

**THE IMPACT OF INSET IN
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OBE**

BY

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SUMMARY

The aim of conducting my research is to establish the impact of INSET on the implementation of OBE in the Foundation Phase. I believe that OBE was implemented before the Foundation Phase teachers were thoroughly serviced through INSET programmes conducted by the Curriculum Advisory Section.

In my research exercise I conducted interviews with the Foundation Phase teachers and I am also going to request them to completed by classroom observations.

The main reason of my research is the fact that the Foundation Phase is the base on which future learning activities are to be built on. If the foundation or base is not well laid out, a lot is going to be affected in the educational process.

I discussed my research problem and claim in detail. This is followed by an explanation about how I collected and analysed data. Finally I gave my findings and concluded by some recommendations.

I would like to use my findings to guide me on the future arrangement and conduction of INSET programmes with the Senior Phase teachers in order to make it to be more effective.



SECTION ONE

1.1 Background

I would like to start my essay by quoting Frith and Mahoy (1988: 1) when they stated that:

“We are currently in the midst of unprecedented change in education .Almost every thing in education is apparently changing and the rate of change is accelarating. Which leaves us little time to become acclimatized to new ways of looking at things.”

It is true that the South African system of education is being overhauled and that this change is taking place at a very high speed. The most hard hit are the Foundation Phase teachers who are not given a chance to “acclimatize to the way of looking at things.” It is of vital importance that a person who effect changes, fully understands what he or she is expected to do and how to do it.

Foundation Phase teachers are expected to change their methods of teaching, the content, approach and be outcomes-based inclined. These teachers were never trained the OBE way. They were trained to be the centre of the learning situation and be curriculum-based. The learner, on the other hand, had to passively take part in the learning activities and at the end of the year, his or her fate, be decided within an hour, or at most, as cited by Schrender (1993:15) is that a teacher must have:

Unfortunately, the present Foundation Phase teacher is still busy trying to acquire the “necessary skills” required in the new learning and teaching activities. The only problem is that while still acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills, he/she is expected to, at the same, effect or implement changes without having not yet acquired all the needed tools.

To assist the Foundation Phase teachers to acclimatize and to acquire the necessary professional knowledge and skills so as to assist them in the implementation of educational changes, specifically OBE is by engaging them in In-Service Training (INSET) programmes or activities.

INSET is defined by Bell and Day (1991: 137) as:

“...education and training activities engaged in by the (secondary) teachers and heads, following their initial professional certificate, and intended mainly or exclusively to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in order that they can educate children more effectively.”

- ✓ From the above definition the main purpose of INSET programmes is to provide teachers with professional knowledge and skills so that they in turn provide learners with effective and quality education. And that there is a need to provide teachers with INSET programmes because it is not possible for teachers to come out of training institutions with all the necessary professional knowledge and skills to last them to the end of their teaching career, For a teacher to be effective, he/she must have the necessary tools.

The government has decided to run in-service programmes for the Foundation Phase teachers to equip them with the necessary tools to enable them to implement OBE. This group of teachers consists of teachers with different

attitudes and professional experiences. The in-service training programmes must, at the end of the day, bring them all aboard bearing in mind the fact that different people respond differently to changes. And now that these different types of teachers are presently engaged in the implementation of changes, the question can be asked as how effective are the INSET programmes in influencing (changing) the attitudes, knowledge and skills of these teachers?

Dean (1991:6) stated that:

“ Although in-service education has been in being for a long time, we know remarkably little about its effect.”

- √ If what is stated above is true, that very little is known about the effect of INSET programmes, what impact do the ongoing INSET programmes, being conducted for the foundation Phase teachers have on the effective implementation of OBE? Is it worthwhile exercise or is it worthless? And if the exercise is not effective, why is it still in progress?

We find that although OBE is presently being implemented in the Foundation Phase, some or most of the educational authorities in charge of the INSET activities to service the affected teachers, are not yet clear about OBE. At times they even issue contradictory statements on the issue of OBE. They seem not to have acquired the relevant knowledge and skills about OBE and educational policies in general.

Furthermore, officials who are conducting INSET activities in the Northern Province for the Foundation Phase teachers are still under training through INSET programmes arranged by the Department to assist them by providing them with training, knowledge and skills because they are not yet fully familiar with OBE. This implies that even those who are conducting INSET programmes are not yet

“clear” about what OBE is all about- If this is the case what effect will their INSETS have on the implementation of OBE?

At times when more than one official is involved in the running of INSET programmes, one realises that they are not in agreement on some OBE issues. This might mean that, sometimes teachers are fed with wrong information due to a lack of the correct information or knowledge on the part of the INSET facilitators.

Dean (1991:20) wrote:

“...Generally, studies tend to show that in-service courses do not have the impact which might be expected because of one reason or another teachers do not put what they have learned into action.”

✓ If the above statement is true, why are teachers not practising what they have learned? And in case of the Hlanganani District (in the Northern Province) where schools have been clustered according to their proximity so as to enable teachers from neighbouring schools to meet periodically in order to assist each other in OBE problems encountered in their respective classes and also to make it easy for officials, who are helping them in OBE, to make follow-ups, if INSET is not working, why does it seem as if the introduction of OBE in the Foundation Phase is proceeding as expected? And to what extend are teachers practising OBE in their respective classes?

The Hlanganani District is situated in a rural black area. Like most, if not all schools in rural areas, the Hlanganani schools are plagued by overcrowding in classes. The departmental teacher-pupil ratio does not exist. This is also influenced by the process of rationalization and redeployment. OBE requires a new approach in the classroom arrangement. Learners, in OBE, are expected to be

divided into manageable groups. And before the Government could resolve the problem of overcrowding in classes, it implemented OBE. The classes are so overcrowded that arranging learners into manageable groups is not practical, if not impossible. In this set up, how can the unfortunate teacher effectively put to practice what he learned from INSET, even if he/she wanted to?

Some schools, if not all, in Hlanganani District do not have educational facilities and the necessary resources to implement OBE.

INSET is being conducted in the Hlanganani District and OBE is also being implemented in the Foundation Phase. With the present state of affairs, one can ask the question, what impact does it have on the implementation of this very important change in our educational system?

The above background led me to decide to do research on the impact of INSET on the professional development of Foundation Phase teachers and on the implementation of OBE.

Although OBE is being implemented throughout the country through INSETS programmes, I am going to limit my area of inquiry to schools in Hlanganani District. I intend to establish the impact of INSET as a method of assisting teachers to implementing OBE.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

The Curriculum Advisory Section in Hlanganani District is tasked with the servicing of the Foundation Phase teachers. This is done through INSET in a form of periodic workshops. These workshops in most cases, are run for a day or few days in a week.

If the main purpose of INSET is to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers, how effective are these periodic workshops? Teachers who attend these workshops do not know anything concerning OBE. Are these teachers in a position to facilitate learning activities competently? Scrender et al (1993:11) indicated that:

“A professional person must be in command of specialised knowledge in order to identify specific problems in the work situation, to analyse them and to solve them”

- From the above statement, it is obvious that our Foundation Phase teachers do not yet command specialised knowledge and skills on the implementation of OBE. This implies that they cannot confidently identify problem areas and resolve them. And how is the learning process affected if this is the case?

Dean (1991:18) wrote that:

“There is no way in which students in three or four years can learn everything they need to know as teachers and, at the same time, increase their knowledge in given subject area. Initial training is only the beginning of learning to be a teacher.”

If two to four years of pre-service training are not enough to equip a teacher with all the required knowledge and skills, how can a teacher be changed or influenced within a period of days or weeks? Are the INSET programmes effective enough to be used as the only means of assisting teachers in effecting important change in the education of our children?

I have noticed that OBE is still a monster to some members of the education authorities. Furthermore, officials who are conducting workshops for the Foundation Phase teachers are still being "work-shopped" themselves. How then can they effect changes on something they are not clear about? INSET is very important in teacher's professional development because a teacher must be effective and competent in his/her teaching activities. Things are always changing in education and one must always acquire new knowledge and skills. A teacher must be a master in his /her field. With the present changes in our education, the teacher's knowledge and skills need to be updated.

This can be achieved through INSET programmes. Schreuder (1993:10) supported this when he stated that:

“The professional person must ensure that he
always provides service of a high quality”

To provide with quality service a teacher must have all the necessary professional tools. To what extent does INSET influence the teacher's mastery of knowledge and skills needed in their profession? To what extent did INSET change these teachers to be relevant and effective?

I am a member of Hlanganani Curriculum Advisory Section and I attended a four-day workshop to be trained to conduct OBE workshops for Senior Phase teachers in one of the Learning Areas. Although these teachers attended a general OBE orientation workshop, at the end of my workshop I realised that these teachers were not given enough time to enable them to implement OBE in the next year Senior Phase. This led me to question the impact of INSET in helping teachers to be able to perform their respective educational duties. If three days are not enough, how then did the Foundation Phase teachers manage to kick-start the OBE process?

All of us who are conducting OBE programmes in the Hlanganani District are not OBE experts, and our positions as facilitators is dangerous. We are busy trying to familiarise ourselves with OBE and at the same time we are expected to assist teachers by providing them with professional knowledge and skills we are still accumulating ourselves.

My problem is to find out if what we are trying to provide with is enough to assist in making a meaningful change in our education system through our INSET programmes, and if not, where should we improve?

Dean (1991: 12) indicated that:

“ Learning takes place most easily if the teacher is aware of experience each pupil brings to the learning process. This is extremely difficult to do in large classes and impossible if all the children are expected to do the same work. Good teaching therefore involves both skills in assessing the stage pupils have reached and then organising to meet varying needs.”

✓ The above words are very true when teachers are to practice OBE. A learner is said to have a specific knowledge on which the teachers are to build or add new knowledge. Furthermore, OBE expects a teacher to give individual attention to all learners, and to accommodate both the fast and slow learners. Unfortunately, the state of our present overcrowded Foundation Phase classes make it difficult, if not impossible, for the teachers to practice OBE as expected. With this in mind, how then did the INSET assist teachers in the practice of OBE in overcrowded classes? Is it possible to assess the learner's development stages and to meet their needs in this set up?

Furthermore, when one happens to ask the Foundation Phase teachers and schools principals on how they are coping, one receives different responses. Some are

saying that the implementation is taking place smoothly, whereas, some are saying that they find it difficult to implement OBE because they are not clear on what to do and how to do it. I would like to establish the real truth on this.

Finally, Foundation Phase teachers are expected to teach all Learning Areas, Mathematics and Science included. The initial training of some teachers, however, did not equip them with basic Mathematics and scientific knowledge to enable them to teach these subjects. Now that OBE requires this knowledge to what extent, did the INSET assist these teachers?

1.3 NEED TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

As I mentioned earlier, the Foundation Phase teachers have already started implementing OBE. The process began in 1998 and is now towards the end of the second year since its inception. And now that the Senior Phase is expected to start with OBE next year (2000), I intend to establish whether the use of INSET is assisting teachers who are supposed to implement this change, is effective, so that if not, another method could be used. The Government, on the other hand, seems to rely on INSET programmes. There is a need to establish the impact of these programmes on teacher's professional development and in effecting new changes in education.

There is a great need of teacher's professional development programmes due to rapidly incoming changes in education. This fact is supported by Dean (1991:1) when he wrote that:

“ A great deal that we are currently teaching in schools, if not already out of date will become so in the very near future”

She could not been closer to the truth. The speed of change in our educational system is so high that if nothing is done to help teachers to cope with this change, our education is going to be negatively affected. If INSET is one of the best methods of assistance, then one need to establish this. As Dean (1991:2) proceeded to state:

“If we are to manage change rather than be managed by it, we need to see that as far as possible the staff of schools are able to cope with what is happening.”

✓ OBE has an impact on the professional competency of teachers. Their professional knowledge and skills are being tested. There must be a means to upgrade and update teachers so as to make them knowledgeable within the present changes. Now that INSET activities are being utilized as a means of training teachers to be able to survive and fit in the present teaching and learning activities, one is bound to establish the effect of the INSET method in order to continue using it.

It is important to establish the impact of INSET especially in the Foundation Phase because this is the base on which future education activities are to be built. And if the base is not strong, the expected implementation might crumble.

1.4 CLAIM

Although in-service training programmes are organized by the Government to train teachers who are tasked with the implementation of OBE, I doubt if these teachers received enough training to enable them to be outcomes-based and that the same time be ready to practice what they have received from INSET in their respective classes.

The manner, in which INSET activities are being conducted, seems to be not enough to develop teacher’s professional knowledge and skills. These teachers are

expected to make drastic changes when it comes to their teaching methods and approaches. They are expected to know what OBE is all about and at the same time be able to practice it within a very short space of time.

Most people take time to accept and adapt to changes. The problem can also be made difficult if one is forced to change. When one meets some of the Foundation Phase teachers and asks them how they are coping in OBE, one hears different responses.

Some say that they are not yet clear on what to do, some indicate the problem of not being provided with the necessary resources while others say that they are busy with OBE. These different responses made me to doubt if these teachers are in position to implement OBE competently and effectively.

✓ I also believe that OBE was not given enough time to be made known to teachers. It is possible that some schools are fortunate to be able to practice it, but I believe that most are still struggling. The INSET programmes seem to take into consideration the abnormal numbers of learners in most of the classrooms. Even if a teacher was ready with OBE, he/she does not know how to practice it in his/her overcrowded classroom.

I believe that the use of periodic workshops must be coupled with other teacher development methods so as to be more effective. This must be coupled with the suggested teacher-learner ratio in classes.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Target Area

As stated earlier, I intend to conduct my research in the Hlanganani District, in the Northern Province. Foundation Phase classes are found in primary schools, and I will, therefore, make use of some of these schools.

There are many primary schools with the Foundation Phase in this District. Due to the nature of my research, I am going to use a few selected schools. No specific order is going to be followed in the choice of schools. ✓✓

Furthermore, there are three Circuits in this District. I am going to visit an equal number of schools in each Circuit so as to collect more representative data.

1.5.2 Target Group

I am going to make use of the Foundation Phase teachers in my exercise. And teachers from different schools will be selected in no specific order. These teachers are going to be selected from each of the three Circuits. Both male and female teachers are going to be used. Teachers are going to be contacted in-groups or individually. ✓✓

1.5.3 Data Collection

The following data collection methods are going to be used, viz. interviews, questionnaires and observations. It is not easy to gather all the necessary data when using one method. I am going to use the three mentioned methods because I want to get as much information or data as possible. The three methods supplement each other.

1.6 THE STUDY PLAN

1.6.1 Section One

This section is an introduction to my study exercise. As discussed above, this section consists of an introduction in the form of background information. The main focus of this section is the research problem and claim. I have also included some needs to conduct the research and the research methodology.

1.6.2 Section Two

This section will deal mainly with the literature review. I am going to discuss the effect of change on education, especially on teachers. And I will also outline the meaning of INSET based on my research problem and claim. The set-up of the environment will be discussed to give a picture of the place, people, schools and the environment of the Hlanganani Area.

1.6.3 Section Three



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This section will be the exposition of the process of my field of study. I am going to explain how I went about in my research collecting and analysing data. In short this section will carry the activities involved in my research in detail.

1.6.4 Section Four

This is going to be my last section. This section will contain the discussion of my research findings, implications of the findings and recommendations. The section will end with a conclusion in the form of a summary of the whole research process.

1.7 SUMMARY

I would like to conclude this section by stating that INSET programmes are very important in the professional development of teachers. Education is always changing and this affects the teachers teaching skills and knowledge. Periodic workshops can be very effective as one of the methods in teacher development programmes.



SECTION TWO

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Section One I have pointed out that South Africa is presently implementing drastic changes in education. We are now shifting from the teacher–examination based education towards learner-outcomes-based education. This is not an easy shift because our education system has been for decades teacher and examination centered.

The most affected by this change are teachers. They are the ones who implement these changes in schools. And the problem is made more difficult by the fact that these changes challenge their professional knowledge and skills. They are expected to, within a very short period, acquire new knowledge and skills to enable them to successfully implement changes in education.

✓ Most traditionally Black schools in rural areas, like in Hlanganani, are still plagued by overcrowding in classrooms and lack of resources. Unfortunately, before these problems are addressed, the government is already implementing OBE. OBE cannot be easily practiced in overcrowded conditions. The process is not able to move smoothly because of this.

2.2 THE EFFECT OF CHANGES ON TEACHERS

It is not only the professional knowledge and skills of teachers that are affected by changes; the teacher’s attitude, competency and confidence are also affected. Bell and Day (1991:13) indicated that:

“Changes in education can affect the methodologies used,

the content of what is taught, the ways in which work is planned and children progress is assessed and recorded”.

The above statement that the change in education can affect the teacher’s professional knowledge and skills. South African education is now moving towards OBE. Teachers who are to implement this were never trained to teach and practice OBE. This implies that teachers who have to implement OBE have to undergo further training to familiarize them with OBE. Unfortunately this does not end here, it also includes teaching them new methods of evaluation and planning.

OBE is learner centered. The teacher is no longer the center of the learning situation. He/she must now facilitate learning in class. And training. Instead of relying on the end of the year examination for promotion purposes, the teacher, in OBE, must now rely on the records of assessment done throughout the year-continuous assessment. This is a very difficult shift and the teacher cannot cope without the help from somewhere. Murphy (1987:32) said that the following concerning the effect of changes;

“Changes call for effort, imagination and dealing with the unknown. Changes normally cause more insecurity. Insecured people get more insecure with change.”

The above words are supported by Henderson (1981:2) when he wrote that:

“ The development of a climate in which changes is seen as a natural and logical outcome of new knowledge is not easy- in any group, the development of such a climate requires leadership of the highest order and for the individual a level of self understanding which is often a too rare- anxieties will also occur.”

The introduction of OBE in South Africa frightened and frustrated a lot of teachers because it was seen as a monster infiltrating their comfort zones. Most teachers never believed that they would come to understand, enjoy and be able to practice OBE in class. Furthermore OBE calls for a drastic swing in teachers' methodologies and subject content.

People respond differently to changes. Most of the teachers especially in the primary schools where the Foundation Phase is, felt insecure and anxious to find out what the future holds for them. This was accelerated by the rate at which change is coming. The Government was in a hurry to implement this change although teachers were never involved and engaged in the decision making process to keep them informed and to take them aboard. Unfortunately, the teacher does not face changes from the Government only.

“In addition of change coming to us from the Government, we also have the changes resulting from the rapid development of knowledge which is making existing knowledge out-of – date very quickly- a great deal of what we are currently teaching in school, if not already out of date, will become so in the very near future”
(Dean, 1991:1).

The Foundation Phase teacher is expected to implement changes in education, to adapt to changes and be part of these changes. He is not given enough time to do so. Does this teacher who is presently effecting changes in our education possess all the professional tools to be effective, competent and confident? Schrender (1993:10) stated the following on the teacher's profession:

“ The professional person must ensure that he always provides service of high quality. His professionalism is also enhanced if he is a person of

irreproachable character and commands respect for the manner in which he provides his service.”

A teacher is able to provide service of a high quality if he is equipped with the necessary professional knowledge and skills. If a Foundation Phase teacher is to provide with high quality service, he too, must be assisted by the Government through guidance and training. Fortunately the Foundation Phase teachers in the Hlanganani District are being serviced through INSET programmes.

2.3 WHAT IS INSET

INSET is defined by Ashley and Mehl (1987:43) as:

“...Programmes which assist teachers by improving their knowledge and increasing their desire to learn, to improve their effectiveness in the classroom and in their professional service generally.”

The above definition is supported by Hopkins (1986: 18) when he said that INSET is:

“... these education and training activities engaged in by primary and secondary school teachers and principals following their professional certification, and intended primarily or exclusively to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in order that they can educate children more effectively.”

From the above definition it becomes clear that the main function of INSET is to develop the professional knowledge and skills of teachers. This is so because

changes affect their knowledge and skills, resulting them to be effective and competent in their teaching activities.

It is unfortunate that all the changes in our education come from the Government. Teachers are only instructed to go and attend INSET activities so as to update them. The question is how effective are these programmes and what do teachers gain from them?

Ashley and Mehl (1987:46) wrote that:

“No teacher can refuse to abide by the inspectors or departments instructions to attend in-service programme, yet a number of teachers who attend on instructions alone may not be sufficiently committed to the programmes.”

If Ashley and Mehl are stating the truth, how much did the Foundation Phase teachers who attended INSET programmes to assist them to implement OBE, gain from these programmes? And at the same time, how much is the implementation of OBE affected by these programmes. Dean (1991:9) indicated that:

“Commitment can only be achieved if those involved feel they have control of the process. Teachers will readily seek to improve their performance if they regard it as a part of their professional accountability, whereas they will resist change that is forced on them.”

The teachers had obviously not played any role in the changes taking part in our education. That is why OBE was implemented as something very new and unknown to the teachers. The Government alone decided to effect a change in education. The teachers come in when this change is to be implemented. And it is also expected of these teachers that the implementation must be a success because it seems as if our Government is ready to implement changes at all costs. That is

why series of INSET programmes had been organized for the Foundation Phase teachers.

The question is who is held accountable if OBE could prove to be a disaster? Hoyle (1980:96) stated that:

“INSET is no panacea. It cannot make such an impact on these fundamental social, cultural, political and economic constraints within which schools teachers have to operate.”

If INSET is no panacea, why is the government relying on it to effect crucial changes in education. Does it mean that when it comes to the implementation of changes, INSET can be effective, or does it mean that other methods ought to be used by the Government together with INSET programmes? If INSET is no panacea, what impact does it have on the implementation of OBE in the Foundation Phase? If the government is using only one method to assist teachers in their professional development, is it aware as to what extent had these teachers been assisted or how ready are they?

2.4 THE EFFECT OF INSET ON TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

When conducting INSET workshops, teachers seem to be following what is imparted. Some of the teachers gave the impression that they were ready and well equipped to go and practice what they gain from workshops. The problem the facilitator is faced with is that he/she cannot guarantee that a teacher will go back to school and practice what he/she received from INSET. Murphy (1987:16) indicates that:

“ A teacher’s enthusiasm soon diminishes as soon as he gets back to school because he has many commitments,

and because the staff who have never been on courses and have been teaching in the same way for many years are not receptive to new changes... no support is offered to teachers when they return to the school... the programme fail to recognize the professional status of the teachers.”

What Murphy stated is very true in our schools. Some teachers who attended OBE workshops are always fired with questions by teachers who did not attend these workshops. The purpose of these questions is to humiliate the teacher and to try to pretend as if the teacher who attended courses or INSET programme is no better than they are. And in most cases a teacher will not have all the answers and this, in most cases, influences him/her in sharing and practising what he gained from the course/workshop. Teachers are not supportive because they feel threatened because they are very much aware of the fact that change is slowly rendering their methods and knowledge redundant.

One cannot deny the fact that INSET programmes are very important in assisting teachers to implement changes in education. Henderson and Perry (1981:5) support this when they indicated that:

“Given the rapid and accelerating rate of social and educational change, it has long been recognized as vital that teachers should be involved in continual, or at least intermittent learning processes throughout what is generally called in-service education and training (INSET).”

Teachers need to be carried aboard through INSET. This can be of great help if done correctly. And INSET must be conducted throughout the teacher’s career. We used to have INSET institutions in the past. Many teachers were enrolled in these institutions in order to upgrade their profession or for specializations.

Unfortunately due to changes in politics, the institutions are no longer utilized. And many teachers are of late reluctant to upgrade themselves because the government does no longer effect any changes in their salaries after upgrading. If teachers do not upgrade themselves, they cannot offer quality service. Their competency is challenged. Schrender (1993:12) stated that:

“The teacher must maintain his own professional development at the highest possible level...
The professional person must ensure that he always provides service of high quality.”

The Foundation Phase teachers are now beginning to be upgraded. And INSET programmes run periodically. Teachers attend workshops for a day or two and go back to their respective schools to implement what they have acquired or been trained to do in their respective classroom. It seems as if these teachers are not given any time to accumulate enough knowledge and skills to successfully implement educational changes to be specific, OBE. It appears as if it would have been better if all these teachers were taken to INSET institutions and be trained for a full year or two. Maybe this was not possible because the Government is, up to date, still collecting more information on OBE. This implies that the implementation timing was wrong.

The INSET programmes rationale is to improve or to develop the teacher's professional knowledge and skills as supported by Bell and Day (1991:7) when they wrote that:

“Its (INSET) rationale lay in the need to improve the education of relatively poorly educated teachers and as such, it was probably highly effective.”

“Although little research and evaluation had been directed towards INSET and its effectiveness, the subjective judgements of many of those involved throughout the education profession suggested that much INSET was failing to have any significant impact on practice in the schools.”

The above statement made me to have doubts on the effectiveness of INSET programmes conducted for the Foundation Phase in the Hlanganani District. This led me to decide to do research in this area hoping that I will be able to establish the impact of these programmes on the implementation of OBE.

Some Curriculum Advisors ran workshops with the Foundation Phase teachers who are presently busy with OBE in Hlanganani District. And as a Curriculum Advisor in this District, I was involved in Senior Phase teachers who are to implement OBE next year (2000) using the same method as in the Foundation Phase. I want to establish if what we are presently trying to do is not a futile exercise.

As I mentioned, I have attended OBE INSET workshops, which ran for just four days. The aims of these workshops were to train us to be able to conduct these workshops for the Senior Phase teachers. At the end of the workshops I still had a lot of gaps concerning OBE. And the Department expected me, who is not an OBE expert, to service teachers in a three-day workshop programme. These teachers are now expected to have gathered enough OBE knowledge and skills to kickstart the implementation of OBE in the Senior Phase. I therefore need to establish the effect of these OBE workshops from the group already in practice-the Foundation Phase teachers.

2.5 THE PRESENT SCHOOL SITUATION

2.5.1 The classroom situation

Foundation Phase classes are overcrowded. This makes it difficult for teachers to facilitate learning activities as expected in OBE because it requires that learners be divided into manageable groups. Furthermore, a teacher is expected to give individual attention to his/her learners. This is very difficult to achieve in a full class.

- ✓✓ Most of the schools do not have basic resources such as furniture and classrooms. These are some of the problems the Foundation Phase teachers are faced with. Even if these teachers had acquired the knowledge and skills from OBE INSET programmes, the present classroom situation is not very conducive to OBE.

2.5.2 Lack of Resources

The Government does not supply schools with OBE materials such as assessment forms and teaching aids. The teachers are told that they must be creative and be able to make use of the limited resources. Assessment requires individual assessment, group assessment, peer-group assessment and self-assessment. Without computers and photocopying facilities, how are these teachers coping?

2.5.3 Staff Support

Most teachers and principals who are still in the dark concerning OBE cannot give teachers the necessary needed support. In most cases OBE teachers are demoralised. The teacher is left to struggle alone.

With the above school situation, how is the implementation of OBE affected in the Foundation Phase and to what extent are INSET programmes assisting?

2.6 CONCLUSION

OBE is being implemented in the Foundation Phase. This process started in 1998. OBE is something new in South African education system. And teachers, who are affecting this change, were never trained to do so in their initial teacher training process at their respective training institutions. To familiarise teachers with OBE, the government is making use of INSET programmes conducted by the Curriculum Advisory Section.

As I indicated, OBE is a new concept, both the Government and the Curriculum Advisory Section are not yet clear about it. Unfortunately the new Government is in a hurry to implement changes in education. The teachers, who are also stakeholders, were never involved in decision –making processes. But they are now playing a key role in implementation. The failure and success of the exercise rest on them. Unfortunately, these teachers still lack the necessary vital knowledge and skills.

The learning situation is now changed. The learner is in complete control of the learning situation, the teachers' teaching methods and skills are now rendered ineffective and there are problems of uncertainty caused by the process of rationalisation and redeployment, the problems of salary boycotts, are some of the things they are to live with and at the same time be expected to be effective and to offer quality service.

With the above situations and the assistance offered through INSET programmes, how is the implementation of Curriculum 2005 affected or what role does the INSET play in motivating teachers to effect changes in education?

I hope that at the end of this exercise the findings will establish some answers to these questions.

SECTION THREE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this section is to explain how I conducted my research. Here is where I will describe the people, place and the environment of where I am conducting my research. This will be followed by my research plan. And in my research plan, I will, among others, include an overview of the design of my investigation, data collection method and procedure, data sampling method and procedure, data analysis method and procedure.

3.2 SETTING OF MY INQUIRY

The reason for carrying out this research exercise is to establish the impact of in-service training programmes (INSET) on the implementation of OBE in the Foundation Phase. The Foundation Phase is presently practising outcome-based education throughout our country. And the teachers who are engaged in this have been helped through INSET programmes in the form of mainly workshops to give them knowledge and skills to be used in the implementation of Curriculum 2005/OBE.

It is not possible for me to conduct my research in all schools in South Africa. I have, therefore, decided to limit my area of operation to be within Hlanganani District in the Northern Province.

3.2.1 HLANGANANI DISTRICT

The Hlanganani District, as I stated above, is found in the Northern Province. This area is located between Tzaneen and Louis Trichardt.

This is a rural area. Like most rural areas in our country, the state of some primary schools is not very conducive to learning activities. Some of these schools are still faced with the problem of overcrowding and the lack of basic school facilities such as furniture, stationery (for learners), electricity, communication facilities such as telephones and fax machines and even drinking water.

3.2.2 TEACHERS

Most of the primary school teachers, if not all, in the Hlanganani District have never been trained to teach the OBE way. Like most of the teachers in South Africa, were trained to facilitate teacher-centred and subject controlled education. OBE is still not yet a familiar approach. And before teachers could acclimatize themselves to outcomes-based education, the Department seems to have been in a hurry to implement it. To familiarise teachers with OBE and to equip them with professional knowledge and skills, so as to be able to implement this, the Province or the Department organised INSET programmes. Not all teachers are able to attend these programmes because they are only arranged for a specific group of teachers involved with a specific phase only. Initially, only the Foundation Phase teachers were catered for to enable them to kickstart Curriculum 2005. The question is how prepared are they, because in most of these teachers are “allergic” to changes and always fight anything interfering with their “comfort zones?”

3.2.3 LEARNERS

Although there are few pre-schools in this area, most of the children do not attend these pre-schools. This is so because of distance. Some children are staying very far from these pre-schools and they will need to be transported to go and attend at these schools. And at times, even if the pre-schools is situated near some of the children, they do not attend because their parents do not realise the need for a child to start school from the pre-schooling stage. This then indicates that most children go straight from home to grade one and therefore, experience the school

life for the first time. The grade one class consists of two groups of learners: those who are coming to school straight from home and those who are from pre-school.

3.2.4 PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND THE COMMUNITY

Although some parents and guardians are illiterate, most of them are semi-illiterate. The culture of checking up the progress of a child at school is still at a very low rate, if it is there at all. This then is an illustration to indicate that most parents/guardians do not give themselves, even those who are literate, time to check the school progress of their children and assist them accordingly.

In most cases the community does not know how the school functions. And most of the schools are built by them, i.e. they contributed some funds towards the building of schools in their respective villages. In other words the schools are theirs. They always want to have a certain amount of control in the running of schools including academic matters, although they do not know how schools are operated. Some of these people are members of the school governing bodies.

3.2.5 CHIEFS/HEADMAN AND THE CIVICS



The chief/headman always want to have control of schools especially when it comes to the appointment of teachers and principals. The same is true with the civics. Unfortunately they do have the knowledge and skills to do this. The criteria attached to an appointee, in most cases is that you must be a child of that village. Qualification and experience are not taken into consideration.

The principal is expected to keep the two above parties informed on the affairs of the school. He is expected at times to effect changes through their permission. The departmental policies are at times violated. Unfortunately the two parties are always at loggerheads. There is always a power struggle. They always resist “outside” changes at schools including the implementation of changes they are not conversant with like Curriculum 2005.

The above discussion is meant to give one the picture of the conditions under which the rural schools operate. For the smooth implementation of Curriculum 2005, learners and teachers need a lot of support from educationists. Outcomes-based education or Curriculum 2005 requires the involvement of parents or guardians in the educational activities of their children. They are expected to assess the progress of their children and give assistance where needed.

I used three data collection methods in order to collect as much information in a short space of time, viz are the questionnaire, interviews and observation. Leedy (1989:142) said the following on a questionnaire:

“Data sometimes lie buried deep within the minds or within the attitudes, feelings, or reactions of men and women... The problem is to devise a tool to probe below the surface. A common place instrument for observing data beyond physical reach of the observation, is the questionnaire.”

With the use of a questionnaire, as Leedy stated above, I hope to obtain a reliable response from people I'm using as my respondents. I am aware that some people feel comfortable to respond to a questionnaire or to give information in writing and that some feel comfortable to remain anonymous. Taking that in consideration, I did not ask my respondents to reveal their identities.

The questionnaire is used together with interview. I used both individual and group interviews. An interview is defined by Kerlinger (1986:46) as:

“...a face to face interpersonal role situation in which one, the interviewer, asks a person being interviewed, the respondent, questions designed to obtain pertinent to the research problem.”

I used interviews because I believed that these interviews would be able to obtain some of the information I would have failed to collect through the questionnaire. The interview is said to be the most important tool in data collection. Mahlangu (1987:87) stated that:

“With a skillful interviewer, the interview is often superior to other data gathering devices... people are usually more willing to talk than to write ... certain confidential information may be obtained that an individual might be reluctant to put in writing.”

Making use of both the interview and the questionnaire helped me in making it possible for me to gather as much data as possible from my respondents. People differ, there are those who are comfortable in talking when others prefer to put their thoughts in writing. So, the two methods supplement each other. Kerlinger (1986:440) stated that:

“When used with a well conceived schedule (questionnaire), an interview can obtain a great deal of information... Interviews and interview schedule are therefore subject to the same criteria of reliability, validity and objectivity as other measuring instruments.”

The data collected must be reliable and valid. So, I used both methods in order to come out with reliable and valid data to strengthen my research problem and claim. And I wanted to be as objective as possible. But I am aware that even with the use of the above-mentioned tools of data collection, I might still not be able to come out with all expected responses. And this led me to use observation as another tool in my data collection process.

I used the observation method because I felt that what my respondents told me could not reveal what they are really practising in their respective classes. I observed the classroom arrangement, decorations, learner's files and learning activities.

3.3 DATA SAMPLING

A sample is defined by Best and Kann (1986: 12) as

“...a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis”

This definition implies the use of a small proportion of a population to represent the rest. In my research exercise, I am making use of samples for the nature of my research does not allow me to make use of all the people who are involved with the Foundation Phase group in schools. The fact that all these teachers underwent the same OBE training and were trained by the same people, selecting a proportion of them as my sample is going to give me the required or expected responses, Added to this fact I used random sampling to avoid bias. Kerlinger (1986:111) said the following on random sampling;

“A sample drawn is unbiased. In the sense that no member of the population has any more chance of being selected than any other member is. We have democracy in which all members are equal before the bar of selection.”

The above words are supported by Barley (1992:91) when he wrote that:

In a random sample each person in the universe has an equal probability of being chosen for the sample, and

every collection of persons of the same size has an equal probability of becoming the actual sample.”

I chose to use random sampling because I wanted to have views or responses from different people who were not prepared beforehand of my intention to use them in my research.

I targeted nine schools with a Foundation Phase group –three schools per circuit. I did not use any criteria in my choice of these nine schools. And when coming to my respondents, I used seven teachers from each Circuit to complete my questionnaire. In case of the interviews, I allowed the situation to control me. Where the situation was not conducive for group interviews, I targeted one of the teachers and conducted individual interview. At times when a questionnaire is busy being completed, if the situation did not allow me to conduct interviews I tried to observe what was taking place in some of the Foundation Phase classrooms.

3.3.1 Data Analysis



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The fact that I am using three types of data collection, made that I have decided to study and compare the responses. And I used the questionnaire responses to find out if they are supported by what I got from interviews and observation classrooms. How I went about it will be illustrated under analysis procedure below.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedure

As I indicated earlier in my discussion, I decided to make use of random sampling. I used randomizing because I realized that all Foundation Phase teachers were trained together by the same people. Due to this fact I could pick any of these teachers to represent the rest. To make sure that the chosen teachers

are as representative as possible, I used teachers from all the three circuits were used.

3.3.3 Sample for questionnaire

To make sure that my sample is as representative as possible, I picked up seven teachers from different schools in each of the three existing Circuits. This then means that I picked up twenty teachers at random as my respondents. The only criteria I used in picking up my respondents was to have attended INSET programmes arranged by the Province for the Foundation Phase teachers and to be involved in the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in the Foundation Phase.

3.3.4 Sample for the Interviews

I mentioned that I was going to conduct both individual and group interviews. As in the question of the questionnaire, I picked up any Foundation Phase teacher. The interviews were not too formal. I used teachers at schools or even outside working hours. I did not have any specific order on how I picked up my respondents. I only chose teachers who are involved with the Foundation Phase. No gender issue was considered. Unfortunately, there are more female teachers than male teachers in this phase. But I tried to be as gender sensitive as possible.

3.3.5 Choice of schools

There are more than sixty primary schools in the Hlanganani District. All these schools starts from grade one. It would have been difficult for me to use all of them. The method being used conducting OBE at all this school is more or less the same because as stated earlier, all these teachers have been subjected to the same training. I therefore picked some of these schools without making use of any specific method. To make sure that these schools are as representative as possible,

I visited equal number of schools in each circuit. I used different schools and teachers for both interviews and questionnaires.

3.3.6 Sampling period

To avoid disruption of school activities and to make sure that I follow professional procedures, I first obtain permission from the District office to visit schools in the District and visited the schools during breaks and only requested help from teachers who were not in class - during their free periods. With questionnaires, I always asked that respondent complete it alone to avoid that he/she be influenced by other teachers to get the view of the picked up teacher without being influenced by others. I gave each respondent twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire. And in case of interview, I conducted some while the questionnaire respondent was busy completing the questionnaire. But at times I conducted interviews with any identified Foundation Phase teacher I came across. This then means that I conducted my interviews during and after working hours.

3.4 Data Collection



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3.4.1 Questionnaire

My questionnaire consisted of three pages. The first page consisted of directives. Here is where I explained the content of my questionnaire and directions on how to fill in the questionnaire (See Addendum A).

Due to lack of time, I failed to make appointments with principals to visit their respective schools. This did not really create any problem because at all the schools I visited I was warmly received by both the principal and the teachers immediately after I indicated my reason to visit the school. I did not reveal that my questionnaires were for research purposes but I told them that I wanted to establish the impact of INSET programmes they attended- fortunately this was the

real reason for my undertaking this research. In most cases people tend to respond negatively when asked to help for academic purposes.

I found it easy to request teachers to complete my questionnaires because most of the teachers were aware that I am involved with OBE programmes in the Senior Phase. Before a teacher fills in the questionnaire, I briefly explained how I expected him/her to do it. I realised that the teachers relaxed when I stressed that they were not required to put down their names and that there were no right and wrong answers. After I established that everything was understood, I left the teacher to complete the questionnaire alone because I realised that my presence might intimidate them.

After completing the questionnaire, I thanked the teachers and the principal before I left the school. At times I was stopped by the inquisitive teacher who wanted to know why I was at their school, and why I excluded them in my inquiry. I always explained that I did not have enough forms and assured them that they were represented by their colleagues.

3.4.2 Interviews

I compiled a number of questions to guide me in interviews (See Addendum B). These questions were to help me to remain focused. I immediately realised that my respondents responded with suspicion and there were tense. I asked one of my respondents to tell me why she seemed to be tense and the answer was that she was not sure whether the interview was not part of research to establish the competency of teachers in OBE with the aim of redeploying the incompetent teachers. This response helped me a lot because from there onward I proceeded conducting informal interviews so as to make my respondents to loosen up and relax.



Instead of sticking to my list of questions, I asked leading question at random. I made sure that I explained my reason for conducting the interview. Some teachers asked me questions to find out if I was not on an inspection mission since I was from the District Office.

With interviews I preferred to visit the schools during breaks in their staffrooms. In most cases my opening statement was: “Goodmorning/goodday teachers, or should I call you educators?” The next question was: “ By the way are you OBE inclined? How do you find OBE?” In most cases I got answers that portrayed mixed feelings. From here I became specific. “ Who of you is teaching in the Foundation Phase? How is OBE in class? Have you all attended the OBE workshops? I allowed other teachers not in the Foundation Phase to share their views on OBE. I made sure that the atmosphere remained relaxed, but now and then I directed questions to the relevant group of teachers.

Besides group interviews, I also conducted individual interviews. I began by getting to a school and explain my reason for the visit to the principal and at the same time asked him/her to give me one of the Foundation Phase teachers to interview. I found that the chosen teacher was usually very frightened and did not understand why he/she was picked out from the rest. I had to explain to her the reason of my visit and openly told her that the interview was for the research purposes. Fortunately I had with me a letter from RAU and one from the District Manager. Then the teacher relaxed but I did not easily get what I wanted. It was then that I decided to combine my questionnaire and interviews. From there onward, when a respondent was busy completing the questionnaire, I remained with other teachers asking them “informal focused questions” focusing on my interview questions and my research field of inquiry. This method helped me a lot. And with individual interviews, I at times made sure that I am accompanied by one of the Foundation Phase teachers on my way to the Principal’s gate. I parked my car outside the gate for strategic reasons. The distance allowed me to collect further information.

3.4.3 Observation

When I was busy conducting interviews and distributing questionnaires, I visited some OBE classrooms through the permission of the principal and the teachers concerned. What I wanted to establish through this exercise was to find out whether the classroom had relevant pictures and charts on the walls to be used as teaching aids. And I even visited some teachers who were busy with learning activities. Most teachers were very helpful. Besides observing classrooms and lesson, I even observed the relationship between the Foundation Phase teachers themselves and with their other colleagues, including the principal. I studied the type of resources they have, including electricity, furniture and stationery. I usually got more information from the principles.

It took me three weeks to collect this data. I visited twelve schools- four schools per each of the Hlanganani three circuits.

To avoid intimidating my respondents, I always carried along a notebook in which I recorded my findings. Since I could not jot down anything in the presence of my respondents, I noted down what I collected or what I found from each school immediately I moved out of the schoolyard. So I kept a record of responses from interviews and observations.

3.5.1 Data Analysis

3.5.2 Questionnaire

The purpose of my questionnaire was to ask those who are presently involved with the Foundation Phase group and who attended most, if not all the INSET programmes organised by the Department with the aim of equipping teachers with knowledge and skills to implement Curriculum 2005.

When analysing my questionnaire responses, I wanted to establish whether all my respondents were involved with the Foundation Phase, presently implementing Curriculum 2005, the number of INSET programmes they attended, what they gained, their feelings concerning INSET programmes and the feeling about Curriculum 2005/OBE in general.

In the questionnaire I asked the respondents to rate their feelings using the score scale rated from 1-5.

1. = Strongly disagreed
2. = Disagreed
3. = Undecided
4. = Agree
5. = Strongly agree (See Addendum A)

After going through the responses I came out with the following Table (see Addendum for the statements they responded to).



Fig 3.1 S C O R E S

| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 21 | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | 18 | 02 | 01 | - | - |
| 3 | 21 | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 18 | 01 | 01 | 01 | - |
| 5 | 12 | 02 | 04 | 02 | 01 |
| 6 | 20 | 01 | - | - | - |
| 7 | 19 | 01 | 01 | - | - |
| 8 | - | - | - | 04 | 17 |
| 9 | - | - | 01 | 02 | 18 |
| 10 | 10 | 06 | 03 | 01 | 01 |
| 11 | 16 | 02 | 02 | 01 | - |
| 12 | 07 | 05 | 02 | 03 | 04 |
| 13 | 14 | 04 | - | 02 | 01 |
| 14 | 21 | - | - | - | - |
| 15 | 20 | 01 | - | - | - |
| 16 | 15 | 04 | 02 | 02 | - |
| 17 | 15 | 03 | 01 | 01 | - |
| 18 | 06 | 05 | 04 | 04 | 06 |
| 19 | 12 | 05 | 01 | 01 | 01 |
| 20 | - | - | 02 | 02 | 18 |
| 21 | - | - | - | - | 21 |
| 22 | 15 | 04 | - | - | - |
| 23 | 01 | - | 02 | 02 | 18 |
| 24 | 09 | 08 | - | - | 01 |

- 5 = Strongly agree
- 4 = Agree
- 3 = undecided
- 2 = Disagree
- 1 = Strongly disagree

In section B of my questionnaire, I asked five questions and left some spaces to fill in (See Addendum D). I got the following responses to the five question.

Fig. 3.2 Section B

| | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | One workshop More than three workshop | 2 98 |
| 2 | Knowledge about OBE How to plan a lesson Learning Areas Class arrangement How to work with groups How to facilitate learning How to use a policy document | 95 70 60 71 91 96 90 |
| 3 | More OBE materials Longer period for workshop Examples of lesson plan | 100 98 99 92 |
| 4 | Lack of resources Overcrowding Lack of stationery (assessment) | 97 95 99 |
| 5 | Group discussions Visit schools where OBE is running well. | 60 64 64 |

3.5.1 Interviews

I used some of the following questions at random in my interviews:

- Did you acquire enough OBE knowledge and skills from the workshop you attended?
- What do you enjoy most when practising OBE in your class?
- Do you still need to attend more OBE workshops and why?
- What do you think must be improved in the running of workshop?

- What do you gain from clusters and how do you think they should be improved when need arises?

As I indicated earlier, I wrote down the responses to the above questions. After going through them the following responses from the above questions were found:

- About 40% acquired enough OBE knowledge and skills from INSET.
- 80% enjoy watching the learners taking active part in learning activities.
- 50% enjoy everything in the OBE learning activities.
- More than 90% indicated that they still want to attend more workshops.
- 80% are not yet clear on the drawing-up of a lesson plan.
- More than 80% indicated that workshops should be arranged to run for a week and not for three days only.
- About 90% want to be provided with more handouts and assessment forms.
- More than 85% indicated that they get assistance from clusters and share ideas with other teachers. They draw-up lessons together and it helps them a lot because they still have difficulties in drawing-up lesson plans. More time must be given to teachers to meet.

3.5.3 Observation

I found that most classes have educational pictures and charts on the walls. Most of these pictures and charts are very educative. The names of learners are pasted on their desks and at times even on the walls. Teaching aids were orderly arranged or grouped. The desks were arranged in circles, rectangles and arcs.

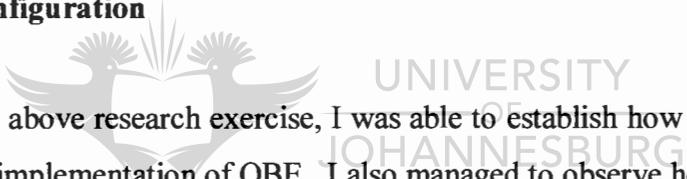
I went to three Grade One classes in the absence of the teacher and found learners busy cutting and pasting pictures on charts. Although their teacher was not

present, the noise in these classes was controlled and learners were actively engaged in learning activities.

I also managed to attend three classes in session. The teachers seemed to know what they were doing in these classes and both the teacher and the learners seemed to be enjoying the learning activities. Both the learners and the teacher were in control of the learning situation.

I even got a chance to go through the files of some of the learners. There were assessment forms and the work of the learners in these files. The files were neatly arranged on window sills. Unfortunately the same was not true in the other two schools I observed. OBE was practised but learners were packed in the classroom and the teacher was struggling to move in between the desks. Few charts were on the walls. Teachers seemed not to be sure of what they were expected to do.

3.6 Final configuration

The logo of the University of Johannesburg, featuring two stylized birds facing each other with an open book between them, and the text 'UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG' in a light grey font.

From the above research exercise, I was able to establish how teachers are coping with the implementation of OBE. I also managed to observe how outcomes-based education lessons are conducted. These findings will be discussed in more detail in the last and final section.

SECTION FOUR

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of my research exercise was to establish the impact of INSET programmes on the implementation of Curriculum 2005/OBE in the Foundation Phase. Interviews were conducted with the Foundation Phase teachers, they completed questionnaires and I also tried to observe what was being done in classes. In this section I will discuss my findings and recommendations. And my research findings and implications will be discussed based on my claim.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 When conducting interviews – both individual and group interviews, I found that my respondents were taking part actively because I told them that I was involved with the Senior Phase. They responded to most of my questions expecting me to provide them with instant solutions to some of the problems they encountered in their teaching activities, like the lack of resources and learning programmes.

Most of the teachers said that they had problems in teaching the outcomes-based method. But when asked if they receive any assistance in their activities, they indicated that they formed clusters. These clusters are formed by a group of leaders from neighbouring schools. They meet regularly and share ideas and the cluster facilitator is always offering them help where needed. And from this exercise, I found that teachers wanted more programmes (workshops) should be arranged and they must run, for a period of not shorter than a week so as to be effective because they still need to be provided with more OBE knowledge and professional skills.

4.2.2 Questionnaire

All the teachers who completed the questionnaire indicated that they were involved with the Foundation Phase group. On the responses based on INSET programmes, the majority responded that they still need more information on OBE and that they still find it difficult to practice it in class. Most indicated that they have large classes and lack resources.

4.2.3 Observation

I found charts and pictures on the walls of all the classrooms I visited. When I studied what was in classes, I found that most teachers took their time to collect these pictures and charts.

Some of the learners' works were displayed on the walls and on windowpanes or at different places in the classrooms. At most schools desks and chairs were arranged in circles, arcs and squares. Learners were seated in-groups. And where the lesson was in progress, learners were in-groups and the teacher was moving from one group to another trying to assist here and there.

I observed that the learners were enjoying the learning activities. And I even visited classes where learners were left on their own. I found them talking to each other in-groups. Each group had a group leader. They all listened to that group leader. What caught my attention was the age of the learners (Grade One) and the fact that they could engage themselves in learning activities in the absence of their teacher and most importantly was the controlled noise.

When I discussed with their teachers, they indicated that learners know what they were expected to do in class. The absence of a teacher does not stop them to continue with their activities. Most teachers said that they are able to manage their classes through the help of the OBE INSET programmes they attended.

I also went through the files of learners. At most of the schools each learner had his/her own Individual file. Assessment forms were put in these files. I could easily assess the activities of these learners.

4.2.4 Summary of my findings

What I found in class contradicted what I got from interviews and questionnaires. Teachers gave the impression that they were still struggling to implement OBE because they did not receive enough assistance from INSET programmes. And they also indicated that they find it so difficult to facilitate learning activities that they, in most cases, still practised the “old” teaching methods.

The classroom activities however illustrated that OBE was in progress and those teachers were doing it quite impressively. The only problem that affect their teaching activities is overcrowding and lack of facilities, but teachers are trying their best to make use of the limited resources.

When coming to clusters, I found that they help in filling in the gaps because if the teachers missed something in a workshop, they got explanations from clusters. These clusters help not only in the sharing of information they also facilitate the dissemination of new information.

4.3 Implications of findings

With the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education in South Africa, the Department of Education realised that none of the present teachers were trained to facilitate this. Some predominately white schools were using a more or less similar method of teaching, but not as a system of Education. Retraining all teachers would have been too expensive to the Government. Teachers were retrained in installments. The group that needed first consideration was the Foundation Phase teachers. To facilitate the training with limited school

disruptions, INSET programmes in a form of workshops were organised. Unfortunately OBE was something new. To facilitate training of teachers, a group of educators taken mostly from the Advisory Section were pre-trained and they in turn serviced the Foundation Phase teachers. And since the Department was in a hurry to implement OBE, teachers were made to start with the implementation while at the same undergoing further training. This process is still going on to date. The fact that these teachers are still being assisted through INSET programmes is a clear indication that enough is not yet achieved to equip teachers with OBE knowledge and skills. OBE is something new and more information or knowledge is still being gathered. That is why the facilitators of OBE are still being trained.

The fact that OBE is in progress in the Foundation Phase implies that the INSET programmes conducted by the Department did assist teachers with enough knowledge and skills to get them started. The only problem is that most of these teachers are operating with very little understanding of what and how they are expected to do. Most of the teachers are not sure whether they are in the correct track or not. Teachers are not confident and this affects their competence.

From my findings, I found that INSET is a very important tool in assisting teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills. It is an important tool in retraining teachers. But to be used as a tool to equip teachers with knowledge and skills to implement drastic changes in education, a longer period must be set aside for that.

The response of my respondents is an indication that they still need a lot of assistance. Although they are busy teaching the OBE way, there is still a lot of confusion here and there. This is highlighted by the work found in the files of learners.

This is also an indication that the Department failed to give INSET programmes enough time to train teachers in OBE. The fact that the educators who are

facilitating the INSET programmes are themselves no experts in this field make it another problem. These educators, although they did a good job in that something is being done at schools, need to be authorities in OBE. But this does not mean that they did not help in the effecting of in our education system. The fact that teachers are busy trying to practice OBE in their respective classrooms means that given a chance and enough time, OBE can be a success.

My research was based on the claim that enough was not done by INSET to equip the Foundation Phase teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills so as to be able to implement OBE effectively. The findings of this exercise support my assumptions because most teachers are still struggling in classes. They still need a lot of help. But I do not deny the important role done by INSET. It is just that enough was not attained. The impact of the INSET in the implementation of OBE is not enough – there is little impact.

4.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations could be made from my research results:

- Teachers who are supposed to be trained in a specific field could be taken out of their classes and be trained for some months or even a year. There are many teachers ever so eager to fill these positions on a temporary basis.
- Experts in OBE must be the only people to train teachers and the “others” can then make follow-ups.
- The Department must not rely only on their educators to facilitate changes. The NGO’s must also be used to supplement it.

- Before any important change in education can be effected, the ground must be level. OBE was implemented before the teacher-learner ratio was in place, the problem of facilities and resources in schools was not addressed before OBE is effected.
- OBE is being implemented in the whole of South Africa and this research exercise only covered a very small fraction of the country. I recommend that a further research on this topic be persuaded in order to establish if what is happening in the Hlanganani District is what other areas are experiencing.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This research exercise highlights the impact of INSET in the implementation of OBE in the Foundation Phase in the Hlanganani District. The findings from the data collected through interviews, questionnaires and observation were used to provide information used in establishing the effect of INSET programmes in equipping teachers with enough relevant knowledge and skills to assist them in effecting changes in education. The data collected were analysed and tables were used in the analysis.

The assumption that INSET did not provide teachers with enough professional knowledge and skills was supported.

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ADDENDUM A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions

1. This questionnaire contains statements on the OBE workshops you attended from 1998. There are no right or wrong answers.
2. Think about how well each statement in section A describes your feelings about what you gained from OBE workshops, and write what is asked according to your opinion in section B.
3. Reasons to each statement in section A by making a cross in the appropriate number in the square on the right. The numbers have the following meaning:

5 = strongly agree

4 = agree

3 = undecided

2 = disagree

1 = strongly disagree



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4. provide your choice to each statement truthfully.
5. You need not write down your name.
6. Your responses are confidential.
7. Thank you for your co-operation.

ADDENDUM B

Some of the questions used for interviews:

1. Did you acquire enough OBE knowledge and skills from the workshop you attended?
2. What do you enjoy most when practising OBE in your class?
3. Do you still need to attend more OBE workshops and why?
4. What do you think must be improved in the running of OBE workshops?
5. What do you gain from clusters and how do you think they should be improved when need arises?



ADDENDUM C

SECTION A

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | strongly disagree |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Indicate YOUR feeling by writing down the appropriate numbers in the space provided on the right.

1. I am a Foundation Phase teacher
2. I am busy implementing Curriculum 2005
3. I attended OBE workshops from 1998
4. The OBE workshops I attended were very informative
5. I can freely talk about OBE
6. The methods used in conducting OBE workshops were good
7. The facilitators of the OBE workshops have been good
8. The teacher-ratio in my class is not a problem
9. I have the necessary resources to use in my learning activities
10. I can easily draw a lesson plan? Learning activity
11. I know the meaning of all OBE terms
12. I always receive help from my colleagues at school

13. My principal is supportive
14. I always meet with other Foundation Phase teachers in my cluster
15. The cluster assist in the implementation of OBE
16. I enjoy practising OBE in my class
17. The implementation of OBE in my school is running smoothly
18. It is easy for me to use resources/material to use in my teaching activities
19. I have enough OBE information to help in my teaching activities OBE
20. The OBE workshops attended so far are enough
21. I am never in need of more OBE information
22. My learners enjoy OBE
23. My school has a photocopying machine
24. I think the implementation of OBE in the Foundation Phase was done in the right time

ADDENDUM D

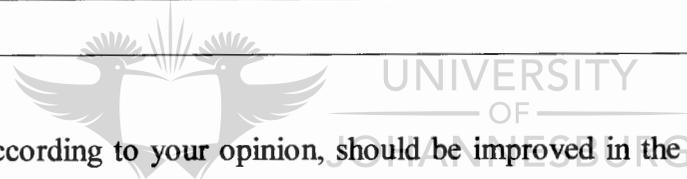
SECTION B

1. How many workshops (programmes) did you attend so far?

2. Indicate some of the things you gained in the OBE workshops you attended.

3. What according to your opinion, should be improved in the running (conducting) of OBE workshops?

4. Which problems do you encounter when you apply OBE in your school/class?



5. Besides workshops, what else do you think could be used to help you in facilitating OBE in your class?

Thank you _____

