The role of Curriculum Advisors in supporting teachers to implement curriculum policies in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province

by

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my grandparents, aunts, sister and brother; to my mother and family.

DECLARATION

I declare that **THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM ADVISORS IN SUPPORTING TEACHERS TO IMPLEMENT CURRICULUM POLICIES IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE** hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of **Master of Education in Curriculum Studies** has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

_____ _____

Surname, Initials (title) **Date**

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What a superb experience, though the path has not always been an easy one. In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon writes, “Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all” (Ecclesiastes 9:11). I have never been the swiftest, the strongest, the wisest, or the most intelligent. It has been by His grace.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how district office Curriculum Advisors (CAs) support teachers to implement curriculum policies requirements in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province.

This exploratory case study addressed this knowledge gap by exploring the lived experiences of ten CAs in one district. Data was constructed through semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis.

This study revealed various forms of support that CAs offer to teachers, challenges they face and suggestions/strategies they use to deal with them. The kind of support CAs offer to teachers can be categorized into five themes: training, monitoring, moderation, setting tasks and enrichment programmes. Generally, the study also revealed that there are significant challenges to CAs' ability to effectively practise curriculum support. These include: overload due to shortage of CAs, lack of resources, political interference and challenges from teachers. Furthermore, CAs used teamwork and sacrifice as their way of dealing with these challenges. They also provided suggestions which the government may employ to eradicate these challenges.

In conclusion, the study provides six recommendations related to policy-makers and government, and implications for future research.

KEY CONCEPTS

Curriculum Advisors, curriculum support, teachers.

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Acronyms

AASA	American Association of School Administrators
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CAT	Common Assessment Tasks
CDs	Compact Discs
CES	Chief Education Specialist
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DCOP	District Curriculum Operational Plan
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
FRD	Foundation for Research Development
GET	General Education and Training
IDME	Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education
IGAEN	Inspection Generale de l'Administration de l'Education Nationale
IGEN	Inspection Generale de l'Education Nationale
INSET	In-Service Training of Teachers
LEA	Local Education Authority
LPDE	Limpopo Province Department of Education
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
MASTEC	Mathematics, Science and Technology College
McREL	Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
NEEDU	National Education, Evaluation and Development Unit
OECD	Organization for Economic Development
OFSTED	Office of Standards in Education

PPSB	Post-Primary Schools Board
REQV	Relative Education Qualification Value
SBA	School Based Assessment
TED	Transvaal Education Department
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study is designed to contribute to the knowledge of curriculum advisory, but more precisely, it describes the kind of support Curriculum Advisors (CAs) offer to teachers, what challenges impede the CAs to engage in effective curriculum advisory practices and the strategies CAs use to deal with such challenges. Effective curriculum support is pivotal for teachers' and schools' growth and improvement. In this era of educational accountability, where teachers are expected to demonstrate achievement through learners' results, the role of CAs in education matter more than ever. While not completely ignored, curriculum advisory is comparatively unstudied. Augmenting the knowledge base of curriculum support is timely and prudent.

South African school districts face serious problems in positions of Curriculum Advisors (CAs). When CAs were employed as subject specialists, they were usually not provided with job descriptions and information on the roles that are specific to their responsibilities (Brynard & Netshikhophani, 2011). As a result, their roles and responsibilities seemed not to be clearly defined and differ from province to province. This problem was confounded by among other things the shortage of staff in their offices. Moreover, despite this shortage, they were still expected to perform other multiple roles such as delivering question papers and books to schools, and to conduct monitoring and whole school evaluation (Brynard & Netshikhophani, 2011).

This problem is well clarified by the Final Report: Ministerial Committee on National Education, Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2009a) which indicates that the inability to isolate curriculum support and advisory roles from curriculum monitoring roles constrains the reliability of both. Ideally, the roles of CAs are more focused on providing teacher support than on a monitoring role. When CAs commit to provide for both, these roles may thus be compromised. This might impede them to perform their curriculum support duties effectively. CAs were thus challenged to take on these larger responsibilities (Apple, 2001).

The situation of challenges faced by CAs is not unique to South Africa. Lamkin (2006) indicates that in New York, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee, CAs faced two challenges, one, lack of adequate training for specific tasks and skills. Secondly, lack of acculturation to rural settings, which normally poses difficulties to those who come from urban settings. These two challenges are almost similar to those in South Africa because normally lack of adequate curriculum support is found in rural settings such as Limpopo province.

Despite challenges, CAs had a responsibility to assume leadership role in curriculum policy implementation. Although there are studies on CAs, noticeably, no known study has systematically examined their experiences in this role, at least in South Africa. For this reason, the current study sought to explore the roles of CAs in supporting teachers to implement curriculum policies requirements in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province (Bantwini, 2009).

This chapter is designed as follows: background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of key terms, limitations of the study, organization of the dissertation and conclusion.

1.2 Problem statement

An education system is dependent on CAs to act as intermediaries between curriculum policy and implementation in schools. However, CAs face multiple challenges which prevent them from executing their duties effectively. Amongst others are: understaffing, lack of training to implement curriculum policies and lack of resources (Brynard & Netshikhophani, 2011). In addition, Dilotsothle, Smit and Vreken (2001) found that CAs came across obstacles in their duties which included: unqualified and demotivated teachers, negative attitudes of teachers and duties they are expected to perform beyond their job description. Administrative problems include budget cuts, poor communication, poor co-ordination, and lack of co-ordination and co-operation with senior management, lack of follow-up on the part of senior management and lack of either a government or subsidized car which hampered school visits and workshops.

Despite several attempts by governments or ministries of education, to address these challenges there seems to be no solution on the horizon to resolve these. CAs seem to be still struggling to overcome these challenges. Whereas numerous studies have looked at various challenges faced by CAs (Sutton, 2010; Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001; Orr, 2006), most of them have not been written to expose CAs' experiences, at least from a South African perspective.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the proposed study was:

To explore how district offices CAs support teachers to implement curriculum policies requirements in Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province.

1.4 Research questions

The main research question of this study is:

- What is the role of CAs in supporting teachers to implement curriculum policies in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province?

Sub questions:

- Which kinds of support do CAs offer to teachers during curriculum policies implementation?
- What are the challenges of the position of a CA?
- How do CAs deal with challenges in their practice?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study should be of interest to a wide range of audiences. It might be significant as:

- Schools and education officials (policy makers) may understand the role and challenges of CAs in curriculum support.
- CAs may benefit from the findings which may help them improve their practice.
- Results may serve as a springboard for further research on curriculum support in schools.

1.6 Definitions of key concepts

For the purposes of this study, the following notions were defined:

1.6.1 Curriculum support refers to a process in education, the primary purpose of which is to support and sustain all teachers in their goal of career-long growth and development, which ultimately results in quality teaching.

1.6.2 Curriculum Advisor (CA) is an office based specialist whose aim is to facilitate curriculum delivery through support to teachers and schools in various ways.

1.6.3 Teacher refers to any person who has been trained in teaching methodology and whose duty is to teach learners in basic education.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The following indicate the limitations of this study:

Only one district in the Limpopo province has been selected for this study. Therefore this district will not be representative of the remaining school districts in the province or those outside of it.

The identification of curriculum support practices and what, if any, challenges exist to impact these practices are limited to ten CAs in one district.

1.8 Organization of the dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters and prefaced by a brief abstract of the study. Chapter one discussed the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of key terms, limitations of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two looked at the review of literature as it relates to the study. This information was sourced from the internet, documents, both published and unpublished such as books, journals, and newspapers that had useful information on the topic to be reviewed. Chapter three dealt with the methodology which was used in the data collection and how the data was analyzed. The sampling technique was also covered. Chapter four

constituted data findings and Chapter five provided discussion, conclusions and recommendations of this study.

1.9 Conclusion

Chapter one provided an overview and outline of the development of the study. The next chapter is a literature review of studies previously conducted from international research and South Africa on similar and related issues.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical synthesis of literature review into the role of CAs and the challenges facing them in order to contextualize and validate the research problem presented in this study. This chapter is designed as follows: the concept of CA, historical overview of CAs, the roles of a CA and the challenges faced by CAs.

2.2 The concept of Curriculum Advisor

The position of CA globally has been one with a nebulous and multiple job description and responsibilities. The terms used to describe such positions and role responsibilities depend on the individual countries, states or provinces and school districts, their sizes, needs and administrative structures (Gallant-Norring, 1999). Some places have positions called curriculum consultants or subject area consultants or specialists, inspectors, supervisors or CAs. Some school districts have had such positions in the past, but with budget restraints, have eliminated them (Gallant-Norring, 1999). Albeit, research on positions of curriculum support in school districts is limited. This could be due to the variety of descriptions of such a role, the different needs of school districts and the overall individual differences of school districts.

2.3 Historical overview of a Curriculum Advisor

The history of curriculum advisory is tightly bound to the theoretical beliefs regarding education over time. Olivia and Pawlas (2004, p. 4) contend that advisory practices are based on the “political, social, religious and industrial forces existent at the time”. Since the theory of teaching and learning is ever changing, advisory will continue to morph with its perceived needs.

Brighouse and Moon (1995) indicate that inspection in Britain dates back to the Industrial Revolution. The first inspectors of schools were not appointed under educational legislation but under the Factories Act. Around 1839 and thirty years thereafter the inspectorates were developed along denominational lines with separate inspectors for the Church of England, Non-conformists and Catholic

schools. Initially it was not a requirement that inspectors should have taught or had experience of schools they were to inspect. The 1870 Act discontinued the denominational split of the inspectorate and by 1980 parliament debated the need for some kind of training for inspectors (Brighouse & Moon, 1995).

By 1911 countries tended to have organizers who increasingly advised and organized for schools about matters of health, safety and the latest advances in available equipment. Advisors in mathematics, science, humanities and modern languages followed the concept of “organizer” in 1911. This structure compares fairly well with the present advisory service in South Africa where each subject/phase has an advisor (Brighouse & Moon, 1995). The Local Education Authority (LEA) inspectorate/advisory activity expanded in 1986. Grants were made available for mathematics and science teachers and LEAs were also involved in curriculum development. Some of the counties were beginning to refer to their advisors as inspectors. The period 1980-1992 witnessed the most remarkable growth of advisory and inspectorial activity on the part of LEAs. Particular inspection/advisory posts were created for In-Service Training of Teachers (INSET) training for teachers who were non-existent before 1985. I found this aspect to be consistent with the envisaged roles of CAs in South Africa. One of the roles of CAs in South Africa is to train teachers. In September 1992, the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) gave direction to the new inspection system through training and accreditation of inspectors, lay inspectors and team members (Brighouse & Moon, 1995).

Brighouse and Moon (1995) further stipulate that the LEAs in the United Kingdom (UK) employed a group of professional staff in 1992 with a concern for quality in education and it was referred to as “The Advisory Service, the Inspectorate or the Inspection and Advisory Service” (p.1). In general, they were called upon to provide professional educational advice over the deployment of those education resources which did not belong to any one school. Their advice was also sought on matters where individual schools were not judged fully competent. It is clear from what is stated above that the CAs functions are closely related to the inspectors in the UK. The main aim of monitoring teachers should be to provide support where and when necessary, not to judge them.

A few years before the 1992 developments, Gerald Haigh (1989, p. 22) raised the question: “When is an inspector not an advisor?” According to Mark Lear (Haigh, 1989, p. 27), principal advisor in Devon, “on the spectrum from advice to inspection you cannot actually separate them out”. Bill Laar, chief inspector for the New London Authority of Westminster indicated that advisory services in an inspectorial role must make the criteria upon which they are basing their investigation explicit to schools (Haigh, 1989). What Laar was asking for was the kind of partnership in which school and inspector agreed on and what the criteria of inspection were going to be. (Haigh 1989) also mentions a process in which the school’s own evaluation plan involves, periodically, an “external view” by the advisory service. This is called the “shared criteria” model of inspection/monitoring whereby the inspector/advisor is involved in the formulation of the school’s development plan. According to Laar, it may not be a bad rule of thumb to follow that inspection reports should not provide any awkward surprise for schools. Equally, inspectors should not be overwhelmed by unexpected discoveries when they visit schools. Contrary to “ambush visits”, and perhaps to encourage transparency and accountability, CAs in South Africa are expected to inform teachers before school visits (Department of Education, 2007).

The above statements somehow indicate the rapport that has to exist between the inspectorate/advisory service and the schools serviced by the two groups of officials. A conclusion can be drawn that the advisors in the UK, through their “shared criteria model” and their team work with inspectors, were acceptable to schools because they conduct inspection on agreed terms of reference.

In colonial New England, supervision of teaching began as a process of external inspection: one or more local citizens were appointed to inspect both what the teachers were teaching and what the learners were learning. The inspection theme was to remain firmly embedded in the practice of supervision. Monitoring what teachers are teaching and what learners are learning is imperative in education. CAs often carry out this role through moderation of teachers’ and learners’ portfolios of evidence.

In the USA, during the first half of the nineteenth century, population growth in the major cities necessitated the formation of city school systems. The history of

supervision as a formal activity exercised by educational administrators within a system of schools did not begin until the formation of the common school in the late 1830s (Firth & Pajak, 1998). While supervisors initially inspected schools to see that teachers were following the prescribed curriculum and that learners were able to recite their lessons, the multiplication of schools soon made this an impossible task for supervisors and the job was delegated to the school principal. In the early decades of the twentieth century, the movement toward scientific management in both industrial and public administration had an influence on schools. Contrary to this, I believe that the principal cannot execute curriculum support to all teachers in their various subjects. He/she may not be versatile in the subject matter of all learning areas, thus a CA as a subject specialist becomes crucial.

At much the same time, child-centred and experienced-based curriculum theories of European teachers such as Friedrich Froebel, Johann Pestalozzi, and Johann Herbart, as well as the prominent American philosopher John Dewey, were also affecting the schools. Thus, school supervisors often found themselves caught between the demand to evaluate teachers scientifically and the simultaneous need to transform teaching from a mechanistic repetition of teaching protocols to a diverse repertory of curriculum responses to learners' natural curiosity and diverse levels of readiness. This tension between supervision as a uniform, scientific approach to teaching and supervision as a flexible, dialogic process between teacher and supervisor involving the shared, professional discretion of both was to continue throughout the century.

In the second half of the century, the field of supervision became closely identified with various forms of clinical supervision. Initially developed by Harvard professors Morris Cogan and Robert Anderson and their graduate learners, many of whom subsequently became professors of supervision in other universities, clinical supervision blended elements of "objective" and "scientific" classroom observation with aspects of collegial coaching, rational planning, and a flexible, inquiry-based concern with learning (Glickman, Gordon & Jorvita, 1998). Robert Goldhammer (1969) proposed the following five-stage process in clinical supervision model: (1) a pre-observation conference between supervisor and teacher concerning elements of the lesson to be observed; (2) classroom observation; (3) a supervisor's analysis of

notes from the observation, and planning for the post-observation conference; (4) a post-observation conference between supervisor and teacher; and (5) a supervisor's analysis of the post-observation conference (Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011). For many practitioners, these stages were reduced to three: the pre-observation conference, the observation, and the post-observation conference. CAs should insist on a collegial relationship focused on the teacher's interest in improving learning, and on a non-judgmental observation and inquiry process.

The initial practice of clinical supervision, however, soon had to accommodate perspectives coming out of the post-Sputnik curriculum reforms of the 1960s that focused on the structures of the academic disciplines. Shortly thereafter, perspectives generated by research on effective schools and effective classrooms that purported to have discovered the basic steps to effective teaching colonized the clinical supervision process. It was during this period that noted teacher Madeline Hunter (1982) adapted research findings from the psychology of learning and introduced what was also to become a very popular, quasi-scientific approach to effective teaching in the 1970s and 1980s. These various understandings of curriculum and teaching were frequently superimposed on the three-to five-stage process of clinical supervision and became normative for supervisors' work with teachers. Nevertheless, in many academic circles the original dialogic and reflective process of Goldhammer continued as the preferred process of supervision. This original process of supervision has been subsequently embraced by advocates of peer supervision and collegial-teacher leadership through action research in classrooms.

Despite the obvious appeal of clinical supervision in its various forms, it is time-consuming and labour-intensive, rendering it impossible to use on any regular basis given the large number of teachers that supervisors are expected to supervise (in addition to their other administrative responsibilities). Recognizing the time restraints of practicing supervisors, and wanting to honour the need to promote the growth of teachers, Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998) suggested the creation of a supervisory system with multiple processes of supervision, including summative evaluation. Such a system would not require the direct involvement of a formal supervisor for every teacher every year. The supervisory system might cycle teachers with professional

status through a three-to five-year period, during which they would receive a formal evaluation once and a variety of other evaluative processes during the other years (e.g., self-evaluation, peer supervision, curriculum development, action research on new teaching strategies, involvement in a school renewal project). The once-a-cycle formal evaluation would require evidence of professional growth. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998) also attempted to open the work of supervision to intentional involvement with the school wide renewal agenda, thus placing all stimuli toward professional growth including the supervisory system within that larger context.

It is claimed that, the Massachusetts School Law, adopted in 1642 in USA, where the field of educational management and supervision developed, is considered to be the beginning of educational supervision. This period, the first stage of supervision, lasted until the 1865 civil war (Daresh, 2001). During this time, supervisors attempted to detect teachers' mistakes in classrooms, focusing mainly on control. With an increase in the number of learners and the concomitant obligations of supplying educational services by all main actors, supervising services were reshaped and the existence of authority figures such as "head teacher" or "principal" evolved. On the other hand, the position of "superintendent" started to include supervisory functions. However, district assistant managers became the first supervisors, because school districts were in the process of expanding over a large area (Oliva & Pawlas, 2004). Their approach to supervision generally was based on strict control and close examination of schools.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a great increase in school enrolment rates, sizes and complexity, with schools gradually increasing in numbers. Nevertheless, there was still a lack of managerial specialization to meet these growing needs. During this period, supervisors assumed greater importance than before and were provided with new responsibilities. Moreover, principals were assigned the duty of supervising classrooms on a daily basis (Daresh, 2001).

It can be said that the development of educational supervision in France and England underwent a similar process. In France, which has a central educational system, improvements were sought in the control-based educational supervision process by the central authorities after the educational reform process started in the

1980s (Memduhoğlu, Aydın, Yılmaz, Güngör & Oğuz, 2007). Supervision in education services were fulfilled by different units concerning program applications and system management. Supervisors from the Inspection Generale de l'Education Nationale (IGEN) perform assessment and guidance tasks on curriculum programs and applications, whereas general supervisors from the Inspection Generale de l'Administration de l'Education Nationale (IGAEN) are supposed to carry out guidance and counseling based supervision on system management (Memduhoğlu, et al., 2007).

In the Turkish education system, the term supervision was first used in a scheme issued in 1838 to open Rüştiye Schools (secondary schools). In the scheme, the following was stated "In these schools, supervision shall be carried out by officials to be appointed in order to determine the professional skills of teachers, to improve instruction and to educate students more efficiently..." (Su, 1983, p. 47). During this period when the concept of supervision was first used in the Turkish educational system, the concept was aimed at controlling teachers' work and teaching improvement. In a regulation published in 1847, "Staff (members) called "muin" (assistant) are to be appointed in order to supervise schools and to guide teachers..." (The Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 1977). In 1862, staff to supervise "Rüştiye" and "Sıbyan" schools (elementary schools) was called "supervisors" for the first time. Recognizing "supervision" as a profession is considered as an important step in the Turkis educational system. In another regulation in 1875, the guidance principal was emphasized (MoNE, 2000).

Supervision in the Turkish educational system continued to be control-based, although the principle of developmental supervision was itself quite old. With the foundation of the republic in 1923, supervision principles were defined as well as the foundations of supervision, responsibilities and authorities. With "Tevhid-I Tedrisat" (Unification of Instruction Law) on 3 March 1924, all schools and medressehs (theological schools) officially came under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education and in 1925 legal regulations on the appointment of supervisors and assistant supervisors were made. In 1933, Ministerial Supervision Council Board was founded and its duties, responsibilities and authorities were redefined. In 1961, the basis of the dual supervision system which still applies to the Turkish educational

system were determined, and the supervision system as it still exists today was formed in 1993 (Memduhoğlu, et al., 2007).

As can be seen, educational supervision which dates back to 1642 in USA was first in practice in Turkey in 1838 on a very limited basis and discussed comprehensively with the promulgation of the republic in 1923. Many regulations and reforms on structure, functions and regulations of educational supervision have been attempted since then.

As explained by Kenya Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (1999), education inspectors are officials of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology charged with the responsibility of identifying and providing feedback on strengths and weaknesses in educational institutions, so that these institutions can improve the quality of education provided and the achievements of their pupils, and who may inspect any educational institution – pre-school, primary, secondary or college, public or private. To achieve its inspectoral functions in particular, the inspectorate endeavors to arrange some visitations to schools by inspectors to carry out general supervision or inspection, including the following activities (Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 1999): (a) checking on educational facilities; (b), monitoring, reviewing, and assessing how well educational standards are being maintained and implemented by teachers and school administrators; and (c) observing classroom teaching by individual teachers to assess their professional competence for promotion on merit and professional guidance. Arising from inspection, in-service training needs for teachers and head-teachers were expected to be identified.

Wanzare (2002) asserts that in Kenya, the so called advisory can be conceptualized as overseeing, which involves directing, controlling, reporting, commanding, and other such activities that emphasize the task at hand and assess the extent to which particular objectives have been accomplished within the bounds set by those in authority for their subordinates. Okumbe (1999), writing from a Kenyan perspective, noted that advisory is an old concept in management whose basic concept is that of autocratic management aimed at catching the workers red-handed; a fault-finding attitude in management, and a one-time fact-finding activity. Therefore, in Kenya,

school advisory seems to be viewed as a process of checking other people's work to ensure that bureaucratic regulations and procedures are followed and that loyalty to the higher authorities are maintained. This resembles the apartheid education system. This view of advisory overlooks the professional interests and needs of the teaching personnel. Advisory process conducted with this view in mind, may not be effective in facilitating educational quality or in improving teaching and learning in schools.

In South Africa, curriculum advisory was done by the inspectors of education (academic) in the dispensation before the first democratic elections in 1994. They had clearly spelt-out functions stipulated in the manual for inspectors of education as, for example, in the former Transvaal province (Transvaal Education Department (TED), 1979). Inspectors' roles and functions were specified and differentiated under common functions of inspectors of education (academic) (TED, 1979, p. 5) and specific function of inspectors of education (academic) (TED, 1979, p. 7). In the old dispensation CAs had been concerned with bureaucratic efficiency and social control, rather than effective management and professional development at school level (Dilotsothle, Smit & Vreken, 2001). According to the African National Congress (ANC) (1994), teacher management and support were conceived as two separate processes.

Curriculum advisory was oriented towards the narrow objective of improving Grade 12 examination results. Inspection was focused on assessing teachers with a view to monetary rewards and promotion. According to Dilotsothle et al. (2001), the majority of teachers in the TED were in favour of the involvement of the academic inspector (later referred to as academic CA) in their professional development, particularly in INSET programmes. It was overwhelmingly about compliance with departmental regulations rather than engaging with teachers about their work. Loyalty to officials and their departments outweighed the interest and needs of teachers. In the TED, a different scenario presented itself where the inspectors of education (academic) were responsible for subjects in secondary education. Their main role was to take the lead in the subject which they were responsible as set out in the common functions (TED, 1979).

During the apartheid era, teachers, particularly in the Department of Education and Training (DET), criticized the curriculum advisory services and the appraisal system. CAs in the DET had no powers but only rendered an advisory service to teachers. Incompetence, one-off visits, irregular criteria, secrecy, absence of contextual factors and arbitrariness in appraisal processes were among the criticisms levelled against inspectors and CAs of the DET (ANC, 1994, p. 53-54). In some areas there had been, prior to the 1994 elections, a total breakdown of trust between teachers and CAs (Foundation for Research Development (FRD), 1993). Despite the negative attitude portrayed towards CAs, teachers still felt that a solution to their teaching problems laid in the formation of study groups to share expertise and to call on CAs and university specialists for guidance (FRD, 1994). This is an indication that CAs were not completely rejected, but that a clarification of their role and function could change the attitudes of teachers.

Despite numerous criticisms leveled at CAs generally, the DET conceptualized their roles in 1992 (DET, 1993). The main emphasis was that a CA was not to be seen as an inspector. His/her role was to advise and not to criticize. The following main areas were identified: Knowledge of the subject(s), innovation, and community involvement on educational issues, writing skills, confidence, upgrading of unqualified teachers, field and administrative work, identification of good teachers, communicating and establishing good relations with teachers and curriculum development. This positive development occurred at the end of the apartheid era in South Africa.

This historical overview points to two main conclusions. Firstly, that the conceptualization of CA has evolved over a multiplicity of forms and purpose leading to ambiguity and uncertainty about what exactly it is or its purpose is. Secondly, the concept of CA seems to hinge on notions of management models rather than curriculum development models. If this conclusion is correct, there is a need to know what its role was, which may be enlightened by this study.

2.4 The role of a Curriculum Advisor

With changes in education today and the increased responsibilities in the business of running a school, the principal's role as curriculum leader is becoming more and

more difficult (Gallant-Norring, 1999). Having a position for curriculum support at the district level can facilitate this responsibility.

The role of the public school CA has evolved substantially over time. The long history of that evolving role underscores the increasingly complex and challenging work of modern CAs. Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young and Ellerson (2011) offer a thoughtful discussion of the CA's changing role in the introduction to their national study of CAs for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Their synthesis describe four traditional conceptualizations of the CA's role in public education since the mid-1800s. Namely: teacher-scholar, manager, democratic leader and applied social scientist. As teacher-scholars, CAs' central work concerned the direct supervision of curriculum in classrooms throughout their school districts. CAs gave counsel to local boards of education on matters of teaching and learning and ensured consistency in curriculum delivery through the personal supervision of classroom teaching. In a sense, CAs served as lead teachers for their school districts throughout this era.

The onset of the industrial revolution in the early 1900s altered this early view of the CA's role. Through the mid-1900s, schools were substantially influenced by principles of efficiency and output common to business and industry, and CAs were re-conceived as business managers for their school districts. In the same way that managers were distinguished from workers in the industrial setting, CAs were likewise distinguished from teachers in the education setting, and school administration emerged as a distinct specialization within the field of public education for the first time. The work of CAs and teachers became more fully delineated, and a "control core culture – that is, an authoritative, impersonal, and task-oriented set of values and beliefs" was born (Kowalski et al., 2011, p. 3).

Just as the industrial revolution re-shaped the role of the CA in the early 1900s, the Great Depression re-shaped it once again in the 1930s. As Kowalski et al. (2011) explain, the crash of the stock market substantially undermined public confidence in the principles that fuelled the industrial revolution, and a renewed interest in democratic control followed. This broad social interest in democratic control was soon translated to the public school setting, and CAs assumed the role of statesmen

for the first time. They were expected to cultivate and sustain widespread political support for schools and became ambassadors for democratic governance of public school organizations. This role was short-lived, though, as interest in the social sciences flourished. The ending of this role might be virtuous. CAs roles should be directly linked with enhancing teaching and learning not some cheap political popularity.

In the wake of intense interest in the social sciences that emerged by the middle of the twentieth century, the CA's role was re-conceptualized once again. By the mid- to late 1900s, the CA was expected to identify and implement solutions to complex social and educational problems, and to ground those solutions in empirical evidence and social scientific thought. This is key to CAs. They should possess diagnostic and problem-solving skills. In the wake of growing enthusiasm for social scientific methods, the work of CAs became highly technical, and their demonstrated expertise in empirical research was commonly expected (Kowalski et al., 2011).

Kowalski et al. (2011) add another conceptualization to this traditional perspective on the historical evolution of the CA’s role: the CA as communicator. They argued that the role of communicator implicitly accompanied each of the four roles traditionally attributed to CAs. In their estimation, the form and function of CAs’ communication shifted to match the evolving roles conceived for them. In one era, CAs' communication served to define and inform; in another era, it served to maximize administrative control and legitimize formal authority. More recently, it has served to empower constituents and stakeholders and to build internal capacity among other participants in the public school setting. Just as the role of CAs has evolved over time, so too has their communication. CAs should be able to communicate with their teachers in various forms.

Without a great deal of variation, the four traditional roles Kowalski et al. (2011) described are consistent with those generally reflected in the literature, which commonly links the CA’s changing role to the broader social forces and developments associated with a given era in the nation’s history. Glass (2001) for example, likewise characterized CAs as scholars, business managers, agents of organizational improvement, and facilitators of shared leadership during distinct eras

over the past 150 years. Undeniably, CAs should be lifelong scholars. This will make them to be conversant with the education system they work in, understand their roles better and thus enable them to manage and support teachers effectively.

Bredeson and Kose (2007) hypothesize that the last decade of educational reform policy initiatives, whether locally or externally driven, were likely to have influenced the expectations various role holders had for CAs especially in such areas as curriculum development, curriculum leadership, and assessment of learner learning outcomes leading to role transitions. As Petersen (1999) reported, there is an emerging "new and somewhat different leadership role for the district CA in the core technologies of curriculum and instruction." Transition leadership (Goldring, Crowson, Laird, & Berk, 2003) suggest that it is important to examine the substantive shifts and role transitions in CAs' work. As CAs negotiate the terrain between internal and external accountability systems within a volatile educational reform environment, there are transitions in role and work priorities due to demands for greater accountability for learning outcomes. Anchored in role transition theory, CAs' responses to demands for greater accountability for learning outcomes provide a window into the impact of educational reform policy on their work (Bredeson & Kose, 2007).

Accountability is another framework that provides both empirical and analytic lenses for an investigation of CAs' work and the policy environment (Bredeson & Kose, 2007). One of the most important features of the new accountability is that it shifts governance from a system of local political accountability to state administrative accountability (Timar, 2003). Various educational players, including CAs, over time slowly and through a process of mutual adaptation adapt and adjust patterns of individual and organizational behaviour to fit the new accountability policy environment (Timar, 2003). In modern days, federal accountability measures, most notably in the policy on No Child Left Behind (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, & Foleno, 2001) have intensified demands for CAs to attend to assessment and learning outcomes in their districts. Moderation of learners' assessment is an important role for CAs and teaching in totality.

Elmore (2003, p. 7) describes the impact of this new model of educational accountability on the evolving role of school CAs over the past decade: “The biggest change has occurred with the introduction of performance-based accountability, the direct measurement of learner performance, disaggregated by school and by type of learner, and the use of that data to make judgments about how well schools perform.” There are many complications with such accountability systems, the biggest may be the profound change in the work of leading and managing teacher and school systems. Many CAs might not be compatible with this change, some might acknowledge the change and struggle with how to accept it, and a few might embrace the knowledge necessary to operate in this new situation.

Highlighting the work of other scholars (for example, Newman, King, & Rigdon, 1997), these authors describe six types of accountability systems, namely: bureaucratic, legal, professional, political, moral, and market, differing from each other in terms of mutual relationships among participants, expectations, mechanisms for implementation, and incentives.

It is anticipated that CAs should endeavor to be as professional as possible in their practices. This includes an attempt to: provide objective judgments of teacher performance, establish a friendly and interactive atmosphere with teachers, cultivate a harmonious working relationship with teachers and, above all, stop their bullying attitude toward teachers (Kamuyu, 2001 & Ndegwa, 2001). Also, in advocating for professional advisory, Isolo (2000) suggests that CAs must change with the times, shift from their traditional crude image and do their work objectively, professionally, and with courtesy.

Based on the prevalence of findings in the research on CAs related to role confusion and ambiguity, it appears logical to discuss the construct of Role theory.

2.4.1 Role theory

Role theory describes an individual’s behaviour within a group or an organization (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Huse, 1980). Huse (1980, p. 52-53) state, “Each individual within an organization has a unique set of characteristics and the role filled by the individual provides the building block, or link, between the individual and the

organization". Katz and Kahn (1978) report that all persons fulfill roles, and that, it is through these roles that a person is known as by others. According to Huse (1980), a person's behaviour is a combination of the individual's expectations as well as the expectations of those persons associated with that person. This study sought to find out if CAs understood their roles in education. Huse summarized, "…a 'role' is the sum total of expectations placed on the individuals by supervisors, peers, subordinates, vendors, customers, and others…" (p. 53). Katz and Kahn (1978) described role behaviour as a set of recurring actions that along with the actions of others result in an expected outcome. Unarguably, the success of CAs duties depends on the response of teachers. For CAs' support to be effective and fruitful, teachers would have to implement their directives and recommendations. Without a doubt, role behaviour better explains what CAs duty entails.

In their discussion of Role theory, Katz and Kahn (1978) described how an individual or "focal person" acts out an "office" or position of employment couched in an environment of expectations held by fellow employees (both on the same level of the organizational hierarchy as well as above or below). These expectations are perceived or received by the focal person and are filtered by that person's intellectual and emotional background. The focal person, in fulfilling his or her office, must decide how to comply (or to what degree he or she will comply) with the expectations of the "role senders" or "role-set." This measure of compliance consists of certain activities and will be the focal person's "response" to the collection of expectations perceived from his or her role-set.

According to Katz and Kahn (1978), the process of receiving expectations, whether from within or outside of the individual, deciding on a response, and acting this response out through appropriate activities, which are then observed by the role-senders, is cyclical. The focal person's "role-set" may be satisfied with the response and continue to send or communicate the same expectations, or the role-set may not be satisfied, and will modify or alter their expectations. Again, the focal person will receive these sent expectations and the process continues. Within this process, the focal person is being modified by the messages received from others. The focal person observes the responses to his or her activities or role behaviours and may choose to increase, decrease, or leave unchanged the level of compliance to send

expectations. CAs as leaders are expected to give teachers curriculum mandates to be implemented in their teaching. As a result, CAs are also expected to monitor if teachers are doing as expected and support when it is necessary. In return, teachers also expect CAs to support them regularly. This might be an impossible task for CAs to do if they do not have enough manpower.

2.4.1.1 Role Conflict

The individual's ability to satisfy his or her role-set determines how much role conflict or role ambiguity is experienced by the individual (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Huse, 1980). In some cases, a role will involve expectations that a person cannot or will not meet. This results in role conflict (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Huse, 1980). Huse (1980, p. 53) asserted, "Role conflict occurs when the manager knows what is expected of him, but is not able to comply with all of the expectations". Katz and Kahn (1978, p. 204) described role conflict as, "the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult." Katz and Kahn (1978, p. 204) comment on the source of role conflict stating:

> "Role conflict is typically envisaged as a disagreement between two or more role senders, but two or more expectations of the same role-sender may be in conflict, and conflict can occur between expectations of the role-set and those of the focal person for himself or herself. Conflict may also be generated between two or more roles held by the same person – for example, the role of worker and mother, although the study of such inter-role conflicts takes us outside the immediate boundaries of the organization".

Role conflict continues if the individual fails to comprehend the expectations sent by the role-set (as opposed to knowing but not doing) and role ambiguity results (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Huse, 1980). This study also sought to find out challenges that CAs faced in their positions. Literature has shown that CAs often complained about the inadequate support and unrealistic roles set by the education departments. The inability of CAs in supporting most if not all teachers due to shortage of CAs and resources in the districts might result in role conflict. This would mean that they have failed to execute what is expected from them.

2.4.1.2 Role Ambiguity, Conflict, and Research on the CA

Huse (1980, p. 53) reported, “Role ambiguity occurs when the individual has insufficient knowledge of the expectations”. Katz and Kahn (1978, p. 206) asserted:

> “In its prototypical form, role ambiguity simply means uncertainty about what the occupant of a particular office is supposed to do. But there may be uncertainty as well about many other aspects of a role, including the membership of the role-set, the ends to be served by role enactment, and the evaluation of present role behaviour.”

The present study sought to examine the perspectives of CAs as providers of support to teachers in their specializations. CAs have long suffered from an identity crisis, and literature indicates that the tasks and activities carried out by CAs vary from one system to the next, even from one district to another within the same system (Bliss, Fahrney & Steffy, 1996; Weller & Weller, 2002). It is a good thing for CAs roles to change with educational reform. However, for CAs to operate differently in one system because of their geographical location remains a mystery since national mandates affect all CAs. From the field notes generated in this study, role ambiguity seemed to exist in South African curriculum advisory. Though there is set list of CAs roles from the national level, it appeared as if every province operated in a way that is exclusive, so does their district levels. This may be perhaps of the circumstantial factors which distinguished provinces and districts. Despite this, I believe that the education department from the national level should strive for similitude in the operation of curriculum advisory country wide.

In a 1996 study of Kentucky schools district, Bliss et al. (1996) found that CAs reported that expectations and responsibilities had increased greatly, but there was still no consensus about what their roles were. Moreover, they reported that even though CAs perceived that they were assuming more curriculum leadership, that in fact, members of their departments did not view them as helpful in meeting needs in such areas as “improvement in teaching” and with “assessment techniques.” The Kentucky study concluded that CA roles needed to be aligned with the on-going goals of restructuring. It is believed that the findings of this study will point out the importance of curriculum advisory in teaching and learning.

Weller and Weller (2002, p.6) reported about role ambiguity in the CA's role:

> "Many teachers who become CAs find themselves in a role dilemma. They question whether they are colleagues or administrators, or both. Role ambiguity is due in part to the lack of a written job description and the mistrust many teachers have of administrators".

Although the role of the CA in curriculum is not clear (Weller, 2001), it appears logical that the CA would provide curriculum leadership to the teachers of their respective departments.

In summary, Katz and Kahn (1978) and Huse (1980) provided a basis for understanding how and why a person behaves a certain way within a group or organization. Katz and Kahn observed that others know people through their actions, which are dictated by the role they are currently fulfilling. Huse described behaviours as being the manifestation of a person's response to both external and internal expectations. When a role involves expectations that a person has difficulty fulfilling, role conflict is the result (Huse, 1980; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Katz and Kahn (1978) described role conflict as a situation involving expectations that a person either has difficulty complying with or will not fulfill for some reason. If a person does not understand the expectations of a role, a person experiences role ambiguity (Huse, 1980).

Many authors, particularly in relation to the tasks and functions that the holder of a CA position is expected to complete (Bliss et al., 1996; Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Weller &Weller, 2002), have studied the role of the CA. Their studies have revealed that the occupants of CA positions often encounter role conflict and ambiguity.

According to Weller and Weller (2002), the role ambiguity that is experienced by CAs is due in large measure to the failure of districts to produce clear job descriptions for the position. As the curriculum leader, the works of the CAs seem sketchy relative to the curriculum leadership they provide to the teachers, and this is what motivated the current study.

Notwithstanding the discrepancies and ambiguity associated with the role of a CA, Krug's (1992) claims that the role of CAs should be on curriculum leadership. He provides the five dimensions of curriculum leadership, namely: (a) defining mission, (b) managing curriculum and instruction, (c) supervising and supporting teaching, (d) monitoring student progress, and (e) promoting instructional climate.

These dimensions appear to get affirmation from other scholars. Waters and Marzano (2006) agreed that CAs can influence teaching through managing the dimensions of curriculum leadership. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) concurred by claiming that research suggests that effective curriculum leadership can improve teaching. Krug (1992) further suggests that this five-factor taxonomy encompasses some of the activities in which an effective curriculum leader should engage. Consequently, the research questions of this study focused on the practices of CAs around these five dimensions of curriculum leadership. In the next section, Krug's (1992) five-factor taxonomy of effective curriculum leadership is discussed.

2.4.2 Krug's dimensions of effective curriculum leadership

2.4.2.1 Defining a Mission

The first role of CAs is to explicitly frame the curriculum system and educational goals, purposes, and mission. Curriculum advisory that has not fully considered how it will go about the process of education has no criteria for judging whether it is successfully engaging in that process or not. People who are skilled in this area of advisory often discuss purpose and mission with teachers, learners, and the community. They take advantage of opportunities to stress and communicate goals. Further, they try to make themselves visible in their environment and they communicate excitement about education to teachers and learners. This dimension is relevant to this study. When CAs meet teachers, they should inform them about the purpose and objectives of the meeting.

2.4.2.2 Managing Curriculum and Instruction

Effective leaders provide information that teachers need to plan their classes effectively and they actively support curriculum understanding. Although they usually do not teach, CAs need to be aware of the special needs of each curriculum area.

Indeed, I opinionate that without a broad knowledge, CAs cannot provide the resources teachers need to carry out their mission effectively. CAs skilled in this area provide information teachers need to plan their work effectively. They work to ensure a good fit between curriculum objectives and achievement testing and actively support curriculum implementation. Their primary emphasis as CAs is with curriculum rather than administrative issues.

2.4.2.3 Supervising and Supporting Teachers

Although mandates and traditional hierarchical structures have usually assigned CAs a role with questionable habits with respect to teachers (Wanzarre, 2002), the effective curriculum leader is more broadly oriented to teacher development. That is, the effective CA is proactive rather than retrospective regarding teachers and focused on what can be, not what was. CAs should focus on supervising and supporting teachers, and spending time encouraging them to try their best. In addition, CAs are to coach and counsel them in a supportive and considerate manner. They should also attempt to critique teachers as though they were a mentor rather than an evaluator. They encourage teachers to evaluate their own performance and set goals for their own growth. This study found that CAs develop teachers professionally through support meetings, workshops and school visits.

2.4.2.4 Monitoring student progress

The school district's primary product is a population of graduates who have the technical and life skills they need to cope in an increasingly competitive world. Good CAs need to be aware of the variety of ways in which learner progress can and should be assessed. Even more importantly, CAs need to use assessment results in ways that help teachers and learners improve and that help parents understand where and why improvement is needed. CAs regularly review performance data with teachers and use this information to gauge progress toward educational goals.

2.4.2.5 Promoting an instructional climate

Those who survive for very long in leadership positions soon learn that their primary objective is to motivate people to do what needs to be done. When the atmosphere of the school district or school is one that makes learning exciting, when teachers and learners are both supported for their achievements, and when there is a shared

sense of purpose, it is difficult not to learn, particularly in the critical first years of school when lifelong attitudes toward education are forming. Effective CAs create that atmosphere. CAs strong in this area nurture learning in a variety of ways. They encourage teachers to innovate. They regularly recognize teachers' efforts, write letters of commendation for a job well done, and ask parents to praise teachers for their good work.

2.5 Challenges faced by Curriculum Advisors

The work of modern CAs is more complex and challenging than ever before (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Some challenges appear to be universally common to the CA as a professional role, while others appear to vary based upon personal characteristics and other contextual factors.

2.5.1 Common challenges

Challenges commonly associated with curriculum advisory as a professional role are documented (Morgan & Peterson, 2002). Curriculum advisory as currently done seems to be highly inadequate and, consequently, it does not seem to meet the needs of schools, teachers and learners. Commenting about the inadequacy of school inspection, Adongo (2000) reported that, in general, teachers are rarely ever advised. Further to this, the amount of observation of classroom teaching by advisors is uneven and disturbingly small. There appears to be several reasons for inadequate advisory in schools, namely: understaffing of CAs, heavy workloads and time constraint (Le Cornu, 2012). It is possible that these issues might be analogous with the findings of this study. These issues may disable CAs from diligently fulfilling their job expectations.

Most important among the common challenges is the complex nature of the work itself, where CAs must concurrently attend to educational, managerial and political responsibilities (Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001; Orr, 2006). CAs are simultaneously expected to lead school organizations, ensure the educational success of all learners, respond to evolving community needs, facilitate school reform initiatives, model understanding and demonstrate accessibility to both internal and external stakeholders, and manage myriad financial and business operations while serving as

good stewards of taxpayer funds. When CAs are faced with multiple roles like these, they may have difficulty fulfilling them. As a result, role conflict is likely to occur.

These complex and often disparate array of professional responsibilities means that CAs are like the jack of all trades. Further, Kowalski et al. (2011) assert that this complexity in CAs' work continues to increase as information technologies rapidly expand, involvement of the government in public education grows, and concern about the competitive position of the population and its schools in the global marketplace intensifies. As Orr (2006) observed, though, the greater challenge facing CAs is not simply responding to the immediate complexity of their work context, but rather how to work within it and even try to change it for the benefit of their schools and learners. The government's inability to provide CAs with contemporary and necessary resources such as computers, printers, photocopiers, to name few might make their job more complex.

Problems of professional practice facing CAs are also well documented. For example, inadequate financing of public education persistently compounds the already difficult work of CAs. In AASA studies, CAs have cited financial issues as the most pressing challenge facing them in their work since 1950. Other documented practical challenges include accountability pressures, relationships between CAs and school boards, managerial obstacles, testing and assessment issues, curricular changes, planning and goal setting, personnel, and the CA's role and visibility within the larger community (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). For curriculum advisory to function effectively, the department should inject enough money into the curriculum division and thus will make them well-equipped to deal with the daily needs of their position.

A common complaint often heard when CAs describe their work is that there is too much to be done, with new mandates and policies piling up on administrative plates that are already overloaded (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000. For example, CAs suggest that district governance and local politics take a substantial amount of their time and energy and serve as primary obstacles to improving learner performance (Farkas et al., 2001; Fuller, Campbell, Celio, Harvey, Immerwahr & Winger, 2003). One more conflict for CAs is the reported discrepancy between what CAs say is

important and what they actually spend their time doing (Bredeson, 1996). A primary example of this frustration involves the core technology of education, teaching, curriculum development, and assessment of learning outcomes.

Many of the so called CAs are incompetent, lacking the skill and pedagogical training which are requisite for the task (Ige, 2012). They are also inadequate for the growing number of schools and enrolment. CAs are also saddled with heavy workloads thus making it difficult for them to carry out effective support. Ogunu (2000) reported that in Edo state, there were 1,008 primary and 145 secondary schools, compared to fifteen staff at the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education (IDME), and Post-Primary Schools Board (PPSB). It is quite disturbing that out of the fifteen CAs, only six had degree in education while none had specialized training in supervision. What this implies is that most CAs are misfits. What then can one expect from such unqualified CAs? In most schools, the parochialism of CAs is reflecting in many ways. Most of the vital areas that need to be addressed are often left out by the CAs.

The success of any training and development initiative depends on the quality of its trainers. However, the trainees, like the trainers, must have a positive attitude, show commitment and be willing to learn. There is a general belief regarding training that the quality of training by trainers, facilitators or teachers who provide training was not always satisfactory. According to Yeowart (2003) when the new curriculum, the National Curriculum Statement 2002 Policy, was designed, CAs were trained to become its facilitators for teachers.

The Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of National Curriculum Statement 2002 Policy (2009b) cited that most departmental officials' experience and knowledge level on policy issues was inadequate. These officials also have a superficial understanding of the National Curriculum Statement 2002 Policy. It would appear that the current crop of CAs has not been adequately trained. The provision of content training and the development of CAs through the Mathematics, Science and Technology College's (MASTEC) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme (DoE, 2009) was an indication that these CAs' content knowledge levels were still low.

A study of Texas CAs found a similar set of problems and, further, a statistically significant relationship between CA tenure and the challenges of both school funding and personnel administration, suggesting the substantial negative influence of those problems on CAs and their work (Trevino, Braley, Brown, & Slate, 2008). While CAs face a common array of challenges generally associated with the profession itself, they may also face challenges that are closely linked to contextual factors.

2.5.2 Contextual challenges

As a contextual feature, the setting in which CAs conduct their work appears to influence some of the challenges they face. Lamkin (2006), for example, conducted grounded theory research focused on the challenges uniquely associated with the work of CAs in rural settings. Her research included CAs in rural school districts within the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Her analysis of data collected through seven focus group sessions indicated that participants experienced the same set of challenges commonly associated with the advisory as a professional role, but that they also experienced additional challenges that were specifically linked to the rural context of their work. They frequently described inadequate training and professional preparation necessary to execute specific job duties or apply specific professional skills required of them, particularly within the domains of law, finance, personnel, government mandates, and established board policies.

Further, they described specific environmental challenges, including “the lack of specialized contact and experience with that environment, the lack of acculturation to the setting and expectations of the rural CA”. Strikingly, participants in all three states repeatedly described themselves as a “jack of all trades”, noting that the unique, rural context of their school districts required them to assume disparate professional responsibilities not expected of their counterparts in larger, urban settings. Unlike their urban counterparts, those rural CAs were, in addition to the work commonly attributed to CAs, directly responsible for pupil transportation, facility management, contracts, and other management areas. CAs in this study were required to oversee schools in both rural and urban areas. Perhaps they might also be experiencing similar challenges.

Correspondingly, curriculum advisory in Kenya, especially in rural areas, has been frustrated by the lack of essential facilities, such as office accommodation, clerical services and support staff for CAs, funds, equipment, and stationery (Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 1999). Perennial shortage of stationery and inadequate secretarial services also make it difficult for the CAs to prepare meaningful reports. In brief, the general support relative to curriculum advisory, especially in terms of staff, equipment, accommodation, and advisory services is often not matched to the tasks to be discharged. Consequently, CAs often felt ill-prepared for the range of responsibilities they held and pressured to attend to an unwieldy spectrum of duties toward which they had inadequate time to devote.

Parallel to this study, CAs are often faced with the problem of lack of transport, especially for those advisors deployed in rural areas (Republic of Kenya, 1999). This problem is aggravated by the fact that some schools are located in areas that are too remote to be reached by CAs (Olembo, Wanga & Karagu 1992). As noted by Olembo et al. (1992, p. 11-12), who commented about the difficulties Kenyan CAs experience in the process of assessment of teachers:

> "There are some geographical regions in the country where visits to schools are easily possible even by most un-mechanized means, like walking across to a school. But, proportionately, such regions are very few indeed. The majority of the regions are the very epitome of impossible physical terrain. It is even worse if such areas are prone to capricious weather condition. Further to this, there is a lack of sufficient funds, especially traveling and subsistence allowances, provided to CAs to meet expenses associated with transport and accommodation."

Achayo and Githagui (2001) concluded that the problem of lack of transport had affected regular and efficient assistance of teachers by CAs in different parts of the country. Transport problems were evident in this study. Most CAs indicated that transport was not well managed. The department could not replace old cars in time. CAs who used their own cars for their work were also not paid in time. These

appeared to be stressing them as they had to use their own money so that they are able to produce work evidence when required.

Similarly, in Nigeria, Ige (2012) asserts that money is believed to be the 'vehicle of evangelism'. Effective inspection requires adequate fund to purchase and maintain the vehicles that will transport the CAs to and from schools, the stationery as well as other logistics during their practice. The issue of lack of stationery makes it difficult for meaningful reports to be prepared after inspection. In an ideal situation, advisory supposes to be carried out regularly, in view of the number and population of schools, as well as the prevailing cases of misdemeanours in schools in Nigeria. Unfortunately, visits of schools have been irregular in view of inadequate fund to achieve this feat. This has been making many schools not to be visited in a term or session thus contributing to the rots that can be observed in many schools these days. CAs are also facing the problem of lack of means of transportation especially those that have to go to the rural areas (Adetula, 2010). This is compounded by the fact that some schools are located in the remote areas which are tough to drive in while some are in the difficult terrains such as water side, hill top and island. There is also lack of sufficient funds such as travelling and subsistence allowances for CAs to meet expenses associated with transport and accommodation.

At the same time, CAs in urban settings likewise appear to face specific contextual challenges. The Council of the Great City Schools (2006), a coalition 35 of USA's 65 largest urban school districts, outlined some of those challenges. Included among them is the substantially greater diversity of race, ethnicity, native languages, and socioeconomic conditions among learners within their school districts. Urban CAs face the challenge of ensuring that this diverse population of learners demonstrates adequate academic progress in an era of increasing public accountability for demonstrable learner achievement outcomes. They likewise face unique political pressures, often working to respond to disparate constituencies with conflicting interests and demands. Further, the size of their school districts substantially increases their visibility and scrutiny as public figures in the eyes of government bodies, private businesses, community organizations, and the media.

While a setting represents one contextual factor that influences the challenges facing CAs, personal characteristics represent another. Existing research suggests that gender and ethnicity present unique contextual challenges for CAs. In their survey research of female CAs in Illinois, in the USA, school districts, for example, Van Tuyle and Watkins (2009) found that participants faced particularized challenges associated with family responsibilities, gender discrimination, and lowered self-confidence in their leadership skills and behaviours. Some respondents further reported that those challenges were significant enough to trigger their attrition from the advisory. More broadly, female CAs often face contextual struggles related to gender stereotypes and sex-role norms (Dana, 2009). The growing number of female and non-white CAs, accompanied by the lack of research into their particular experiences, presents a pressing need to understand their experiences in the role (Alston, 2005).

Finally, highly individualized circumstances also represent contextual variables that shape challenges facing some CAs. That is to say, contextual variables specific to a given school district and the CA's work there may raise unique situational challenges. Two contributions to the literature best illustrate that phenomenon. Bogotch's (1995) case study research described a female CA in the South-Eastern United States, Kathleen Connors, who was selected to fill the position after the school board failed to identify a suitable candidate even after a national search lasting seven months and the employment of two temporary CAs. Desperate to fill the role, the school board hired Connors in a split vote without the traditional involvement of typical constituencies in the school district, creating dissension among board members and friction among constituents from the onset of her advisory. Almost immediately, she was immersed in a hotly contested sales tax referendum about which she had little prior experience or expertise.

Despite her successful advocacy for the referendum, board frictions escalated. One member who disagreed with her appointment to the advisory criticized her efforts on behalf of the tax referendum in the local newspaper. Ultimately, Connors' beliefs and style as a leader conflicted with the broader political culture of her district, and she faced a series of challenges in her work there that ultimately eroded her working relationship with the school board.

Garza's (2008) auto-ethnography explored formidable challenges associated with the practical demonstration of his leadership values as a CA in the face of unique social, political, and cultural opposition and conflict. Shortly after his unanimous appointment to the advisory, he found himself deeply entrenched in a conflict between the school board and a district administrator who alleged that her re-assignment was the result of gender discrimination. During that following month, he found himself at odds over the issue of salary stipends with a teacher whose husband was a powerful politician with substantial influence over the results of school board elections. Garza (2008, p. 165) wrote that the "incident was the beginning of a persistent effort to defame me. From this moment on her husband's main focus was to create enough support on the school board to remove me." Conflicts between Garza and the school board grew, and they were mirrored by his growing conflicts with members of his administrative team. Ultimately, he was able to successfully navigate those challenges, but his story helps to illustrate how unique and often unpredictable circumstances may create pressing situational challenges for CAs. Nevertheless, these kind of situational challenges were not evident in this study.

2.5.3 Challenges associated with entry into curriculum advisory

Beyond common and contextual challenges associated with the advisory, other challenges are specifically associated with the entry into the position. Particularly for some novice CAs, inadequate formal preparation for the responsibilities and demands of the position make their entry especially difficult (Baldwin, 2007; Gray, 2005; Hess, 2003; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006; Swindle, 2005). Further, Kowalski, Petersen, and Fusarelli (2009) found in their study of first-time CAs that 17% had completed no academic programme leading to professional licensure for the position. Notwithstanding issues of preparation, however, CAs entering the position are often challenged by their school boards' inadequate planning and preparation for a change in district leadership (Sweeney, 2007). In South Africa, for one to qualify as a CA, he/she should have a basic four year diploma/degree, Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV) 15 or an equivalent qualification in the learning/subject area/phase, registration with SACE as professional educator and eight years of experience in the educational field (DBE, 2011).

Despite Hargreaves' (2005) argument that school districts should more carefully plan for changes in leadership, many do not because they lack sufficient financial resources and an adequate understanding of its importance (Sweeney, 2007). At the same time, there exists limited guidance for outgoing CAs about the ways in which they can accomplish their successful disengagement and set the stage for the smooth entry of their successors (Keane & Follo, 1996). Perhaps due at least in part to those factors, CAs often experience initial confusion or disorientation as they enter the position (Jentz & Murphy, 2005). They often face conflicting demands for their time, attention, and action. They "plunge into 'the work' without taking a casual and informal 'just-a-few-minutes-on-the-fly' approach to sizing up the situation" (Jentz & Murphy, 2005, p. 739-740) and they quickly become over-extended. CAs may also find that they lack adequate time or opportunity to learn about the important social and organizational context of their work and school district (Lytle, 2009), and many find that expectations for their work and roles change substantially as they move through the entry period (Cox & Malone, 2003).

Orr (2006) also provides a list of challenges associated specifically with CA entry available in scholarly literature. Her focus group research found that entry challenges are most commonly related to "the nature of the work itself, developing relationships with the school board, budget and financial issues, power and politics, learning about the culture of the community and school district, the history and expectations of the school district, learning about the role itself, and unique challenges like balancing work and family obligations" (p. 1375).

Despite different studies addressing different views about CAs, for example, how they support teachers to implement curriculum policies seem to be ignored. Dissimilar to these studies, the present study explored how CAs support teachers to implement curriculum policies in the Capricorn district of the Limpopo Province.

2.6 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework enhances the significance of a study and is used for guiding the methodology and discussion (Anfara & Mertz, 2006).

2.6.1 Constructivism and Social Constructivism

For this study social constructivism was used as the theoretical framework. The purpose of this section of the literature review is to provide a brief synopsis of the qualities and differences of constructivism and social constructivism. A distinction between constructivism and social constructivism is important because as Raskin (2002, p. 2) has indicated: "…one comes across so many varieties of constructivism that even the experts seem befuddled. Terms like 'constructivism', 'constructionism', and 'constructive' are employed so idiosyncratically and inconsistently that at times they seem to defy definition." This confusion is not because constructivism and social constructivism cannot be distinguished from one another but that the former focuses on meaning making and the constructing of social worlds through individual, cognitive processes while the latter emphasizes that the social world is made real through social processes and interactions (Liu & Matthews, 2005). However, this simple distinction masks the variety and heterogeneity both within and between them which serves to distort the distinction.

Constructivism is commonly associated with Western intellectual figures such as Jean Piaget, George Kelly, and Ernst von Glasersfeld (Gergen, 2001). Constructivism proposes that each individual mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes. It differs from positivism in its argument that the world cannot be known directly, but rather by the construction imposed on it by the mind. In other words, constructivism is commonly understood as the ability of learners to take abstract concepts and actively make meaning of them via concrete experiences, as opposed to passively learning via the direct transmission of knowledge. Constructivism is concerned with how we know and by implication how we develop meaning.

One of the main critiques of constructivism lies in its reliance on "an individually sovereign process of cognitive construction to explain how human beings are able to share so much socially, to interpret, understand, influence and coordinate their activities with one another" (Martin & Sugarman, 1999, p. 9). Essentially, Martin and Sugarman's point is that constructivism suggests a highly individualistic approach without reference to social interaction and contexts that make self-reflection possible.

To some extent this weakness of constructivism is being addressed by social constructivism.

Social constructivism is based on the notion that knowledge is the product of our social culture and organizations or of the connections and exchanges between related social groups (Gasper, 1999). Generally stated, social constructivism is how individuals construct knowledge from one another and collaboratively create a culture of shared meaning. When one is immersed within a culture, one is learning all the time about how to be a part of that culture on many levels.

Lev Vygotsky (1962) the founding father of social constructivism believed in social interaction and that it was an integral part of learning. Most, if not all, of Vygotsky's research and theories are collectively involved in social constructivism and language development such as, cognitive dialogue, the zone of proximal development, social interaction, culture, inner speech(Powell, 2009). Some versions of social constructivism maintain that objects exist only after individuals or groups communicate about them (Keaton & Bodie, 2011). At one level an object's existence is determined through an individual's sensory perception; through communicative acts, both intra and interpersonally, they are defined and eventually embody meaning. The social process of defining the object (that is, its construction) enables it to exist in a social context, to have meaning. Given this social constructivist's position, confusion often surrounds exactly what is being socially constructed. It is not the physical composition of an object that is brought into existence, but its social composition, the ideas which define that object within a social context (Keaton & Bodie, 2011). In other words, communication changes how objects are perceived and the range of potential meanings they can represent.

Recent challenges to social constructivist ideology have placed Vygotsky's theory in a curious position. The most common challenge is that social constructivism takes the concept of truth to be a socially "constructed" (and thereby a socially relative) one. This challenge leads to the charge of "self-refutation" (Wenger, 1991). If what is to be regarded as "true" is relative to a particular social group, then this very conception of truth must itself be only regarded as being "true" within this group. In another social formation, it may well be false. Further, one could then say that truth

could be both true and false simultaneously. Research should therefore not be generalized. Hence, this was a case study. The findings may be exclusive to the area of the study.

Another challenge of social constructivism is that it holds that the concepts of two different social groups to be entirely different and unequal (Wenger, 1991). Therefore, it is impossible to be in a position to make comparative judgments about statements made by these different social groups because of different worldviews. This is because the criteria of judgment will have to be based on some worldview or the other. If this is the case, then it brings into question how communication between different social groups about the truth or falsity of any given statement can be established.

While Vygotsky's theory is assumed, by many, to be the origin of social constructivism, other scholars have claimed that he cannot be social enough. Lave and Wenger (1991), for example, in proposing their situated learning theory, disapproved of Vygotsky's concept of learning internalization and scientific concepts for they contain only "a small 'aura' of socialness that provides input for the process of internalization, viewed as individualistic acquisition of the cultural given" (p. 47). Another noted criticism regarding social constructivism is in its emphasis on learner active participation. It is often seen that social constructivism too easily dismisses the roles of passive perception, memorization, and all the mechanical learning methods in traditional didactic learning (Fox, 2001).

One of the complicating factors in any discussion of constructivism and social constructivism is the ambiguity in the utilization of these concepts which seems to vary by its particular context and use. For the purpose of this study, social constructivism emphasizes that the social world is made real through social processes and interactions and perceptions of these interactions. Utilizing social constructivism as a theoretical framework for this study called for the participants to share their views of curriculum advisory, recognize the practices or roles of curriculum support, focus on the certain settings in which curriculum advisory occurred, try to explain the understandings that the participants had about curriculum support and whether any challenges were evident that impacted this practice.

2.7 Conclusion

This literature review chapter explored five topics. The first topic was the concept of CA. The second was the historical overview of the role of CA. The third described the roles of CA. The fourth examined the challenges faced by CAs. The last topic provided the theoretical framework of this this study. The overall impression from this review is that the CAs existed from long ago. Each era brought with it a new nomenclature and that their role has been evolving with time and educational reforms. There are also ongoing debates about curriculum advisory on a variety of issues, which are indicative of the ways in which leadership by these individuals is imperative in education. The following chapter, Chapter Three, will articulate the qualitative research design and methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a description of the study's paradigm or world view. It then discusses the study's methodology and design. An outline of how study participants were selected is provided. Data collection and analysis procedures are explained along with the strategies used to ensure trustworthiness. Ethical considerations of the study are also provided.

3.2 Interpretive Paradigm

A paradigm, also referred to as a world view, is considered the foundational lens which researchers use to interact with the world around them. It is a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990, p.17). Although paradigms remain largely hidden in research, they significantly influence the approach and practice of research. Paradigms are ultimately a general orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher holds. They are shaped by the discipline area and beliefs of the researcher and past research experiences. The types of beliefs held by researchers will often lead to embracing qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches in their research. The diverse terminology and practices of research can often be confusing and daunting.

However, generally speaking, a research paradigm impacts the span of all decisions made – from broad assumptions to details such a data collection and analysis. There are broadly speaking three main paradigms, positivism, interpretivism and critical paradigm.

The research in this study is approached from an interpretive paradigm. In this type of paradigm the researcher attempts to interpret and make sense of how others view the world (Creswell, 2009). The researcher focuses on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. Researchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretations, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences

(Creswell, 2009). Lastly, rather than starting with a theory this type of paradigm generates or inductively develops a theory or pattern of meaning.

A foundational element of this study included the notion that I engage with participants so that they can share their views (Patton, 2002). Research of this nature seeks to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. As the socially constructed realities of participants were considered, this study used qualitative approaches to best understand the views of CAs.

3.3 Research Method

According to Patton (2002), a study's research design should be determined by the nature of the research question. The research question guiding this study called for a qualitative approach since it is seeking to understand the lived experiences of the participants. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003, p. 3) defined qualitative research as "research that involves analyzing and interpreting texts and interviews in order to discover meaningful patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon". Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p. 3) further describe qualitative research as:

> ". . . a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. These practices transform the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, and recordings". This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Qualitative researchers are keenly interested in understanding the meaning people have built to make sense of their world and their lived experiences (Merriam, 1998). Thus, it involves the process of discovery to allow the researcher to better understand the meaning of the participants involved in the study. The researcher as an inquirer examines the experiences of the participants and attempts to develop new meanings by discussing these experiences with the participants.

Consistent with Creswell (2007), Patton (2002) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have identified four components of qualitative research. First, qualitative research

incorporates the natural setting as the source of data and information: “The researcher attempts to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Qualitative inquiry allows theory to be inductively created from the researcher’s interviews and observations in a real world setting rather than the laboratory. Second, the researcher is responsible for data collection through the use of a research instrument. In both quantitative and qualitative research validity depends on the research instrument. Caution must be used to ensure that the research instrument is constructed to measure what it is supposed to be measuring and administered consistently: “The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork” (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Third, qualitative researchers use methods that allow for flexibility and ability to build on implied knowledge (Patton, 2002). Fieldwork is approached with an open mind and without being constrained by predetermined responses. Qualitative research allows the researcher to dig deeper into each person’s experience.

Lastly, qualitative research generates a wealth and depth of detailed information about a limited number of people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). During interviews participants are encouraged to tell their own stories reflecting on their day-to-day experiences: “Direct quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative inquiry, revealing respondents’ depth of emotion, the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions” (Patton, 2002, p. 21).

Patton (2002) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) also identify several limitations of qualitative research. For example, some politicians and hard scientists display resistance to some qualitative studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) because they are not generalizable to a wider population. They often view qualitative research as irrational, tentative, and subjective. In addition, these individuals refer to the researchers as journalists or soft scientists and this research as criticism rather than theory. For Patton (2002) qualitative research reduces generalizability from data generated from quantitative research that can be compared and easily aggregated to produce a broad, generalizable set of findings. Qualitative research generates a

wealth of detailed information on a smaller number of cases and “This increases the depth of understanding of the cases and situations studied but reduces the generalizability” (p.14).

Qualitative researchers strive to make sense or provide order of the stories they hear from participants and how they intersect (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Using a qualitative research approach for this study allowed me to examine CAs’ experiences in curriculum implementation, and the challenges they face by engaging participants in their natural settings. Therefore, I was able to observe how participants make sense of curriculum advisory and the challenges that impact these activities.

3.4 Research design

A case study was carried out at the Capricorn district office of the DoE. According to Yin (2009), a case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomena. The case study has been a common research method used in education, psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, social work, business, nursing, and community planning (Creswell, 2007). In all of these situations, the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social events. The case study method allows researchers to retain the meaningful characteristics of actual events. Yin (2009, p. 18) also relates that a “case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

A case study involves organizing data for an in-depth study and comparison. Case studies can be about critical incidents, stages in the life of a person or program, or anything that can be defined as a “specific, unique, bound system” (Stake, 2000, p.436).

The case study approach in qualitative research creates a specific way of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data (Yin, 2003). The purpose is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about a case of interest. Thematic analysis of

the data is then used to determine patterns or themes (Boyatzis, 1998). The case study takes the reader into the case situation and experience of the person, group, or program being examined. Each case study allows the reader to understand the case as a unique, holistic entity (Hartley, 2004).

Yin (2009) describes three main categories of case studies: explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive. This qualitative research study is an exploratory case study. According to him (Yin, 2009) an exploratory case study can answer the "what" questions: "This type of question is a justifiable rationale for conducting an exploratory study, the goal being to develop a pertinent hypothesis and propositions for further inquiry" (p. 6). The outcome of this study was to contribute to the theories on curriculum leadership and the challenges that impact these activities. Although the case study is a distinctive form of inquiry, many researchers are critical of the case study strategy (Yin, 2009). In other words, case studies are viewed as a less desirable form of inquiry than either experiments or surveys. One of the strongest concerns raised about case studies is the lack of rigor associated with it (Yin, 2009; Bitsch, 2005). For example, the case study researcher may have been sloppy or has not followed systematic procedures, and thus reducing the credibility of case studies as a method of inquiry.

Another common concern about case studies is that they provide little opportunity to generalize their findings to other people or settings (Bitsch, 2005). However, the purpose of a case study is not to generalize to other populations but rather to expand and add to theoretical propositions. A third frequent complaint about case studies is that they take too long to complete, and they result in large unreadable documents (Guba and Lincoln). This complaint may have a historical bias given the way that case studies were completed in the past, but this is not necessarily the way case studies will be done in the future (Creswell, 2009).

Despite the fact that these concerns about case studies can be alleviated, case studies are difficult to complete and must be approached and implemented with careful consideration and caution. However, the essence of a case study is to illuminate the real-life and complex social phenomena of an individual, group, or organization. Therefore case studies are to be valued as contributors to our

knowledge base and not simply as alternatives to experimental designs (Cook & Payne, 2002).

3.4.1 Exploratory Case Study Method

Qualitative research according to Patton (2002) is a varied field with a variety of approaches and methods. Patton (2002) describes three types of qualitative data gathering methods: interviews, observations, and document reviews. For this study interviews, observations and document reviews were used. Ten CAs from one district in the Limpopo Province were interviewed. The interviews explored and probed the diversity of curriculum support elements practices provided to teachers. Insights were also gained into the challenges that impacted their curriculum support practices.

The examination and analysis of District Curriculum Operational Plan (DCOP) and CAs annual work plans further defined the district's expectations of individual CAs. These plans also described the goals of the CAs as well as the strategies to be implemented to accomplish these objectives. These documents identified areas of strength and concern for the district, and held CAs accountable to strive for improvement. Delving deeply into how CAs go about their work as curriculum leaders, why they choose certain activities in which to become engaged, and what challenges are evident is critical to further developing the understanding of the roles they play in supporting schools. The distinctive need to understand this complex social phenomenon lends itself to exploratory case study design.

Case study research is an inquiry method that has multiple definitions and understandings. Davey (1991, p.1) defines a case study as a "systematic way of looking at what is happening, collecting data, analyzing information and reporting the results." On the other hand, Neuman (2003) describes a case study as the intensive investigation of a limited set of cases focusing on a limited number of factors. For Merriam (1998, p. 19): ". . .case studies are differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system such as an individual, program, event, group, intervention, or community."

According to Yin (2009, p. 4), case studies allow researchers to retain the “holistic and meaningful characteristics” of real-life events. Yin further describes a case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). Therefore, I chose to use an exploratory case study approach because of the desire to examine and understand a real-life phenomenon in depth. However, such an in-depth understanding of a real-life phenomenon also incorporates significant contextual conditions because these conditions are highly relevant to the phenomenon of study.

Design for case study research must specify the unit or units of analysis to be studied (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). The unit of analysis can vary from an individual to a multinational company and the primary focus of data collection is on what is happening to that individual or group in a setting. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis was ten CAs who were involved with curriculum support on teachers at schools. Yin (2009, p. 18) also promoted that a case study is a method of inquiry that:

- “copes with a technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result;
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result; and
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.”

As described by Yin, a case study research comprises a comprehensive method that addresses the logic of design, data collection practices and detailed approaches to data analysis. Exploratory case studies strive towards an all-inclusive understanding of related activities performed by participants in a social situation. Case studies always have boundaries and cases must be carefully selected in order to gather the necessary information in the allotted time to complete the study (Patton, 2002). This particular exploratory case study involved ten CAs in a better performing district. The social situation for this study was the day-to-day practices of the CAs as they carried out their duties as advisory leaders.

3.5 Population

The district selected for this study had 8 clusters, 32 circuits and 941 schools (574 primary and 367 secondary). This district employs approximately 120 CAs in total. CAs were located at the district and circuits.

3.6 Sampling

According to Merriam (1998, p.8), “sample selection in qualitative research is usually (but not always) nonrandom, purposeful, and small, as opposed to the larger, more random sampling of quantitative research.” The participants for this study were purposefully selected and consisted of ten CAs from one district office in Limpopo Province. For this study, CAs needed to be located at the district level, have at least circuits or schools assigned to them to support. The sample size was adequate to support the purpose of this study which was to contribute to the knowledge of how district office CAs support teachers to implement curriculum policy requirements in Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province.

In Patton’s (2002) view, there are no rules for sample size. It depends on what it is the researcher wants to know and what will be useful and possible within the time and money allocated for the study. Purposeful sampling of this type does not allow the findings to be generalized back to other populations. Therefore the sample size just needs to support the purpose of the study which is unlike probability sampling that needs a sample large enough to generalize from the sample to the population of which it is a part. The criteria used to select the district for this study was better learner achievement on year end examinations in the province. Once the district was identified, I contacted the education provincial department by letter, explained the title of this study, and asked permission to conduct this research in their district. I also fully complied with the department’s research permission and approval processes strictly. All interviews were held at the district’s office.

3.7 Data Collection

Using a combination of data collection methods to obtain information provided a comprehensive perspective with regards to this exploratory case study (Patton, 2002). This study was a qualitative case study with three data sources used (interviews, observations and document reviews). The primary method of data

collection was interviews. Observations and document reviews served as secondary methods. Data collection occurred over a two month period.

The strength of using an exploratory case study method was the opportunity to utilize a variety of sources of information (Yin, 2009). The use of multiple sources of evidence in this study allowed the opportunity to examine a broad range of individuals and documents leading to “converging lines of inquiry.” By accessing and examining different sources of data from participants and documents in this district, the aim was to provide corroborating evidence of the practice of curriculum support. Data triangulation is the process of using a variety of methods to “illuminate an inquiry question” (Patton, 2002, p. 248). Data triangulation also reduces the potential problem of construct validity as multiple sources of evidence “essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon” (p. 117). However, with the use of triangulation comes a greater burden for the researcher. For example, the collection of data from multiple sources is more time consuming than if data were only collected from a single source (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). And lastly, through the use of triangulation the researcher also needed to be skilled in multiple methods of data collection and analysis.

3.7.1 Interviews

Participants selected for the interviews were first contacted by an individual physically at their workplace or phone request and this was followed up with a letter of consent (Appendix C). The ten CAs from the same district were interviewed. The purpose of interviewing according to Patton (2002) is to allow the researcher to learn about the other person’s perspective: “Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. “We interview people to find out what is in their minds and gather their stories.” (p. 341). Fontana and Frey (2005) regard interviews as a source of information that one assumes is a true and an accurate picture of the participants’ lives.

Glesne (2011) describes many of the complexities associated with collection of interview data in qualitative research. She cites that interviewing participants “is a human interaction with all of its attendant uncertainties” (p. 67). It requires careful

attention to the development of probative questions that balance focus on the research topic with the flexibility to pursue conceptual tangents that may ultimately prove meaningful to the study. At the same time, it also requires attention to the setting of the interview and attributes of the interviewer in order to establish rapport with participants and facilitate the meaningful exchange of information, perspectives, and experiences (Oelofse, 2011). For those reasons, a written interview schedule (Appendix B) was developed to guide interviews conducted throughout this study.

The development and use of a written interview schedule is widely supported in qualitative research methodology (Creswell, 2007, 2008; Glesne, 2011). The schedule commonly includes "instructions for the process of the interview, the questions to be asked, and space to take notes of responses from the interviewee" (Creswell, 2008, p. 233). Consistent with common standards, it included a core set of questions to guide the interview and space to record field notes (Creswell, 2008).

Each participant was interviewed face-to-face. During the interviews, CAs had an opportunity to reflect on their practices as they carried out their duties. Length of interviews varied depending on the conversational level of the informant. As Patton (2002) suggests that we can never fully understand the experience of another individual and we need to be cognizant of the time and effort needed to gain the necessary understanding for the study. Semi-structured interviews in which a fixed set of questions (Appendix B) were utilized. A semi-structured interview is a process where the interviewer has established a set of questions beforehand, but intends the interview to be conversational (Yin, 2009). This structure, as well as the opportunity to delve into topics as they arose during the interview, allowed the flexibility to probe for further details. A semi-structured interview format was deemed advantageous because it was conducted with an open framework which allowed for focused, two-way communication. Probing questions such as the following were asked to drill deeper into the participant's responses: Can you give me an example? Can you tell me more about that?

The first five minutes of each interview provided an opportunity to talk socially with the participant. This was seen as a way to begin developing rapport with each participant. I informed each participant that there were no correct or incorrect

answers to the questions. I also encouraged CAs to regard the interview as a conversation. I ended each interview by letting the participants know how imperative they were to this study and thanking each of them. Interviews were recorded digitally so data could be transcribed for analyses. I listened to the recordings as the transcripts were reviewed to ensure the meaning had not been lost in the translation to text.

I took field notes during the interviews sessions. While interviewing, it was important to remain cognisant of Yin's (2009) emphasis on the importance of the researcher's skills and attributes. Yin claims that a researcher must possess the ability to "question, to listen, to adapt, to possess a firm grasp of the issues and to maintain a lack of bias before gathering the data." When interviewing the CAs, the intent was to emphasize the empathic neutrality stance (Patton, 2002). It was important for me to be interested and caring in the people being studied while remaining neutral about the information that was being shared. While participants were being interviewed it was important for me not to make any comments about what the participants were saying. However, where necessary, I asked participants some follow-up and probing questions that were important to further understand or clarify point made.

3.7.2 Observations

In the case of observations, the research coincided with support meetings hosted by the district department. This method worked well as it presented actual experience with the phenomenon of support meetings like it has been suggested by Merriam and Associates (2000). It was during these support meetings were the observation method was used as a secondary source of data collection. Patton (1990) in Hoepfl (1997) revealed that observations provoke knowledge of the content in which events occur, and enable the researcher to see things that may be unnoticed from the participants.

The criteria for observation were based on the availability of the support meetings. These meetings are hosted by the district office and only takes place once in a while. Noticeably, a number of support meetings appear on the CAs work plans but they are unable to host most them due to several constraints. The purpose of observations was to confirm trends which came out during interviews.

3.7.3 Document reviews

The document reviews consisted of reviewing the DCOP and the CAs' annual work plans. These documents were analyzed to support what the participants said was occurring within the district and schools. These plans also described the goals of the district and CAs as well as the strategies to be implemented to accomplish these objectives.

There are several advantages to utilizing document reviews as part of this study. In examining school district and school documents I was able to "uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (Merriam, 1998, p. 133). The district and CAs documents were readily available in the office of the Chief Education Specialist (CES). As a result, I was able to gather this data in a way that was inconspicuous to participants.

Although there are definitive advantages to a thorough document reviews, limitations were also evident and had to be considered. For example, Yin (2009) has indicated that while documents are useful, bias is a potential factor to consider. Yin (2009) pointed out that bias of the person developing the documents must be recognized and considered and "not be accepted as literal recordings of events that have taken place" (p. 103).

3.8 Data Analysis

According to Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin (1993) case study research creates a great wealth of data. This was evident for the research completed for this study. Files were prepared in order to assist with the sorting, categorizing, and retrieving data for analysis. As Patton (2002, p. 440) stated, this was required to "get a sense of the whole." Therefore, it was imperative to ensure that, as thoroughly as possible, all data was labeled correctly and all interview transcripts were complete.

As noted by Patton (2002) verbatim transcripts are critical for qualitative analyses. Patton further explained that this is how we stay true to the material and ensure that the reader is hearing the interviewee's voice and not the researcher's voice. All recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and each transcript was labeled with the participant's pseudo name. Data analysis was based on an inductive approach

geared to identifying patterns in participants' responses. To recognize the patterns in the gathered data required the ability to place the data into meaningful categories and themes. To accomplish this, as Patton (2002) suggested, a content analysis was completed: "Content analyses, then, involves identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary pattern in the data" (p. 463). This analysis identified the overarching themes and patterns prevalent in the evidence.

Data analysis was conducted immediately after data collection. During data analysis, I identified themes from the perspective of the participants and sought to understand and explain these. To accomplish this, the following process was utilized: data from the interviews was transcribed as soon as the interviewer returned from conducting the interviews; after each interview was transcribed, I read the data, and input themes and concepts into "descriptive matrices" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 26). Themes emerging from the interviews and data gathered were described and detailed quotes from the interviews were included as supporting information; and themes gleaned from this research were compared and contrasted with the themes found in the literature.

According to Patton (2002) and Creswell (2009) qualitative analysis has no rule book. Creswell recommends beginning the analysis with a general review of all information. To accomplish this each transcript was immediately reviewed following each participant's interview. Specific themes and participant tone were noted at this time. At this point it became necessary for me to note key and recurring words. Patton (2002) described this as pattern recognition. Patterns are the mechanism that enables a large amount of data to be reduced into meaningful and manageable information. These patterns or themes are often called "core meanings" (p. 453).The collected data was further reduced by coding the key and recurring words. The final step in the data analysis was to review the coded key words and place them into themes. Patton (2002) referred to this step as classifying. Classification into themes allowed me to contrast and compare the data collected from participants. The data was now ready to interpret.

Data analysis was in accordance with the following steps that are recommended by O'Connor and Gibson (2003):

Step 1: organizing the data

To accomplish this, the following process was utilized: data from the interviews was transcribed as soon as the interviewer returned from conducting the interviews; after each interview was transcribed, I read the data, and input themes and concepts into “descriptive matrices” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 26).

Step 2: Finding and organizing ideas and concepts

When looking at the various responses for one particular question, I found specific words or ideas kept coming up. I made note of the different ideas as the different responses were read through. The ideas coming from these words and phrases were then organized into categories, themes and topics.

Step 3: Building themes in the data

From the categories, associated themes were developed.

Step 4: Ensuring reliability and validity in data analysis

I checked for consistency by taking pages of the transcripts. In addition, the main and sub-questions were always displayed so as to recap the focus of the study and prevent the analysis from straying.

Observations and document reviews as secondary methods of collecting data for this study also identified particular themes and patterns. These results were compared to the themes and patterns that emerged from the interviews. It was important to look for the consistencies and inconsistencies in the results. According to Patton (2002, p. 248), “different kinds of data may yield somewhat different results because different types of inquiry are sensitive to different real-world nuances.” An important exploratory case study element that was incorporated into this study was that data was collected from multiple sources. This aided in the development of “converging lines of inquiry”, that aimed to corroborate the same facts or phenomena (Yin, 2009). The use of multiple sources of evidence allowed the opportunity to examine a broad range of individuals and documents. This process of triangulation helped to address any issues of establishing credibility.

3.9 Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) trustworthiness contributes to the plausibility of the study. They argued that trustworthiness asks, “How can the inquirer persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (p. 290). Within an interpretivist paradigm the criteria for establishing trustworthiness, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), consists of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The components of trustworthiness were addressed in this research and contributed to establishing the plausibility of the study.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is concerned with techniques that contribute to trustworthy findings and interpretations being produced within an interpretivist paradigm. This study employed the practice of prolonged engagement and referential adequacy to address the contribution credibility brings to trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement refers to spending sufficient time to become oriented in the research situation. Familiarities with the context or research site, as well as focusing on the importance of building trust with the participants are characteristics of prolonged engagement. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have indicated that building trust with the participants is time-consuming yet essential. Establishing trust was aided by the fact that I was known to the participants as a teacher. This helped to minimize possible distortions that are sometimes difficult to overcome when trust has not been established between the researcher and the participants (Jackson, 1968).

Another procedure that I used, which helped to establish credibility, was the technique of referential adequacy. Electronically recording data allowed me the opportunity to establish a standard by which later data analyses and interpretations were checked for adequacy (Eisner, 1975, pp. 447-542). Testing for misinformation was an important consideration. To minimize the possibility of introducing misinformation by distortion (Bilmes, 1975), recorded in-depth interviews on audio-tape and transcriptions of the interviews were compared against the notes that I took during and after each interview. This allowed the opportunity to constantly check the data analyzes and interpretations with the original source in order to minimize the chances of inadequate interpretations of the data. During this process of checking

and constant comparison, care was taken to explore possible contradictions and misinterpretations.

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) interviewing, observation and document collection are important techniques in qualitative inquiry. These methods were used together in this study. The trustworthiness of the data is much solider when it has been collected through numerous data collection methods, that is, triangulation.

The data collected from the interviews was compared to data collected from observations and document reviews. Review of the documents provided me with a more complete picture of the curriculum support factors that were emphasized in this district. This triangulation of data contributed to the credibility of the data analysis (Patton, 2002). Triangulation with the data from the interviews, observations and document reviews determined consistencies and inconsistencies as it related to curriculum advisory. Patton (2002) encouraged researchers to focus on rigorous techniques of data collection and systematic analyses. Extreme care was taken when collecting and analyzing data and all procedures were well documented.

3.9.2 Transferability

Within an interpretivist paradigm, the notion of transferability is different from that understood within a positivist paradigm which relies on external validity.)Transferability, as described by Yin (2009, p. 40), is defined as “the domain to which a study’s findings can be generalized.” Critics of case study method often state that this approach offers a poor basis for generalizing. To ensure that transferability was achieved, the data from all participants was compared to Krug’s (1992) five-factor taxonomy of effective curriculum leadership. This procedure stipulated that data collected from participants was vetted through an external mechanism that examined the findings via an established criterion of curriculum leadership. According to Yin (2009, p. 40), transferability is defined as “demonstrating that the operation of a study such as the data collection procedures can be repeated, with the same results.” Therefore, a researcher aiming for transferability would write up their research in such a way that future researchers following the same procedures as described in this study should arrive at the same findings and conclusions. As a result, as many procedures as possible are described

in as much detail as possible so that future researchers can repeat this study and obtain the same results. Yin (2009, p. 36) stated that “the goal of transferability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study.” This was accomplished by ensuring that the procedures used were well documented and can be replicated numerous times with the same results each time.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is tested by the capacity of the reader to determine from the written account the point at which the various stages of analysis have occurred. An inquiry audit is one technique used to consider the dependability of a study. This technique can be used to authenticate the data analyses and interpretations. “The intention of an inquiry audit is to establish fair representation of the trustworthiness of the stages of analysis” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 317- 318).

“The auditor should see him or herself as acting on behalf of the general readership of the inquiry report, a readership that may not have the time or inclination (or accessibility to the data) to undertake a detailed assessment of trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 326).According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the inquiry auditor must be sufficiently sophisticated to act in the role. Sophistication can be determined by a substantiative understanding of the methodological area as well as substantiative knowledge in the area of inquiry. The transcripts of the interviews were presented to two academics that were very familiar with both the methodology of qualitative research and curriculum support. They were able to identify, from the data, categories that were virtually identical to those identified by me.

3.9.4 Confirmability

An inquiry audit can be used to simultaneously determine dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, experts in the field of curriculum support were consulted. In addition to acknowledging the dependability of the study they also confirmed the accuracy and fairness of the data analyses and interpretations. While absolute objectivity is impossible in any research (Bryman, 2001), the process of constant comparison, and journaling such as the memoing process that is integral to qualitative research were undertaken throughout the data

collection phase and assisted in avoiding personal values and judgments, or theoretical inclinations to overtly influence the research data.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In conducting qualitative research, it is vital that the researcher respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the participants (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 70) also cautioned that “because the objects of inquiry in interviewing are human beings, extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them.” The following safeguards were utilized to protect the participants: the research objectives were clearly articulated so that they were well understood by the participants; an opportunity was provided for participants to ask any clarifying questions that they might have; participants were informed of all data collection methods and procedures; participants’ rights, interests and wishes were considered first when choices were made regarding the reporting of the data; participants were asked to voluntarily participate in this study and they were informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time; and I guaranteed participants’ anonymity and maintained confidentiality.

The digitally taped interviews, field notes, and the transcriptions are maintained in strict confidence and held in a secure place. The anonymity of participants’ data and all other data has been protected through the use of pseudonyms when direct quotes are used in this study.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter began with a description of the study’s paradigm or world view. It then discussed the methodology followed and the research design used. An outline of how study participants were selected was provided. Data collection and analysis procedures were explained along with the strategies used to ensure trustworthiness. Ethical considerations of the study were also provided.

In explanation, the design of this study focused on one district in the Limpopo Province and attempted to answer the following research question: What is the role of CAs in supporting teachers to implement curriculum policies in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province? This qualitative inquiry involved ten CAs from the

same district. Data was collected through interviews, observations and document analysis. The following chapter, Chapter Four, discusses the findings of this study and establishes themes of participants' feedback.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how district office CAs support teachers to implement curriculum policies requirements in Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. The study specifically sought to develop an understanding of the kind of support they offer to teachers and to characterize challenges associated with their position. Furthermore, the ways of dealing with such challenges and suggestions were scrutinized. This study sought to answer three research questions:

- Which kind of support do CAs offer to schools?
- What are the challenges of the position of a CA?
- How do CAs deal with challenges in their practice?

This chapter presents detailed findings for each research question, summarized and labeled as a category. It is organized around research questions to ensure purposeful and specific treatment to each. Due to their density, findings for all research questions were further organized by themes that delineate major concepts evident in participants' descriptions of their experiences in their positions.

In addition to the interview data, observations (on support meetings) and documents (for example DCOP, CAs focused roles and annual work plans) were done to determine if any triangulation existed between participants' transcripts and them as mandated by the Capricorn district.

4.2 Categories, themes and topics

The following categories, themes and topics which had a bearing on how CAs support schools in the implementation of curriculum policies were identified through data analysis:

Categories	Themes	Topics
Support	**Training**	Briefing sessions Content knowledge workshops Recommend & Provide Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSMs) Doing actual teaching in class Teaching methodologies/approaches
	Monitoring	Visit to schools Adherence of policies (teaching plans, assessment policies and types & promotional) Checking examinations
	Moderation	Checking (approving/disapproving) teachers & learners work and files Continuous Assessment (CASS) tasks
	Setting tasks papers	Common Assessment Tasks (CATs)
	Enrichment Programmes	June catch-up programmes Community programmes
Challenges	**Overload due to shortage of CAs**	Lack of manpower
	Lack of resources	There are no adequate photocopying machines, printers, papers, updated computers and internet. Transport problems
	Political interference	Confusion brought by teacher unions and government
	Challenges from teachers	Unqualified and scarcity of teachers Changing of teachers teachers not conversant with content of the subject

Solutions and suggestions	**Teamwork**	Group teachers Visit schools in groups Using subject committees

In the following sections, each category, theme and topic will be discussed and augmented by examples (quotations) from the text of the interview transcriptions. In this chapter, the codes P1 to P10 were used to identify participants one to ten with whom I had interviews.

A special note concerning the use of quotations in this chapter seemed to be necessary. As could be expected from the participants who were required to conduct the interviews in their second or third language, the language usage and choice of words are, from a language perspective, not always perfect. Some of the participants would quote switch to their vernacular. As a result, some of the quotations used in this chapter to substantiate pronouncements, may contain grammatical errors. The respective messages the participants attempted to convey, are nevertheless clear. The standard practice in research reports is to point out these errors by inserting the Latin adjective, *sic*, directly after the error, the intention being to guarantee that the word or expression in the quoted passage has been quoted exactly, though its incorrectness or absurdity would suggest that it was not. However, after consultation with experts in this regard as well as with the supervisor of the study, it was decided not to use *sic*. The word *sic* would need to be inserted so many times that it would undoubtedly deform the quotations and distract the attention of the reader. In view of this decision, I have taken special care to ensure that quotations used in this chapter, are an accurate reflection of the verbatim transcriptions which were made of the interviews.

4.3 The kind of support Curriculum Advisors offer to teachers

In this study, CAs appeared to be giving teachers support in various ways. Those ways are as follows:

4.3.1 Training of teachers

This study revealed that all CAs interviewed regarded training of teachers as one of their main roles and should be ongoing. Training was mainly held in forms of briefing/support meetings and workshops. P7 remarked that *"mostly, we actually, the first thing is to call them for a briefing session"*. As noted by most participants, I also observed that these briefing sessions are normally held in the beginning of the year. CAs would send a notification to teachers and also draft an agenda. In these

meetings, CAs, inter alia, make a review of the past academic year's results in their subjects, supply teachers with new information for the current academic year, for example, new policies and expectations and listen to teachers' concerns and challenges. These appeared to be helping CAs and teachers to plan the target of results for the academic year together. As well, it appeared as if through the undertakings done in briefing/support meetings, CAs were more flexible with teachers when discharging their advisory duties to reduce unnecessary building up of anxiety. They also seemed to be encouraging teachers to be less secretive to them and be ready to show willingness to accept mistakes where necessary in order for teaching and learning to continue to thrive.

CAs also provided training through workshops. P1 mentioned that *"in some cases you will find that there are general problems with regards to content, that's where the CA will organize some workshops or some training to meet them halfway."* These workshops seemed to be differentiated. They focused on content gaps, that is, difficult topics and new topics (P1, P6, P7 & P10). It is alleged and appeared to be known that there are certain topics that teachers find challenging and may decide not to teach them. P6 explained that *"you find that educators have got some tendency of eh… brushing aside or shelving some difficult topics."* This is also emphasized by P9. He highlighted that *"you can actually get to the school if it's possible, the time permits, you can even give on-site small workshop, if the teacher says I don't understand genetics."* During this operation, CAs may go to class and teach while the teacher is observing. This way of demonstration served as a mode of imparting teachers with the teaching methodologies they may adopt for effective teaching to flourish.

They also trained teachers on implementing the new curriculum (P7). When CAPS (Curriculum Assessment Policies Statements) was established, CAs had a job to train teachers on implementing it over three years as follows: January 2012: grades 1 to 3, and grade 10, January 2013: grades 4 to 6, and grade 11 and January 2014: grades 7 to 9, and grade 12. I observed that their primary duty was to disseminate CAPS and train teachers on greater specification of content, teaching methods, assessment and moderation. This appeared to be the only workshop which took

some days (P7 & P9). CAs felt that it was not given days it deserved and therefore was ineffective. P7 mentioned that:

> *"I can just indicate that we only have one workshop per annum, a serious one. The one that we have conducted in January because it's CAPS which is a new thing. It's an improvement of NCS. So, we only had that one for three days which was catered for. Apart from that, there is no formal serious workshop up until the end of the year."*

It was also believed that it was difficult for a CA to call a workshop during the course of the year because of, inter alia, inadequate and improper time to organize it, lack of resources and political interference. They were not able to organize workshops during the course of the year because they were always busy with moderation. In addition, funds are not provided to run teacher workshops. The government and teacher unions' mandates add to their confusions. The government does not want them to run workshops during schools hours whilst teacher unions don't permit them to hold teachers after school hours or during weekends. As P7 remarked:

> *"Apart from that, there is no formal serious workshop up until the end of the year. There are no funds, number one. Number two, you call them after 12 o'clock, unions are fighting. Teachers mustn't go there because they want to be workshopped early in the morning."*

This left CAs marooned. Despite these hiccups, CAs perceived workshops as a way of offering teachers necessary training and guidance.

This role seemed to be consistent with the roles stipulated in the district's CAs' roles document. The review of the DCOP specified the district's performance indicators as well as the 2014/2015 annual target on training teachers. With regard to training, 3680 teachers would be trained in CAPS, subject content and methodology in schools. The findings in this research discovered that this target would be carried out by CAs. They were expected to support teachers in strengthening their content knowledge in their subjects.

4.3.2 Monitoring

All CAs shared the same feeling in this regard. They perceive this role as fundamental in supporting teachers. The department requires CAs to support all schools in a year. This seemed impractical from their point of view. Understaffing, travelling long distances and other obligations made it impossible. As a result, CAs had to design criteria to use when supporting schools. It is called “focused support” (P10). It was agreed that the focus will be on underperforming and high enrolment schools. P6 confirmed this by saying:

> “*Okay. Well, let me give this practical scenario. Eh… right at the beginning of the year, we get results. The grade 12 results. In January, they will be announcing results. Immediately after that, we are going to get the results. You sit down and analyze them looking at the performance of the schools in the district in that particular circuit. Then I will go for those schools that are underperforming*.”

This was confirmed by all the CAs and consistent with roles of CAs as stipulated in the district’s document. Precisely, P7 assured that:

> *“We have targets. We have poor performance schools. We have big enrolment schools. Even if they are performing but we focus on them because if learners fail, in such schools, they pull down the results. So, we normally go to such schools.”*

This study established that monitoring through school visits in Capricorn district seemed to be determined by results and therefore more directed to two concerns, that is, high enrolment and underperforming schools. This was noticeable from the review of the DCOP. The District’s 2014/2015 annual target on the pass numbers was envisaged at 20223, the pass percentage at 80% and 5000 learners obtaining bachelor passes in NSC. Schools that are performing and have a low enrolment rate were unlikely to be visited. As P10 accentuated that, *“schools which are doing well, why waste time? Why take coal to Witbank?”* This appeared to be contrary to the document designed at the district focusing the roles of CAs in terms of support. It required CAs in the district to visit all schools. Schools that performed under 30%

were supposed to be visited and supported at least three times per term, schools that performed under 60% were supposed to be visited and supported at least two times per term and all other schools at least once per annum. P10 further confirmed that these visits were results focused:

> "*So, we need to start now talking about quality. So, at the moment we are only addressing the quantity, that, a school must pass learners, because of this shortage. Our take was to go beyond that. And start addressing the issue of quality."*

The pivotal function during these schools visits included checking adherence of policies (teaching plans, assessment: informal and formal including final examinations) which CAs would have supplied teachers with (P3, P9) to make sure that teachers implement policies as envisaged by the department. This could help in improving results. Other roles emerging from monitoring outlined in this study was recommending and providing LTSMs (P9).

4.3.3 Moderation

Nine participants explained moderation as one of the approaches they use to support teachers. I observed the purpose of CAs moderation as to check the consistency of teachers' judgments after they have made their assessments and to identify and resolve any differences. Moderation was done quarterly. This was consistent with the DCOP. It stated that 368 secondary schools SBA (School Based Assessment) portfolio files should be moderated, computerized mark sheets and promotional schedules verified. These would be done by CAs. P7 observed that:

> *"CASS moderation takes 80% of our time because we do it each and every quarter. We do it thrice. And if I'm faced with close to 150 files, then when do I finish? And that one is compulsory. We make sure that we moderate each and every teacher. So, that's where most of our time is spent."*

Moderation appeared to be time consuming because of the amount of files needed to be checked by CAs every quarter. During moderation, CAs further checked teachers' compliance on assessment policies, that is, tasks given, marking and

recording. Moderation brought some effects. P4 explicated that *"there are times when you do moderation. You can't go and visit schools"*. Moderation delayed schools visits.

4.3.4 Setting tasks papers

P6 explained that *"again, as an intervention strategy, we normally set midyear examination for the educators."* CAs seemed to be doing roles that are not theirs. The issue of setting tasks seemed to be meant for teachers. P6 further highlighted that *"in principle it's not a core function of the CA to set SBA tasks, those tests and the midyear examination".* CAs executed this task because teachers had some challenges in terms of setting papers (P6). This could be seen as one of the things that defocus and delay CAs in doing their actual work. These assertions seemed to be contracting the DCOP. The DCOP specified that 306 CATs for FET subjects should be developed and administered. CAs would implement these tasks. I also observed that CAs would set question papers and memoranda, and send them to schools via CDs (Compact Discs) and emails.

4.3.5 Enrichment programmes

CAs also supported teachers through the coordination and facilitation of enrichment programmes. These programmes seemed to be a plethora of them. P10 indicated that *"we have got a lot of enrichment programmes, CAs will coordinate and facilitate."* According to CAs, enrichment classes may be from the DoE, for example, winter enrichment programmes for Grade 12 learners and community enrichment programmes where teachers were supposed to workshop the community, for example, on environmental issues like using roads (P7 & P10). Thus, these programmes normally come differently in various subjects (P7). Sometimes these programmes had a sponsor outside the DoE (P10). As a result, CAs as specialists in curriculum would coordinate and assist such programmes for teachers to execute them successfully. The district's annual target of number of schools participating in enrichment programmes at circuit and district level was envisaged at 368 in the FET band.

4.4 Challenges faced by Curriculum Advisors

CAs revealed a number of challenges which hinders them from executing their daily duties successfully.

4.4.1 Overload due to shortage of Curriculum Advisors

Nine participants in this study complained about overload in their district. P5 explained that:

> *"Presently, I'm over extra overloaded because I'm supporting two subjects. These subjects, one is Economics, which is having 300 schools in the district and Business Studies which is having 269 schools. All in all, there are 569 schools that I'm supposed to support in the district, which is abnormal. You won't expect… even if I promise you that this year eh… economics is going to have 80% whereas I don't support even 20% of the 300."*

P5 seemed to believe that his lack of support to all schools due to overload could impact the results target undesirably.

Other CAs also mentioned the number of schools they were required to support in the district. P2 explained that she was expected to support "five circuits". P4 showed that:

> *"Challenge number one is workload. I am handling 56 schools alone. More than 70 teachers and on top of that I received extra four schools away from the workstation. So, the scope is very wide.*"

He was of the view that due to this *"you are not able to visit all the schools in a year"* because there were other things to do apart from visiting schools, for example, moderation. Correspondingly, P7 explained further that *"because here at the district we are managing. We write reports. We do quite a number of things that will take us away from schools or take us away from supporting schools."*

The study's participants implicated that overload was as a result of shortage of CAs (P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 & P10). P5 indicated that:

"We don't have enough manpower. We don't have enough CAs who can support all our schools. And within a year there are certain months that are designed for examinations, certain months for monitoring, for doing SBA moderation. Most of the time we also do admin work."

Shortage of manpower made it difficult for CAs to support all schools. From the field notes I took from P6, shortage of CAs was as a result of no replacement by the Limpopo Province Department of Education (LPDE) of retired and deceased CAs. The vacancies left by these CAs were not filled and therefore made it worse and impossible for CAs to support the number of schools given.

4.4.2 Lack of resources

This study revealed that CAs did not have adequate resources to do their work. Shortage and dysfunctional photocopier machines, printers, papers, outdated computers and poor internet made it difficult for CAs perform their roles effectively. All participants in this study indicated a challenge associated with photocopying machines. P6 stated that:

"With resources, as I'm talking now, we need to photocopy that side. The machines are down. It is going to take time to fix those machines." This indication was confirmed by P8. She showed that *"the other challenge is that, we don't have physical resources like photocopying. It is a big challenge."*

P4 further affirmed that *"where I'm working we have got five circuits. There is no single photocopy for all the five circuits, you can't work."* Shortage and dysfunctional photocopier machines appeared to be a serial nuisance to CAs. This made their work more difficult (P4).

In addition, from the field notes, P9 explained he was using his own printer as the ones from the department were dysfunctional and outdated. This appeared similar to P4. He claimed that:

"So, we don't have a printer where I work. If I have to print, I have to use my own printer. I have to use my own laptop, just to keep the ball rolling." P3 alleged that *"sometimes there are no papers. So, we just improvise." P5*

revealed that "I don't know when did I see a new printer or a new toner. It is around three or four years back. Most of the materials here we use our own money. We just sacrifice."

P2 demanded the department to provide CAs with *"updated computers not old stuff, updated stuff and we will be the happiest."* From this study, I discovered that lack of fundamental resources appeared to be a principal challenge for CAs.

The other challenge on resources which CAs complained of was transport. The main concern for most CAs was the way it was being managed. Transport in the district was organized and subsidized according to "Schemes". CAs were required to choose one transport scheme. Nine participants chose what is called "Scheme B". P7 explained that in Scheme B *"I just use my car, any car. I just register it and go to schools and they will pay petrol depending on the capacity of the car."* Despite its opportuneness as CAs would be using their cars and claim money for petrol, this scheme appeared complex. The department did not pay CAs claims on time. P3 clarified that *"you find that as of now we have just been paid claims for December, the whole of January up to now we haven't got. Some of us we haven't got the money for fuels. That's the problem."* She further explained that the delay in payments of claims would even stretch to about "five months". This was found to be demotivating (P4).

Furthermore, in such delays, CAs were still expected to do their routine work exceptionally. This meant that they should use their own monies to pay fuel (P4). P3 asserted that one could not stay in the office and say they did not pay me, because by the end of the month the department wanted the report on how many schools did a CA support and that is the key job to them.

In another form, P9 used "Scheme A". He explained that in Scheme A, a CA used a government car and would apply for a new one after every four years. Similar to Scheme B, the department still delayed when he was applying for a new one. He stated that *"it's a working tool and I applied in 2009 for a second one. This is 2014. This car is ten years old."* With such an "old car", he was expected to drive long distances to go and support schools. He further explained that he always felt that

every time he was driving it, he was not sure if it will complete his expeditions. The delaying concern was also heard from P1. She remarked that:

> *"Eh… the subsidized car you will have to wait. Some of us have waited for almost 5 years now without having a car. Now, you use your own car and come and claim. Now, when your own car is broken, it means you will have to ask some of the colleagues to take you along, which is not possible."*

It appeared impossible since different schools needed different support in different subjects (P9). The way transport was being managed by the district posed a variety of challenges to different CAs.

4.4.3 Political interference

Two participants felt that teacher unions distract their operations at times (P6 & P7). P6 remarked that:

> *"The other challenges that we find at schools can be if there is a situation of the social partners, the unions. If they can come up with the story of work to rule or we disengage, that is a having a serious impact on the learner performance. Because time lost is time wasted. There is no way you can talk of catch ups, but I'm telling you it is really causing serious harm to our schools and to the performance of our learners."*

She perceived this interruption as a time waster. During such incidents, teaching and learning process were impacted severely.

In addition, when it comes to arranging meetings with teachers, CAs seemed to encounter problems. They wondered in a dilemma. P7 explained that *"we don't have time again to call them for workshops. Because there is this problem between the department and the unions."* The problem detailed by P7 was that the government wanted CAs to call teacher meetings after working hours since during working hours they would be disturbing the teaching and learning process. Antagonistic to the department's order to CAs was teachers unions' directive to their teachers. Unions would not allow their teachers to attend CAs meetings after working hours since they

would not be compensated. They seemed to be of the view that such meetings are part of teachers' work and therefore must be held during working hours. This kind of conflict between government and unions left CAs stranded. As P7 remarked *"so, we are caught up in the middle. We don't know what to do, where to go."*

4.4.4 Challenges from teachers

4.4.4.1 Unqualified and scarcity of teachers

CAs complained about teachers offering subjects they were not qualified in. P3 remarked *that "our main one among others is this one of appointment of new educators where Life Orientation as an internal subject will be given to any teacher."* Teachers were also changed every year (P2 & P10). CAs trained different teachers' year in and year out. They believed this prevented teacher continuity and empowerment, and made their duty more challenged.

P5 alleged that this happened because teachers are no longer studying further. He remarked that:

> *"…as you know that most of our teachers are no longer reading further. They are no longer studying. Most of them when they go for studying, you may find that when we are having a teacher who is teaching Accounting and Economics but only to find that he has registered management with UNISA or ABET. Something that is different from what he is teaching. That is the problem."*

As a result, such teachers are not conversant with the content of the subjects they are offering at school (P6). Ignorance and resistance to change were also some of the few challenges teachers posed to CAs. In certain schools, CAs found that teachers were not implementing the new policies. As P7 stated, *"there are topics that are in the policy document which is called CAPS in each and every subject, but you go to schools, teachers are not following that."* This did not go well with CAs since teachers were trained on it. Some teachers were found to be ignorant to new policies since they are not interested (P5 & P7). They were understood to prefer "Bantu Education" style of teaching. This affected learners negatively since CAs set CATs

based on the current assessment policies. Learners with such teachers were likely to fail (P7). CAs somehow felt that teachers were not held accountable for that.

CAs in scarce skill subjects were also faced with shortage of teachers. P10 confirmed this when he stated that:

> *"There are no teachers in scarce skill subjects. You talking about your commerce, you are talking about your maths and science. So, they find that there is no one to workshop. Learners are without educators."*

As a result, CAs with the overloads they are carrying may even go an extra mile to go to class and assist such schools. This is not encouraged since it may create a wrong impression to other stakeholders (P10).

4.5 Solutions and suggestions from Curriculum Advisors

4.5.1 Solutions

Most CAs seemed to have minor strategies they used to alleviate the challenges they were faced with. Below, strategies which CAs used are discussed.

4.5.1.1 Teamwork

Some CAs relied on teamwork amongst themselves in response to their shortage (P2 & P3). They clustered nearby schools and visit them in groups. P3 indicated that *"the ways that we are using to deal with them, sometimes we just do teamwork as CAs."* This is seen as an effective way of supporting as many schools as they can at once. From the chat with P9, individual school support seemed to be taking time because of the dearth of CAs and most schools were left unvisited and unsupported for years.

As a result of the dire dearth of CAs in the district, most CAs team up with knowledgeable teachers in supporting schools. P9 remarked that:

> *"We are making use of teachers. Can you believe it? There are teachers who are having agric qualifications, some don't even have. But when we go for national training, we go with teachers. CAPS, we go with teachers. We identify three or four teachers. We go for training with them. Eh, when we*

come back and do CAPS training, don't think when I say the role of a CA is CAPS training I'm doing it alone, no, I'm doing it with teachers. And then we share topics, and we do it and for them they are not even paid."

CAs relied on this strategy when training teachers but other roles remained challenged as teachers are not meant to be their own advisors.

4.5.1.2 Sacrifice

Since most issues that are tabled as challenges by CAs took time to be addressed, some participants in this study showed that they sometimes sacrifice their finances on resources (P2, P4, P5 & P9). They did this to make their work easier. P4 explained that *"sometimes you have to dig deep into your pocket for things to happen. Because if you wait for government, things will not happen and people won't say it's because of government."* Laying emphasis on the issue of sacrifice, P9 also highlighted that sometimes he had to sacrifice and pay petrol for teachers who helped in training teachers during the implementation of CAPS. P5 further emphasized that *"most of the materials here we use our own money. We just sacrifice."*

4.5.2 Suggestions

There seemed to be no direct personal solutions to most of the CAs challenges. Most challenges are beyond their control. Thus, they provided the following suggestions to their employer, that is, the DoE:

4.5.2.1 Employ more Curriculum Advisors

All participants suggested that the DoE in the district should hire more CAs. P5 remarked that:

"They must increase the number of subject advisors. Each and every circuit must have a subject advisor for a specific subject. Not in the situation that we are in, where you find that one CA is responsible for a cluster which is having almost around eh… 70 to 80 schools."

This was further unfolded by P10. He explained that:

"The numbers, we've got a very serious shortage of CAs. Because in an ideal situation, each circuit must have nine CAs, you see. It means each circuit must have a CA for a particular subject. And that is not the case. We have circuits without CAs. Therefore, the challenge is that our CAs are supposed to work across the district, across the circuits. They work across. And then, it is a very tiring exercise."

P2 also remarked that *"And the department let it eh… increase man power so that the whole district can be taken out of this pit."* Out of these observations, CAs claimed that if the department hired more CAs, the shortage issue would be resolved.

4.5.2.2 Budget

All CAs exposed somehow issues relevant to poor budget management by the department, for example, lack of resources. They suggested that the department should provide all CAs with contemporary and updated resources. P1 remarked that:

"… and then all the laptops in case he want to download notes to that particular teacher, in terms of internet access whenever they want to download some of the things that are needed. I think that will so count. Up to now it's only a telephone."

P2 shared the same sentiment with P1. She was of the view that if the department provided them with photocopying machines, updated computers and laptops regardless of the subject, they would be the happiest.

P5 alleged that *"the major thing is that we are having challenges of budget. If we can have enough money, at least we can have two workshops, three weeks content."* The provision of enough budgets was envisioned by P5 to be a permit for CAs to be able to host several content enrichment workshops. All participants also insisted that for things to run more smoothly in the curriculum division of the district, the department must reimburse transport claims in time. P5 was of the view that the budget should be cascaded from the province to the district to clusters or even to

individual CAs. CAs viewed proper budgeting of funds by the department as something that would make their job more effective.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the research. The purpose was to explore how district office CAs support schools to implement curriculum policies requirements. The categories, themes and topics extracted from the study were presented.Observations of support meetings also confirmed the study's issues and trends which assisted in understanding the envisaged and actual operation of this district. The analysis of the district's one year curriculum plan and CAs focused roles assisted in supporting what most of the participants voiced.

The following chapter, chapter five, provides a discussion, conclusions and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I summarized the findings from this study in an attempt to address the primary question of this study. The findings presented in Chapter Four will be discussed by addressing the three categories that funneled this study. These findings specifically describe how CAs supported teachers and schools; whether there were any challenges to curriculum support for these individuals; and what strategies and suggestions were/might be used to overcome any challenges to curriculum advisory. The discussions of the findings provide a link between the findings in Chapter Four and the literature reviewed on the position of CA in order to provide a clear understanding during discussions. Conclusions on the study are also drawn. Recommendations are directed to policy-makers and government. This chapter also presents implications for future study.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This study focused on CAs' curriculum support practices in teaching as perceived by themselves in their school district. However, more notably this study further scrutinized the challenges to curriculum advisory as recognized by CAs in their practice. Lastly, strategies used by the CAs to overcome these challenges were outlined.

The overarching research question for this study was: What is the role of CAs in supporting teachers to implement curriculum policies in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province? Overall, this study contributed to the knowledge of curriculum advisory, also more in detail, it described what challenges impeded the ability of CAs to engage in effective curriculum support practices and the approaches used to prevail over these impediments. The findings of this study indicated that CAs were aware of the kind of support they offer to teachers and also found that there were significant challenges for CAs. These challenges significantly limited the amount of time and energy that could be directed towards curriculum support.

As explained in Chapter 3, this exploratory case study employed qualitative methods to secure rich descriptors and grounded explanations of the processes in place within a localized environment (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The exploratory case study approach generated a rich description of each component under study (Patton, 2002). It provided a means for investigating the realities and complexities of curriculum support by incorporating the explicit lived experiences of participants rooted in a localized context (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). This familiarity assisted me in compiling information.

From a qualitative perspective, the intent of this study was to explore and understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, seek to know the lived experienced of the participants, and through a process of inquiry come to grasp how meaning was constructed (Creswell, 2009). This information was then used to determine the realities, that is, the kind of support CAs offer to schools and the challenges which impacted their abilities to be effective CAs. This exploratory case study relied on interviews, observations and document analysis.

Data collection occurred over a one month period. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the key data gathering tool. Ten CAs were interviewed for this study. Data collection also consisted of examining one year DCOP and CAs working plans.

There is available research that pertains to curriculum leadership. It is wide and has produced a richness and depth of findings that outlines the effects of curriculum leadership at the school system and school levels (Carr, 2005; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Grogan, 2000). DuFour (1999) supported the importance of CAs when he stated “where curriculum coordinators are effective curriculum leaders, learner achievement escalates” (p. 15). Peterson and Barnett (2003) espoused the significance of the CA as curriculum leader when they stated “the curriculum coordinator’s role as an instructional leader is crucial for the success of school reform” (p.1). Obviously the curriculum support capabilities of the CA are vital for improving the process of teaching. Overall, this study has added to the knowledge of curriculum support and purposefully identified the challenges that impeded it.

The following sections discuss the major findings drawn from this study as related to CA's support practices.

5.3 Discussion of each category and its themes

5.3.1 The kind of support

Following a thorough analysis of the data, the support of CAs was classified and sorted into five themes: training; monitoring; moderation; setting tasks and enrichment programmes.

5.3.1.1 Training

According to Watts (1992) supporting teaching was seen as a vital activity implemented by CAs in school districts and contributed magnificently to schools that have high learner achievement. All CAs in this study recognized the importance of advising and encouraging teachers to do their best to meet the needs of learners. A significant focus for CAs as it related to supporting teaching was the value of being supported financially with training needs. The CAs saw their responsibility as it pertained to training as being considerable and should occupy a significant amount of their available time. I found it factual that the operation of every organization is determined by the training that its employees received. For employees to work effectively and efficiently, the training that they receive must be of quality. It was also impressing to hear CAs stating that they also recommend and supply teachers with LTSMs. CAs in this study encouraged teachers to create a conducive milieu for teaching and learning by providing them with LTSMs and by also involving some teachers in subject committees.

Despite the fact that CAs faces some hiccups to cultivate and employ a total focus on training, and growing together as a community, most of them explained how it was fundamental for them to be a very active and a visible role model as it related to supporting teachers. Peterson (1999) also emphasized this point when he stated that a CA who is highly visible and is considered a strong role model significantly impacts the importance of teaching. For the CAs in this study, this meant, to varying degrees, alerting district's top stakeholders how they would want to be involved in training activities. CAs wanted to host as many workshops and support meetings as they could. This strategy was seen as necessary by the CAs as they felt teachers

appreciated their leadership and efforts in setting a positive example of learning together as a community.

During support meetings, I observed that teachers appeared to be very encouraged by CAs commitment to improve their content knowledge and teaching practices, hence CAs want these forms of meetings to be continuous. CAs appeared for the most part, setting aside their monitoring responsibilities to focus more on engaging in professional discussions with teachers. According to Leithwood (2008) curriculum leaders who participated in more professional conversations with teachers was indicative of a high performing district. Lastly, CAs were seen by teachers as being an effective role models who were continually attempting to improve their skills. CAs also asserted that teachers were appreciative of these efforts.

The analysis of the district's one year education plan, CAs focused roles and annual plans indicated or reflected that supporting teaching was a priority area for this district. In attempting to determine whether the CAs were effective curriculum leaders as it related to supporting teaching, in considering their views and the district's one year education plan, CAs focused roles and annual plans in this regard, it would appear that the CAs are aware of their role in training teachers but did not successfully practice and employ their leadership skills as they anticipated. Despite the fact that these district documents reflect supporting teaching in various ways as a priority, CAs felt that they did not execute the training role as envisaged since they were faced with multiple challenges.

Certainly, continuous professional development should be aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers by means of orientation, training and support (Coetzer, 2001). According to Bredenson (2003), to allow professional teacher training to proceed successfully, it should be a continuous process contributing to the general improvement of education. It is most effective when it is a continuing process, which includes appropriate, well thought out training and individual follow up. Continuing professional development allows teachers to expand and deepen their teaching (Teacher Professional Model, 2003).

5.3.1.2 Monitoring

According to Watts (1992) monitoring teaching was seen as a vital activity implemented by successful administrators in districts that have high learner achievement. Consistent with Krug's dimension on monitoring, all CAs recognized the importance of support through monitoring as this would encourage teachers to do their best to meet the needs of learners. A significant focus for the CAs as it related to monitoring teaching was the value of being able to visit schools regularly. The CAs saw their responsibility as it pertained to monitoring as being considerable and should occupy a significant amount of their available time as outlined in the DCOP and work plans. Haglund (2009) also noted this observation and stressed the importance of administrator involvement in teacher monitoring following a systematic examination of leadership practices that improved learner achievement in a large urban school district.

I believed that by emphasizing and accentuating support through monitoring for teachers, CAs were attempting to provide timely support that would positively influence teachers and impact the teaching practices they utilized in their classrooms. Also, by stressing the importance of teacher monitoring and support, CAs would be endeavouring to develop and implement a culture in which teachers would implement the department's policies, felt safe to try new initiatives and where teachers would not be penalized for trying something new even if it did not work out well, and where a community of learners would learn and grow together and also share best practices. These observations align with Marzano and Waters (2009) who described that being supportive of teachers trying new techniques and providing adequate resources in this regard was critical to improving learner achievement. This is consistent with the focused monitoring CAs provided in schools. They used end of year Grade 12 results to visits schools. Underperforming and high enrolment schools were the targeted schools.

This appeared to be contrary with the policies. All schools were supposed to be monitored. It was expected of the district to conduct a minimum of one monitoring visit per school per quarter, per subject (DBE, 2009). The Capricorn district expected CAs to monitor schools as follows: schools that performed under 30% were supposed to be visited and supported at least three times per term, schools that

performed under 60% were supposed to be visited and supported at least two times per term and all other schools at least once per annum. This impression appeared to be impossible for CAs to implement due to a variety of common and contextual challenges.

As the CAs struggled to cultivate and employ a systemic focus on monitoring and support, all of them explained how it was fundamental for them to be a very active and a visible role model as it related to monitoring teaching. Peterson (1999) also emphasized this point when he stated that a CA who is highly visible and is considered a strong role model significantly impacts the importance of teacher instruction. For the CAs in this study, this meant visiting schools to monitor and thereafter support them on the challenging work. This simple strategy was seen as necessary by CAs as they felt most teachers appreciated their leadership and efforts in setting a positive example of learning together as a community.

5.3.1.3 Moderation

Most participants indicated moderation as one of their key role in curriculum support. The purpose of moderation is to ensure that teachers are making consistent judgments about standards. In order to do this, they should have a shared understanding about the expectations for a particular standard so that when a learner's response is awarded a particular level of achievement, it has the same characteristics regardless of who marks it.

After teachers' marking, CAs were responsible for validating their marking. This study found that CAs were faced with a mammoth of files to moderate in each quarter. CAs explained that the process of moderation in each quarter was obligatory. Despite this obligation, CAs felt that moderation was time consuming and a hindrance to other roles expected from them. This was as a result of shortage of CAs in the district. Although there were not adequate CAs in the district, they were still expected to play the moderator and assessor roles, in order to ensure the work quality of teachers. With this shortage, quality assurance in moderation of teaching might be compromised.

5.3.1.4 Setting tasks

This role seemed to be an addition to the roles of a CA in the District. Adding more roles on CAs' overload might impact the execution of their main roles adversely.

5.3.1.5 Enrichment programmes

CAs facilitated enrichment programmes such as the Grade 12 Winter enrichment programmes and other various community programmes. Engaging CAs in these programmes is a great deal. CAs should provide leadership to teachers when needed.

5.3.2 Challenges faced by Curriculum Advisors

Generally, all participants experienced similar challenges that affected their capacity to sufficiently implement curriculum support practices and skills. Overall these challenges negatively impacted the amount of time CAs had available to complete their advisory duties. By and large, these types of challenges to curriculum advisory tended to align with those identified by Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, and Glass (2005) who indicated that interruptions that reduced the amount of time for curriculum leadership duties were common and frustrating.

5.3.2.1 Overload due to shortage of Curriculum Advisors

The findings made in this study that has been echoed by P7, in Chapter Four indicated that the district has approximately 120 CAs. This proved to be a very low number. From this, I assumed that there might be a lot of posts which needed to be filled. One participant indicated that posts left through retirement and deaths were not filled. These contributed to overload on the currently employed CAs. CAs were given more schools to support. I also learnt that some circuits do not have CAs. Despite being understaffed, CAs were expected to perform their strenuous roles of providing various curriculum support and advisory roles to schools and teachers.

Shortage of CAs made the role of moderator wearisome and time consuming. CAs were expected to moderate all teachers' files from 52 circuits once in each term to ensure quality of the work done by teachers. It is clear and argued from the findings of the study that moderation of teachers' work from all schools in the district was a demanding task, given the understaffing of CAs. The pressure that these personnel

were faced with during the moderation period, end up compromising the quality of moderation itself and the important work of support through school visits that they do as subjects experts.

5.3.2.2 Lack of resources

In a careful review of the findings in this theme, I recognized that the role of a CA has become increasingly difficult as a direct result of increased demands and decreased assistance. That is, CAs now struggles to do more with less. According to the responses by CAs, it seemed as if the resources were another influential reason CAs were unable to support teachers in schools. Inadequate photocopying machines, printers, papers, updated computers, internet and transport problems were the challenges faced by CAs in the district. Participants accused the government of budgetary constraints.

Money is believed to be the “vehicle of evangelism” (Ige, 2012, p. 206). Dynamic curriculum support requires adequate fund to purchase and maintain the vehicles that will convey CAs to and from schools, the stationery, the equipment as well as other logistics during the exercise. The issue of lack of stationery made it difficult for meaningful reports and other productions to be prepared after support. In an ideal situation, support was supposed to be carried out regularly, in view of the number of schools, as well as the prevailing cases of underperformance and cases of high enrolment in schools in the district. Unfortunately, support of schools has been irregular in view of inadequate fund to achieve this feat. Participants indicated that this has been making many schools not to be visited in a term, semester or year thus contributing to the deteriorations that can be observed in some schools these days. CAs were also facing the problem of lack of means of transportation. The department was late in paying claims and providing cars for CAs to travel long distances to support schools.

This challenge needs to be given a serious consideration by the government if curriculum support is to be implemented effectively.

5.3.2.3 Political interference

Politics means the process of exercising power. Power means the wielding of influence over peoples' opinions and behaviours. White (1983) concurs with the above Oxford Dictionary definition. He argues that politics is about power, in that the decisions made necessarily affect peoples' lives and interests, crucially and trivially. Similarly, Thomas (1983) explains the political action as an action involving attempts of political groups to exercise power over others. Activities, according to him, are means of political strategies ranging from gentle persuasion and logical reasoning through bribery and intimidation to physical violence. Political action seems to be found more on motives of, *inter alia,* fame and power.

CAs from this study were somehow negatively affected by the power of politics. Teachers unions and government's orders confused them when it came to arranging workshops and briefing meetings at certain times. These stakeholders preferred CAs to hold workshops and briefing meetings at certain times. The unions wanted CAs to hold such sessions during schools hours. They seemed to argue that teachers were not paid for doing work after their working hours. Contrary to this command, the government wanted CAs to hold them after school since during school hours the teaching and learning process would be adversely impacted. In addition, teacher unions would sometimes employ the notion of "go slow" or "disengagement" because of the disagreements with government on certain issues. Participants in this study indicated that during such times, their work was negatively affected. They would not be allowed to enter into schools by unions members to render their services. This affected their planning.

5.3.2.4 Challenges from teachers

Teacher quality is probably the most important school-based factor affecting learner achievement (Sawchuk, 2011). Quality education will show if teachers teach what they are qualified to teach. Parker (2011) argues that teachers may be qualified but they are teaching something they are not qualified to teach. These kind of teachers lacked content knowledge. Content knowledge coupled with appropriate teaching methodologies are necessary in teaching. Villegas-Reimers (2003) links professional standing of teachers to the knowledge base required to fulfil their role, which encompasses content knowledge as well as pedagogical knowhow. It is generally

accepted today that content knowledge alone is insufficient for effective teaching, but over-emphasis on technique and classroom management at the expense of content can equally impoverish teaching. Teachers require balanced training in content and teaching methods. If South Africa is going to contend excellently in global markets, a well-educated group of people with knowledge and skills at all levels in their specialized subjects will be needed.

It was also apparent from this study that shortage of qualified teachers in certain subjects was also affecting CAs. They had no one to support at schools. At times they would go to such schools to teach learners. This was a tiring exercise taking into consideration their multiple roles. This aspect of unqualified teachers resulted in certain subjects being allocated to new unqualified teachers every year. Participants indicated that this was a bad practice since it created a lot of work on their side. It also hindered the process of continuity.

In addition, this study revealed that the educational transformation that has been brought about by the political dispensation affected people differently. The new curriculum, CAPS, seemed not to be accepted by old teachers. They preferred “Bantu Education”. The training and development workshops they received through CAs might not have fully addressed this educational change. CAs noted that this generation of teachers compromised the implementation of the new curriculum severely. As a result of teachers’ ignorance and resistance to change, CAs realized that they had a minimal understanding of contemporary curriculum policies and this affected learner performance negatively.

5.3.3 Solutions and suggestions from Curriculum Advisors

5.3.3.1 Solutions

Some CAs had few strategies they used to deal with challenges they faced.

- Teamwork

Some participants in this study used teamwork to control the negative impact as a result of shortage of CAs. According to Cohen and Bailey (1999), an employee team is a collection of individuals who are interdependent in the tasks and who share

responsibility for the outcomes. Teams enable people to cooperate, enhance individual skills and provide constructive feedback without any conflict between individuals (Jones, Richard, Paul, Sloane & Peter, 2007). Teamwork is an important factor for smooth functioning of an organization. Most of the organizational activities become complex due to a variety of reasons; therefore teamwork is a major focus of many organizations. One research study concluded that teamwork is necessary for all types of organization including non-profit organizations (Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003). Team members enhance the skills, knowledge and abilities while working in teams (Froebel & Marchington, 2005).

Teams can expand the outputs of individuals through collaboration. Employees who are working in teams become the standard for the organization (Alie, Beam & Carey, 1998). It is the mean of improving man-power utilization and potentially raising performance of individual. On contrary, teams that fail to work as a collaborative functioning unit rarely accomplish goals and objectives. Various behaviours and attitudes can throw off the effectiveness of a group, lowering morale and even impacting overall job satisfaction. Undefined roles, in which no one is sure of his responsibilities, or a lack of structure for projects and tasks, can both contribute to ineffective teamwork. If CAs group themselves according to their subject specializations, their team was likely to perform well during schools support visits. However, if CAs mingle themselves regardless of the subjects they specialize in, their team was likely to be ineffective. It would be challenging for CAs to support teachers and schools on subjects they do not specialize in.

- ❖ Sacrifice

Participants in this study indicated that they would go an extra mile for the work to be done in the district. They sometimes used their own finances to do the district's work. This appeared not to be voluntary, but somehow binding. Despite resources at hand, CAs were expected to report on their work output at the end of every month. In a way, they were doing favour for themselves. With multiple challenges CAs were faced with, it was unfair for them to use their money for the department's work.

5.3.3.2 Suggestions

Since most of the challenges faced by CAs are district oriented, CAs suggested two main things that the district must address:

- Employ more Curriculum Advisors

All participants suggested that the department should hire more CAs. In this study, a dire shortage of CAs in the district has been shown. There were approximately 120 CAs working in 32 circuits for 956. 53 were responsible for about 367 secondary schools. I found it the obligation of the LPDE to hurriedly resolve this problem by making funds available so that the vacancies available could be filled. The 120 CAs available were expected to render a variety of responsibilities, a task too massive for them. Participants in this study indicated that if more CAs were employed, most of the challenges faced by the curriculum sub-directorate would be solved. I also thought the frequency of quality curriculum support of schools and teachers for the implementation of policies would certainly improve.

- Budget

Most CAs recommended that the department should supply more budget in the curriculum sub-directorate so that CAs would be able to work effectively. This would enable them to hold workshops, support meetings and school visits frequently. They also urged the department to provide them with the necessary resources, inter alia, photocopying machines, computers, printers and papers. CAs in this study showed that lack of resources made their job difficult.

Above the direct impact that a lack of resources has on productivity, there is an impact on morale which must not be overlooked (DeYoung, 1994). When CAs are trying to work at their jobs with pride and dedication, but are held back by a lack of resources, it is very frustrating. This can cause them to lose their passion for their work, and the result is a lessened energy for getting the job done. Certainly, because the department anticipated CAs to provide reports on work output every month end, they would still work, but they would not have the energy because they were always feeling held back by deficiency of resources. It is clear that the issue regarding lack of resources should quickly be resolved.

5.4 Conclusions and recommendations

5.4.1 Conclusions

CAs have many roles and serve as managerial supervisors, educational mentors, political leaders, change agents, as well as primary communicators in the school district (Kowalski, 2003). The relative emphasis placed on each role varies according to social, economic, and political circumstances of their communities. For example, during the 1960s and 1970s demands for the CAs to engage with the public and with interest groups required them to expand their political leadership role at the community level (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). Although changing conditions heightened the importance of different dimensions of their roles, the nature of the CA's work required mastery of all. Although there might be other responsibilities like management duties, their role as a curriculum leader is vital for the success of the district. Research findings indicated that CAs of effective districts exhibited high levels of involvement in curriculum support matters at their disposal to influence the practices of teachers who are more directly involved in improving classroom teaching and learning (Hoyle, 2002).

A significant conclusion that was gleaned from this study's findings was the knowledge and desire that CAs had in being effective curriculum leaders. The CAs expressed on several occasions their wish to exhibit and thoroughly carry out curriculum support duties. The CAs were exceedingly reflective of their own practices and actions in this regard, mentioning the kind of support they are expected to offer and the challenges they are faced with and constantly attempted to balance curriculum support practices with other tasks.

In Capricorn district, CAs are accountable for a variety of duties. The expectations and demands of the district greatly impacted the amount of time available for curriculum support duties through school visits (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). I found it most difficult for CAs when their expectations and demands were in conflict with one another. For example, the CAs were expected to visit schools for on-site support regularly but the department was not paying their claims timeously and would not replace old cars for CAs to travel efficiently.

During the mid-1990s interest in reform in education drew more attention to the notion of building the capacity of individuals. Fullan (1998) characterized the time period from 1992 to the present as the “change capacity era”. During this study it was evident that the CAs went to significant lengths to enhance teachers to consider what they can do to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom and thus improve their capacity as teachers. The CAs highlighted the importance of enhancing teachers with regard to their knowledge and skills through training, monitoring, moderating and facilitating curriculum implementation. According to Chappuis, Chappuis, and Stiggins (2009), these areas of emphasis aligned with their notion that supporting teachers and creating dynamic learning teams is necessary for improving learner achievement.

From the findings of this study, one is left to question if the department’s personnel are cognizant of the support CAs require on a daily basis to be able to work with teachers to build their capacity in education. It is apparent from the findings of this study that CAs had more difficulty fulfilling curriculum duties related to training, monitoring and moderation to the same level of effectiveness as their other areas. They could not hold training and support meetings as outlined on the DCOP, their work plans, not visit schools regularly and most of their time was consumed by moderation.

One of the participant also indicated that their training in the implementation of the new curriculum was not taken serious by old teachers. These teachers were resistant to change. Overcoming resistance to change and building the capacity of teachers to develop communities of learners to collectively solve problems is a primary concern for CAs (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). Prevailing norms, values, beliefs, and accepted ways of doing things, teacher isolation, and general unfamiliarity with notions of learning communities often inhibit school and school district improvement efforts (Bjork & Richardson, 1997). One of the most crucial dimensions of training is the process or the “how” of teacher development. Research suggests that changing practices takes time, conventional “one-shot” workshops are ineffective, and individuals are more likely to acquire knowledge and transfer new skills if they learn them in work contexts and are supported by a mentor (Bjork & Keedy, 2001).

A significant conclusion that was observed from the findings of this study was the realization of the CAs that their district's process of teacher development had to change if it was to better meet the needs of teachers. The one-shot workshop or support meetings used as information downloads provided little time or opportunity for engaging teachers in the concepts or practices being discussed. The CAs noted that the district needed to alter their culture towards effective training. It was evident that widespread, sustained implementation of new practices in classrooms required new forms and multiple training ways. It was interesting for me to observe how a new perspective regarding the importance of training was deployed in this district and took only subtle, but important, changes in their training processes for it to have positive effects. For example, providing time during training sessions to allow teachers to discuss and practice the concepts or strategies being presented had a tremendously positive impact on teachers' attitudes towards training sessions and workshops.

When learning is the primary focus of a district's activities, capable CAs understand how the whole system works, play a central role in ensuring coherence, and use their experience levers to sustain the mission (Hoyle, 2002). However, these aspirations do not occur in a vacuum. A skilled CA is also keenly aware of the need of the importance of securing vital resources to ensure that they have the greatest impact in supporting teaching and learning achievements. The district budget development and allocation processes determine who gets what, when, how, and reflects the goals of the school district. Thus the budget and allocation processes must reflect more focus on teaching and learning (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998). From the findings of this study, the district was faced with budget constraints. This appeared to be bearing serious impact on CAs.

Another significant conclusion gathered from this study were the frequent references to inadequate resources being available for CAs to meet their needs. It appeared that a dissonance between the various needs of the CAs with the availability of sufficient resources to meet the position's demands existed in this district. Why did this school district find itself in this particular situation? One plausible reason for this dissonance was the placement of the LPDE under national administration. Some CAs from this study indicated that this affected the running of the district adversely.

In addition, budget distribution from the district's human resource department was not comprehensive. Another plausible reason is that the budgeting processes were not refined enough to recognize the changing dynamics of curriculum in this school district. Nonetheless, when significant systemic changes are being considered or implemented, being aware how budgeting processes should be revised in order to reflect these transitions is an important attribute to be included in the decision-making process for any district.

According to Bjork and Gurley (2005), CAs and teachers cannot increase achievement for all learners alone they must provide vision of change for stakeholders and serve as activists for this change. Walters and Marzano (2006) reported that Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) conducted a meta-analysis of research on school district leaders on learner performance. The meta-analysis included 27 studies "... resulting in what McREL research believed to be the largest-ever quantitative examination of research on CAs" (p. 3). Four major findings emerged from their study: "... district leadership matters; effective CAs focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts; CAs' positions are positively correlated with teaching and learning achievement; and they set clear, non-negotiable goals for teaching and learning, yet provide school leadership teams with the responsibility and authority for determining how to meet those goals." (p. 4).

Some of the findings of this study affirm the findings of Walters and Marzano's study. District leadership being focused on specific goals and striving to improve teaching and learning were conclusions associated with the CAs involved in this study.

Curriculum leadership has changed melodramatically over the past decade, moving away from highly directive managerial perspectives towards more collegial engagement characteristics of communities of learners (DuFour & Marzano, 2009). The desire to create more effective teaching and learning environments is heightening interest in many variables as part of a process that is central to becoming a community of learners. As is evident, the findings of this study support the conclusion that curriculum support when focused on the right work, without challenges, matters and might enhance teaching and learning achievement.

5.4.2 Recommendations

This study has generated six recommendations about curriculum support. These recommendations are specifically related to policy-makers and government.

DuFour and Eaker (1998) articulated that CAs have the most significant impact when teachers are inspired to become more proficient at their skills and techniques through structured collaboration and CAs also understand their role to be that of a facilitator of leading and learning rather than imposing and calculating. DuFour and Eaker described this concept as the CA being a “learning leader”. DuFour and Marzano (2009) further supported this concept when they stated that CAs should move beyond working with individual teachers and work with teams of teachers to expand their capacity to function as members of high performing collaborative teams. Chappuis, Chappuis, and Stiggins (2009) added support to this idea by stating “collaborative learning teams can change day-to-day teaching by giving teachers the ongoing opportunity to learn together, apply learning to the classroom, and reflect what works and why” (p. 60). The importance of the CA cannot be underestimated in relation to being an effective curriculum leader in this regard. Curriculum leadership research corroborates that learner achievement escalates when CAs are proficient curriculum leaders (Hallinger, 2007; Leithwood, 2007; McEwan, 2003).

According to Leithwood (2005) CAs leadership effect on learner achievement have “been considered too indirect and complex to sort out” (p. 2). Morgan and Peterson (2002) also criticized the view that understanding multifaceted roles and responsibilities of the CA as a curriculum leader has proven to be hard to pin down. However, Leithwood (2008) later claimed that CAs in high performing districts do invest in curriculum leadership at schools and have changed their role from organizational managers to curriculum leaders. More recent research has supported this and indicated that sound jurisdictional leadership practices are instrumental in creating the conditions for teachers and learners to succeed. For example, the Wallace Foundation (2009) maintains that “behind excellent teaching and excellent schools is excellent leadership” (p. 1). This observation is further supported by a modern Organization for Economic Development (OECD) (2008) study of education

systems in 22 countries that concluded “leadership is essential to improve efficiency and equity of schooling” (p. 9).

The recommendations generated by this study are provided below:

5.4.2.1 Recommendation one

In this study, CAs frequently referenced the lack of available time to execute their task of supporting teachers on a daily basis, largely created by other factors like moderation, shortage of CAs in the district, lack of resources and human resource issues as a significant challenge that adversely impacted their abilities to be effective curriculum leaders. They described that if they had more time that they could devote to becoming a stronger curriculum leader, they would use this time to support teachers regularly and strive to improve their teaching skills and as a result improve learner achievement. Therefore, the challenge for policy-makers is to endeavor to provide time during each school week where teachers and CAs in their various subjects can actively engage in professional discussions that examines evidence of teaching and learning and develops strategies for improving teaching.

5.4.2.2 Recommendation Two

Although most of the recent research has described that the role of the CA has changed considerably in recent years, the CA is still responsible for overseeing personnel, academics, finances, and community involvement duties (Berman, 2005). Increased responsibility in education has also shifted the role of the CA. CAs are asked to be exceedingly skillful curriculum leaders yet the responsibility requirements drastically impacts the time available for them to fulfill these tasks (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). Policy-makers should examine responsibility requirements and strive to focus the roles of CAs as it relates to education in Capricorn with the time required to be effective curriculum leaders for CAs. Moderation appeared to be consuming most of the CAs time. The district should develop functional subject committees and they should amongst others deal with the moderation of files. This would enable CAs more time to visit schools.

5.4.2.3 Recommendation Three

This study found that there was a critical shortage of CAs in the district. This made CAs to be overloaded. It is the responsibility of the LPDE to swiftly resolve this problem by making funds available to fill the vacant posts. If the number of CAs is increased, the rate of curriculum support of teachers and schools for effective implementation of curriculum policies in schools would certainly advance. When quality and meaningful support by CAs, who are knowledgeable on teachers in schools is intensified, the knowledge level of curriculum policies and subject content of teachers will also improve; thus benefiting learners, as their performance is likely to improve.

5.4.2.4 Recommendation Four

Logistic matters must carefully be attended to. The success of the curriculum advisory services depends critically on logistic factors like schedules, number of teachers per CA, resources and budget. The needs and expectations of CAs must be surveyed regularly and be taken into account. There is a need for the LPDE to provide adequate resources such as funds, office furniture, photocopying machines, printers, computers, stationery and transport to enable them discharge their duties effectively.

5.4.2.5 Recommendation Five

The government and teacher unions should encourage various support meetings and regularly scheduled visits to schools to continue to be organized and posted ahead of time; and that teachers be encouraged to plan ahead for the day the CA may be in their building. Also, teachers should be encouraged to request the assistance of the CA on a particular day or for a certain amount of time for special projects. The support meetings are imperative and school visits are necessary to have the one-on-one contact that is most effective in assisting teachers. Therefore, government and teacher unions should create and agree on times CAs may carry out their support duties without offending either party.

5.4.2.6 Recommendation Six

The scarcity and unqualified teachers in different subjects in LPDE, in particular, Capricorn district, could be attributed to the failure or inability of the district to

achieve its envisaged academic goals. It is therefore important and urgent that the DBE should be strict on hiring teachers. All vacant posts should be filled by qualified teachers. The DBE should also consider the reopening of former teacher colleges that are well equipped throughout the country, so that any shortage of teachers could be addressed. These would enable CAs to render curriculum support to people who are conversant with the subject. As a result, their work of advising, strengthening and motivating teachers would be effective and efficient.

5.5 Implications for future research

Given the fact that CAs' curriculum support is critical for teachers' growth and improved learner achievement, a great deal remains to be researched regarding the curriculum support practices of these individuals during this era of educational accountability and reform (Leithwood, 2008). Since this study may be of interest to CAs, school principals, vice-principals, teachers, provincial and national office administrators and other researchers who are interested in curriculum support, the following recommendations are provided for these audiences.

The limited scope of this study should be expanded. This qualitative study examined the kind of support and the challenges that impacted the curriculum support leadership practices of CAs in one district. A more in-depth qualitative examination of curriculum support practices, and challenges to these behaviours, of more CAs should be designed and implemented. It would be important to replicate this study to verify whether these specific findings are representative of other CAs from other districts, provinces and countries.

It is my contention that CAs can only survive and manage challenges to their curriculum support leadership for a limited period of time before it begins to adversely affect teacher growth and learner achievement. Follow-up studies should be conducted to determine the long-term impact of challenges to CAs curriculum support leadership on teacher achievement.

Future research would be enhanced by concentrating on fewer curriculum support dimensions. By reducing the number of curriculum support services or characteristics to be studied, more in-depth analysis could be provided on each

characteristic. The curriculum support services or characteristics described by CAs in this study in the Capricorn district are suggested as the dimensions to be more thoroughly examined. If the leadership focus of a CA is not teaching based, then it needs to change (Leithwood, 2008). Future research should be conducted to review the processes or procedures CAs use and implement to transition from being managerially fixated to being curriculum driven.

5.6 Conclusion

Current CAs engage in remarkably demanding work. They are required to execute various roles in their occupancy. In addition, they face an extraordinary variety of challenges, often simultaneously, and work to advance the district's success even as they negotiate their own assimilation. Participants in this study undertook those efforts with a sense of optimism, determination, courage, and satisfaction, even when circumstances threatened not only their district and professional efficacy, but also their personal well-being. Their powerful individual stories reveal compelling truths about their shared, lived experiences.

This study serves several worthwhile purposes. First, it helps to fill a problematic gap in current knowledge about CAs support practices by either corroborating, extending, or refuting findings from previous research. Second, it extends the current knowledge base by contributing altogether new perspectives and findings about the nature of support and challenges facing CAs and about the mechanisms through which they seek to mediate them. Third, it suggests the need for a coherent framework to inform future studies and clarifies specific directions for that research. Finally, it highlights important recommendations and implications for practice among multiple audiences, each of which shares a vested interest in curriculum support and ultimate success of CAs. Given the fact that curriculum support would still be a need to our teachers and schools over the next several years, the aggressive adoption of those recommendations and a brisk, well-guided research agenda are pressing needs as communities of scholarship and practice work together to support those individuals who hold the courage, conviction, knowledge and skill to lead our nation's public schools.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: APPLICATION LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

P O Box 1691
Giyani
0826
28 August 2013

Limpopo Department of Education
Private Bag X9489
Polokwane
0700

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR MASTERS PROGRAMME

The matter above bears reference:

I hereby request for permission to conduct research in Capricorn District's offices. I am a Masters student registered at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) doing research on: **How Curriculum Advisors enable schools to implement curriculum policies in Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.** My supervisor is Prof. MJ Themane.

I undertake to abide by the rules and regulations to ensure ethical adherence.

Hoping that my request will be taken into consideration.

Yours faithfully
Seshoka MW
0734177398

APPENDIX B: LETTER FOR PERMISSION FROM LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Enquiries: Dr. Makola MC, Tel No: 015 290 9448. E-mail: MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

PRIVATE BAG X1106

SOVENGA

0727

RE: Request for permission to Conduct Research

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a research has been approved- **TITLE: HOW CURRICULUM ADVISORS ENABLE SCHOOLS TO IMPLEMENT CURRICULUM POLICIES IN CAPRICORN DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**
3. The following conditions should be considered

3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.

3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Offices and the schools concerned.

3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.

3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the forth term.

3.5 During the study, the research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

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Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

4. Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
5. The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.

Dedera

02/10/2013

Dederen K.O

Acting Head of Department

Date

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant

I appreciate your participation in the research study, **The role of Curriculum Advisors in supporting teachers to implement curriculum policies in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province**. The study will explore how district offices Curriculum Advisors support teachers to implement curriculum policies requirements in Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. In order to protect the interests of the participants I will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. I will interview you to discuss your experiences on various forms of support that CAs offer to teachers, challenges they face and suggestions/strategies they use to deal with them.
2. You will be interviewed once (approximately 30 minutes) and the interview will be audio-taped and you will be free to turn off the tape at any time during the process. You have the right not to answer all the questions if you so wish.
3. The audio-tape will be transcribed and analyzed to discover major themes that would be discussed. You will be presented with your version of the transcription. You will be asked to check the transcription to clarify and add information, so as to construct the meanings and interpretations that become “data” for later interpretation by me as researcher. You may delete anything you do not wish to be quoted within the study.
4. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study at any time without fear of penalty or reprisal by me, the district office or University of Limpopo. If you choose to withdraw, the audio tape recordings, transcripts and interview data will be destroyed.
5. Tape recordings and the results of this study will be securely stored with Prof. Themane MJ, Department of Educational Studies, and retained for a certain number of years at the University of Limpopo, in accordance with the university guidelines.
6. The results of the study will be disseminated in the researcher’s Masters Dissertation. Later, the study may be published as an article in a scholarly journal or presented at a conference. Your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

If you have any questions about your participation or your rights as a participant within this study, you may contact me at 073 417 7398 or my supervisor, Prof. Themane MJ, Department of Educational Studies, at 015 268 2928.

Yours truly
Seshoka Matome Winter

I, _____, understand the guidelines above, agree to participate in the study and have received a copy of the consent form for my records.
Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____
Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

MAIN QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
What is the role of CAs in supporting teachers to implement curriculum policies in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province?	Which kinds of support do CAs offer to teachers during curriculum policies implementation? What are the challenges of the position of a CA? How do CAs deal with challenges in their practice?	What is the role of a Curriculum Advisor (CA) during curriculum implementation? What kind of support do you offer to schools? When is support needed most in schools? How does the support you offer to schools improve teaching and learning? What do you find positive during curriculum policies implementation process? What, in your opinion, are some of the shortcomings of the position of Curriculum Advisor during this process? Which ways do you use/should be used to deal with the challenges you encounter?