ASSESSSMENT IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EFAL) FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND RATIONALE

The Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) approach for the education system in South Africa represents a new paradigm in education which is the change from the traditional education system to the OBE system. The new democratically elected government promulgated the South African Schools Act of 1996 to try to change the traditional type of education. In 1997, Curriculum 2005 or Outcomes-Based Education was introduced. OBE is the broader approach adopted in South Africa while in C2005 the curriculum was designed following the OBE principles. Curriculum 2005 was the new education framework for South Africa. The overall objective of Curriculum 2005 was to promote a culture of life-long learning.

Killen (1996: 2) states: "Outcomes-Based Education is an approach that requires teachers and students to focus their attention and efforts on the desired results of education. OBE encourages teachers to use this focus as a guide to all their instructional decision making, in particular their planning." OBE unlocks the potential of all South Africans to be active, creative, critical thinkers, living productive lives (Department of Education, 1997: 2). OBE aims to place the learner at the centre of learning and the educators as facilitators. Educators are encouraged to be innovative and learners to be responsible. The primary focus is on achievements which equip the learners for useful, fulfilling and contributory roles in life. It would seem that the single most important way to improve educators in OBE is to strengthen educators' involvement through training. The Department of Education provides this OBE training for educators.

A variety of assessment methods and instrument techniques are imperative when learners are assessed in Grade 9 in English First Additional Language (EFAL). Assessment has become very important because using OBE in South Africa aims to initiate an era of meaningful teaching and assessing. The government has even given guidelines on how it should be done through the 1998 Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training based on Grade R to 9 and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET).

The researcher identified shortcomings by educators in the current assessment practices of Grade 9 EFAL. This study, therefore proposes to focus on the extent to which educators follow the principles of OBE Grade 9 EFAL assessment in their classrooms as outlined in the guidelines for assessment. One of the important principles of assessment in Grade 9 of EFAL is to develop communicative competency and the ability to use English in authentic situations, such as during formal and informal conversations.

According to the Assessment Policy Document (DoE, 2000: 4), assessment should be done as a continuous process throughout the year in Grade 9 of EFAL. Assessment methods include teacher-assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, and group assessment. Assessment tools include profiles, observation sheets, journals, assessment grids, and class lists and profiles; techniques include tests, assignments, poetry, music, drama, and debates. The categorization of the methods, tools and techniques above must, however, not be used rigidly.

The researcher realized in various secondary schools that assessment in Grade 9 of EFAL is not based on OBE and is not a continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of learners measured against the assessment standards. The researcher further observed insufficient training of educators pertaining to assessment in Grade 9 of EFAL. Therefore, the retraining of the teachers in the existing life-long learning and the creation of the culture of learning have become major educational priorities for the Department of Education.

Assessment is a multipurpose activity. It is useful for both educators and learners. Among its many uses are the following: according DOE (2000: 3): it enables educators to gather sufficient information about the learners, it enables the educator to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide appropriate support, it provides enrichment for fast learners, it encourages teachers to use a wide variety of methods, tools and techniques of assessment. In addition, it motivates teachers and learners to use a wide variety of methods, tools and techniques of assessment; and motivates teachers and learners to

evaluate and improve their work. While enabling teachers and learners to assess progress and promote continuity, learning and progression. The implementation of a system of teacher-driven assessment must be supported by a focused programme for training and re-orientating teachers and education support services personnel, to fulfil new roles and perform new functions.

Many educators have come to recognize that assessment is an important means of gaining a picture of students' academic and linguistic development. Hamayan (1995: 213) asserts that "Assessment refers to procedures and techniques which can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the school or classroom". It is particularly useful with EFAL learners because it employs strategies that ask learners to show what they can do. Huertar-Marcias (1995: 9) affirms that "Focus is documenting individual student growth over time, rather than comparing students with one another. Emphasis is on students' strengths (what they know), rather than weaknesses (what they do not know). Consideration is given to the learning styles, language proficiencies, cultural and educational backgrounds and levels of students".

1.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following concepts are defined in terms of their meaning within the context of OBE:

1.2.1   OBE

Killen (1996: 2) describes "Outcomes-Based Education as an approach that requires teachers and students to focus their attention and efforts on the desired results of education". The definition embraces OBE as an activity-based and learner-centered education process.

Spady (1994:2) is supportive of the above statement: "Outcomes-Based Education means exactly what it suggests, namely 'Education' is to be based on the outcomes (or learning

results), we want all students to be able to demonstrate successfully". OBE as a process and achievement-oriented curriculum is stressed.

1.2.2   Assessment

Taylor (1988: 17) defines "assessment as the collection of data on the effectiveness of specific learning activities. The objects of assessment are the students and the outcomes". From this quotation, assessment as a continuous planned process of gathering information of learner performance, measured against the assessment standards is implied. According to (DoE, 2000: 2), assessment is 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.

1.2.3   English First Additional Language

EFAL is the area addressing the acquisition and learning of English as second or even third language. Learners will need to become proficient in this EFAL as their language of learning. It is also the language learned in addition to one's home language. The opportunity to speak, listen, write, and read becomes evident.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study focuses on the problem of assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE. To the researcher's knowledge, there is a problem in assessment following the principles of OBE. Over the years the researcher as an educator observed that assessment in Grade 9 of EFAL does not take into account the context in which outcomes should be demonstrated. Assessment, unfortunately, was subjected to a time constraint and driven by the calendar with little implementation and care of following the principles of OBE.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this study was to assess educators' success in the implementation of OBE assessment principles in EFAL in Grade 9. In order to achieve this broad aim, the study addressed the following specific objectives, namely:

- To identify the extent to which educators were implementing the assessment policy of EFAL in Grade 9.
- To explore the extent to which the training received by educators on assessment succeeded in applying OBE principles and policy guidelines in their daily practice of assessment in Grade 9 for EFAL.
- To evaluate the educators' opinions regarding assessment in Grade 9 for EFAL.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study set on to address the following questions:

Main question:

To what extent do educators follow OBE principles in their assessment of Grade 9 learners in EFAL?

Sub-questions:

- To what extent are educators able to implement the EFAL assessment policy in Grade 9?
- To what extent has the training received in assessment succeeded in assisting educators to apply OBE principles and policy guidelines in the daily practice of assessment in Grade 9 of EFAL?
- What are the educators' opinions regarding assessment in Grade 9 of EFAL?

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1. Qualitative Methodology and Justification

The problem under investigation is suited to the qualitative methodology rather than the quantitative perspective. Given the nature of the problem under study, the researcher found more sense in the qualitative school of thought than the quantitative paradigm. The qualitative mode of thinking does not see reality as operating according to the immutable natural laws. The qualitative mode of thinking asserts that it is possible to separate the inquirer from the inquired.

The qualitative research is premised on the fact that the researcher interacts with the learners that are being studied. In this case it is the educators and Grade 9 learners. That interaction could take various forms, ranging from the observation of subjects to interviewing them (Creswell 1994: 4). The interaction could assume the form of living with the informants over a prolonged period of time. It may, amongst other things, also take the form of actual collaboration. When such intermingling takes place that is how knowledge is being created. In short, the qualitative research paradigm's view of knowledge is that its formulation happens in a situation where the researcher attempts to minimize the distance between himself or herself and those who are being researched. The researcher as an educator is at close proximity with assessment. The qualitative research paradigm employs terms such as understanding, discovery and meaning during the course of creating knowledge (Le Compte and Preissle 1993: 51).

Given the distinctions between the qualitative paradigm and the quantitative paradigm, their rhetorical dimensions are likely to differ. Cresswell (1994:4) argues that the rhetorical assumption or language used by the investigator in the qualitative school of thought is informal. There could be no gainsaying to the fact that the researcher is born and bred in particular society with its own values. When researchers conduct a study, the values which they have been brought up in would influence their research consciously or unconsciously. The qualitative line of thinking stresses the importance of the investigator

to acknowledge that he or she is not value-free, the same with research findings the investigator would emerge with. Cresswell (1994: 4) buttresses the expressed point by stating that the qualitative researchers are aware of the value laden nature of their study and they actively report their own values, biases, judgments as well as the value nature of the information gathered from the field.

One of the clear lines of distinction that could be drawn between the quantitative and the qualitative research paradigms is the methodology used. The quantitative school of thought is deductive in approach. The qualitative paradigm follows inductive logic. Given the exposition of the above assumption of the qualitative school of thought, it is valid that the researcher's investigatory problem could be studied more approximately and convincingly through the qualitative research paradigm.

1.7 SAMPLE

Armstrong (1993: 75) states that sampling involves the collection of attitudes, opinions and facts from a representative number of people in the total population. Le Compte and Preissle (1993: 60) define a sample as a subset of a larger population. The term sampling denotes extracting systematically from a group so as to represent it adequately. Sampling is undertaken when studying an entire population is too wide, too expensive, too time-consuming or simply unnecessary. It is unimaginable to talk of sampling to the exclusion or disregard of the term population. The two terms are inextricably linked.

The researcher studied a particular attribute of the population through a sample and then generalized about the population. By large in qualitative studies, generalizing does not reign supreme like in quantitative studies. The qualitative research design aims at understanding the case under study in its context, hence, this paradigm was inductive in approach. Armstrong (1993: 76) notes that bias can enter if the sampling method does not allow each member of the population an equal chance of contributing to the sample.

Mankweng Area or Region 2 has 35 schools. This suggests that the number of EFAL educators in senior phase Grade 9 is not less than 35. The researcher's selection of five schools in Mankweng Area purposely identified the educators in Grade 9 of the senior phase. Only 5 educators of EFAL were sampled for intensive appropriate focus.

1.8 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The research instruments used to gather data were interviews, documents and classroom observations. While a detailed exposition of the empirical research design and the rationale for the choice of methodology are fully explained in Chapter Three, a brief overview is given below.

1.8.1   Interviews

The educators were interviewed to establish how they go about assessing Grade 9 learners in EFAL using the principles of OBE. The researcher invited educators concerned to one central venue. The interviewees were encouraged to be free as the information gathered would be confidential.

1.8.2   Classroom Observation

The researcher observed 225 learners from various classes for 35 minute periods for Grade 9 English lessons to ascertain how educators were assessing learners following the principles of   OBE.

1.8.3   Document Analysis

The assessment of 25 portfolios as the systematic collection of the learners' work measured against predetermined scoring criteria was analyzed. It included scoring guides, rubrics, checklists or rating scales. Assessment portfolios included performance-based assessments.

1.9   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The researcher believes that this study will make a contribution to assessment of Grade 9 in EFAL following the principles of OBE. The researcher is concerned about poor assessment. Most studies done in the field of assessment were done in developed countries and did not take into consideration the specific educational requirements such as those of South Africa. Therefore, it is anticipated that the knowledge which will be generated in this study will enhance educators' understanding of many aspects of assessment. As a result, the findings of this study will directly or indirectly influence language teacher education, curriculum and instructional material development. This study is, therefore, expected to be of value to curriculum designers, language, educators and learners.

1.10   LIMITATION OF STUDY

The researcher limited the study to the implementation of assessment in English First Additional Language within the Outcome-Based Curriculum in the Mankweng Area (Region 2) of the Limpopo Province (former Northern Province) of South Africa. The study focused on the senior phase in Grade 9 as it is the present exit level for OBE. The results can be generalized to the whole province and other provinces, as OBE is a national approach. Similar problems may arise because of common training received by educators.

1.11   THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The aim of the following paragraphs was to present a brief structure of the dissertation and to highlight the contents of the chapters. Chapter 1 describes the background and rationale of the study. It describes the assessment of Grade 9 in EFAL following the principles of Outcomes-Based Education. In Chapter 2 documents were read and interviews used to confirm the validity of the research done to confirm the research.

References were made to other studies as evidence located by a scrupulous library search. Chapter 3 is centered on how the researcher gathered data relevant to the problem under investigation. The chapter further articulates how data were collected and recorded, the steps taken to ensure validity and reliability and the research instruments employed. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes data gathered through the interviews and observations protocol.

In the final chapter the empirical results of the study are presented. Educators' assessment of the learners in EFAL following the principles of OBE is given. Chapter 5 further describes the recommendations for educational changes in South Africa. The chapter integrated the formulation from previous chapters in outlining the assessment of educators in EFAL following the principles of OBE. It also provides suggestions which may contribute towards the development of more effective implementation strategies for assessment.

1.10   CONCLUSION

This chapter centered on the explanation of the problem. The background and rationale are articulated. The aims and objectives are provided. The delimitation and significance of the study are provided. The structure of research or chapter division is also explained.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher outlined a general orientation to the study. This chapter provides an overview of assessment as a concept and how Grade 9 assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE is followed.

Educators are unlike workers in non-school settings in several ways. They are relatively isolated from one another, compared to their counterparts in other work settings. They expect and experience a high degree of autonomy in the control of their daily work. There is a low level of interdependency among educators in terms of task assessment. As professionals, educators are not closely supervised and they exercise a great deal of discretion in their daily work assessment. Given their physical isolation from one another and the limited amount of direct supervision received from school administrators, it is very difficult for administrators to influence educator practices (Anon 1995: 65).

Educators can with relative ease ignore most efforts by administrators to influence their assessment or what occurs in their classroom. Resistance by many educators to change their approaches to teaching has a negative influence on learners in Grade 9 EFAL classroom assessment.

2.2   THE CONCEPT "ASSESSMENT"

To the researcher, assessment must drive instruction towards new learning theories. Learners learn by doing. Brown and Knight (1995: 9) observe that "assessment is a systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of learners in the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting and using information to increase learners' learning and development. This is confirmed by Astin (1993:14) who notes that "assessment promotes talent development more indirectly when

it enlightens or informs the educator about the effectiveness of various educational policies and practices".

The above discussion clearly indicates that assessment practices should further the basic aims and purposes of educational institutions. Assessment is for learners, educators, governing bodies, and employers. Depending on those people's interests, assessment needs to take different forms and have its findings communicated in different ways. The researcher believes that the testing of the learners' achievements in order to see if he or she meets some criterion held by the educator is significant for learning.

2.2.1   Categories of Assessment

Miller, Austin and Brown (1998: 30) classify assessment tasks into three main categories, namely:

- Diagnostic assessment tests which have their main function as the placement of students in the most suitable teaching programmes. Brown and Knight (1995: 15) view diagnostic assessment as a sub-set of the formative.
- Formative assessment tests provide regular feedback to students in order to stimulate learning and to provide students with information which will help them judge the effectiveness of their learning strategies to date. The researcher views the purpose of formative assessment as primarily to get an estimate of achievement which is used to help in the learning process.
- Summative assessment makes a judgment (usually irreversible) regarding each student's performance or level of achievement at the end of a study. The researcher regards summative assessment as the end-of-course assessment. It sums up someone's achievement and describes what has been achieved and what has not been achieved.

2.3 ASSESSMENT IN EFAL FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF OBE

2.3.1 Introduction

One of the important components of the curriculum that has undergone tremendous change is assessment. Identifying the central role that teachers or educators will play in assessment does not imply that all of them will immediately be comfortable with such a role or that they will be expected to be assessors without support. On-going training will be essential. According to Dasoo (1995: 5), educators have received insufficient training to assess learners in Grade 9 EFAL using the Outcome-Based Assessment (OBA) approach. The OBA assessment approach in the Grade 9 EFAL classroom should assist in acquiring knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation skills.

2.3.2 Assessment within OBE Content

Dasoo (1995: 6) further mentions that the successful acquisition of assessment becomes more important for all South African learners to enable them to function effectively in a more demanding society. Proper assessment in the Grade 9 EFAL classrooms is a way of promoting intelligent, creative and lateral thinking. The OBE approach advocates that assessment in Grade 9 EFAL needs educators to change from an educator-centred approach to a learner-centred approach. It encourages learners to appraise their work and have reporting and progression.

The DOE (1997: 14) proclaims that all training programmes must include components which attempt to address anxieties and attitudes which will stem from the role changes of educators, learners and education support personnel. Assessment within the OBE content addresses the need for accountability. It shows whether what is produced is superior and of high quality or not. The indication of whether learning did take place is fathomed. OBE is a way of learning and teaching in which pupils do most of the work themselves and teachers are mere guides and assessors of their progress.

2.3.3 Purpose of Assessment

To the researcher, the purpose of assessment in Grade 9 EFAL is to unveil critical outcomes. According to DOE (1997: 15), the purpose of assessment encompasses the following: at all levels of the education system that is national, district, and classroom, assessments in Grade 9 EFAL will be aligned to agreed-upon standards of student performance. Shortsighted and outdated goals are eliminated by assessment. Assessments in Grade 9 EFAL must match instructional goals and reflect the effects of good instruction. Assessment instruments in Grade 9 EFAL must be chosen on the basis of the content to be studied and the intended use of the assessment results and that research-based changes in teaching and learning will be reflected in improved assessment results of Grade 9 EFAL.

2.3.4 Principles of Outcomes-Based Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL

According to the DoE (1997: 19), OBA in Grade 9 EFAL assists learners to reach their full potential. It is participative, democratic and transparent and is criterion referenced. It places less emphasis on norm-referencing. It involves a shift away from learning as memorization. Moreover, involves learners using relevant knowledge in real life context and integrated throughout the teaching and learning process. According to Killen (1996: 7), "Assessment of student learning is an essential element of outcomes-based education, without valid and reliable assessment procedures, educators simply will not know whether or not their students have achieved the outcomes that were the focus of the programme".

The preceding citation encourages the researcher to view assessment in Grade 9 EFAL as not something that educators should think about at the end of a unit of work, but as an integral part of all programming. Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL should be made against predetermined standards but it should be on an individual basis after each student has had adequate time to learn. It is important that Grade 9 EFAL assessment procedures give a clear indication of what students are learning.

2.3.5 A Need for an Assessment Change in EFAL from Educator-Centred Approach to Learner-Centred Approach

OBE has undergone changes under the DoE, first it was introduced as Curriculum 2005, then as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and presently to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which is the new education framework for South Africa. Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL aims to show what the learner has achieved and how he or she is able to integrate and apply his or her knowledge and skills. In the past, assessment was structured and inflexible with poor assessment quality educational materials.

Many educators, according to the *Sowetan Education* (Friday April 26, 2002) have " a morbid fear for assessment change in Grade 9 EFAL and suffer from what can be referred to as 'contemporary phobia', that is, the fear of everything new. Educators tend to want to hold life in the gripping yoke of sameness and resist vehemently the emergence of anything that threatens the status quo. The move out of a comfort zone is unthinkable, unpleasant and unimaginable for many".

Currently English and Afrikaans are still used as the media of instruction in secondary schools. Predominately, English attains the national unity and is the lingua franca that links all other languages and cultures in South Africa. Assessment in Grade 9 of EFAL should promote learning outcomes for listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing, thinking and reasoning, and language structure and use. A brief description of the learning outcomes and assessment standards follows here under according to DoE (2002: 28) Language Policy on NCS for EFAL.

2.3.6 Learning Outcomes for EFAL

When language is used knowledge, skills and values are integrated to express people. The learning outcomes hereunder are presented as separate outcomes and should be integrated when taught and assessed.

Learning outcomes 1: **Listening**: The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.

Learning outcomes 2**: Speaking**: The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.

Learning outcomes 3: **Reading and viewing**: The learner will be able to read and look for information and enjoyment and respond critically, to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.

Learning outcomes 4: **Writing**: The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

Learning outcomes 5**: Thinking and reasoning**: The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.

Learning outcomes 6: **Language structure and use**: The learner will know and be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts.

2.3.7   *Assessment Standard*s

Assessment standards measure the learner's performance in relation to the goals of a course. The goals can be measured if they are in the form of objectives. The NCS helps to define the desired standard of learning at each level. Listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing, thinking and reasoning, and knowledge of sounds, words and grammar are integrated.

2.3.8   *Planning for Assessment*

According to the Language Policy DoE (2002: 29) on NCS the following questions may assist educators in planning Grade 9 assessment for EFAL:

- Why does the researcher want to assess Grade 9 EFAL learners?
- What knowledge, skills, values and attitudes should Grade 9 EFAL learners demonstrate?
- Are Grade 9 EFAL learners aware of what is important in this assessment?

- What prior knowledge do Grade 9 EFAL learners have?
- Which are appropriate methods in Grade 9 EFAL for assessing the activity and how will the researcher use them?
- What appropriate tools and techniques will be used?
- What activity or assessment task can be used for Grade 9 EFAL learners to show the evidence?
- Who will be assessing Grade 9 EFAL?
- What kind of feedback can be given to Grade 9 EFAL learners?
- How is the researcher planning to support Grade 9 EFAL learners?

2.3.9   Assessment Competences

According to the Norms and Standards for Educators as enshrined in the Government Gazette (2001: 21), the assessor must have the following:

(a) Practical competence

- The assessor must make use of continuous and diagnostic forms of assessment in Grade 9 EFAL.
- Assess in a manner appropriate to the phase, subject or learning area.
- The assessor must provide feedback to Grade 9 EFAL learners in sensitive educationally helpful ways.
- The assessor must also judge Grade 9 learners' competence and performance in a fair, valid and reliable way.
- The assessor must also maintain efficient recording and reporting of academic progress of Grade 9 EFAL.

(b) Foundational competence

- The assessor in Grade 9 EFAL must understand the strengths and weaknesses in relation to the age of the learner and learning area being assessed.
- The understanding of Grade 9 EFAL assessment approaches and methods appropriate to the learning area subject discipline or phase is necessary.
- Understanding of language terminology, descriptive and diagnostic reporting and the degree to which it is gender and culturally sensitive is of paramount

importance.

(c) Reflexive competences

- The assessor in Grade 9 EFAL must reflect on the appropriateness of assessment decisions made in particular learning situations.

- The assessment in Grade 9 EFAL must also interpret and use assessment results to feed into the process for the improvement of learning programmes.

The shift from the traditional assessment to the OBE assessment methods and approaches in line with the new policy places a challenge to educators of Grade 9 EFAL who were initially trained to practise summative assessment in the form of tests and assignments only while some of them have practiced this form of assessment for many years. They find it difficult to adapt to the newly introduced form. The new form requires the learner to demonstrate the ability to integrate or connect performances and decision making with understanding and with the ability to adapt to change and unforeseen circumstances and explain the reasons behind these actions.

Few studies (Dasoo 1995; Miller 1998; Messick 1999; Hamayan 1995) have focused on assessment. It is against this background that this study will be undertaken, focusing on how educators assess Grade 9 learners in EFAL.

2.3.10 Continuous Assessment (CASS) in Grade 9 EFAL

Gathering sufficient evidence of a learner's progress towards achieving the stated outcomes on an ongoing basis, recording and reporting on the level of performance of learning are of paramount importance. Continuous Assessment (CASS) in Grade 9 EFAL is an ongoing everyday activity that finds out what a learner knows, understands, values, and can do, providing information that is used to support a learner's development and enables improvement to be made in the teaching and learning process. CASS in Grade 9 EFAL must be an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

CASS in Grade 9 EFAL does not mean assessing continuously; it means that teachers have to plan assessment as part of their learning activities and assess learners' progress over a period of time. Teachers do not assess all learners all the time. They assess selected learners or groups of learners at different times.

The following features from the Department of Education (1997:26) on Continuous Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL are crucial:

- Enables teachers to use any planned learning experience to assess Grade 9 learner achievement and progress.
- It is an essential aspect of the total evaluation of every Grade 9 learner.
- Takes place over a long period of time.
- Is diagnostic, enabling the teacher to monitor strengths and to address the needs of the Grade 9 learner.
- Enables teachers to place Grade 9 EFAL learners and to provide enrichment for faster learners.
- Sets well-defined targets (outcomes) for Grade 9 EFAL learners.
- Ensures that the learning programme is significant for the Grade 9 EFAL learner by providing positive outcomes and prevents teaching for a test.
- Covers a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks.
- Is transparent as learners are aware of the criteria against which they are assessed.
- Requires the development of a sound assessment record to track the learning progress and provide useful data for reporting and progression.
- Involves assessment of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values ensuring that content is not the only focus.
- Encourages teachers and learners to appraise their work.
- Ensure that learners are exposed to a wide range of techniques.
- Ensures that summative assessment is only one component of evaluation.

For the researcher, assessment in Grade 9 EFAL is contradictory for many reasons. Assessment strategies in Grade 9 EFAL need change to tie assessment design and content

to new outcomes and purposes for assessment. The skills and competencies needed to succeed in today's workplace are changing as well. Hill and Parry (1994: 234) support this by stating, "In this atmosphere of reform, student assessment is the centerpiece of many educational improvement efforts. Many educators and policymakers believe that what gets assessed is what gets taught and that the format at assessment influences the format of instruction".

Assessment can be an emotive issue. Learners and parents are often confused but, along with educators, are concerned about the fairness of the assessment. Educators, learners and frequently parents have definite views about the measurement of the progress. Their concerns are not always the same. Educators have a number of reasons for assessing learners and sometimes the reasons are unclear. Assessment can be subjective or objective. A subjective assessment often means that the person carrying it out, usually the educator or the learner will have made a judgment on gut reactions. This is based on past experience and involves comparing learners. It has been shown in schools that assessment by comparing learners benefits only a few it is, therefore, desirable to a achieve high degree of objectivity. Assessment must be kept in perspective. It is part of teaching and learning that must not be allowed to dominate the process.

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) (1997: 79) compare the Traditional Assessment and OBA in the table below:

2.3.11 Traditional Assessment versus OBA

TRADITIONAL	*OUTCOMES BASED*
Focuses mainly on knowledge	Focuses mainly on knowledge, skills, values, and attitude
It is summative	Is formative (continuous)
Involves mainly tests and examinations	It involves a range of methods, tools and techniques

Is norm referenced	It is criterion referenced
Confidential	Transparent
Time-based	Learner–based
Arouses fear	Learners get used to it
Not always related to real life context	Uses relevant knowledge in real life context

TABLE 1:   Comparison between Traditional and OBA

Collier (1967: 127) is supportive of the above differences when he notes that "The Traditional South African education does not educate but is intermingled with the principles of what has been termed the 'mug and jug theory'. The jug refers to the educator with knowledge which must be poured forcefully into the learner who is compared to an empty mug".

2.3.11 Assessment methods, tools and techniques in Grade 9 EFAL

Assessment finds out what a learner knows, understands, values, and can do. Assessment provides information that is used to support a learner's development and enables improvements to be made in the teaching learning process. Assessment must be based on a learner's progress over a long period of time. Educators must assess selected learners or a group of learners at different times. Messick (1999: 201) mentions: "A variety of methods, tools and techniques should be used when learners are assessed."

An assessment method is a procedure to be followed in assessing learners. Assessment methods include the following: teacher assessment, self assessment, peer assessment, and group assessment. Pertaining to teacher assessment, the educator as the assessor must understand methods of assessment and be able to provide helpful feedback to learners. The educator will thus design and manage both formative and summative assessment in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of the learning.

An assessment tool or rubric is any instrument that you use in your assessment method, that is, what the educator uses to make a fair assessment. They are usually the records kept by the teacher, for example, observation sheets, class lists and journals. These assessment tools or rubrics make provision for gathering proof of Grade 9 EFAL assessment for recording and reporting on a learner's progression. For example, the educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment. The educator will understand how to interpret and use assessment results to feed into processes for the improvement of learning programmes.

An assessment technique is what the learner acquires or shows the evidence of achievement, for example, role-play, test, project, and presentation. Assessment techniques includes, inter alia, Collages, tests, assignments, charts, poetry, debates, rubrics, questionnaires, drama, story telling, and self reporting. For example, debates make a learner understand language terminology and content to be used in the assessment task and the degree to which this is gender and culturally sensitive. The learner will demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and thinking which underpins the debate taken.

The categorization of the various methods, tools and techniques above should not be used rigidly. A tool or a technique can be used as a method given the circumstances; for example, a test can be a tool or a method or a technique. This will depend on what the educator in Grade 9 EFAL finds appropriate.

2.3.12 The Researcher's Assessment of Grade 9 EFAL following the Principles of OBE

The researcher's personal critique of Grade 9 EFAL assessment to learning in general and language learning in particular derives from empirical evidence amassed over a number of years. Having gone through a number of assessment approaches, the researcher contends that the Continuous Tasks Assessment (CTA) for Grade 9 EFAL assessment seems to be a kind of remedy which will help cure some of the anomalies inherent in our education system which was exam-oriented. It has been observed that the

EFAL Grade 9 assessment system defines outcomes clearly. Through Grade 9 EFAL assessment, both educators and learners are able to determine whether these outcomes have been achieved.

2.3.13 Characteristics of EFAL Assessment

a) Critical Thinking and Liberty in Grade 9 EFAL Assessment

Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL offers learners an opportunity to demonstrate their competence within a particular learning area. The process of Grade 9 EFAL assessment becomes transparent and learners are involved in the ongoing assessment of their progress. This involvement and clarity of purpose serve to motivate the Grade 9 EFAL learners.

Outcomes are publicly stated so that educators can be held accountable for not achieving them. A credit is only awarded to Grade 9 EFAL learners who can demonstrate that they have achieved the outcomes. The above indicates the contradiction to the traditional methods which were exam-driven and which perpetuated rote-learning. Assessment in EFAL promotes critical thinking, reasoning, reflection, and action.

b) Creativity in assessment

Learners in Grade 9 EFAL are allowed to develop at their own pace. With assessment in Grade 9 EFAL, learners take responsibility for their own learning by demonstrating the ability to integrate or connect performances and decision making with understanding and with the ability to adapt to change and unforeseen circumstances and explain the reasons behind these actions. Learners are motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth. They become analytic and creative thinkers, problem solvers and effective communicators. Messick (1999:207) buttresses this fact by saying "learners develop the capacity to collect, gather and organize information and conduct research. This is made possible by flexible time-frames which allow learners to work at their own pace."

Teachers are relieved from the pressure of being the source of knowledge. Learners in Grade 9 EFAL must be trained to take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching can, therefore, become a more attractive and innovative career. The teacher is no longer merely the one responsible for teaching but the one who is taught in dialogue with the learners, who in turn, while being taught, also teach. Learning programmes are seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes of Grade 9 EFAL.

c) *Assessment eliminates permanent failure*

Learners in Grade 9 EFAL are motivated by constant feedback. CTA engulfs marks gathered by learners from the beginning of the year. The exam is not the sole instrument of determining the fate of the learners. Flexible time-frames allow learners to work at their own pace. Comments and inputs from the wider community are encouraged through sections to be answered at home with the help of the parents. It unlocks the potential so that they can live productive and fulfilling lives. All learning will not fail but succeed and time will no longer control the learners' progress. Contrary to the traditional assessment approach which was exam oriented, the assessment in Grade 9 EFAL stresses that outcomes be assessed as an ongoing process. Learners in Grade 9 EFAL do not just get marks for remembering subject content only. Different aspects of the Grade 9 EFAL learners' abilities such as their creativity and critical thinking are assessed.

According to Huerta-Marcias (1995: 75), "Permanent failure is eliminated because learners who have achieved the required standards will be granted further opportunities to show their skills. Absorption of discrete facts is eliminated and the understanding of context is required. Learner's ability to appreciate and deal with real situations like those that they encounter outside the classroom is increased by positive encouragement."

2.4   CONCLUSION

It is clear that the process of Grade 9 EFAL assessment is long and difficult due to the fact that any assessment change within an education system is often representative of change within society. It is for this reason that assessment change within South Africa becomes so difficult.

What Grade 9 EFAL educators need to keep in mind is that assessment is about the growth future and development society. If the bigger picture of assessment gets caught up in individualistic, egotistical ideologies then no growth or progress will be in sight. Communication, respect, understanding, and common goals are needed in assessment to experience positive results.

The researcher, in this chapter, studied literature pertinent and relevant to assessment. This provided valuable insight into the nature of assessment problems in Grade 9 for EFAL. An in-depth analysis and interpretation of assessment opens the gate for the research design in Chapter 3. It also orientates the researcher's focus.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Le Compte and Preisle (1993: 233) note that over-collection of unselected data threatens non-interactive methods of data collection. The above assertion indicates that data could be gathered through interactive and non-interactive methods. Cresswell (1994:143) maintains that only a few writers agree on a precise procedure for data collection, analysis and reporting of qualitative research. Data collection steps involve setting the boundaries for the study, collection of information through observations, interviews, documents, visual materials, and establishing the protocol for recording information (Cresswell 1994: 148).

Miles and Huberman (1984) as quoted by (Cresswell 1994: 148) suggest four parameters to be considered by the investigator when collecting data. Those parameters are the setting that is where the research will take place, the actors, that is, which will be observed or interviewed. The third parameter is events. Events are what the actors would be observed doing or interviewed about. The last parameter is a process. A process has something to do with the involving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the research setting.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACHES AND JUSTIFICATION

Research approaches inform the reader exactly how the data was collected and processed. The researcher felt that the ideal research to use for in this research study was qualitative research. This was done after extensive perusal of existing literature on research methodology. The clear lines of distinction between the quantitative and the qualitative research paradigms are important.

3.2.1 *Quantitative Research Approach*

The quantitative research approach maintains that research must be objective in order to arrive at the truth and the researcher must be free from observation. Cresswell (1994: 147) maintains that the researcher was expected by the quantitative research to remain distant and independent of what was being researched. When a researcher uses a quantitative approach, he seeks to find relationships by means of established sets of procedures. Quantitative research describes any phenomenon according to its statistical or numerical elements. Traditional quantitative methodologists assume that the individuals who are investigated merely possess opinions about the social world.

3.2.2 *Qualitative Research Approach*

The research methodology chosen for this study is qualitative. In this study classroom observation, artefacts or documents and interviews were used as techniques.

Cresswell (1994:2) states that "Qualitative methodology advances one major assumption that quantitative methodology does not. All research endeavors must be responsible relative to the methodology which they employ." The researcher felt that the qualitative approach will largely meet the aim of gaining greater insight into and understanding of educators' assessment of learners in Grade 9 EFAL following the principles of OBE or curriculum 2005. The qualitative approach was selected because the life world of educators' perspectives on curriculum is an intimate and subjective matter. The qualitative research paradigm is premised on the fact that the researcher interacts with those that are being studied. That interaction could take various forms, ranging from the observation of subjects to interviewing them (Cresswell 1994: 4).

The interaction could assume the form of living with the informants over a prolonged period of time. It may amongst other things also take the form of actual collaboration. When such intermingling takes place that is how knowledge is being created. In short, the qualitative research paradigm's view of knowledge is that its formulation happens in

a situation where the researcher attempts to minimize the distance between himself or herself and those who are being researched. The qualitative research paradigm employs terms such as understanding, discovery and meaning during the course of creating knowledge (Le compte and Preissle 1993: 51).

3.2.3   *Justifying the Research Paradigm Selected*

One of the clear lines of distinction that could be drawn between the quantitative and the qualitative research paradigm is based on methodology. Le Compte and Preissle (1993: 60) state that the quantitative school of thought is deductive in approach whereas the qualitative paradigm follows inductive logic. Given the exposition of the above assumptions of the qualitative school of thought, it is valid that the researcher's problem under investigation could be studied more approximately and convincingly through the qualitative research paradigm.

3.3.   THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Since the researcher is an educator in Grade 9 EFAL and is responsible for assessment, he has certain thoughts about assessment following the principles of OBE. Assessment is about measuring a learner's achievements against the goals of a programme. The goals are usually expressed as statements called objectives. Objectives are a focusing device for teaching, learning and assessment. If a goal statement cannot be measured, it is more likely to be an aim, rather than an objective. Aims are statements about the direction or trends of a programme.

3.4 SAMPLING

Leedy (1993: 198) maintains that "sampling enables one to study a portion of the population rather than the entire population". It, therefore, saves the researcher's time. The researcher identified the population and the focus of the study beforehand by

establishing and identifying boundaries of the said population. This was done by considering reachability and accessibility to schools. Logical matters were examined.

3.4.1. *Method of Sampling*

Armstrong (1993: 75) states that sampling involves the collection of attitudes, opinions and facts from a representative number of people in the total population. Le Compte and Preissle (1993: 60) define a sample as a subset of a larger population. The term sampling denotes extracting a group systematically to represent the population adequately. Sampling is undertaken when studying an entire population is too wide, too expensive, too time-consuming or simply unnecessary. It is unimaginable to talk of sampling to the exclusion or disregard of the term population. The two terms are inextricably linked.

The researcher studied a particular attribute of the population through a sample and then generalized about the population. By and large in qualitative studies, generalizing does not reign supreme like in quantitative studies. The qualitative research design aims at understanding the case under study in its context, hence this paradigm is inductive in approach. Amstrong (1993: 76) notes that bias can enter if the sampling method does not allow every member of the population an equal chance of contributing to the sample.

Mankweng Area or Region 2 has 35 schools. This suggests that the number of English First Additional Language educators in senior phase Grade 9 is not less than 35. The researcher's selection of 5 schools in the Mankweng area will purposely identify the educators in Grade 9 of senior phase. Only 5 educators of EFAL will be sampled for intensive appropriate focus. The researcher used a non-probability or comprehensive sampling. This was done to obtain a sample study of Grade 9 Assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE. There was no way forecasting, estimating or guaranteeing that each element in the population would be presented in the sample when the researcher was using a non-probability sampling. This means that all educators who attended the interviewing on the day the research instruments were administered formed the population of the study. Educators in Further Education and Training (FET) were not

included in this study because they were familiar with assessment. The researcher wanted to discover and gain a deeper understanding of Grade 9 assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE and, therefore, needed to select a sample from which most could be learned. All 5 educators were Grade 9 EFAL language speakers.

3.5   VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF TOOLS

Validity and reliability are key concepts in any form of enquiry. It was important to distinguish between these two concepts by the researcher as applied in this study.

3.5.1   *Validity*

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure Creswell (1994: 144). Creswell (1994: 146) notes that there are four types of validity. These are the content validity, predictive validity, concurrent validity and construct validity. Content validity refers to the degree to which an instrument samples the content area which is to be measured. Predictive validity refers to the extent to which an instrument can predict the future performance of individuals. Concurrent validity, according to (Cresswell 1994: 147), is the approximate truth about inferences regarding concurrent relationships. Construct validity refers to the extent to which an instrument can construct causal relationships.

Validity is one of the most important characteristics of a test. In this study the integrity and validity of the instruments were influenced by several factors. As an educator the researcher has an educational background. The researcher has spent several years assessing learners and, therefore, has sound information about assessment following the principles of OBE. The credibility was also established in the data collection by using a tape recorder to supplement the researcher's field notes, literature and educators' interviews.

3.5.2 *Reliability*

Creswell (1994: 144) mentions that reliability is the extent to which a measuring device is consistent in measuring whatever it measures. Creswell (1994: 146) furthermore maintains that reliability of a measuring instrument is the degree of consistency with which the instrument measures what is supposed to measure. The above scholars proceed to reveal that the less variation an instrument produces among the repeated measurements, the more reliable it is. A perfectly measuring device produces exactly the same results every time it is used. The inaccuracy of the instrument represents a problem related to validity of the instrument. It is possible for an instrument to be reliable without being valid. However, an instrument cannot be valid if it is also not reliable.

Reliability is an essential component of validity. If an instrument provides inconsistent or unreliable measures, the measures would be inaccurate or invalid (Cresswell 1994: 148). Several factors contributed to the validity and reliability of the instruments in this study of Grade 9 assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE.

Firstly, the researcher has an educational background as he had spent several years teaching in Grade 9 and other grades and therefore has some information about Grade 9 assessment in EFAL. Other means to establish credibility in the data collection included portfolios, literature and educator interviews. The researcher was always careful about the limitation of the study in order to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the data collected. The researcher was alert about his own bias and subjectivity. The researcher cemented the reliability of this investigation of Grade 9 assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE by using the qualitative methodology.

3.6 DATA-GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

3.6.1   Orientation

For the purpose of this study 3 instruments of data gathering were used, namely, observation, interview and documents. They helped the researcher in investigating the extent to which educators assess Grade 9 learners in EFAL following the principles of OBE. Other data were collected during the course of reviewing relevant literature.

A brief description of each instrument and the number of respondents involved in each case is presented in the table below. The total number of learners observed was 225. Five educators from five different high schools were selected for interviews. Five learners whose artifacts from each different school class were selected for the study and analysis. The total number of learners' portfolios from five different schools was 25. The schools visited were Mankoeng High School, Nkoshilo High School, Mathukana High School, Motlakaro High School, and Doasho High School.

TABLE 2: Summary of the data-gathering instruments

Research instrument	Description	Number of respondents
Classroom observation	Observed learners interacting with educators in class	225 learners
Educator interview	Interviews with educators	5 educators
Artifacts	Analysed learners' portfolios	25 portfolios

3.6.2. Classroom observation

The 5 schools were observed by the researcher in order to collect data. The researcher observed a lesson of 35 minutes in a Grade 9 class of EFAL at Mankoeng High School.

Classroom observation was a suitable method for the collection of data because the researcher was able to observe how assessment was done following the OBE principles. The researcher observed 5 classes from different schools in Grade 9 offering EFAL. The researcher as a participant observer interjected himself into an actual situation in an effort to draw out and document the assessment of the learners following the OBE principles. In doing so, the researcher was guided by the research questions so that the observation was not just haphazard but theoretically selective. The researcher observed classes for a maximum duration of 35 minutes. The topics covered various assessment standards.

The assessment standards were observed, namely, critical language awareness about prepositions and homophones, listening for specific information, reading different types of texts, interacting or speaking or debating social and ethical issues, writing as a process, using language for thinking, and the use of tenses and different types of nouns.

3.6.3 Educators' interviews

- *Orientation*

In order to obtain the educator's own view on assessment, it was important to include oral interviews with the educator. The researcher was conscious of the errors or bias which might be deliberate lying, unconscious mistakes, accidental errors, and memory failures in conducting the interview as a social interaction. The researcher encouraged the interviewees to be focused.

- *Types of interviews*

Keeves and Kvale (1999: 214) differentiate 3 types of interviews, namely, respondent interviews or structured interview where the researcher retains control throughout the whole process, information interviews or unstructured interviews where the goal is to gain some insight into the perceptions of a particular person within a situation. The interviewee does not know what line of questioning to pursue until they have a chance to see what kind of information is available. Thirdly, there are semi-structured interviews or open-ended interviews: flexibility is allowed and video-taping is used.

- *The type of interview used in this study*

The interviews undertaken in this study were of a semi-structured (open-ended) nature. They were conducted during the period June to August 2003 in the staff rooms of the various schools. The interviews were conducted in English because the educators in Grade 9 were teaching English. Questions were in line with assessment following the OBE principle. Meaning was explored and the researcher guided the interview where necessary. The researcher conducted a combination of individual and group interviews. Educators were in a group and interviewed individually. The researcher used oral interviews to provide a wider background to the problem on a face-to-face basis. This was done to help put the questionnaire responses in better a perspective for data analysis.

 They were conducted in the form of a conversation because many people are usually more willing to communicate orally than in writing. They are thus able to provide data more readily and fully in an interview than on a questionnaire. Where educators struggled to make meaning, they were allowed to code- switch from English their mother tongue and vice versa. Some educators, because of limited English proficiency, struggled to make their meaning clear but this was not too severe to make the information incomprehensible. Therefore, the questions were flexible and the meanings were explored. The researcher and the research subjects together created meanings through conversations.

- *Pitfalls of oral interviews*

One of the pitfalls of oral interviews is that the respondent may mislead the interviewer due to departmental rules and regulations. Pitfalls can also occur because the respondent adores the status of the interview and fear reprisal. Armstrong (1993: 80) notes that sometimes errors and misinformation can mislead the interviewer. To avoid this, the researcher followed the initial probe questions: To what extent do educators assess learners in EFAL following the principles of OBE? Thereafter, the researcher used appropriate communication techniques to facilitate communication. Follow-up questions were more variable.

- *Procedure in conducting interviews*

The interviews were conducted at the researcher's work place in the staff room using a tape recorder. The tape recorder was placed under the table in order to provide a non-threatening environment. The researcher explained to the educators that there were no right or wrong answers and that the researcher was interested in their assessment of EFAL following the OBE principles. The 5 educators from 5 different schools teaching EFAL in Grade 9 were selected. Fortunately the five selected schools had one educator teaching Grade 9 EFAL. The 3 educators were males and 2 females.

The researcher told them that if they did not know an answer to a particular question, they should say so and the researcher would go on to the next question. In each case the educators were interviewed individually. The researcher used such probes as "What do you mean by …?" "Show me what you mean…?" "Can you give me an example…?" or "Tell me more…." The researcher obtained a fairly full and detailed picture of Grade 9 assessment in EFAL following the OBE principles by conducting individual interviews.

- *Document Analysis*

The researcher collected 25 portfolios, that is, 5 for each school in Grade 9 from the 5 different schools offering EFAL, namely, Mankoeng High School, Nkoshilo High School, Mathukane High School, Motlakaro High School, and Doasho High School. Inside the portfolios, the researcher found tests, assignments, class works, and projects which helped to expand the information that was collected during the classroom observations and oral interviews.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to describe the research design. This chapter gave a detailed description and justification of the selections. The data collection methods were also entertained. The selection and locating of the research subjects and data gathering by means of observation, interviews and documents were also included. The researcher also highlighted differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches. The option to use qualitative approach is explained. The researcher structured research design in line with the purpose of the study. Thus, the study accommodated a variety of methods of data collection. In the following chapter the researcher will report on the findings obtained from each of research instruments used.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the data gathered through the interviews, observations and the review of documents. Each of the research instruments elaborated on in Chapter 3 is briefly described followed by an exposition and discussion of the findings.

4.2 FINDINGS FROM CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

The researcher attended lessons of 35 minute duration for English First Additional Language in Grade 9 from 5 selected schools namely, Mankoeng High School, Mathukana High School, Nkoshilo High School, Motlakaro High School and Doasho High School. A description of each of the lessons observed is presented and it is followed by an analysis of each lesson. At the male school educator's topic was on prepositions. The researcher observed an atmosphere of mutual trust between the learners and their educator. The learners clearly understood the lesson following the OBE principles. At Mathukana High School, the female educator of EFAL in Grade 9 offered a lesson of 35 minutes about family relationships. The class had 50 learners. The researcher observed a positive assessment following the OBE principles. The lesson presented at Nkoshilo High School by a female educator was attended by 55 Grade 9 learners. The topic was on homophones. The researcher observed participative assessment following OBE principles. At Motlakaro High School the researcher observed 50 learners in a 35 minute period in Grade 9 on EFAL taught by an old male educator. The topic was on reasoning and thinking. The researcher observed the current OBE assessment following OBE principles.

The lesson of EFAL in Grade 9 at Doasho High School had 50 learners, and took 35 minutes. The topic was on figures of speech and was taught by a male educator. In that

lesson the researcher observed a positive assessment of the learners' knowledge following the OBE principles.

The following is a description of what occurred in the lessons and what the researcher noted in those 5 lessons from different schools.

4.2.1 Lesson Presentation One

The male educator of EFAL in Grade 9 came to class 15 minutes late. The class was attended by 50 learners. He brought along one textbook and a personal notebook. He started the lesson with a reference to the previous lesson. According to the researcher's observation, he was well prepared. He wrote the topic about language structure and use pertaining to prepositions on the chalk board. He gave learners examples like "I am going to school", "I am staying at Turfloop". He said that "to" in the first sentence and "at" in the second sentence are prepositions. He wrote the following prepositions on the chalk board: "under", "from" and "around" and asked the learners who were sitting in a circle to discuss them. He gave them 5 minutes to discuss. After 5 minutes, he asked each group to give one sentence. A learner's response from one group was "I am sitting around the table". The learner from another group's response was "I am coming from the toilet". The educator's response from the 2 learners from the different groups was "Excellent". He asked other groups to respond to "under" as a preposition. A naughty boy from other group immediately stood up and said "My under wear is red". The whole class laughed.

The educator warned the naughty boy to be serious. The educator gave the class an example of "He is sitting under the shade of a tree" and told them to write it down in their exercise books. The researcher observed a good attempt in assessment by the educator. The assessment was learner-centered as required by OBE principles. In the researcher's opinion, overcrowding prevented more learners from participating. The researcher noted the late-coming by the educator as a stumbling block to most of the learners' participation.

4.2.2 Lesson Presentation Two

The female educator of EFAL in Grade 9 came to class early. The class was attended by fifty learners who were sitting in a disorderly manner. She came to class empty-handed and started to shout at the learners to keep quiet. To the researcher's observation, she was not sufficiently prepared. She told the learners to respect a visitor referring to the researcher. She went further to single out one boy as a troublemaker. She took 5 minutes rebuking the boy referring to him as "a lizard" and "a lunatic". The entire class was silent and she introduced the topic about family relationships. She wrote the words to talk about or write about relatives:

Men	Women
Great-grandfather	Great-grandmother
Grandfather	Grandmother
Father	Mother
Brother	Sister
Stepfather	Stepmother
Half-brother	Half-sister
Brother-in-law	Sister-in-law
Nephew	Niece
Husband	Wife

The researcher observed fearful discussions and talking about family relationships for 30 minutes, as 5 minutes were wasted.

4.2.3 Lesson Presentation Three

The female educator of EFAL in Grade 9 came to class 5 minutes late. The class was attended by 55 learners sitting in rows. She came to class with some loose sheets. According to the researcher's observation, she was also insufficiently prepared. The learners were silent. She started to write the topic "homophones" on the chalk board:

"Leave-Live", "Whole-Hole", "See-Sea", and "Two-Too". The female educator moved swiftly to the door-frame and said "homework tomorrow". She left the class 10 minutes too early. The Learning Outcome of writing was given without clarification.

The researcher observed the traditional assessment method whereby the educator is the depositor of knowledge and the learners the receiver. The researcher further observed the bureaucratic assessment which did not put the learners first. The researcher observed language structure and use of homophones being taught theoretically only.

4.2.4 Lesson Presentation Four

The male educator of EFAL in Grade 9 came to class on time. The class was attended by 20 learners who sat in rows. The 30 learners were not in class. He came to class empty-handed. According to the researcher's observation, he was well prepared. He asked about the whereabouts of the other 30 learners. No learner responded. He started to call those who were absent "morons", "thugs", "drunkards", "dagga smokers" and "tsotsis". He took about 10 minutes insulting truant learners. He introduced the thinking and reasoning topic. He asked learners to write a questionnaire about traditional knowledge and write answers to the questions in their exercise books.

He wrote an example of a questionnaire for the learners to provide answers to:
- Do you think mountain schools or initiation schools are important? Why?
- Are initiation schools important for township learners? Why?
- Give as many examples as you can about activities at the initiation schools.

The researcher observed the educator moving around checking to see whether learners were writing. The learners were shivering and afraid as the educator passed through. The researcher further observed the "old order" of teaching whereby the educator is the be-all and the end-all.

4.2.5   Lesson Presentation Five

The male educator of EFAL in Grade 9 came to class on time. The class was attended by 50 learners sitting in groups. He came to class with a personal note-book. To the researcher's observation, he was well prepared. He immediately asked one question about language skills namely, "Name one example of figures of speech" All the learners were silent. The researcher observed that they did not have any comprehension of the question. Some learners sat and looked at the educator without attempting to answer the question. The educator's response to the silence of the learners was "After all, you are not serious about seriousness." The educator wrote class work on the chalk board for the learners. He asked them to give 10 figures of speech without explanation. In essence, the researcher observed 2 attempts to assess the learners' knowledge of this lesson, that is, speaking and writing.

4.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Educators need to know what they are assessing. In the lessons observed, the learners were not told why they were supposed to respond to the assessment requirements. However, the following assessment complexities presented themselves in the lessons observed:

4.3.1 Lesson Presentation One

In this lesson about prepositions the researcher observed a positive assessment of the learners' knowledge following the OBA principles. The educator's lesson about prepositions indicated subject-matter knowledge to be learned. Thinking skills were demonstrated. Desired behaviours were exhibited and products with specific attributes were created. Desirable behaviours included communication and artistic skills. The teacher expected the learners to do written work. The educator used 3 categories of assessment methods, that is, paper and pencil assessments, performance assessments and direct personal communication with the learners.

4.3.2 Lesson Presentation Two

According to the researcher the lesson about family relationship distinguished sound assessment from unsound assessment. Sound methods of assessment involve sound decision making as observed in that lesson. The lesson demonstrated effective and efficient instruction that learners understand. The educator cared about assessment outcomes. The lesson enhanced learner motivation and developed the ability to reflect on their progress.

4.3.3 Lesson Presentation Three

In this lesson on homophones, the unspecified assessment outcomes ran the risk of blocking skills and knowledge observed. The qualitative dimensions of assessment in learning are compromised as observed. The bureaucratic assessment requirements as observed ran the risk of becoming ends in themselves. The quality of assessment depends not only on vision, but on the creativity of assessors or educators in their schools. Educators must develop and present assessment teaching strategies to reach the set standards.

4.3.4 Lesson Presentation Four

The lesson about initiation schools was authentic assessment. Authentic assessment is when learner performance on a worthy intellectual task is examined. In this case not all the learners were graduates of initiation schools. Authentic assessments require learners be effective performers with acquired knowledge. The researcher observed the positive side of the educators in the assessment of learners. On the positive side, an observation was made to the effect that assessment makes new demands on the educator. Assessments of these kinds are putting learners first, recognizing and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs. The assessments were focusing on the application of significant and useful knowledge, but not on feelings, emotions, beliefs

and preferences. The educators took time in assessment. The learners knew exactly what to do and became motivated. If one considers the remarks and observations made above, one will realize that the assessment environment was not conducive to OBA.

4.3.5 Lesson Presentation Five

According to the researcher, this lesson on figures of speech enhanced the essential intellectual abilities. The lesson provided parents with direct observable evidence concerning the learners' performance. The task was engaging, meaningful and useful for improving assessment. Exemplary tasks improve performance across the board. Genuine accountability does not avoid human judgments. Judgments are monitored and improved through exemplary tasks as observed in that lesson.

4.4   FINDINGS FROM THE EDUCATORS' INTERVIEW

After observing the assessment lessons, the focus group interview was held with all the educators who were part of the sample. The focus group interview had only one aim. The researcher aimed at triangulating the data gathered by conducting the focus group interview. The interviewees are asked similar questions. To guard against the problem of maturity by respondents the focus group interview was conducted the day after the observation was done. Although the interview was tape recorded, the researcher also made some notes during the course of the interview process. The investigation found the interview to be very helpful in confirming or rejecting the data contained in the lesson observations. Le Compte and Preissle (1993: 181) advise that researchers should carefully record the respondents' exact words since paraphrasing could mask or distort the meanings intended by the respondents. When the researcher wrote down some notes during the interview, the above advice was kept in mind. The observation and documents used to gather data were based on the literature reviewed.

This section contains the results obtained from each of the 5 educators, collectively and singly during the interviews. All viewpoints were reported, even where a particular

comment was not in agreement with the view of the majority. This method is generally known as a constant comparative method. The 5 educators who were the 5 selected secondary schools that is Mankoeng High School Mathukana High School, Nkoshilo High School, Doasho High School and Motlakaro High School, were interviewed in the staff-room of the researcher's place of work. The research question ("To what extent do you as an educator assess learners in EFAL following the principles of OBE?") was the basis of the interview. The reason for conducting the interviews was that the researcher wanted to gather the educators' opinions and further information concerning assessment. The interviews were on the whole conducted in English. The researcher was largely interested in the teachers' opinions. A summary of the questions and responses obtained from the interviewees is presented below.

- *What is assessment? (Definition)*

The first respondent said: "Assessment is an effect or result of an educative process." The second respondent described assessment as "an approach that required teachers and learners to focus their attention and efforts on the desired results of education". The third respondent described assessment as "an examination". The response to this question, as expected by the researcher, was that assessment is the process of gathering sufficient evidence of a learner progress towards achieving the stated outcomes on an ongoing basis, recording and reporting on the level of performance of learning. Basic and therefore, vital to the assessment is implementation and commonalities. The fourth and fifth respondent said: "we agree with the first three".

- *What is the role of the assessment in EFAL following the OBE Principles?*

The first, second, third and fifth respondents did not answer this question by saying "pass". The fourth respondent said: "The role of assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE is difficult to nudge upon." The researcher concluded that the educators did not understand the OBE principle of assessment and this resulted in poor assessment practices.

- *Do you think further training for educators in EFAL assessment, following the principles of OBE, is necessary?*

The first respondent said: "The training must be consistent, systematical (sic), creative and simultaneously done." The training should encompass whatever tools, resources and strategies that the trainers might use according to the researcher. According to the researcher, the educator capitalized on this philosophical training bias and began to look for weaknesses in assessment. The researcher, however, concluded that training for educators in EFAL assessment, following the principles of OBE, is not efficient and accurate. The second, third, fourth and fifth respondents said: "Further training is not necessary because it is stressful."

- *Do you have regular meetings on assessments?*

Only the first and the third respondents mentioned that "there are insufficient meetings on assessment". The second, third, fourth and fifth stated that "respondents were not aware of such meetings." Of interest to the researcher is the lack of a year plan for meetings on assessment.

- *Are sources or materials supplied?*

The first respondent stated that materials were supplied. The second, third, fourth, and fifth respondents mentioned that few learning resources or learning materials, for example, textbooks, were supplied. The researcher viewed the shortages of learning materials as a stumbling block to assessment. This lack of resources causes problems when assessing learners because educators are not able to assess practically. The researcher deduced that the lack of materials was a serious problem because assessment predominantly depended upon resources or learning materials.

- *What are your views on assessment?*

The first respondent viewed assessment as "a yardstick to promote learning but too much demanding". The researcher concluded this view as an acceptance of assessment by the educator. The second respondent viewed assessment "as a tool used by the government to help to analyze how learners learn without consulting the educators". According to the above responses, the researcher sees the necessity for allowing educators a voice within the assessment change process as this will empower teachers about assessment. The third, fourth and fifth respondents also stated "assessment is an imposition on their heavy work on their shoulders". The above response, according to the researcher, indicates that educators may be feeling disempowered with the way assessment is expected to happen. The need for reassurance and information pertaining to assessment is critical.

- *Do you think there is enough human capacity in the implementation of assessment in EFAL following the OBE approach?*

The first, second and third respondents said "No! The government does not want to hire more educators." The fourth and the fifth respondents stated: "Yes! Lecturers from the former colleges of education are used." It became clear to the researcher that the process of assessment was long and difficult due to the fact that any change within an educational system was often representative of a change within the society. The concept of pleasing all educators was difficult.

- *What would you consider as bad practices for assessment?*

The first, second, third, and fifth respondents noted that "assessment is not always related to real Black life context, but to White life context". From that common response, the researcher concluded that the assessment system affected the racial group to which the educators were belonging and profoundly affected access to opportunities in society because of the racial implications. The respondents were African educators and the researcher deduced racial thinking from this response. South Africa is in a transitional

phase which is characterized by transformation in every sphere of life, including the sphere of assessment and training. Embraced in this transformation was the significant paradigm shift in the way educators thought about learning and the way it was organized in assessment. Therefore educators need to have a focus on assessment. The fourth respondent mentioned that "assessment is demoralizing". The researcher concluded that assessment practices were not properly practised and that educators found racial overtones in practising assessment.

- *How is assessment done?*

All first, second, third, fourth, and fifth respondents said: "Old methods are an alternative." This response suggested to the researcher that educators feel forced to accept assessment whereas they preferred the old order. The researcher concluded that the status quo in South African education had been that of transitional curricular approaches. It was a paradigm of structured and inflexible curriculum and approaches which were underpinned by poor assessment strategies. Poor assessment quality based on the old order cannot develop a vision for citizenship and cannot educate the learners properly. That unfortunately hampered on education.

- *How do you see your role in assessment?*

The fifth respondent said: "My role in assessment is difficult to quantify hence the bad practices for assessment." The researcher concluded that there were the gaps in the role of the educator in assessment. From that response the researcher concluded that educators need to be prepared to understand assessment. The first, second, third, and fourth respondents viewed their role in assessment as being in "tatters". The researcher, from that response, saw the need for encouragement among educators about assessment.

- *Who conducts training for education in assessment of EFAL in line with OBE?*

All the respondents called the office-based lecturers from the former colleges of education the "guerillas". The researcher's analysis of this response is that the educators were not happy being assessed by former lecturers of colleges. After probing, the researcher realized that the name "The guerillas" implied witch-hunting and vendetta. The researcher further probed that "The guerillas" were also used to inspect and punish educators.

- *What is the duration of the training?*

The first respondent mentioned that "the training occurs once after three months." The third and the fourth respondents said: "The training occurs once per year". The second and the fifth respondents noted: "The training occurs 3 times per year". From the above responses, the researcher realized that without valid and reliable assessment time-frameworks for training procedures, educators simply will not know whether or not their learners have achieved the outcomes that were the focus of the programmes.

- *Do you think the training is effective?*

All the respondents agreed that "The training is ineffective." The researcher, from that common response, realized that the training must have provide an increasing range of assessment possibilities, offering learners greater flexibility in choosing what, where, when, how and at what pace they wanted to learn in order to obtain efficiency. Also, there needs to be some yardstick by which training can be measured and its effectiveness tested.

- *What are the problems with regard to the implementation of assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE?*

All the respondents said: "The lack of resources or materials hampers the implementation of assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE." From that common response, the researcher realized that resources or materials were imperative to consider knowledge, skills and attitudes and that the educators were improvising and compromising with the little resources or materials at their disposal.

4.5 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

On the whole, the educators' responses showed that they had not received any training in OBA. According to the researchers, OBA was labeled as being in trial and error. Responses were often very definite although there were a few good examples. These responses clearly show that the educators were aware of the critical role of OBA. It is crystal clear that the educators were recognizing the importance of OBA but that it was severely limited in implementation. The educators were left with no option but to figure out by themselves how to implement OBA.

As a result, they never knew whether what they were doing were correct or not. It is quite evident from the above responses that educators are in the dark concerning OBA. There is a need for educators to be trained in OBA. The lack of training and implementation can only lead to poor assessment. The educators were also struggling to express themselves in English as they committed several grammatical errors. Their English proficiency also needs attention to supplement OBA. The OBA implementation problem is becoming more acute as educators are required to excel. According to the researcher, it is like driving a car without a license. The responses also portrayed a negative attitude to OBA.

4.5.1 Lack of allocation of resources

The educators were keenly aware of the importance of EFAL outcomes and achievement standards. The lack of proper text-books and libraries was raised as a problem. OBA in Grade 9 EFAL assessment requires authentic educational materials. Evidence abounds of newfound devotion to outcomes. Important assessment decisions are based on

information about learners' achievement. If those decisions are badly made, learners suffer. Low-quality outcomes pertaining to assessment abound where assessment materials are not available. The critical problem is that Grade 9 EFAL educators as assessors were not sufficiently literate in the basic of assessment to know whether their achievements were sound or unsound. South Africa is a nation of assessment illiterates. It is a society that has come to care very much about high standards of assessment achievement, but a society that is incapable of understanding whether those assessments are being met by not providing resources for OBA.

4.5.2 How "assessment- literate" were the interviewees?

Assessment literacy is best understood by looking first at what it means not to have it. Assessment illiterates do not understand what it takes to produce high quality assessment and do not critically evaluate as required by OBA. The researcher realized that the interviewees were assessment illiterate as they accepted assessment achievement at face value; they were easily intimidated by apparently technical information and by a complicated presentation of test scores in Grade 9 EFAL assessment. In short, the assessment illiterates often lack the tools to be critical consumers of assessment data. To the researcher, those who are assessment literate, on the other hand, have a basic understanding of the meaning of high and low quality assessment and are able to apply knowledge to various measures of learners' achievement.

Assessment literates ask two questions about all assessments of learners' achievement: "What does this assessment tell learners about the achievement outcomes valued?" and "What is likely to be the effect of this assessment on learners?" Assessment literates seek and use assessments that communicate clear, specific and rich definitions of the achievement that is valued. Unlike the interviewees, assessment literates know the importance of using an assessment method that reflects a precisely defined achievement target. They fully realize the importance of sampling performance. They are aware of the factors that can interfere with assessment results. The interviewees did not have built-in alarms that sound when an assessment target is unclear and when an assessment method

misses the target. However, just sensing a problem about assessment in EFAL is not enough. Those who care about learners either make or demand changes in unsound assessment.

4.5.3 Critical review of the interviews

The researcher realized that the interviewees were not interested in OBA and were not prepared to critically examine their assessment. To get the real meaning of the assessment results requires an understanding of the meaning of grades or of test scores. The picture was almost frightening to the researcher when examining the assessment literacy of the interviewees. The researcher can speculate that the contributing factor for the interviewees to remain assessment illiterates may be that they have traditionally valued process more than product. For example, high school graduation decisions have typically been based on units completed rather than on knowledge and skills attained.

To the researcher, educators in Grade 9 EFAL assessment who place little value on outcomes are not apt to be concerned about the assessment of those outcomes. Recently, however, a growing interest in outcomes-based education has been seen, and that makes assessment literacy essential. Another barrier to the spread of assessment illiteracy may have been that assessment training traditionally has been based on a very narrow definition of assessment. This limited focus has failed historically to meet the needs of interviewees in Grade 9 EFAL assessment.

Interestingly, although almost all of the educators interviewed made reference to OBE, during further interaction, the researcher found out that only 2 of the 5 understood OBA. The others confessed that they knew that assessment in Grade 9 following the OBE principles was significant but due to insufficient training and a lack of resources, they were unable to implement it. It was clear to the researcher that the interviewees recognized the importance of assessment in OBE but it was also quite clear that they were severely limited by the lack of the resources.

If educators are to succeed with OBA, they need extensive training in assessment. At the same time it should be made clear to educators that it is quite possible to understand OBA in spite of a few unknown assessment strategies. Educators should also be made to realize that OBA can impose a completely new meaning to learners.

Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL following the principles of OBE is essential for academic learning and life-long learning. What emerged from the interviewees' responses that educators are struggling to understand OBA. Therefore, there is ample evidence to suggest that OBA needs attention as well while educators need to be assisted in moving from seeing the negative only.

4.6 FINDINGS FROM DOCUMENTS

4.6.1 Introduction

Although the researcher has compiled many portfolios in other grades as an educator, for purposes of these 25 portfolios the assessment strategies such as the learner's outcomes and assessment standards used were the main focuses. A portfolio used for educational assessment must offer more than a showcase of learner products. It must be the product of a complete assessment procedure that has been systematically planned, implemented and evaluated. A portfolio that is based on a systematic assessment procedure can provide accurate information about the depth and breadth of a learner's capabilities in many domains of learning.

4.6.2 Learners' portfolios

Another source of data was the 25 portfolios of the learners from the 5 different schools. The purpose of studying the portfolios was to expand the information that was gathered during the observations. Before accessing learners' portfolios, the researcher firstly explained to the learners and educators that he was interested in looking into their

portfolios as part of the study he was conducting about assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE. They were assured that they should not view that as an attempt to pass judgment on them, but that it was necessary for the researcher to know what their difficulties were in assessment. The purpose of observing the portfolios was to see the arrangements of content and the assessment strategies used.

Oral presentations, written samples such as projects and assignments were not included in the portfolios. Of grave concern, art work such as pictures or drawings and charts, tests and quizzes were missing. Checklists that link portfolio work with criteria were also not kept. According to the researcher, portfolios are used to collect samples of learner work over time to track learner development. The researcher, with the advantage of being an educator in Grade 9 EFAL, realized that portfolios varied tremendously as would be expected in terms of volume, quality and character. Very few class exercises and homework were given. Class work had grammatical errors and spelling mistakes because the learners tended to have poor English language proficiency. In some cases, the answers were not given. Even educators' corrections by means of a red pen had grammatical errors. The arrangement was haphazard; hence the feedback was less informative. In some portfolios the tasks of learners were well arranged. Inside some portfolios were projects, time-tables, class work, home work, tests, and memoranda.

4.6.3. Assessment strategy

According to the researcher, portfolios are used to collect samples of learners' work over time to track learner development. Hamayan (1995: 213) is supportive by stating: "among other things, teachers do the following: maintain anecdotal records from their reviews of portfolios and from regularly scheduled conferences with learners about the work in their portfolios, keep checklists that link portfolio work with criteria that they consider integral to the type of work being collected, and devise continua of descriptors to plot learner achievement". Whatever methods educators choose, they should reflect with learners on their work to develop learners' ability to critique their own progress.

Hamayan (1995: 220) furthermore suggests that the following types of materials can be included in a portfolio:

- Recording of readings or oral presentations.
- Writing samples such as dialogue, journal entries, book reports, writing assignments (drafts or final copies), reading log entries, or other writing projects.
- Art work such as pictures or drawings, graphs and charts.
- Conference or interview notes and anecdotal records.
- Checklists (by educators, peers or learners).
- Tests and quizzes.

Interestingly, 10 out of the 25 portfolios did not have all the items cited above. The other 15 portfolios had only three of the items. To gain multiple perspectives on a learner's academic development, it is important for educators to include more than one type of material in the portfolio. Although the challenge to modify existing methods of assessment and to develop new approaches is not an easy one, the benefits for both educators and learners are great. The ideas and models presented above are intended to be adaptable, practical and realistic for educators who are dedicated to creating meaningful and effective assessment experiences for Grade 9 learners. Disappointingly, continuous assessment is compromised.

4.6.4. *Characteristics of a model portfolio procedure*

Features typifying model portfolios can be used as a systematic assessment tool in instructional planning and learners' evaluation. These features have implications for OBA.

Comprehensiveness: A comprehensive approach
- Uses both formal an informal assessment techniques.
- Focuses on both the processes and products of learning.
- Seeks to understand learner language development in the linguistic, cognitive, meta-cognitive, and affective domains.

- Contains educator, learner and objective input.
- Stresses both academic and informal development.

Unfortunately, 20 out of 25 portfolios lacked comprehensiveness which was tempered by practical limitations of the evaluation environment of the educator-learner ratios and educator work load.

Informative: The information in the portfolio procedures must be meaningful to the educators, learners, staff, and parents. It must also be usable for instructions and curriculum adaptation to learner needs. Only 5 out of the 25 portfolios satisfied these requirement.

Predetermined and systematic: All 25 portfolios did not have a sound portfolio procedure which was planned prior to implementation. The entry in the portfolios did not have a purpose.

Tailored: Unfortunately, 10 out of the 25 portfolios did not have assessment instruments to match information needs and to reflect learner characteristics. They did not coincide with learner linguistic and developmental capabilities.

Authentic: Precise, 5 out of the 25 portfolios provided learner information based on assessment tasks that reflect authentic activities used during classroom instructions. Authentic language may be assessed across formal classroom activities, natural settings such as the playground and informal classroom settings. An effective portfolio procedure will include assessment of authentic classroom-based tasks focusing on communicative and functional language abilities rather than the attainment of fragmented skills.

4.6.5. *What is continuous assessment?*

In an outcome-based system assessment that plays a very important role in education. All educators will have to try to find ways of making continuous assessment successful and

manageable so that they can support to their learners. In the past assessment focused mainly on tests and exams and on whether learners 'passed or failed'. Now assessment is used for a variety of purposes such as:

- Formative Assessment

It is used to recognize positive achievements and give feedback so that the appropriate next steps can be planned.

- Diagnostic Assessment

In diagnostic assessment responses may be scrutinized and classified so that the appropriate help and guidance can be provided.

- Summative/ Formal Assessment

This refers to the recording of the overall achievement of the learner in a systematic way. It is also used formatively.

Continuous assessment does not mean assessing learners all the time, or every day or every week at a fixed time. Continuous assessment means assessing learners, in order to track progress. Educators need to know what they want to assess and why, and how the learner's knowledge, skill, attitude or value, build on existing competence. In the past, evidence of learning has been mainly direct evidence, produced at the end of the learning activity, such as an artifact or piece or writing or drawing. This evidence was marked or graded by the educator.

In an OBA system, there are other aspects to consider in assessment. Some of these are:
- Progress of learning (at what pace the learning is happening and what is achieved).
- Process of learning (the ways in which learners are learning, what skills, attitudes and values they display?).
- Diagnostic purposes (what the problems are how the learner can be helped, and/or what consolidation or acceleration needs to be done?).
- Critical and specific outcomes (has the focus for the task been achieved?)

Learners will be assessed against criteria, not against one another. Criteria for assessment should de discussed with learners before they begin a task. They can be asked to suggest criteria such as "What would you look for to show that this task was done well?"

4.6.6. Methods of assessment

Methods of assessment will include the learner in the process, using self and peer assessment, and have a formative (development) function for the learner, educator and the learning programme. A variety of methods tools and techniques will be used to collect evidence gathered over time. The judgments will not rely on a single person, exam or test.

- *Learner Self Assessment*

Learner self assessment is valuable. It enhances learner motivation and develops the ability to reflect on their progress. It also provides the educator with another source of input for assessment. The activities in each unit often require learners to think about, assess, and/or comment on their work.

- *Peer Assessment*

Many activities require learners to assess, and/or comment on their peers' work. When feasible, you should incorporate these peer assessments into the final assessment. This will encourage learners to value and respect their own assessment of their work, as well as those of their peers. It is important to acknowledge that the notion of self and peer assessment may be foreign to learners. The educator should explain the value of it and let learners negotiate the incorporation of these assessments into the final assessment. It is critical that learners see the assessment process as fair and appropriate.

- *Group Assessment*

The ability to work in a group is one of the critical outcomes. Assessing group work involves looking for evidence that the group of learners co-operate, assist one another, divide work and combine individual contributions into a single composite assessable product. It involves assessing social skills, time management, resource management, and group dynamics as well as the output of the group.

- *Integrated Assessment*

Integrated assessment may happen at the end of a cycle or at the end of several cycles of learning. Integrated assessment of several skills, demonstrated in practical ways, is recommended. This has to be carefully structured to ensure that the outcomes can be verified and remain portable.

In contrast, the researcher realized that in the learners' portfolio methods used by the educators did not reflect the assessment of learners of their work and the learners' ability to critique their own progress was thus impaired. Although the challenge to modify existing methods of assessment and to develop new approaches is not an easy one, the benefits for both educators and learners are great.

4.6.7. *Methods of collecting assessment evidence*

To the researcher, the following methods of collecting evidence must be undertaken with caution and thoughtfulness for the fulfillment of the aim.

- *Observation Based Assessment*

Observation based assessment tends to be less structured and allow the development of different kinds of evidence for different learners at different times. This kind of assessment is often based on tasks that require learners to interact with one another in

pursuit of a common solution or product. Observation has to be intentional and should be conducted with the help of an observation instrument.

- *Test- Based Assessment*

This kind of assessment is more structured, and enables educators to gather the same evidence for all learners in the same way at the same time. This kind of assessment creates evidence that is verified by a specific score. If used correctly tests and exams are important parts of the curriculum because they give good evidence of what has been learned.

- *Task-Based Assessment*

This kind of assessment aims to show whether learners can apply the skills and knowledge they have learned in an unfamiliar context or in a context outside the classroom. Performance assessment also covers the practical components of subjects by determining how learners put theory into practice. The rules, criteria or standards by which the task will be assessed are described in rubrics or task checklists, and help the educator to use professional judgment to assess each learner's performance.

- *Methods of Recording*

Recording and reporting involves the capturing of data collected during assessment so that they can be logically analysed and published in an accurate and understandable way.

The researcher realized that tests and exams were only used as methods of assessment in the portfolios. Task-based assessment was not seriously monitored by the educators to put theory into practice and to assess each learner's performance.

4.7 CONCLUSION

The findings emanating from the interviews and researcher's observation complemented one another. The content, methods, learning context, and learner assessment interacted and influenced one another. However, assessment was no longer practised and determined in traditional ways. Within that framework, it was also important to consider how learners were evaluated. An evaluation of whether the outcomes were, in fact, significant, meaningful and appropriate was of paramount importance. Quite clearly, the educator must assess, in detail, the knowledge, skills and dispositions that learners must develop in order to achieve those outcomes. One deduced that there have been widespread successes in assessment, and that tangible practices were there for educators to observe and learn from. Poor assessment retarded the pace and level of learning.

In the next and final chapter, a summation of the main points of the study will be presented together with conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter is a summary of the findings that emerged from the problem investigated in this study. The purpose of this study was to assess educators' success in the implementation of OBE assessment principles of EFAL in Grade 9. The study also explored the difficulties which educators experienced in the implementation of assessment policy of EFAL in Grade 9. The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to conclude the research findings on the basis of the results of the study and then draw conclusions and make recommendations on the strength of the interpretation of those results.

5.1   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings are:

- Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL was a problem for the majority of educators and the English language proficiency level for learners and educators was below the expected level.
- An over-arching consideration in Grade 9 EFAL assessment was the question of how educators were trained. Training was not reasonable to the educators. Self-confidence and a record of prior success were not evident.
- Assessment did not play significant role in learning. For that reason, assessment in Grade 9 EFAL should be guided by the desired learning outcomes. Educators should start by assessing the learners' prerequisite knowledge. To be meaningful, each assessment must be placed within an appropriate context.
- Preparation for the Grade 9 learners by educators for EFAL assessment understanding was usually lacking service. Forms of Grade 9 EFAL assessment instructions were not provided.

- Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL did not take into account the context in which outcomes should be demonstrated. Enrichment activities for competent Grade 9 learners were not provided. Additional instruction and practice for slower learners were also ignored.

- Educators admitted that they did not always know how to assess, partly because they were never trained.

- Learners in Grade 9 EFAL were not encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning in assessment. Educators were not engaged in continuous support for learners to accept responsibility in assessment.

- Plans for several Grade 9 EFAL assessment strategies were written on loose papers. Not only did educators struggle with assessment, but they also experienced problems with the skills of listening, speaking and writing.

- Resources and teaching techniques to assist Grade 9 EFAL learners who did not master the required assessment outcomes as quickly as other learners were scarce.

- Educators did not feel motivated and confident to implement OBA. As a result, they lacked the necessary training to implement it.

5.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, recommendations for OBA are presented. However, it should be noted that not all of these recommendations emanate from the present findings of the study; some are based on the literature studied.

- Educators in Grade 9 EFAL need to be privy to assessment, through consultation, information disclosure and constant communication. Hard's (1999: 2) research suggests that until participants within the change process are informed of the procedure from start to completion, there can be little expectation that the desired

result or change will be achieved. Educators also need to be informed at their particular level of educational training. Schools could assist Grade 9 EFAL educators by creating booklets and providing information sessions on the new assessment in Grade 9 EFAL. This dissemination of knowledge needs to be fun and inviting for educators.

• OBA of Grade 9 EFAL must make educators believe that they are truly valued members of the educational team. This can only be achieved by allowing educators a voice within the change process and not disempowering them. The *National Commission on Special Needs in Education* (NCSNET) and *National Committee for Education Support Services* (NCESS) (1997: 62) document provides an overview of the promotion of educators' rights and responsibilities. The strategy they suggest is one of a partnership between government and educators. The should include recognition of the critical role played by educators and their involvement in assessment, development, implementation, and monitoring of education and support and should be facilitated through processes such as training to empower educators to develop their unique capacity to participate in the learners' education.

• As individuals differ in their approach and response to change, the government needs to observe that different people require differential support and assistance. Learners, who perceive themselves to be low in influence and disempowerment, need more reassurance and information than educators who are open to change and eager (Rogers 1971 in Hard 1993: 3). Sensitive practices, therefore, need to be implemented when dealing with educators of different cultural systems. The school should carry out a needs analysis of assessment at the beginning of the year and continuously throughout the year to address the specific needs of different cultures.

- Educators' attitudes need to be valued in terms of the cognitive and emotional components. It is essential that educators be assisted in realizing emotional components that affect their Grade 9 EFAL assessment. This would imply recognizing and containing educators' fears and thoughts towards assessment, while concurrently enhancing insight through knowledge empowerment and training (Bason and Bythe, 1991: 142). Educator's educational qualifications and socio-economic background need to be considered when training for assessment.

- Educators should personally experience positive results from Grade 9 EFAL assessment. If they can witness the benefits for themselves, their attitudes would be a positive emotional component (Nespor 1987: 321). Educators need to feel a sense of ownership through school pride, for example, through sports and cultural activities.

- Assessment of any kind should not be overdone. An excessive concern with performance can erode curiosity and, paradoxically, reduce the quality of performance. Performance-obsessed learners also tend to avoid difficult tasks so they can escape a negative evaluation.

- The best evidence whether educators are succeeding comes from observing learners' behaviour. Where interest is sparked, skills are usually acquired because interest is difficult to quantify, but the solution is to acknowledge the limits of measurements.

- Educators must transform schools into safe, caring communities. This is critical for helping learners to become good learners and good people, but is also relevant for assessment. Only by being able to ask for help will they be likely to improve.

5.3   FINAL COMMENTS

- Training methods for assessment will have to be devised and implemented. Assessment strategies should allow educators to actively interact, elaborate and rehearse assessment in order to retain it for later use.

- The choice of any assessment strategy should depend on the learners. The ultimate goal is to assess the learner to a lifelong skill without guidance from the educator. At the same time, educators should assess to pursue academically acceptable discourse resulting from independent thinking.

- Educators should, therefore, encourage the development of assessment awareness by asking learners describe their thoughts, explain how they found an answer and share their own strategies. One way of encouraging this, is for educators to model different ways of assessment. The more explicit the instruction, the more the learners will become independent users of assessment strategies.

- This study leaves little doubt that assessment strategies demand that an educator takes up a new role of assessor, helper, facilitator, and collaborator. Educators must meet the learners where they are with respect to affect, motivate and assess and explicitly teach them assessment strategies for taking charge of tasks, situations and the successful completion of academic tasks.

- Accordingly, educators should assess learners in "process" rather than in "products", offer assessment for monitoring their comprehension, make explicit connections to previous reading and provide tangible representations for learners to think logically and strategically.

- As assessment serves as preparation for writing, assessment strategies should as far as possible represent a range of levels of difficulties to match learners against

a range of language difficulties. Learners should also realize that other language skills such as listening, speaking and writing also complement what they have read about.

- Despite the introduction of OBA which emphasizes learner-centredness assessment in schools, the majority of educators still employ teacher-centred assessment approaches. This approach denies learners the experience of developing independent thinking skills.

- All educators, in assessment planning and implementation, must think about the learners they teach and their unique needs and characteristics. And finally, they must also be knowledgeable about OBA and be open to new assessment ideas and practices as they formulate goals and activities for learners.

5.4   IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although this study has achieved its aims and objectives, there are a number of related aspects, which warrant additional research and analysis. Like any study where some significant results are revealed, it is essential that further research be carried out in order to replicate and verify the accuracy of those results with different subjects in similar situations. The following are some such suggestions:

- Additional research should be conducted in the area of OBA training. Not enough research has been conducted in this field.

- Educator apathy, disinterestness and frustration pertaining to assessment should be investigated. This study only concentrated on assessment in EFAL following the principles of OBE.

- Continuous research should be conducted on the lack of resources in rural schools. This study only focused on rural schools.

- A change in Grade 9 EFAL assessment requires perusal. Change is inevitable in our Grade 9 EFAL assessment system because of an apparent need for   more learning on global awareness.

- The preparedness for educators to move away from the old order of assessment methods in Grade 9 EFAL needs further research. Educators tend to want to hold Grade 9 EFAL assessment in the gripping yoke of sameness and resist vehemently the emergence of anything that threatens the status quo. The move out of a comfort zone is unthinkable, unpleasant and unimaginable for many educators.

5.5   CONCLUSION

Observation and experience indicate that the education system affects life changes of citizens and profoundly affects access to their opportunities in society. South Africa is in a state of transition, characterized by transformation in every sphere of life, including the sphere of Grade 9 EFAL education assessment and training. Embraced in this transformation is the significant paradigm shift in the way people think about learning and the way it is organized in education and training, particularly in assessment.

The erstwhile scenario in South African education had been that of transitional curricula and approaches which were subjected to a time constraint and driven by the calendar. It was a paradigm of structured and inflexible curriculum and approaches which were underpinned by poor Grade 9 EFAL assessment quality educational materials. The latter could not develop a vision for citizenship and could not educate the nation properly and that hampered the given education to have a social function and environmental determinism. Assessment in Grade 9 EFAL requires training, implementation and care.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I   =   I NTERVIEWER

All 5 educators were interviewed at the researcher's at his work place staff room. You are unequivocally assured that the information furnished will be confidential. It is only contemplated to do justice to my research topic, namely, ASSESSMENT   IN EFAL FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION**.**

I   -   The first thing that I would like to ask you is: Do you encounter
             any problems with the assessment of English First Additional
             Language?   If yes, state the problems.

I   -   Is the assessment of English First Additional Language workable
             or unworkable? Explain your answer.

I   -   Based on the previous education approach, how would you review
             the assessment of English First Additional Language (EFAL)
             following the principles of OBE?

I   -   Additional comments on assessment of English First Additional
             Language (EFAL).

ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EFAL) FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

by

KGWAHLE BERNARD LETSOALO

A MINI-DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE

in

LANGUAGE EDUCATION

in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO
(TURFLOOP CAMPUS)

SUPERVISOR : DR R.J. SINGH

2009

DECLARATION

I, KGWAHLE BERNARD LETSOALO, solemnly declare that the information in this study is mine. Supportive information taken from other sources is quoted and acknowledged. This is done to conform to scholarly writing.

_____

SIGNATURE

I.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the following people:

- My beloved wife, Masedulo Cathrine Letsoalo
- My mother, Alice Mokgadi Letsoalo
- My younger brother Phillip Maribe Letsoalo
- To my children, Blantina Malehu and Paul Matlebjane Letsoalo
- My late uncle, Paul Matlebjane Letsoalo.

ACRONYMS

EFAL : English First Additional Language

OBE : Outcomes-Based Education

OBA : Outcomes-Based Assessment

CASS : Continuous Assessment

ABET : Adult Based Education and Training

GET : General Education and Training

SASA : South African Schools Act

C2005 : Curriculum 2005

ETQA : Education and Training Quality Assurance

NQF : National Qualification Framework

RPL : Recognition of Prior Learning

GETC : General Education and Training Certificate

FET : Further Education and Training

NCS : National Curriculum Statement

RNCS : Revised National Curriculum Statement

LSEN : Learners with Special Education Needs

SAQA : South African Qualifications Authority

DoE : Department of Education

NCESS: National Committee for Education Support Services

CTA : Common Task Assessment

NCSNET: National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training

III.
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IV.

ABSTRACT

The assessment of the current school reform effort emphasizes the neeed to improve the education of all learners. Assessing the academic achievement of every learner is an essential part of this reform, but one that presents a challenge for most schools, school districts and provinces. Traditional assessment practices have tended to exclude learners who are denied access to important educational opportunities that are based on assessment results. This problem is often more pronounced among learners who have to do Grade 9. This study focuses on assessment and discusses the advantages and challenges experienced by learners and educators. The aim of this study, therefore, is to assess educators' success in the implementation of OBE assessment principles of English First Additional Language (EFAL) in Grade 9.

This study was prompted by educator assessments, which have kept interesting the researcher because of traditional assessments which are at odds with OBE. Most importantly, assessment is no longer practised and determined in traditional ways. The educator must assess, in detail, the knowledge, skills and dispositions that learners must develop in order to achieve learning outcomes. The researcher recommends assessment to include English langauge learners, increase school accountability for all learners, have a shared vision of learner goals and standards, have an authentic picture of learning, and reflect assessment.

V.

APPENDIX C

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

The researcher in studying the portfolios unpacked the following four learning outcomes (LO's) and assessment standards (AS) for guidance:

Learning Outcome 1: Listening and Speaking

The learner is able to listen and speak for a variety of purposes, audiences and contexts.

Assessment Standards

1. Demonstrate knowledge of different forms of oral communication for social purposes.
2. Demonstrate planning and research skills for oral presentation.
3. Demonstrate the skills of listening to and delivery of fluent and expressive oral presentations
4. Demonstrate critical awareness of language use in oral situations.

Examples: prepared, unprepared speech, literature, and debates.

Learning Outcome 2: Reading and Viewing

The learner is able to read and view for understanding and to evaluate critically and respond to a wide range of texts.

Assessment Standards

- Demonstrate various reading and viewing strategies for comprehension and appreciation.
- Explain the meaning of a wide range or written, visual, audio and audio- visual texts.
- Evaluate how language and images may reflect and shape values and attitudes in texts.
- Explore key features of texts and explain how they contribute to meaning (those features should never be dealt in isolation)

Learning Outcome 3: Writing and Presenting

The learner is able to write and present for a wide range of purposes and audiences using conversations and formats appropriate to diverse contexts.

Assessment Standards

- Demonstrate planning skills for writing for specific purpose, audience and contexts.
- Demonstrate the use of writing strategies and techniques for first drafts.
- Reflect ion, analyze and evaluate own work, considering the opinion of others, and present final product.

Example: summary, compositions, letters, dialogue reports, e-mails, and minutes taking.

Learning Outcome 4: Language

The learner is able to use language structures and conventions appropriately and effectively.

Assessment Standards

- Identify and explain the meaning of words and use them correctly in a range of texts.
- Use structurally sound sentences in a meaningful and functional manner,
- Develop critical language awareness.

Example: spelling, abbreviations, suffixes, prefixes, plurals, diminutives, superlative degrees, adjectives, adverbs, borrowing, homophones, homonyms, poleysmes, synonyms, antonyms and paronyms and literature.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Assessment is used for a variety of purposes. These are:

- Formative Assessment to recognize positive achievements and give feedback so that the appropriate next steps can be planned.

- Diagnostic Assessment whereby learners' responses may be scrutinized and classified so that appropriate help and guidance can be provided.

- Summative/Formal Assessment is the recording of the overall achievement of the learner in a systematic way (Summative assessment is also used formatively).

  In OBA system there are other aspects to consider in assessment. Some of these are:

  - Progress of learning (at what pace the learning is happening what is achieved).
  - Process of learning (the ways in which learners are learning-what skills, attitudes and values do they display).
  - Diagnostic purposes (what the problems are-how the learner can be helped, and /or what consolidation/acceleration needs to be done/)
  - Critical and specific outcomes (has the focus for the task been achieved/)

Learners must be assessed against criteria, not against each other. Criteria foe assessment should be discussed with the learners before they begin a task. They can be asked to suggest criteria "what would look for to show that this task was done well/"

Methods of assessment will include the learner in the process, using self and peer assessment and have a formative (developmental) function for the learner, the educator and the learning programme.

X

Learner Self-Assessment is valuable. It enhances learner motivation and develops the ability to reflect on their progress. It also provides the educator with another source of input for assessment.

Peer Assessment encourages learners to value and respect their own assessment of their work, as well as that of their peers. It is critical that learners see the assessment process as fair and appropriate.

Group assessment involves assessing social skills, time management, resource management and group dynamics as well as output of the group. Assessing group work involves looking for evidence that the group of learner's co-operate, assist one another, divide work, and combine individual contributions into a single composite assessable product.

Integrated assessment may happen at the end of a cycle or at the end of several cycles of learning. Integrated assessment of several skills, demonstrated in practical ways is recommended.

APPENDIX B

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

The researcher wanted to observe the following in the classrooms:

- To observe a promising assessment procedure that is replete with both strengths and weaknesses that must be fully realized for proper implementation.
- Enhancing of educators' professionalism through meaningful and active involvement in learner assessment.
- The encouragement of thoughtful assessment in the classroom.
- Promotion of assessment criteria in the classroom.
- Creation of assessment links at different grade levels.
- For linking assessment more closely to classroom activities.
- For allowing assessment to draw on the skills they learn in process-centered classrooms.
- Allowing assessment to develop a teaching strategy to improve learning.
- Drawing on learners' strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses.
- Involvement of both learners and parents in assessment.
- The making of assessment to be more equitable.
- Commitment by educators to make assessment procedure mandatory.