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**THE CORE-PLUS CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH FOR THE TEACHING OF  
COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS**

by

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Research Essay

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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**SUPERVISOR: PROF. E. HENNING**

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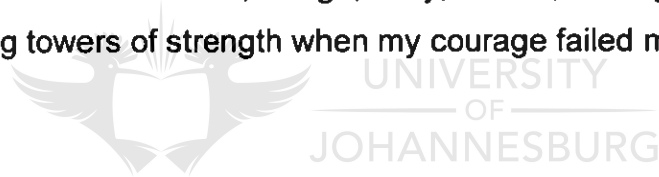
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	I
LIST OF TABLES .....	V
LIST OF ADDENDA.....	VI
<b>SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND .....	1
1.3 THE ROLE OF THE CORE-PLUS CURRICULUM .....	4
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION .....	5
1.5 THE RESEARCH AIM .....	5
1.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS .....	6
1.6.1 <i>Sampling</i> .....	6
1.6.2 <i>Focus group interviews</i> .....	7
1.6.3 <i>Questionnaires</i> .....	7
1.6.4 <i>In-depth interviews</i> .....	7
1.7 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....	7
1.8 CONCLUSION.....	8
<b>SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	9
2.2 PIAGET AND VIGOTSKY'S THEORIES OF LEARNING .....	9
2.3 THE COMMUNITY AND THE SCHOOL .....	11
2.4 THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION .....	13
2.5 THE CORE-PLUS CURRICULUM AND TOWNSHIP YOUTH .....	14
2.6 STRATEGIES OF IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY .....	16
2.6.1 <i>Cummins' theoretical framework</i> .....	16
2.6.2 <i>Content-centred language instruction</i> .....	19
2.7 CONCLUSION.....	21
<b>SECTION THREE: DATA COLLECTION, CODING, CATEGORISING AND ANALYSING .....</b>	<b>23</b>

3.1	INTRODUCTION .....	23
3.2	AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY .....	23
3.3	METHODS OF GATHERING RAW DATA .....	23
3.3.1	<i>Focus interviews</i> .....	24
3.3.2	<i>Structured questionnaires with teachers</i> .....	29
3.4	INDEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY .....	33
3.5	CATEGORIES OF FINDINGS .....	37
3.6	CONCLUSION .....	38
	<b>SECTION FOUR: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1	INTRODUCTION .....	39
4.2	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	40
4.2.1	<i>Acquisition of business language</i> .....	40
4.2.2	<i>The development of the core-plus curriculum</i> .....	41
4.2.3	<i>The culture of teaching and learning</i> .....	41
4.3	RECOMMENDATIONS .....	43
4.4	CONCLUSION .....	43
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>60</b>



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## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1 1998 EXAMINATION RESULTS.....	3
Table 2 CUMMINS' TABLE OF BIC AND CALP .....	17
Table 3 THE CUMMINS MATRIX .....	19
Table 4 CODED DATA FROM SOWETO COLLEGE .....	25
Table 5 CODED DATA FROM A THOKOZA INTERVIEW .....	27
Table 6. CODED DATA FROM A STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE .....	33
Table 7 CODED DATA FROM IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW.....	35
Table 8 CODED DATA FROM ALL THE RAW DATA GATHERED IN THIS STUDY.....	35



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OF  
JOHANNESBURG

## LIST OF ADDENDA

<i>CONTENT</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
ANNEXURE A – FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW.....	44
ANNEXURE B - FOCUS INTERVIEW WITH A COLLEGE IN SOWETO.....	45
ANNEXURE C – FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH A COLLEGE IN THOKOZA .....	48
ANNEXURE D - QUESTIONNAIRE .....	51
ANNEXURE E - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMERCIAL SUBJECT TEACHERS IN THE FET PHASE .....	52
ANNEXURE F - IN-DEPTPH INTERVIEW WITH MR. T NXUMALO (THE ENTREPRENEUR).....	56
ANNEXURE G - IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH THE HEAD OF THE TYPING POOL- MRS. ERWEE .....	58

# **SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The social problem that led to this research question stems from the fact that township youth seem to lack the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency required for accessing the curriculum of Commercial subjects. One of the causative factors for this low language proficiency is that the apartheid system of racial segregation deliberately denied access to quality and appropriate education to the majority of Black people. Education institutions were used as an instrument of oppression that separated people. Further, most people who live in the townships use English as a second or third language, and have limited access to the language of business and trade.

Poor cognitive academic language proficiency leads to a number of problems, namely, inability to master difficult text, inability to read text critically and analytically and difficulty in written composition.

The research question therefore reflects the possible need for a link between school and world of commerce and industry in the format of a core-plus curriculum (Townsend, 1994).

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

I work for the Department of Education: Directorate of National Examinations. This directorate serves as an agency for the nine provinces, and is responsible for the running of the technical college's examinations. My designation in this Directorate is that of a subject specialist. One of the functions that we perform after each examination is the analysis of results and the investigation of causes of poor results, and thereafter provide a support function.



On careful analysis of the recent results it became apparent to the Department of Education that learners, especially the Black learners, were experiencing a problem with the mastery and use of the English language in commercial subjects. The summary of results for all candidates in Business English during three consecutive examinations is presented in table 1



**Table 1**                      **1998 EXAMINATION RESULTS**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No written</b>	<b>No. passed</b>	<b>Pass %</b>
1997/0 6	5227	5338	41.22
1997/11	6082	2586	39.45
1998/0 6	5575	3042	49.45

After every examination, moderators submit reports to the Directorate about their findings of the performance of students. These are some of the remarks they make about the learner's use of the English language.

- (i) students miss the essence of questions
- (i) students have a problem with sentence construction
- (ii) students cannot express themselves in English
- (iii) students have a difficulty in the interpretation of questions.

An interesting point to note is that Business English/ Communication is a compulsory subject across all the streams that are offered at technical colleges.

The aims of the subject as spelt out in the syllabus are as follows:

- (a) Students must be able to communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings effectively through written and spoken language in such a way that they can take their place in the community and function productively in their working environment.

- (b) The conceptual abilities of the students must be developed by reading, speaking, and writing, listening and comprehending as integrated skills.”

In the summary of results given above it is evident that an average of 45% of the learners pass Business English/ Communication N4, and the remaining 55% fail. The implication of this is that for each examination approximately 55% of the learners fail to effectively communicate their thoughts in written language.

The above-mentioned scenario requires some form of intervention, either from the government, the communities themselves or from the private sector. It is obvious that formal education cannot successfully meet the needs of all the candidates from different communities and different cultural backgrounds. Non-formal education seems to be a possibility. Corletta (1968) defines non-formal education as any organised, systematic education activity, carried outside the framework of formal education system, to provide selected types of learning to a particular subgroup in the population. From the view of theory of Community Education, a partnership between the community and institutions of learning has to be forged with the purpose of developing core-plus curriculum, relevant to the needs of that specific community.

### **1.3 THE ROLE OF THE CORE-PLUS CURRICULUM**

School and institutional effectiveness is usually measured by the ability of the school or institution to meet its set goals. Townsend (1994) differentiates between two types of goals, the first being the state mandated goals, or what he refers to as the 'core', and the local goals, which refer to specific needs of learners in a distinct community, which he refers to as the 'plus'.

Townsend (1994) continues to say that for schools and other institutions to be effective, both mandatory and local goals have to be achieved by all or most

students. A core-plus curriculum in language for commercial subjects would imply an introduction into the schools of a core-plus curriculum specifically for the needs of a particular community with the aim of empowering that community. The aim of that curriculum would be to supplement and complement the existing curriculum that is offered in the schools. If students have access to a broader curriculum and acquire the language of commerce, they will be more advanced by the time they enter the world of work.

It is Townsend's belief that the acceptance of the core-plus curriculum for school effectiveness would suggest the need for education systems to redesign and retrain the staff in specialised teaching, in order to provide specialised teaching to a particular group. Success of the core-plus curriculum thus depends on community involvement. Acceptance of the core-plus curriculum brings about a core-plus school. A core-plus school, according to Townsend, implies a widening of the brief of the school to accommodate the needs of the community it serves. He is also of the opinion that schools need to change so as to keep abreast of the changing needs of the world. Schools should teach new knowledge, new attitudes and new skills and should be supporters of community change and development.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

In the light of the above discussion the research question of this study is:

What role does the English language proficiency and the acquisition of business language have on the mastery of Commercial subjects?

#### **1.5 THE RESEARCH AIM**

The indirect purpose of this research is to investigate the possibilities of assisting English Second Language speakers in accessing the curriculum more readily through simplifying the language used in the curriculum, and employing teaching

methods that are designed specifically for second language speakers. The direct aim of this inquiry is to ascertain the views of a group of roleplayers' on the issue.

## **1.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

I have opted for methods of gathering qualitative data for the following reasons;

- Qualitative research focuses on naturally occurring , ordinary events in natural settings ( local groundedness)
- It provides descriptions that are vivid and nestled in the real context
- It places emphasis on "lived experiences" (Miles and Huberman, 1994).
- I have used a variety of methods of collecting data, namely, structured questionnaires, focus interviews and in-depth interviews.

### **1.6.1 Sampling**

The sample to be used in this research was selected in two townships namely, Thokoza in the East Rand and Soweto in Johannesburg. The technical colleges chosen were those that were identified as having poor results, particularly in Commercial subjects. I believe the sample chosen will provide a wealth of information about the acquisition of CALP in commercial subjects of township youth. Patton(1987) believes the power of purposeful sampling depends on selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. He holds that when the researcher studies information-rich cases he is better able to learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the evaluation.

Six Commercial subject teachers were requested to participate in this research, three from each college. A focus group interview was conducted with eight learners, four learners from each school. Two entrepreneurs from the Alberton Central Business District who had in their employ recently qualified technical college diplomates.

### **1.6.2 Focus group interviews**

Two focus group interviews were used to collecting information from learners. Focus interviews are ideal because they are the most effective as a means of gathering information from a small number of people simultaneously. During focus interviews the learners were given an opportunity to respond to questions in the presence of other group members who listened in to the responses of their fellow group members.

I used an interview guide, which is a list of prepared questions, so as to ensure that I covered all the topics I wanted to investigate.

### **1.6.3 Questionnaires**

I prepared a structured questionnaire consisting of twenty questions and I gave it to six college lectures to respond to.

### **1.6.4 In-depth interviews**

Two in-depth interviews were conducted with members of the business community.

## **1.7 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

This research paper is divided into four sections. Section One focuses on the following

- ✓ the background of the problem, which is the inability of the township youth to access the curriculum, in particular, commercial subjects.
  - the research aim,
  - research problem and
  - the methods of gathering data.

Section Two constitutes the theoretical framework. The thrust of this section is the following

- learning as propounded by Vigotsky and Piaget
- CALP as an instrument for improving language acquisition
- the core plus curriculum
- content based language instruction
- community education
- Section Three gives a detailed explanation of the methods used in gathering data, *inter alia*
- focus interviews with learners at two township schools
- questionnaires given to six Commercial subject teachers in two township schools
- in-depth interviews conducted with members of the business community

Section four deals mainly with the findings drawn from the raw data. This section attempts to ascertain whether the findings of the research are in keeping with the theory espoused in chapter two.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have discussed the claim of this research, the aim of the research and the research question. This chapter also endeavoured to give a brief overview of the study as a whole. Further all the methods of gathering data were articulated.

## **SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Black learners seem to experience a problem in the mastery of Commercial subjects probably due to the fact that they are linguistically unable to cope with the context. The medium of instruction in South African high schools is English, irrespective of the fact that the learner is a first or second language English speaker. English is a second language for most Black learners, it is not spoken in most homes nor in their neighbourhood: and they only encounter it in the school. Their parents are mostly illiterate or semi-literate. It seems that it becomes extremely difficult for these learners to master difficult context, because they lack the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency required for the mastery of that context.

The overall claim of this investigation is that a core-plus curriculum in English will empower Black learners to access the curriculum more readily, and will enable them to experience success in their studies and in their daily lives. The core plus curriculum will serve to scaffold the complex context and simultaneously improve their language acquisition.

### **2.2 PIAGET AND VIGOTSKY'S THEORIES OF LEARNING**

Piaget (Husen and Postlethwaites, 1983) believes that learning is a proactive activity. He holds that the learning is an activity whereby the learner makes or constructs his own knowledge through his interaction with the physical, social and conceptual objects. Piaget also holds that prior knowledge is a basis for further learning, and that learning does not happen in a vacuum but is dependant on what the learner already knows.



Vygotsky believes that all forms of learning occur within a culture or through cultural interaction (Rogoff and Lave, 1984). He believes that people learn from their peers or from more advanced persons in their communities. The adult, he holds, models the task to the child, or shows the child how to do it, using the instrument of language.

Vygotsky stresses the fact that the manipulation of language is an important characteristic of schooling. He believes that in the school setting words do not only act as a means of communication, like in everyday talk, but as an object of study. During classroom interaction the teacher directs the learners attention to meaning of words, their definition and the systematic relation among them that constitute an organised system of knowledge.

It is interesting to note how these two theorists view learning. Piaget believes that the learner makes his own learning, whilst Vygotsky believes that learning is culturally mediated. Adults act as mediators during the learning process, using an important instrument called language. According to Vygotsky language plays an important role in the acquisition of knowledge. My deduction of learning from the views of the two theorists, is that the learner is assisted by the teacher to make/construct his own learning through the manipulation of language. In my opinion it seems that for effective learning to take place, the learner has to have good understanding or command of the language of instruction.

Greenfield in Cline and Frederick (1996) espouses the concept of scaffolding as an ideal role of a teacher. He likens this role as the scaffold that is used in the building industry. The scaffold has five characteristics, namely, it provides support, it functions as a tool, it extends the range of the worker, it allows the worker to accomplish what was otherwise not possible and is used selectively by the worker where needed. These characteristics also define the interaction provided by the

teacher in an informal learning context. The teacher structures the interaction on what he knows the learner can do, with the aim of providing support and thereby extending the learners' skill so as to enable him to accomplish a task not otherwise possible.

Vygotsky (Rogoff and Lave, 1984) suggests that cognitive growth occur in the zone of proximal development (ZOPED). He explains it as the phase in the development of a cognitive skill where a child has only partially mastered a skill, but can still successfully employ it and eventually internalise it, with the assistance and supervision of the adult. The adult structures and models the appropriate solution to the problem, as the child monitors the current level of skills and level to a higher level of competence. Greenfield (Cummins, 1996) defines the zone of proximal development as those functions that have not yet matured, but are in the process of maturation. Through scaffolding provided by the adult intervention the child solves problems that he previously could not solve alone.

The implication of the above exposition is that teachers should take cognisance of the learners prior knowledge and design teaching tasks that will build on what the learner already knows. The teacher should strive to simplify difficult context and bring it to the level of the learners' understanding.

### **2.3 THE COMMUNITY AND THE SCHOOL**

A community 'is a configuration of people who live next to, as well as people who share deep common bonds: work, love, an ideology, a religion, a culture, a history, and so on (Husen and Postlethwaites, 1983). This definition implies that a community is a group of people who share something in common. However it is important to note that though people might live in the same geographic area, they may belong to different communities. There can exist different communities, within the same geographic, owing to clashing interests, for example Black South

Africans and White South Africans, gay communities and lesbian communities, Palestinian within Israeli communities, and so on.

Sergiovanni (1994) argues that a community is that entity to which one belongs; it is greater than kinship but less than a society. He further holds that it is an arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience in social life outside the home.

Sergiovanni (1994) takes the debate further by differentiating between a society and a community. He calls a community a *gemmeinschaft* and a society a *gessellschaft*. Tonnies in Sergiovanni (1994) believes that there exist *gemmeinschaft* by kinship, of place and mind. A *gemmeinschaft* of kinship comes from unity of being (family), a *gemmeinschaft* of place emerges when people share a common habitat and a *gemmeinschaft* of mind which is a community of mental life.

The relationships that are engendered by a community and a society differ. Relationships within the community of mind are not contractual but are based on the understanding about what is shared and the obligation to embrace what is shared. Relationships within the community of kinship are not based on contracts but on understanding how the family unit functions. Relationships within the community of place are based on the understanding about how members live together as families.

The relationships in a *gessellschaft* however, are somewhat different. Contractual relationships replace community values. According to Tonnies in Sergiovanni(1994) in a *gessellschaft* every person strives for that which is to his own advantage, and in the furtherance of his own goals. People also relate to each with the aim of reaching some goal or to gain some benefit. If there is no benefit to be derived from a relationship, that relationship ends.

Tonnies explains further that a *gemmeinschaft* and a *gessellschaft* are opposite ends of a continuum, and that they are ideals that do not exist in the real world in pure forms. Schools are never *gemmeinschaft* or *gessellschaft*, but they possess characteristics of both. It is important to recognise that the *gessellschaft* component is valuable and inescapable. We live in a *gessellschaft* world, a society characterised by technical rationality. This technical rationality has brought us many gains, amongst others, computerised banking, heart transplant technology, profitable multinationals, self-sustaining universities and so on.

In practice the extreme implementation of *gemmeinschaft* and *gessellschaft* create a problems. Too much *gemmeinschaft* blocks progress, by the same token too much *gessellschaft* creates a loss of community. The solution according to Tonnies is to build *gemmeinschaft* within a *gessellschaft*. The family, the extended family and the neighbourhood should be dominated by *gemmeinschaft* values. The schools, the multinationals and the civil service, should, on the other hand lean more towards *gessellschaft* values.

#### 2.4 THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community education according to Gleazer (1980) can be defined as a participative educational process within local public schools or adult centres. He believes that the school formerly limited to children should open its doors to the entire community for academic, social, recreational and vocational pursuits.

Ramarumo (1997) holds that community education seeks to make educational programs more relevant by bringing the community into the classroom and taking the classroom to the community. It advocates for equal opportunity for all in all areas of education, academic, vocational, recreational and social. It is the organisation of communities on the local level so that the representative groups

can establish two way communication, work on community power, work towards building that community into the best it is capable of becoming. (Ramarumo, 1997)

- Community education relates to lifelong learning as applied to all spheres of life
- It encourage the establishment of partnerships between community based organisations, local government, and local enterprises to work with education institutions in addressing community concerns based on the following principles
  - Self –determination
  - Self-help
  - Leadership development
  - Maximum resource utilisation
  - Social participation
  - Institutional responsiveness
  - Local social and economic regeneration
- Community education can be implemented through schools, colleges, industry, local government and non-governmental organisations.

In South Africa community education came as a means of accelerating redress caused by the imbalances and inadequacies in the education system caused the apartheid system of racial segregation

## **2.5 THE CORE PLUS CURRICULUM AND TOWNSHIP YOUTH**

A core plus curriculum is a curriculum that has been developed and designed to meet the needs of the community it serves. It is developed by the members of the community with the aim of meeting the ideals, values and aspirations of that particular community. (Townsend, 1994).

Bishop Tutu once remarked that South Africa is a rainbow nation, with a rich cultural diversity. South Africa is a country with a wide range of cultures divided according to race, creed, language and geographic boundaries. This diversity

poses a challenge in the education arena in that though learners come from diverse communities, communities that speak different languages, yet in school, they all learn through one language, English. This engenders a problem for the English second language speakers, of not being able to access the curriculum, because of their low language proficiency. A core-plus curriculum in English would be an effective instrument of scaffolding the curriculum and bringing it to the level of comprehension of the learners who use English as a second language.

The core plus curriculum is a framework that is used to measure school effectiveness (Townsend, 1994). It originated in Australia and the United States. It rests on the premise that all schools have goals for all children, and that education systems or the government determines these goals. It further states that schools have local goals that relate to specific needs of children who live in the distinct communities, and that these might vary from school to school. This framework is labelled the core-plus framework, where the core is state mandated obligations, while the plus would be objectives determined by the school community itself.

Townsend (1994) further argues that the core-plus curriculum would be further divided into a core-plus school, where the core would be the education of all the children, whilst the plus would be a wide range of either formal and informal programs. This would lead to the school becoming a learning facility for all members of the community and would be available to them on demand.

A core-plus curriculum in English would be a viable possibility for the community of Thokoza and Soweto, in that it would scaffold the language used in the existing curriculum to the level of the learner's understanding, thus making it more accessible and meaningful to them. The core-plus curriculum in English would create an opportunity for the youth to acquire knowledge and skills that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

## **2.6 STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY.**

Township youth, especially those that attend township schools, seem to lack the mastery of cognitively demanding tasks. This is due to the fact that these learners do not possess the linguistic competency required to enable them to access the curriculum. Cummins' theory of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins and Swain), suggests that the curriculum can be made accessible to second language speakers as well, by breaking down difficult context into tasks developed in language that is easily understood by the learners. It is my belief that a concerted effort to improve the cognitive language acquisition of township youth should be a priority of the communities, non-governmental organisations as well as the local government.

### **2.6.1 Cummins theoretical framework**

Frederick and Cline in Cummins (1996) advocate for the use of cognitive academic language acquisition as a vehicle of assisting English second language speakers to access the curriculum more readily. They identified two aspects of language proficiency, differentiated in terms of functional relevance to performance of cognitive and academic task, namely, BIC- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, CALP – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency.

According to Cummins, BIC is the visible, basic vocabulary, whereas, CALP is less visible semantic aspects of language. Leung in Cummins (1996) explains these two aspects in the following manner. BIC is the language supported by a range of situational and contextual clues. It does not require a great deal of cognitive involvement and there is immediate feedback, for example, choosing food items on display. CALP refers to language text not supported by contextual clues. There is no immediate feedback and the task is cognitively demanding, for example, writing

an assignment. It is generally understood that BIC type of language occurs in everyday communication, whereas CALP type of language use tends to occur in a de-contextualised formal learning activities.

It is important to note that for effective teaching and learning to occur, difficult context should be well supported by contextual clues such as pictures and relia which are more meaningful in terms of the learner's prior knowledge. It is of utmost importance to design learning tasks that would enable children learn to use a second language appropriately to carry out a learning task.

Frederick's and Cline in Cummins (1994) suggest that a distinction between BIC and CALP might be more clearly conceptualised along a two dimensional table

**Table 2 CUMMINS TABLE OF BIC AND CALP**

<b>Cognitively demanding</b>	
(III)	(IV)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Dramatise favourite stories</li> <li>b. (b)Role-play / dramatic play</li> <li>c. Making own books based on own spoken / written stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss content of information text</li> <li>b. Discuss ways in which language is written</li> <li>c. Generalise on different kinds of stories</li> </ul>
<b>Context embedded</b>	<b>Context reduced</b>
(I)	(II)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Listening to stories being read aloud</li> <li>b. Re-reading favourite stories</li> <li>c. Talking to teacher about books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss stories heard on TV and radio</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitively undemanding</b>	



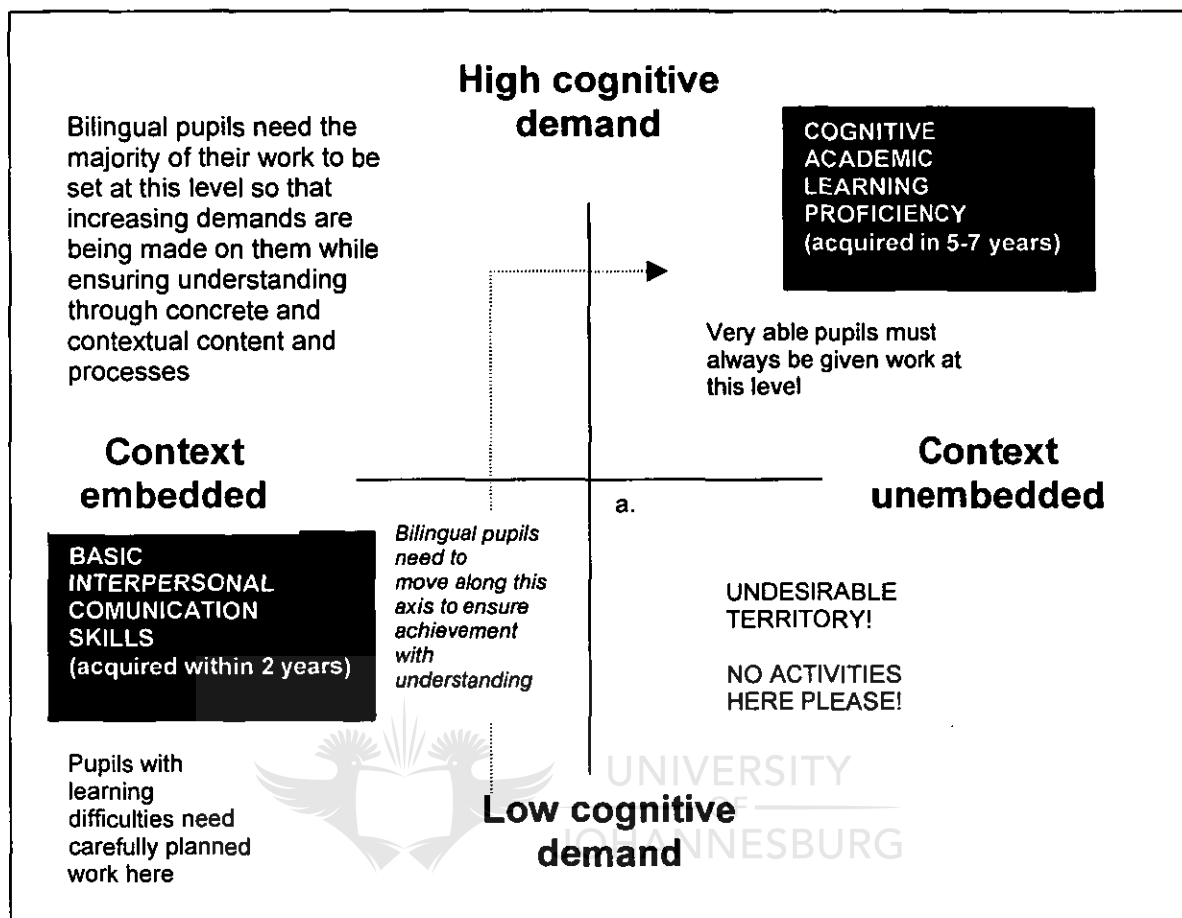
On this diagram the horizontal dimension is used to indicate the degree of contextual support that is provided. At the context embedded end of the dimension, the language would be embedded within a meaningful context and cues would be present. On the context-reduced end the only cues to meaning would be linguistic ones. The vertical dimension indicate the level of cognitive demand placed on the child by the language used in a particular task or situation. The aspects of language referred to as BIC's will be found in the left hand quadrant, and the language aspects described as CALP where the child is engaged in cognitively demanding tasks with little supporting context is found in top right hand quadrant.

This framework offers a useful basis for differentiating classroom tasks and designing particular modification by level or method in promoting maximum access to the curriculum. If a child, for example, experiences a difficulty in a particular task, the teacher may respond by making that particular task easier, (reducing the level of cognitive demand). However, second language learners may well be able to cope with the cognitive complexity of the task but simply may not have yet developed the necessary language skills necessary for access. To reduce the complexity of this situation would result in children being given easy tasks that do not stretch them intellectually.

The Cummins model suggest that the teacher can facilitate the bilingual child's access to the curriculum by retaining the level of cognitive complexity involved in the task, in a meaningful context, so that the child then is able, despite their limited linguistic skills, to understand the nature of the task and what is required of them.

Hall and Derynm suggest this framework for bilingual children.

**Table 3 THE CUMINS MATRIX**



Bilingual learners need to move from along the BIC axis to the CALP axis to ensure achievement with understanding.

### 2.6.2 Content centred language instruction

Crandall (1994) claims that second language is most successfully acquired when it is taught in conditions that are similar to those present in the first language acquisition, that is, the focus of instruction should be on meaning rather than form.

He believes that there should be sufficient opportunity to engage in the use of meaningful language in an anxiety free environment.

The focus of the second language classroom, Crandall believes, should be on something meaningful, such as academic content. Further the target language should be modified to facilitate language acquisition and on making the academic content accessible to learners.

Integrated language and content instruction offers a means by which English second language speakers can continue their academic or cognitive development while they are acquiring academic language proficiency.

Crandall suggests the following models for the acquisition of academic language proficiency for English second language speakers, namely, content based language instruction, sheltered subject matter teaching, theme based teaching, sheltered instruction, language across the curriculum and adjunct model.

**(a) Content based language instruction**

This approach is also called the integrated language and content instruction. English Second Language (ESL), bilingual or foreign language teachers use instructional material, learning tasks and classroom techniques from academic content areas as the vehicle for developing content, cognitive and study skills. The second language is used as a medium of instruction for Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and other academic subjects. Instruction is usually given by a language teacher or by a combination of the language and content teachers.

**(b) Sheltered subject matter teaching**

This approach involves adapting the language of the text or tasks and using certain methods familiar to language teachers, namely, demonstrations, graphic organisers, visuals or co-operative work, to make instruction more accessible to

students of different English proficiency levels. This approach is also called the language-sensitive content instruction. The class-teacher or content teacher in this case gives instruction. In other instances a language teacher with expertise in that particular academic area is used.

### **(c) Sheltered instruction**

Here, a content curriculum is adapted to accommodate students' limited proficiency in the language of instruction. This model was developed to assist students who were taught in a foreign language, and were involved in an immersion program, to enable some portion of the curriculum to be taught in a foreign language. This model is commonly used in immersion programs and two-way bilingual programs, and it has been adapted for use in second language programs with large numbers of limited English proficient students, intermediate or advanced English proficiency.

### **(d) Theme-based instruction**

In these programs, a language curriculum is developed around selected topics drawn from one content area, for example, OPEC and the economy. The goal is to assist the learner in developing general language skills through interesting and relevant content.

### **(e) Language across the curriculum**

This model involves a conscious effort to integrate language instruction into all subjects. This may include the development of integrated curricula and team teaching.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter we focussed on the diverse and interesting views of well known theorist about topics such as learning, community education, communities and so

on, and how those theories can be linked to the possibility of introducing a core-plus curriculum in English for the purpose of Commercial subjects.

We gave Vigotsky's exposition on learning. He believes that learning is culturally mediated and that children in the communities learn from their peers and adults. Piaget on the other hand believes that the learner makes his own knowledge.

We then studied Cummins and Crandall's model of scaffolding the curriculum and thereby making it more accessible to English second language speakers. We looked at Sergiovanni's definition of communities and their impact in the management of schools. Cohen's views about community education gave us an understanding of the role that communities play in the provision of education for their constituencies.



## **SECTION THREE: DATA COLLECTION, CODING, CATEGORISING AND ANALUSING**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section is going to give an exposition of the research methodology used in this study. I have used the qualitative method of gathering data because it renders itself most effective when one is researching about peoples lives, behaviour, social organisations, social movements or inter-actional relationships (Strauss & Corbin). In this study we are focussing on the township communities and the processes involved in the teaching and learning of their young.

I have selected the qualitative methods of gathering data because they permit the researcher to study selected issues, cases or events in detail (Patton1987). Patton further states that qualitative methods produce a wealth of detailed data about a small number of people. In this study we used small sample of teachers (n=6), learners (n=8) and business community (n=2).

### **3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The focus of this chapter will be to give an exposition on the four components of gathering data used in this study, namely, gathering of raw data, data reduction, data display and drawing of conclusion. According to Miles and Hubermann (1994) data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organise data in such a way that those final conclusions can be drawn and verified. It is a process of selecting, focussing, simplifying and transforming data that is written in field notes. Data display is an organised compressed assembly of information that permits concluding drawing and action.

### **3.3 METHODS OF GATHERING RAW DATA**

I have used a methodical triangulation for gathering data, namely, focus interviews, in-depth interviews and a structured questionnaire.

### **3.3.1 Focus interviews**

I conducted two focus interviews, one with students from a Technical College in Soweto, and the other with students from a Technical College in Thokoza. In both interviews I used a sample of four students each, which were chosen randomly by the teachers.

#### **(a) Focus interview with students from a college in soweto**

I visited this College on the 26 September 1998. Prior to my visit I had made an appointment with the Head of Division for Business Studies, who gave me an appointment for 12.30.

When I arrived at the college administration building, a teacher who was assigned by the Head of Division to assist me met me. As we entered the administration building I heard a choir of about fifty strong voices singing cultural songs. I noticed that two teachers were in the auditorium with the choir. When I enquired about the reason for the choir practice I was informed that the culture of teaching and learning had deteriorated so much in that school and that the teachers had resorted to the choir as a means of keeping the students occupied. I was also informed that both the teachers and the learners left school at about 10.00 am every Friday. On inquiring further I learnt that the school did not have a principal, and that the White lady who was a principal there had been unceremoniously dismissed by the students during a strike action ten months ago.

I was assigned a neat empty office and four students as per my request. The students were in different levels, that is, N2-N4. Before the interview started I encouraged the students to use a language they were most comfortable in during the interview. I used an interview guide to facilitate my interview, together with a note pad and a tape recorder. The interview guide is in annexure A, and the transcript of the interview is in annexure B

The raw data gathered from that interview is organised according to themes in table 4.

**Table 4**                      **CODED DATA FROM SOWETO COLLEGE**

Resources	<p>Not available</p> <p>The library keeps old books</p> <p>The computer programs are outdated</p> <p>Some of the resources are obsolete</p>
Official medium of instruction	English
Practised medium of instruction	<p>50% of the lesson is conducted in English, and another 50% in vernacular</p> <p>learner have difficulty of translating vernacular to English</p>
Explanation of terms by teachers	<p>teachers use big words</p> <p>teachers use 'bombastic' words</p> <p>teachers do not simplify concepts</p> <p>'sometimes teachers do not know the meaning of concepts and subsequently have difficulty in explaining'</p>
Explanation of terms by the learners	'though we are at tertiary level we cannot express ourselves in English'
Reading ability of learners	<p>Reading is difficult</p> <p>authors use big words</p> <p>'there is no one to explain difficult terms'</p>



	'we cannot read with understanding, especially difficult text'
Writing skills	'sentence construction is difficult' 'we are taught in vernacular so our English vocabulary is limited'
Acquisition of business language	We sometimes cannot explain difficult terms'
Culture of teaching and learning	minimal teaching take place at school standards in the school have dropped teachers teach only what is in the syllabus learners come to school daily but teachers come to class when they feel like teachers prepare learners for examinations only- there is no enrichment the relationship between teachers and learners is poor
Introduction of a core plus curriculum	yes
Suggested ways of improving the acquisition of business language	lessons should be conducted in English

**(b) Focus interview with students from a college in Thokoza**

This college is situated in the East Rand township of Thokoza. This college has new and modern buildings, with a beautiful garden and lawn sprawling in front of the administration building. As I parked my car I noticed small groups of students sitting under the trees, some were eating and some just milling around.

The reception area is well decorated with big pot plants in beautiful earthenware pots. Works of art painted by Black artists adorn the walls of this office. When I announced myself to the attractive receptionist she quickly informed the Head of Division about my presence. I was ushered into an office where the four students were already waiting for me.

After brief introductions, I informed the students about the nature of my research and requested them to use a language they are most comfortable in. I used the questions that I had prepared in my interview guide. The transcript of the interview is in annexure C

**Table 5**                      **CODED DATA FROM A THOKOZA INTERVIEW**

Resources	Library books are few and outdated 'We have to travel to other centres to get information/reading material'
Official medium of instruction	English
Unofficial medium of instruction	Vernacular
Ability of learners to communicate in English	'We are embarrassed to speak in English' 'We fear ridicule' Some of the learners believe that they could communicate

	in English
Ability of teachers to explain difficult concepts	- teachers try to explain to the best of their ability
Reading ability of learners	difficulty in reading especially when the text is difficult sometimes authors use big words sometimes reading is enjoyable
Writing skills of learners	Sentence construction is a problem Organising thoughts and putting them on paper is a challenge
Acquisition of business language	Most respondents would like to improve
Culture of teaching and learning	Okay but teachers are de-motivated Teachers do not come to class regularly
Introduction of a core-plus curriculum or guide	yes
Ways of improving acquisition of business English	reading newspapers and periodicals reading for leisure communicating with people from other racial groups

### **3.3.2 Structured interview with teachers**

I drew up a structured questionnaire consisting of twenty questions that I distributed to six teachers, three from each of the above mentioned schools. From the six questionnaires I sent out I only received feedback from five teachers. The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish the reading and writing ability of the learners and also the learners' acquisition of the business language. The questionnaire is in annexure D. Annexures D1 – D5 are the written responses of the teachers.

**Question 1** was about the qualification of teachers. Five out the six teachers had a degree plus a diploma.

**Question 5** enquired about the language medium of the school. All five respondents reported that it was English.

**Question 6** required information about which languages the respondents taught the languages. The responses were as follows:

- two respondents taught in English and vernacular because the learners lacked the required/expected language proficiency
- another respondent often asked the learners to explain difficult terms in their own language

**Question 8** related to the way in which learners communicated in English. The response to that question was as follows

- two respondents believed that students communicated well
- two respondents believe that learners perform poorly
- one respondent – believed that learners performed poorly

**Question 9:** How well do you learners explain difficult terms?

- Two respondents – poorly.
- one respondent- very poorly
- two respondents – very well

**Questions 10 & 11:** Do you believe that your learners understand the questions you ask in the test and why?

The responses of four respondents were as follows

- learners sometimes understand
- One respondent – learners understand well

Justification is:

- poor language ability
- English is difficult for the learners
- learners lack the vocabulary and understanding business language
- learners lack the understanding of business language
- learners show a preference writing than expressing themselves vocally
- lack of understanding the terminology

**Question 12:** When you give short tests do students answer in clear and concise language;

The responses were:

- four respondents – sometimes
- One respondent – very rarely

**Question 13:** When you give long essays, are the learners able to arrange their answers in a logical and systematic manner?

The response was

- two respondents – sometimes
- Three respondents – very rarely

**Question 14.** When you give long essays do learners answer in clear and concise language

The response was:

- two respondents – very rarely
- Three respondents– sometimes

**Question 15:** When you give long essays, do your learners answer in a clear and concise language?

- Three respondents – sometimes
- two respondents – very rarely

**Question 16.** How often do you give your learners additional reading material and why?

The responses were as follows four respondents

- regularly
- one respondent – sometimes

The reasons for giving reference were:

- sometimes – resources were not available
- regularly – ‘course demands that the learner should research’
- course is practical, learner should refer to textbooks and newspapers
- to broaden the knowledge, insight and understanding of the learner
- need English language knowledge

**Question 17:** What impact in your opinion, does reference work have on improving the learners understanding of the subject?

Responses:

- One respondent –none, learners find it difficult to read let alone to understand
- Four respondents - regularly, improves vocabulary and encourages creativity
  - different sources give different explanations
  - serves as a source of self discovery
  - instils a desire and willingness to achieve
  - it improves their understanding

**Question 18:** In which ways do you as a teacher assist your learners to understand difficult concepts

Responses:

- consult with colleagues and other knowledgeable people
- Purchase a dictionary
- Give correct spelling and variations of spelling

**Question 19:** If you were provided with a guide that explains difficult terms, would you approve of it?

Responses

- one respondent – definitely yes
- yes would use it
- one respondent - may use it

**Question 20:** Do you have any recommendations as to how to formulate the guide?

Responses:

- through consultation with other teachers in the field
- workshops

- through training sessions
- time consuming but viable, employ previous students with high marks especially in Computer Practice.

Table 6 gives a summary of themes from these questionnaires.

**Table 6. CODED DATA FROM A STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE**

Qualifications of teachers	Degree + diploma
Medium of instruction(official)	English
Medium of instruction (unofficial)	Teachers occasionally use vernacular
Students ability to explain terms	Poor
Learners understanding of questions	Poor
Reasons for lack of understanding	Poor linguistics skills Lack of understanding of business terminology English is difficult for learners
Use of clear and concise language	Average/fair
Logical arrangement of ideas	Average/fair
Factual correctness of data/ answers	Fair
References used	Case studies, dictionaries, newspapers

### **3.4 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY**

I conducted two in-depth interviews with members of the business community. One was with Mr. Nxumalo, a businessman, the other with Mrs. Erwee who has a typing pool in one of the government departments.



**(a) An in-depth interview with an entrepreneur**

I conducted an interview with Mr. T Nxumalo who is a manager of Afro Cosmetics. Afro Cosmetics is a small distributor of Afro hair-care products. The enterprise is situated in the industrial area of Alberton. This enterprise employs fifty workers, four of which have recently completed their studies in the technical college. The transcript for these interviews is documented as annexure E

**(b) An in-depth interview with the head of the typing pool**

Mrs. Erwee is the supervisor of a typing pool manned by eight ladies. Two of these ladies completed their N6 studies in the past twelve months. The typing room is a spacious room with each ladies' desk magnificently decorated with a variety of small and beautiful ornaments. The supervisors' office where we had our interview is small but cosy. The transcript for this interview is annexure F.

Listed below are questions from the interview guide that I had prepared before hand.

- Do you have any person in your employ that has recently graduated from a technical college?
- What type of work do these employees do?
- How many are they?
- Do you believe that the training they received at college adequately prepares them for the world of work?
- What is your opinion about the way they communicate in English?
- What is your opinion about their writing skills
- How well do they read?
- Can you suggest any ways of improving their English language proficiency?
- Do you believe that a guide that simplifies Commercial terms would help?
- Would you assist in drawing up this guide if you were asked to do so?

**Table 7** **CODED DATA FROM IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW**

Relevance of curriculum	Not relevant – learners are trained in outdated programs, for example WP 5.1 in stead of Ms Word
Employees' communication ability	Fine They communicate well They know English but they are not fluent / proficient
Employees' reading ability	They read with understanding The majority can read with understanding in the first instance Others have to read again in order to digest
Employees' writing ability	their written work requires a lot of corrections they have a difficulty in expressing their thoughts on paper
Mechanisms for improving linguistic skills	read newspapers conduct conversation among themselves in English speak English frequently
The core-plus curriculum	Yes

**Table 8** **CODED DATA FROM ALL THE RAW DATA GATHERED IN THIS STUDY**

<b>THEME</b>	<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>LEARNERS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
Resources	Available but limited	Computer programs outdated, library books old	Computer programs outdated

<b>THEME</b>	<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>LEARNERS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
Official medium of instruction	English	English	
Unofficial medium of instruction	vernacular	Vernacular	
Learners communication skills	Poor – learners have a difficulty in communicating in English – lack of understanding business language	Poor – ‘we cannot express ourselves in English though we are at the tertiary level	Requires improvement
Reading skills	Poor – learner do not seem to read with understanding	Poor – especially with difficult text	Poor – requires intervention
Writing skills	Poor – learners do not always use clear and concise language – they have poor linguistic skills	Poor, learners have a difficulty in sentence construction and putting thoughts on paper	Poor- requires intervention
COLTS		Minimal teaching in schools Teachers demotivated Teachers use the	

<b>THEME</b>	<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>LEARNERS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
		wrong medium of instruction occasionally	
Core-plus curriculum	Agreeable	Agreeable	Agreeable

### 3.5 CATEGORIES OF FINDINGS

#### (a) Linguistic skills

- learners have a difficulty in communicating in English
- learners have a difficulty in writing in a clear and concise language
- learners' ability to read English with comprehension is poor

#### (b) Medium of instruction

- teachers occasionally use vernacular as a means of instruction.

#### (c) Culture of learning and teaching

- class attendance by teachers is irregular
- class attendance by learners is irregular
- teachers are de-motivated
- teachers do not provide enrichment to learners
- resources in schools are limited

#### (d) Acquisition of business language

- cognitive academic language proficiency is poor

#### **(e) Core-plus curriculum**

- the learners, the teachers and the business community were in agreement about the development of a core-plus curriculum.

#### **(f) Qualification of teachers**

- the teachers had appropriate qualifications.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reflects the research methods used for gathering data. A triangulation of methods was used, namely, in-depth interviews, focus interviews and structured questionnaires for collecting raw data.

The raw data was then coded and clustered into meaningful categories, namely

- the acquisition of business language is poor
- the culture of learning and teaching in the schools is minimal
- there exists a need for the development of a core-plus curriculum in English for the teaching of Commercial subjects.



## **SECTION FOUR: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter we are going to focus on the findings of this research, and further establish whether they are in keeping with the research claim, the research question and the theoretical framework encapsulated in this essay. The findings of this research are the following:

#### **(a) Acquisition of business language**

- learners have a difficulty in communicating in English
- learners have a difficulty in writing in a clear concise language
- learners have a difficulty in reading with comprehension
- the cognitive academic language proficiency of learners is poor

#### **(b) Culture of learning and teaching**

- teachers do not go to class regularly
- learners do not go to class regularly
- teachers are de-motivated
- teachers teach only what is in the syllabus
- resources in the schools are inadequate
- teachers occasionally use an incorrect medium of instruction

#### **(c) Core plus curriculum**

- the teachers, the learners and the community were in agreement that a core-plus curriculum would assist township youth in the acquisition of the business language.

## **4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.2.1 Acquisition of business language**

According to Piaget (International Encyclopaedia of Education) the learner constructs his own knowledge. He holds that the learner has to play an active role in the acquisition of his knowledge. Vigotsky, however believes that learning is culturally mediated, and that children learn from their peers and from adults in the community. Vigotsky argues that teachers act as mediators, who models the tasks to the child. When a learner has a difficulty in understanding context, it becomes the duty of the teacher to simplify or scaffold context to the level of the learners understanding. Vigotsky further claim that learning is facilitated by the use of language. Language during classroom interaction becomes an object of study.

Cummins(1996) believes that English second language speakers can be assisted to access the curriculum more readily through the modification of tasks and the simplification of language used during teaching. He further encourages the appropriate use of pictures and relia in supporting difficult context. Crandall (1994) also supports this view and he advocates for the content-centred language instruction, which espouses that the focus instruction, when teaching English second language speakers, should be on meaning rather than form.

The finding of this research indicates that township youth are encountering difficulties in the acquisition of the English language. The findings indicate that the learners' reading, writing and communicating skills are poor. There seems to exist a need for the scaffolding of the language the curriculum and making it meaningful to the learners as suggested by Cummins and Crandall. It is also evident that the community of teachers/ mediators has to take a leading role in the development and scaffolding of the curriculum. These findings support Vigotsky views that education is culturally mediated.

#### **4.2.2 The development of the core-plus curriculum**

According to Allen and Martin (1990) community education has three salient features, namely,

- it is egalitarian in nature in that it seeks to confront reality of inequalities in the communities and to provide redress
- it enable people to engage constructively with the changing realities of life in their communities
- it advocates for coherent and systematic strategies of intervention, positive action and collaborative action at the local level.

Townsend (1994) advocates for a core-plus curriculum as a vehicle of making education relevant to needs of communities with distinct needs. The core he believes would be the curriculum determined by the state and the plus would be the curriculum determined by the community. The plus, he further states would be developed to meet the social, physical and economic needs of the community.

The implication of Townsend's and Allen and Martin's theories is that the onus rests upon the community to develop a core-plus curriculum that will address their specific needs, for the following reasons:

- the core-plus curriculum would serve as a strategy of redress for the inferior and inadequate education given to Blacks by the apartheid government
- it would be a vehicle of empowering the community with business skills

It is important to note that all the stakeholders in the communities should drive this curriculum, *inter alia*, the teachers, the business fraternity, the non-governmental organisations and the local government.

#### **4.2.3 The culture of teaching and learning**

The research finding also indicates that the culture of teaching and learning in the schools that were researched is poor. It was noted that the teachers do not go



class regularly, the learners do not go to class regularly, the resources are limited and that teachers teach in their own vernaculars, which in some cases, is not the same as that of the learners.

Sergiovanni (1994) hold that schools should strive to be communities in societies. Schools should uphold family values, a sense of unity and neighbourliness. On the other hand, schools should be designed as formal organisation that are considered legitimate in the eyes of their relevant publics. Schools should have clear management structures, clear procedures for realising their objectives. The reward for teachers and administrative personnel should be clearly spelt out.

The Department of Education (1997), in its campaign on the improvement of the culture of learning and teaching suggest the following:

- all teachers to teach a full day
- all learners to attend a full day
- all teachers to prepare for all their classes
- all learners to complete all their homework
- all schools to be guaranteed at least a minimum package of learning resources
- the governing bodies should ensure that that all teachers teach a full day, and that all learners attend a full day.

Allen and Martin(1990) believe that community education is a joint responsibility of the teachers, the learners and the community at large. It is the duty of the community to ensure that teachers teach what they are supposed to teach and that learners play an active role in their learning. In the two schools that were researched, it was found that the culture of teaching and learning is wanting. School should strive to be accountable to the communities they serve. It is the duty of the community, therefore, to ensure that the school are run as effective organisations and that they achieve the objectives they set out to for themselves.

The community has to challenge the non-attendance of teachers and learners. The community also has to look into the fact that resources in the schools are limited and devise ways of rectifying that situation.

#### **4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Township communities have to ensure that effective teaching and learning occurs in the schools on a daily basis.
- The schools should form partnerships with the business community and the non-governmental organisation and design a core-plus curriculum in English for the teaching of Commercial subjects.
- The business community should articulate its current and future work related skills requirements.

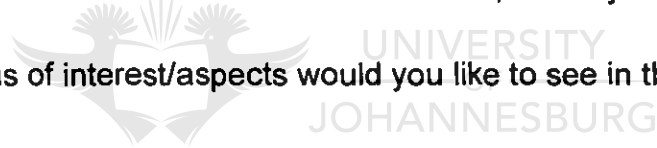
#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The findings of this research support the claim of this investigation that the township youth have poor language proficiency which hinders them from accessing the curriculum. There exist a need for the development of a core-plus curriculum that will assist to enhance the cognitive acquisition of language proficiency of the learners.

I believe that the research findings of this study were reached through employing valid, reliable and authentic research methodology. This study, however, has its limitations, in that the research was conducted with a small sample of learners, teachers and business people.

## **ANNEXURE A – FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

1. This year is your final year at College, what do you think of the education you have received thus far?
2. When you leave college do you think that you shall be well equipped to meet the demands of industry?
3. In which area of your life would you like to see improved?
4. What is your opinion about your communication ability and use of business language?
5. Do you think you are conversant with the business language?
6. Suggest ways of improving your language competency.
7. If a core-plus curriculum would be introduced, would you be interested?
8. What areas of interest/aspects would you like to see in the curriculum?



## ANNEXURE B - FOCUS INTERVIEW WITH A COLLEGE IN SOWETO

**Interviewer:** This your final year at College, what is your opinion about the education you have received.

A: We are not happy about the education we received from this college. This college lacks facilities like bursaries and learnerships.

B; We feel that we are being <sup>AR</sup> taught outdated syllabus; for example we are taught WP 5.1 whereas other colleges are going more advanced staff.

C: Standards are dropping, there are no organised learnerships, or rather there are no companies recruiting from this college.

**Interviewer:** Which parts of your learning would you like to see improving?

A: We would like to keep abreast of technology, we would also like that our computers be upgrade. If we are doing vocational education we should be updated in the latest technology.

B; We are being <sup>AR</sup> taught outdated staff, which we will never use in the world of work. The staff that we learn will never assist us to get work. We need to be exposed to more practical work so that we can get more exposure.

C: Our problem is equipment. It is not in good condition. It is given to jamming, that is very discouraging. Even when I do get employment I will still lack confidence because <sup>AR</sup> equipment I use is outdated. I am frustrated because the big companies do not come to recruit students.

**Interviewer:** What is your opinion about the ability your ability to speak English?

B: Many students <sup>umi</sup> speak in their vernaculars. Teachers also conduct about 50% of the lessons in vernacular. If the teachers could use English for the <sup>umi</sup> duration of the lesson, we would benefit a lot, we would get to hear the

English language spoken and learn to speak it in the process. What is happening now is that teachers are using their own vernaculars, which we do not know. They forget that they are teaching students who speak vernaculars that are different from theirs.

A: If a teacher uses his own vernacular it creates a problem of translation. If, for example you understood a concept in Sotho, it is difficult to translate to English, especially during exams. Students make a lot of careless mistakes.

D: Lectures sometimes use big words which confuse us. Teachers should stop using bombastic words and terming us. Again we ask teachers to simplify concepts for us, we have a difficulty in understanding them.

**Interviewer:** How well do you think you communicate with the outside world?

B: That depends on the individual student. Most of our students are not encouraged to read English novels. We always use our mother tongue. Fluency in English depends on what one puts in. Though we are at tertiary institutions many of us cannot express themselves in English.

**Interviewer:** When you write essays or short test questions what problems do you encounter?

D: When the topic is easy we do not have a problem. When the topic is difficult we do not know how to put our thoughts on paper.

B: Sometimes you know the answer in your vernacular but it is difficult to write it in English.

**Interviewer:** Can you please tell me about your reading ability?

C: I do not have a problem in reading. I read a lot of newspapers and magazines.

A: I enjoy reading. Sometimes author use big words and we do not understand.

<sup>And</sup> B: Some books are easy to read, some are not. <sup>All</sup> Some authors use big and difficult words.

Interviewer: How can we assist learners who have a problem in reading, speaking and writing in English?

C: Teachers should be strong about <sup>UMI</sup> using English as a medium of instruction

A: I strongly <sup>NCP</sup> suggest extra lessons, though I do not have the confidence that teachers will be willing to do that. You see <sup>COLTS</sup> the standard have dropped so much that the teachers are preparing us for examinations and not for enrichment and growth. Teachers teach only what is in the syllabus. Education is a waste of time and heart-breaking.

D: <sup>COLTS</sup> The relationship between teachers and students is poor. We students are discouraged, because teachers come to class only when they feel like. We come to school daily a waste a lot of <sup>COLTS</sup> time milling around.

E: I support the idea of <sup>NCP</sup> extra lessons but I doubt if will have the <sup>COLTS</sup> support of the teachers.



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## ANNEXURE C – FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH A COLLEGE IN THOKOZA

**Interviewer:** Do you believe that the education you have received has prepared you for the world work?

**M:** I believe that I am being prepared for a vocation though it is obvious that most companies prefer students from technikons.

**J:** The staff we learn here is relevant though learnerships would be an added advantage so as to gain more experience.

**F:** I believe we are being prepared for work. By the time we leave college we will be well prepared, What is lacking is career guidance.

**Interviewer:** What are your views about the ability of most learners when communicating in English?

**H:** Sometimes we feel embarrassed about <sup>ACE</sup> expressing ourselves in English. We always fear that someone <sup>ACE</sup> might laugh at us. We are <sup>ACE</sup> very shy. We need more exposure, or an opportunity to <sup>ACE</sup> apply our knowledge, for example, telephone etiquette.

**F:** Communication depends on individuals, one has to speak the language continuously. Students should be <sup>NCC</sup> encouraged to read for leisure, watch English TV programs and listen to English radio programs. Students should not always depend on their teachers.

**M:** <sup>ACE</sup> Communication is a problem for me. People need to have more confidence in themselves and speak the language more often.

**J:** I suggest <sup>NCC</sup> public speaking as a means of breaking this barrier. <sup>NCC</sup> Debates and speech contents should be encouraged so as to get students used to expressing themselves in English.

**Interviewer:** Can you please tell me why you get embarrassed when you speak in English?

H: Sometimes you pronounce a word incorrectly. People laugh at you instead of correcting you.  
ACE ACE

**Interviewer:** Are you happy with way that English is taught at your school?

F: The manner in which English is taught is okay, but we Blacks when we hear people speaking in English we criticise them. We call them English Wallabies. Yet there is an English saying "practice makes perfect"  
LOLTS

J: I am happy with the way they teach, and I believe that the books they are using are relevant.  
LOLTS A.R

**Interviewer:** Do you find it easy to master the business terminology/ jargon?

H: We do not have a problem with the acquisition of economese or economics terminology. People need to be more motivated, read newspapers and books so as to learn to use words in their correct context.  
NCC AR

**Interviewer:** Have you got a wide variety of books in the library to choose from?

H: No. Books in there are old and nobody is interested in reading them.  
AR

J: Our greatest problem is that we do not read, and therefore we can neither read nor write English.  
LAR

M; I support the previous speakers. When I read I gain a lot of information. I also become abreast of technology. Reading opens ones mind. In the township schools the problem is that the library keeps outdated books. It is de-motivating to read something that you can use in the future.  
LAR AR

**Interviewer:** Do teachers give enough reference work?



M: No. When teachers give us assignments to work on, <sup>AR</sup> our library does not have the required books. As a result we have to go to other libraries and incur transport costs.

Interviewer: How the problem of low English language proficiency be resolved.

H: I would <sup>NCC</sup> suggest public speaking and debates so as to encourage shy students to conquer their fear.

F; People should be encouraged to communicate with people of other races.

M: If teachers could <sup>OmI</sup> conduct lessons in English instead of vernacular our <sup>OmI</sup> problem would be solved. Teachers should always explain difficult concepts <sup>OmI</sup> in English and not revert back to vernacular.

F: I would suggest <sup>NCC</sup> speech and drama, <sup>NCC</sup> speech therapy for those who need it.



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## **ANANNEXURE D - QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING**

This questionnaire is part of a mini dissertation towards my Masters of Education degree.

The information obtained will be confidential and will be strictly used for research purposes.

Your personal particulars are necessary for the purpose of a possible follow-up survey.

NAME AND SURNAME: .....

POSTAL ADDRESS: .....

.....

.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER: .....



Your participation in this survey is very important and is highly appreciated.

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMERCIAL SUBJECT TEACHERS IN THE FET PHASE

1. What is your highest academic qualification?

GRADE 12  
OR  
LOWER  
TERTIARY  
DIPLOMA

Degree +  
Diploma or  
Post  
graduate  
degree

Other

2. Which Commercial subjects do you teach? .....

.....

3. For which grades do you teach these subjects? .....

.....

4. How many pupils per class on average do you teach? .....

.....

5. What is the language medium of the school? .....

.....

6. In which language(s) do you teach the subjects mentioned in question 2.....

.....

7. If you teach in more than one language specify why.....

.....



The following questions relate to the way in which learners answer questions in commercial subjects.

8. Do you think that is easy for your learners to communicate in English

very difficult

difficult

easy

very easy

9. How well do your learners explain difficult terms

very poorly

poorly

well

very well

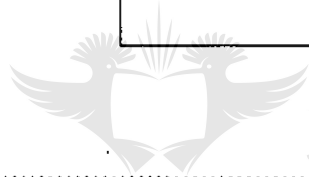
10. Do you believe that your learners understand the questions you ask in the test?

Always

very often

sometimes

very rarely



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11. Justify .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. When you give short test do your students answer in clear and concise language?

always

often

sometimes

very rarely

13. In the short tests, are answers given by students factually correct?

always

often

sometimes

very rarely

14. When you give long essay test, are your learners able to arrange their answers in a logical and systematic manner?

always

very often

sometimes

very rarely

15. When you give long essays do your learners answer in a clear and concise language?

always

very often

sometimes

very rarely

16. How often do you give your learners additional reading/reference to work through in their own time.

very regularly

regularly

sometimes

rarely

never



Give reasons why.....

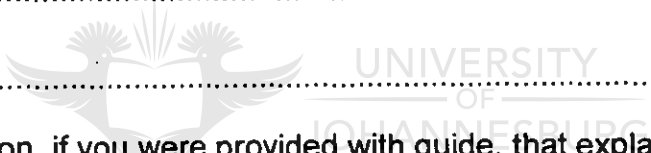
.....  
.....

17. What impact, in your opinion, does reference work have on improving the learners understanding of the subjects.

.....  
.....  
.....

18. In which ways, do you as the teacher assist your learners to understand difficult concepts?

.....  
.....  
.....



19. In your opinion, if you were provided with guide, that explains difficult term and concepts would you approve at it.

On a scale at 1 to 5 where 1 = definitely yes and 5 = definitely no and where the numbers 2 to 4 lie on an equal distances in between.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

20. Do you have any ideas or recommendations as to have to formulate that guide.

.....  
.....  
.....

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMERCIAL SUBJECT TEACHERS IN THE FET PHASE**

1. What is your highest academic qualification?

Grade 12  
or lower  
tertiary ..  
diploma

Degree +  
Diploma or  
Post graduate  
degree

Other

2. Which Commercial subjects do you teach?

COMMUNICATION & COMPUTER PRACTICE (ECONOMICS, TYPING AND BUS MANAGEMENT)

3. For which grades do you teach these subjects?

N4 + N5 (GRADE 6 TO TEN)WE

4. How many pupils per class on average do you teach?

THIRTY

5. What is the language medium of the school?

ENGLISH

6. In which language(s) do you teach the subjects mentioned in question 2.

ENGLISH

7. If you teach in more than one language specify why.

.....

**The following questions relate to the way in which learners answer questions in commercial subjects.**

8. Do you think that is easy for your learners to communicate in English

very difficult

difficult

easy

very easy

9. How well do your learners explain difficult terms

very poorly

poorly

well

very well

10. Do you believe that you learners understand the questions you ask in the test?

Always

very often

sometimes

very rarely

11. Justify *They do not understand questioning terminology.*

12. When you give short test do your students answer in clear and concise language?

always

often

sometimes

very rarely

13. In the short tests, are answers given by students factually correct?

always

often

sometimes

very rarely

14. When you give long essay test, are your learners able to arrange their answers in a logical and systematic manner?

always

very often

sometimes

very rarely

15. When you give long essays do your learners answer in a clear and concise language?

always

very often

sometimes

very rarely



16. How often do you give your learners additional reading/reference work to work through in their own time.

very regularly

regularly

sometimes

rarely

never

Give reasons why *To broaden their knowledge, insight and understanding.*

17. What impact, in your opinion, does reference work have on improving the learners understanding of the subjects.

*It improves their understanding*

18. In which ways, do you as the teacher assist your learners to understand difficult concepts?

*Consult with colleagues and anyone who has knowledge about the concepts.*

19. In your opinion, if you were provided with guide, that explains difficult term and concepts would you approve at it.

On a scale at 1 to 5 where 1 = definitely yes and 5 = definitely no and where the numbers 2 to 4 lie on an equal distances in between.

1

2

3

4

5

20. Do you have any ideas or recommendations as to have to formulate that guide.

*Through training sessions, educational excursions.*

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMERCIAL SUBJECT TEACHERS IN THE FET PHASE

1. What is your highest academic qualification?

Grade 12  
or lower  
tertiary  
diploma

Degree +  
Diploma or  
Post  
graduate  
degree

Other

2. Which Commercial subjects do you teach?

Communication, Office Practice

3. For which grades do you teach these subjects?

N6

4. How many pupils per class on average do you teach?

25

5. What is the language medium of the school?

English

6. In which language(s) do you teach the subjects mentioned in question 2.

English

7. If you teach in more than one language specify why.

N/A

The following questions relate to the way in which learners answer questions in commercial subjects.

8. Do you think that is easy for your learners to communicate in English

very difficult

difficult

easy

very easy

9. How well do your learners explain difficult terms

very poorly

poorly

well

very well

10. Do you believe that you learners understand the questions you ask in the test?

Always

very often

sometimes

very rarely

11. Justify

.....  
Poor language ability  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. When you give short test do your students answer in clear and concise language?

always

often

sometimes

very rarely

13. In the short tests, are answers given by students factually correct?

always

often

sometimes

very rarely

14. When you give long essay test, are your learners able to arrange their answers in a logical and systematic manner?

always

very often

sometimes

very rarely

15. When you give long essays do your learners answer in a clear and concise language?

always

very often

sometimes

very rarely

16. How often do you give your learners additional reading/reference work to work through in their own time.

very regularly

regularly

sometimes  
X

rarely

never

Give reasons why.....

..... Sources not readily available

..... Students don't understand

17. What impact, in your opinion, does reference work have on improving the learners understanding of the subjects.

..... Doesn't have any impact. (or very little.)

18. In which ways, do you as the teacher assist your learners to understand difficult concepts?"

..... Explaining, using dictionaries

19. In your opinion, if you were provided with guide, that explains difficult term and concepts would you approve at it.

On a scale at 1 to 5 where 1 = definitely yes and 5 = definitely no and where the numbers 2 to 4 lie on an equal distances in between.

1 X

2

3

4

5

20. Do you have any ideas or recommendations as to have to formulate that guide.

.....  
.....  
.....

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMERCIAL SUBJECT TEACHERS IN THE FET PHASE**

1. What is your highest academic qualification?

Grade 12  
or lower  
tertiary  
diploma

Degree +  
Diploma or  
Post  
graduate  
degree ✓

Other

2. Which Commercial subjects do you teach?

MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

3. For which grades do you teach these subjects?

N4 & N5

4. How many pupils per class on average do you teach?

35

5. What is the language medium of the school?

ENGLISH

6. In which language(s) do you teach the subjects mentioned in question 2.

ENGLISH

7. If you teach in more than one language specify why.

—

**The following questions relate to the way in which learners answer questions in commercial subjects.**

8. Do you think that is easy for your learners to communicate in English

very difficult

difficult ✓

easy

very easy

9. How well do your learners explain difficult terms

very poorly

poorly

well ✓

very well

10. Do you believe that you learners understand the questions you ask in the test?

Always

very often

sometimes ✓

very rarely

11. Justify English is difficult to them and lack of Vocabulary and understanding of concepts. Each Course has its own language and concepts so it is really difficult to understand certain questions;

12. When you give short test do your students answer in clear and concise language?

always

often

sometimes ✓

very rarely

13. In the short tests, are answers given by students factually correct?

always

often

sometimes ✓

very rarely

14. When you give long essay test, are your learners able to arrange their answers in a logical and systematic manner?

always

very often

sometimes ✓

very rarely

15. When you give long essays do your learners answer in a clear and concise language?

always

very often

sometimes ✓

very rarely

16. How often do you give your learners additional reading/reference work to work through in their own time.

very regularly

regularly ✓

sometimes

rarely

never

Give reasons why. Because of the practical situation which prevails. We give relevant case studies and they must refer to newspapers & books

17. What impact, in your opinion, does reference work have on improving the learners understanding of the subjects.

Improve vocabulary and that one concept can be explained in different ways by different authors, and encourages creativity

18. In which ways, do you as the teacher assist your learners to understand difficult concepts?

Purchase a dictionary, underline and write an alternative word next to the given word.

19. In your opinion, if you were provided with guide, that explains difficult term and concepts would you approve at it.

On a scale at 1 to 5 where 1 = definitely yes and 5 = definitely no and where the numbers 2 to 4 lie on an equal distances in between.

1

2

3

4

5

20. Do you have any ideas or recommendations as to have to formulate that guide.

Difficult words must be highlighted and at the end of each chapter give the explanation.

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMERCIAL SUBJECT TEACHERS IN THE FET PHASE**

1. What is your highest academic qualification?

Grade 12  
or lower  
tertiary ..  
diploma

Degree +  
Diploma or  
Post  
graduate  
degree

Other

2. Which Commercial subjects do you teach?

Information Processing N4, N5, N6  
Computer Practise

3. For which grades do you teach these subjects?

N4, N5, N6

4. How many pupils per class on average do you teach?

25

5. What is the language medium of the school?

English

6. In which language(s) do you teach the subjects mentioned in question 2.

English

7. If you teach in more than one language specify why.

Only English. Often ask students  
to explain in own language.

The following questions relate to the way in which learners answer questions  
is commercial subjects.

8. Do you think that is easy for your learners to communicate in English

~~very difficult~~

difficult

easy

very easy



9. How well do your learners explain difficult terms

<del>very poorly</del>	poorly	well	very well
------------------------	--------	------	-----------

10. Do you believe that your learners understand the questions you ask in the test?

Always	<del>very often</del>	<del>sometimes</del>	very rarely
--------	-----------------------	----------------------	-------------

11. Justify *Depends on language capability of student.*

12. When you give short test do your students answer in clear and concise language?

always	often	sometimes	<del>very rarely</del>
--------	-------	-----------	------------------------

13. In the short tests, are answers given by students factually correct?

always	often	<del>sometimes</del>	very rarely
--------	-------	----------------------	-------------

14. When you give long essay test, are your learners able to arrange their answers in a logical and systematic manner?

always	<del>very often</del>	sometimes	<del>very rarely</del>
--------	-----------------------	-----------	------------------------

15. When you give long essays do your learners answer in a clear and concise language?

always	very often	sometimes	<del>very rarely</del>
--------	------------	-----------	------------------------

16. How often do you give your learners additional reading/reference work to work through in their own time.

very regularly

~~regularly~~

sometimes

rarely

never

Give reasons why..... Need of English language  
Knowledge.

17. What impact, in your opinion, does reference work have on improving the learners understanding of the subjects.

Not much. They find it difficult  
to read let alone understand.

18. In which ways, do you as the teacher assist your learners to understand difficult concepts?

As much as possible.  
Give correct spelling as well as  
different variations of spelling.

19. In your opinion, if you were provided with guide, that explains difficult term and concepts would you approve at it.

On a scale at 1 to 5 where 1 = definitely yes and 5 = definitely no and where the numbers 2 to 4 lie on an equal distances in between.

1

2

~~3~~

4

5

20. Do you have any ideas or recommendations as to have to formulate that guide.

Good idea, but time consuming.  
Employ previous students with  
high marks to help, esp. in a  
practical subject such as  
computer practise. I often do  
this. It works very well.

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMERCIAL SUBJECT TEACHERS IN THE FET PHASE**

1. What is your highest academic qualification?

Grade 12  
or lower  
tertiary..  
diploma

Degree +  
Diploma or  
Post ✓  
graduate  
degree

certificate in  
the basics  
Other of business

2. Which Commercial subjects do you teach?

SALES MANAGEMENT

3. For which grades do you teach these subjects?

N5 AND N6 LEVELS

4. How many pupils per class on average do you teach?

38

5. What is the language medium of the school?

TSWANA, VENDA, TSONGA, N. SOIHO

6. In which language(s) do you teach the subjects mentioned in question 2.

ENGLISH AND N. SOIHO

7. If you teach in more than one language specify why.

Because of the fact that the background of our students and lack of exposure.

The following questions relate to the way in which learners answer questions is commercial subjects.

8. Do you think that is easy for your learners to communicate in English

very difficult

difficult  
X

easy

very easy

9. How well do your learners explain difficult terms

very poorly

poorly

well ✓

very well

10. Do you believe that you learners understand the questions you ask in the test?

Always ✓

very often

sometimes

very rarely

11. Justify *Because they prefer to write more than expressing themselves again their performance with tests says it all.*

12. When you give short test do your students answer in clear and concise language?

always

often

sometimes ✓

very rarely

13. In the short tests, are answers given by students factually correct?

always

often ✓

sometimes

very rarely

14. When you give long essay test, are your learners able to arrange their answers in a logical and systematic manner?

always

very often

sometimes ✓

very rarely

15. When you give long essays do your learners answer in a clear and concise language?

always

very often

sometimes ✓

very rarely

16. How often do you give your learners additional reading/reference work to work through in their own time.

very regularly

regularly ✓

sometimes

rarely

never

Give reasons why Because the course that I offer it demand that they should go out a learn by themselves what has been taught in class.

17. What impact, in your opinion, does reference work have on improving the learners understanding of the subjects.

To me it serves as self discovery which I regard as the best teacher. It motivates and instil love and willingness to achieve above others.

18. In which ways, do you as the teacher assist your learners to understand difficult concepts?

I utilise different learning content and to a certain extent provide them with dictionaries to look for meaning and link it to the content.

19. In your opinion, if you were provided with guide, that explains difficult term and concepts would you approve at it.

On a scale at 1 to 5 where 1 = definitely yes and 5 = definitely no and where the numbers 2 to 4 lie on an equal distances in between.

1

2 ✓

3

4

5

20. Do you have any ideas or recommendations as to have to formulate that guide.

Consultation with other teachers in that field.  
Workshops where a theme will be explained as to formulate guide and let individual teachers come with references from various sources of information e.g. technicians libraries Business Mail etc.

## ANNEXURE E - IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH MR. T NXUMALO (THE ENTREPRENEUR)

**Interviewer:** What is your designation?

**Respondent:** I am the manager

**Interviewer:** How many persons who have recently completed college education report to you?

**Respondent:** five

**Interviewer:** What do you think about the relevance of the training they get at college?

**Respondent:** Most of their <sup>CR</sup> qualifications are not relevant to our business needs, but one.

The one with a commercial subjects has a better understanding of her duties. The others require a lot of assistance in the carrying out of their respective tasks.

**Interviewer:** What is opinion about their ability to communicate in English?

**Respondent:** <sup>EAC</sup> They know English, bit they are not very proficient. They make a <sup>EAC</sup> lot of grammatical errors

**Interviewer:** What is your opinion about their writing skills

**Respondent:** <sup>EAW</sup> Their written English requires a lot of correction, there are a lot of <sup>EAW</sup> errors – <sup>EAC</sup> their spoken English is better than their written English.

**Interviewer:** Can you sight the areas of weakness, e.g. grammar, tenses, etc

**Respondent:** <sup>EAW</sup> Grammar, tenses, sentence construction and <sup>EAW</sup> failure to put forward the message

**Interviewer:** Do you believe that they communicate well with the outside world?

**Respondent:** yes

**Interviewer:** Can you please tell me something about their reading ability

**Respondent:** The majority <sup>EAR</sup> can read with understanding in the first instance

**Interviewer:** What mechanism can be put in place to improve their English?

**Respondent:** I think they should <sup>MBL</sup> read newspaper and conduct <sup>MBL</sup> their conversation in English

**Interviewer:** Do you think that a guide that simplifies business terminology would be effective?

**Respondent:** Yes.



## ANNEXURE F - IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH THE HEAD OF THE TYPING POOL- MRS. ERWEE

**Interviewer:** Do you have anybody in your company who has recently passed standard 10 or NCS?

**Respondent:** Yes I've got two.

**Interviewer:** What type of work do they do?

**Respondent:** They do typing for the examinations section.

**Interviewer:** Do you believe that the education that they received at college has adequately prepared for the work that they are doing?

**Respondent:** Yes, though I had trouble with one. It seems that she has adjusted and is now okay.

**Interviewer:** What improvements would you like to see in their training?

**Respondent:** They should receive training in specific programs, for example, WP 5.1 differs from 5.2 and WP 6 differs from 6.1

**Interviewer:** Which programs are they using now in their daily tasks?

**Respondent:** We are using Word, they were trained in WP5.1 and the other in 6.1. The one who was trained in WP5.1 had problems because the programs are different.

The one trained in WP6.1 adjusted easily.

**Interviewer:** Let us talk about their ability to communicate in English. What is your opinion about the way they communicate in English?

How well did they express themselves in English in the interview for example.?

**Respondent:** It was fine.



**Interviewer:** How do they communicate with the outside world?

**Respondent:** Fine, Though when they speak together they speak in their own language. Sometimes they mix English with Afrikaans.

**Interviewer:** What about their ability to read?

**Respondent:** <sup>EAR</sup> They read English quite well, but I am not sure they understand Afrikaans so well.

**Interviewer:** What is your opinion about grammatical mistakes.

**Respondent:** The one that problems in the beginning struggles a bit with Afrikaans.

**Interviewer:** Do they sometimes write up memos and reports?

**Respondent:** No never, they simply do typing.

**Interviewer:** What remedy can you suggest that will assist young Black people to improve their language.

**Respondent:** They must speak <sup>NCC</sup> English more often

**Interviewer:** Do you think that a guide that simplifies Commercial terms will be a good idea.

**Respondent:** <sup>NCC</sup> Yes I do

**Interviewer:** Do you think that you can help draw up that guide?

**Respondent:** Yes I will to the best of my ability.

## **ANNEXURE G**

### **LIST OF CODES**

**AR – availability of resources**

**UMI – unofficial medium of instruction**

**ET – explanation of terms by teachers**

**ALR – ability of learners to read English**

**ETT – explanation of terms by learners**

**ALW – ability of learners to write English**

**NCR – need for core-plus curriculum**

**COLTS – culture of learning and teaching**

**ACE – ability of learners to communicate in English**

**RC – relevance of curriculum**

**EAC – employees ability to speak English**

**EAW – employees ability to write English**

**EAR – employees ability to read English**

**MBL – mastery of business language**



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