LEARNER PROMOTION POLICY IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND: A SITUATION ANALYSIS

by

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DECLARATION

I, David Peter Knight, student number: 0510-800-4, declare that **LEARNER PROMOTION POLICY IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND: A SITUATION ANALYSIS** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

D. P. KNIGHT

2010/03/20

Date

This research is dedicated to my dad, David, my wife, Anna and my son, David, for their support, encouragement and sacrifices.

Faith in God is a perfect antidote for the fear of men and dread of circumstances.

(Source unknown)

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"I am overcome with joy because of your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles and about the anguish of my soul."

Psalm 31:7

SUMMARY

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades 10 to 12 (Schools), implemented from 2006, led to changes in promotion requirements and assessment practices. The investigation aimed at acquiring information about the extent to which the differences in the promotion requirements and assessment practices contributed to the high retention rate of learners in the FET Band.

An explanatory mixed method strategy was followed to obtain reliable and valid results in this research. Quantitative research consisted of questionnaires and a survey to investigate OBE, assessment practices, the Grade 12 examinations and the impact of changes in promotion requirements since 2006. Qualitative research consisted of an interview with an official from the National Department of Education that contributed to a better understanding of policy changes.

Based on the findings of the research, recommendations were constructed to improve assessment practices and to provide scientific data on the consequences of policy changes on the promotion of learners.

KEYWORDS

Promotion policy, learner promotion, learner retention, learner assessment, Further Education and Training Band, General Education and Training Band, National Curriculum Statement, National Senior Certificate.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

"The glory of life is not in never failing; the true glory consists in rising each time we fall."

F Scott Fitzgerald (cited in De Villiers, 2003:17)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades 10 to 12 (Schools) was implemented for the first time in Grade 10 in South Africa in 2006. The implementation continued in Grade 11 in 2007 and in Grade 12 in 2008. Since "….progression by grade is central to the NCS" (Department of Education, 2002a:11), the results of the Grade 10 learners in the examinations in 2006, the Grade 11 learners in 2007, and of the Grade 12 learners in 2008, were key indicators to measure the success of the implementation of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band. These learners were the first to write the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations after implementation of the NCS.

At first glance the results of the Grade 10 learners in 2006 portrayed a gloomy picture. Nationally, one in every three learners did not comply with the criteria for promotion (Rademeyer, 2007:5). According to a report by the Free State Department of Education (2007), 6 543 of the 10 713 Grade 10 learners in the Northern Free State (Fezile Dabi Education District) in 2006 were promoted to Grade 11; 4 170 were held back in Grade 10. This represented a 61.1% pass rate. The average pass rate for the Grade 10 learners in the entire Free State was even worse, namely 57.6% (Free State Department of Education, 2007), and decreased even further to 56.5% in 2007 (Free State Department of Education, 2008). In 2007 the Grade 11 pass rate improved to 67.2% (Free State Department of Education, 2008), and the Grade 12 pass rate in 2008 was 71.8% compared to a national pass rate for Grade 12 of 62.5%

(Rademeyer, 2008:1). Thus, as a measure of success, the pass rate for the first learners under the FET Band should be a major concern to policy makers and educators.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The first democratic elections held in South Africa in 1994 paved the way for the new educational dispensation. The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) provided the policy framework for the development of a new curriculum better suited to post-apartheid South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1995). The National Education and Training Forum (NETF), established in 1995, compiled Report 550 (Department of Education, 2002a:1). This report was the first step in the implementation of an 'interim' syllabus that was followed by Curriculum 2005 in 1999 (Department of Education, 2002a:6-7). A policy document, the NCS Grades 10-12 (Schools), was developed in 2001 (Department of Education, 2002a:8). The implementation started in 2006 to be fully implemented in 2008.

The new curriculum also led to changes in promotion requirements and assessment practices. Of particular interest for the research were the changes in the National Education Policy on assessment and qualifications, on assessment guidelines and on promotion. Differences existed in the National Policy on assessment and promotion in the General Education and Training (GET) Band, compared to the promotion policy applied in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band (RSA, 1996). The policy on the National Senior Certificate (NSC), containing the promotion requirements for the FET Band, was amended in 2007 (Department of Education, 2007).

The focus point of this research is the changes in the promotion requirements. The difference in promotion requirements and assessment practices that resulted from the policy changes was illustrated by the following:

- The changes in promotion requirements from the GET Band to the FET Band.

- An increase in the number of compulsory subjects (learning areas) for the National Senior Certificate.
- Changes in the percentages that had to be obtained in order to pass a learning area in Grade 10 in 2006, Grades 10 and 11 in 2007, and then in Grades 10, 11 and 12 in 2008.
- Changes since 2006 in the number of learning areas that a learner had to pass in order to be promoted to the next Grade or to pass Grade 12.
- Changes since 2006 in the marks that had to be obtained by each learner for all learning areas.
- Changes since 2006 in the condoning of a learning area, where a learning area that was failed could be converted to a pass, to enable a learner to be promoted to the next Grade.
- Changes in the totals of marks that learners had to obtain in certain learning areas (Mathematics and Life Orientation) in order to be promoted to the next Grade.
- Continuous assessment (CASS) which formed the largest component of the GET Band promotion mark, and was included in the promotion mark of the FET Band.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

It was unavoidable that these new promotion requirements and assessment practices would have an impact on the promotion of learners in 2006, and also on the promotion of learners in 2007 and 2008. At first it might appear acceptable that two out of every three Grade 10 learners were promoted to Grade 11 in 2006. However, a closer inspection of these results indicated serious implications: 34 679 Grade 10 learners failed in the North West Province; 34 350 failed in Gauteng; 29 933 failed in Mpumalanga; and 26 376 failed in the Free State (Rademeyer, 2007:5). The resulting outcry in the media about these results was not surprising. According to Niebuhr (as quoted by Rademeyer, 2007:5), the high retention rate could be attributed to the learners not being used to examinations, and to their failing their home language or Life Orientation.

Reducing the examinations and the fact that Life Orientation was a compulsory subject that had to be passed, were of the consequences of the changes in the National Policy. While changes in the promotion requirements were inevitable due to the transformation of the education system, these changes should not be at the expense of learners. The researcher aimed his investigation to determine to what extent the differences in the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, the changes in the promotion requirements for the FET Band, as well as assessment practices contributed to the high retention rate of learners in the FET Band.

Against this background the main research question was formulated as follows:

What was the impact of the promotion policy changes and assessment practices, on the promotion of learners in the Further Education and Training Band?

The main research question implied the following sub-questions for investigation:

- What were the differences between the promotion requirements for the GET Band and the FET Band?
- What changes were there in the promotion requirements for Grade 10 learners in 2005 and 2006?
- What impact did these changes in the promotion requirements have on the promotion of Grade 10 learners in 2006?
- What amendments were there to the promotion requirements for Grades 10 and 11 learners in 2007?
- What impact did the amendments to the promotion requirements have on Grades 10 and 11 learners in 2007, and Grade 10 to 12 learners in 2008?
- What process was followed in the amendments to the promotion policy ?
- Were assessment practices in accordance with policy documents?

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To address the research questions, the researcher aimed his investigation at acquiring information about the extent to which the differences in promotion requirements between the GET and the FET Bands, the changes in the promotion requirements for the FET Band, as well as assessment practices in the FET Band contributed to the high retention rate of learners. To address this aim, the following objectives were formulated, namely to investigate and report on:

- the differences in promotion requirements between the GET Band and the FET Band;
- the differences in promotion requirements for Grade 10 learners in 2005 and 2006;
- the promotion of Grade 10 learners during 2006, with special reference to the influence of changes to the policy on the promotion rate in the National Senior Certificate (NSC);
- the amendments to the promotion requirements in Grades 10 and 11 during 2007;
- the promotion of Grades 10 and 11 learners in 2007 and 2008, as well as the pass rate of Grade 12 learners in 2008, with special reference to the influence of the amendments to the policy on the promotion rate in the National Senior Certificate (NSC); and
- the process of establishing promotion policy and amendments to the promotion requirements by the Department of Education;
- the assessment practices of educators in the FET Band.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research was considered to be of great importance for education management. The macro, meso and micro levels of educational management (Van Deventer, 2003:67) would benefit as a result of the scientific knowledge on the consequences of policy changes. According to McMillan and

Schumacher (2001:545), policy research could be used to "…evaluate government policies and to provide policymakers with pragmatic action orientated recommendations".

Research was done on the effectiveness of OBE, as well as on factors for consideration with regard to the promotion of learners in the FET Band, and the causes of the retention of learners after the implementation of the NCS in 2006. It was only possible to obtain these insights by a holistic research approach, which included not only quantitative research and the verification of statistical data with individually selected respondents, but also by the experience of an official from the Department of Education. Policy makers in the Department of Education, school principals and teachers would benefit from the results.

The researcher's personal experience as a teacher indicated that conflicting assessment practices, and the National Policy changes on promotion requirements, affected the promotion of learners at his school during 2006. The changes in the promotion requirements appeared to be a reason why a larger number of learners were retained in Grade 10 than would have been the case if the same learners' results were measured against the previous promotion requirements. Furthermore, amendments to these changes for the promotion of learners in 2007 were a clear indication that the impact was also experienced by other schools. Finally, the application of these changes for only one year and their subsequent amendments, as well as conflicting assessment practices, endorsed the need for scientific research.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to Fouché and Delport (2002:265), the first thing a researcher has to do, is to select a paradigm that outlines his point of view or frame of reference. Bogdan and Biklen (2003:261) describe a 'paradigm' as "…(a) logically related assumption(s), concept(s) or proposition(s) that orient thinking and research". Creswell (2003:13) mentions that the researcher

brings assumptions about knowledge claims to the choice of a research design. He further (2003:6) indicates that a 'knowledge claim' means that the researcher starts a project with certain assumptions about how and what he will learn during his inquiry, and that these claims may be called 'paradigms'.

A mixed method strategy was followed to obtain the envisaged results in this research. Creswell (2003:16) refers to 'sequential procedures' as strategies in which the researcher seeks to elaborate on or expand the findings of one method with another method. A holistic view on the impact of promotion policy changes on the promotion of learners can only be obtained by evaluating the statistical analysis of the marks obtained by learners through quantitative research. This was done against the background that led to the changes in 2006, and the amendments in 2007.

A literature review provided the conceptual background to the empirical investigation. The literature review included an examination of national education policies and guideline documents, legislation, books, journals, newspapers and magazine articles, information obtained from the internet, workshop materials and dissertations.

With regard to the empirical investigation, Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006:489) encourage researchers to combine the elements of methods creatively in any way that makes the best sense of the study they wanted to do. This view was also expressed by Rossman and Wilson (1985, cited in Creswell, 2003:11), who stated that the research problem was most important, and researchers might use all kinds of approaches to understand it. According to Creswell (2003:18), mixed methods research implies that investigators used both quantitative and qualitative data to provide the best understanding of the research problem. Thus, the empirical inquiry in this study made use of both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches.

The research was largely explanatory, and confined to a South African context. A key reason for also using a qualitative approach was that not much

had been written on the topic, and the researcher sought to build an understanding based on the ideas of the participants (Creswell, 2003:30).

The empirical inquiry was conducted in four phases:

During phase one the relevant statistics to determine all secondary public schools in the Fezile Dabi education district that taught Gr. 10 learners in 2006, Gr. 11 in 2007 and Gr. 12 in 2008, were obtained from the Education Management Information System at the Free State Department of Education. Although the intention was to generalize the results of the research to the target population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:169) of all Grade 10 learners in 2006, all Grade 10 and Grade 11 learners in 2007 and Grade 10 to 12 learners in 2008 at schools in the Republic of South Africa, the survey population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:169) was all the Grade 10 learners in the Fezile Dabi Education District in 2006, Grades 10 and 11 learners in the Fezile Dabi Education District in 2007 and the Grade 10 to 12 learners in the Fezile Dabi Education District in 2008. Thus, the purpose of phase one was to identify all the schools in the Fezile Dabi Education District that had Grade 10 learners in 2006, Grade 10 and Grade 11 learners in 2007 and Grade 10 to 12 learners in 2008, and the number of those learners.

Phase two consisted of quantitative research to investigate assessment practices that could influence the promotion of learners. This research was conducted amongst educators in the Fezile Dabi Education District by means of questionnaires. Thus, the aim of Phase two was to investigate the composition of the promotion mark which consisted of an assessment mark and an examination mark.

Phase three comprised a survey (quantitative research) conducted to determine the impact of changes in promotion requirements from the promotion schedules of 2006, 2007 and 2008. Data were gathered by means of questionnaires, completed by the researcher to ensure the competency, accuracy and reliability of the information.

Phase four consisted of an interview conducted with an official from the Department of Education responsible for examinations and assessment. The data gathered by means of the interview contributed to a better understanding of policy changes by the Department of Education. The interview with the official responsible for examinations and assessment provided insight into the process of establishing promotion policy and elucidated on some of the findings of the quantitative research.

Ethical guidelines as provided by Bak (2004:28) outline the responsibility of researchers. In this study it was of particular importance to

- avoid misleading results;
- obtain the consent from all the participants;
- protect the rights of all concerned;
- protect the identities of schools, individuals, educators and the official of the Departement of Education; and
- guarantee the confidentiality of all the information.

Informed consent (Strydom, 2002:65) was obtained to comply with these ethical guidelines. This included the provision of information on the purpose of the research, the credibility of the researcher, the necessity of accurate information and a guarantee of confidentiality. An informed consent form was provided to the Free State Department of Education and to all participants.

1.6.1 Quantitative data collection

The quantitative data collection was done according to the steps identified by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:257-267). Questionnaires were developed in consultation with the University of South Africa, and the process of design would include its justification, the objectives would be defined, the questions and statements identified, the items reviewed, the general format constructed, also including a pretest and revision (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:257-267). The quantitative data collection instrument included open-form items for the purpose of accuracy, closed-form items, Likert-scale and rank-order items

(McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:260-263). Questionnaire one was distributed to all the schools in the Fezile Dabi Education District, together with envelopes for their return to the district offices of the Department of Education. Follow-ups were done in the form of telephone calls to schools that did not respond.

1.6.2 Qualitative data collection

Based on the following descriptions by LeCompte and Preissle (1992), Bogdan and Biklen (2003) as well as Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005), the qualitative research was conducted from a phenomenological perspective. LeCompte and Preissle (1992:850) indicate that "…phenomenological studies of schooling elicited the meanings that participants in the educational process assigned themselves and what they were doing". Bogdan and Biklen (2003:261) refer to 'phenomenological research' as research that aimed to understand the point of view of the subjects. Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:18) state that a phenomenologist studied the situation in the everyday world from the viewpoint of the experiencing person.

According to Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:18), people's actions can best be understood and explained with reference to their "conscious intentions," and to understand why people do things we need to examine the meaning and interpretations they give to their actions. The qualitative research intended to understand and explain the process of establishing promotion policy, amendments to these policies and the meaning and interpretations by the Department of Education on some of the research findings.

The qualitative data collection was performed according to the phases identified by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:405-407). The qualitative data collection had the following phases:

- Phase 1: Drawing up the research questions. Semi-structured open-ended questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:269) were developed for the interview with the official from the Department of Education.

- Phase 2: Data collection. In conjunction with the interview, observation notes and field notes were used. The interview data was captured by means of audiotape. The interview was conducted in English. An interview protocol (Creswell, 2003:190; Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005:58-68) was used. The protocol included the instructions to the interviewer, formulating key research questions, probing, managing the interview, recording the interviewee's comments, the reflective notes, and the transcription. The interview with a member of the Department of Education was determined by the availability of the Chief Director: Examinations and Assessment; the Director: Examinations and Assessment, or any other representative regarded to be an information-rich informant on promotion policies.

- Phase 3: Data analysis. The data analysis and interpretation of the qualitative interview were done according to the steps identified in Creswell (2003:191-195):

- Step 1: Organize the data for analysis: transcribe the interview and type the field notes.
- Step 2: Read through all the data in order to obtain general ideas. Make use of keywords in the margins and highlight the relevant information.
- Step 3: Do a detailed analysis of paragraphs by using a coding process, and by labeling categories with *in vivo* terms.
- Step 4: Decide on the way the categories must be presented in the qualitative narrative.

- Phase 4: Data interpretation. Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Creswell, 2003:194) capture the essence of data interpretation as "What were the lessons learned?" The data were interpreted with the focus on the research problem and to elaborate on the quantitative data.

The data analysis and the interpretation of the quantitative data had been done before the qualitative interview was conducted. The purpose of this step was

to have scientific evidence and statistical data available when conducting the interview.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The **General Education and Training Band** consists of Grades R to 9 and was introduced in 1998 in terms of the Statement of the National Curriculum for Grades R to 9 (RSA, 2002).

The **Further Education and Training Band,** implemented in 2006 in Grade 10 according to the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (Schools) (Department of Education, 2002a), is applicable to schools and FET colleges. Schools can furthermore be subdivided into independent (or private) and public schools. The research was only conducted at schools, excluding FET colleges.

Promotion refers to progression to the next grade after reaching the goals set by the system (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:10).

The best descriptive explanation of the practice of **retention** is found in Land and Legters (2002:20) as "… the holding back of academically underperforming students from promotion to the next grade". The phrase 'retention' is used in this same sense in documentation of the Department of Education.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Orientation
Chapter 2: Learner assessment and promotion: A literature review
Chapter 3: Research design and methodology
Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion and recommendations

1.9 CONCLUSION

The poor results of learners in 2006 led to amendments to the policy on the NSC. These amendments did not lead to any improvement in the Grade 10 or Grade 12 results. The goal of the researcher was to add knowledge and insight to assessment practices, why learners failed, as well as to add insight into the continuous and possibly harmful retention policy amendments. Chapter two provides an in-depth discussion on assessment in outcomes-based education, assessment in the NCS, promotion requirements for the GET Band and the FET Band, differences between the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, and changes in the promotion requirements in the FET Band.

CHAPTER 2

LEARNER ASSESSMENT AND PROMOTION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

> "If we wish to discover the truth about an education system, we must look into its assessment procedures."
>
> D. Rowntree (1987:73)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Although the aim of this research is not an investigation of Outcomes-based Education (OBE), a brief explanation of OBE is necessary to grasp its influence on the promotion of learners. OBE forms the foundation of the curriculum in South Africa (Department of Education, 2003:2).

The previous education paradigm was characterized by a content-driven and teacher-centered approach (Rasool, 1999:177). Subjects were rigidly defined in a syllabus that focused on knowledge (Rasool, 1999:177). The role of the teacher was reduced to the provider of content by means of extensive notes (Rasool, 1999:177). Promotion and retention in the pre-OBE system in South African schools were primarily based on end-of-year exams (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:123).

OBE requires a paradigm shift away from content-driven rote learning, to a system where learners "…discover and construct knowledge, use critical thinking skills and problem-solving matters across broad learning areas" (Rasool, 1999:178). The introduction of OBE in South Africa required a paradigm shift in assessment policy and practice to ensure that the assessment practices would guide, support and underpin the transformation process (Pahad, 1999:247). The implementation of OBE was, however, hampered by the complexity of the process and a lack of understanding (Pahad, 1999:248).

2.2 ASSESSMENT IN OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

2.2.1 Background

Jansen (1999:146) was of the opinion that OBE could not be traced to a "single historical legacy". However, it most likely developed from competency debates which encouraged training and development discussions in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Kraak (1999:38) indicated that OBE was preceded by "…competency-based modular education in the South African industry after 1985; the adoption of Australian and British 'outcomes' models in the policy development since the early 1990's and the resurrection of the radical rhetoric of People's Education in the mid-1980's." Baxen and Soudien (1999:133) added the mastery learning movement of Benjamin Bloom as another educational reform that forms the basis of OBE, namely that "…all learners are able to master desired outcomes" on the condition that educators "…reconstruct the time and instructional parameters in which learning is set."

A characteristic of the OBE system is that the process of learning is regarded to be as important as the content (Department of Education, 2002c). Both the process and the content of education are emphasized by determining outcomes that should be achieved at the end of the process (Department of Education, 2002c). The lack of clearly defined outcomes in the previous system contributed to educational goals not being reached (Mahomed, 1999:165). These outcomes were inevitable in order to ensure clarity and direction in education (Mahomed, 1999:165). The aim of OBE was not only the measurement of the end-result, as was the situation in the previous examination-driven curriculum, but also the assessment of the process of learning through assessment standards and learning outcomes. These assessment standards, learning outcomes, ways of recording and reporting, as well as guidance on assessment issues, are subject-specific and appear in the Subject Assessment Guidelines, Learning Programme Guidelines and National Curriculum Statements of every subject (Department of Education, 2003:31).

According to OBE, the progress of learners is, therefore, evaluated against a set of criteria. Evidence can be collected at different times and places, and by means of various methods, instruments, modes and media (Department of Education, 2003:31). According to the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2003:31), the reasons for the assessment of a learner's performance include monitoring progress and providing feedback, diagnosing or remediating barriers to learning, selection, guidance, supporting learning, certification and promotion.

2.2.2 Definitions

According to the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band (RSA, 2007a:1), 'authentic assessment' refers to "…assessment that aims to assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in contexts that closely resemble actual situations in which that knowledge and those skills, values and attitudes are used." Lubisi (1999:53) referred to 'authenticity of assessment' as "…the measuring of learner performance in meaningful tasks that represent what people do outside the school".

The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 to 12 (General) (Department of Education, 2003:31) defines 'assessment' as "…a process of collecting and interpreting evidence in order to determine the learner's progress in learning and to make a judgment about a learner's performance." An almost similar definition is provided by Linn & Miller (2005:26), namely that assessment is a range of procedures used to gain information about learner performance.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement: Senior Phase (Free State Department of Education, 2005c:4) adds a further dimension to the above definitions by referring to assessment as "…the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, as measured against nationally agreed outcomes for a particular phase of learning." Lubisi (1999:12) is more specific in the 'outcomes' by referring to

‘assessment in education’ as “... obtaining and interpreting information about the knowledge and understanding, or abilities and attitudes.”

The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 9 (Schools) (Department of Education, 2002b:48) refers to ‘assessment’ more in terms of continuous assessment by defining it as a “…continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of learners measured against the Assessment Standards of the Learning Outcomes.” This definition is similar to the definition of ‘continuous assessment’ in the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band (RSA, 2007a:2), namely, “…an ongoing process that measures a learner’s achievement during the course of a grade or level, providing information that is used to support a learner’s development and enabling improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process.”

From the above definitions, it is possible to identify four steps involved in the assessment process (Free State Department of Education, 2005c:4):

1. Generating and collecting evidence of achievement (Department of Education, 2002b:48; Department of Education, 2003:31; Free State Department of Education, 2005c:4; RSA, 2007a:2).
2. Assessing or evaluating the evidence against the outcomes (Department of Education, 2002b:48; Free State Department of Education, 2005c:4).
3. Recording the findings of this assessment (Department of Education, 2002b:48; Department of Education, 2003:31; Free State Department of Education, 2005c:4; RSA, 2007a:2).
4. Using the information to promote the learner’s development and to improve the process of learning and teaching (Department of Education, 2002b:48; Department of Education, 2003:31; Free State Department of Education, 2005c:4; RSA, 2007a:2).

According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement: Senior Phase (Free State Department of Education, 2005c:4), it is important for teachers to spend

enough time on each of the four steps. Empirical research needs to include an investigation into the assessment practices associated with these steps.

2.2.3 Principles of quality assessment practices

To prevent assessment from becoming the generation of worthless data, there are certain principles that teachers need to understand to ensure high-quality assessment practices (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:120).

Reliability

According to Lubisi (1999:91) validity and reliability are the two most important principles in educational assessment. Khattri, Reeve and Kane (1998:60) claim that reliability and validity are interrelated. Meaningful inferences cannot be drawn from inaccurate scoring or assessment that does not accurately assess the knowledge, skills or values it intended to assess (Khattri et al. 1998:60).

- Assessment is reliable if it is "free of errors of measurement" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:120). Lubisi (1999:94) associates reliability with the ability of assessment to make generalisations about the knowledge, skills and values of the learners. Khattri et al. (1998:59) refer to generalizability as the inference deducted from a specific task in comparison with the total of all assessment tasks which measures similar skills or knowledge. Fairbrother (1997:165) identified the test itself, the learners who take the test and the markers of the test, as the three main sources of unreliability. Gauld (1980, as cited in Fairbrother, 1997:166) found that learners could interpret questions differently from what the examiner intended, and gave answers which were different from what was expected. This statement is indeed very relevant due to language barriers in South Africa and the language of teaching not being the home language of the majority of learners. Rudner (1997:161) also recognised the "significant linguistic demand" that tasks can have.

- Fairbrother (1997:166) identified personal circumstances like "forgetfulness, headaches, arguments with a friend and the temperature of the examination room" as contributing to varying results. Lubisi (1999:94) describes the ability of assessment to render the same results under different circumstances as "stability reliability". Freeman and Lewis (1998:25) regard such consistency as unattainable since students and assessors will perform differently on different days determined by their feelings. According to Vandeyar and Killen (2003:120), the performance of learners could be influenced by their personal circumstances, the assessment tasks being worded in a confusing way, the prejudice of teachers, and preconceived ideas about the capability of a learner. What role does the layout of the final Grade 12 examination paper play in the results?

- Assessment tasks are considered to be reliable when the task, the conditions under which it is administered, and the marking process are designed to minimize errors of judgment on the learners' performance (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:120). "Interscorer reliability" (Lubisi. 1999:94) would imply that different markers give the same marks to the same standard of work. Freeman and Lewis (1998:24) also regard consistency by different assessors for work of similar standard as a prerequisite for reliability. The marking process, specifically of the Grade 12 final examination, plays a fundamental role in the promotion of learners or in obtaining the National Senior Certificate. Fairbrother (1997:166) was of the opinion that even the most experienced markers would vary in their interpretation of the same standard of work, which would bring about different marks for similar answers.

- Another form of reliability, referred to as "internal-consistency reliability" by Lubisi (1999:95), would require educators to assess each task on merit. Marks obtained in one assessment activity should not influence your judgment on other assessment activities. Preconceived ideas about the ability of a learner would result in assessment that does not comply with internal consistency.

Validity

"You assess someone for a purpose, and an assessment is valid if the results enable the purpose to be achieved" (Fairbrother, 1997:164). Four different kinds of validity, associated with different purposes, were identified from the literature:

- Face validity exists if the questions in the examination paper are recognizable as belonging to the subject (Fairbrother, 1997:164). Lubisi (1999:92) refers to face validity as "first impression" validity, an elementary and subjective impression on whether the assessment looks valid. Face validity implies that assessment should be credible to the learners and educators (Freeman & Lewis, 1998:27).

- Content validity consists of the coverage of the work that has been taught, as well as reflecting the accentuation of the relative importance of the different parts of the work (Fairbrother, 1997:165). Eisner (1993:148) claims that a test can only have content validity if it contains work that learners were exposed to. Lubisi (1999:92) relates content validity to the proportion of work being assessed in comparison to the content covered. Freeman and Lewis (1998:24) argue that not only do you need to cover all the learning outcomes but there should be sufficient "depth" in every outcome. According to Khattri et al. (1998:56) certain procedures can ensure content validity, namely, consensus about the knowledge or skills being assessed, selecting an appropriate method of assessment, connecting the method to the domain assessed and finally pilot testing that could lead to reviewing and scoring rubrics. It should therefore be important to evaluate question papers, in particular the Grade 12 final exams to comply with content validity.

- Construct validity exists if there is correlation between what assessment intends to assess and what is eventually being measured (Freeman & Lewis, 1998:27). Construct validity is reflected in the assessment of abstract qualities like intelligence, understanding, recognition, showing

awareness, the ability to hypothesize, to interpret and to analyze (Fairbrother, 1997:165). Lubisi (1999:92) refers to construct validity as the extent to which the assessment measures specific knowledge, skills and values. Khattri et al. (1998:58) refers to assessment achieving its intended purposes as consequential validity. Do word problems in mathematics test mathematical skills or the application of mathematics in word problems? (Lubisi, 1999:92)

- Criterion-related validity measures the relationship between the scores of a test and a concurrent measure at the same time or a predictive criterion in the future (Fairbrother, 1997:165). Lubisi (1999:93) distinguishes between two types of criterion-related validity, namely, concurrent and predictive validity. According to Lubisi (1999:93) concurrent validity exists if there is correlation between the performances of assessment measuring the same construct. Predictive validity is the ability to predict future performance from current results (Lubisi, 1999:93). Freeman and Lewis (1998:28) indicate that validity in this sense, usually relates to retrospective validity, referring to past performance of a student. According to Freeman and Lewis (1998:28) it is more problematic to apply predictive validity and to predict likely future performance of a learner. Predictive validity can be applied by using assessment marks already obtained to predict the likely performance of that learner in future examinations. For the purpose of this research the question can be raised whether there is a direct correlation between the CASS marks and the final examination marks?

Fairness

- To ensure that a test is reliable, it must be fair. Fairness implies that educators ensure that all the learners have the opportunity to learn the content that would be tested, and that it is not expected from learners to do unreasonable things (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121). Asking questions in a language that learners do not understand or to answer too many questions in a limited time can be regarded as unfair (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121). Another kind of fairness, identified by Freeman and Lewis (1998:307),

exists when all students have the same assessment opportunities. Educators should not advantage any student over another on grounds of age, gender, ethniticity or disability (Freeman & Lewis, 1998:307).

Meaningfulness

- Teachers have the responsibility to make tasks meaningful for learners to ensure they put in extra effort (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121). Learners find tasks meaningful if they understand the purpose of the assessment, regard it as realistic and worthwhile and are able to link it to important learning outcomes (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122). Khattri, et al. (1998:58) refer to meaningfulness as properties that assessment tasks possess that motivate students to put in extra effort in completing tasks of higher standards. Tasks relating to real-world problems will be meaningful to students (Khattri et al., 1998:58) Freeman and Lewis (1998:27) classify assessment that is worth while and worth achieving as "curriculum validity." Meaningful tasks also contribute towards learners' learning experience (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121).

Discrimination

- According to Vandeyar and Killen (2003:121), discrimination refers to teachers being able to distinguish between those learners who have mastered the work being tested, and those learners who have not. Tests with a low discrimination index will not adequately distinguish between the levels of understanding of learners (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121). Test items need to be objective, and the calculations would require mathematical skills from teachers to be able to interpret different responses from different learners (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121).

Reliability, validity, fairness, discrimination and meaningfulness need to be the basic principles of assessment and should not be sidelined by the focus on procedures, new terminology and the political rhetoric (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:125). Past experiences have indicated that the lack of understanding of

teachers to implement these characteristics into their assessment practices is a weakness of the policy documents (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:132).

2.2.4 Types of assessment

McEvoy and Welker (2000, as cited in Dimmitt, 2003:3) indicated that academic failure is related to assessment techniques, since assessment techniques are used to determine what students know and how well they know it. They claim that the more teachers make use of different teaching methods and various types of assessments to gather information about the learners' progress, the more learners are able to learn and demonstrate their knowledge.

According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 9 (Schools) (Department of Education, 2002b:48), the main purpose of assessing learners is to "…enhance individual growth and development, to monitor the progress of learners and to facilitate their learning". Lubisi (1999:16) had a similar viewpoint to monitor learners' progress in knowledge, skills and values by assessing learners by means of various methods. To be able to continue the discussion on assessment in OBE, the different forms of assessment and the purpose of each need to be indicated.

- Baseline assessment of prior learning takes place at the beginning of a grade or phase to establish what learners already know (Department of Education, 2002b:48). Baseline assessment is not supposed to form part of summative assessment, but the results should assist teachers in planning learning programmes and learning activities (Pahad, 1999:253).

- Diagnostic assessment is used to discover the nature and cause of barriers to learning experienced by specific learners, and should be followed by guidance, appropriate support and intervention strategies (Department of Education, 2002b:48). All assessment tasks should be adapted to assist in the early identification of learners who may experience barriers to learning and development, in order to provide them with learning support (RSA, 2007a:8). Fairbrother (1997:161) placed the emphasis of diagnostic

assessment on the identification of where learners experience difficulties so that corrective measures can be taken. Decisions made about learners who experience barriers should involve a partnership between educators, learners, parents, and education support services such as occupational and speech therapists and educational psychologists (RSA, 2007a:9). Programmes which address barriers have to be coordinated by the district-based support team, and used by the institution-level support team and educators, to ensure that the learner masters the curriculum (RSA, 2007a:9).

- Formative assessment monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching, and is used to inform learners and educators about the learners' progress so as to improve learning, and to enable learners to grow through constructive feedback (Department of Education, 2002b:48). Fairbrother (1997:161) also emphasizes that the results of formative assessment should assist educators to adapt to the needs of learners. Assessment should help learners to learn (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:131). According to Lubisi, Wedekind and Parker (1997:22), formative assessment "teaches as well as assesses," and is referred to as formative assessment because it "forms and shapes learning." The purpose is therefore to determine whether the learning required for the achievement of the specific outcome is being reached (RSA, 2007a:8). Malcolm (1999:91) contends that schools ultimately strive to culminate performance, and that all performance and assessment can be called formative.

Assessing the progress of learners in achieving the expected outcomes is the responsibility of educators, but the National and Provincial Departments of Education are accountable for the management of the assessment programmes (RSA, 2007a:9). Formative assessment can be formal or informal and includes observing, listening, asking and answering questions (Mack-Kirschner, 2005:53). By observing learners' work educators are able to determine what they know and what they can do, to assess their reasoning, and the depth of their understanding, to uncover misconceptions, and plan accordingly (Mack-Kirschner, 2005:53). Unfortunately, research by Black

(1986, cited in Fairbrother, 1997:161), indicated that formative assessment was often not applied correctly and consisted of various summative assessment tasks.

- Summative assessment gives an overall picture of a learner's progress at the end of a term or year (Department of Education, 2002b:49). Summative assessment includes different forms of assessment that are added together and an average is calculated, expressed in words, numbers, symbols or outcomes, for a section of work, an entire school year or the end of the educational process (Lubisi *et al.,* 1997:19). Pahad (1999:251) gave an almost identical definition of summative assessment, namely "…a summary of a learner's achievement over a period of time," gained through various assessment tasks.

Summative assessment will therefore play a major role to determine whether the learner has a sufficient grasp of the work to pass on to the next section or grade (Lubisi *et al.,* 1997:19). It is therefore essential that summative assessment should be fair, reliable and valid (Pahad, 1999:254). This would not only imply a "culture-fair and anti-bias stand," with "effective quality assurance systems," but also consistency in internal assessment performed by a teacher in one school that should be comparable with the internal assessment at another school (Pahad, 1999:273). To comply with this would require a common understanding of the different levels of achievement and consistency in the interpretation thereof (Pahad, 1999:273). A report to parents and other role-players and stakeholders should contain the progression through the acquisition of knowledge and levels of achievement across a range of competencies acquired during the learning process. This could be used to build a profile of the learner's achievement at all learning areas and to make judgments about a learner's progress (RSA, 2007a:8).

- Systematic assessment is a way of monitoring the performance of the education system, and is conducted at the end of each phase of the GET Band, from a representative sample of schools and learners selected provincially or nationally (Department of Education, 2002b:49). Lubisi

(1999:17) referred to the process of evaluation in a broader sense than assessment as a method to determine what is working and what not. It includes the appraisal of educators, auditing resources and scrutinizing learning programmes (Lubisi, 1999:17). Fairbrother (1997:161) referred to the assessment of learners, with the purpose of evaluating the performance of an educator, a department or a school, as evaluative assessment.

- An input-based approach to assessment is "…a method of assessment which focuses on tests and examinations and prioritizes content recall (Lubisi *et al.,* 1997:19). The main function of assessment, when using the input-based approach, is to determine whether the student can recall the input made by educators and textbooks (Lubisi *et al.,* 1997:19).

- Norm-referenced assessment compares the performance of one learner with the performance of another learner, or the norm established by other learners (Lubisi *et al.,* 1997:19).

- Criterion-referenced assessment also referred to as outcomes- or competence-based assessment, measures the performance of learners against a set of criteria or outcomes, and not against other learners or a class average (Lubisi *et al.,* 1997:22). Kraak (1999:40) referred to outcomes- or competency-based education as showing competence in the criteria established by the education authority.

The purpose of OBE is a "…movement away from a content-based towards an outcomes-based system" (Combrinck, 2003:51). Baxen and Soudien (1999:134) referred to this paradigm shift from "content-driven to outcomes-driven" as a necessity to transform the "…complex educational dilemmas of South Africa." This paradigm shift influenced the way learning and teaching takes place, "…away from the traditional syllabus-oriented, content-based transmission model of teaching and learning to one based on outcomes" (Kraak, 1999:43). The focus shifts from a "summative norm-reference approach to a formative criterion reference-approach" (Combrinck, 2003:52).

Criterion-referenced assessment underpins all assessment in Curriculum 2005 (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:120). Lubisi *et al*. (1997:14) referred to "an input-based, norm-referenced, summative approach to assessment" compared to an "outcomes-based, criterion-referenced, formative approach." This is clearly a change from the pre-OBE focus on once-off examinations as the basis for promotion or retention (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:125). The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 9 (Schools) introduced a shift from criterion-referenced assessment to standards-referenced assessment (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:130; Department of Education, 2002b). Each learning area in every grade consists of phase outcomes that are divided into assessment standards that define the knowledge, skills and attitudes that must be attained. These phase outcomes remain the same from grade to grade, but the assessment standards change from grade to grade (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:130).

Pahad (1999:251) emphasized that it is not the form of assessment that determines whether it serves a summative or formative function, but the way the assessment, or the results thereof, is used. According to him (1999:251), summative assessment in the form of a project or examination, used to assess the progress of learners against particular outcomes at the end of a learning programme, can also be used as formative assessment if the marked assignments are returned with constructive feedback that provides opportunities for learning where weaknesses had been identified. This does not imply that all formative assessment must be recorded to serve as summative assessment, which seems to be the tradition in South Africa (Pahad, 1999:251). According to Pahad (1999:257) the practice of including baseline assessment and daily learning tasks as part of summative assessment stems from the belief that continuous assessment refers to the continuous recording of results. The purpose of summative assessment is to determine the progress at the end of the learning programme, and not to determine knowledge at the start, or throughout the learning process (Pahad, 1999:253).

According to Lubisi *et al*. (1997:35), the Department of Education implements OBE on three different levels, namely formal summative assessment as the

first level, formal continuous assessment as the second level and informal formative assessment as the third level. Of the different ways of collecting assessment evidence, tests and examinations still contribute the largest percentage of the marks used for promotion from one grade to the next (Lubisi, 1999:35). As a system of reporting where numerical scores are still used, more emphasis is placed on summative assessment, and not on formative assessment (Lubisi, 1999:37). Whichever form of assessment is being used, teachers should be able to explain "…what they are assessing, why they are assessing it and how they will do it effectively and fairly" (Pahad, 1999:259).

2.2.5 Characteristics of continuous assessment

Continuous assessment is not a type of assessment, but rather an assessment approach that encourages learners to demonstrate and improve competence in a variety of ways and in different contexts (Pahad, 1999:249). Since continuous assessment is the method of assessment in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002b:49) the following characteristics of Continuous Assessment can be identified:

- Continuous assessment should take place over a period of time and should be an ongoing process. The assessment of learners should therefore take place on a regular basis throughout the year (Department of Education, 2002b:49). The National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band (RSA, 2007a:7), requires assessment to be an on-going integral part of the learning and teaching process, be authentic, continuous, multi-dimensional, varied and balanced.

- Continuous assessment should support the growth and development of learners. Learners should become active participants in learning and assessment by understanding the criteria that are used for assessment activities, do self-evaluation, set targets for themselves, reflect on their learning, and experience increased self-esteem (Department of Education,

2002b:49). If learners do not understand the criteria by which their performance will be judged, they cannot comply with those criteria (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:120). "Learning is aimed at what is missing" (Harley & Parker, 1999:191). Educators must use assessment to "…help students to improve their performance and maximise their learning, as well as to reflect on and improve their own teaching" (Lubisi *et al.,* 1997:22). This form of assessment serves a formative and developmental purpose in which the educator and learner work together to improve the learner's performance (Pahad, 1999:249).

- Learners should receive feedback in the form of appropriate questioning, comparing the teacher's comments on what was intended to be achieved by the assessment activity (Department of Education, 2002b:49). Assessment should be used to inform and evaluate teaching and learning (RSA, 2007a:7). Lubisi, Wedekind and Parker (1997:33) also advocated that teaching, learning and assessment should be "inextricably linked", and that education integrated in this way is central to OBE.

- Assessment should be transparent so that there is clarity on the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes being measured for any assessment task (RSA, 2007a:7). According to Pahad (1999:264), assessment is transparent if all the role-players, including the learners, educators, parents and the education department have clarity on which outcomes are being assessed and the criteria being used in relation to these outcomes. Assessment should maximize the learners' access to the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes set forth in the National Curriculum Statements (RSA, 2007a:8). The skills, attitudes and knowledge serve as outcomes, and must be communicated to learners in order for them to know the criteria they have to meet to be regarded as "competent" (Lubisi *et al.,* 1997:22). Vandeyar and Killen (2003:123) referred to the linking of assessment tasks to well defined outcomes as the principle of clarity of focus.

- Through continuous assessment a number of related learning outcomes can be assessed within a single activity, combining a number of different

assessment methods. A variety of assessment methods and opportunities must be provided by means of which learners can demonstrate their ability (Department of Education, 2002b:49; Pahad, 1999:270; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:131). These different forms of assessment should be appropriate for the knowledge, skills or attitudes and the range of competencies being assessed as well as for the age and developmental needs of the learners (RSA, 2007a:8). Assessment should comprise many forms, and several contexts, and make provision for a range of competencies and uses (RSA, 2007a:7). Lubisi *et al.* (1997:22; Lubisi, 1999:58) also claimed that different aspects of learning, including "understanding knowledge, practicing skills or developing attitudes and values", require teachers to use a variety of modes, media and techniques of assessment. Pahad (1999:270) elaborated on these modes, media and techniques as being "…homework, classwork, individual work, work in pairs, in groups, in teams, open book, no book allowed, silent or collaborative" and by making use of calculators, computers, libraries and the internet.

- Continuous assessment uses strategies that cater for differences in language, physical, psychological, emotional and cultural needs. Provision must be made for different rates and styles of learning (Department of Education, 2002b:49). The National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band (RSA, 2007a:7) requires various assessment strategies to be used to accommodate the diverse needs of learners. It should therefore be sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities (RSA, 2007a:7).

- The accumulation of the results of continuous assessment results in summative assessment. A compendium of exercises, tasks, projects, school- and class tests would provide an overall picture of a learner's progress (Department of Education, 2002b:49). Pahad (1999:250) was of the opinion that an aggregate of marks collected throughout the year was not necessarily a suitable indicator of competence at the end of the year.

- Educators first have to decide what knowledge, skills and values they want to assess before they can decide how to assess those skills, knowledge and values (Lubisi *et al.*, 1997:22). The topic that has to be assessed must be clearly defined, and the criteria for success must be specified in advance (Kraak, 1999:40). This characteristic defines the object of teaching in so far that every learner has to become competent in mastering the prescribed performance objectives in varying time frames (Kraak, 1999:40). The purpose of each assessment task should be to provide information about the learner's current understanding and readiness to progress to a next level of long-term outcomes (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:124).

2.2.6 Concerns about assessment in OBE

Since the introduction of OBE, there has been a hectic debate on whether it is destined to be a recipe for failure or the pathway to a successful education system for South Africa (Mahomed, 1999:158). Mahomed (1999:168) was of the opinion that obstacles should be turned into challenges that could lead to solutions being found. "The challenge lies in thinking and acting reconstructively instead of oppositionally" (Rasool, 1999:172). A critical evaluation on concerns regarding OBE includes the following:

- The maze of new language concepts, terminology, and definitions were simply too complex for most educators (Jansen, 1999:147). Jansen (1999:147) referred to more than fifty concepts, some confusing, contradictory and constantly changing, which have to be mastered by teachers to give meaning to policies and to implement OBE in their classrooms. Mahomed (1999:163) regarded complexity in the language of curriculum innovation as a challenge to be confronted and not shied away from. Rasool (1999:173) emphasized that every academic discipline develops its own language, and that teachers simply needed time to become accustomed to new concepts.

- The claim by OBE advocating that there exists a relationship between OBE and economic growth, was questionable, according to Jansen (1999:147). His point of view was based on a lack of evidence in research to prove that any relationship existed between a change in curriculum at school level and changes in national economies (Jansen, 1999:148). Mahomed (1999:160-161) came to the same conclusion, comparing the crime and violence caused by underemployment to the closer links that needed to exist between "academic knowledge and the world at work".

Mahomed (1999:164) emphasized that one should not lose sight of the fact that universal evidence exists that "…increasing educational levels lead to social and economic benefits to society". It is common sense that if a learner is taught vocational skills that lead to "…higher productivity, lower post-school training costs, greater competence to tackle work tasks and better quality workmanship" (Rasool, 1999:173), it must lead to economic growth. Even though it would not lead to direct economic growth, it would have positive effects on society (Mahomed, 1999:164). Rasool (1999:174) emphasized that the impact of the curriculum on economic development could serve as a guideline to determine whether school-leavers were adequately prepared for the world of work. OBE advocates that learners should be prepared for a meaningful career choice, that it should increase their trainability and capacity for a productive career performance (Rasool, 1999:175).

- OBE relies heavily on unanimity of behaviour which assumes that everybody behaves in the same predictable way under certain circumstances (Kraak, 1999:46). Measuring competency with precision leaves no room for imagination, creativity and innovation (Kraak, 1999:46). The elements of skills, values and attitudes are not separable for assessment purposes (Kraak, 1999:47). Criterion-referenced assessment will thus be susceptible to subjective assessment (Kraak, 1999:47). Over-specification of assessment practices will not reduce the subjective element, but only diminishes the role of the teacher (Kraak, 1999:50). There will have to be a radical change in assessment practices to comply

with the requirements of OBE, but on international level very little change has taken place in assessment practices since OBE was implemented (Jansen, 1999:153).

- Kraak (1999:47) criticized the "seamless" nature of acquired learning that could be applied across the differing knowledge and contexts of other learning areas. Learning areas are not regarded as separate fields of study but should be integrated with other learning areas. This would imply that an assignment in Economic and Management Sciences will be integrated with learning outcomes of First Additional Language and Mathematics. This is a result of OBE extending itself beyond traditional subjects to multiple learning areas, in correlation with the view that "…the world is an integrated whole where problems are perceived as interconnected and interdependent" (Rasool, 1999:179). Educators from the different learning areas should work together to promote a culture of learning and encourage problem solving (Harley & Parker, 1999:191).

- The differences in levels of achievement in a class, which may exist after assessment, should lead to a corrective and an enriched pathway, but "fast" learners who are supposed to be involved in enrichment activities, are often neglected since the educator is too busy trying to bring the slow learners up to standard (Malcolm, 1999:92).

- "Another area of substantial critique," according to Kraak (1999:49), "is the disregard for the central role that the curriculum plays, and the importance of a professionally trained and motivated educator corps". Jansen (1999:149) also emphasized the prerequisite of highly qualified educators who understand the theoretical basis of OBE, and are able to implement it in its entirety in South Africa, a scenario that simply does not exist in the average South African classroom where the majority of teachers do not possess the knowledge about OBE (Jansen, 1999:149-150). Guidelines regarding outcomes and assessment practices are not sufficient (Kraak, 1999:49).

Malcolm (1999:84) was of the opinion that, in contrast to other countries, the design of curriculum and assessment lies with the "professionalism and skills of teachers and school leaders". This places a responsibility on the schools and education department to make provision for the development of teachers (Malcolm, 1999:84). For OBE to succeed teachers will have to be trained and retrained, including the application of new forms of assessment, the time to implement, manage, and evaluate the new system, as well as the time to evaluate, select and implement new educational resources that comply to OBE (Jansen, 1999:152). Pahad (1999:247) mentioned that very little practical help was available for teachers within the OBE system. Mahomed (1999:159) identified an "acute lack of resources" as an inhibiting factor, and where resources were available, disparities existed in the distribution thereof. This would, however, create the opportunity for educators to become effective mediators or facilitators of learning and to use the surrounding environment, the media and other resources skillfully (Mahomed, 1999:165).

- The administrative burden of teachers would double in the process of managing OBE (Jansen, 1999:151). According to Jansen (1999:151), teachers would be required to "…reorganise curriculum, increase the amount of time allocated for monitoring individual student progress against outcomes, administer appropriate forms of assessment and maintain comprehensive records". Harley and Parker (1999:195) agreed that educators would have to be "…curriculum developers, classroom managers and learning mediators in a context of a discourse which is unfamiliar". According to Malcolm (1999:83), any performance, irrespective of whether it consists of a test, project or member of a team, must be analyzed in relation to the specific outcome, making record keeping and reporting to be much more complex.

- Very few educators were involved on the Learning Area Committees and structures involved in developing OBE (Jansen, 1999:150). Furthermore, there was no process for teachers to become familiar with, "conceptualise or make sense" of OBE, before implementing it with "uneven, fragmented

and non-existent" help from departmental officials (Jansen, 1999:150-151).

- The outcomes of OBE did not define the content of the learning programmes (Jansen, 1999:151). The intention was to "…encourage different reflections of knowledge found in different life experiences of people" (Mahomed, 1999:166). The emphasis of the content shifted from a "…be-all, end-all of learning, to a vehicle used to achieve knowledge, skills and values" (Mahomed, 1999:167). The advocates of OBE blamed the emphasis on content and the content itself of the previous system as reasons for objectives not being reached (Mahomed, 1999:161).

- The outcomes were elucidated in curriculum content and selecting that content implied that somebody had to make choices (Jansen, 1999:152). Who was supposed to make these choices and were they influenced by the "politics of curriculum reform" that is, or can be, in conflict with broader "politics of transition"? (Jansen, 1999:152). The devolution of the responsibility to contextualize the curriculum necessitates a high degree of knowledge in curriculum design, which is questionable in South Africa (Kraak, 1999:51). Devolution of this responsibility can furthermore cause havoc in the education printing industry where uncertainty would force publishers to print smaller quantities and thus be unable to benefit from the advantage of economies of scale (Kraak, 1999:51).

- The original purpose of creating a unified education system which would address social inequalities remained largely unaltered with "…the current elite academic schooling track and its stigmatised vocational alternative" (Kraak, 1999:53). This was also the point of view of analysts and political parties after the matriculation results of 2008. Zille and Reddy (as quoted Anon, 2008:11) both confirmed that the results were a clear indication of unequal access to quality education for the Grade 12 learners in 2008, with learners from well-equipped schools that adapted to OBE doing well, and learners from poor-performing schools being disadvantaged.

- According to Mahomed (1999:159), there exists a "…shared international agenda of access, equity, quality and relevance in educational reform" catering for the interests of all the people in a specific country. He (1999:159) asked whether it is possible to have an education system in South Africa without racial, class, gender, ethnic and epistemological divisions. According to him, there should be equality of access and outcomes for all, without advantaged and disadvantaged groups (Mahomed, 1999:159). Jansen (1999:147) predicted that the failure of OBE will be caused by misinformed politicians and bureaucrats who politicize education without the knowledge of the realities in the classroom.

- Mahomed (1999:161) is furthermore of the opinion that the assumption that "…all learners can learn and succeed, but not all in the same time or in the same way," needs rethinking.

All of these concerns will have an influence on the quality of education in classrooms and unavoidably on the results of learners. These concerns were voiced at the time of implementation of OBE, whereas the empirical research is conducted after it has been implemented. Through empirical research evidence will prove whether these concerns materialised. If so, a generation of poorly educated learners matriculated since 2008, or are still caught up in lower grades, abandoned by a system that was not "concerned with the modalities of change at the classroom level" (Jansen, 1999:145).

2.3 ASSESSMENT IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT

The above-mentioned discussions on the principles of quality assessment practices, types of assessment, characteristics of continuous assessment and concerns about assessment in OBE, constitute a general literature review on the criteria applied to all assessment under the OBE-system. These criteria formed part of the empirical research because they constitute the basis of assessment practices taking place in the classrooms. To move from the

general to the specific, it is necessary to narrow the discussion to assessment prescribed in the policy document, namely, the National Curriculum Statement.

Continuous assessment (CASS) forms an integral part of the promotion policies in both the GET and the FET Bands. The scope of this research limits the discussion of CASS to only the FET Band. The main research question focuses on promotion policy changes. Although CASS has only been implemented since January 2005 in Grades 10 to 12 (Free State Department of Education, 2005a), and can thus not be indicative of a change in promotion policy, it still forms an integral part of the promotion of a learner, as it constitutes 25% of the promotion mark in subjects with no oral or practical marks and 50% of the promotion mark in subjects with oral or practical marks.

The Subject Assessment Guidelines (Department of Education, 2008) is a document issued annually to provide guidelines for assessment in the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 to 12 (General). In Grades 10 and 11 all the assessment of the National Curriculum Statement is done internally, and the examination at the end of Grade 12 is set and marked internally, but moderated externally (Department of Education, 2008). The only exception is in the case of Life Orientation, where all the assessment is done internally and constitutes 100% of the final mark for promotion and certification (Department of Education, 2008).

According to the Subject Assessment Guidelines (Department of Education, 2008), CASS involves informal daily assessment and a formal Programme of Assessment undertaken throughout the year, using various kinds of assessment forms, methods and tools. Assessment should be part of every lesson, and teachers should plan assessment activities to complement learning activities. (Department of Education, 2008:1). Daily assessment tasks conform to this requirement by means of the monitoring of learners' progress during learning activities through question and answer sessions, short assessment tasks completed during the lesson by individuals, pairs or groups, or by homework exercises.

The formal Programme of Assessment consists of tasks undertaken during the school year, and also the examinations. The marks obtained in each assessment task in the formal Programme of Assessment have to be recorded and included in formal reports to parents and to School Management. These marks determine the learner's promotion in Grades 10 and 11, or whether he or she obtains the National Senior Certificate in Grade 12. The number of assessment tasks which make up the Programme of Assessment by subject in Grades 10 and 11 are indicated in Table 2.1 (Department of Education, 2008). The tasks to be completed are prescribed in the Subject Assessment Guidelines and differ between different subjects. The importance of the different tasks that make up the Programme of Assessment will form part of the empirical research.

Table 2.1: Programme of Assessment for Grades 10 and 11

SUBJECTS	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4	TOTAL
Language 1: Home Language	4 Essay, Literature, Oral, Test 1	4* Essay, Literature, Oral, Exams	4 Essay, Literature, Oral, Test 2	4* Report, Oral, Test 3, Exams	16
Language 2: Home Language or First Additional Language	4 Essay, Literature, Oral, Test 1	4* Essay, Literature, Oral, Exams	4 Essay, Literature, Oral, Test 2	4* Essay, Oral, Test 3, Exams	16
Life Orientation	1 Case Study	1* Exams	1 Project	2* PET Exams	5
Mathematics or Mathematics Literacy	2 Investigation or Assignment Test 1	2* Investigation or Assignment Exam	2 Project or Investigation Test 2	2* Assignment, Project or Investigation Exam	8
Subject choice 1**	2 (each)	2*(each)	2 (each)	1* (each)	7 (each)

Subject choice 2** Subject choice 3	Test and 1 of the following: Assignment, Report, Project, Practical Task, Worksheet, Simulations or PAT.	Exam and 1 of the following: Project, Assignment, PAT, Practical Task or Investigation.	Test and 1 of the following: Investigation, Case Study, Practical Task, PAT, Project, Worksheet or Model.	Exam	

Note:

* One of these tasks must be an examination.

** If one or two of the subjects chosen for subject choices 1, 2 or 3 include a Language, the number of tasks indicated for Languages 1 and 2 are still applicable. Learners who opt for a Second Additional Language are required to complete 13 tasks in total: 4 tasks in term 1, and 3 tasks in each of terms 2, 3 and 4.

The number of assessment tasks which make up the Programme of Assessment by subject in Grade 12 are indicated in Table 2.2 (Department of Education, 2008). The Subject Assessment Guidelines determines the tasks that must be completed for every subject.

Table 2.2: Programme of Assessment for Grade 12

SUBJECTS	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TOTAL
Language 1: Home Language	5 Essay, Literature, Oral (x2), Test 1	5* Essay, Literature (x2), Oral, Exam	4* Essay, Oral, Test 2, Exam	14
Language 2: Home	5	5*	4*	14

Language or First Additional Language	Essay, Literature, Oral (x2), Test 1	Essay, Literature, Oral (x2), Test 1	Essay, Oral, Test 2, Exam	
Life Orientation	1 Oral or PET	2* Exam Project or PET	2* Exam PET	5
Mathematics or Mathematics Literacy	3 Test, Investigation, Project or Assignment	2* Assignment, Exam	2* Test, Exam	7
Subject choice 1** Subject choice 2** Subject choice 3	2 (each) Test and 1 of the following: Assignment, Report, Project, Practical Task, Investigation, Worksheet or PAT.	2* (each) Exam and 1 of the following: Test, Research, Assignment, Report, Project, Practical Task, Investigation, Worksheet or PAT.	(2*)3* (each) Exam and 1 of the following: Test, Presentation, Assignment, Report, Project, Practical Task, Investigation, Worksheet or PAT.	(6#)7

Note:

* One of these tasks must be an examination

** If one or two of the subjects chosen for subject choices 1, 2 or 3 include a Language, the number of tasks indicated for Languages 1 and 2 are still applicable. Learners who opt for a Second Additional Language are

required to complete 12 tasks in total: 5 tasks in term 1, 4 tasks in term 2 and 3 tasks in term 3.

The number of internal tasks differs from 6 to 7, depending on the subject.

According to the Subject Assessment Guidelines (Department of Education, 2008), schools can choose to write one or two internal examinations in Grade 12. A scheduled test can replace one of the exams.

Two of the assessment tasks in Grades 10 to 12 for all subjects, excluding Life Orientation, should be tests written in the first and third terms. The remainder of the assessment tasks should not be tests or examinations, but consist of debates, presentations, projects, simulations, written reports, practical tasks, performances, exhibitions and research projects (Department of Education, 2008).

According to the Subject Assessment Guidelines (Department of Education, 2008:8) the allocation of marks for subjects without a practical component in Grades 10 and 11 is calculated as indicated in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Allocation of marks for Grades 10 and 11

PROGRAMME FOR ASSESSMENT	MARKS	TOTAL
2 term tests x 100 Midyear examination x 200 3 formal assessment tasks x 50 (minimum)	200 200 150	
Total for tasks undertaken during the year (CASS)	550/5.5	**100**
End-of-year examination		**300**
Total (Promotion mark)		**400**

Subjects with a practical component consist of 100 marks for CASS, 100 marks for practical assessment tasks (PAT), and 200 marks examinations.

According to the Subject Assessment Guidelines (Department of Education, 2008:12) the allocation of marks for subjects without a practical component in Grade 12 is calculated as indicated in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Allocation of marks for Grade 12

PROGRAMME FOR ASSESSMENT	MARKS	TOTAL
2 term tests x 100	200	
Midyear examination x 300	300	
3 formal assessment tasks x 50 (minimum)	150	
Trial examination x 300	300	
Total converted to 100	950/9.5	**100**
External assessment		**300**
Total (Promotion mark)		**400**

Subjects with a practical component consist of 100 marks for CASS, 100 marks for practical assessment tasks (PAT), and 200 marks examinations.

As can be deduced from the discussion above, the Subject Assessment Guidelines are very prescriptive on the number of tasks that have to be completed, the different types of assessment that need to be conducted and the calculation method that must be used. To deviate from these would lead to inconsistent assessment and inaccurate marks. Empirical research will shed more light on the assessment practices of different schools and subjects.

2.4 PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GET BAND

Before the promotion requirements of the FET Band are discussed, the difference between the promotion requirements for the GET Band and the FET Band will be indicated. The main research question focuses on the changes in the promotion policy in the FET Band. To be able to evaluate the promotion requirements of the FET Band, a comparison with the promotion requirements for the GET Band will indicate what standards learners had to

comply with in order to be promoted to the FET Band. The GET Band promotion policy distinguishes between the promotion policies applicable to Grades 7 and 8 and those applicable to Grade 9.

2.4.1 Promotion requirements for Grades 7 and 8

According to the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications (RSA, 2007a:22), the progression of learners in Grades R to 8 should be based on the evidence of the learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks. CASS contributes 100% of this assessment for Grades 1 to 8. This does not necessitate any formal examination (RSA, 2007a:10). Up to 2004, symbols, *i.e.* B, A, P and N, were used in all OBE grades to indicate the level of achievement of these assessment tasks. These symbols were replaced in 2005 (Free State Department of Education, 2005b:6) by the levels, as indicated in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Replacements of symbols by levels

SYMBOL	LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
B (Achieved beyond)	Level 4	80% +
A (Achieved)	Level 3	60 – 79%
P (Partially achieved)	Level 2	40 – 59%
N (Not achieved)	Level 1	0 – 39%

Retaining a learner in Grades 7 and 8 should only occur in highly exceptional cases. A learner should only be considered for retention in Grade 7 or 8 if four level 1's (not achieved) have been attained for four of the eight learning programmes, or three level 1's which include Language, Literacy & Communication (LLC) or Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS) (Free State Department of Education, 2005b:6).

According to the Free State Department of Education (2005b:5), this should only occur after all possible efforts have been made to support the learner in achieving the outcomes; if external support has been called in and such support has been utilized fully; and if the learner and his/her parents have been involved in the decision. External intervention can include remedial work and the services of therapists, psychologists or other specialists (RSA, 2007a:9). If the parents and the professional team cannot reach an agreement, the decision of the professional team is binding. The purpose of retaining a learner in grade 7 or 8 is to give him/her more time to reach the expected levels of performance for some of the outcomes. Should the learner reach these levels early in the next year, the school has to reconsider promoting the learner to the next grade (Free State Department of Education, 2005b:5).

2.4.2 Promotion requirements for Grade 9

The levels to be used by the eight learning areas to record CASS and Common Task for Assessment (CTA) marks in Grade 9 since 2005 are indicated in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Levels for Grade 9 assessment

RATING CODE	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE	PERCENTAGE
Level 4	Has exceeded	70% +
Level 3	Has satisfied	40 – 69%
Level 2	Has partially satisfied	35 – 39%
Level 1	Has not satisfied	0 – 34%

These four levels were compulsory and had been in use in the promotion schedules of Grade 9 learners since 2005 (Free State Department of Education, 2005b:2).

In 2006 schools were allowed to use a 7-level coding system, illustrated in the Government Gazette (RSA, 2006:33), in Grades 7 to 9. This coding system became compulsory in the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band (RSA, 2007a:15). Table 2.7 illustrates this 7-level coding system.

Table 2.7: Seven-level coding system for Grades 7 to 9

RATING CODE	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE	PERCENTAGE
7	Outstanding achievement	80 – 100
6	Meritorious achievement	70 – 79
5	Substantial achievement	60 – 69
4	Adequate achievement	50 – 59
3	Moderate achievement	40 – 49
2	Elementary achievement	30 – 39
1	Not achieved	0 – 29

Promotion requirements for Grade 9 learners differ from those for Grade 8 learners, since Grade 9 signifies an exit point in the education system (RSA, 2007a:23). CASS takes place throughout the year in each of the learning areas and the results have to be included in the learner's portfolio. The CASS mark should constitute 75% of the promotion mark for each learner. During the last term the learner writes the CTA, which constitutes the other 25% of the promotion mark (Free State Department of Education, 2005b:7).

According to the Free State Department of Education (2005b:8), a learner can be promoted to Grade 10, taking the following into consideration:

- The learner should obtain at least level 3 (40%+) in MLMMS and LLC.
- The learner should obtain at least level 2 (35 – 39%) in the other six learning areas.

- Three learning areas may be condoned, one from the fundamentals (MLMMS and LLC) and two from the other six learning areas. This would imply that if a learner obtains a level 2 (35 – 39%) for either LLC or MLMMS and level 3 (40%+) for the other, the level 2 (35 – 39%) assessment is condoned to level 3 (40%+). A rating of level 1 (less than 34%) in either LLC or MLMMS cannot be condoned. If the learner obtains at least four level 2 ratings and two level 1 ratings in the other six learning areas, the two level 1 ratings may be condoned to a level 2 rating.
- There is no grand (aggregate) total requirement.

These promotion requirements were changed in the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band (RSA 2007a:22) to include the following:

- at least a "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in one of the Official Languages offered, and Mathematics;
- at least an "elementary achievement" or level 2 rating in the other Official Language; and
- at least a "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in four other Learning Areas.
- A learner's results will be condoned only once when he/she achieves an elementary achievement or level 2 in Mathematics; or when a learner achieves elementary or level 2 in Languages; or when a learner achieves elementary achievement or level 2 in only one of the four other Learning Areas required for promotion.

Summarising these promotion requirements in terms of percentages would imply that a learner needs to obtain at least 40% in one of the Languages, at least 40% in Mathematics, at least 30% in the other Language and at least 40% in three other Learning Areas. They do not need to pass the two remaining subjects in order to pass Grade 9. Comparing the results of the Grade 9 learners in the Northern Free State in 2006 and 2007 (Free State Department of Education, 2008) these amendments led to a slight decrease in the pass rate from 83.29% in 2006 to 80% in 2007. In order to evaluate the requirements

and statistics of the GET Band, a comparison with the FET requirements is necessary.

2.5 PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FET BAND

Promotion requirements for the NCS Grades 10 to 12 (General) were announced in the Government Gazette (Department of Education, 2005:16). The nationally approved subjects are provided in Table 2.8. A learner has to select seven subjects, namely four from Group A and three from Group B. The four subjects in Group A consist of two official languages, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation. One of the two official languages must be on Home Language level, and the other, on either Home or First Additional Language level, provided further that one of the two languages is the language of learning and teaching. According to the Government Gazette (Department of Education, 2005:18) a maximum of two additional languages over and above the two official languages may be selected.

In the Government Gazette (Department of Education, 2007) certain amendments were made regarding the selection of subjects from Group B. A candidate may not select both Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology. A second condition is that candidates may not select both Consumer Studies and Hospitality Studies. (Refer to Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: Nationally approved subjects

GROUP A	GROUP B
Official Languages at Home and First Additional Level:	**Agriculture:**
Afrikaans Home Language	Agricultural Management Practices
Afrikaans First Additional Language	Agricultural Science
English Home Language	Agricultural Technology
English First Additional Language	**Culture and Arts:**
IsiNdebele Home Language	Dance Studies
	Design

IsiNdebele First Additional Language IsiXhosa Home Language IsiXhosa First Additional Language IsiZulu Home Language IsiZulu First Additional Language Sepedi Home Language Sepedi First Additional Language Sesotho Home language Sesotho First Additional Language Setswana Home language Setswana First Additional Language SiSwati Home Language SiSwati First Additional Language Tshivenda Home Language Tshivenda First Additional Language Xitsonga Home Language Xitsonga First Additional Language	Dramatic Arts Music Visual Arts
Mathematical Sciences: Mathematical Literacy Mathematics	**Business, Commerce and Management Studies:** Accounting Business Studies Economics
	Official Languages at Second Additional Level, and Non-Official Languages: Afrikaans Second Additional Language English Second Additional Language IsiNdebele Second Additional Language IsiXhosa Second Additional Language IsiZulu Second Additional Language Sepedi Second Additional Language Sesotho Second Additional Language Setswana Second Additional Lamguage SiSwati Second Additional Language Tshivenda Second Additional Language Xitsonga Second Additional Language Arabic Second Additional Language French Second Additional Language German Home Language German Second Additional Language Gujarati Home Language Gujarati First/Second Additional Language Hebrew Second Additional Language Hindi Home Language Hindi First/Second Additional Language Italian Second Additional Language

	Latin Second Additional Language Portuguese Home Language Portuguese First Additional Language Portuguese Second Additional Language Spanish Second Additional Language Tamil Home Language Tamil First/Second Additional Language Telegu Home Language Telegu First/Second Additional Language Urdu Home Language Urdu First/Second Additional Language
Human and Social Studies: Life Orientation	**Engineering and Technology:** Civil Technology Electrical Technology Mechanical Technology Engineering Graphics and Design
	Human and Social Studies: Geography History Religion Studies
	Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences: Computer Applications Technology Information Technology Life Sciences Physical Sciences
	Services: Consumer Studies Hospitality Studies Tourism

According to the Government Gazette (Department of Education, 2005:18), a maximum of one subject, developed and assessed by an accredited

Assessment Body, may be offered to meet the requirements of three Group B subjects, provided that such a subject is accommodated in the National Education Policy, and approved by the Minister for this purpose. The choice includes:

- Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music Practical Music Examination Grade 6, 7 or 8.
- Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music Practical Music Examination Performer's Diploma.
- Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music Performer's Licentiate in Music.
- Trinity College of London Practical Music Examination Grade 6, 7 or 8.
- Trinity College of London Performer's Certificate, Associate.
- Trinity College of London Performer's Certificate.
- Trinity College of London Performer's Licentiate in Music.
- University of South Africa Practical Music Examination Grade 6, 7 or 8.
- University of South Africa Performer's Licentiate in Music.

According to the Government Gazette (Department of Education, 2005:19), the National Senior Certificate shall be issued to a candidate who has complied with the following promotion requirements:

- Obtained at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level.
- Obtained at least 30% in the other required language on at least First Additional Language level.
- Obtained at least 30% in Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics.
- Obtained at least 40% in Life Orientation.
- Obtained at least 40% in one of the remaining three subjects and at least 30% in two subjects.
- A condonation of a maximum of one subject per grade with a rating of 'Not Achieved' will be allowed for either a Group A or a Group B subject, and such a subject will be deemed to have been obtained with a rating of 30%, provided that a condonation is applied only once.

- Learners who offer a Music programme from either the Associated Board of Royal Schools Practical Music Examination, Trinity College of London Practical Music Examination or UNISA Practical Music Examination, must obtain the following ratings:

(i) The Associated Board of Royal Schools Practical Music Examination: at least 65%.
(ii) Trinity College of London Practical Music Examination: at least 65%.
(iii) UNISA Practical Music Examination: at least 50%.

The various achievement levels and their corresponding percentage bands are shown in Table 2.9 (Department of Education, 2005:25).

Table 2.9: Achievement levels in the FET Band

RATING CODE	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE	PERCENTAGE
7	Outstanding achievement	80 – 100
6	Meritorious achievement	70 – 79
5	Substantial achievement	60 – 69
4	Adequate achievement	50 – 59
3	Moderate achievement	40 – 49
2	Elementary achievement	30 – 39
1	Not achieved	0 – 29

Compared to the Grade 9 results of 2006, there was almost a 20% decrease in the pass rate for Grade 10 learners in the Northern Free State which slumped to 61.1% (Free State Department of Education, 2007). As mentioned previously, the entire Free State pass rate for Grade 10 learners in 2006 was only 57.6% (Free State Department of Education, 2007) and nationally only two in every three learners passed (Rademeyer, 2007:5). Amendments to the promotion requirements were unavoidable.

The Minister of Education announced in the Government Gazette (Department of Education, 2007) the amendments to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Senior Certificate as contained in the policy document, *The National Senior Certificate: A qualification at level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework*. According to the Minister, the promotion requirements require updating from time to time when anomalies are brought to the attention of the Department of Education. The following areas of amendment, which are of relevance for this research, have been identified:

"To obtain the National Senior Certificate a learner must achieve 40% in three subjects, one of which is an official language at Home Language level, and 30% in three subjects, provided that a complete portfolio of evidence in the school-based assessment component is submitted in the subject failed" (RSA 2007b).

This amendment came into effect in 2007 and implies that the requirements to pass are no longer stated in terms of the fundamental and optional subjects, but in terms of all seven subjects, and that provision is no longer made for condonations, but a learner is now allowed to fail one subject if a complete portfolio of evidence for that subject is submitted.

In terms of levels that must be obtained for the seven subjects, a learner must achieve 3's in three subjects of which one must be an official Home Language and 2's in three other subjects. Should the learner fail the seventh subject, a complete portfolio of evidence of the school based assessment for that subject must be produced.

2.6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GET BAND AND THE FET BAND

Amendments to the promotion requirements for the FET Band were possibly necessitated by poor results. The amended promotion requirements for the

FET Band can be compared to the promotion requirements of the GET Band to determine whether the difference could be a possible cause of the poor results in Grade 10. Even after the amendments, there were still great disparities between the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band. These disparities can best be observed in tabular form. The promotion requirements indicated in Table 2.10 were applicable for 2007 up to 2009.

Table 2.10: Promotion requirements applied in 2007 up to 2009

GRADE 8	**GRADE 9**	**GRADE 10 to 11 (2007 up to 2009)** **GRADE 12 (2008 and 2009)**
Continuous Assessment (CASS) throughout the year contributes 100% of the assessment.	The weight of CASS is 75% and the weight of the external assessment (CTA) is 25%. No examination is necessary.	The promotion mark of subjects with no oral or practical marks will consist of 25% CASS and 75% examination. In subjects with oral or practical marks the CASS mark will contribute 50% (25% CASS and 25% oral/practical) of the promotion mark, and the final examination the other 50%.
Levels and percentages: 1: 0 -39% 2: 40 – 59% 3: 60 – 79% 4: 80% +	Levels and percentages: 1: 0 – 34% 2: 35 – 39% 3: 40 – 69% 4: 70% + Seven level coding system is similar to Grade 10 – 12 system.	Levels and percentages: 1: 0 – 29% 2: 30 – 39% 3: 40 – 49% 4: 50 – 59% 5: 60 – 69% 6: 70 – 79% 7: 80 – 100%

Progression: Learners move from grade to grade with their age cohorts. Poor performers can be retained for one year per phase.	Moving with age cohort principle does not apply to grade 9. Learners must comply with minimum requirements in order to be promoted to grade 10.	Learners must comply with minimum requirements in order to be promoted to the next grade or receive the National Senior Certificate.
Learners may be considered for retention if, after intervention strategies have been applied, the learner still obtains more than four level 1 ratings in any of the Learning Areas.	Minimum requirements include: - 3 in one Language - 3 in Mathematics - 2 in other Language - 3s in 4 other Learning Areas.	For the ordinary National Senior Certificate: - 3s in three subjects of which one must be an Official Language at Home Language Level - 2s in three other subjects - In seventh subject at least a complete portfolio of evidence of the school based assessment (CASS)
No condonation	Condonation: One of the following: - 2 in Language - 2 in Mathematics - 2 in one of the four LA's in which the learner should have obtained a 3. A rating of level 1 in either LLC or MLMMS cannot be condoned.	No condonation

Disparities that exist between the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band include:

- CASS constitutes at least 75% of the promotion mark in the GET Band but only 25% in the majority of subjects in the FET Band. This implies that

the emphasis in the FET Band shifts back to examinations which require "rote learning" to be successful.

- Grade 7 and 8 learners that move with their age cohorts but may be retained for one year per phase.
- Learners are only considered for retention after failing more than four subjects in Grade 7 and 8 but no condonation may take place. In Grade 9 a learner may fail two subjects. Since condonation may take place, it would imply that a third subject may be failed under certain conditions, as explained in Table 2.10

By using empirical quantitative research, the researcher can determine whether educators regard these disparities as a possible cause of poor results once learners reach Grade 10. The reasoning behind these disparities will only be clarified through qualitative research at the Department of Education.

2.7 CHANGES IN THE PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS IN THE FET BAND

The implementation of the National Curriculum Statement Grade 10 to 12 in 2006 brought many changes to the education system. OBE was implemented over a three year period, starting with the Grade 10 learners in 2006. "New" subjects were introduced, there were changes to school time tables, a syllabus replaced by curriculum statements and new assessment procedures were implemented. The focus point of this research is the changes in the promotion requirements. The promotion requirements changed in 2006 to coincide with the introduction of the NCS. These promotion requirements where then amended in 2007.

2.7.1 Grade 10 comparison of 2005 and 2006

A change in the promotion requirements for the FET Band was introduced in 2006. The differences between the promotion requirements that were used in 2005 and those used in 2006 are indicated in Table 2.11.

Table 2.11: Differences in promotion requirements for the FET Band in 2005 and 2006

2005	2006
Minimum of six subjects. Five of the six must be passed.	Minimum of seven subjects. All seven subjects must be passed.
One of the five subjects that need to be passed could have been condoned by two percent to allow a pass in that subject. Condonation can take place only within 2% of the subject total and 10 marks of the aggregate total. Condonation takes place either in a single subject or the aggregate of a candidate, not in both. Condonation to result in a conversion from Higher Grade to Standard Grade, or from Standard Grade to Lower Grade, is not permissible (Department of Education, 2005:10).	One of the seven that need to be passed may be condoned up to 30%.
Subjects could have been taken on Higher Grade, Standard Grade or Lower Grade. (Lower Grade has been phased out as from 1998). To pass on Higher Grade a learner had to obtain 160/400 (40%). To pass on Standard Grade and Lower Grade a learner had to obtain 100/300 (33%).	Different levels of ability are recognised by subjects, but there is no provision for Higher Grade, Standard Grade or Lower Grade.
Conversion between Higher Grade, Standard Grade and Lower Grade were possible. According to a circular LTA 23/2005, on progression/promotion schedules, by the Department of Education (2005) a mark from 100 to 159 out of 400 for Higher Grade subjects was	No conversion is possible.

converted to a pass on Standard Grade.	
An aggregate total for the six subjects of 720 marks had to be obtained to pass. The aggregate total could also have been condoned by ten marks.	There is no aggregate total that needs to be obtained in the seven subjects.
Compulsory subjects consisted of two official languages.	Compulsory subjects consist of two official languages, Life Orientation and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy.

Differences that could influence the pass rate and would be included in empirical research, include:

- An increase in the number of subjects the learner had to pass from five subjects in 2005 to seven subjects in 2006. This would imply that learners that passed five or six subjects in 2006 would have failed. These same learners would have passed if they obtained the same results in 2005.

- Different levels of ability are not recognised by means of Higher Grade or Standard Grade since 2006. Marks obtained in an examination can therefore also not be converted from Higher to Standard Grade anymore. Learners who failed on Higher Grade in 2005, but obtained at least 25%, had their marks converted to a pass on Standard Grade.

- An increase in the number of compulsory subjects. Except for the two official languages, Life Orientation and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy were also compulsory. By means of empirical research, the researcher determined how many learners had failed because they could not pass these additional compulsory subjects.

2.7.2 Amendments in 2007

Amendments to the promotion requirements for the FET Band were introduced in 2007. These differences are shown in Table 2.12.

Table 2.12: Differences in promotion requirements for the FET Band in 2006 and 2007 to 2009

2006	2007 up to 2009
Applied only for the promotion of Grade 10 learners in 2006.	Applied for the promotion of Grade 10 and 11 learners in 2007, as well as Grade 10 up to Grade 12 learners in 2008.
Obtained at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level.	Obtained at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level.
Obtained at least 30% in the other required language on at least First Additional Language level.	It is not a prerequisite to obtain at least 30% in the other required language as long as 40% is obtained in two of the remaining subjects and 30% in the three other remaining subjects.
Obtained at least 30% in Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics.	It is not a prerequisite to obtain at least 30% in Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics as long as 40% is obtained in two of the remaining subjects and 30% in the three other remaining subjects.
Obtained at least 40% in Life Orientation	It is not a prerequisite to obtain at least 40% in Life Orientation as long as 40% is obtained in two of the remaining subjects and 30% in the three other remaining subjects.
Obtained at least 40% in one of the remaining three subjects and at least 30% in two subjects.	Obtain at least 40% in two of the remaining six subjects and at least 30% in three of the four subjects
Condonation of a maximum of one subject per grade with a rating of 'Not Achieved' will be allowed for either a Group A or a Group B subject, and such a subject will be deemed to have been obtained with a rating of 30%, provided that condonation is	No condonation can take place.

applied only once.	

The amended promotion requirements that were applied from 2007 lowered the standards to pass in the following ways:

- It is not a prerequisite to obtain at least 30% in the First Additional Language.
- It is not a prerequisite to obtain at least 30% in Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy anymore
- It is not a prerequisite to obtain at least 40% in Life Orientation anymore.

However, the above amendments only applied under the following conditions:

- The learner obtained at least 40% in Home Language and two of the other remaining six subjects, as well as at least 30% in three of the remaining subjects.
- No condonation may take place.

The researcher made use of empirical research to compare the results of 2007 and 2008 with the promotion requirements of 2006 and 2005 to determine the influence of differences in promotion requirements on the pass rate.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The most important issues regarding assessment policy, as reflected in the policy documents, can be summarized as follows (Free State Department 2005c:10):

Continuous assessment

- measures the learners' achievement during the course of the grade and provides evidence to support their development;
- must be transparent and make use of a variety of assessment strategies;
- is an on-going process taking place over a period of time;
- must support the growth and development of a learner;
- must provide feedback from the teaching process;

- should use strategies that cater for a variety of learner needs; and
- should compound to summative assessment.

The factors influencing the assessment and promotion policy of learners in the FET Band can thus be summarized as follows:

- The impact of CASS on the promotion of learners. In Grades R to 8 it constitutes 100% of the promotion mark, in Grade 9 it is 75% of the promotion mark, and in Grades 10 to 12 either 25% or 50%, depending on the subject.

- The differences between the GET Band and the FET Band with regard to promotion or progression and retention requirements, assessment, symbols and levels of rating codes.

- Changes in the promotion requirements of the FET Band since 2005, including the pass rates of Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation, promotion requirements, condonation of marks, the number of compulsory subjects and the phasing out of different grades that compensated for different levels of ability.

The impact of these changes in the assessment and promotion policy on learner promotion in the FET Band can only be determined by means of an empirical investigation. The next chapter will focus on an in-depth description of the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

"Because research systematically describes or measures phenomena, it is a better source of knowledge than one's own experience, beliefs, tradition, or intuition alone."

(McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:6)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Researching the policy on learner assessment and promotion in the Further Education and Training Band necessitates a demarcation for the purpose of the empirical research. The main research question focuses on the impact of the promotion policy changes and assessment practices, on the promotion of learners in the Further Education and Training Band. Sub-questions already addressed in the literature review are assessment in OBE, assessment in the NCS, the difference in the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band; changes in the promotion requirements for Grade 10 learners in 2005 and 2006 and amendments to the promotion requirements in 2007.

Sub-questions that can only be investigated by means of empirical research are the impact of policy changes in the promotion requirements on the promotion of Grade 10 learners in 2006 and the impact of the amendments to the promotion requirements in 2007 and 2008. The most recent promotion policy change was implemented in 2006 and was then amended in 2007. To determine the impact of these changes and amendments on learner promotion, the results of Grade 10 learners were evaluated against the previous promotion requirements of 2005 and compared to the promotion requirements of 2006 and 2007. The same evaluation was done on the results of the Grade 11 learners in 2007 and the Grade 12 learners in 2008.

The promotion mark of a learner constitutes of a CASS mark and an examination mark. To obtain a detailed analysis of the promotion mark would therefore also necessitate empirical research on assessment practices and differences in constituting the promotion mark of the GET Band and FET Band. The research was concluded by a qualitative interview with an official of the Department of Education on national level in order to elaborate on the process of policy changes and some of the findings of the empirical research.

3.2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Empirical research is described by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:12) as the evidence the researcher obtains by means of systematic research methods, rather than by opinions or from authorities. In order to gain knowledge on the impact of promotion policy changes and assessment practices, on learner promotion, the following inter-related research objectives were set for the empirical research:

- The first objective was to obtain knowledge through a qualitative interview from an official of the Department of Education on disparities that exist between the promotion requirements in the GET Band and the FET Band. Furthermore, the differences in the promotion requirements also formed part of the research questionnaire that was completed by educators to determine whether they regarded these differences as a contributing factor to the poor results of the Grade 10 learners.

- The second objective was to gain thorough knowledge on the promotion requirements that applied in 2005, the changes that occurred in 2006, and the amendments that were introduced in 2007. By means of quantitative research the examination results of learners were analysed against these promotion requirements. The aim of this analysis was to determine the reasons for retention, as indicated in the promotion requirements. Secondly, the analysis enabled the researcher to compare the examination results with the different requirements of 2005, 2006 and 2007. This comparison indicated the number of learners who could have passed, but

failed in 2006, 2007 and 2008, when measured against the different promotion requirements.

- The third objective, briefly mentioned in the previous paragraph, was an in-depth quantitative analysis of the Grade 10 results in 2006, the Grade 11 results in 2007 and the Grade 12 results in 2008. This analysis indicated the reasons why learners could fail, when measured against the promotion requirements of that particular year. The aim of this analysis was furthermore to measure the results of one year against the promotion requirements of another year. This comparison indicated the impact of the promotion policy change for that particular year.

- The fourth objective was to gain a better understanding of the process of establishing promotion requirements, of disparities that exist between the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, and to elaborate on the findings of the empirical research conducted at schools. This information was obtained from the already mentioned interview with an official of the Department of Education.

- A fifth objective was an analysis of assessment practices and to determine whether assessment was conducted according to prescribed principles. In the literature review a detailed discussion was given of the prescribed types of assessment, the calculation of CASS and promotion marks, quality assessment practices, the characteristics of CASS, and concerns regarding assessment in OBE. The way CASS was administered would eventually have a direct influence on the promotion mark. The aim of these questions was to lodge an extensive investigation into the application of CASS at the selected schools.

- A final objective of the research was to provide the Department of Education with the research findings which may assist the authorities in scientific decision-making on promotion requirements.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:30) define the research design as "…the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained." With the research aims in mind, the correct choice of a research design was essential in obtaining reliable and valid results. The accuracy needed to interpret the results of learners for a three year period warrants quantitative research. The contribution of educators, who had to implement and administer OBE and CASS, as well as those involved in the Grade 12 final examinations, was obtained by means of questionnaires.

The statistical analysis of the quantitative research was, however, not sufficient to understand the process of establishing promotion policies by the Department of Education. This process could only be researched by means of a qualitative design. The research design was consequently an explanatory mixed-method design. The mixed-method design was furthermore necessitated to enable the Department of Education to elucidate on the findings of the quantitative research, as well as the disparities that exist between the promotion requirements of the GET and FET Bands.

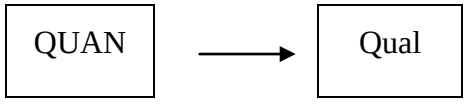
A mixed-method design is a research design that mixes both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Gay *et al.*, 2006:490). According to Snyder (2006:401), combining qualitative and quantitative research in a single study is often regarded as the best approach to conduct research.

Defining quantitative research in terms of its application for this research, Creswell (2003:18) claims that knowledge can be developed by collecting data by means of predetermined instruments, including surveys, questions, measurement and observation, that yield statistical data. "Quantitative research is statistical results represented in numbers", according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:15).

Qualitative research is defined by Bogdan and Biklen (2003:261) as research that emphasizes collecting descriptive data in order to understand the subjects' point of view. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:15) indicate that qualitative research will lead to a better understanding of a phenomenon from the participants' perspective. The qualitative interview in this research was conducted with the sole purpose of understanding the phenomenon of policy changes. The researcher obtained "descriptive data" from the interviewee at the Department of Education.

Quantitative questionnaires for data collection, combined with a qualitative interview for collecting descriptive data to obtain a better understanding, justified a mixed-method design. Mixed methods combine the quantitative data on the results under varying promotion policies with a more complete understanding of the process that influenced these results, to obtain a better comprehensive picture of the learner promotion policy in the FET Band.

In an explanatory design, the emphasis is on quantitative data that are collected and analysed before the qualitative research is undertaken (Snyder, 2006:402). Gay *et al.* (2006:491) emphasise that, when making use of the explanatory mixed-methods design, quantitative data will first be collected, analysed and interpreted before making use of qualitative analysis to elaborate on the quantitative data. The quantitative data are "more heavily weighed" than the qualitative data (Gay *et al.,* 2006:491). The notation system (Cresswell, 2002:213; Gay *et al.* 2006:491; Snyder, 2006:402) to represent the explanatory mixed-method design can be illustrated as follows:



Phase 1 constituted the collection and analysis of quantitative data. Phase2 sequentially explained or further elaborated on the quantitative findings (Snyder, 2006:402). According to Snyder (2006:402), the explanatory design is used when it is necessary to use qualitative methods "…to elucidate the quantitative findings."

3.4 RESEARCH METHODS

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:9) describe research methods as the manner to collect and analyse data. Data collection takes place by means of measurement techniques, interviews or observations to acquire knowledge by means of reliable and valid procedures (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:9). The methodology regarding sampling, the selection of participants, the data collection and the data processing, will consequently be discussed.

3.4.1 The sampling and selection of participants

Before research can commence, the participants from whom data will be collected must be identified (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:169). For the purpose of quantitative research these participants are referred to as subjects, or as a group, as a sample, selected from a larger group known as the population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:169).

The target population in this research was different from the survey population. The promotion policy and promotion requirements are applicable to all public and independent schools or other registered institutions that present seven subjects in terms of the NCS in South Africa (RSA 2005:13). To generalize the findings will thus include all of these schools and institutions. The quantitative research, however, necessitated extremely accurate and conscientious documentation of the results of the promotion schedules since 2006, done by the researcher himself. The survey population, from which a sample was drawn, therefore only included schools in the Northern Free State Education District (Fezile Dabi Education District) that met the following requirements:

- Secondary schools that had full-time learners enrolled for the tuition of Grade 10 in 2006, Grade 11 in 2007 and Grade 12 in 2008, according to the NCS Grades 10 – 12 programmes.

- The availability of the promotion schedules of the Grade 10 learners of 2006 and the Grade 11 learners of 2007 that were approved by the Department of Education, as well as the official results from the Department of Education regarding the Grade 12 learners of 2008.

A list of all secondary schools in the Fezile Dabi Education District was obtained from the Department of Education. The list included information on the first requirement regarding enrolment for the different years and different grades. An alphabetical list of these schools, which accumulated to 56 schools, was drawn up. These 56 schools represented the survey population. Questionnaire one was distributed to all 56 schools of the survey population. This questionnaire investigated assessment practices, concerns regarding CASS and OBE and evaluating the Grade 12 external examination. These factors could influence the promotion mark in Grade 10 and Grade 11 or the pass rate in Grade 12.

Questionnaire two was the analysis of the results of learners in 2006, 2007 and 2008. This analysis focused on the pass and failure rates and the reasons for learners not being successful when their results were measured against the promotion requirements. For the completion of questionnaire two, random sampling was applied to the already selected 56 schools.

Random sampling gives every member of the population the same chance of being selected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:107). To enable random sampling, each school was assigned a number from 001 to 056. The table of random numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:622) was thereafter used to determine the sample of schools where the research was conducted.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:177), the researcher must determine the size of the sample that will provide a credible result. In random sampling a "small percentage of the population can approximate the characteristics of the population satisfactorily" (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:177). In determining the sample size for this study, the researcher was influenced by the following factors:

- The geographical location of the schools – they cover an area with a diameter of approximately 200km.
- The accuracy required in the completion of the data – it was very time-consuming, and the researcher was limited to complete the research at only one school per day.
- The availability of school principals to provide promotion schedules.
- The number of learners enrolled in the schools on the list – they vary from 250 to more than 1200. The results of these learners had to be analysed for three consecutive years.

Taking these factors into account, a sample of twenty schools was identified. This allowed the researcher to complete questionnaire two of the quantitative research in November when the learners were writing examinations. The sample size represented more than 35% of the survey population, and the results of approximately 7000 learners were analysed. This was regarded as a sufficient number to provide a credible result.

The selection of a participant for the qualitative interview was determined by the availability of officials from the National Department of Education responsible for examinations and assessment. This was an elite interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:445) of an information-rich informant who was able to contribute insight and meaning to policy changes. The Department of Education was contacted to make the necessary appointment. Even though only one interview was conducted, the contribution was of more value for the research than a larger number of interviews conducted with less knowledgeable officials would have been.

3.4.2 Data collection

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:39) indicate that research can also be classified as the study of different techniques used to collect data. For the purpose of this research, the quantitative research data collection made use of numerical data obtained from questionnaires to describe the phenomena of

policy changes, combined with qualitative data collected by means of an interview, to provide a narrative description of the process of policy changes.

Phase one of the data collection process was completed by the researcher in order to obtain the relevant statistics from the Education Management Information System at the Free State Department of Education, by means of the internet and by visiting the Department of Education.

Phase two of the data collection process consisted of the development and completion of questionnaires. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:257), a questionnaire is the technique that is most widely used to obtain information. Since questionnaires also form the basis of the data collection on the impact of changes in promotion requirements, the following steps, identified by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:258-267), were adhered to:

- The first step in developing a questionnaire, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:258), is to justify the use of questionnaires above other instruments. Other instruments that can be used to collect data quantitatively include structured observations, standardized interviews or paper and pencil tests (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:39). The choice of questionnaires in this research ensured accuracy, anonymity, reliability and validity.

- The second step was to define the specific objectives that the responses to each item on the questionnaire had to meet (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:258). With the main research question and the research aims in mind, the following were the broad objectives of the different questionnaires:

Questionnaire one that was completed by educators aimed to:

(i) obtain the biographical information of each respondent,
(ii) establish the training, implementation and resources of OBE,

(iii) establish whether the assessment practices comply with policy documents,
(iv) establish whether the Grade 12 final examination comply with OBE principles.

- Questionnaire one included questions on the marking process of those educators who were involved in marking Grade 12 final examination papers in 2008. The aim of these questions was to establish whether the question paper itself, as well as the interpretation of the answers of the learners, complied with the basic principles of quality assessment practices. The questionnaire further included questions on OBE. Since the Grade 12 learners of 2008 were subjected to OBE from 2003, the aims of these questions were to establish whether the training of educators and the implementation of OBE were dealt with sufficiently. The majority of the questions in this questionnaire dealt with assessment.

The second questionnaire completed by the researcher aimed to

(i) analyse the results of the learners who were in Grade 10 in 2006 in order to establish the reasons for not complying with the promotion requirements,
(ii) analyse the results of the learners who were in Grade 11 in 2007 to determine the impact of the policy changes,
(iii) analyse the results of the learners who were in Grade 12 in 2008 to compare them with other promotion requirements.

- The third step was to identify the questions or statements (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:258). Guidelines for identifying effective questions, as provided by Babbie (1998, cited in McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:258-259), include avoiding vague, ambiguous, negative, or biased questions, and to set questions that are simple, easy to understand and easy to respond to. These guidelines were taken into consideration in the formulation of the questions and the instructions provided in each questionnaire.

- The next step was the decision on the manner the response was to be made (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:260). Questionnaire one, completed by educators, included the following types of items:

(i) The questionnaire commenced with open and closed items on the biographical information of the respondents. Open items included the number of years' teaching experience, experience teaching Grades 10 to 12 and Grades 8 to 9, as well as the average number of learners in a class. Closed items included the respondents' post level, academic and professional qualifications, learning areas taught on the FET level, workshops attended and efficiency after attending the workshops.

(ii) Likert scale responses constituted the majority of the responses in the remainder of the questionnaire. A neutral stem was selected to accommodate respondents who neither agree nor disagree with a statement. According to Best and Kahn (1993:247), a scale value can then be allocated to each of the five responses.

(iii) To distinguish between the different forms of assessment, respondents were asked to rank-order the five most important forms by allocating a 1 to the most important item, 2 to the next most important, with 5 being allocated to the least important item.

- The fifth step was compiling the general layout and organization of the questionnaire (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:266). Suggestions made by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:266-267) that this questionnaire complied with, include:

(i) Avoid any grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes.
(ii) The printed words should be clear and easy to read.
(iii) Brief instructions that can be easily interpreted should be given.
(iv) Avoid including too many questions on one page.
(v) Do not abbreviate items.
(vi) The questionnaire should be as short as possible.

(vii) Related items should be grouped together.

(viii) Pages and items should be numbered.

(ix) Make use of examples if possible.

(x) Print response scales on every page.

- The final steps in developing a questionnaire included the pilot test and revision (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:267). Questionnaire one was subjected to educators with whom the researcher is familiar, in order to ascertain honest feedback. An additional form accompanied the questionnaire used for the pilot-test to provide space for comments and feedback. The researcher did two pilot-tests with questionnaire two, by using the promotion schedules of two schools in his immediate vicinity.

- Questionnaire one was distributed to schools by the Department of Education in two regional offices. The questionnaires were distributed during the week preceding the June examinations. This allowed educators two weeks to complete the questionnaires before they had to be returned. After completion the questionnaires had to be handed back to the regional offices of the Department of Education. Schools that did not return the questionnaires were contacted by the researcher to motivate them to complete the questionnaires, or to determine whether any problems existed.

- Questionnaire two was completed by the researcher during the November examinations, when visiting the randomly selected schools in the Fezile Dabi Education District. Although pilot-testing made provision for alterations to questionnaire two, the uniqueness of the results of every school was incorporated by the researcher by making further alterations as were necessitated during the analysis process.

The qualitative data were collected by means of an in-depth interview, characterised by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:42) as “a conversation with a goal”, namely, in this research, to gain a better understanding of the process of establishing promotion requirements, of the disparities that exist between

the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, and which factors influence the decision to change or amend the promotion requirements.

An interview protocol (Creswell, 2003:190; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005:58-68; Maritz & Visagie, 2007:23) was used. This protocol included the following:

- Instructions to the interviewer:

(i) Introduce yourself.
(ii) Explain the purpose of your research.
(iii) Explain the reason for selecting the interviewee.
(iv) Explain the envisaged use of the results.
(v) Assure the interviewee of confidentiality and anonymity.
(vi) Explain the structure and process of the interview.
(vii) Disclose your qualifications and experience.
(viii) Request the interviewee to read and sign the letter of consent.

- Formulating key research questions. Bearing in mind that semi-structured open-ended questions had to be formulated, the following questions served as a guideline to the interviewer:

(i) What process is followed in establishing a promotion policy?
(ii) How are the contents of the promotion requirements determined?
(iii) Referring to the Grade 10 results of 2006, did the promotion requirements play a role in the poor results?
(iv) Your point of view on the results of 2007, after the requirements were amended.
(v) Your point of view on the disparities between the promotion requirements of the GET and FET Band (75% Cass, CTAs).
(vi) Your opinion on the equipment of teachers to implement the NCS; the standards of CTAs; the difference in weights of CASS in the GET and FET bands and schools that lack resources.
(vii) Are there any other comments you would like to add regarding the promotion policy and promotion requirements?

- Another measure in the protocol, is probing. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:446) are quite clear that qualitative in-depth interviews are guided more by probes than by question formats. Guidelines provided by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:448-449) which were included in this research are: the elaboration of detail, further explanations, adjustment to responses and the order of questions.

- Managing the interview. Since this qualitative research focused on an elite interview, managing the interview (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005:65-66) was critically important. Procedures suggested by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:66) and adapted for this research included the following:

(i) Register the research project with the Department of Education and obtain their approval to conduct the research. The letter of consent (see Annexure A) was referred to in requesting permission for the interview. The same letter was also used to introduce the researcher to the interviewee.

(ii) Request permission in writing (see Annexure H) to conduct the interview directly to the interviewee. Since it was an elite interview, the venue was the office of the interviewee, at a time convenient for him/her. After permission was obtained, the appointment was confirmed two to three days prior to the interview.

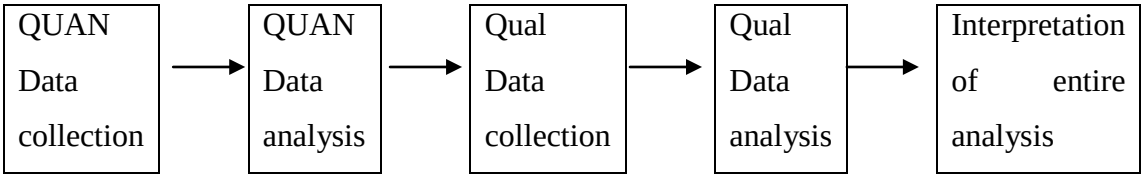
(iii) Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:66) encourage the interviewer to be aware of his/her own body language that could reflect nervousness. This is even more applicable at a first interview which, in this research, was an elite interview.

- Recording the interviewee's comments in an elite interview was essential. The level of detail and accuracy would not be obtainable in any other way than recording the interview (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005:67). A digital recorder was used to record the interview.

- Transcription. In the course of the interview, graphs that reflect the pass rates for 2006 and 2007, number of learners that failed and were promoted, and the percentage of learners per grade that were promoted were used to phrase questions and serve as probes. Being semi-structured questions, matching these graphs to specific questions in sequential order could not be ascertained before the interview. Field notes and the formulation of the questions determined which graph the interviewer referred to.

3.4.3 Data processing

The sequential explanatory mixed-method design used in this research is illustrated by Creswell (2003:213) as follows:



The purpose of the sequential explanatory mixed-method design was to have the findings of the quantitative study explained and interpreted by means of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003:215). It was therefore essential that the quantitative data first had to be processed before the qualitative data collection, and eventually, qualitative data analysis, could take place.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407), data analysis is a construction of "the facts" obtained from "research-recorded data." This analysis was essential to enable the researcher to make interpretations. The quantitative data were recorded by means of two questionnaires. The first questionnaire, as explained under the previous heading on data collection, included open and closed items on the biographical information of the respondents, Likert scale responses and rank-order items.

The second questionnaire consisted of data completed by the researcher. The data of questionnaire one and two were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. These spreadsheets assisted the researcher to systematically examine the data,

to decide upon the categories that were analysed, and the responses were converted to percentages. These spreadsheets were also used to draw pie charts and bar or column charts to analyse the data.

The processes of organizing, analysing and interpreting qualitative data are referred to by McMillan and Schumacher (2003:466) as "data analysis." From the different sources researchers use for classifying systems to organize the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2003:467), only two were applicable in this research, namely the research question and sub-questions, as well as the prior knowledge of the researcher. These two sources contained predetermined categories which determined the coding. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:467) define coding as "…the process of dividing data into parts by a classification system." Units of content are referred to as 'topics', and groupings of topics form 'categories' (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:467). In this research the strategy that was used, was to start with predetermined categories and divide each category into smaller units or sub-categories, as the data were analysed.

To analyse the qualitative data, the steps indicated in McMillan and Schumacher (2001:468-472), and Creswell (2003:190-195), were adapted to suit this particular research, namely

- Organization and preparation of the data for analysis. The transcription of the interview was done by the researcher.
- The researcher read through the transcription and wrote notes on the predetermined categories and units.
- By means of this coding process a detailed analysis was done, comparing the qualitative interview responses with the quantitative data obtained from the two questionnaires.
- The final step in the data analysis was the interpretation of the entire analysis. How did the qualitative data elucidate the quantitative statistics and the main research question on the impact of the promotion policy changes on the promotion of learners in the Further Education and Training Band?

3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:167), is "…the degree to which scientific explanations match the realities of the world." In other words, the "…degree to which the explanations are accurate comprises the validity of the research" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:167). Validity is therefore expressed as a degree of validity present in the research, based on evidence, and not an "all-or-nothing proposition" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:243).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:167) distinguish between internal validity and external validity. The degree of control over 'extraneous variables' is referred to as 'internal validity'. 'Extraneous variables' include the procedure of doing research, the sampling of participants and the instruments used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:168). As was indicated, the most reliable instrument for this research was the use of questionnaires and the promotion schedules from the randomly selected schools. The use of these instruments ensured validity.

Best and Kahn (1993:242) emphasise that validity and reliability can be increased by asking the right questions that are not ambiguous and not including terms that have to be defined to ensure that all respondents interpret them correctly. The questionnaires used in this research were pilot-tested to indicate ambiguities or items that do not relate to the purpose of the questionnaire. Furthermore, a number of terms are clarified in the questionnaires by means of examples and descriptions.

Another internal threat to validity identified by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:192), is the prejudice of participants who manipulate responses. The instructions in the questionnaire requested participants to respond in absolute honesty, promising that all participants will remain anonymous.

External validity, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:167), refers to the generalizability of the results. Strydom and Venter (2002:201) claim

that random sampling is the best technique to ensure an optimal chance of drawing a sample that is representative of the population from which it was drawn. Random sampling can thus ensure validity, and allowed the researcher to generalize the results beyond the immediate group (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:168). For the purpose of this research, random sampling was used in the selection of schools where questionnaire two was completed.

Validity can also be obtained through evidence based on relations to other variables (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:241-242). A common way to establish convergent evidence of validity is to compare the correlation of the scores from one instrument to another measure (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:241-242). One method of enhancing external validity is to ensure the collected data are consistent with what is known about the target population (Barret, 2006:412-413). In this research specific data collected from the participants, including the pass rate of the different years of the participants, were compared to the pass rates of the survey population and the target population, obtained from the Department of Education, which constituted the secondary data. This comparison was essential to add creditability to the research findings and to determine the degree of validity, and will be included in the next chapter on the findings of the research.

Since qualitative research makes use of different assumptions, designs and methods to obtain knowledge, the strategies to enhance validity are also different from those applicable in quantitative research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:407). McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) define validity of qualitative research as "…the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher."

Three strategies to enhance validity, as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407), applicable in this research, are multi-method strategies, verbatim transcription and digitally recorded data. The mixed-method design is based on multi-method strategies. The qualitative interview in this research was necessary to elucidate the quantitative data, and ensured

validity through triangulation of data. Secondly, verbatim transcriptions of the interviews "are highly valued as data" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:409), and ensured validity. Thirdly, digitally recording the interview provided an accurate and complete record of the interview.

Reliability is a prerequisite for validity because scores cannot be valid unless they are reliable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:250). To comply with test reliability, the "scores" should be similar over different forms of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:181), or the "extent to which measures are free from error" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:181). The mixed-methods design ensured that different forms of data collection were used in this research. Furthermore, questionnaire one was completed by experienced FET educators who were able to evaluate and compare assessment practices. Questionnaire two was completed by the researcher to ascertain that the data are free from errors.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:247) provide factors that should be considered in ensuring reliability, and which were applied in this research. Firstly, a higher measure of reliability was obtained from a more heterogeneous group. Random sampling ensured a heterogeneous study group. Secondly, reliability was increased by including more items in the instrument. In this research, questionnaire one consisted of 64 questions on seven topics. In questionnaire two the results of the FET learners from 20 schools for three consecutive years were analysed, evaluating 16 to 18 different aspects for each year. The qualitative interview was conducted on 11 questions. Thirdly, the greater the range of scores, the higher the reliability will be. Questionnaire one was distributed to 336 educators and data from approximately 7000 learners were analysed in questionnaire two. This ensured reliability through a wide range of scores.

To further enhance reliability, the data collection took place under standard conditions; the same instructions were provided on every questionnaire, and the same time for completion was applicable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:249).

3.6 ETHICAL MEASURES

Strydom (2002:63) describes 'ethics' as moral principles that provide rules and behavioural expectations that guide the correct conduct towards "experimental subjects, respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students," as well as his own conduct. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:420), the ethical principles in qualitative and quantitative research are similar, and should include informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and privacy. Strydom (2002:64), in addition, identified harm to experimental subjects or respondents, violation of privacy, cooperation with contributors, release or publication of findings, and debriefing, as ethical issues.

For the purpose of this research, the following principles on ethical measures (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:196-197), were adhered to:

- Informed consent to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of Education (see Annexure A). Approval was granted on the condition that participation is voluntarily, that schools and participants remain confidential, that the questionnaires are completed and interviews conducted outside normal tuition time, and that the findings and recommendations are presented to the Department of Education.

- Letters (see Annexures D and E) that include the title of the research, an introduction on the background, the purpose of the research or interview, approval, their rights as participants, and informed consent, were signed by the participants, school principals and the researcher.

- The researcher was open and honest with participants, and verbally reassured them of the purpose of the research, the intended use of the data, confidentiality and anonymity. Their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw, was also pointed out.

- To ensure confidentiality and anonymity all questionnaires and schools were allocated numbers for administrative purposes. Schools, educators and the interviewee were not linked, and only the researcher had access to the individual data, that disclosed this information.

3.7 SUMMARY

The crux of determining the impact of promotion policy changes on learner promotion in the FET Band was theorised on in this chapter. To enable scientific conclusions and recommendations from the findings to be made, the following were adhered to:

- The objectives of the research were pursued by gaining knowledge on assessment practices, the differences in promotion requirements between the GET Band and the FET Band; knowledge was acquired on the changes in the promotion requirements in the FET Band; an in-depth quantitative analysis of the Grade 10 results in 2006, the Grade 11 results in 2007 and the Grade 12 results of 2008 was obtained; a qualitative interview was conducted with a member of the Department of Education; the marking process of the Gr. 12 examination in November 2008 was investigated; and the Department of Education would be provided with scientific findings that could assist in decision-making.

- The explanatory mixed-method design, with the emphasis on quantitative data that were collected and analysed before the qualitative research took place in order to achieve these objectives, was applied.

- A scientific approach was followed with regard to the selection of participants, data collection, an interview, data processing and analysis.

- It was ensured that the principles of reliability, validity and ethical measures were adhered to.

The data analysis and interpretation are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

"Research advances knowledge and improves practice."

(McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:17)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Even though the improvement of educational practice is not in the hands of the researcher, this chapter will, hopefully, add to the knowledge in respect of assessment practices and promotion policy. In order to attain this, the following aspects will be presented in this chapter, namely

- an analysis of the research process, *i.e.*, what ensured success and what was problematic and had to be managed differently;
- the validity of the random sample;
- the biographical data of the educators who completed questionnaire one, and the schools selected for the completion of questionnaire two;
- the findings from the questionnaire on OBE, assessment and examinations, as completed by the educators;
- an analysis of the results of FET learners in 2006, 2007 and 2008; and
- an exploration of the qualitative data needed to elucidate the quantitative findings.

To summarise the chapter, concluding remarks will be presented at the end.

4.2 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

A discussion of the problematic experiences, and of the successes, during the research process can be divided into three sequential phases of the empirical research, namely questionnaire one, completed by educators on assessment practices, OBE and examinations; questionnaire two, an analysis of the results

of the FET learners in the examinations of 2006, 2007 and 2008; and the qualitative research, consisting of an interview.

4.2.1 Questionnaire one

To comply with the conditions set by the Department of Education (see annexure A) that questionnaires have to be completed outside normal tuition hours, questionnaire one was handed to the Department of Education for distribution on 29 May 2009. All schools have 'mail boxes' at the district offices of the Department of Education where the schools collect their circulars from the Department. Permission was obtained from the Department for the researcher to distribute the questionnaire to 56 public secondary schools in the Fezile Dabi Education District via their mail boxes in Kroonstad and Sasolburg. This would allow educators to complete the questionnaire during the June examinations, and to return them to the Department at the end of the term four weeks later, namely by 26 June 2009.

The schools re-opened on 20 July 2009. From the total of 336 questionnaires that were distributed, only 78 were returned to the Department. After contacting the first three schools that did not respond, it was found that they received the questionnaires only a few days before the end of the term. The decision to make use of the Department of Education for the distribution of the questionnaires was to ensure that all the public secondary schools in the Fezile Dabi Education District received them. Each school is responsible for collecting the circulars from the Department whenever it is convenient for them. What was not foreseen by the researcher is that schools situated approximately 100 kilometers or even further from the district offices very seldom collect their circulars from the Department, but receive them by e-mail. The questionnaires were, therefore, either collected three to four weeks after they had been handed to the Department or, in some cases, not at all.

A fax was sent to all the schools that did not return the questionnaires, postponing the return date to 31 July 2009. Another 42 questionnaires were returned, bringing the total number of completed questionnaires to 120.

Another attempt was made by contacting the schools that did not respond, but it soon became clear that some principals were reluctant to compel FET educators in the middle of the third term to complete a 12-page questionnaire.

The smaller than anticipated number of completed questionnaires should however not influence the validity of the findings. Rowntree (1941, as cited in McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:177) found that there existed little difference between the findings of a sample size of two percent and those of a sample size of ten percent.

An analysis of the completed questionnaire additionally revealed the following:

- Open and closed form items and Likert scale responses did not pose any problems for the respondents, and were answered correctly.
- Only one of the 36 questions was misinterpreted by less than 10% of the respondents. To distinguish between the five most important forms of assessment, the respondents were asked to rank-order the five most important forms from a list of 14 by allocating a 1 to the most important, 2 to the next most important, and so forth, up to 5 to the least important. Responses who did not indicate the five most important forms of assessment in rank order were excluded in the summation of this question.

4.2.2 Questionnaire two

After selecting the participating schools by means of random sampling, a program was drawn up to indicate the order in which the schools would be visited, taking into consideration the responsibilities of the researcher at his own school, the distances that would have to be travelled, the number of FET learners in the school and the time of the appointment with the principal.

As this was the first time the researcher became involved in fieldwork, this phase of the empirical research was approached with uncertainty on what to expect. The researcher was familiar with only four of the twenty schools that were selected, where he knew the principals and the location of the schools.

Uncertainties included what the attitude of the school principals of township schools would be, where some were categorized as dysfunctional by the Department of Education, - would they cooperate with an unknown researcher that wanted to analyse their results of the past three years? Would uncooperative hostile school principals ring the death bell of this research? To the contrary, when the researcher phoned to make the appointments and to receive directions on how to reach the schools, he was surprised by the polite reception.

The following experiences are worth indicating:

- The telephone conversations with the school principals included an explanation of the purpose of the research, the desire to make an appointment with them, and also indicating that the promotion schedules of 2006, 2007 and 2008 would be required for the research. Two schools postponed the appointment after the researcher had arrived at the school because the promotion schedules were missing. Appointments with both these schools were made after the promotion schedules were found.

- There existed no uniformity among the schools regarding the completion of the schedules, specifically the promotion schedules of 2006 and 2007. Some schools made use of handwritten promotion schedules, and others used printed schedules, some indicated the learners' percentages, some the marks, and others the levels. This complicated the analyses for the researcher, and some schools were revisited for a second time in order to complete the analysis. To ensure validity and reliability, only the promotion schedules approved by the Department of Education were used. These promotion schedules officially provide the statistics on the marks or levels obtained by each learner and for each learning area, to indicate a pass or fail.

- Besides the minor difficulties experienced, the principals were very cooperative, were interested in the analysis that was being done and what the researcher's findings were for their school. The fieldwork was

conducted during the Grade 12 final examinations in November 2009. All school principals acted as chief invigilators, and their first priority during this time of the school year was to ensure that the procedures, rules and regulations regarding the examinations are adhered to. Despite these responsibilities they were willing to assist the researcher in completing the analysis. The fieldwork was of immense value to the researcher in obtaining a better understanding of the conditions under which the majority of the schools have to function and are managed in South Africa, aspects, however, beyond the scope of this research.

4.2.3 Elite interview

The purpose of conducting mixed-method research was to obtain a more holistic view on policy matters, but the researcher experienced much more than gaining theoretical knowledge. The contrast in moving from township schools to the offices of policy makers on national level, once again left the researcher feeling insecure, and he had to suppress the temptation to be more of an advocate for the disadvantaged schools, but to remain focussed on the aim of interviewing the policy makers.

Because the interview consisted of semi-structured open-end questions, pilot testing was not possible. Ensuring that the digital recording device was in working order and preparing the topics that had to be addressed, were about as much preparation as the researcher could do. The researcher entered into conducting the interview inexperienced, feeling nervous and unprepared, and not knowing what to expect. And once again, as with the fieldwork in the quantitative research, the expectations far exceeded the apprehension.

It was an absolute privilege to interview an information-rich knowledgeable person and to have him share his points of view, contributing insight and meaning on policies and assessment without which this research would not be complete. The persons being interviewed was responsible for examinations and assessment on national level, and with the marking of the Grade 12

examinations already in progress, it took weeks of negotiations with a secretary to finally be able to make the necessary appointment.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section commences with ascertaining the validity and reliability of the findings of this research. In order to ascertain the validity and reliability of the findings the sample had to be comparable to the statistics of the survey population and the target population.

For the purpose of greater clarity the analysis and interpretation of the data will be done concurrently. The biographical data of the 120 educators who completed questionnaire one, and of the 20 schools where questionnaire two was completed, will be provided. After providing the biographical data, the quantitative data will be analysed graphically or by means of diagrams, interpreting each graph by synthesizing the literature, other quantitative data, the qualitative interview, or other research.

An analysis will follow on the attendance of workshops and the proficiency of workshops to implement the NCS and OBE. A brief explanation of the composition of the promotion mark will follow. This explanation is necessary to indicate the necessity of questionnaire one and to act as a preface to the analysis of OBE and assessment. Errors in measurement will be analysed with special reference to methods of calculation.

An analysis will also be included to determine the extent to which the current methods of CASS comply with the characteristics of continuous assessment discussed in the literature review. An analysis regarding concerns about assessment will include negligence on the part of so-called ‘fast’ learners, a lack of resources, the continuous emphasis on tests and examinations, the time spent on work that would be examined, an analysis of the types of assessment, differences in internal assessment among schools, and whether school leavers are adequately being prepared for the world of work.

The Grade 12 examinations of 2008 will also be analysed in respect of the question papers placing the accent on the most important work, whether the memoranda make provision for all sources and divergent answers, whether examiners are clear regarding the allocation of marks, and if there exists a correlation between the CASS marks and the final examination marks. Another question that needed to be analysed is whether the original purpose of creating a unified education system which would address social inequalities of the past remained largely unchanged.

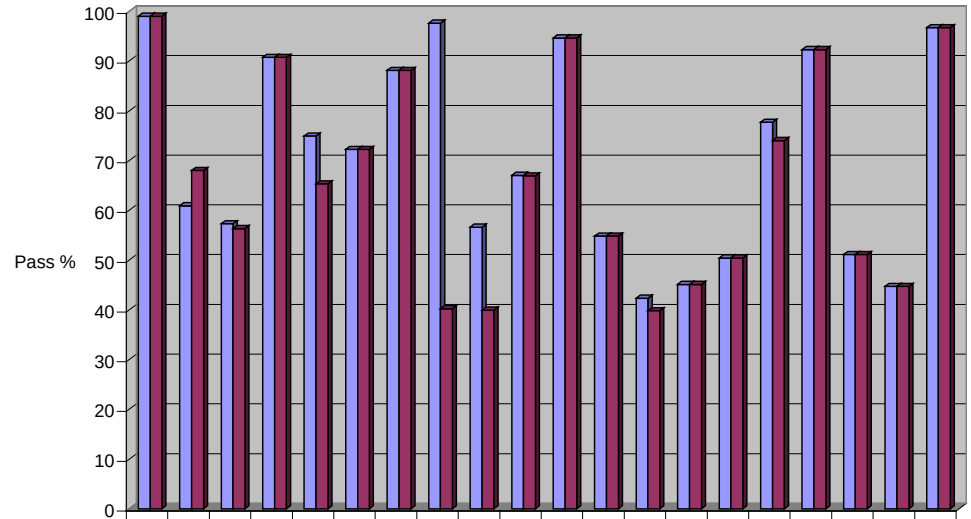
Thereafter an analysis will follow of the Grades 10, 11 and 12 results. The analysis will include a summary of the pass-rate, an explanation of the learners not promoted, the reasons for failing, and a subject analysis.

This section will be concluded with a discussion of the qualitative interview, which was conducted to gain a better understanding of the process of establishing promotion requirements, and also the amendments to the promotion requirements.

4.3.1 Ascertaining reliability and validity

In order to ascertain validity and reliability the findings in the sample of this research must be comparable to the statistics of the survey population and the target population, which is available from the Department of Education. The pass-rate per grade for every school in the sample can be calculated from the statistics in questionnaire two. The information already obtained from the Department of Education on the pass-rate per grade for the same schools can serve as a cross reference to ascertain the reliability of the calculations.

Graph 4.1: Grade 10 pass-rate per school: 2006



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Department	99	60.9	57.3	90.7	74.9	72.2	88.1	97.6	56.6	67	94.6	54.8	42.3	45.1	50.4	77.7	92.3	51.1	44.7	96.7
Research	99	68	56.3	90.7	65.3	72.2	88.1	40.2	39.9	66.9	94.6	54.8	39.8	45.1	50.4	74	92.3	51.1	44.7	96.7

Schools

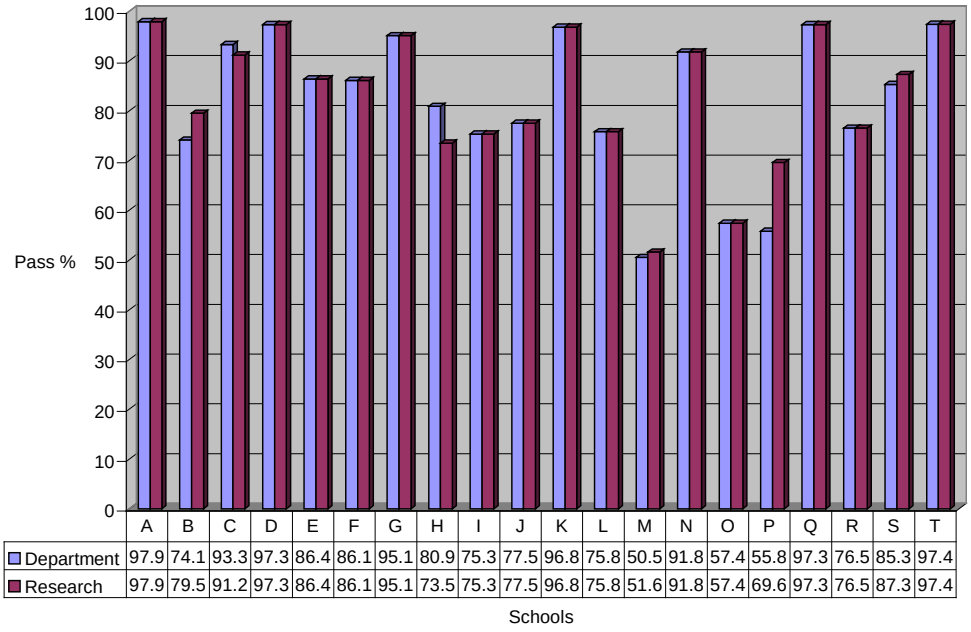
- Statistics on 12 of the schools show no difference between the statistics provided by the Department and those of the sample as obtained by the researcher.

- In six of the schools the deviation between the results from the Department and the research findings is less than 10%. In all of these schools there were learners whose exams, or the results thereof, were incomplete. Incomplete exams could be caused by illness, welfare cases such as death of relatives, or outstanding CASS marks. The researcher considers incomplete results as indicative of learners that did not pass. The statistics from the Department is calculated two to three months later than the examination, and it stands to reason that differences may occur.

- In the two remaining schools, huge anomalies appeared that could not be attributed to the methods of calculation. In School H, according to the promotion schedules analysed by the researcher, 33 of the 82 Grade 10 learners were promoted to Grade 11, which is 40.2%. According to the Department, 80 of the 82 learners were promoted, which is 97.6%. In School I the promotion schedules indicated that 136 of the 341 Grade 10

learners were promoted, which is a pass-rate of 39.9%. According to the Department, 193 learners were promoted, which is 56.6%. The only logical explanation is that, apart from typing errors, the statistics provided to the Department by the schools were incorrect.

Graph 4.2: Grade 11 pass-rate per school: 2007



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Department	97.9	74.1	93.3	97.3	86.4	86.1	95.1	80.9	75.3	77.5	96.8	75.8	50.5	91.8	57.4	55.8	97.3	76.5	85.3	97.4
Research	97.9	79.5	91.2	97.3	86.4	86.1	95.1	73.5	75.3	77.5	96.8	75.8	51.6	91.8	57.4	69.6	97.3	76.5	87.3	97.4

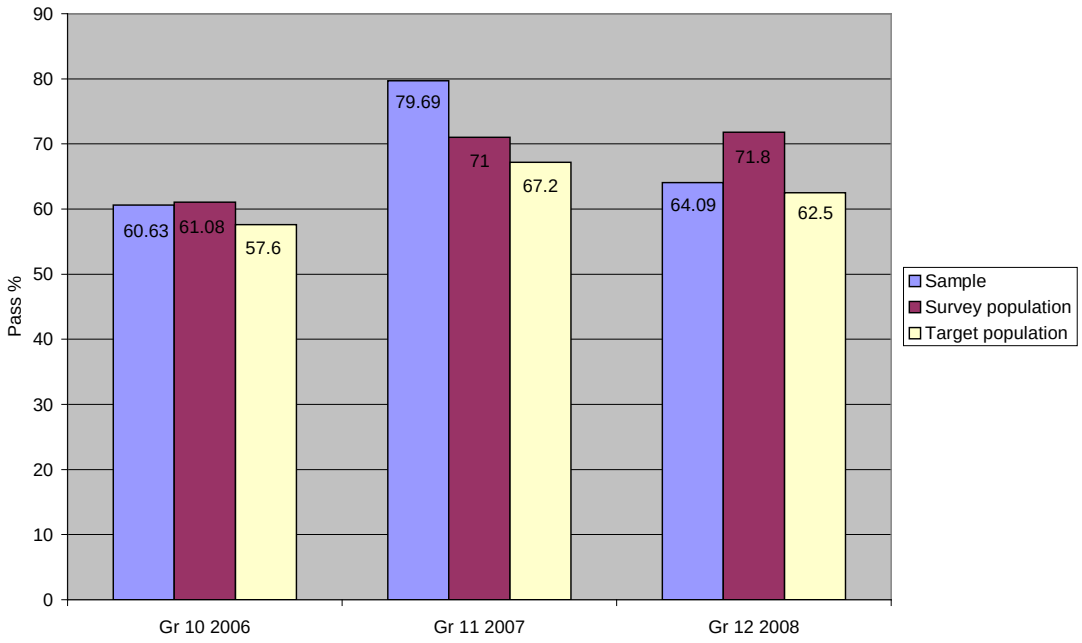
- In 14 schools there existed no difference between the statistics of the Department and those that the researcher calculated.

- Minor differences appeared in the other six schools, with deviations of less than eight percent. The biggest deviation was again from School H, where the promotion schedules indicated the number of learners promoted as 72 of the 98 learners, which is 73.5%. According to the Department it is 72 of the 89 learners, which is 80.9%. These differences can again be attributed to typing errors or methods of calculation regarding incomplete examinations.

- With reference to graphs 4.1 and 4.2, and the explanation of the possible causes of smaller deviations, 95% of the measurements can be regarded as reliable.

With proof that the measurements were reliable, validity can now be ascertained by determining whether the random sampling is a true reflection of the survey and target populations. This will determine whether the findings can be generalized to the survey and target populations. As proof of the ability to generalize, the pass-rate of the sample should correlate with the pass-rate of the survey and the target populations.

Graph 4.3: The pass-rates of the sample, the survey population and the target population



- Bearing in mind that the pass-rate differs in the different districts, in the provinces and from year to year, the consideration to determine validity is not whether the pass-rate of the sample is equal to that of the survey and target populations, but whether the pass-rates are comparable. In 2006 and 2008 there were very small differences between the pass-rates of the sample and the target populations. The only exception being 2007, where

the pass-rate of the sample was 79.7%, compared to the pass-rate of 67.2% of the target population.

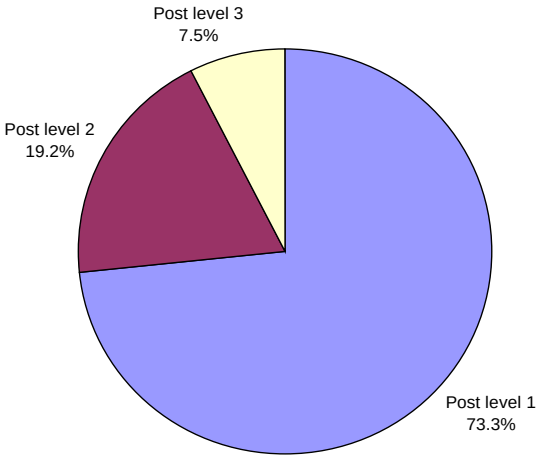
- Random sampling has ensured that in two of the three years there can be no question about the ability to generalize, whereas in 2007 the same sample group performed better than the target population. For the purpose of this research, however, namely to analyse the results of the learners, the different results of 2007 should not influence validity.

4.3.2 Biographical data

The biographical data of the 120 respondents who completed questionnaire one are as follows:

- On average the 120 respondents had 16 years teaching experience, 14.2 years teaching Grades 10 – 12, and 8.5 years teaching Grades 8 and 9.
- The average size of the classes of these respondents was 31.3 learners per class in the FET Band.

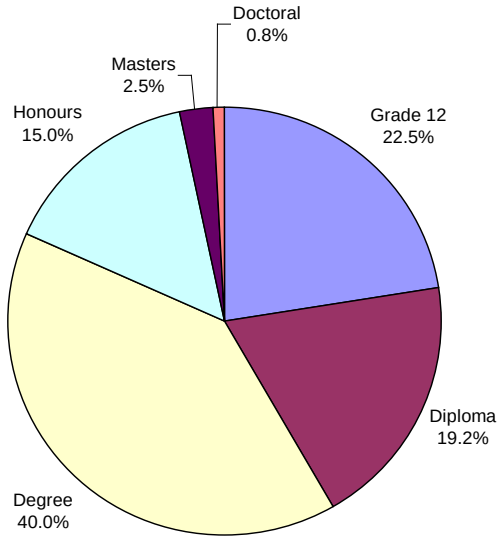
Graph 4.4: Post levels of respondents



- The majority of the respondents who completed questionnaire one was post level one educators.

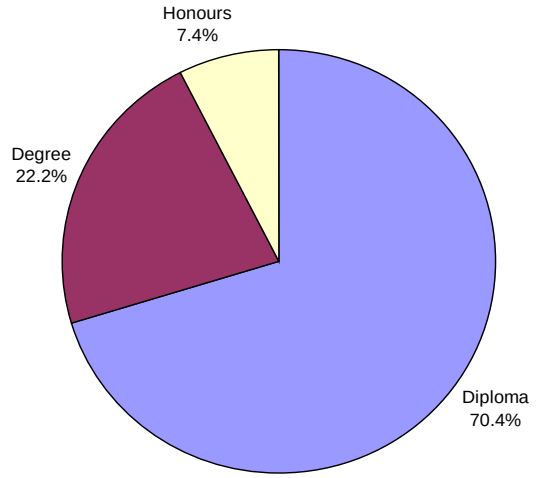
Distinction exists between the academic qualifications and professional qualifications of educators. Academic qualifications include, for example, a B.A, B.Com or B.Sc degree, whereas professional qualifications include an education diploma, for example the Higher Education Diploma, or education degree, for example B.Ed. Educators that only possess a professional qualification indicated on the questionnaire that their highest academic qualification is Grade 12 and their highest professional qualification is for example a degree.

Graph 4.5: Highest academic qualification



- When comparing the academic and professional qualifications of the respondents, it is clear that 40% of respondents possess an academic degree, but 22.5% of the FET respondents employed at the schools do not possess a higher academic qualification than grade 12. The qualifications of the respondents that only possess Grade 12 were further analysed and are illustrated in Graph 4.6.

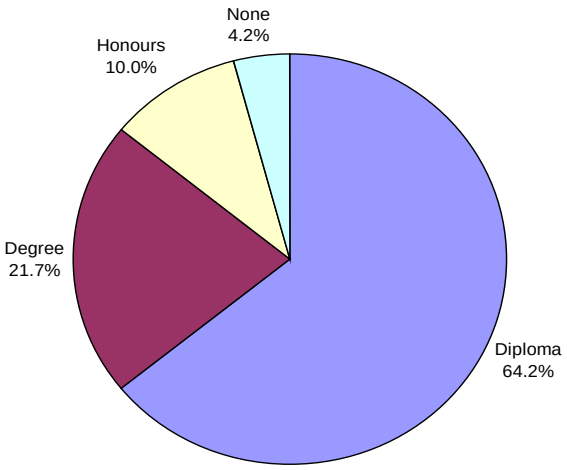
Graph 4.6: Professional qualifications of educators with only Grade 12



- Graph 4.6 illustrates the analysis of the respondents that only possess an academic qualification of Grade 12. All of them are at least in possession of a professional diploma.

Graph 4.7 is an illustration of the professional qualifications of all the respondents that completed questionnaire one.

Graph 4.7: Professional qualifications of the respondents



- Graph 4.7 indicates the high level of professional qualifications, with 95.8% of the respondents in possession of a professional qualification.

The biographical data of the twenty schools that were randomly selected can be indicated as follows:

- Six schools are in urban areas and fourteen in townships.
- Three schools are Afrikaans-medium schools, one is a double-medium school and sixteen are English-medium schools.
- Two of the schools were classified as dysfunctional by the Department of Education in 2008.
- The average number of learners per school is 766.
- The average number of learners in Grade 10 in 2006 was 172, in Grade 11 in 2007 it was 136, and in Grade 12 in 2008 it was 108.

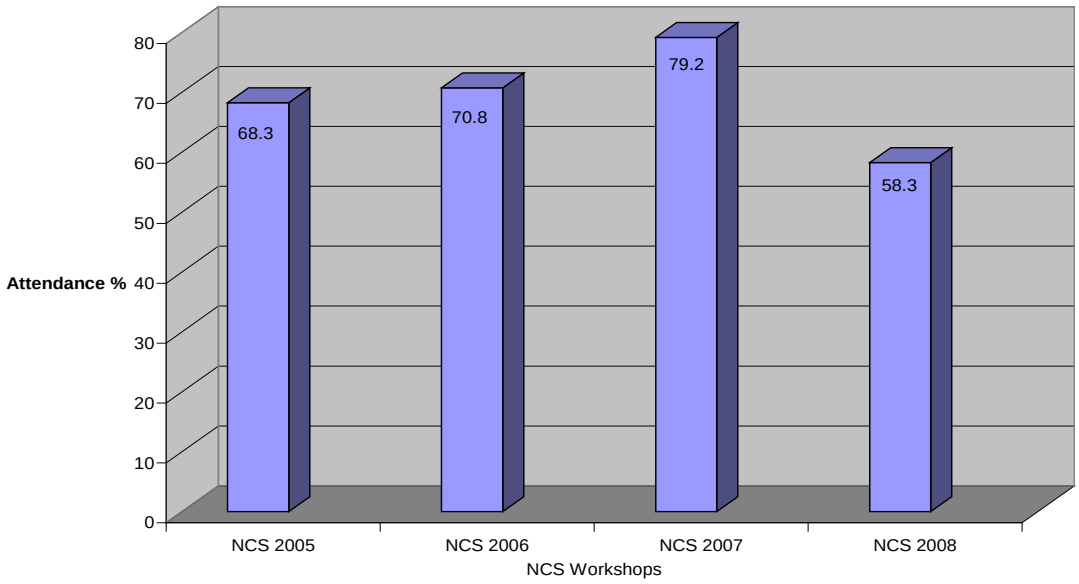
4.3.3 Findings from questionnaire one

Questionnaire one was completed by educators on workshops and training, composition of the promotion mark, errors in measurement, characteristics of CASS, concerns about assessment and Grade 12 examinations.

Workshops and training

Workshops were given prior to the implementation of OBE and the NCS. How well did educators attend these workshops, and were they better equipped after attending them?

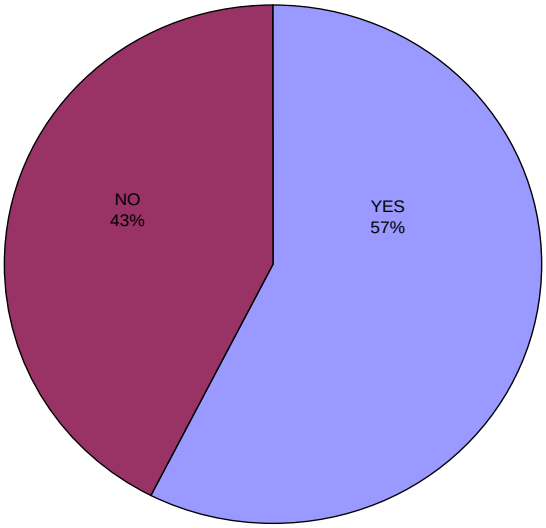
Graph 4.8: Attendance of workshops



- A first observation regarding workshops is that the attendance is not what it should be. The first workshops before implementing the NCS were attended by only 68.3% of the respondents. There was a slight improvement in 2006 and 2007 but in 2008 only 58.3% of the respondents attended. The sample consisted of 120 FET educators. The NCS was implemented in the FET from 2006. It was therefore essential that FET educators used the opportunities to empower themselves in tutoring the NCS. How can a new curriculum be implemented if teachers do not accept the responsibility of ensuring they make use of the training opportunities?

- Did the respondents feel they were adequately equipped to implement the NCS after attending the workshops?

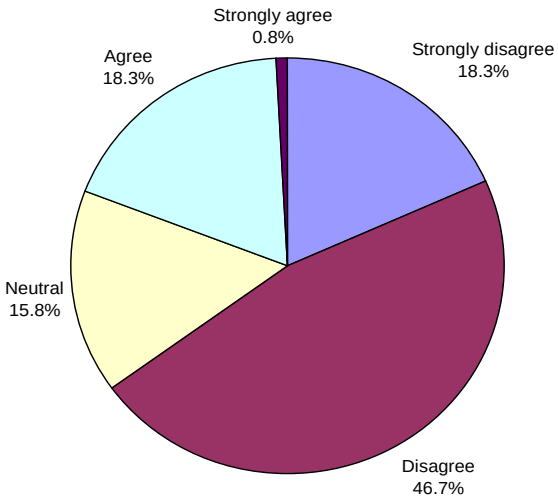
Graph 4.9: Workshops adequately train educators for NCS



- Graph 4.9 gives a clear indication of the success of the workshops. It is questionable whether the workshops achieve their goal if only 57.5% of the respondents who attended the workshops regarded themselves as adequately equipped to implement the NCS.

- Were the respondents adequately trained before implementing OBE?

Graph 4.10: Sufficient training provided to implement OBE



- Graph 4.10 indicates that 65% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that sufficient training was provided before the implementation of OBE.

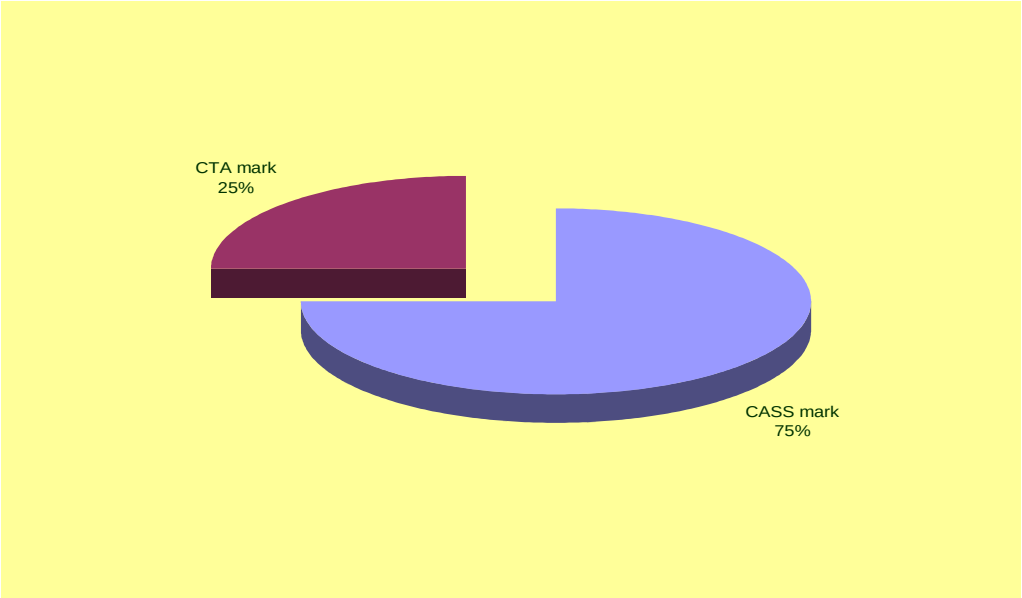
- The qualitative interview elaborated on the training debate. “You can’t expect teachers to go to a one day workshop, a two day workshop and to then come out from that workshop and claim they are trained. Training requires extensive periods; ... and a training programme has to be a programme that has been well thought out, is accredited by an external body, either Umalusi or a university. [Currently] ... a subject adviser puts together his own training programme [and] train teachers. [This procedure] brings about disparity in the standard of training from one province to the other [and] from one district to the other. …. We need a nationally developed programme. …….trainers [who] are well-trained and such a programme we can then say is acceptable. So, I think there is still room for improvement in terms of training.”

- In addition to the discussion above, 55% of the respondents were of the opinion that educators do not receive sufficient support to implement OBE.

Composition of the promotion mark

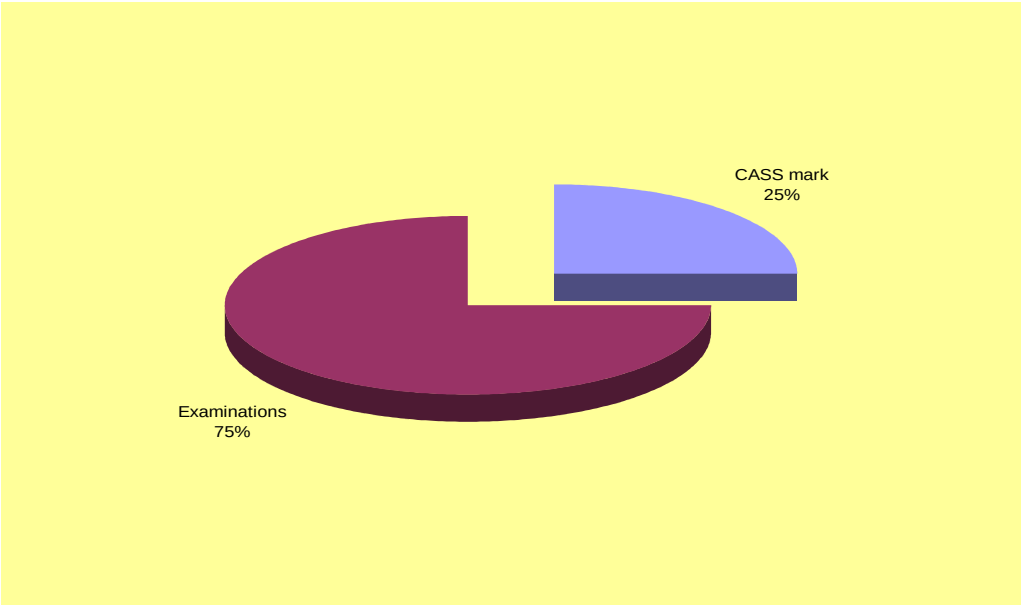
A brief explanation of the composition of the promotion mark is necessary to explain the necessity of questionnaire one and to act as a preface to the analysis of OBE and assessment.

Graph 4.11: Composition of the Grade 9 promotion mark



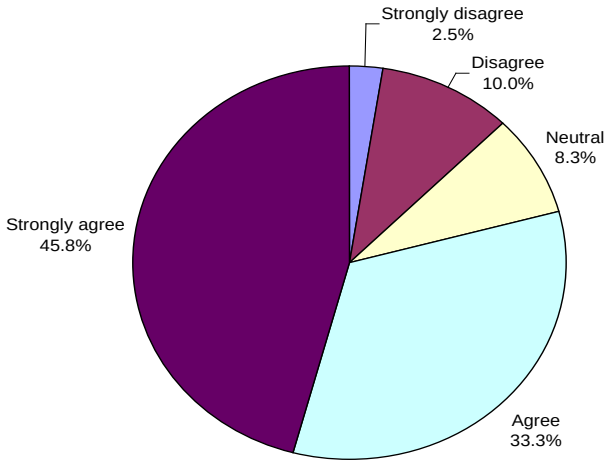
- Graph 4.11 illustrates the composition of the promotion mark for Grade 8 and Grade 9 learners. It is clear that the CTAs constitute 25% of the promotion mark, and that the other 75% consists of the continuous assessment mark. Graph 4.12 illustrates the composition of the promotion mark for Grade 10 to 12.

Graph 4.12: Composition of the Grades 10 to 12 promotion mark



What is the significance of the difference in the composition of the promotion marks for the GET phase and the FET phase? The response to the question whether the difference in the weight of CASS in Grade 9 compared to the weight in Grades 10 to 12 can cause poor results in Grade 10, was as follows:

Graph 4.13: The difference in promotion marks as a reason for poor results



- Apart from the fact that 79.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the difference in weight is a reason for the poor results in Grade 10, it was also emphasised by the interviewee that " ... if you look at assessment requirements, in the case of Grade 9 it is based on a 75/25. Seventy-five percent is school based assessment and 25% is exam, up to Grade 9. But when you get to Grade 10 it is the other way around, it is 25% school based assessment and 75% exam. My assumption is that these learners were not exposed to examinations in the lower grades. So this is the first time they were now being exposed to such a high weighting of examinations that require writing. My assumption here is that up to Grade 9, because it was 75% school based assessment, it was based on project work they had done, oral presentations and there was not much focus on the writing and the written part which is required of the examinations. ...

for me that would have caused the high failure rate in this particular grade (Grade 10)."

Errors in measurement

Reliability is one of the principles of quality assessment, as discussed in the literature review. Assessment is reliable if it is "….free of errors of measurement" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:120). Item 16 in questionnaire one was included to ascertain any errors in the calculation of the CASS mark.

The method of calculating the CASS mark may seem insignificant. The method prescribed in the policy documents was adapted by subject advisors and recommended in the subject assessment guidelines (SAG) to educators. The result was that different methods of calculation existed within a specific learning area. Some educators would use the method prescribed in the policy document while others used the method in the SAG. For the purpose of this research, the method prescribed in the policy document, method 1, will be compared with one other method of calculation, namely method 2. Other methods of calculation are being used in other learning areas as well, but the outcomes remain the same.

Table 4.1: Different methods of calculation

Method 1: (Prescribed in the policy document)

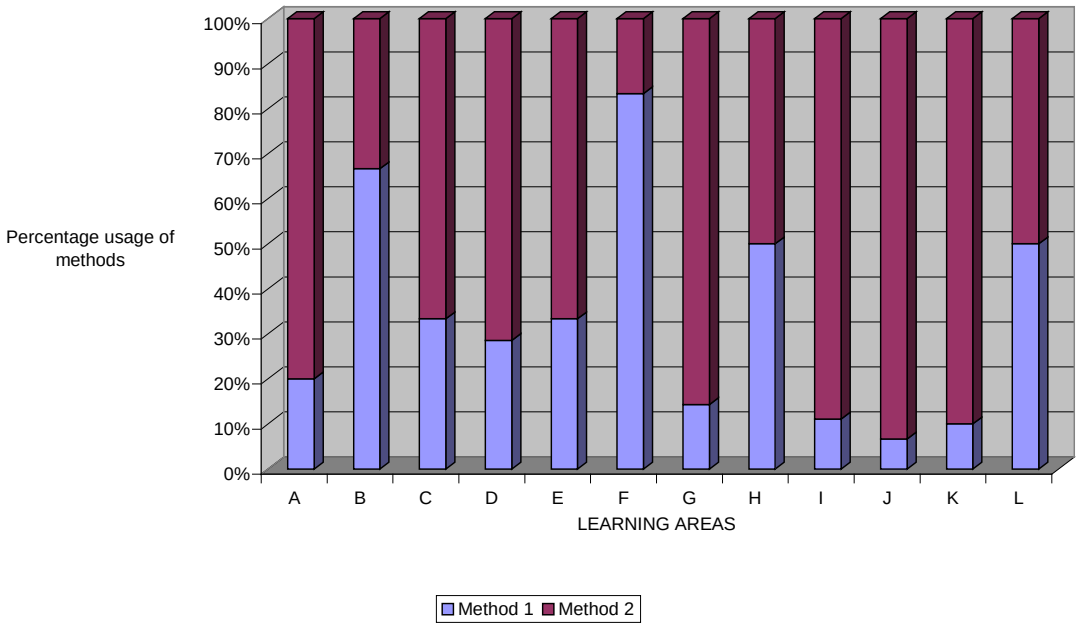
PROGRAMME FOR ASSESSMENT	MARKS	TOTAL	Marks obtained
2 term tests x 100	200		**64**
Midyear examination x 300	300		**126**
3 formal assessment tasks x 50	150		**102**
Trial examination x 300	300		**114**
Total converted to 100	950/9.5	**100**	**406/9.5 = 43**
External assessment		**300**	**113**
Total (promotion mark)		**400**	**156 (39%)**

Method 2: (Taken from the SAG for a specific learning area)

PROGRAMME FOR ASSESSMENT	Marks	Marks obtained	Converted to	Marks
2 term tests x 100	200	64	20	**6.4**
Midyear examination x 300	300	126	10	**4.2**
3 formal assessment tasks x 50	150	102	60	**40.8**
Trial examination x 300	300	114	10	**3.8**
Total of CASS			**100**	**55**
External assessment			**300**	**113**
Total (promotion mark)			**400**	**168 (42%)**

- Of the 19 learning areas researched, seven make use of only one method, but in 12 learning areas there is no consistency in the method of calculation. Educators responded to this as follows:

Graph 4.14: Using different methods of calculating CASS



- The major concern is that there is a huge difference in the CASS mark when using method 1 (43) as opposed to method 2 (55). The reason in this specific learning area is that the subject advisor used different weights in the components, namely tests, examinations, projects and the preparatory examination.

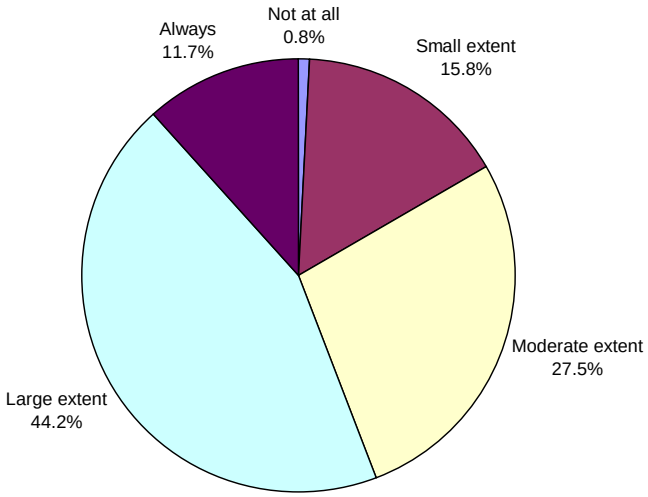
Table 4.2: Comparing the weights of methods 1 and 2

Component	Method 1: weights	Method 2: weights
Tests	21	20
June exam	31.6	10
Projects	15.8	60
Preparatory exam	31.6	10

- With a difference of 12 percentage points in the CASS mark and a difference of three percentage points in the promotion mark, thus making use of different methods in one of the learning areas, the reliability of the promotion marks is questionable, if there is no consistency in calculations.

Learners who interpret questions differently to what the examiner intended may bring about another error in measurement which will influence the reliability of assessment.

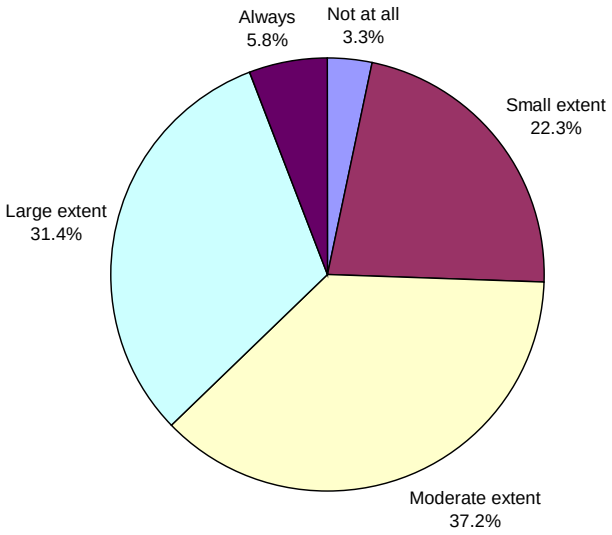
Graph 4.15: Learners' different interpretation of questions



- According to 11.7% of the respondents, the different interpretation of questions to what the examiner intended, are always the cause of varying results, 44.2% is of that opinion that it causes different results to a large extent, while 27.5% of the respondents indicated that misinterpretation is only to a moderate extent the cause of varying results. This finding is very significant, since the language of teaching and learning is, for many learners in South Africa, not their home language.

Different results in the performance of learners can also be the reason for examiners differing in their interpretation of the standard of work. Participants regarded different interpretations as follows:

Graph 4.16: Different interpretations of examiners as a cause of varying results

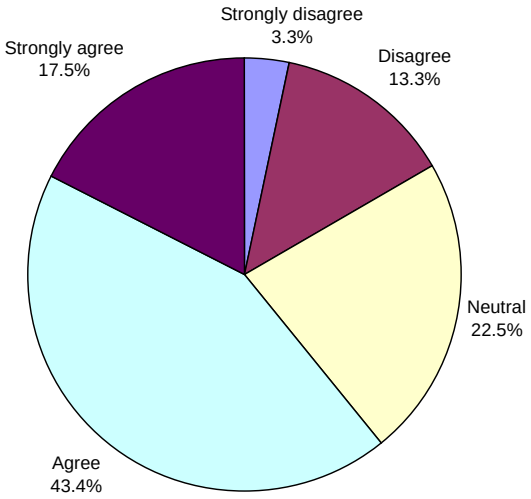


- According to the respondents different interpretations by examiners attribute to a moderate to large extent to varying results.

Characteristics of CASS

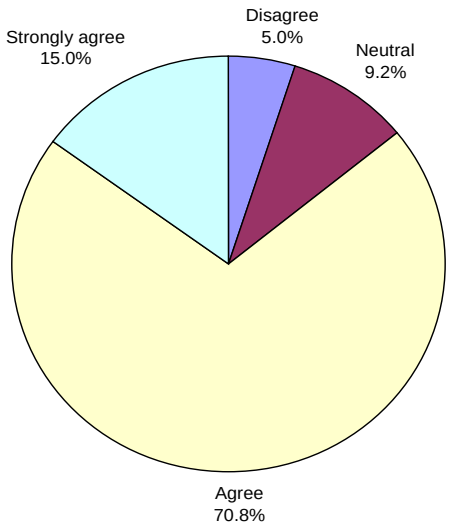
Questionnaire one also determined the extent to which the current methods of CASS comply with the characteristics discussed in the literature review. The first characteristic that was researched is whether CASS helps learners to improve their performance and to maximise their learning.

Graph 4.17: CASS contributing to improved performance and maximised learning



- The majority of the respondents (60.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that CASS contributed to improving the performance of the learners and maximised their learning. They said it assisted learners' progress towards achieving the intended outcomes, and supports the process of the educator and learner working together to improve the learners' performance.

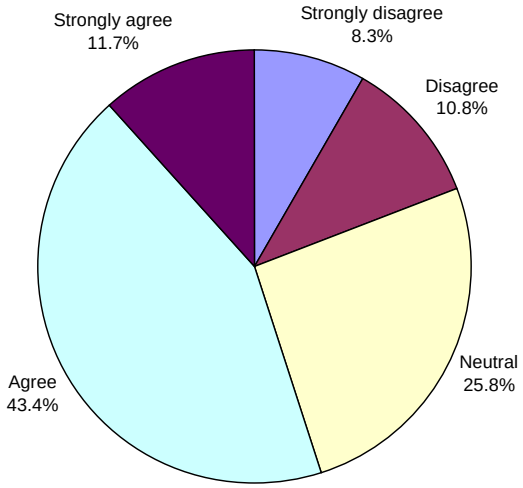
Graph 4.18: Learners receiving feedback after assessment



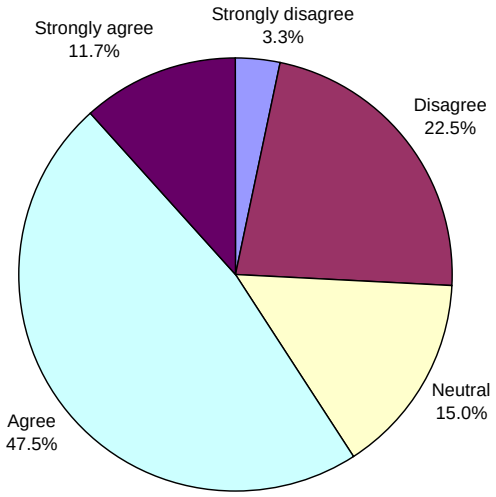
- Educators should provide learners with feedback on what was intended to be achieved after an assessment activity. More than 70% of the respondents agreed and 15% strongly agreed, thus the finding is that more than 85% of respondents provided feedback to learners after assessment activities had been completed. Learners should receive feedback in the form of appropriate questioning, comparing the teacher's comments on what was intended to be achieved by the assessment activity (Department of Education, 2002b:49). This ensures that learners are active participants in learning and assessment by understanding the criteria that are used for assessment activities, also the fact that they do self-evaluation, set targets for themselves, reflect on their learning, and thus experience increased self-esteem (Department of Education, 2002b:49).

Two characteristics of CASS that respondents evaluated but which have to be read in conjunction with each other, are that learners have to be allowed varying time-frames to master the objectives, and that CASS provides information about a learner's ability to progress to a next level.

Graph 4.19: Allowing varying time-frames to master objectives



Graph 4.20: CASS as an indication to progress to a next level



- Near-similar responses were received on both these characteristics, with more than 55% agreeing or strongly agreeing. These characteristics define the object of teaching in so far that every learner has to become competent in mastering the prescribed performance objectives which serve as an indication of his/her current understanding and readiness to progress to a next level (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:124). Differences in aptitude would imply that these objectives are obtained in varying time-frames.

Concerns about assessment

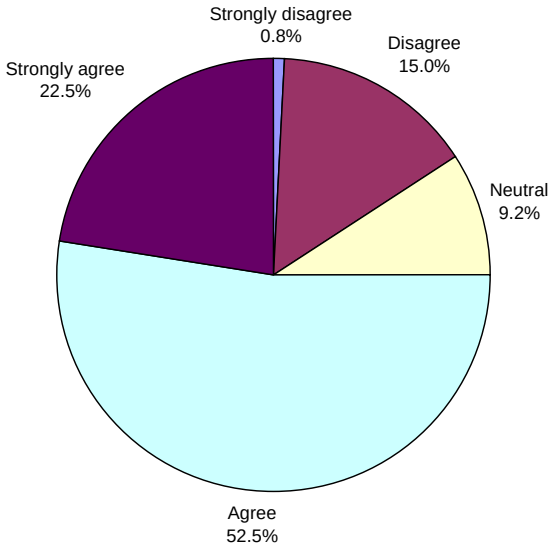
Concerns that have already been discussed in this analysis are:

- the different weights of the assessment and examination marks;
- workshops and training; and
- errors in measurement.

The following findings are based on the section in questionnaire one regarding concerns about assessment, discussed as important criticisms by Jansen (1999:146-154), and the follow-up responses by Mahomed (1999:157-168) and Rasool (1999:172-195):

The first concern is that, following an assessment activity, either corrective or enrichment activities should follow. Learners who did not attain the objectives should be exposed to corrective measures, and learners who attained the objectives have to be exposed to enrichment activities. The concern, however, remains that 'fast' learners are neglected in order to bring 'slow' learners up to standard.

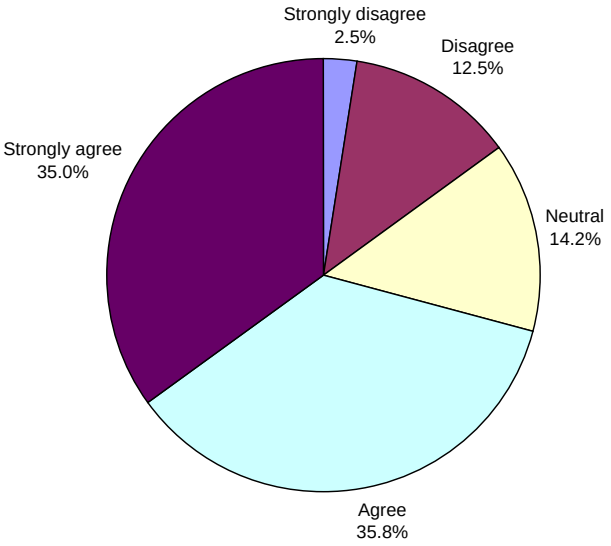
Graph 4.21: Negligence of 'fast' learners



- That 'fast' learners are neglected in the process of bringing 'slow' learners up to standard was the opinion of 75% of the respondents, who either agreed or strongly agreed.

Mahomed (1999:159) identified an "acute lack of resources" as an inhibiting factor, and where resources were available, disparities existed in the distribution thereof. Participants responded as follows when asked whether the lack of resources was an inhibiting factor:

Graph 4.22: Lack of resources as an inhibiting factor



- The sample indicated that more than 70% strongly agreed or agreed that a lack of sufficient resources was an inhibiting factor in the implementation of CASS.

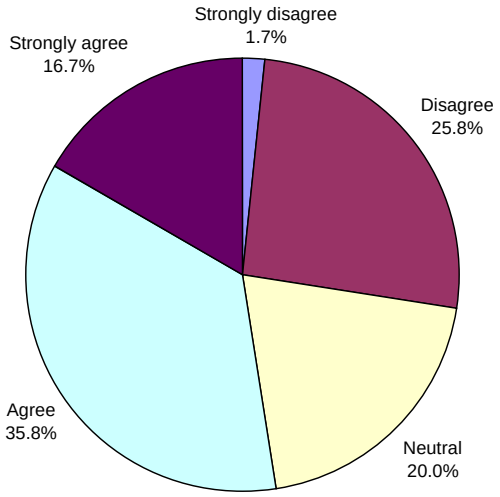
- The qualitative interview reflected a different point of view, because "... it is only subjects with a practical component like your life sciences [and] the physical science, where there is a practical part that constitutes SBA [school based assessment]. ... in those subjects, if you don't have laboratories and if you don't have proper equipment then SBA is compromised. ... what we find is that you go to many schools and you find equipment is still lying in boxes, packed away ... not used. ... there are resources available in terms of literature, newspapers ... libraries, ... the internet. I would say that the lack of resources contributed, but was not the main factor." Mahomed (1999:165) also stated that the creative use of limited resources created the opportunity for educators to become effective mediators or facilitators of learning and to use the surrounding environment, the media and other resources skillfully.

Even under conditions of the correct implementation of CASS, another concern was that the emphasis remained on tests and examinations. In the

interview it was mentioned that "[educators] implement SBA [CASS] and say they are implementing SBA, but all they are doing is just administering tests. So, if you look at school-based assessment it is in the main test orientated and yet the reason school-based assessment has been introduced is to bring in other forms of assessment which are different from a formal examination or a pen and paper test."

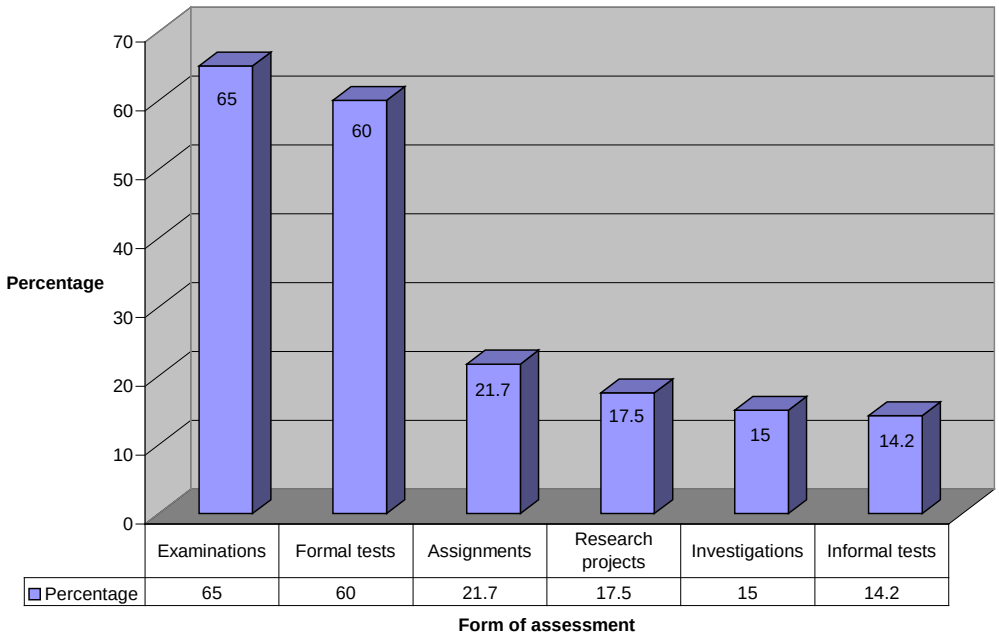
Multiple questions arise from the above remark. Participants were first asked whether they were of the opinion that the emphasis remained on tests and examinations that are a test of memory.

Graph 4.23: The emphasis on tests and examinations in CASS



- The findings reflect that more than 52% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the emphasis simply remained on tests and exams. In the selection of the five forms of assessment that the participants considered to be the most important, the following results were obtained:

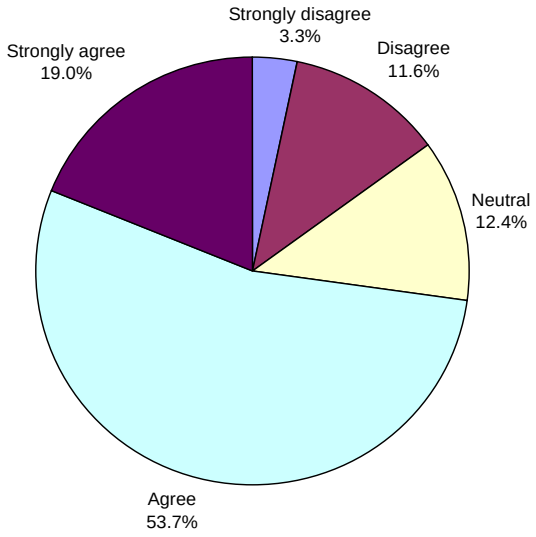
Graph 4.24: Most important forms of assessment



- Examinations were indicated as being the most important form of assessment by 65% of the respondents, and 60% regarded formal tests as the second most important form of assessment. Then there is a dramatic decrease in the importance of assignments, research projects, investigations and informal tests.

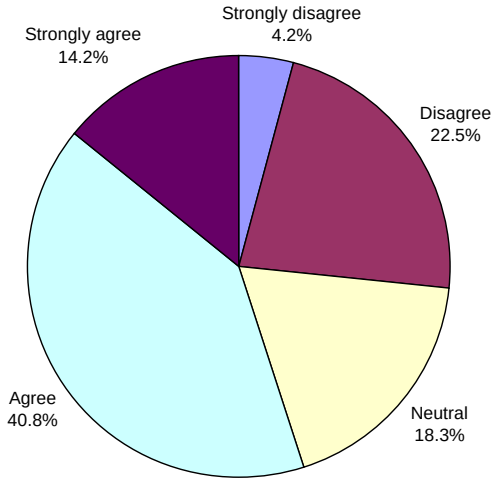
With the emphasis on tests and examinations that do not only have the most important influence on the CASS mark, but also on the promotion mark, the question arises if the most time is also spent only on work that will be examined.

Graph 4.25: Time spent only on work that will be examined



- With 72.7% of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the most time is spent on work that will be examined, knowledge remains the most important, and skills and values are neglected. Learners adjusted to this method of assessment, and the effort they are willing to put into an assignment, test or other form of assessment is determined by the marks they will receive for them.

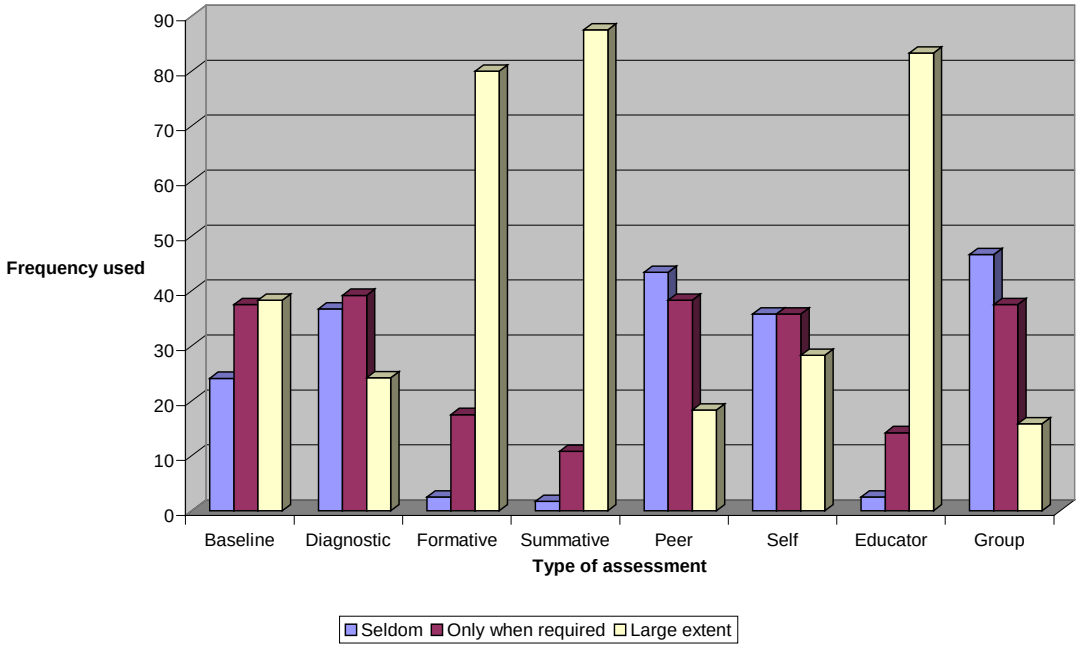
Graph 4.26: Effort determined by marks allocated to an assignment



- If educators spend the most time on work that will be examined, learners will also devote their time and effort on assessment activities that count the most marks and have a bigger influence on their promotion mark. This was the opinion of 55% of the respondents, who either agreed or strongly agreed.

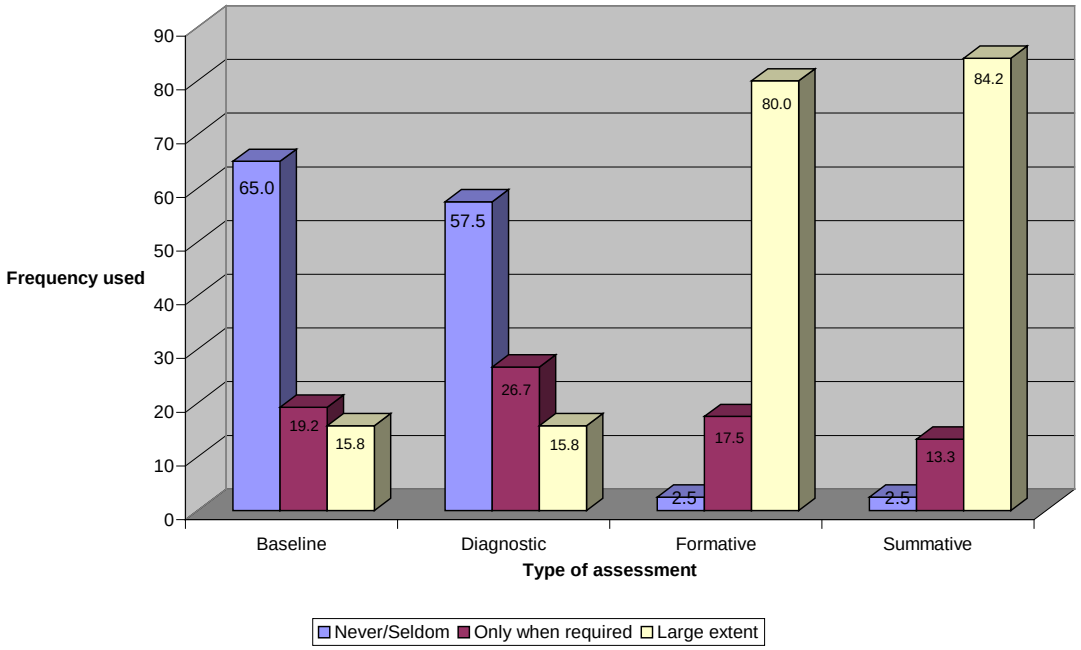
- Learners can only spend time on assessment activities that have been provided to them by the educators. In the literature review the different types of assessments and their importance were explained. The question that arises is to what extent educators make use of these different types of assessments available to them.

Graph 4.27: Frequency of using different types of assessments



- When analysing the graph it is clear that educator assessment is used to conduct formative and summative assessment whereas peer, self- and group assessment are seldom used. Baseline assessment is used when required and to a large extent, but less frequently, whereas diagnostic assessment is seldom used, or only when required. Which of these types of assessment are included in the calculation of the CASS mark?

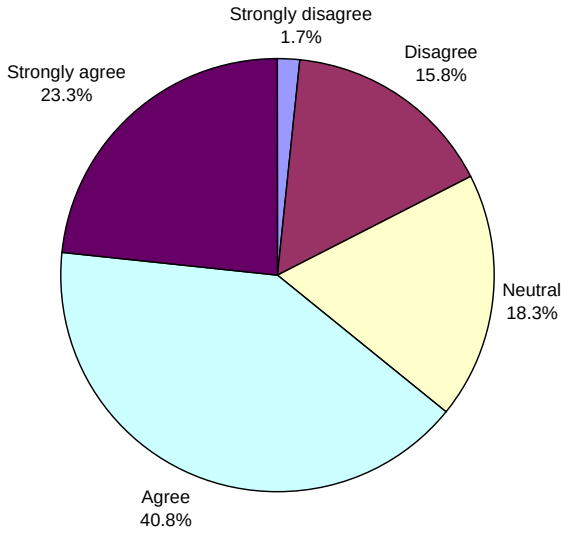
Graph 4.28: Types of assessment included in the CASS mark



- Graph 4.27 illustrates that formative and summative assessment are most frequently used by educators. Graph 4.28 illustrates clearly the reason for this. Formative and summative assessment are included in the CASS mark, according to more than 80% of the respondents, whereas baseline and diagnostic assessment are never or seldom used for the calculation of the CASS mark.

Another concern regarding the CASS mark is that Grade 12 CASS is moderated externally but administered internally in all schools, and Grades 10 and 11 CASS are, in the majority of the learning areas, only controlled internally. Is a CASS mark therefore really reliable if differences in internal assessment are taken into consideration?

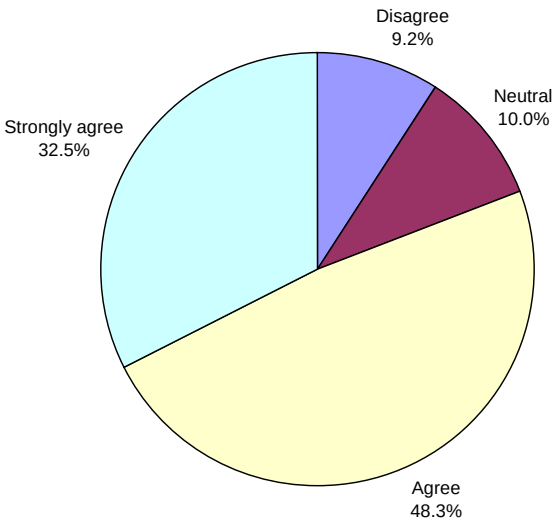
Graph 4.29: Differences in internal assessments among schools



- Participants who agreed and strongly agreed represented 64.1% of the respondents who were of the opinion that CASS cannot be regarded as reliable due to the differences in internal assessments among schools.

Although the relationship between OBE and economic growth does not fall within the scope of this research, it was identified by Jansen (1999:147) as a criticism, as discussed in the literature review. The impact of the curriculum on economic development could serve as a guideline to determine whether school-leavers were adequately prepared for the world of work (Rasool, 1999:174). OBE advocates that learners should be prepared for a meaningful career choice, that it should increase their trainability and capacity for a productive career performance (Rasool, 1999:175).

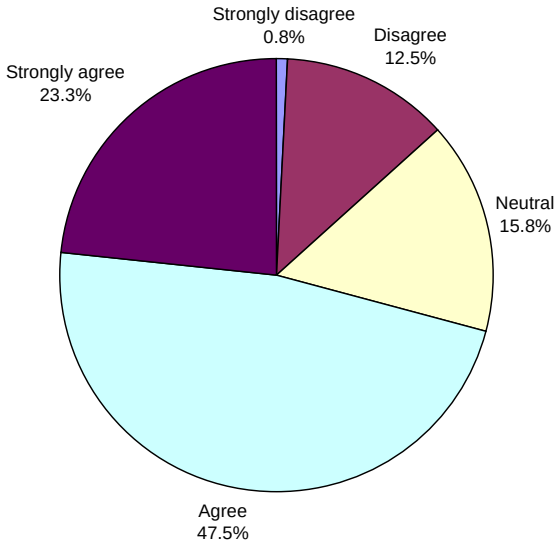
Graph 4.30: School-leavers not prepared for the world of work



- More than 80% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that school-leavers were not adequately prepared for the world of work. This is contrary to the paradigm that OBE prepares learners for a meaningful career choice, and increases their trainability and capacity for a productive career performance, as advocated by Rasool (1999:175).

Another concern expressed by Jansen (1999:151) was that the content of the learning programmes were not defined. The intention was to "…encourage different reflections of knowledge ..." (Mahomed, 1999:166) and step away from the emphasis on content in the previous system (Mahomed, 1999:161). The lack of content resulted in authors making their own choices on contextualizing the various textbooks in a single learning area. The question arises whether this practise causes differences in the contextualising of textbooks.

Graph 4.31: Differences in the contextualising of textbooks

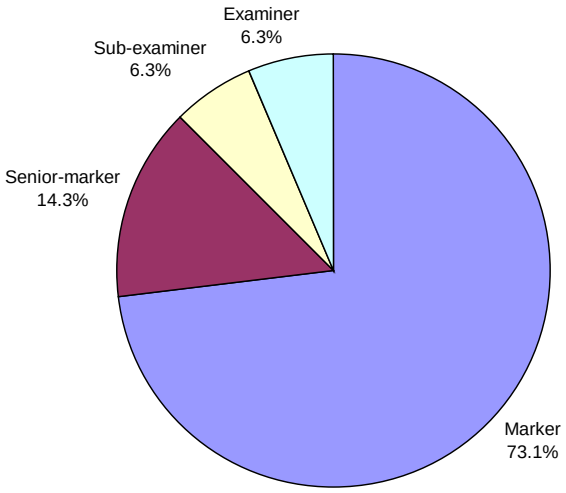


- More than 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that differences exist in the contextualising of textbooks. In Grades 10 and 11 this does not pose a problem because assessment is done internally at all schools. In Grades 12, however, an external exams is written and it is important to analyse whether the difference in contextualisation had an influence on the marking process following the examination.

Grade 12 examinations: 2008

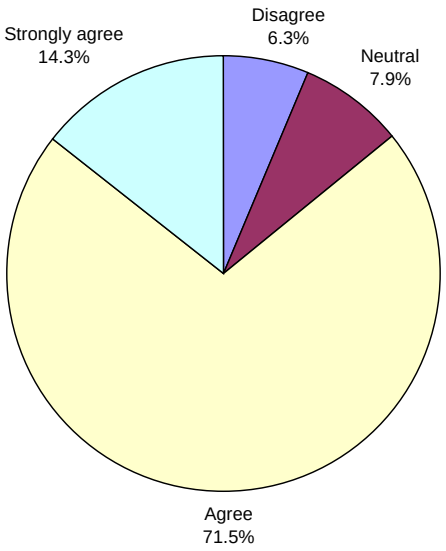
Of the 120 respondents who completed questionnaire one, 63 acted as examiners, senior examiners, or sub-examiners in the final Grade 12 examinations in 2008.

Graph 4.32: Distribution of respondents' capacities in the final examination



Following the discussion of graph 4.31 on the contextualisation of textbooks, the accent placed on the relative importance of the different parts of the work would indicate content validity. The following are the responses of the abovementioned 63 participants representing 19 different question papers.

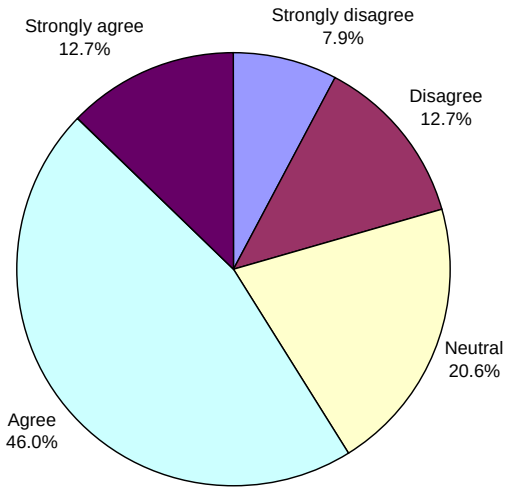
Graph 4.33: Accent placed on the relative importance of the work



- A first opinion that was analysed was to determine whether the examination paper reflected the accent placed on the relative importance of the different parts of the work. As indicated in graph 4.33, more than 85% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the question paper that they were involved in accentuated the relative importance of the different sections of the work.

Graph 4.31 indicates that more than 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that differences existed in the contextualisation of the textbooks. Did the memoranda of the Grade 12 final examinations make provision to include answers from all the approved sources available?

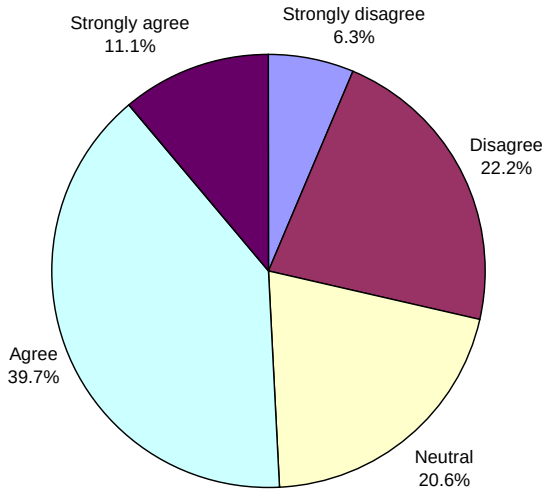
Graph 4.34: Memoranda making provision for all sources



- Graph 4.34 indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the memoranda of the question papers made sufficient provision to include answers from all the approved sources available. Slightly more than 20% of the respondents were of the opinion that there existed room for improvement, namely to include even more sources.

In addition, was sufficient provision made for divergent answers which measure creativity and imagination?

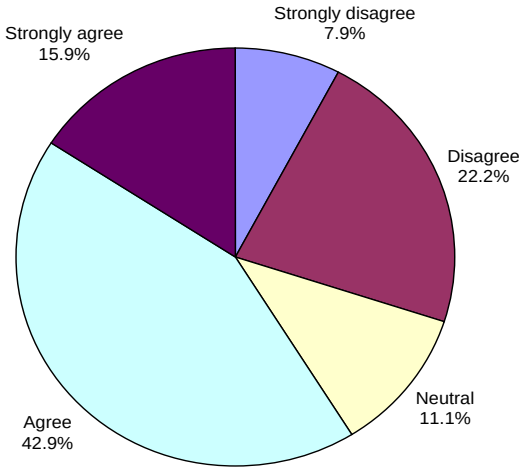
Graph 4.35: Provision for divergent answers



- Although about 50% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, 28.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the remark that sufficient provision is made for divergent answers. It can therefore be concluded that provision was made for creativity and imagination but the extent to which it is accepted in all learning areas can still be improved.

Another prerequisite for reliability discussed in the literature review is the consistency among different examiners allocating the same marks for the same standard of work. Assessment is considered to be reliable if the marking process is designed to minimize errors of judgment on the learners' performance (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:120). This leads to the question whether all examiners in the final examination had a good idea of what counts as sufficient evidence for marks to be allocated.

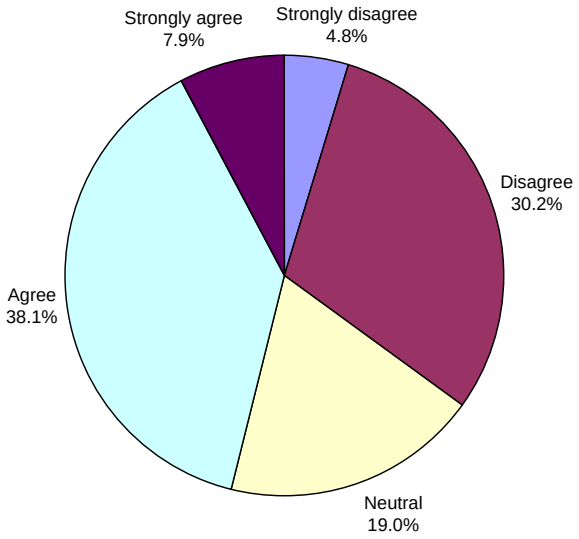
Graph 4.36: Examiners have clarity on the allocation of marks



- The majority of the respondents were satisfied that marks were allocated according to unanimous principles by the examiners. However, there still exists room for improvement when more than 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed on the correctness of the allocation of the marks.

As discussed at the beginning of this section, the promotion mark is weighted differently in Grades 8 and 9 when compared to Grades 10 to 12. Criterion-related validity, as discussed in the literature review, can be ascertained by determining the correlation between the CASS marks and the marks obtained in the final examination.

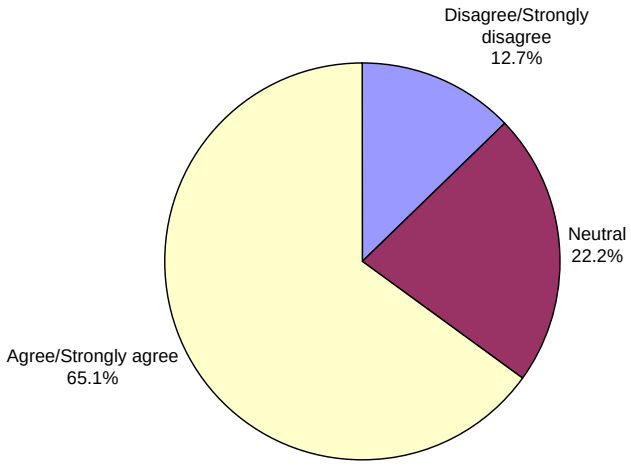
Graph 4.37: Correlation between the CASS marks and the final examination mark



Another aspect, on which there existed no agreement, was whether there existed a direct correlation between the CASS mark and the examination mark of a learner. Respondents who agreed and strongly agreed added up to 46%, and those who disagreed and strongly disagreed added up to 35%. The fact that some correlation exists can be deduced from the composition of the CASS mark. According to the method prescribed in the policy document (Department of Education, 2008:12) the midyear examination and the trial examination constitute 600 of the 950 CASS marks. There should be a direct correlation between these marks. The other 350 marks consist of 200 marks for tests, which should correlate or be slightly higher than the examination mark, since the work for the tests should be less than that for examinations. The remaining 150 marks are made up by assessment tasks, which provide the opportunity for diligent learners to increase their marks. The opposite is, unfortunately also true of lazy learners who will lose marks for either doing work of a poor quality or not do it at all.

To conclude this section of questionnaire one, the participants were asked whether the original purpose of creating a unified education system, which would address social inequalities, remained unchanged.

Graph 4.38: The education system remained largely unchanged

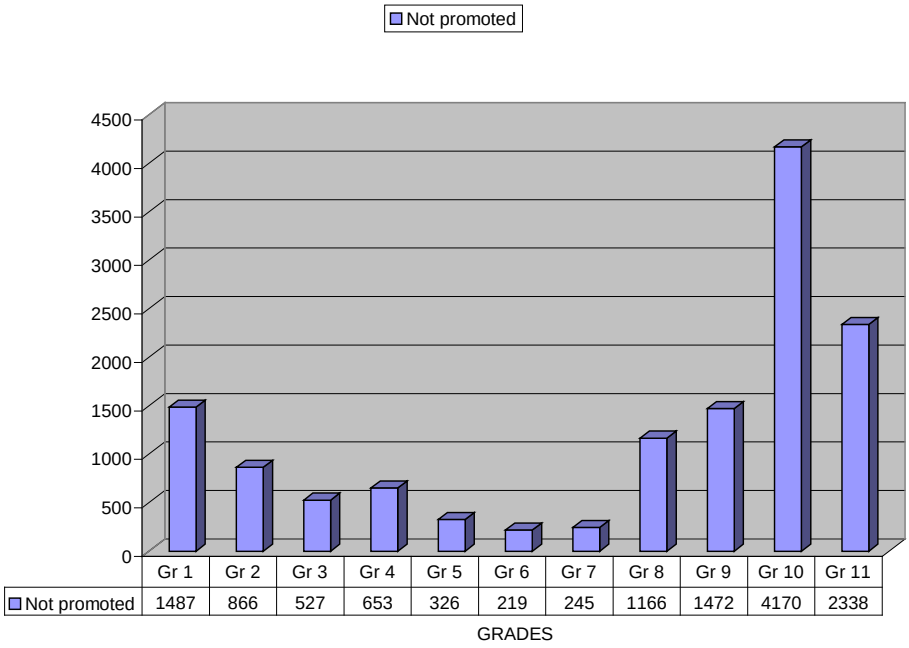


- According to 65% of the respondents the original purpose of creating a unified education system which would address social inequalities remained largely unaltered. As explained in the literature review, this was also the point of view of analysts and political parties after the matriculation results of 2008, where the results were an indication of unequal access to quality education. Learners from well-equipped schools adapted to OBE and performed well, whereas learners from previous poor-performing schools remained disadvantaged.

4.3.4 Analysis of the Grade 10, 11 and 12 results

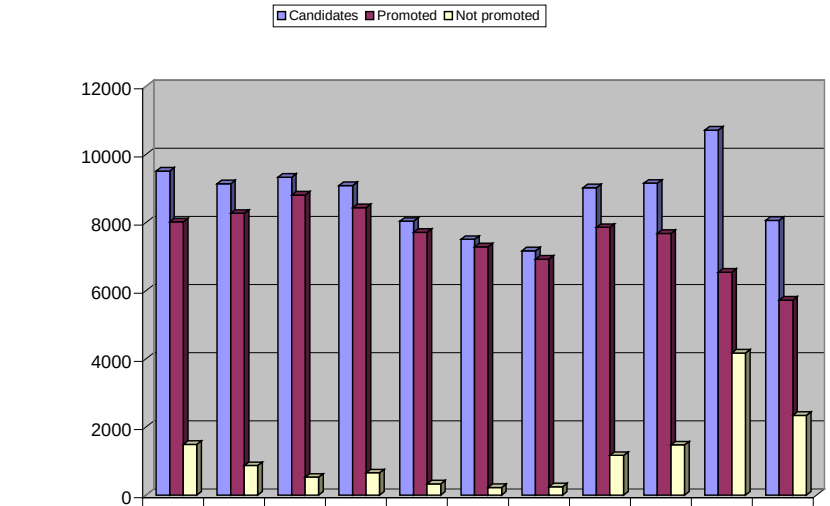
In the introductory orientation in chapter one the Grade 10 results of 2006, the first year examinations on the NCS were written, were indicated as a cause for concern. To place these results in perspective they need to be compared to the results of the other grades.

Graph 4.39: Learners not promoted in 2006: Fezile Dabi District



Comparing the number of learners who were not promoted per grade, it is clear that an extremely high number of learners failed Grade 10, if compared with the other grades. Since there were more learners in Grade 10 than in the other Grades, the graph can be expanded to also include the number of candidates, the number that was promoted and the number of those who were not promoted.

Graph 4.40: Pass-rate summary per grade in 2006: Fezile Dabi District

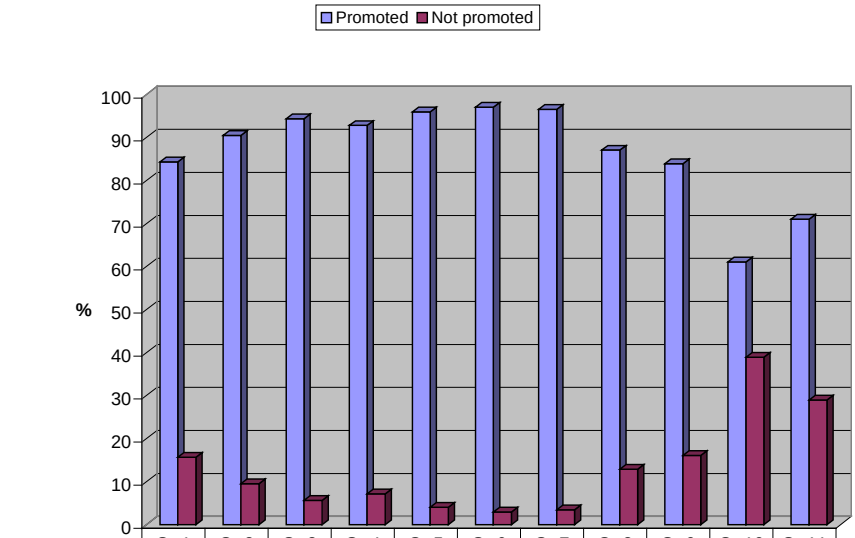


	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11
Candidates	9508	9136	9333	9088	8039	7506	7174	9023	9153	10713	8064
Promoted	8021	8270	8806	8435	7713	7287	6929	7857	7681	6543	5726
Not promoted	1487	866	527	653	326	219	245	1166	1472	4170	2338

GRADES

Using the statistics of graph 4.40, the number of learners who were promoted compared to those who were not promoted can also be expressed as a percentage for every grade.

Graph 4.41: Percentage pass-rate per grade in 2006: Fezile Dabi District



	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11
Promoted	84.36	90.52	94.35	92.81	95.94	97.08	96.58	87.08	83.92	61.08	71.01
Not promoted	15.64	9.48	5.65	7.19	4.06	2.92	3.42	12.92	16.08	38.92	28.99

GRADES

Irrespective of whether the comparison is on the number of learners who were not promoted or on the percentages, the results remain the same, namely that the Grade 10 learners did not perform in accordance with the other grades. Although the comparison of the difference in promotion requirements were discussed in the literature review, what is of significance is that the Grade 10 promotion requirements differ from all the other promotion requirements in the other Grades in 2006. An analysis was therefore done to measure the results of the Grade 10 learners against the promotion requirements which were applicable in the previous year, that is 2005, as well as the promotion requirements that were amended and applied in 2007 for the Grade 10 learners. An analysis and comparison of this nature will indicate the reasons for learners not being promoted and whether a difference in promotion requirements would have a different outcome.

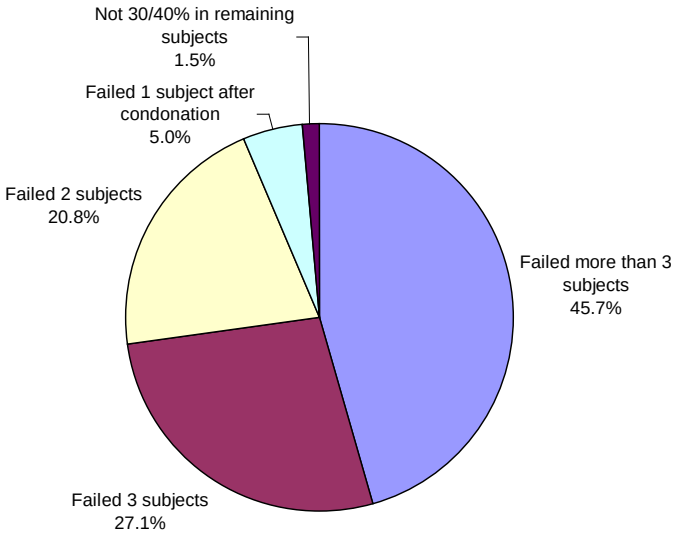
The sample consisted of the analysis of the results of 3447 Grade 10 learners of 2006, of whom 1355 were not promoted. These results were classified according to the following promotion requirements which were applicable in 2006:

- Obtain at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level.
- Obtain at least 30% in the other required language on at least First Additional Language level.
- Obtain at least 30% in Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics.
- Obtain at least 40% in Life Orientation.
- Obtain at least 40% in one of the remaining three subjects.
- Obtain at least 30% in two subjects.
- A condonation of a maximum of one subject with a rating of 'Not achieved' will be allowed and such a subject will be deemed to have been obtained with a rating of 30%, provided that a condonation is applied only once.

The implications of the above promotion requirements are as follows:

- Learners who do not obtain 40% in their Home Language and Life Orientation, or one of the remaining subjects, fail, because condonation can only increase marks up to 30%.
- If all the other promotion requirements are met, but a learner fails only the First Additional Language, Mathematics, or Mathematical Literacy, or needs 30% in one other subject, that learner is promoted because condonation increases the mark for that subject to 30%.
- Learners who fail two or more subjects, fail, because too many subjects are failed.

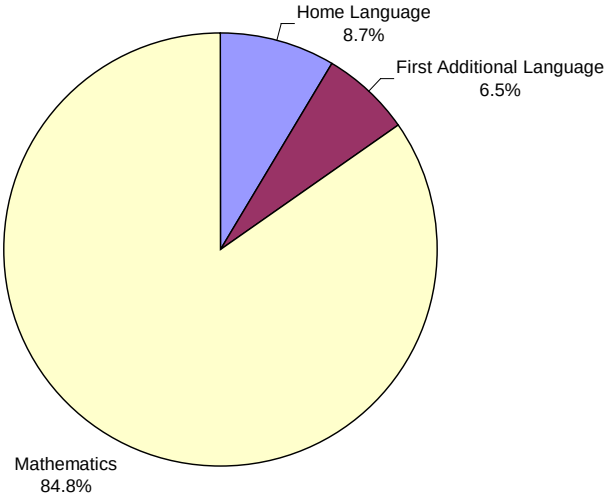
Graph 4.42: Reasons for Grade 10 learners failing in 2006



- Of the 1355 learners who were not promoted in 2006, more than 93% failed because they failed two or more subjects. To pass the Home Language, Life Orientation and at least one other subject, learners have to obtain 40% and 30% in the remaining subjects, except one that can be condoned. This necessitated an analysis of these compulsory subjects.

Of the compulsory subjects that learners have to pass, including 40% in the Home Language, 30% in the First Additional Language, 30% in Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, and 40% in Life Orientation, the following subjects proved to be the reason for not being promoted:

Graph 4.43: Learners who failed one subject after condonation



- No learner failed for not passing Life Orientation. Even though either Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy and the First Additional Language can be condoned to obtain a compulsory 30%, these learners failed another subject as well, and only one subject may be condoned. The findings of graph 4.43 only indicate the percentage of learners who could not be promoted after condonation had already been done.

As discussed in the literature review, different promotion requirements were applicable in the previous year, 2005, and also in the following year, namely 2007. Comparing the 2006 results with the promotion requirements of 2005 and 2007, can indicate whether the pass-rate would have been different if the promotion requirements were different. The differences in the promotion requirements of 2005 and 2006 were discussed in detail in the literature review but the differences that are comparable are indicated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Comparable differences between the promotion requirements of 2005 and 2006

2005	2006
Minimum of six subjects. Five of the six must be passed.	Minimum of seven subjects. All seven subjects must be passed.
One of the five subjects that need to be passed could have been condoned by two percent to allow a pass in that subject.	One of the seven subjects that need to be passed may be condoned up to 30%.
Subjects could have been taken on Higher Grade, Standard Grade or Lower Grade.	Different levels of ability are recognised by subjects, but there is no provision for Higher Grade, Standard Grade or Lower Grade.
Conversion between Higher Grade, Standard Grade and Lower Grade were possible.	No conversion is possible.
Compulsory subjects consist of the two official languages.	Compulsory subjects consist of the two official languages, Life Orientation, and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy.

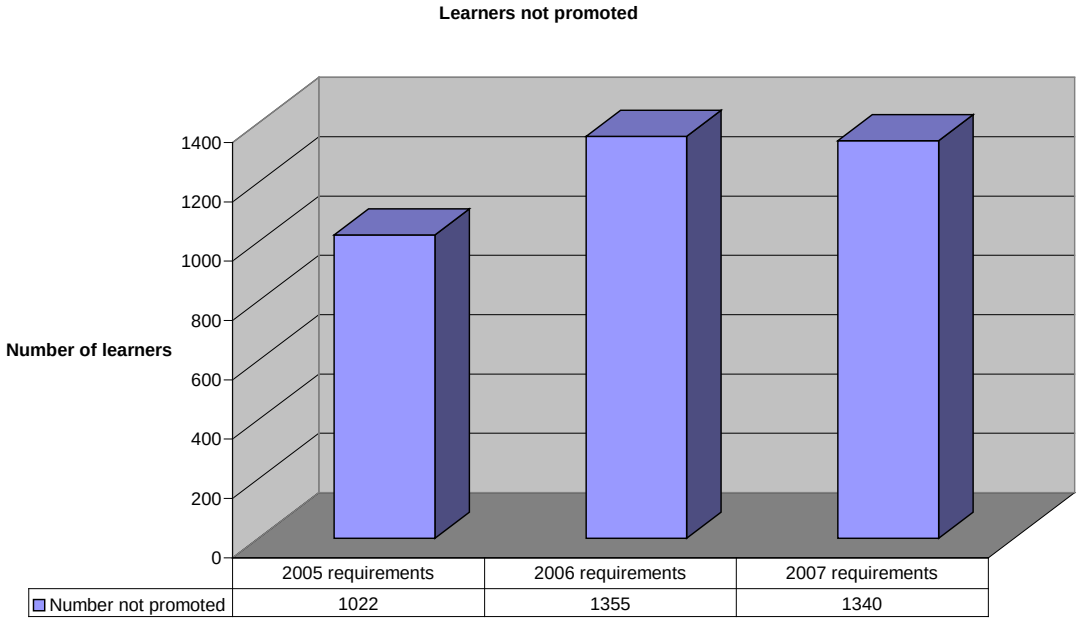
The other difference, which is not considered in this analysis, includes the aggregate total of 720 marks the learner had to obtain for the six subjects in the promotion requirements of 2005. The percentage represented by 720 marks would depend on the number of Higher Grade and Standard Grade subjects the learner presented, but would add up to an average between 30% and 40%. In 2006 the learner had to obtain 40% in three subjects and 30% in four other subjects. This adds up to an average of 34.3%. Since it is not possible to allocate an equal percentage to the pass requirements of 2006 to compensate for the 720 marks of 2005, this difference in pass requirements was not taken into consideration in this analysis.

As discussed in the literature review, the promotion requirements of 2006 were amended in 2007. The promotion requirements applicable for 2007 are summarised below.

- Obtain at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level.
- Obtain at least 40% in two of the remaining six subjects.
- Obtain at least 30% in three of the other remaining four subjects.
- A learner may fail one subject if a complete portfolio of CASS can be provided.

An analysis and comparison of the results against the promotion requirements of 2005 and 2007, is illustrated in graph 4.44.

Graph 4.44: A comparison of the 2006 results with the 2005 and 2007 requirements



- The major difference when comparing the results of the different promotion requirements, was comparing the 2006 results with the promotion requirements of 2005. There were 333 learners (24.57%) who were not promoted in 2006 who would have been promoted if their results were measured against the requirements of 2005. The difference was

primarily that learners who obtained between 30% and 39% in the Home Language would have passed on Standard Grade in 2005, and learners who failed one subject in 2005 after condonation was applied.

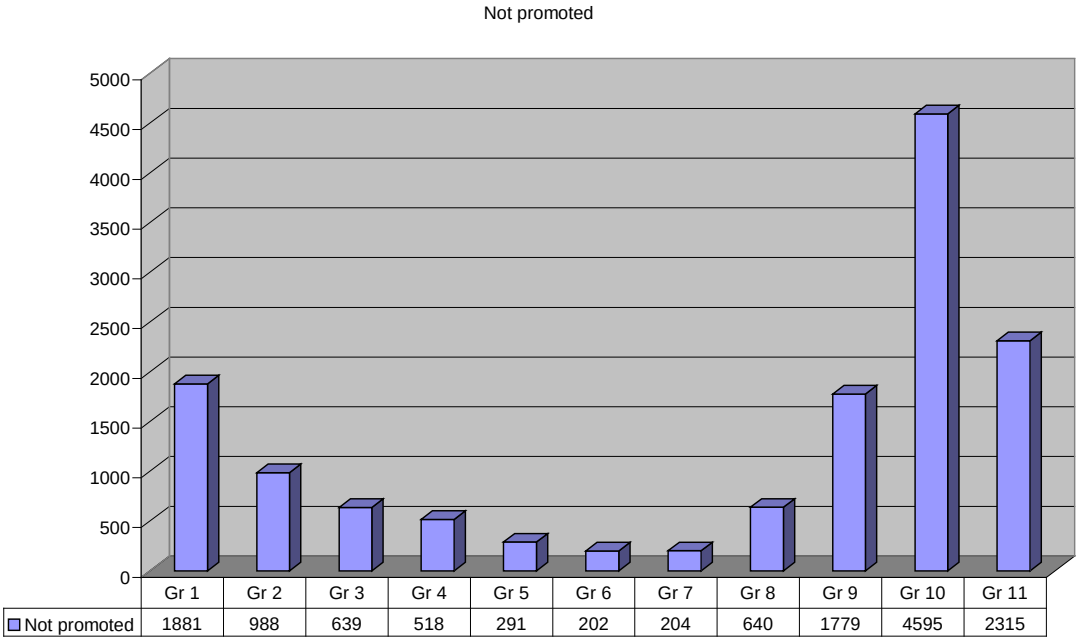
- There existed only a small difference when measuring the results of 2006 against the requirements of 2007. Only 15 learners from the sample who were not promoted in 2006 would have been promoted when compared to the requirements of 2007. These learners were not promoted in 2006 for failing to obtain 40% in one remaining subject, excluding Life Orientation and the Home Language. Condonation in 2006 merely increased the marks in a subject to 30%. In 2007 learners were allowed to fail one subject.

Before analysing the results of the Grade 11 learners of 2007, the difference in the promotion requirements of 2006 and the amended requirements of 2007, discussed in the literature review, can be summarised as follows:

- It is NOT a prerequisite to obtain 30% in the other required language on First Additional Language level.
- It is NOT a prerequisite to obtain 30% in Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics.
- It is NOT a prerequisite to obtain 40% in Life Orientation.
- NO condonation can take place.

The results of 2007 need to be compared with the other grades to determine whether the amendments to the promotion requirements improved the pass-rate.

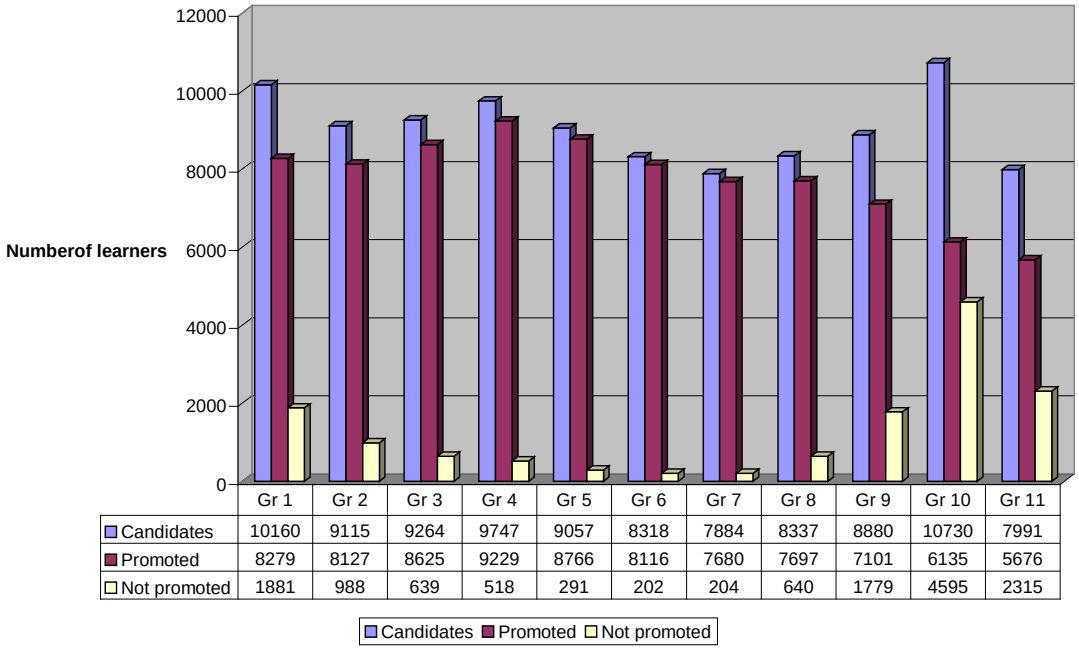
Graph 4.45: Learners not promoted in 2007: Fezile Dabi District



- Amendments to the promotion requirements in 2007 did not improve the pass-rate of the Grade 10 learners. Comparing graph 4.39 with graph 4.45, it is obvious that the high failure rate in Grade 10 simply continued. This finding confirms the argument discussed in section 4.3.4, that the difference in promotion requirements of Grades 9 and 10 contribute to the poor results of grade 10 learners.

A comparison of the number of learners in each grade, the number who were promoted and the number who were not promoted in 2007, is illustrated in graph 4.46.

Graph 4.46: Summary of the pass-rate per grade in 2007: Fezile Dabi District

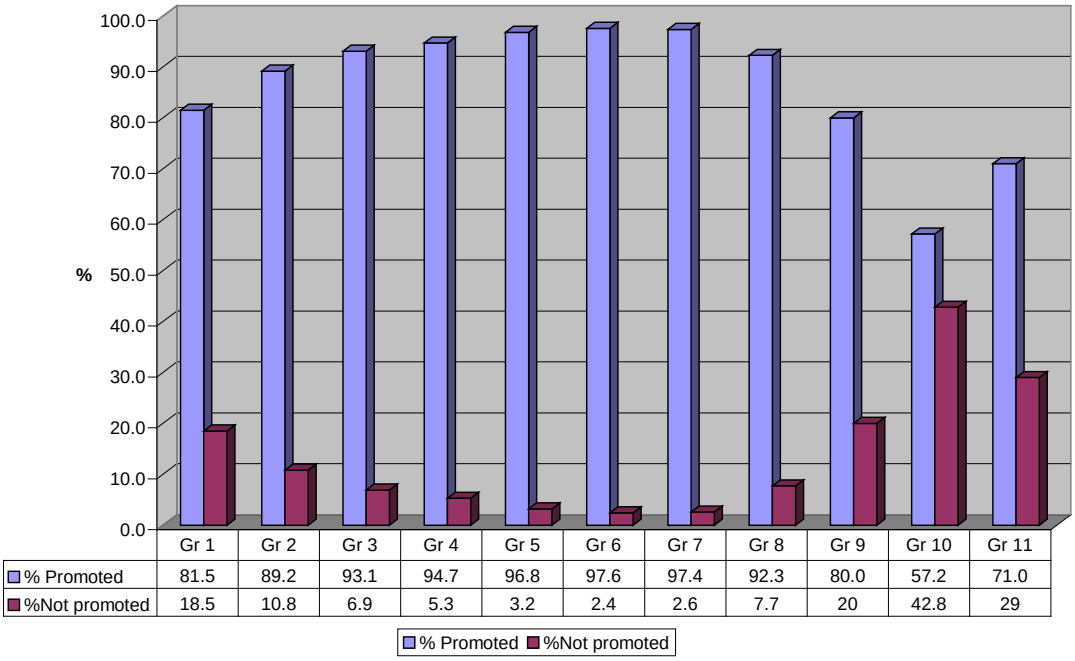


	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11
Candidates	10160	9115	9264	9747	9057	8318	7884	8337	8880	10730	7991
Promoted	8279	8127	8625	9229	8766	8116	7680	7697	7101	6135	5676
Not promoted	1881	988	639	518	291	202	204	640	1779	4595	2315

Even though the number of learners in Grade 10 exceeded the number of learners in the other grades, 7681 were promoted from Grade 9 to Grade 10 in 2006, and 4170 learners were not promoted in Grade 10. This adds up to 11851 learners who were supposed to be in Grade 10 in 2007. Comparing this to the 10730 who were actually enrolled in Grade 10 in 2007 leaves one with the question where more than 1120 learners, which represents more than 10.4% of the Grade 10 learners, are. This same observation is applicable to the Grade 11 learners, where more than 10% did not return to school. This difference was not experienced with Grade 9, where the difference was only 5%, the most likely reason being that school is still compulsory for grade 9 learners.

The number of learners who were promoted and those who were not promoted is expressed as a percentage in graph 4.47.

Graph 4.47: Percentage pass-rate per grade in 2007: Fezile Dabi District

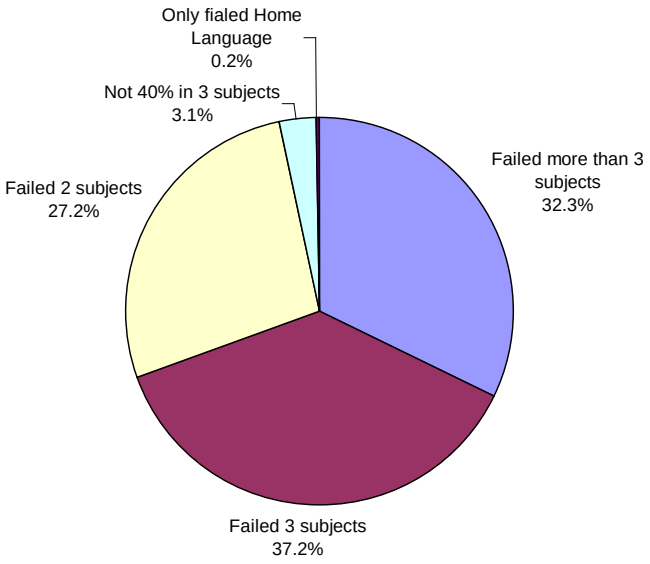


	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11
% Promoted	81.5	89.2	93.1	94.7	96.8	97.6	97.4	92.3	80.0	57.2	71.0
%Not promoted	18.5	10.8	6.9	5.3	3.2	2.4	2.6	7.7	20	42.8	29

- With a pass-rate of more than 80% from Grade 1 up to Grade 9, the 57% pass-rate for Grade 10 learners is, once again, unacceptably low, even after amendments to the promotion requirements.

The focus of the analysis of the results now shifts to the Grade 11 learners of 2007. These learners were all promoted successfully to Grade 11 in 2007. All of them complied with the promotion requirements of 2006 and passed their Home Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, Life Orientation and a First Additional Language. Yet, another 29% of the 7991 learners were not promoted at the end of 2007. These results are now analysed and compared with the statistics of graph 4.42 that indicated the reasons for not being promoted in 2006.

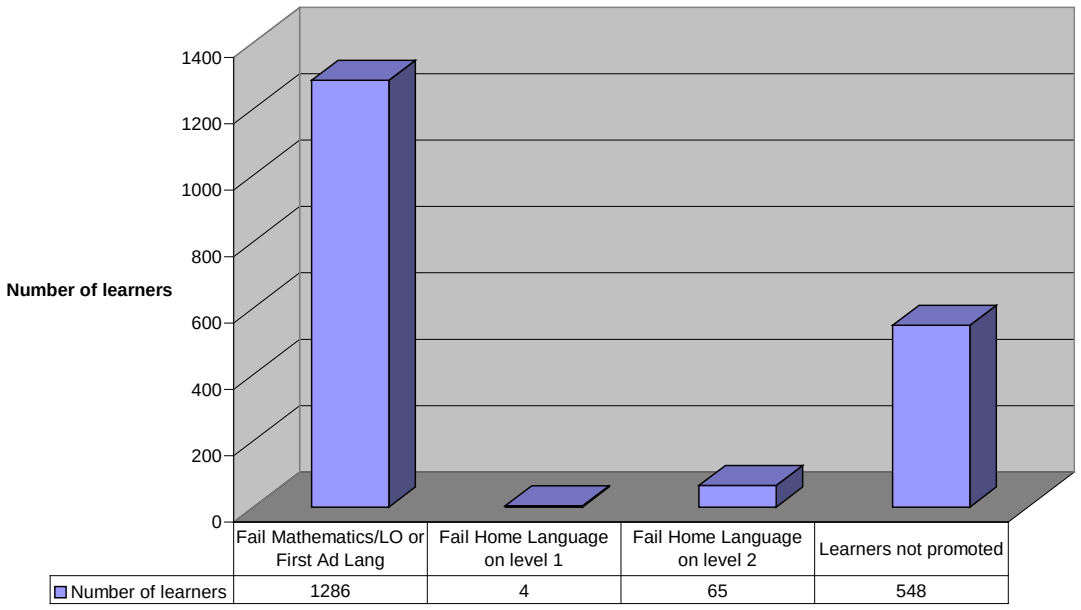
Graph 4.48: Reasons for Grade 11 learners failing in 2007



- The first difference in the reasons for learners not being promoted is that the number of learners failing more than three subjects decreased from 45.7% in 2006 to 32.4% in 2007. There was, however, an increase of 10 percentage points in the number of learners who failed three subjects and an increase of more than six percentage points in the number of learners who failed two subjects. The percentage of learners who could not obtain 30% or 40% in the prescribed number of subjects increased from 1.5% to 3.1%.

Although it was not compulsory for learners to pass the First Additional Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, or Life Orientation in 2007, the analysis included statistics on the number of learners who failed these subjects, as well as information on those who failed the Home Language. The findings are illustrated in graph 4.49.

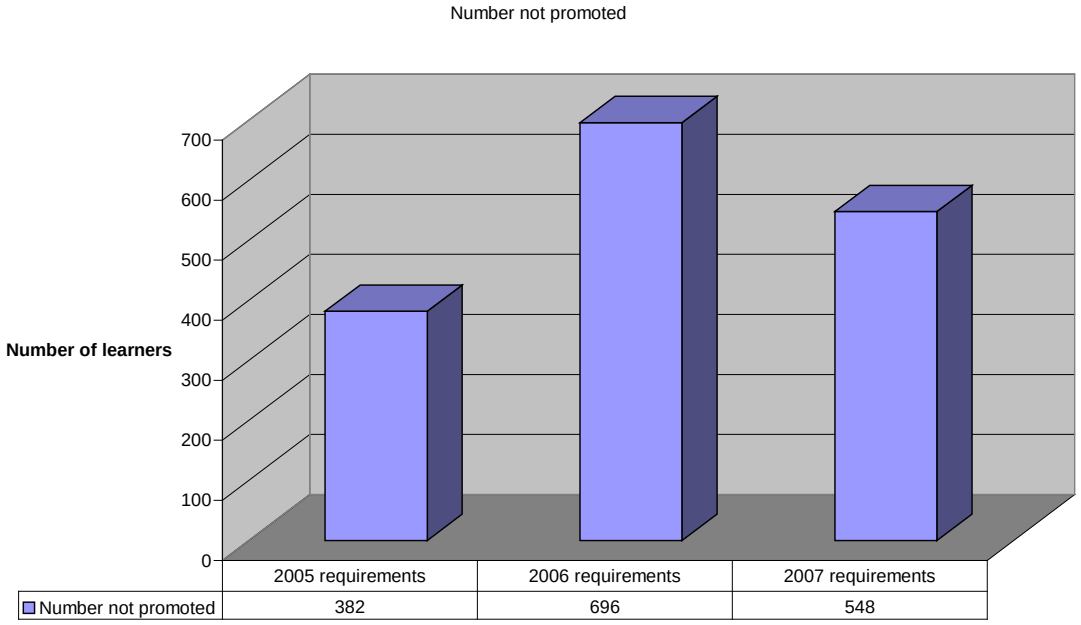
Graph 4.49: Analysis of the subjects



- Comparing these results with the results of 2006, it is clear that since it is not compulsory to pass Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, the First Additional Language and Life Orientation in order to be promoted to the next Grade, of the 1286 learners that failed these subjects, 738 learners were still promoted to Grade 12. The amended promotion requirements allowed learners to fail one subject.

- Comparing the results with the promotion requirements of 2005, learners could have failed one subject, another subject could be condoned, and a Higher Grade subject could be converted to a Standard Grade subject. This would imply that learners who failed the Home Language on level 2 could have been promoted if measured against the 2005 promotion requirements. Graph 4.50 illustrates the results of 2007 when compared with the promotion requirements of 2005 and 2006.

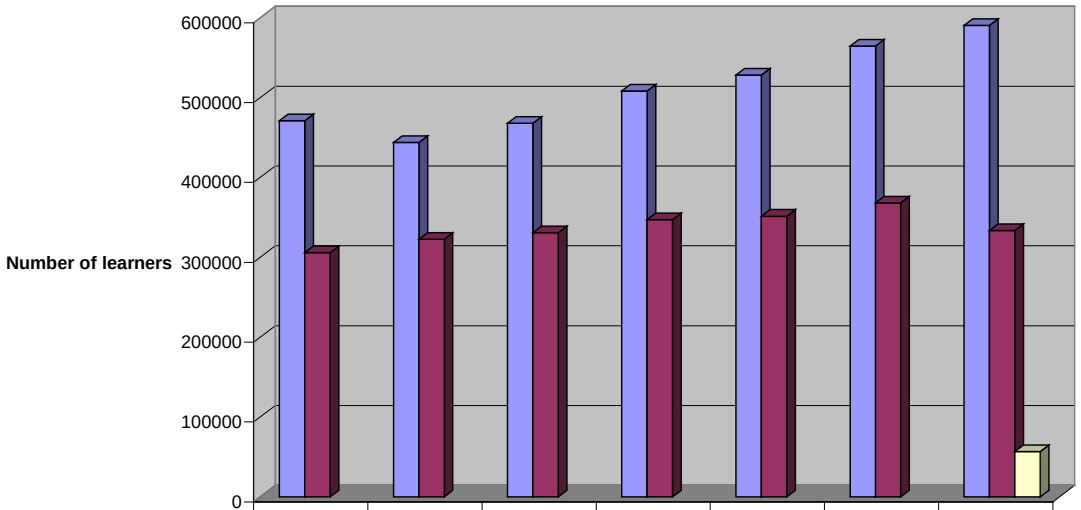
Graph 4.50: Comparing the 2007 results with the 2005 and 2006 requirements



- The findings are very similar to those indicated in graph 4.44. The least number of learners who would have failed when measured against the promotion requirements of the other years would be those measured against the 2005 requirements. The highest failure rate would be those measured against the promotion requirements of 2006.

The promotion requirements remained the same since the amendments were implemented in 2007. Analysing the Grade 12 results of 2008, therefore, meant measuring the results on the same promotion requirements as those that applied for the Grade 11 learners in 2007. The Grade 12 results of 2008 remained significant in terms of being the first national examinations for grade 12 learners after implementation of the NCS. A comparison of the pass-rate of the sample, the survey population and the target population was indicated in graph 4.3. The first comparison of the 2008 results was to measure the pass-rate on the national level against those of previous years, as illustrated in graph 4.51.

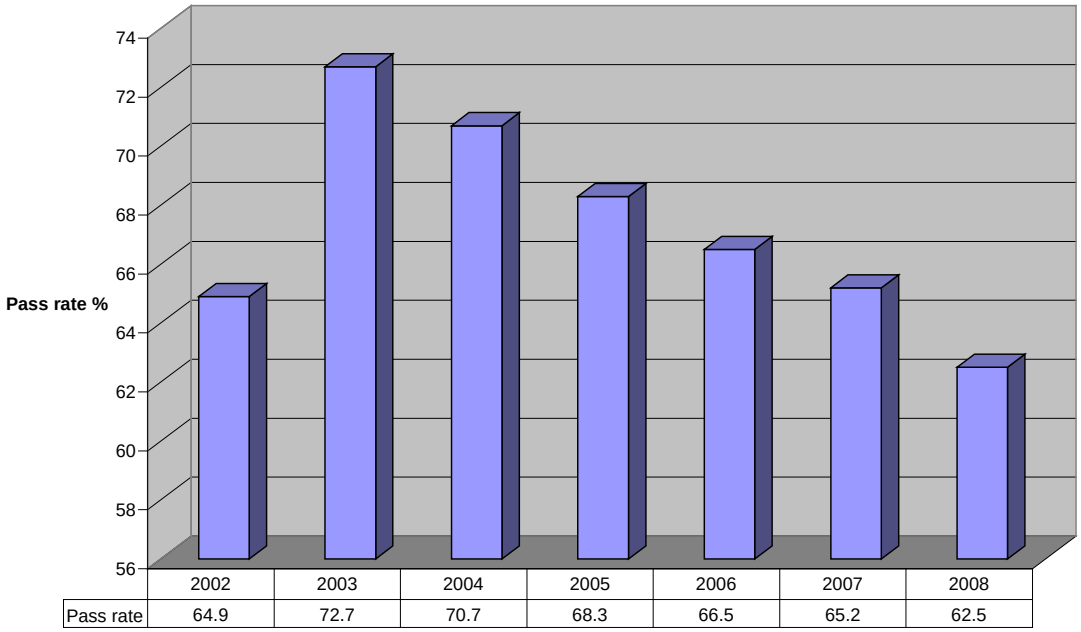
Graph 4.51: National enrolment for Grade 12 examination



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of learners	471309	443821	467985	508363	528525	564775	590371
Number passing	305774	322492	330717	347184	351503	368217	333592
Incomplete							56810

- The significant increase in the number of Grade 12 learners from 2003 is evident from graph 4.51. The results of the 2008 examination do not include the 56810 learners whose results were incomplete. Calculating the percentage pass-rate for 2008 was officially for the 333592 of the 533561 learners who received results. Many of the incomplete results were released within weeks after the official results were published, but the Department of Education did not add these to the initial results to possibly amend the pass percentage. The percentage pass-rate, illustrated in graph 4.52, is also the official pass-rate as supplied by the Department of Education prior to the release of the incomplete results. The official pass-rate of 62.5% for 2008 is therefore not completely accurate, specifically because almost 10% of the learners had not received their results. The results of these 56810 learners would imply an actual overall pass percentage that could vary between 56.5% and 66.1%.

Graph 4.52: National pass-rate, 2002 to 2008

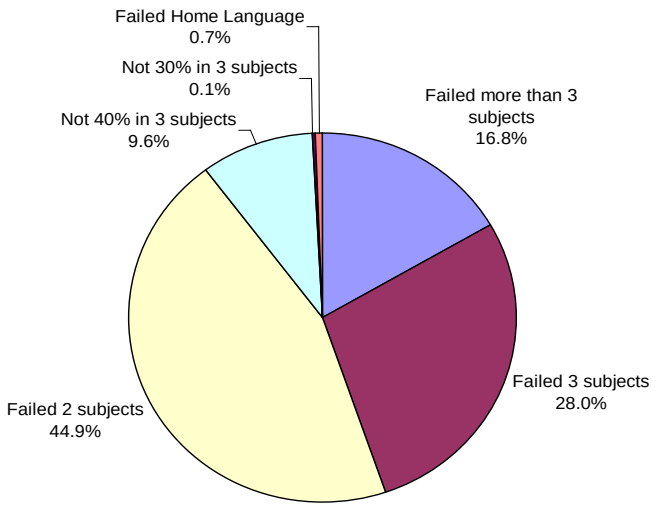


	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Pass rate	64.9	72.7	70.7	68.3	66.5	65.2	62.5

- Although the number of learners and those who passed increased in most of the years, there was a decrease in the percentage of learners who passed.

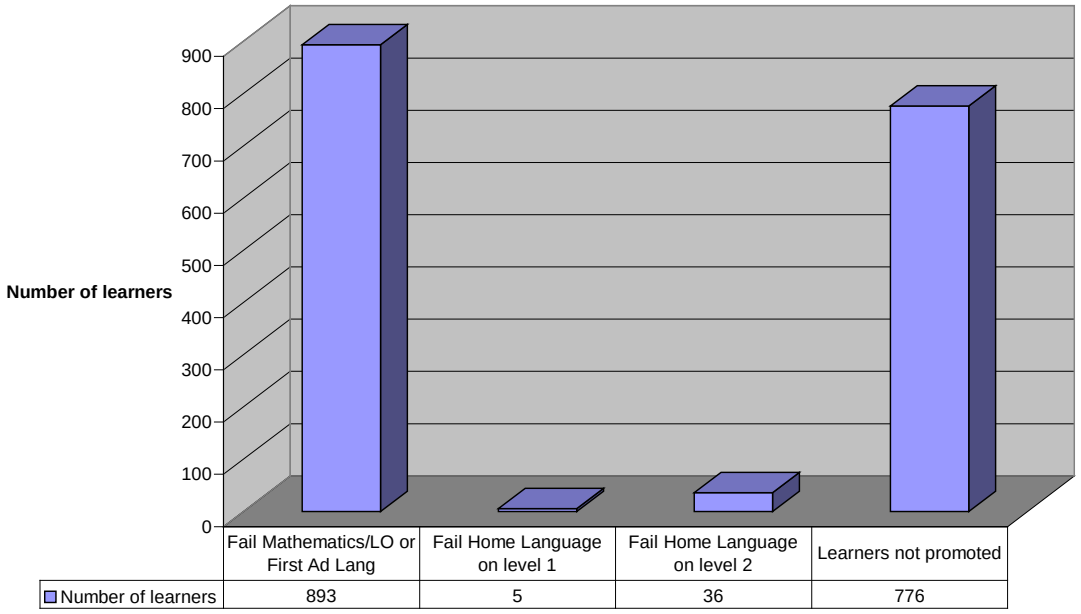
The analysis of the sample was completed in respect of 2161 Grade 12 learners of whom 1385 passed and 776 failed. The reasons for failing are illustrated in graph 4.53.

Graph 4.53: Reasons for Grade 12 learners failing in 2008



The promotion policy remained unaltered for 2008. The results of learners were therefore measured against the same promotion requirements as previously. Comparing the internally assessed Grade 11 results of 2007, as illustrated in graph 4.48, with the externally assessed Grade 12 results of 2008, as illustrated in graph 4.53, distinct differences are obvious. The number of learners who failed more than three subjects decreased from 32.3% to 16.8%, and those failing three subjects decreased from 37.2% to 28%. The one reason for many of the Grade 12 learners failing was because they failed two subjects in 2008, namely 44.9% of them, compared to the Grade 11 learners where only 27.2% failed two subjects. There was also an increase in the number of learners who could not obtain 40% in three subjects, of which one had to be the Home Language. In 2007 only 3.1% could not comply with this requirement, whereas it increased to 9.6% in 2008.

Graph 4.54: Analysis of subjects

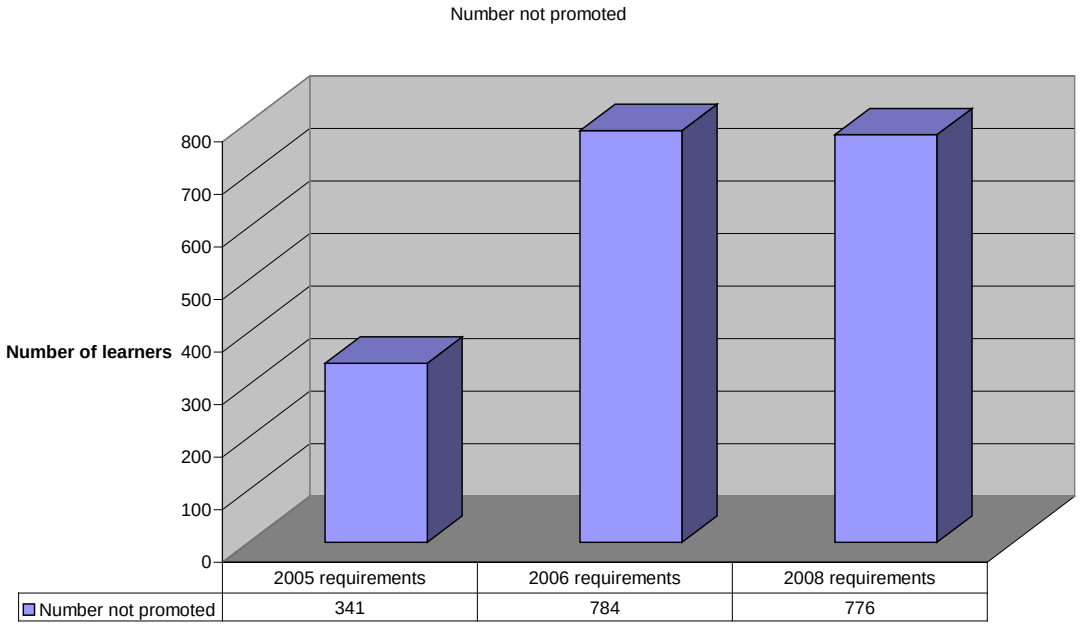


- The situation was the same in respect of Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, Life Orientation and the First Additional Language in 2007, only to a smaller extent. These subjects were compulsory and had to be passed in 2006, but not in 2007 and 2008. Of the sample, 117 learners failed

these subjects, but still passed their Grade 12 examinations. The 36 learners failing the Home Language on level 2, as well as those failing two subjects of which one could have been condoned or converted to a Standard Grade pass, would have passed in 2005.

Measuring the 2008 results against the promotion requirements of 2005 and of 2006 are illustrated in graph 4.55.

Graph 4.55: Comparing the 2008 results with the 2005 and 2006 requirements



- The number of learners who could have passed when measured against the 2005 requirements is the only significant difference. The reason for this difference is the requirement applied in 2005 on condonation, and allowing learners to fail one subject. Even though different promotion requirements were used in 2006 and 2008 the result would have been almost similar. The analysis proved that the main reason is that 12.2% of the sample failed only Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy or the First Additional Language. In 2006 one subject could be condoned to obtain 30%, which is the minimum required to pass these subjects. In 2008 learners were allowed to fail one subject. Therefore, in contrast to the

results of 2007, the amendments in the promotion requirements made little difference to the pass-rate.

4.3.5 Establishing a promotion policy

Before determining the outcomes of the changes in the promotion policy, it is necessary to investigate the process of establishing the promotion policy and the route that will be followed if amendments have to be implemented. The fourth aim of the empirical research, namely to gain a better understanding of the process of establishing promotion requirements, will be reached by means of a qualitative interview with an official of the Department of Education responsible for examinations and assessment.

From the interview the following procedure was established:

"The Inter-provincial Examinations Committee (IPEC) ... comprises of ... the heads of examinations of each of the provincial departments, teacher unions, HESA (Higher Education of South Africa), UMALUSI the IEB (Independent Examinations Board) and the distance education institution. The provinces make proposals to IPEC or they receive proposals from the National Department" of Education on promotion requirements. These proposals are then "discussed by IPEC and if it is accepted" will be tabled at "a committee comprising of the heads of Departments" of the nine provinces "which is called HEDCOM". "If they think…." ...the proposal ... "is suitable it will then ... go to ... the Council of Education Ministers" (CEM) which "comprises of all the MECs for Education from the different provincial departments and it is chaired by the Minister of Education. It is then discussed at that level and once it is discussed at that level it is then approved as policy that must now go out for public comment. ... It is then gazetted for public comment ... Those comments are then incorporated and finally go back to the minister who then makes sure that the comments that the public has made have been incorporated and finally it gets published as policy."

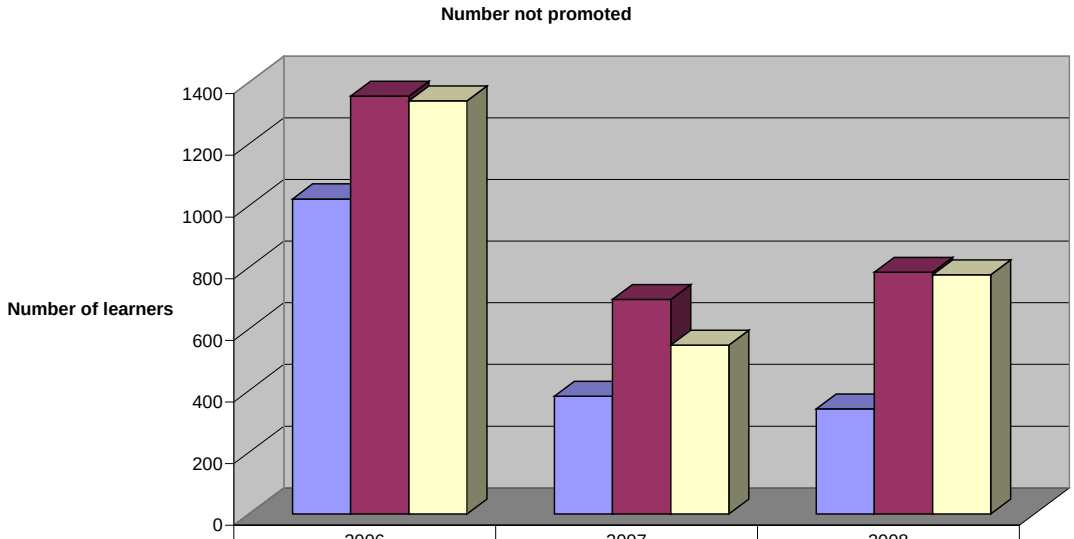
"If a policy has been approved, and it needs to be amended, it must go through the same process. There is no amendment that could be made through any short-circuiting of that particular protocol that must be followed."

"The requirement with regards to obtaining the qualifications, in terms of what should be the pass requirements per subject, what should be the pass requirement overall to obtain the qualification, was part of this package regarding the new curriculum."

4.4 SUMMARY

The main research question focused on the impact of the promotion policy changes and assessment practices, on the promotion of learners in the Further Education and Training Band. The impact of different promotion requirements on the promotion of learners was illustrated in graphs 4.44, 4.50 and 4.55. Combining these three graphs clearly illustrates the different results that are obtained when the promotion requirements are changed.

Graph 4.56: Comparing the results against different promotion requirements



	2006	2007	2008
2005 requirements	1022	382	341
2006 requirements	1355	696	784
2007/8 requirements	1340	548	776

Other factors influencing the results of learners, as illustrated in this chapter, are:

- Differences in the composition of the promotion mark between the GET and FET phases.
- Attendance and adequacy of workshops and training.
- Errors in the method of calculating marks.
- Differences in the interpretation of questions by learners.
- Differences in the interpretation of answers by examiners.
- Concerns about assessment, including the negligence of 'fast' learners, the lack of resources, the emphasis that remains on tests and examinations, the majority of time spent on work to be examined, differences in internal assessments among schools, school-leavers who are not adequately prepared for the world of work, and differences that exist in the contextualisation of textbooks.

The fact that the respondents were of the opinion that the education system remained largely unchanged and that the poor results were proof thereof, is concerning.

4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Aside from the above, evidence was also provided that CASS contributes to improving the performance of learners and that learners receive feedback. It indicates the readiness of learners to progress to a next level, although it will take time to achieve this.

Examiners were satisfied that the examinations accentuated the importance of the work, the memoranda made provision for answers from all sources and divergent answers were accepted, examiners were clear in respect of the allocation of marks, and there existed a direct correlation between the CASS marks and the outcome of the final examination. In the next chapter the summary, conclusions and recommendations will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"What were the lessons learned?"

Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Creswell, 2003:194)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, an analysis of the data and interpretations was made, based on the questionnaires completed by educators and the researcher, as well as the information obtained at the qualitative interview. Data were obtained on the results of the Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners, with specific emphasis on the reasons for not complying with the promotion requirements. The impact of the promotion policy changes on the promotion of learners was illustrated by comparing the results to different promotion requirements. Assessment practices that influenced the promotion marks were analysed and an in-depth view was obtained on the process of setting up policy and amendments to policies.

In this chapter, these interpretations and findings are summarised in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations that can serve as guidelines to those involved in education. The chapter will commence with a summary of the literature review before continuing with a summary of the empirical research. The conclusions will follow before recommendations will be made.

5.2 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to summarise the literature review on learner assessment and promotion, attention was given to a summary of assessment practices.

The principles of quality assessment practices included:

- Reliable assessment that accurately measured the knowledge, skills or values it intended to assess and which was free from errors of measurement. Sources of unreliability were the test itself, the learners who took the test and the markers of the test. Language barriers could cause learners to interpret questions differently from what the examiner intended. The performance of learners could also be influenced by their personal circumstances, assessment tasks being worded in a confusing way, the prejudice of teachers, and preconceived ideas about the capability of a learner. Marks obtained in one assessment activity should not influence your judgment on other assessment activities.

- Assessment tasks should be reliable if the conditions under which the task was administered, and the marking process, were designed to minimize errors of judgment on the learners' performance. Such reliability would imply that different markers would give the same marks to the same standard of work, and consistency could be obtained. The marking process, specifically of the Grade 12 final examination, played a fundamental role in the promotion of learners or in obtaining the National Senior Certificate.

- Assessment should also be valid in terms of the coverage of the work that had been taught and accentuating the relative importance of the different parts of the work. Validity would also be reflected in the correlation of CASS marks and examination marks because both measured the same knowledge, skills and values of a learner.

Correctly applying the different types of assessment according to the policy documents was equally important in monitoring the progress of learners. The different types discussed in the literature review (see section 2.2.4), were:

- Baseline assessment should take place at the beginning of a grade or phase to establish the learners' knowledge, but should not form part of summative assessment.

- Diagnostic assessment should discover barriers to learning by specific learners to ensure support and guidance. Corrective measures should be taken in areas where learners experience difficulties.

- Formative assessment should monitor and support the process of learning and teaching and inform the learner and the educator about the progress that was made with regard to achieving the specific outcomes. In order to measure progress, constructive feedback is required.

- Summative assessment should give an overall picture of a learner's progress at the end of a term or year by adding different forms of assessment and calculating an average. Educators would need a thorough understanding of the different levels of achievement and consistency in the interpretation thereof. A report to parents and other role-players and stakeholders should contain the progression through the acquisition of knowledge and levels of achievement across a range of competencies acquired during the learning process.

- An input-based approach to assessment focused on tests and examinations and prioritized content recall to determine whether the student could recall the input made by educators and textbooks. The purpose of OBE was a movement away from the traditional syllabus-based, content-driven approach based on a once-off examination for promotion, to an outcomes-based formative approach.

Continuous assessment was the assessment approach applied to conform to OBE principles and prescribed in the NCS. Characteristics that CASS should comply to (see section 2.2.5), as discussed in the literature review included:

- CASS should be an ongoing process and should take place on a regular basis throughout the year.
- CASS should assist in the growth and development of learners. Learners should be active participants and understand the criteria used for assessment activities.
- In order for assessment to inform and evaluate teaching and learning, feedback on what was intended to be achieved by the assessment activity would be required.
- Assessment should therefore be transparent to ensure clarity on the knowledge, skills and values being measured. The topic to be assessed should be clearly defined, and the criteria for success specified.
- A variety of assessment methods and opportunities were required to allow learners to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Provision should be made for differences in language, physical, psychological, emotional and cultural needs.
- The accumulation of the results of continuous assessment resulted in summative assessment.

Right from the introduction of OBE, there were concerns regarding the implementation in a diverse South African education system. These concerns (see section 2.2.6) included:

- The maze of new language concepts, terminology and definitions that would have to be mastered by educators.

- A lack of evidence in research to prove that any relationship existed between a change in curriculum at school level and possible economic growth.

- Measuring competency with precision left no room for imagination, creativity and innovation. The elements of skills, values and attitudes were not separable and susceptible to subjective assessment.

- Learning areas were not regarded as separate fields of study but should be integrated with other learning areas. Learning areas in OBE extended to beyond traditional subjects and aimed to emphasize the interconnected and interdependent nature of obtaining knowledge.

- Educators spent time trying to bring 'slow' learners up to standard, at the expense of 'fast' learners that were supposed to be involved in enrichment activities.

- The disregard for the central role that the curriculum played, and the importance of a professionally trained and motivated educator corps simply did not exist in the average South African classroom.

- The administrative burden of teachers would double in the process of managing OBE. Educators would be required to reorganise curriculum, increase the amount of time allocated for monitoring individual learner progress against outcomes, administer appropriate forms of assessment and maintain comprehensive records.

- The content of the learning programmes was not defined in the NCS. The devolution of the responsibility to contextualise the curriculum was transferred to authors of different text books, each with their own interpretation of the learning programme.

- The original purpose of creating a unified education system which would address social inequalities remained largely unaltered.

- The assumption that all learners could learn and succeed, but not all in the same time or in the same way was also criticized.

Summarising assessment in the NCS (see section 2.3), the following assessment practices were important:

- The Subject Assessment Guidelines is a document issued annually to provide guidelines for assessment in the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 to 12. According to these guidelines CASS involves informal daily assessment, and a formal Programme of Assessment that makes use of various types of assessment throughout the year.

- The marks obtained in each assessment task in the formal Programme of Assessment have to be recorded and determine the learner's promotion mark.

- The different assessment tasks to be completed in every subject (see table 2.1 and 2.2) will differ and are prescribed in the Subject Assessment Guideline of every subject. The method of calculating the CASS-mark and the promotion mark is also prescribed in the Subject Assessment Guideline.

Since there was a difference in promotion requirements for Grades 7 and 8 and those of Grade 9, a summary of the promotion requirements for the GET Band (see section 2.4) could be confined to the Grade 9 promotion requirements.

- The promotion mark consisted of a CASS mark and CTA mark. The CASS mark constituted 75% of the promotion mark and the CTA mark the other 25%.

- In order to be promoted to Grade 10 a learner needed to obtain at least 40% in one of the Languages, at least 40% in Mathematics, at least 30% in the other Language and at least 40% in three other Learning Areas. They did not need to pass the two remaining subjects in order to pass Grade 9.

The promotion requirements for the FET Band (see section 2.5) could be divided into the requirements applicable in 2006 and the amendments that were implemented during 2007, and were applicable for 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Summarising the promotion requirements applied in 2006 would include the following:

- Obtained at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level, Life Orientation, and in one of the remaining three subjects.
- Obtained at least 30% in the other required language on at least First Additional Language level, Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics and at least 30% in two remaining subjects
- A condonation of a maximum of one subject per grade, and such a subject would be deemed to have been obtained with a rating of 30%, provided that a condonation was applied only once.

The amended promotion requirements that were applied from 2007 could be summarised in the following way:

- It was not a prerequisite to obtain at least 30% in the First Additional Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy anymore.
- It was not a prerequisite to obtain at least 40% in Life Orientation anymore.

However, the above amendments only applied under the following conditions:

- The learner had to obtain at least 40% in Home Language and two of the other remaining six subjects, as well as at least 30% in three of the remaining subjects.
- No condonation could take place.

The difference between the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band (see section 2.6) was illustrated in table 2.10, and the difference in the FET Band requirements of 2006 and the amendments applied since 2007 in table 2.12.

The implementation of the NCS in 2006 in Grade 10 was accompanied by new promotion requirements (see section 2.7). The promotion requirements applied in 2005 could be summarised in the following way:

- Minimum of six subjects. Five of the six had to be passed.
- One of the five that needed to be passed could have been condoned by two percent to allow a pass in that subject.
- Subjects could have been taken on Higher Grade, Standard Grade or Lower Grade. (Lower Grade was phased out from 1998). To pass on Higher Grade a learner had to obtain 160/400 (40%). To pass on Standard Grade and Lower Grade a learner had to obtain 100/300 (33%).
- Conversion between Higher Grade, Standard Grade and Lower Grade was possible.
- An aggregate total for the six subjects of 720 marks had to be obtained to pass. The aggregate total could also have been condoned by ten marks.
- Compulsory subjects consisted of two official languages.

The difference between the promotion requirements of 2005 and 2006 was illustrated in table 2.11.

In the light of the literature review on learner assessment and promotion the empirical research was divided into three phases, namely questionnaire one, completed by educators on assessment practices, OBE and examinations; questionnaire two, an analysis of the results of the FET learners in the examinations of 2006, 2007 and 2008; and the qualitative research, consisting of an interview.

5.3 SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The findings of the empirical research can be divided into a summary of the findings of questionnaire one on assessment practices, questionnaire two on the promotion of learners, and a summary of the findings of the interview.

5.3.1 Assessment practices

Questionnaire one was divided into seven sections, namely biographical information, OBE, assessment, quality assessment practices, characteristics of CASS, limitations of assessment and Grade 12 examinations of 2008.

In Section A respondents provided the following biographical information:

- The number of years teaching experience revealed that on average the 120 educators had 16 years teaching experience.

- Experience in Grade 10 to 12 amounted to 14.2 years, and Grade 8 to 9 to 8.5 years.

- The majority of the educators were post level one educators.

- Regarding the highest academic and professional qualifications, all possessed either a professional qualification, or those with only a Grade 12 academic qualification posed at least a professional diploma.

- The average number of learners per class added up to 31.3.

- Workshops proved to be problematic in terms of attendance and in receiving sufficient training. The question on the attendance of workshops and whether they felt adequately prepared after attending workshops revealed that the highest attendance of workshops was 79.2% and only 57% regarded themselves as adequately equipped after attending workshops. Respondents felt that they were not adequately prepared for implementing OBE or NCS after attending workshops. The interview revealed that educators were not adequately trained in alternative forms of assessment.

Section B on outcomes based education focussed on three aspects, namely:

- Did educators receive sufficient training before implementing OBE? The majority of respondents (65%) indicated that they did not receive sufficient training before implementing OBE.

- Did educators receive sufficient support to implement OBE? Once again the majority of respondents (55%) were of the opinion that they did not receive sufficient support to implement OBE.

- Were sufficient resources available to implement OBE? The majority of the respondents (56.6%) were of the opinion that they did not possess sufficient resources to implement OBE. The interviewee confirmed that subjects with a practical component should have laboratories and proper equipment to expose learners to proper practical assessment tasks.

Section C investigated the different types of assessment, CTAs, and the methods of calculating CASS.

- The first question on the frequency that respondents made use of different types of assessment indicated that respondents made use of educator assessment to conduct formative and summative assessment to a large extent, but seldom of peer, self- and group assessment.

- Regarding the question on the types of assessment included in the calculation of the CASS mark, more than 80% of the respondents correctly only included formative and summative assessment in the calculation.

- On the question to respondents to rank-order the five forms of assessment which they considered to be the most important, examinations were indicated as being the most important form of assessment by 65% of the respondents, and 60% regarded formal tests as the second most important form of assessment.

- Respondents were questioned on the low standard of CTAs in Grade 9 and the difference in the weight of CASS marks in certain subjects in Grade 9 compared to Grade 10, as contributing factors to poor results. Apart from the 60% that agreed or strongly agreed that the low standard of CTAs contributed to the poor results, 79.1% were of the opinion that the difference in weight of the CASS mark was a reason for the poor results in Grade 10. This was regarded as a consequence of Grade 9 learners not being accustomed to writing examinations.

- Respondents had to indicate the method they used to calculate the CASS mark. No uniformity existed in calculating the CASS mark, with 67.5% of the respondents using one method of calculation, and 32.5% using a different method. In 12 of the subjects there was no consistency in the method used. There was a huge difference in the CASS mark when using one method compared to the other method.

Section D questioned respondents on quality assessment practices. Two of the aspects that were investigated included:

- Whether learners interpreted questions differently from what the examiner intended? According to 44.2% of the respondents, the different interpretation of questions to what the examiner intended was to a large extent the cause of varying results.

- Could the cause of varying results in the performance of a learner be that different markers varied in their interpretation of the same standard of work? According to 69.2% of the respondents, different interpretations by examiners attributed to a moderate to large extent to varying results.

Section E focused on the characteristics of CASS to determine whether the methods of CASS complied with the following characteristics:

- Whether CASS helped learners to improve their performance and maximise their ability to learn? The majority of the respondents (60.9%)

agreed or strongly agreed that CASS contributed to improving the performance of the learners and maximised their learning.

- Whether learners received feedback on what was intended to be achieved by the assessment activity? More than 85% of educators provided feedback to learners after assessment activities had been completed.

- Whether learners had to be allowed varying time frames to master objectives? According to more than 55% of the respondents learners should be allowed varying time-frames to master objectives.

- Whether CASS provided information about a learner's readiness to progress to a next level? More than 58% of the respondents were of the opinion that CASS could be used as an indication to progress to the next level.

Section F focused on limitations and concerns about assessment, and investigated the following:

- Were 'fast' learners neglected in the process of bringing 'slow' learners up to standard? That 'fast' learners are neglected in the process of bringing 'slow' learners up to standard was the opinion of 75% of the sample, who either agreed or strongly agreed.

- Was the lack of resources at schools an inhibiting factor in the implementation of CASS? The sample indicated that more than 70% strongly agreed or agreed that a lack of sufficient resources was an inhibiting factor in the implementation of CASS.

- Did the emphasis remain on tests and examinations? The findings reflected that more than 52% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the emphasis simply remained on tests and exams. Examinations were indicated as being the most important form of assessment by 65% of the participants, and 60% regarded formal tests as the second most important

form of assessment. Knowledge remained the most important, and skills and values were neglected.

- Whether CASS could not be regarded as reliable due to differences in internal assessment that existed between schools? Participants who agreed and strongly agreed represented 64.1% of the respondents who were of the opinion that CASS could not be regarded as reliable due to the differences in internal assessments among schools.

- Limitations of OBE focused on whether school-leavers were adequately prepared for the world of work. More than 80% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that school-leavers were not adequately prepared for the world of work.

- Were there differences in the contextualisation of textbooks? More than 70% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that differences existed in the contextualising of textbooks.

- The opinion of respondents on the statement that the original purpose of creating a unified education system, which would address social inequalities, remained largely unaltered. According to 65% of the respondents, that either agreed or strongly agreed, the original purpose of creating a unified education system which would address social inequalities remained largely unaltered.

- Was the majority of time spent on work that would be examined? In the opinion of 72.7% of the participants who agreed or strongly agreed that the most time was spent on work that would be examined, knowledge remained the most important aspect of examination, whilst skills and values were neglected.

- Was the effort by learners determined by the marks allocated to an assignment? If educators spent the most time on work that would be examined, learners would also devote their time and effort on assessment

activities that counted the most marks. This was the opinion of 55% of the respondents.

Section G, the final section of questionnaire one, focused on the Grade 12 examination of 2008.

- Information was obtained on the position of the respondent as marker, senior-marker, sub-examiner, examiner or moderator. Of the 120 educators who completed questionnaire one, 63 acted as markers, senior markers, examiners or sub-examiners in the final Grade 12 examinations in 2008. Of these respondents, 73% were markers and 14.3% acted as senior markers.

- Did the examination paper reflect the accent placed on the relative importance of the different parts of the work? More than 85% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the question paper that they were involved in accentuated the relative importance of the different sections of the work.

- Did the memorandum make sufficient provision to include answers from all the approved sources? The majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the memoranda of the question papers made sufficient provision to include answers from all the approved sources available.

- In addition, was sufficient provision made for divergent answers which measure creativity and imagination? Although about 50% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, 28.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the remark that sufficient provision was made for divergent answers.

- Did markers have clarity on the allocation of marks? The majority of the respondents were satisfied that marks were allocated according to unanimous principles by the examiners. However, there still existed room

for improvement in view of the finding that more than 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed on the correctness of the allocation of the marks.

- Was there a direct correlation between the CASS mark and the examination mark? Respondents who agreed and strongly agreed added up to 46%, and those who disagreed and strongly disagreed added up to 35%.

5.3.2 Promotion of learners

Questionnaire two was the analysis of the learner results of 2006, 2007 and 2008. The research was inspired by the poor results of Grade 10 learners in 2006, illustrated from graph 4.39 up to graph 4.41. Summarising the analysis would include the following:

- In 2006, an extremely high number of learners failed Grade 10, if compared with the other grades. Factors which contributed to these poor results included the difference in the composition of the promotion mark of Grade 9 compared to Grade 10, the learners not being used to examinations upon reaching Grade 10, the Grade 9 curriculum not preparing learners adequately for Grade 10, the poor standard of CTAs, as well as a notion amongst Grade 9 educators that OBE did not require content and they placed too much emphasis on group work and skills development.

- The Grade 10 promotion requirements differed from all the other promotion requirements in the other Grades in 2006.

- Of the 1355 learners of the sample group who were not promoted in 2006, more than 93% failed because they failed two or more subjects, of which 84.8% failed Mathematics. Less than 10% of the sample group failed either Home Language or First Additional Language and no learner failed because of Life Orientation.

- A comparison of the 2006 results with the 2005 and 2007 requirements was made. There were 333 learners who were not promoted in 2006 who would have been promoted if their results were measured against the requirements of 2005. Comparing the 2006 results with the 2007 requirements made an insignificant difference of just more than 1%.

- Amendments to the promotion requirements in 2007 did not improve the pass-rate of the Grade 10 learners (see graph 4.45 up to graph 4.47), and the high failure rate in Grade 10 simply continued. The pass rate for the Grade 10 learners in 2007 decreased to 57.2%. Analysing the reasons for Grade 11 learners not being promoted in 2007 proved that learners failed because they failed two or more subjects.

The analysis also revealed the following:

- Comparing the statistics on the number of learners that were promoted and the number that were not promoted, there was a 10% decrease in the total number of learners in 2007 in Grade 10 and Grade 11

- Comparing the reasons for learners not being promoted in 2006 and 2007, a number of differences appeared (see graph 4.42 and graph 4.48). The first difference in the reasons for learners not being promoted was that the number of learners failing more than three subjects decreased from 45.7% in 2006 to 32.4% in 2007. There was, however, an increase of 10 percentage points in the number of learners who failed three subjects and an increase of more than six percentage points in the number of learners who failed two subjects.

- Comparing the 2007 results with the promotion requirements of 2005 and 2006 indicated that the least number of learners who would have failed would be those measured against the 2005 requirements. Of the 548 learners that failed in 2007 only 382 would have failed when measured

against the 2005 requirements, but 696 learners would have failed according to the 2006 requirements.

Analysing the Grade 12 results of 2008, therefore, meant measuring the results on the same promotion requirements as those that applied for the Grade 11 learners in 2007. The analysis revealed the following:

- There was a continuous increase in the number of learners in Grade 12 since 2003.

- There was a steady decrease in the pass rate of Grade 12 learners since 2003.

- The official pass rate in 2008 did not include the incomplete results, and after these incomplete results were available, the initial pass rate was not amended by the Department of Education.

- Comparing the internally assessed Grade 11 results of 2007, as illustrated in graph 4.48, with the externally assessed Grade 12 results of 2008, as illustrated in graph 4.53, distinct differences were obvious. The number of learners who failed more than three subjects decreased from 32.3% to 16.8%, and those failing three subjects decreased from 37.2% to 28%. The one reason for many of the Grade 12 learners, who failed, was because they failed two subjects in 2008, namely 44.9% of them, compared to the Grade 11 learners where only 27.2% failed two subjects. There was also an increase in the number of learners who could not obtain 40% in three subjects, of which one had to be the Home Language. In 2007 only 3.1% could not comply with this requirement, whereas it increased to 9.6% in 2008.

- It was not compulsory to pass Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy in order to pass Grade 12. As a consequence of this amendment, more learners from the sample group failed Mathematics than the number of learners failing Grade 12.

- Of the 893 learners that failed Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy, Life Orientation or First Additional Language, only 776 failed.

- The number of learners who could have passed when measured against the 2005 requirements was the only significant difference. Of the 776 learners that failed, only 341 would have failed when measured against the 2005 requirements. Almost similar results would have been obtained if measured against the 2006 requirements.

5.3.3 Interview findings

The interview was conducted with an information-rich official from the National Department of Education responsible for examinations and assessment in the FET Band.

The interview started by investigating the procedure of establishing promotion policy. All stakeholders were either directly involved, or were able to at least make comments, before a policy was implemented. These stakeholders included the Head of Examinations of each province, the Head of the Education Department of each province, the MECs for Education, the Minister of Education, teacher unions, Higher Education of South Africa (HESA), Umalusi, the IEB and the public.

Provinces or the National Department of Education could make proposals to the Interprovincial Examinations Committee (IPEC). If accepted, the proposals would be tabled at the committee consisting of the heads of the Departments of Education (HEDCOM) of the nine provinces. From HEDCOM it would go to the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), consisting of the MECs for education and chaired by the Minister of Education. It would then be published for public comment in the Government Gazette. The Minister of Education would consider the comments received before it would be published as policy in the Government Gazette.

Would amendments to a policy follow the same route? For regulations and policies the same protocol would be followed. Acts would go to parliament.

Would promotion requirements be decided upon at the same level? Before the NCS could be implemented, curriculum statements had to be in place, together with overall requirements to obtain the qualification, as well as the pass requirements for each subject. The pass requirements formed part of the complete policy.

Would you think the poor results of the Grade 10 learners in 2006 could be attributed to pass requirements that were difficult to comply to? Seventy-five percent of the Grade 9 promotion mark consisted of school based assessment and 25% examinations. In Grade 10, school based assessment contributed 25% and examinations the remaining 75%. Learners failed because they were not accustomed to the high weight of examinations in Grade 10. A second reason could be that the Grade 9 curriculum did not adequately prepare learners for the new curriculum in Grade 10. A third reason could be that there was a notion amongst educators that the new curriculum did not require content. Once they reached Grade 10 there was a demand for content knowledge. Promotion requirements would be one of the reasons, but other factors also contributed.

Would you think the low standard of CTAs that Grade 9 learners wrote, contributed to poor results in Grade 10? It could have contributed due to CTAs not being conducted under examination conditions. The marks obtained in CTAs could therefore not be regarded as a reflection of the potential and ability of learners.

The view of the interviewee was obtained on the lack of resources as a hindering factor to implement school based assessment. Laboratories and proper equipment were needed in subjects like Life Science and Physical Science, without which assessment would be jeopardised. For other research, learners and educators could make use of libraries, news papers and the

internet. Many schools also didn't make use of equipment provided by the Department of Education.

Were there sufficient opportunities for educators to be trained? Training should be more extensive. Workshops over a period of two days, conducted by subject advisors, could not be regarded as sufficient. Disparity in the standard of training existed between different provinces. Educators should develop a culture of learning and accept more responsibility for their own training.

Restructuring the Department of Education to accommodate the GET Band and the FET Band under one deputy director general, should smooth out the transition from the GET Band to the FET Band.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

To investigate the impact of the promotion policy changes and assessment practices, on the promotion of learners implied that the following sub-questions (see section 1.3) had to be investigated:

(i) What were the differences between the promotion requirements for the GET Band and the FET Band?

Up to 2009, the promotion mark in Grade 9 (GET Band) consisted of a CASS mark and CTA mark. The CASS mark constituted 75% of the promotion mark and the CTA mark the other 25%. In the FET Band, the CASS mark constituted only 25% of the promotion mark and examinations the remaining 75%.

In order to be promoted to Grade 10 a learner needed to obtain at least 40% in one of the Languages, at least 40% in Mathematics, at least 30% in the other Language and at least 40% in three other Learning Areas. They did not need to pass the two remaining subjects in order to pass Grade 9.

Comparing the abovementioned promotion requirements to the promotion requirements applied in 2006 in Grade 10, would include the following:

- Obtained at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level, Life Orientation, and in one of the remaining three subjects.
- Obtained at least 30% in the other required language on at least First Additional Language level, Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics and at least 30% in two remaining subjects.
- A condonation of a maximum of one subject per grade, and such a subject would be deemed to have been obtained with a rating of 30%, provided that a condonation was applied only once.

(ii) What changes were there in the promotion requirements for Grade 10 learners in 2005 and 2006?

The promotion requirements listed above were applied in Grade 10 in 2006. The promotion requirements applied in 2005 could be summarised in the following way (see table 2.11):

- Minimum of six subjects. Five of the six had to be passed.
- One of the five that needed to be passed could have been condoned by two percent to allow a pass in that subject.
- Subjects could have been taken on Higher Grade, Standard Grade or Lower Grade. (Lower Grade was phased out from 1998). To pass on Higher Grade a learner had to obtain 160/400 (40%). To pass on Standard Grade and Lower Grade a learner had to obtain 100/300 (33%).
- Conversion between Higher Grade, Standard Grade and Lower Grade was possible.
- An aggregate total for the six subjects of 720 marks had to be obtained to pass. The aggregate total could also have been condoned by ten marks.
- Compulsory subjects consisted of two official languages.

(iii) What impact did these changes in the promotion requirements have on the promotion of Grade 10 learners in 2006?

Comparing the 2006 results with the promotion requirements of 2005 (see graph 4.44) indicated that 333 learners (24.57%) of the sample group were not promoted in 2006. They would have been promoted if their results were measured against the requirements of 2005. The difference was primarily that learners who obtained between 30% and 39% in the Home Language would have passed on Standard Grade in 2005. Condonation could also be applied to one subject in 2005.

(iv) What amendments were there to the promotion requirements for Grades 10 and 11 learners in 2007?

The amended promotion requirements that were applied from 2007 (see table 2.12) could be summarised in the following way:

- It was not a prerequisite to obtain at least 30% in the First Additional Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy anymore.
- It was not a prerequisite to obtain at least 40% in Life Orientation anymore.

However, the above amendments only applied under the following conditions:

- The learner had to obtain at least 40% in Home Language and two of the other remaining six subjects, as well as at least 30% in three of the remaining subjects.
- No condonation could take place.

(v) What impact did the amendments to the promotion requirements have on Grades 10 and 11 learners in 2007, and Grade 10 to 12 learners in 2008?

In 2007 there were 548 learners of the sample group that were not promoted (see graph 4.50). Measuring the results of 2007 against the promotion requirements of 2006 indicated that 27% more learners would have failed in

2006. Doing the same comparison against the promotion requirements of 2005 indicated that more than 30% less learners would have failed.

Although there was a difference in the promotion requirements of 2006 and 2008, the results would have been almost similar (see graph 4.55), if one measures the 2008 results against the 2006 requirements. Therefore, in contrast to the results of 2007, the amendments in the promotion requirements introduced in 2007 had almost no effect on the pass-rate. The number of learners who could have passed when measured against the 2005 requirements is the only significant difference. Comparing the 2008 results against the 2005 requirements, 56% of the learners that failed would have passed Grade 12. The reason for this difference is the requirement applied in 2005 on condonation, and allowing learners to fail one subject.

(vi) Were assessment practices in accordance with policy documents?

Evidence was provided that CASS contributes to improving the performance of learners and that learners receive feedback on assessment tasks. It also indicates the readiness of learners to progress to a next level, although it will take time to achieve this.

Examiners were satisfied that the examinations accentuated the importance of the work, the memoranda made provision for answers from all sources and divergent answers were accepted, examiners were clear in respect of the allocation of marks, and there existed a direct correlation between the CASS marks and the outcome of the final examination.

Concerns regarding assessment practices are:

- Workshops proved to be problematic in terms of attendance and in receiving sufficient training. Respondents felt that they were not adequately prepared for implementing OBE or NCS after attending workshops. Furthermore, respondents were of the opinion that they did not receive sufficient support to implement OBE.

- The majority of the respondents were of the opinion that they did not possess sufficient resources to implement OBE.

- Examinations and formal tests were still being regarded as the most important form of assessment.

- Respondents regarded the low standard of CTAs and the difference in weight of the CASS mark as a reason for the poor results in Grade 10. This was regarded as a consequence of Grade 9 learners not being accustomed to writing examinations.

- No uniformity existed in calculating the CASS mark. There was a huge difference in the CASS mark when using one method compared to the other method.

- According to the respondents, the different interpretation of questions to what the examiner intended was to a large extent the cause of varying results.

- According to the respondents, different interpretations by examiners attributed to varying results.

- Respondents agreed that 'fast' learners are neglected in the process of bringing 'slow' learners up to standard.

- Respondents agreed that a lack of sufficient resources was an inhibiting factor in the implementation of CASS.

- Examinations and formal tests were indicated as being the most important form of assessment.

- CASS could not be regarded as reliable due to the differences in internal assessments among schools.

- School-leavers were not adequately prepared for the world of work.

- Differences existed in the contextualising of textbooks.

- The original purpose of creating a unified education system which would address social inequalities remained largely unaltered.

- Educators and learners spent most of their time on work that would be examined.

The answers to the sub-questions provide the basis for the research conclusions in view of the main research question (see section 1.3), namely: What was the impact of the promotion policy changes and assessment practices, on the promotion of learners in the Further Education and Training Band? The main research conclusions are the following:

- The differences between the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band were contributing to the poor results of learners in the FET Band, and in particular of the poor results of the Grade 10 learners.

- Taking into account that promotion policy changes were unavoidable and had to be adapted to the NCS as applied in the FET Band from 2006, the differences compared to the promotion requirements applied up to 2005 nevertheless had an unacceptably large negative impact on learner results. In 2006 almost 25% of the learners that were not promoted, would have been successful. The amendments introduced in 2007, with the aim to rectify the poor results that were obtained in 2006, had no effect on the results. On the contrary, the results were even worse for the Grade 10 learners in 2007. The differences in the results of Grade 11 learners in 2007, and Grade 12 learners in 2008 were even more obvious. In 2007 30% of the Grade 11 learners that failed would have been successful when measured against the 2005 requirements, and in 2008 56% of the Grade 12 learners that failed could have been successful.

- In conclusion, with scientific proof that the promotion policy changes and inconsistent assessment practices led to a difference in the promotion of learners of between 25% up to 56%, the Department of Education should precede policy changes with scientific research on the consequences of such changes. In 2008 alone, the lives of more than a hundred thousand Grade 12 learners could have been so much different if assessment practices were in compliance with policy documents, and the promotion requirements were closer related to the promotion requirements of 2005.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from the research focus on assessment practices and the promotion of learners.

The research findings revealed that one of the causes of the poor results in Grade 10 was the differences that existed between the composition of the promotion marks of Grade 9 and Grade 10. Recommendations to address the disparity that exists are:

1. The weight of the school based assessment in Grade 9, which is 75% of the promotion mark, and Grade 10, which is only 25% of the promotion mark in certain subjects, should be phased in over a three year period from Grade 8 up to Grade 10. It is recommended that the weight for school based assessment in Grade 8, for example, should be reduced to constitute only 60% of the promotion mark. In Grade 9 the school based assessment should constitute 40% of the promotion mark and in Grade 10 then eventually 25%. Learners will in this way become accustomed to the importance of examinations.

2. The standard of work prescribed in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for Grade 9 should become more unified with the requirements expected in Grade 10. The researcher recommends that more emphasis should be placed on the standard of work, type of questions and

examinations in Grade 9 that should be linked to the standard of work expected in Grade 10.

In addition to the weights of the school based assessment, it was also revealed that examinations and tests remained the most important components in calculating the CASS mark. The recommendations regarding the importance of examinations and tests in the CASS mark are as follows:

3. In calculating the CASS mark (see table 4.1), different weights are allocated for examinations, tests and assessment tasks. The CASS mark is then added to a final examination mark to determine the promotion mark. It is recommended that the Department of Education should reduce the weight of examinations and tests in the calculation of the CASS mark. The weight of assessment tasks that measure skills, values and attitudes and not only knowledge, should rather be increased.

The research findings showed that there was no uniformity in calculating the CASS mark. Subject assessment guidelines differed from the school based assessment policy document causing huge differences in the calculation of the CASS mark. Recommendations regarding the calculation of the CASS mark are:

4. The researcher recommends that the Department of Education should ensure that subject assessment guidelines comply with the policy documents and that instructions should not be inconsistent.

5. It is also recommended that facilitators or subject specialists should not possess the authority to amend national policy in the subject assessment guidelines. They should neither have any authority to instruct educators in their region to apply contradicting instructions.

The research also revealed that instead of being exposed to enrichment activities, ‘fast’ learners were neglected in the process of bringing ‘slow’ learners up to standard. In this regard, the recommendations are as follows:

6. Schools where learners are divided into different classes in each grade should consider the performance of learners when the learners are divided. This would allow educators to continue with a whole class in either enrichment activities or progress at a slower rate.

7. Educators that identify “fast” learners can plan individual enrichment activities for these learners to keep them occupied in the time that is spent with “slow” learners.

The research revealed that CASS could not be regarded as reliable due to the differences in internal assessments among schools. Recommendations regarding differences in internal assessment are:

8. The Department of Education should place more emphasis on regional meetings where educators from different schools can compare memorandums and reach consensus on the allocation of marks.

9. Educators should be encouraged to apply for the marking of Grade 12 final examination question papers. The experience gained can be shared with other educators at memorandum discussions, organised by the Department of Education, where all Grade 12 educators should be present.

The Department of Education approved the textbooks that can be used by schools in each subject. The research revealed that differences existed in the contextualising of these textbooks. The recommendations regarding the differences in textbooks are as follows:

10. The Department of Education should either limit the number of approved textbooks that comply with the NCS, or identify a limited number of textbooks that could be used in the Grade 12 final examination by the examiner in setting the paper and memorandum.

11. The examination guidelines for every subject should be more specific in terms of content that can be examined, irrespective of which textbook learners make use of. The Grade 12 final examination memorandum should then also make provision for all the different textbooks that were approved.

The research revealed that the original purpose of creating a unified education system which would address social inequalities remained largely unaltered. The recommendations regarding the social inequalities are as follows:

12. It is recommended that the government should control the allocation of sufficient funds to schools. The Department of Education should ensure that all schools are well-equipped in terms of laboratories, computers for administrative and educational purposes, libraries, a variety of textbooks in every subject, proper school buildings and class rooms, and well-equipped offices including photo-copying machines, fax-machines and access to the internet. School Governing Bodies or principals should be held accountable for the management of this equipment.

13. It is urgently recommended that provision should be made for more qualified educators in all subjects or learning areas at an educator-learner ratio that is manageable in every school. This would ensure better discipline in classes and more individual attention provided to 'slow' learners. The Department of Education can only attain the better provision of educators to schools if the gazettes that advertise posts in schools are well managed and are distributed on regular basis. Promotional posts should also be managed to ensure that all schools do have heads of departments and deputy-principals that can perform managerial functions.

14. The researcher recommends that the Department of Education should improve on the performance measurement system for educators. The current system, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) does not serve as an incentive to encourage educators to improve on their performance.

The interview revealed the procedure followed in the establishment of promotion policy and amendments to promotion requirements. Various stakeholders directly contributed to establishing policy documents and the policy was gazetted for public comment. The comment received from the public could at best be opinions from interested parties. It was evident from the establishment procedure that there seemed to be a lack of research on the consequences of policy decisions or amendments. In this regard, the recommendations are as follows:

15. The Department of Education should set up research teams to form part of the procedure in establishing policies. These research teams should consist of educators, principals or subject specialists that have access to relevant documents that can ascertain the possible consequences of new policy or amendments to current policy. The members of these research teams should be knowledgeable on conducting reliable and valid investigations. They should report back on their findings to the Department of Education. Decision making can then be based on scientific evidence and not on opinions.

16. It is furthermore recommended that amendments to promotion requirements should be subjected to the same research before being implemented. The consequences of the amended requirements should be tested on the results of the previous year to estimate the impact that the amendments could possibly have on the results.

The analysis of the results of 2006 up to 2008 led to significant findings on the reasons for learners not being promoted. These findings contributed to reaching conclusions. The recommendations regarding the reasons for learners not being promoted are as follows:

17. It is recommended that schools should be aware of subjects in which learners underperform and take precautionary measures in time. Such measures should include arranging extra classes for learners that need

remedial support, arranging for learners to receive additional classes from experienced educators from other schools on a weekly basis or during holidays, and providing learners with additional literature, including study guides or summaries of the work.

18. Schools should be selective in the subjects they present in the FET Band. Learners tend to perform better in subjects with a practical component, including Computer Applied Technology, Consumer Studies and Civil Technology, due to the examinations only constituting 50% of the promotion mark. The other 50% consist of an assessment mark and a practical mark. These subjects also tend to be in higher demand in the labour market.

19. The researcher recommends that learners should receive guidance during Grade 9 on the correct subject choices they need to select from Grade 10, according to their ability. This includes choices in compulsory subjects like Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy. Too many learners failed Mathematics, which could have passed Mathematical Literacy.

20. Educators need to take responsibility for the performance of learners and stop shifting the blame to a lack of equipment, a lack of textbooks, insufficient training or other excuses. These are all relevant situations that can lead to underperformance, but many schools, in similar circumstances, are successful and perform excellently.

5.6 FINAL REMARKS

The main research question was formulated in terms of the impact of the promotion policy changes and assessment practices on the promotion of learners in the Further Education and Training Band. The changes in promotion policy were implemented in 2006 and 2007. Analysing the impact of these changes on the promotion of learners also brought about an investigation into the process of establishing and amending promotion policy, as well as assessment practices that influenced the promotion of learners.

Finally, it can be concluded, that the promotion of learners was influenced by a number of reasons. Although promotion policy and the amendments to the policy played an important role in the promotion rate, the promotion of learners was also influenced by the standard of work done in previous years, the composition of the promotion mark, and incorrect assessment practices.

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Annexure A: Registration of research project

education
Department of Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Enquiries: Malimane IM
Reference: 16/4/1/20-2009

Tel: 051 404 8662
Fax: 051 447 7318
E-mail: malimane@edu.fs.gov.za

2009 – 06 – 02

Mr. DP KNIGHT
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
KROONSTAD HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Mr. Knight

REGISTRATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

1 This letter is in reply to your application for the registration of your research project.

2 Research topic: **Learner promotion policy in the Further Education and Training band: A situational analysis.**

3 Your research project has been registered with the Free State Education Department.

4. Approval is granted under the following conditions:-

4.1 Educators participate voluntarily in the project.

4.2 The names of all schools and participants involved remain confidential.

4.3 The questionnaires are completed and the interviews are conducted outside normal tuition time.

4.4 This letter is shown to all participating persons.

4.5 A bound copy of the report and a summary on a computer disc on this study is donated to the Free State Department of Education.

4.6 Findings and recommendations are presented to relevant officials in the Department.

5 The costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

6 **You are requested to confirm acceptance of the above conditions in writing to:**

The Head: Education, for attention: DIRECTOR : QUALITY ASSURANCE
Room 401, Syfrets Building, Private Bag X20565, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301

We wish you every success with your research

Yours sincerely

FR SELLO
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE

Directorate: Quality Assurance, Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300
Syfrets Center, 65 Maitland Street, Bloemfontein
Tel: 051 404 8750 / Fax: 051 447 7318 E-mail: quality@edu.fs.gov.za

Annexure B: Letter to principal

10 Eland Street
ELANDIA
KROONSTAD
9499

29 MAY 2009

THE PRINCIPAL / HEADMASTER

RE: PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I, David Knight (UNISA student nr. 510 8004) hereby request permission to do research for my M-Ed study in your school. I am currently conducting research on assessment practices and promotion policy in the FET Band. The title of my dissertation is "**Learner promotion policy in the Further Education and Training Band: A situation analysis**."

I aim to investigate to what extent the differences in the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, as well as the changes in the promotion requirements for the FET Band, contributed to the high retention rate of learners in the FET Band since 2006. For this purpose **six** questionnaires are included that must please be completed by educators in **six different learning areas in the FET Band, except Life Orientation**. **If possible educators that acted as markers/examiners during the Gr. 12 November exams in 2008, or else educators that taught Gr. 12 learners in 2008.**

I would be very grateful if you could distribute the questionnaires to six different diligent FET educators in your school. Answers will be treated as confidential and all participants will remain anonymous. After completion the questionnaires must please be placed in the envelop provided and **returned to the Educational District Offices at Sasolburg or Kroonstad before or on 26 June 2009.**

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Yours faithfully

.....
David Knight
Researcher
082 378 2210

Annexure C: Letter to participant

LEARNER PROMOTION POLICY IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND

Dear participant

I am currently conducting research on assessment practices and promotion policy in the FET Band. The title of my dissertation for a Med-degree is "**Learner promotion policy in the Further Education and Training Band: A situation analysis**."

I aim to investigate to what extent the differences in the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, as well as the changes in the promotion requirements for the FET Band, have contributed to the high retention rate of learners in the FET Band since 2006.

I would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire according to the instructions on it. Answers will be treated as confidential and all participants will remain anonymous. The nature of the questionnaire requires absolute honesty, and I appreciate your effort in this regard.

Yours faithfully

.....

David Knight
Researcher

Annexure D: Informed consent: Principal

INFORMED CONSENT

Learner promotion policy in the Further Education and Training Band: A situation analysis.

INTRODUCTION

I am currently conducting research on assessment practices and promotion policy in the FET Band. I aim to investigate to what extent the differences in the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, as well as the changes in the promotion requirements for the FET Band, has contributed to the high retention rate of learners in the FET Band since 2006.

PURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire will provide information on OBE, assessment practices and the Grade 12 examination of 2008.

APPROVAL

The research project has been registered with the Free State Department of Education.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT

Your participation is entirely voluntary. All information obtained will be treated as strictly confidential. Your identity and the identity of your school will not be revealed and will remain anonymous while the study is conducted or in any reports thereafter.

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study. I have also received, read and understood the above written information regarding this research. I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my gender, age and place of residence will be anonymously processed into a research report. I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation. I declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

Date:	Date: .....
Signature:	.....
Name: ..... (Please print)	David Knight
Participant	Researcher

Annexure E: Informed consent: Interview

INFORMED CONSENT

Learner promotion policy in the Further Education and Training Band: A situation analysis.

INTRODUCTION

I am currently conducting research on assessment practices and promotion policy in the FET Band. I aim to investigate to what extent the differences in the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, as well as the changes in the promotion requirements for the FET Band, has contributed to the high retention rate of learners in the FET Band since 2006.

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

The interview will provide information on the process of establishing a promotion policy, amendments to the policy and disparities between the promotion policy of the GET Band and the FET Band.

APPROVAL

The research project has been registered with the Free State Education Department.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw anytime without penalty or negative consequences. All information obtained during the interview will be treated as strictly confidential. Your identity will not be revealed and you will remain anonymous while the study is conducted or in any reports thereafter.

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study. I have also received, read and understood the above written information regarding this interview. I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my gender, age and place of residence will be anonymously processed into a research report. I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the interview. I had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

Date:	Date: .....
Signature:	.....
Name: ..... (Please print)	David Knight
Interviewee	Researcher

Annexure F: Questionnaire one: FET educators

QUESTIONNAIRE: TO BE COMPLETED BY FET EDUCATORS

SECTION A **Biographical information**				***For office use***
Questionnaire number:				V1 ☐☐☐ 1
Please answer the following questions by making an "**X**" in the appropriate block or by writing your answer In the space provided. Write one number per block, e.g.		4 | 3		
1. Number of years teaching experience:		☐☐		V2 ☐ 4
2. Number of years experience in teaching:	Gr 10 – 12	☐☐		V3 ☐ 5
	Gr 8 – 9	☐☐		V4 ☐ 6
3. Post level:			1 2 3 4	V5 ☐ 7
4. Highest academic qualification: (B.Com, B.A, B.Sc, etc.)				V6 ☐ 8
	Grade 12		☐	
	Diploma		☐	
	Degree		☐	
	Honours		☐	
	Masters		☐	
	Doctoral		☐	
5. Highest professional qualification: (PGCE, HED, BEd)				V7 ☐ 9
	Diploma		☐	
	Degree		☐	
	Honours		☐	
	Masters		☐	
	Doctoral		☐	

6.	Which of the following learning areas, excluding Life Orientation, do you teach on the FET level? (**Indicate only 1** and complete the questionnaire with reference to this subject.)			***For office use***
	Home Language (please specify)		V8	10
	1st Add Language (please specify)		V9	11
	Mathematics		V10	12
	Maths. Literacy		V11	13
	(Other subjects. Please specify:)			
	Subject choice 1:		V12	14
	Subject choice 2:		V13	15
	Subject choice 3:		V14	16
7.	Average number of learners per class in FET		V15	17
8.	In which of the following years did you attend workshops (NCS, FET, etc.)?	2005	V16	18
		2006	V17	19
		2007	V18	20
		2008	V19	21
9.	Did you feel you were adequately equipped to implement the NCS after attending the workshops?			
		YES	V20	22
		NO		

SECTION B **OBE**							***For office use***
	Please answer the following questions by making an "**X**" in the appropriate block.						
10	To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding OBE?						
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
10.1	Educators received sufficient training before implementing OBE.	1	2	3	4	5	V21 23
10.2	Educators received sufficient support to implement OBE	1	2	3	4	5	V22 24
10.3	Sufficient resources are available to implement OBE	1	2	3	4	5	V23 25

SECTION C **ASSESSMENT**								***For office use***		
	Please answer the following questions by making an "**X**" in the appropriate block.									
11.	Indicate how frequently you use the following types of assessment:	Never	Seldom	Only when required	Large extent	Very large extent				
11.1	Baseline assessment (prior to work being discussed).	1	2	3	4	5		V24		26
11.2	Diagnostic assessment (to determine barriers to learning for remedial support).	1	2	3	4	5		V25		27
11.3.	Formative assessment (learner's progress towards achieving outcomes).	1	2	3	4	5		V26		28
11.4.	Summative assessment (overall progress at end of term/year).	1	2	3	4	5		V27		29
11.5.	Peer-assessment (learners assessing other learners).	1	2	3	4	5		V28		30
11.6	Self-assessment (learners assessing their own work).	1	2	3	4	5		V29		31
11.7	Educator assessment	1	2	3	4	5		V30		32
11.8	Group assessment	1	2	3	4	5		V31		33
12	Which of the following types of assessment are included in the calculation of your CASS mark?	Never	Seldom	Only when required	Large extent	Very large extent				
12.1	Baseline assessment	1	2	3	4	5		V32		34
12.2	Diagnostic assessment	1	2	3	4	5		V33		35
12.3	Formative assessment	1	2	3	4	5		V34		36
12.4	Summative assessment	1	2	3	4	5		V35		37

13.	Which of the following procedures is the most descriptive of the procedure you would follow for learners who do not hand in assignments on the due date?	Never	Seldom	Only when required	Large extent	Very large extent	*For office use*		
13.1	No marks will be awarded.	1	2	3	4	5	V36		38
13.2	Marks will be deducted if the assignment is handed in later.	1	2	3	4	5	V37		39
13.3	Learners can get a second change to complete the assignment.	1	2	3	4	5	V38		40

14. The following are different forms of assessment that can be used to calculate the CASS mark. From the list, **choose the 5 forms of assessment which you consider to be the most important, and rank these.** Allocate a value of 1 to the most important a value of 2 to the second most important etc.

Assignments		V39		41
Case study		V40		42
Daily assessment		V41		43
Debates		V42		44
Demonstration		V43		45
Examinations		V44		46
Formal/Term tests		V45		47
Informal/Class tests		V46		48
Investigation task/assignment		V47		49
Oral presentation		V48		50
Projects		V49		51
Research project/assignment		V50		52
Role play		V51		53
Simulation		V52		54
Other (please specify):		V53		55
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _		V54		56
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _		V55		57
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _		V56		58

15.	In your opinion, to what degree will the following situations be the cause of poor results?	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	*For office use*
15.1	Low standard of CTA's in Gr. 9 leads to poor results in Gr. 10.	1	2	3	4	5	V57 ☐ 59
15.2	The difference in the weight of CASS in Gr. 9 (75%) compared to the weight in Gr. 10 – 12 (25%) for certain subjects.	1	2	3	4	5	V58 ☐ 60

16 Which **ONE** of the following **methods of calculation** represents the method that was used in the calculation of CASS marks in 2008 in **Grade 12 in the subject listed in item 6**. Indicate the method you used by making an "**X**" in the appropriate block.

16.1 **<u>Method 1</u>: (No conversion of different CASS components e.g. tests, examinations. Total divided/ converted to 100 marks.)** ☐ V59 ☐ 61

e.g.

Tests	200
June examination	300
Research projects and assignments	150
Preparatory exam	<u>300</u>
	<u>950</u> / 9,5
CASS =	**100**

16.2 **<u>Method 2</u>: (Different components of CASS, e.g. tests and exams are converted to a mark of e.g. 10/20 which is added to reach a CASS mark of 100.)** ☐ V60 ☐ 62

e.g.		**Converted to**
Tests	200	**20**
June examination	300	**10**
Research projects and assignments	150	**60**
Preparatory exam	300	**<u>10</u>**
CASS =		**100**

SECTION D **QUALITY ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**							***For office use***
	Please answer the following questions by making an "**X**" in the appropriate block.						
17.	In your opinion, to what extent can any of the following errors of measurement lead to varying results in the performance of a learner?						
		Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Always	
17.1	Learners interpreting questions differently from what the examiner intended.	1	2	3	4	5	V61 ☐ 63
17.2	Assessment tasks being worded in a confusing way.	1	2	3	4	5	V62 ☐ 64
17.3	Prejudice of educators towards certain learners.	1	2	3	4	5	V63 ☐ 65
17.4	Preconceived ideas about the capability of a learner.	1	2	3	4	5	V64 ☐ 66
17.5	Different markers varying in their interpretation of the same standard of work.	1	2	3	4	5	V65 ☐ 67
17.6	Educators are not able to interpret different responses from different learners.	1	2	3	4	5	V66 ☐ 68
17.7	Educators are influenced by scores of a test or examination and allocate similar marks for assignments, tasks or projects.	1	2	3	4	5	V67 ☐ 69

SECTION E CHARACTERISTICS OF CASS							*For office use*
	Please answer the following questions by making an "**X**" in the appropriate block.						
18	In what extent do you agree that the current methods of continuous assessment comply with the following characteristics?						
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
18.1	CASS helps learners to improve their performance and maximise their learning.	1	2	3	4	5	V68 ☐ 70
18.2	Learners receive feedback on what was intended to be achieved by the assessment activity.	1	2	3	4	5	V69 ☐ 71
18.3	CASS caters for differences in language, physical, cultural, psychological and emotional needs.	1	2	3	4	5	V70 ☐ 72
18.4	An aggregate of marks collected throughout the year is a suitable indicator of competence at the end of the year.	1	2	3	4	5	V71 ☐ 73
18.5	Learners must be allowed varying time frames to master objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	V72 ☐ 74
18.6	CASS provides information about a learner's readiness to progress to a next level.	1	2	3	4	5	V73 ☐ 75

SECTION F **LIMITATIONS OF ASSESSMENT**							***For office use***
	Please answer the following questions by making an "**X**" in the appropriate block						
19.	To what extent do you regard the following as limitations to CASS?						
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
19.1	"Quick" learners are often neglected in the process of bringing "slow" learners up to standard.	1	2	3	4	5	V74 ☐ 76
19.2	Guidelines regarding outcomes and assessment practices are not sufficient.	1	2	3	4	5	V75 ☐ 77
19.3	The acute lack of resources at schools is an inhibiting factor.	1	2	3	4	5	V76 ☐ 78
19.4	The emphasis remains on tests and examinations that are a test of memory by recapitulating content.	1	2	3	4	5	V77 ☐ 79
19.5	CASS cannot be regarded as reliable due to differences in internal assessment between schools.	1	2	3	4	5	V78 ☐ 80
20	To what extent do you regard the following as limitations to OBE?						
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
20.1	School-leavers are not adequately prepared for the world of work.	1	2	3	4	5	V79 ☐ 1
20.2	The outcomes of OBE do not define the content of the learning programmes.	1	2	3	4	5	V80 ☐ 2
20.3	Because content is not defined differences exist in the contextualisation of text books.	1	2	3	4	5	V81 ☐ 3

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	*For office use*
20.4	The original purpose of creating a unified education system which would address social inequalities remained largely unaltered.	1	2	3	4	5	V82 ☐ 4
20.5	The majority of time is spent on work that will be examined.	1	2	3	4	5	V83 ☐ 5
20.6	The more marks that are allocated to an assignment, the more the effort by learners tend to be.	1	2	3	4	5	V84 ☐ 6

SECTION G
GR. 12 EXAMINATION 2008

For office Use

21. You only need to complete this section if you occupied any of the following positions in the Grade 12 November examinations in 2008. Indicate your position by making an "X" in the appropriate block.

Marker	☐	V85 ☐ 7
Senior-marker	☐	
Sub-Examiner	☐	
Examiner	☐	
Moderator	☐	

22. Subject: (please specify) ..... V86 ☐ 8

23. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the Grade 12 November examination in 2008?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
23.1	The examination paper reflected the accentuation of the relative importance of the different parts of the work.	1	2	3	4	5	V87 ☐ 9
23.2	Learners were allowed to verbalize their knowledge over and above the content of the memorandum.	1	2	3	4	5	V88 ☐ 10

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	*For office Use*
23.3	The memorandum made sufficient provision to include answers from all the approved sources available.	1	2	3	4	5	V89 ☐ 11
23.4	Sufficient provision was made for divergent answers which measure creativity and imagination.	1	2	3	4	5	V90 ☐ 12
23.5	All assessors (markers) had a good idea of what counts as sufficient evidence for marks to be allocated.	1	2	3	4	5	V91 ☐ 13
23.6	There is a direct correlation between CASS marks and the final examination marks.	1	2	3	4	5	V92 ☐ 14
23.7	A different final examination time table could have led to different results.	1	2	3	4	5	V93 ☐ 15

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION

Annexure G: Questionnaire two: Analysis of results

SECTION A GR 10 RESULTS SURVEY : 2006					*For office use*
	The statistics needed to complete **Section A** must be obtained from the **2006 promotion schedules for Grade 10.** Please write the necessary information in the space allowed. Write one number per block e.g.	1	4	3	
1.	Number of learners in your school that entered for the November exams in Grade 10 in 2006.				
2.	Number of learners promoted to Grade 11.				
3.	Number of learners that failed Grade 10 in 2006.				
4.	Number of incomplete results.				
	The pass requirements applied in 2006 is attached as Annexure A to this questionnaire. Classify each of the learners that failed Grade 10 in 2006 into one of the following reasons.				
	From all the learners that failed, how many failed:				
5.	Home Language (less than 40%)				
6.	First Additional Language (less than 30%)				
7.	Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy (less than 30%)				
8.	Life Orientation (less than 40%)				
	All the learners that failed **2 subjects**, how many failed:				
9.	Home Language at level 2 (30 – 39%) and another subject.				
10.	Home Language at level 1 (less than 30%) and another subject.				
11.	Two other subjects (except Home Language).				

	All the learners that failed **3 subjects**, how many failed:		
12.	Home Language at level 2 (30 – 39%) and 2 other subjects.		
13.	Home Language at level 1 (less than 30%) and 2 other subject.		
14.	Three other subjects (except Home Language)		
15.	Number of learners that failed **more than 3** subjects		
16.	**Promotion requirement 5**: Number of learners that could not obtain at least 40% in one of the remaining three subjects		
17	**Promotion requirement 6:** Number of learners that could not obtain at least 30% in two subjects		

SECTION B GR 11 RESULTS SURVEY : 2007			For office use
	The statistics needed to complete **Section B** must be obtained from the **2007 promotion schedules for Grade 11.** Please write the necessary information in the space allowed.		
18.	Number of learners in Grade 11 in 2007 who were evaluated by entering for the November exams.		
19.	Number of learners mentioned in nr. 17 that failed **Grade 11** in **2006** and are repeating Grade 11 in 2007.		
20.	Number of learners promoted to Grade 12.		
21.	Number of learners that failed Grade 11 in 2007.		
22	Number of incomplete results		
23.	Number of learners that failed Mathematics/ Mathematical Literacy (less than 30%) and/or Life Orientation (less than 40%) and/or 1st Additional Language (less than 30%).		
	The pass requirements applied in 2007 is attached as Annexure B to this questionnaire. Classify each of the learners that failed Grade 11 in 2007 into one of the following reasons.		
24.	Number of learners that failed because they **only** failed Home Language (less than 40%).		
25.	Number of learners that failed because they could NOT obtain at least 40% in two of the remaining subjects.		
26	Number of learners that failed because they could NOT obtain at least 30% in three of the remaining subjects.		

	All the learners that failed **2 subjects**, how many failed:		
27.	Home Language at level 2 (30 – 39%) and another subject.		
28.	Home Language at level 1 (less than 30%) and another subject.		
29.	Two other subjects (except Home Language).		
	All the learners that failed **3 subjects**, how many failed:		
30.	Home Language at level 2 (30 – 39%) and 2 other subjects.		
31.	Home Language at level 1 (less than 30%) and 2 other subjects.		
32.	Three other subjects (except Home Language).		
33.	Number of learners that failed **more than 3** subjects		

SECTION C GR 12 RESULTS SURVEY : 2008		*For office use*
The statistics needed to complete **Section C** must be obtained from the **2008 final examination results for Grade 12.** Please write the necessary information in the space allowed.		
34. Number of learners in Grade 12 in 2008 who were evaluated by entering for the November exams.		
35. Number of learners that obtained the National Senior Certificate with Bachelors		
36. Number of learners that obtained the National Senior Certificate with Diploma		
37. Number of learners that obtained the National Higher Certificate.		
38. Number of learners that failed Grade 12 in 2008.		
39. Number of incomplete results		
40. Number of learners that failed Mathematics/ Mathematical Literacy (less than 40%) and/or Life Orientation (less than 30%) and/or 1st Additional Language (less than 30%).		
The pass requirements applied in 2008 is attached as Annexure B to this questionnaire. Classify each of the learners that failed Grade 12 in 2008 into one of the following reasons. Supply only the total number of learners for each reason:		
41. Number of learners that failed because they **only** failed Home Language (less than 40%)		
42. Number of learners that failed because they could NOT obtain at least 40% in two of the remaining subjects.		
43. Number of learners that failed because they could NOT obtain at least 30% in three of the remaining subjects.		

	All the learners that failed **2 subjects**, how many failed:		
44.	Home Language at level 2 (30 – 39%) and another subject.		
45.	Home Language at level 1 (less than 30%) and another subject.		
46.	Two other subjects (except Home Language).		
	All the learners that failed **3 subjects**, how many failed:		
47.	Home Language at level 2 (30 – 39%) and 2 other subjects.		
48.	Home Language at level 1 (less than 30%) and 2 other Subject		
49.	Three other subjects (except Home Language).		
50.	Number of learners that failed **more than 3** subjects		

ANNEXURE A

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS: 2006

1. Obtain at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level.
2. Obtain at least 30% in the other required language on at least First Additional Language level.
3. Obtain at least 30% in Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics.
4. Obtain at least 40% in Life Orientation.
5. Obtain at least 40% in one of the remaining three subjects.
6. Obtain at least 30% in two subjects.
7. A condonation of a maximum of one subject with a rating of 'Not Achieved' will be allowed and such a subject will be deemed to have been obtained with a rating of 30%, provided that a condonation is applied only once.
8. Requirements regarding Practical Music Examinations and concessions regarding immigrants and learners who experience barriers to learning are excluded from this survey.

ANNEXURE B

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS: 2007 and 2008

1. Obtain at least 40% in the required official language at Home Language level.
2. Obtain at least 40% in two of the remaining six subjects.
3. Obtain at least 30% in three of the other remaining four subjects.
4. A learner may fail one subject if a complete portfolio of CASS can be provided.

Differences in promotion requirements: A comparison between 2006 and 2007:

1 It is NOT a prerequisite to obtain 30% in the other required language on First Additional Language level.
2. It is NOT a prerequisite to obtain 30% in Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics.
3. It is NOT a prerequisite to obtain 40% in Life Orientation.
4. NO condonation can take place.
5. Requirements regarding Practical Music Examinations and concessions regarding immigrants and learners who experience barriers to learning are excluded from this survey.

Annexure H: Request for interview

10 Eland Street
ELANDIA
KROONSTAD
9499

1 DECEMBER 2009

THE CHIEF DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR
Chief Directorate: National Examinations, Assessment and Measurement
FET Examinations and Assessment (Schools)
Department of Education
179 Pretorius Street
Pretoria
0002

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT

I am conducting research on assessment practices and promotion policy. In conclusion to my research I would be very grateful if you can accommodate me for a brief interview. As Chief Director / Director I regard your contribution as essential to obtain a complete view on changes in the promotion policy.

I will appreciate any date, time and venue that you will be available. I am staying in Kroonstad and only need a day's notice of such an appointment to make arrangements.

Yours faithfully

David Knight

Annexure I: Transcription of part of interview

Part of verbatim transcript of elite interview at the Department of Education, Pretoria

Interviewer: Mr ..., I am currently conducting research on assessment practices and promotion policy in the FET Band. I aim to investigate to what extent the differences in the promotion requirements of the GET Band and the FET Band, as well as the changes in the promotion requirements for the FET Band, has contributed to the high retention rate of learners in the FET Band since 2006. The research project has been registered with the Free State Education Department. All the information will be confidential and used for research purposes only.

Mr ..., my first question is: What process do you follow to draw up a promotion policy? In other words when you decide on the promotion policy for Grade 9 or Grade 10, which process do you follow?

Interviewee: Well, in terms of any policy there is a set down procedure which is followed and now we have a committee which is regarded as the Interprovincial Examinations Committee. The Interprovincial Examinations Committee comprises of representatives of each of the provincial departments and it is normally the head of exams that sits on this committee. So the provinces will then make proposals or alternatively if the national department wants to make a proposal that proposal will be represented to the Interprovincial Examinations Committee and it will be discussed at the level of the Interprovincial Examinations Committee as a proposal and if that proposal is accepted by that committee, it then goes to the next level, which is a committee comprising of the heads of Departments. The Head of Department of the Free State, the Head of Department from Gauteng, Western Cape all sit on that committee which is called HEDCOM. So I think the

Interprovincial Examinations Committee which is referred to as IPEC in short, is a subcommittee of that committee which is HEDCOM. So it goes to the Heads of Departments. They then interrogate the proposal and if they think it is suitable it will then obviously go to a Council of Education. The Council of Education Ministers comprises of all the MEC's for Education from the different provincial departments and it is chaired by the Minister of Education. So it is then discussed at that level and once it is discussed at that level it is then approved as policy that must now go out for public comment. So, then it is gazetted but it is gazetted for public comment and you can buy a government gazette and a government gazette is normally distributed to the key stakeholders in education who will look at it and will normally be given 30 days to make comment. Anybody could make comment. Those comments are then incorporated and finally go back to the minister who then makes sure that the comments that the public has made have been incorporated and finally it gets published as policy.

But also I want to mention that each of these committees, well not each of them, but the Interprovincial Examinations Committee which is the first committee that will receive a policy on, for example, promotion. It not only comprises of Heads of Exam but it also comprises of the Teacher Union. It comprises of HESA (Higher Education of South Africa), it comprises of UMALUSI, which is the politician's council, the IEB and it has the distance education institution. So it has a broad spectrum of representatives. So they have an opportunity to take the proposal back to their constituencies and discuss it with them.

So I think we will only submit a proposal to HEDCOM after it has been thoroughly discussed and interrogated at that level. So there is a lot of opportunity through discussion for consultation on a policy before it goes out from IPEC to HEDCOM to CEM and then it goes out for formal public comment.

Interviewer: If there is now amendments to these policies, do they follow the same procedure again?

Interviewee: The same route: in other words until a policy is gazetted, signed by the minister, okay. Also I think, I need to mention is that there are certain, for example if you look at an act, an act must go to parliament for approval. But obviously regulations will be approved by the Minister and policies will be approved by the Minister. So, if a policy has been approved, and it needs to be amended, it must go through the same process. There is no amendment that could be made through any short-circuiting of that particular protocol that must be followed.

Interviewer: The requirements that they put into the policy, for example let's say they must pass maths with 40%, is that then also decided on that same level?

Interviewee: Well, obviously. Remember when we introduced the new curriculum? (Before) (y)ou had the new curriculum, we had to put in place curriculum statements for each of the subjects but together with that there was a requirement with regards to obtaining the qualifications, in terms of what should be the pass requirements per subject, what should be the pass requirement overall to obtain the qualification, that you need three 30's, three 40's to obtain an NSC. And that Home Language, you must pass with 40%. All of that was part of this package regarding the new curriculum, which I think was promulgated somewhere in 2005, 2006. Quite early, because we trialed the entire curriculum, the new curriculum, in 2006, 2007. Well not trialed, I mean, we did all the preparatory work in 2005, it was implemented in Grade 10 in 2006, Grade 11 in 2007 and the first year was last year in Grade 12.

Interviewer: Regarding 2006, (showed him the graph: number of learners not promoted 2006) this is now the research that I have done in our district, the Fezile Dabi district, the different Grades and the number of learners

that passed and failed. Now Grade 10 you will see there is not in line with the rest.

Interviewee: This is the number that were promoted? That passed?

Interviewer: That were not promoted.

Interviewee: That were not promoted!

Interviewer: The pass requirements were changed in 2007, after these results. Do you think that the Grade 10 results, which were now the first year they had OBE in the FET phase, do you think that the pass requirements were a bit too strict and that is why so many learners failed?

Interviewee: Okay, what was the total number of learners in Grade 10 in the district?

Interviewer: I've got it here (Show graph: Pass rate summary per Grade 2006)

Interviewee This is Grade 10? So there were 10 000 learners.

Interviewer: The number of candidates were 10 000, promoted was 6000 and that not promoted ...

Interviewee: Not promoted was 4170.

Interviewer: (Referring to graph: Pass rate summary per Grade 2006). This just shows the number of learners, the number that were promoted and those that were not promoted. The reason for my studies is that I was concerned about this (indicating to Grade 10 results on graph: Number of learners not promoted: 2006). That the Grade 10 learners that year failed percentage-wise a lot more than the other grades. I initially thought it was because the pass requirements were too strict.

Interviewee: Well, I think for me the one reason is, remember if you look at assessment requirements, in the case of Grade 9 it is based on a 75/25. Seventy-five percent is school based assessment and 25% is exam, up to Grade 9. But when you get to Grade 10 it is the other way around, it is 25% school based assessment and 75% exam. So my assumption then is that these learners were not exposed to examinations in the lower grades. So this is the first time they were now being exposed to such a high weighting of examinations that require writing. My assumption here is that up to Grade 9, because it was 75% school based assessment, it was based on project work they have done, oral presentations and there was not much focus on the writing and the written part which is required of the examinations. So here (indicating to graph: Number of learners not promoted: 2006) for me that would have caused the high failure rate in this particular grade. And you're right, I am not sure that the second reason would be in terms of curriculum linkage, whether the curriculum in Grade 9 is adequately preparing learners for the new curriculum in Grade 10. I am not sure and maybe somebody has to do that kind of a study, to find out whether the content areas in Grade 9 are preparing learners, is it providing the foundation and the platform for learners to get into Grade 10.

And for me the other reason would be is that if you look at Outcomes Based Education or Curriculum 2005 there was a notion amongst teachers that the new curriculum does not require content. So there is a lot of focus on group work, on skills development but content was played down. But when you got into the Grade 10 curriculum, the NCS, there was a demand for content knowledge. And I have a sense that this was kind of a shock to the learners and they were not adequately prepared for this transition from Grade 9 to Grade 10. And also I think it is just about the teaching style, the teaching approach in Grade 9 versus Grade 10. So I am not sure that it is purely the promotion. I think that the promotion requirements play a critical role, because you are right in terms of Grade 9. I think the promotion

requirements are… you just need to pass… What are the promotion requirements again?

Interviewer: I know the new requirements, which they did not implement this year, is that you had to get 50% for Maths and then 40%...

Interviewee: In Grade 9?

Interviewer: In Grade 9, but that will be applied for next year. Although I do think there will be revisions to that also, because just a basic study, our own school proved that many learners will battle to pass that. This year they had to pass the Home Language and if I'm correct they could fail two subjects and still pass.

Interviewee: But I think it will be interesting for you to find out exactly what the promotion requirements were and how they differ from the promotion requirements in Grade 10. Then I think your hypothesis will be correct in terms of promotion requirements. For me promotion requirements would be one of the reasons, but I think there were other factors that also contributed to the high fail-level in Grade 10.

Interviewer: That was one of the questions I was going to come to. I did research at 20 different schools and 79% of the educators had the same point of view: That the 75%/25% school based assessment as opposed to Grade 10, 11 and 12, 79% of the teachers felt that that was one of the main reasons why the children don't perform as well.

Interviewee: And I think there should be a more gradual kind of transition from Grade 9 to Grade 10. Instead of making it such a rapid transition, you know the 75/25; you know we could phase it in and go 50/50 in Grade 10 and then maybe in Grade 11 go 75/25. I think that will help.

Interviewer: The CTA's that they write in Grade 9, do you think that can be another reason, because that forms part of 75% and the CTA's are too easy for

the children, to comply to the requirements and to pass. Then in Grade 10 there is no CTA's for example, that can help them to pass. I see that the CTA's are any case from next year, according to the news papers, are going to be stopped.

Interviewee: Well, you are correct and I think it ties up with my early argument about the focus on school based assessment and as much as the CTA's are set externally by the National Department, it is administered at the school level and it is conducted over an extended period and there isn't tight security in terms of administering that CTA under strict conditions relating to exam. So there is a little more openness, I mean learners can consult there own resources, they can consult with each other, so the CTA we are not sure whether it is an accurate reflection of the potential and the ability of learners. So for me that would also have contributed. Now I understand that in terms of the CTA there is a Section B which is conducted under exam conditions but I am not exactly certain as to what is the weighting of that versus the part that is done at school over an extended period. Because I think that will also be an interesting point to look at.

Interviewer: Just to come back to the results after the examinations: here are the results of 2007 (referring to graph: Free State Department of Education, number of learners not promoted: 2007) but this is now for the whole Free State.

Interviewee: Hmm, pretty much the same.

Interviewer: And the promotion requirements were changed to what it is now: three of the subjects must be 40% of which one must be your Home Language, and three other 30% and then one subject they could fail. So if a person compares 2006 and 2007, the promotion requirements were made easier.

Interviewee: Sorry, what was the promotion requirements here in 2006?

Interviewer: They had to pass maths, they had to pass life orientation, (provided him with the promotion requirements, which was Annexure A of the questionnaire); there is the promotion requirements of 2006; and then Home Language and first Additional Language 30%.

Interviewee: And they need 40% in one of the remaining three subjects. So the difference really was that you had to get 40% in Home Language, which is the same now, 30% in the other which is the same, obtain 30% in maths, which is the same, obtain 40% in Life Orientation, and 40% in one of the remaining three subjects. So it is still an alternative 30% in two. So you had to get one, two, three forties, but the difference is that Life Orientation had to be one of those forties.

Interviewer: (Providing him with a table that indicates the difference between the promotion requirements of 2006 and 2007) Here is the difference between the two, here is the current requirements (indicating to table) and that is the difference between the two. My initial way of thinking was that Mathematics and Life Orientation caused many learners to fail. But then my research proved that that was not the case. It was only about three percent of learners that failed because of Maths in 2006.

Interviewee: Maths Literacy!

Interviewer: Home Language, specifically at your English schools is very good and the schools that I visited, less than one percent failed because of Home Language. The majority failed because they failed two subjects, three subjects or even four subjects. That aim of the research was to determine why learners failed. I suspected it was because of the pass requirements, which proved not to be the case. That is why I am glad that you made the point that the requirements for Grade 9 compared to Grade 10, for example the 75%/25%, that plays a bigger role.

Interviewee: (Referring to the pass requirements handed to him.) Tell me this condonation requirement, where did you get this from?

Interviewer: That is, if I'm correct, in the policy documents (paging through policy document).

Interviewee: Because this was a special ..., I remember we only had a condonation dispensation for Grade 11 in 2007, but there is no policy regarding condonation in Grade 10. You need to check this one.

Interviewer: That is not applicable anymore.

Interviewee: But was it applicable in Grade 10 in 2006?

Interviewer: Here is the policy document of 2005, there it is (referring to Government Gazette, 20 July 2005:20), point F.

Interviewee: (Paging to the cover page of abovementioned document) Government Gazette 2005. So this is the final policy because it is not for comment. OK, that is interesting. I didn't realise that in 2006 we had a condonation.

Interviewer: But of course now from 2007 this was not applicable anymore.

Interviewee: It is not?

Interviewer: No, currently it is three 40's of which one must be Home Language, three 30's and one subject that they can fail. When we mentioned the disparities between the GET and FET phase, just a second last question, your opinion on research that also indicated that educators felt the lack of resources to implement school based assessment was one of the hindering factors. How can that be addressed?

Interviewee: Yes, well listen, my opinion is that I wouldn't say that the lack of resources per se is one of the main reasons for school based assessment not being appropriately implemented. Because if you look at it, I mean it is only subjects with a practical component like your life sciences, the physical science, where there is a practical part that constitutes SBA, I would say in those subjects, if you don't have laboratories and if you don't have proper equipment then SBA is compromised. But in the main, I mean SBA requires alternative forms of assessment that can be very well implemented without resources that need to be purchased. I mean if you are looking at having to conduct some kind of research, I mean research can be done in so many ways without having to look at equipment. I mean there are resources available in terms of literature, news papers. I'm sure schools have libraries, I'm sure schools have access to the internet. I would say that lack of resources contribute, but is not the main factor. For me the problems with school based assessment lies with improper training of teachers. Teachers (are) not being adequately trained in terms of these alternative forms of assessment. So therefore you find that teachers will go ahead and implement school based assessment and say they are implementing school based assessment, but all they are doing is just administering tests.

So if you look at school based assessment it is in the main test orientated and yet the reason school based assessment has been introduced is to bring in other forms of assessment which are different from a formal examination or a pen and paper test. So in terms of resources and I think government is doing a lot, I mean if one looks at the budget that has been allocated to education. But what we find is that you go to many schools and you find equipment is still lying in boxes, packed away in either the principal's office or it is lying in the laboratory in the cupboard, not used. Simply because teachers do not have the initiative to go and reduct(?) / (investigate?) to find out how you use the equipment and be trained or it is easier just to conduct a

process theoretically and explaining to learners rather than demonstrating it or doing it in terms of what the practical requires.

Interviewer: The training of the educators, do you feel that that is the responsibility of the educator, that there were sufficient opportunities for them to attend workshops and to be well trained?

Interviewee: I don't think there have been adequate opportunities. For me, I mean my own personal view is that our training should be more extensive. You can't expect teachers to go to a one day workshop, a two day workshop and to then come out from that workshop and claim they are trained. Training requires extensive periods; either we have a six month course where teachers are going every Saturday or after school hours, possibly spending two hours every day or so many hours per week and a training programme has to be a programme that has been well thought out, is accredited by an external body, either Umalusi or a university. So, I mean, for me to say that a subject adviser puts together his own training programme, train teachers and that is appropriate. It brings about disparity in the standard of training from one province to the other, from one district to the other. My understanding is, let say we are talking about practical skills in Life Sciences, we need a nationally developed programme, which comprises of let's say three or four modules, which teachers will do over three or four weeks, and it is nationally accredited, the trainers are well trained and such a programme we can then say is acceptable. Such a programme must then lead to the award of a national certificate. So, I think there is still room for improvement in terms of training. But in terms of the new teacher development policy, I mean that is what they are talking about, programmes would now be proposed by different institutions and SACE (South African Council for Educators) will take responsibility for making sure programmes are accredited before they are implemented. So there is much more we can do in terms of training. But your question in terms of whether the teacher should also take responsibility. I think so. You know you can't expect

teachers to be spoon-fed. I mean the fact that you have a basic teacher qualification means that you must take responsibility for your training. There is literature that is available which teachers can read. I mean if you look at a doctor, as much as a doctor will attend in-service workshops and seminars, but yet much of his own development stems from him having to read on his own. And I think our teachers have not as yet developed that culture of learning to take responsibility for their own training.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. Is there anything else you would like to add about learner promotion policy or the requirements?

Interviewee: Well for me, I think the main issue is there is still a disjunction between GET and FET. There isn't a smooth transition from one band to the other. And I think currently the restructuring in the department where we have one department of basic education which takes care of GET and FET and if you look at (it) nationally, we are going to have one branch which takes responsibility for curriculum in the GET and the FET Band. Previously it was in two different branches, you had a branch for GET and a branch for FET, and these two branches never spoke to each other. But now with the restructuring that is taking place in the department they will all be in one branch headed by one deputy director general and I think you will allow for a smooth transition. Because we need to look at a school, as a school, and not say this is a primary school and what goes on in the primary school is separate from what goes on in the secondary school. Understandably the approaches are different but there must be that linkage, that alignment, between your primary GET curriculum and FET curriculum and I don't think a lot has been done in terms of bringing about the alignment. So, for me it is not just promotion requirements. It is about the whole curriculum statement that must now talk to each other. And I think that would ensure that there is a smooth transition and that we won't get this high failure rate that we have in Grade 10. You see the other thing that we need to look at is, what is the standard of test and

exams in Grade 10, compared to the standard of tests in Grade 9. Are the primary schools and the secondary schools maintaining the same standard? And I think that would also be an interesting study. Take a test set by a teacher in Grade 10, compare it with the same subject in Grade 9, and see whether the standards are the same. So it will be good for you to take an examination written in Grade 9 and compare the standard, because that could also contribute to the high pass rate here (indicating to Grade 9 results on the graph: Pass rate per grade: 2006) and the lower pass rate here (indicating to Grade 10 results on same graph). But I mean it is also interesting, there is a high failure rate there (indicating to Grade 10 results on graph: Pass rate per Grade: 2006), OK, but Grade 11 still followed the old curriculum there (indicating to Grade 11 results in 2006).

Interviewer: That was 2006. In 2007 they also complied to it. You see many learners already failed in 2006, so the number of learners ...

Interviewee: It is only your best learners that got there. I think the point is made, that even in 2007 the failure rate was high there (indicating to Grade 10 results in graph: Pass rates per grade: 2007). Now it is the same cohort from Grade 10 that were now in Grade 11, and the number that were not promoted has decreased, but I think that can be explained that only your best learners got into Grade 11.

Interviewer: There is a comparison between the two, but that is now in 2007 (indicating to Grade 11 results in the graph: Pass rate per Grade: 2007), where the pass rate was now a lot higher and the learners that was not promoted a lot lower. This is the number of learners that were not promoted (indicating to graph: Number of learners not promoted: 2007).

Interviewee: A very interesting study ...