

An Exploration of Grade 10 Teachers' Experiences of the New Further  
Education and Training (FET) Economics Curriculum

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Political changes of the post 1994 general elections witnessed significant innovations within the education sector of the Republic of South Africa. Most significant of these was the rapid transformation of the existing school curriculum into the new curriculum 2005 (C2005). This confirmed the removal of the unnecessary variations in the curricula used by the different departments, created alongside racial groups. This brought about new challenges for teachers as it was to influence their experiences of how teaching was to be conducted in the context of these changes. As a teacher of Economics, I developed an interest in seeking ways in which teachers could be professionally developed to teach Economics in the new curriculum currently implemented in the FET band, acknowledging that the Department of Education supported the new curriculum by a training programme in the form of a cascading model.

A mixed-methods research approach, drawing heavily on the tenets of symbolic interactionist practice to guide this study, was adopted to address the research questions, since human interaction is largely symbolic and is as important as context in interpretative studies. This was a study of three individual cases involving three teachers in three different schools as contexts in Port Shepstone. Data was gathered through quantitative questionnaires and qualitative observations and interviews.

Furthermore, the latest developments in economics education recognize Economics as a unique science, with unique methods of presentation that suggest an interactive learner-centred approach necessary to arouse interest in learners, in a way that encourages them to take control of their own learning. It is in the context of this understanding that I made an attempt to find out how the FET curriculum policy is implemented in practice. Findings reveal that teachers engaged in these new methods, though contextual factors such as the shortage of resources and large class sizes retarded teachers' efforts in implementing the new curriculum.

## **DEDICATION**

This product (thesis) is dedicated to my late mother, Thembi Beauty, for persistently playing an inspirational role in my continued engagement with further learning.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- To my wife, Mabel and daughters, Samukelisiwe, Sphumelele and Anele, I will always appreciate your support and encouragement.
- With sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. S.M. Maistry, for professional advice
- To Thabani, Kgomotso and Pat, thanks guys for your contribution to this product

## **DECLARATION**

I, Muntuwenkosi Abraham Mtshali, declare that this thesis is a product of my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any university.

.....  
Muntuwenkosi Abraham Mtshali

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## LIST OF ACCRONYMS

A-Level	Advanced Level
AEA	American Economic Association
BCM	Business, Commerce and Management Studies
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CASS	Continuous Assessment
C 2005	Curriculum 2005
DEEP	Development of Economic Education Project
EMS	Economics and Management Sciences
FET	Further Education and Training
GCSE	General Certificate in Secondary Education
HoD	Head of Department
INSET	In-service Education and Training
JCEE	Joint Council on Economics Education
KZN-DoE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
MU	Marginal Utility
NCEE	National Council on Economic Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statements
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PPM	Post Provisioning Model

TEL	Test of Economic Literacy
TU	Total Utility
USA	United States of America
US	United States (same as above)



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION.**

“One way of providing teachers with ‘opportunities to teach’ is to equip them with the knowledge and skills that will increase their ability to provide improved opportunities to learn for all their pupils” (Fullan & Hargreaves 1992, p.2).

#### **1.1 Background:**

The period after the 1994 general elections witnessed a significant revolution in both the political front and the educational arena in the Republic of South Africa. When the new democratic government assembled, one of its key strategic and symbolic challenges was the rapid transformation of the curriculum, giving rise to the new Curriculum 2005 (C2005) (Chisholm, 2004). This was to ensure the removal of variations in the curriculum used by the different departments, which were based on discrimination according to racial groups. This brought about new challenges for teachers as it was to influence how teaching was to be conducted in the wake of these changes.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the Provincial Economics and Management Sciences (EMS) committee developed ward clusters for commercial subjects. These clusters were tasked with moderating Grade 12 continuous assessment on a quarterly basis, in terms of document (EMS 1 of 2001). The aim was to establish a good working relationship between educators, through group moderation and to create a forum to discuss issues relating to the teaching and learning of their subjects. This arrangement was later extended to include Grades 10 and 11 teachers in the uGu district. The introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for the further education and training (FET) band has presented new challenges for teachers of Economics in Grade 10. This study therefore intends to explore Grade 10 Economics teachers’ experiences of the new FET curriculum.

The new curriculum was put forward by the National Department of Education as a symbolic shift away from the school curricula of the apartheid dispensation (Chisholm, 2004). Teachers assimilate new experiences and information through their existing knowledge structures (Hugo & Blignaut, 2008). Teachers' prior beliefs and practices can be an obstacle to innovation not only because teachers do not want to adapt to new policies, but also because their existing knowledge may interfere with their ability to comprehend, interpret and implement change in ways that suit the intentions of policymakers (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Based on this, teachers' experiences at any given time will therefore influence the way in which they interpret and understand new policy.

To achieve the educational reform envisaged by the new curriculum requires not only changes in policy and practices of education, but also significant changes in the philosophy, principles, beliefs and underlying assumptions about people and knowledge (Hugo & Blignaut, 2008). Based on these assumptions, different ways of teaching and learning need to be acquired, and this gives rise to a need to create a new teacher-education experience that would prepare teachers to create and educate in a new curriculum as envisioned and defined by policy reforms (Shulman & Shulman, 2004), through an integrated approach to continuing professional development (CPD).

A teacher community development structure in the form of moderation clusters was introduced by the provincial education department in 2001 to facilitate the moderation of Grade 12 subjects. This was consequently followed by the idea to incorporate Grades 10 and 11 teachers in this cluster set-up, in a less formal way as the decision to do this was not an initiative of the education department as the case is with Grade 12, but an initiative of uGu district education officials.

One of the benefits a teacher community development has for teacher professional development is that while it creates a context for learning new pedagogical practices relating to the curriculum approach, it also provides opportunities for improving the subject knowledge of teachers. Grossman, Wineburg and Woolworth (2001) note that one of the key challenges facing teacher professional development is the need to negotiate a balance between professional development directed towards improving or learning new pedagogical practices, and that devoted towards deepening teachers' subject matter knowledge in the disciplines of instruction. These two facets of teacher

professional development deserve equal respect in any successful effort to create and develop a teacher community of learners (Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001). Flexibility in deciding as to which facet of teacher professional development requires urgent attention remains a function of choice based on teachers' urgency for development.

Teachers' abilities to provide the best learning opportunities for learners are often affected by classroom conditions that may be common to all schools in the neighbourhood. Shared experiences of teachers, whether influenced by class or race, have a role to play in coming to terms with these conditions. For this reason, teachers cannot work successfully in isolation from their colleagues if they want to explore opportunities for the development of practice that will deal with these conditions (Day & Sachs, 2004). A cluster model of teacher community development has at the centre of its existence, professional networking as a practice that enables teachers to share experiences, interact with personal issues and relieve frustration to make their work socially meaningful and yield greater satisfaction from doing it (Day & Sachs, 2004).

Professional networks of teachers within the same schools and of teachers from different schools within the immediate neighbourhood can be used as an effective strategy to reduce the isolation and conservatism of teachers (Day & Sachs, 2004). The concept of professional networking has been mentioned several times as a feature of teacher community development where teachers from different schools work co-operatively to pursue a common purpose, such as moderation. Professional networks in this case will not be limited by boundaries, as the case may involve teachers within the school sites, extend beyond schools to include other schools across education districts, regions or even states. Learning opportunities in the form of a teacher community and collective strategy to work on improving the quality of teaching at a school or/and individual classroom level are becoming available to individual teachers through these professional networks (Day & Sachs, 2004; Shulman & Shulman, 2004).



### **1.2 Statement of purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to explore Grade 10 teachers' experiences of the new FET Economics curriculum.

### **1.3 Critical questions:**

The study intends to address the following questions that will be central to its focus:

- What is the nature of professional development available to Grade 10 Economics teachers?
- How do teachers experience and make sense of the new subject-content topics in the FET Economics curriculum?
- What factors influence teachers' abilities to engage with the new FET Economics curriculum?

### **1.4 Rationale for the study:**

I have been a teacher of economics for eighteen years and have witnessed the challenges that teachers experience as a result of the new expectations of the new curriculum, both in terms of new content knowledge and in terms of a different approach to pedagogy. I have been actively involved in the economics cluster groups, working alongside other teachers of economics. I have tacit knowledge of the functioning of the cluster groups but I was keen to carry out a systematic research study to find out how teachers engage with and make sense of the new economics curriculum currently being implemented in Grade 10. I hope that the findings of this study will inform the work of the cluster groups, curriculum specialists and teachers. Since there appears to be a dearth in research in the field of economics education in South Africa, I hope that this study will begin to stimulate research activity in this field.

## **1.5 Preview of the chapters to follow**

The following chapters will follow as part of this research study;

1.5.1 **Chapter 2:** Literature Review

1.5.2 **Chapter 3:** Research Design and Methodology

1.5.3 **Chapter 4:** Data Analysis and Interpretation

1.5.4 **Chapter 5:** Research Synthesis, Findings and Recommendations

## **1.6 Conclusion:**

This chapter provided a background to the study. It also provided a brief analysis of continued professional development as a concept that provides a contextual orientation to this study. It defines the statement of purpose of the study, the critical questions as well as the rationale for the study, and finally provided a preview to the chapters that will follow. The following chapter will present an overview of the literature related to the phenomenon under study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction:**

In order to lay down the foundations for an understanding of teachers' practices and experiences of teaching Economics in the context of the new National Curriculum Statement (NCS) it is important to begin with an understanding of what Economics is. As one of the subjects in the Business, Commerce and Management (BCM) Studies learning field, located within the NCS as the curriculum plan for Grade 10 to Grade 12 of the Further Education and Training (FET) band, it is important to establish its identity among the related disciplines in this learning field.

This chapter will therefore:

- Present core economic concepts.
- Explore the trends in the teaching of Economics.
- Explore professional development initiatives appropriate for bringing the new Economics Grade 10 FET curriculum to the knowledge and context of teaching practices of teachers.
- Trace teachers' experiences of implementing Curriculum 2005 (C2005).
- Focus on the implications that the literature under review has for this research project.

It is against this background that current models of teacher professional development will be reviewed in the context of the new FET Economics curriculum because, key to the growth of a vibrant society that is able to hold its own in a competitive world, should be a highly motivated and skilled generation of teachers, able and willing to exercise initiative and responsibility to meet new challenges in a changing educational environment (Taylor, et al., 2003), and this can only come about through continuing professional development of teachers.

### **2.2 Core economic concepts**

Economists understand Economics to be a social science because it studies aspects of human behaviour. Mohr, et al. (2004, p. 5) define Economics as "a study of how man

allocates scarce resources, which have alternative uses, to best provide for his unlimited wants”. Two essential elements that define the nature of Economics in this definition are limited means and unlimited wants. In terms of these elements, the definition emphasizes that Economics is a science that studies human behaviour, directed at managing the limited means so that limitless wants can be satisfied in the best possible way.

Salvatore (1994) defines Economics as a discipline that “deals with the allocation of scarce resources among alternative uses to satisfy human wants”. The essence of this definition, which can also be linked to the idea of human behaviour mentioned in the earlier definition, rests on the meaning of human wants and resources on the one hand, and on the scarcity of economic resources in relation to insatiable human wants on the other hand. Salvatore (1994) describes scarcity as the ‘pervasive economic problem’ because resources are generally limited and therefore the amount of goods and services that any society can produce is limited. It is within this reality that our wants are too numerous in relation to what we can afford. For this reason, society must choose which commodities to produce and which to sacrifice.

The problem of scarcity, which often gives rise to the need to make choices, has implications for the concept of opportunity cost. Opportunity cost is ‘the value to the decision maker of the best alternative that could have been chosen but was not chosen’ in terms of other alternatives (Mohr, et al., 2004 p. 8). This concept, therefore, captures the idea that we need to compare choices, and that every choice (including not choosing) means rejecting alternatives (Shanahan, et al., 2006). The value placed on the option rejected by the chooser, seen as the obstacle to choice, which must be considered, evaluated and ultimately rejected before the preferred option is chosen, is the opportunity cost. In an event of a choice, opportunity cost is influenced by prior choices and also influences the current choice (Shanahan, et al., 2006).

Salvatore (1994) further uses the “concept of the Margin” to clarify scarcity that renders economic activities to give rise to some benefits that includes some costs. Maximizing net benefits is the aim behind economic decisions and could be achieved as long as the marginal (extra) benefit from an action or series of actions exceeds the

marginal (extra) cost resulting from that action or series of actions. The rationale behind this thinking is that the only ideal way of maximizing net benefits is for an action to result in a state of equilibrium between the marginal benefit and the marginal cost. This concept or principle applies to all economic decisions and market transactions as well.

Salvatore (1994) further labels Economics a ‘dismal science’ because of diminishing returns. This law is based on the assumption that producers (farmers) employ variable inputs of labour onto the fixed input such as land. It assumes that as more units of a variable input are used in combination with a fixed amount of the other input (land), production will first increase, reach a maximum point beyond which a smaller and smaller return will accrue to each additional unit of the variable input. This means that, in economic terms, the marginal product of the variable input eventually declines because each additional unit of the variable input has less and less of the fixed inputs with which to work.

Another concept used to explain consumer preference and choice is that of utility (Mohr, et al., 2004). Consumers will prefer and choose certain goods over others because of this concept. Utility in economic terms is the property of a good that enables it to satisfy human wants. Utility therefore becomes synonymous with satisfaction. As a person consumes more units (slices) of a good (bread) per time period, his total utility (TU) increases, while his marginal utility (MU) diminishes. MU is the extra satisfaction derived from the consumption of each additional unit of a commodity per time period. The basis for the law of diminishing marginal utility is the assumption that a person consumes at a particular time, identical units of a commodity from which additional satisfaction derived from the consumption of consecutive units of that particular commodity declines, until he reaches a saturation point (Salvatore, 1994; Mohr, et al., 2004). Beyond this point, the consumption of further units of this commodity yields no satisfaction.

### **2.3 Trends in economics teaching.**

Literature states that economists are singled out for their lack of interest in teaching. Becker (1997) argues that in teaching Economics to undergraduates, the work of some

economists is innovative and recognized, although not necessarily known to those who do not participate in teaching at higher education institutions. However, based on what economists are doing in classrooms, it is evident that economists fail to do more, especially in the field of innovative teaching (Becker, 1997). During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teacher-centred chalk-and-talk teaching methods still dominated economics classroom teaching (Becker & Watts, 2001).

Reimann (2004) asserts that Economics instructors tend to adopt a lecture approach and are too reliant on textbooks as opposed to interactive methods of teaching that are both engaging and student-centred such as classroom experiments, games, simulations and case studies. Marburger (2005) confirms this, arguing that the undergraduate 'Principles of Economics' course is predominantly taught using the traditional lecture method yet alternative teaching strategies that engages active learning have gained fame in recent years.

Becker and Watts (1996) conducted a national survey in America to determine how teaching in economics was conducted in academic institutions offering undergraduate courses. A second survey followed in year 2000, which led to the assumption that teaching methods might have changed in these institutions, due to a significant decrease in students enrollments during 1990s (Becker, 2000). Greenlaw (2003) posits that lecture-oriented introductory courses in Economics have led students into believing that education is a passive process, where instructors are the sources of knowledge which is deposited into students when attending tutorials and taking copious notes.

There is valid evidence that economists are less likely to use non-lecture teaching methods than instructors in any other fields (Becker & Watts, 2001) and for this and other reasons not specified, students rate economics teachers somewhat lower than they rate other instructors. In 1990 the American Economic Association (AEA) Executive Committee made a \$26,000 grant to the AEA committee on economics education for a conference aimed at exploring ways to advance the teaching of Economics (Becker, 2000). However, in spite of this development, Becker (2000) continues to pose the important question as to whether the increased emphasis on teaching Economics has indeed led to innovation in the way Economics is taught. In

the opening decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the lecture was the dominant method of teaching Economics at all education levels (ibid), a strong indication that academic economists (teachers) had not embraced alternatives to chalk-and-talk methods (Becker, 2004). This deprives students of the opportunity to learn in ways that simulate how a particular event manifests in practice, and disallows them the experience of social conditions that prevail in the environment where the event (phenomenon) takes place (Hazlett, 2003).

Whilst the process of implementing innovative teaching methods in economics sessions remains an issue, Greenlaw (2003) affirms that recent literature in economics education proposes the use of more productive active or participatory learning. This engages students actively in their learning by exploring economic issues and views under the guidance of their instructor, and there is at least circumstantial evidence that economists have started to devote more attention to teaching than in the recent past (Becker, 2000; Becker & Watts, 2001). Several books have been published to illustrate how economists can use a wide range of alternative teaching methods in undergraduate courses.

A need for innovation in teaching methods used in the teaching of Economics turns out to be a plausible option to restore interest in students and improve enrollments. According to Ormerod (2003), one important methodological development in Economics which enhances the ability to begin to understand systems in which participants can alter each other's behaviour directly, is the development of the personal computer. It allows the investigation of properties of the much more realistic models in which participants operate, and could be a solution to the problem of dwindling enrollments in economics faculties of universities.

Hazlett (2003, p.89) argues that innovative teaching methods in Economics that use experiments become a perfect example of interactive teaching and learning as they 'bring abstract concepts to life [and] provides powerful demonstrations of the principles of Economics at work'. Reimann (2004) further asserts that interactive methods of teaching open-up opportunities for a constructively aligned system that places the intended learning outcomes at the centre of the teaching and learning environment. Becker (2004) however notes that innovations in Economics as a

science are not often reflected in the teaching of Economics at undergraduate level. Reimann (2004) further affirms this by noting that the content used in the undergraduate 'Principles of Economics' course where basic concepts are introduced, has not changed much despite the emergence of new research approaches and paradigms.

However, Colander (2004) offers a word of caution to those who believe that improving the teaching of Economics should emphasize delivery (methods) at the expense of content (subject matter), where 'various new approaches such as active learning, the new paradigm of teaching and co-operative learning' are over-emphasized. He further argues that 'no matter how well you deliver it, if you do not have something to say, you are not going to be a good teacher'. All it takes for a great teacher is the love for his subject and the ability to inculcate this love in his students through mastery of subject-content so that students are convinced that what they are being taught is serious (Colander, 2004: p. 63-64).

Walstad and Rebeck (2000) explored developments in economics instruction in United States high schools and discovered that the teaching of Economics starts with a beginners' course in which basic economic concepts become the focus of attention. They further assert that the great majority of high school students taking a required or elective course in Economics enroll in a regular course that focuses on basic economic concepts with applications. Becker (2004) argues that the goal of teaching Economics at high school and post-secondary levels is to enable students to use basic concepts (such as opportunity cost, comparative advantage, demand and supply, marginal comparisons, etc.) so that instructors do not have to teach these at higher levels of learning Economics.

I find this argument valid, based on the understanding that secondary school education prepares learners for tertiary education such that learning experiences accumulated at secondary level of education are used as building blocks that inform learning at tertiary level of education.

Reimann (2004) maintains that in constructive teaching-learning environments, the emphasis is on the way in which knowledge is basically constructed by students



through understanding and applying fundamental economic concepts and principles in relevant contexts. Marburger (2005) argues that the goal of co-operative learning in groups is to deepen learning so that learners are able to apply knowledge of basic theoretical concepts to different situations or contexts. According to Salemi (2005), the goal of the undergraduate 'Principles of Economics' course (Introduction to Economics) is to provide students the opportunity to attain a deeper understanding and working knowledge of basic economic concepts. This is important in laying down the foundation necessary to provide a better understanding of complex economics content-topics that students are likely to engage with in the various fields of further study in Economics.

Shanahan and Meyer (2003) argue that prior learning of Economics at secondary school on the one hand enables students to demonstrate a better understanding of the subject, while fluency in English on the other hand enables students to perform well in an examination. This is informed by the findings from a study confirming that students entering the first year-level course at university without prior knowledge achieved lower outcomes than students who studied Economics at school. Walstad and Rebeck (2000) posit that students with a basic knowledge of Economics are perceived to be the better achievers at higher education institutions in terms of academic performance, as based on the results of a comparative study on the academic achievements of students who had taken Economics at high school compared to those who had not taken this subject as a course of study at high school.

The results of this study, which indicated that completing a basic course in Economics at high school enhanced economics understanding of most high school graduates, were important in supplying insight into what high school students who had received direct instruction in Economics knew about the subject (Walstad & Rebeck, 2000). These results also indicated on the basis of a comparative achievement of students who had not taken a formal course in Economics, as to what they knew about Economics. A simple comparison of achievement by students with a direct instruction to that of those without a direct instruction in Economics was used to provide the best estimate of the importance of studying Economics at high school (Myatt & Waddell, 1990; Walstad & Rebeck, 2000).

However Bachan and Reilly (2003), argue that students' performances as measured by academic results obtained at General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE), as well as performance in GCSE Mathematics are factors that have a strong influence on students' achievement in A-Level Economics besides fluency in and a good command of English. The Test of Economic Literacy (TEL) was used in the United States as a unit of measurement in determining the impact that learning Economics at high school has on performance by students in the subject at higher education institutions. The TEL is a reliable and most effective measure of understanding of basic Economics taught in high school as supported by the psychometric data in the test manual (Walstad & Rebeck, 2000).

The alpha reliability of the TEL is 0, 89, a figure indicating that there is a high degree of internal consistency (as it is very close to 1) among test data itself and that the test score serves as an accurate index of economics understanding. The consistent validity of the test was based on publications prepared by two distinguished American national committees of economists known as the Framework for Teaching the Basic Concepts and the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics. Both publications identify and describe the economics concepts and principles that should be covered at high school level. The test proved that a positive relationship exists between basic economic literacy and student performance in Economics at tertiary education institutions (Walstad & Rebeck, 2000).

A comparison of international research findings with the South African teaching experience indicates that international researchers emphasize the importance of learning Economics at secondary school, as this enhances student performance in the subject at tertiary institutions. Findings indicate that the application of economic concepts and principles is of great necessity at tertiary institutions. Innovative teaching methods that incorporate the use of electronic media should be practiced in economics classrooms to promote meaningful learning and enable learners to explore and access data relating to local and global economic issues.

While South Africa's teaching experience is compatible with internationally acclaimed emphasis that support secondary school learning of economics concepts, South African research findings reveal that innovative teaching methods in economics

which coincide with the emergence of the new OBE-oriented curriculum, have been heavily crippled by a severe shortage of resources including electronic media. It is therefore noted, as per research findings, that the uneven distribution of resources to the different sectors of the South African education community hampers the implementation of the new FET curriculum.

## **2.4 Trends in teacher professional development.**

### 2.4.1 The international experience.

The following paragraphs present various ways in which teacher professional development has been perceived, approached and facilitated in different countries.

#### 2.4.1.1. Knowledge of economic concepts as a basis for teacher development.

Bridging the gap between abstract economic concepts and real-world experience of students is an ideal approach towards striking a balance between textbook theory and learners' experience, as this enables learners to apply basic principles to a variety of concrete situations (Hansen, 1984). Brenneke, et al. (1988) argue in a study conducted in the United States of America (USA) that teachers in a district must understand basic economics and a variety of methods necessary to teach basic concepts in the curriculum for economics. Teacher educators in economics as a field of specialization must therefore work hard to ensure that teachers at least achieve mastery of the principles course (Walstad, 1984).

Teacher professional development should therefore have focus on improving teachers' knowledge of basic economic concepts, as Becker (2004) considers enabling students to use basic concepts a primary aim of teaching economics at high schools (ibid). Possible ways of doing this include adopting specific algorithmic forms of instruction and use of case study material. Hansen (1984) argues that once students master the basic concepts such as “demand” in the context of the market, they find it easier to see its applications to other markets, thus affirming the merits of concreteness.

#### 2.4.1.2. Experiential learning as a programme for problem solving in economics

Instruction in economics is accomplished through the lecture method, meaning that students' learning is spent listening, taking notes, and preparing to repeat the material back to the instructor at some later stage (Spencer & Van Eynde, 1986; Becker 1997; Reimann, 2004). However, an alternative pedagogical approach in the form of experiential learning, which occurs when a person engages in some activity, reflects on what happened in a critical manner, and abstracts some useful insight from the analysis, can be used (Spencer & van Eynde, 1986). It involves activities such as role plays, business simulations, and exercises that requires individual or group behaviours such as generating ideas, planning, problem solving and decision making, and engages student involvement or observation of others performing (Spencer & van Eynde, 1986; Hazlett, 2003).

Experiential learning may easily be applied in teaching content with which students are familiar in economics, such as unemployment, which affects their families and the immediate neighbourhoods (Spencer & Van Eynde, 1986). Experiential learning provides learners the opportunity to experience how a particular event manifests in practice through demonstrations (Hazlet, 2003). A study conducted in the USA on experiential learning found that it is intrinsically motivating, more involving, and almost always more enjoyable for participants than are most other forms of instruction.

#### 2.4.1.3. The critique and review system as a programme to improve teaching in economics

The need to address the issue of economics teaching in the USA began in the late seventies and took the form of programmes to encourage and support the institutionalization of seminars in teaching, special pre-course training workshops for teaching assistants, and in-service training (Hansen, Saunders & Welsh, 1980). This is in view of the fact that in-service re-training to inform teachers on new topics and/or learning strategies are lacking (Whitehead, 1985). Developing materials for a teaching seminar and/or in-service training course has received special attention as a means to improve teaching, as in-service training courses depend heavily on the use of

materials that teachers could use in their classrooms (Hansen, Saunders & Welsh, 1980; Becker, Green & Rosen, 1990). A special programme was designed at the University of Minnesota in the USA to assist graduate students responsible for teaching economics to undergraduates (Hansen, Saunders & Welsh, 1980). This programme provided for video-taping graduate instructors several times during the semester, thereafter the tapes were viewed and used as a source of reflective practice as they led to the discussion (critique) of the instructor's strengths and weaknesses as a lecturer (Hansen, Saunders & Welsh, 1980). This promoted teacher development as the study shows that pre-course workshops and in-service training programmes proved to be beneficial to the learning of the graduate student teachers (Becker, Greene & Rosen, 1990).

#### 2.4.1.4. Synergistic partnership in the professional development of teachers – the US experience

In the USA, the Development of Economics Education Project (DEEP) laid down the foundations for a synergistic partnership between education districts and the Joint Council on Economics Education (JCEE) to conduct in-service training programmes for teachers (Becker, Greene & Rosen, 1990). Secondary school teachers are burdened with concepts and theories from advanced college courses, and argue that economics does not help them to understand or solve the major current problems. This partnership helps facilitate the building of economics into the school curriculum through formal economics courses for teachers (Whitehead, 1985; Becker, Greene & Rosen, 1990). A study conducted in 1990 reported that in addition to in-service training, student learning benefited more from teachers with advanced degrees and the intervention of economic education consultants mobilized by the partnership for teachers, rather than from experience (Becker, Greene & Rosen, 1990).

While extensive resources are mobilized to upgrade teachers' economic knowledge through in-service coursework, more has to be done to improve methods that use games and simulations, and to improve materials and types of in-service training which are effective in the classroom (Walstad, 1979; Becker, Greene and Rosen, 1990). This partnership insists that teachers must know of quality teaching materials in economics by combining in-service economics instruction with training on the use

of realistic problem-solving approaches to improve their economics understanding (Walstad, 1979; Brenneke et al., 1988).

#### 2.4.1.5. Teacher unions and the professional development of teachers

Questions have been raised concerning the effect of teachers' unions on the quality of education (Grimes & Register, 1990). Findings of a study conducted in the USA showed that students in school districts where teachers are unionized demonstrated a significantly higher level of achievement in economics, relative to students in non-union school districts (Becker, Greene & Rosen, 1990; Grimes & Register, 1990). Teachers' unions have a positive impact on teacher development as they uphold the philosophy that commitment to teacher in-service training and curriculum development has the potential to improve student achievement, and these have to be conducted as there is time in the school programmes that include economics as a subject (Brenneke et al., 1988; Becker, Greene & Rosen, 1990).

#### 2.4.1.6. Measuring efficiency in the methods of teaching

Efficacy and desirability of the teaching methods used in economics are often determined by measurable outputs at the complete exclusion of less measurable outputs (Yates, 1978). However, it is argued that learner performance is not the only criterion for evaluating efficiency of teaching methods, as one study found that an important methodological development in economics must enhance the ability to understand systems in which participants in the economy interact (Yates, 1978; Ormerod 2003). The objectives of education in general such as students' growth and development regarding knowledge and skills, their social development and their acquisition of skills and the extent to which these are achieved weigh more than learner performance (Yates, 1978).

Methods that contribute to the process of learning how to learn rather than to the specific output of precisely what was learned provide the basis for learners to explore and gain meaning of economics for future independent learning (Yates, 1978; Becker, Greene & Rosen, 1990). The extent of the process of learning how to learn might vary according to the teaching method used. If the process of learning how to learn is

equally important as the output of what was learned, there may be a need for more subtle evaluation measures that distinguish between the contribution of a particular method to the learning process and its contribution to the learning outcome (Yates, 1978).

#### 2.4.1.7 The ‘Training of the Trainers Programme’ as a strategy.

In 1949 the National Council on Economic Education (NCEE) began building a network of state organizations and university-based centres for economic education to increase and improve the teaching of economics at the pre-college level in the United States (Scahill, 2006). This meant that teacher trainers (who were to receive instruction in the programme) had to be trained to make this a reality, as the cost of providing training to teacher-trainers is much less than that of providing direct tuition to teacher-trainees and each teacher trained is capable of affecting thousands of trainees over time, according to the ‘multiplier effect’.

Political reforms that gave rise to economic innovations in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980’s created an opportunity for the NCEE to put into productive use professional development methods to an entirely new group of educators who had very little knowledge of the working of the market economy (Scahill, 2006). The NCEE sponsored a series of programmes from 1995 to 2003, for educators from the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe. Instruction in economic theory and the operation of the market economy, as well as how to teach economics through the use of various classroom activities was provided by means of a special programme – *Training the Trainers* – to over 700 educators in this period. This programme can be likened to South Africa’s cascading model of implementing workshops that came into effect after democracy.

In terms of this programme, the role of the trainers (teachers who received instruction during the Training programmes) is very critical to the development of economic literacy which Salemi (2005) believes is capable of providing students with a foundation as well as an opportunity to attain a deeper understanding of economics concepts, especially in nations experiencing a transition from a command system to a form of market economy. Like in-service training, each *Training* programme ran over

four one-week sessions of six days per session (approximately seven hours per day). Tuition in these four sessions covered fundamental concepts in microeconomics, macroeconomics and international economics, which incidentally are the core learning outcomes of the Grade 10 Economics subject framework in the current FET curriculum, whose teachers are the subject of this study. Instruction was in English but lectures were translated into Russian and Ukrainian (Scahill, 2006).

#### Impact of the programme on student learning.

Professional development of teachers by training the trainers in this way is based on the assumption that training teachers to learn and teach economics will be an effective means of improving the education of students and/or learners, while also reaping the benefits of the multiplier effect in the process (Scahill, 2006). Mention also has to be made of the fact that after transformation in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, teachers who taught courses in the new curriculum were, for the most part, the same teachers who taught economic courses in the old curriculum as the case is in South Africa's new Grade 10 FET curriculum. The *Training* programmes exposed trainers in due course, to market-oriented economics programmes as curriculum changes in their own countries became broader and more developed. Comparisons between the pre-training test and the post-training test results obtained by trainers reveal evidence of their ability to learn economics, as well as the instructor's ability to communicate with audiences from widely different cultural and educational environments.

The important role trainers assumed in promoting economic education in their home countries cannot be underestimated as Scahill (2006) found that student gains in post-test scores, using the Test of Economic Literacy (TEL), were highest among students whose teachers had undergone training in these *Training* programmes. This was because 'students learn more when their teachers have adequate or more training and the only situation when students, as a group, will have a statistically significant gain in learning is when they are taking an economics course from a well trained instructor'. Walstad and Rebeck (2000) made a comparative analysis of performance by two groups from transitional nations on a 23 – item version of the TEL. The students taught by teachers who had participated in the NCEE-sponsored programme



(the experimental group) and students taught by teachers who did not participate in this programme ( the control group) both showed similar knowledge of economics as measured by pre-test results. However, the performance of the experimental group on the post-test was greater than that of the control group.

Further findings, in the final analysis, reveal that the number of years trainers taught economics plays no role in any equation (Scahill, 2006). This serves to confirm that teaching experience added very little or nothing to economic knowledge, possibly because much of this experience was accumulated during the teaching of a non-mainstream version of the subject. This ‘old dogs’ theory with regards to experience is not held in high esteem by the National Department of Education in South Africa as it attempts to encourage teachers to improve their qualifications in their subjects of instruction in the new FET curriculum, by linking attractive salary packages to post-graduate qualification in subject taught.

#### 2.4.1.8 The “Master Teacher as Staff Developer” strategy.

Improvement of classroom instruction is a prevalent theme in teacher development programmes (Caldwell, 1985). For this reason, departments of education are investigating incentive plans that consider teaching staff as a major financial investment with excellent returns in the form of improved performance. One of these incentive programmes is the master teacher plan for a subject such as Economics. The basis of this plan is an attempt to reward good teachers and keep them teaching, as well as an attempt to attract competent new teachers into the profession given the apparent teacher shortages highly prevalent in the current times.

The master teacher programme is based on the assumption that each school district sees the master teacher as a staff developer and believes that this is a practical way of implementing a master teacher plan and provides effective professional growth opportunities for both master teachers and other teachers in the system. The case in point here is the School District of Webster Groves, located in sub-urban St. Louis County, Missouri, New York (Caldwell, 1985). This phenomenon is widely accepted by economics teachers and administrators, and consumes about 1% of the annual operating budget on professional development activities such as district in-service

(INSET) training, conferences, university courses, and teacher visitation. The primary goal of INSET for this programme is to increase the use of research-based, effective practices in classroom instruction in economics. A series of workshops called Teaching Effectiveness is covered in INSET programmes that utilizes content and processes from staff development programmes.

The ‘Master Teacher as Staff Developer’ programme recruits teachers who are identified as excellent in instructional practice in various subjects to serve as INSET leaders and direct workshops for specific subjects (e.g. Economics). This programme has three major goals: first is to provide knowledge and experience with research-based, effective teaching practices for teachers in the district; secondly to build commitment to and support for teachers’ professional growth and development; and lastly to reward, recognize and reinforce excellent teachers and to allow these teachers opportunities for continued professional growth (Caldwell, 1985).

The first phase in this programme involves the identification of master teachers who are potential staff development leaders using the scheduled workshop series, Teaching Effectiveness, where a consultant with research-based teaching experience from outside the district was selected as the workshop leader. In this initial workshop, principals were asked to nominate teachers who had already demonstrated highly effective teaching strategies and have keen interest in training other teachers. These master teachers were then invited by their principals to the Teaching Effectiveness workshop that marked the first step in the training phase for the staff development leaders as the second phase of the programme. Further sessions saw the workshop consultant and district teacher development co-ordinator meeting frequently with the group of master teachers. Teachers’ interest in serving as staff development leaders was discussed and their commitment to this role in the district was obtained. Their participation in the Teaching Effectiveness workshop was extended to two “levels”- one as learners and the other as potential leaders. This shaped their leadership roles and began to plan how they would lead and facilitate this workshop in the future (Caldwell, 1985).

The next step in the training phase involves work in adult learning theory, participation skills, facilitation of large and small groups, and effective development

of teachers in economics and other subjects. Since effective teaching in a staff development setting often follows a sequence of activities in learning theory, demonstration, practice facilitation and application, the training of staff development leaders was organized in a similar way.

The third phase in this programme involves presentations by master teacher-trainees. During presentation, the consultant served as a coach for the staff development leaders under observation, who will be given feedback on their performance and participate in the discussion of the micro-teaching segment or presentation with the coach. Feedback sessions also allowed teachers to share mutual problems and frustration while simultaneously receiving technical feedback on specific presentation skills from fellow colleagues. The group continually critiqued and discussed the research-based teaching strategies that formed the basis for their micro-teaching lessons. Like athletic coaching, the benefit of this obviously is the development of team spirit among the staff development leaders as they became a collegial support group. Learning new skills of training fellow teachers is difficult even for the master teachers, hence coaching was critical in this training (Caldwell, 1985).

The last lap in the presentation phase involves advanced practice. This training activity involves each master teacher working with the consultant in a second Teaching Effectiveness series with a new group of 30 economics teachers from the district. The staff development leadership team and the consultant co-operatively plan and lead this new group. The coaching process of observing, critiquing, and discussing continues as is normal for presentation.

Although this programme was still in its developmental stages at the time of reporting, the immediate results were very positive and the outlook on specific term results was good. Comments from workshop evaluations showed a high level of satisfaction with the leadership as well as the staff development team (Caldwell, 1985).

#### 2.4.2. A South African experience.

This paragraph presents various ways in which professional development of teachers has been conducted in South Africa as inferred from the manner in which it manifested in practice.

##### 2.4.2.1 In-service training (INSET).

INSET is mentioned as one of the forms of teacher professional development and has rigorously been used during the period before the new dispensation (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold, 2003; Shulman & Shulman 2004). These programmes are based on the assumption that the teacher views the child as the centre of all learning, and the unit of focus of the course programmes is the individual teacher. The teacher performs the role of facilitator of learning rather than the all knowing bearer of knowledge that the child uncritically assimilates. Change at the school and in the classroom becomes a function of motivation and initiative of the individual teacher (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold, 2003). These courses also assume that programmes should emphasize teaching method, particularly child-centred methods. This sometimes happens at the expense of subject content knowledge. The promotion of learner activities in the classroom centres around customized worksheets as teaching aids, while curriculum content should be relevant to and directed towards the real world (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold, 2003).

However, indications pointing to the low levels of subject and pedagogical content knowledge on the part of teachers concerning the subjects they teach, an issue that has not been addressed as yet by programmes offered within the jurisdiction of these courses, as no provision for any formal intervention has been made, is a cause for concern (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold, 2003). This is why structured reading and numeracy INSET programmes have been integrated into these programmes as urgent priorities for teachers at the Foundation and Intermediate phases, as do programmes which systematically develop Senior Phase teachers in the content of their specialized subject areas. If teacher professional development programmes currently operating in South Africa attempt to ascertain in any detail the knowledge needs of the teachers in

their schools, then it can be assumed that intervention programmes can be designed around the specific needs of the teachers (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold, 2003).

#### 2.4.2.2 Workshops.

Workshops as a form of professional development currently available to teachers who implement the new FET curriculum, have potential to play an important role in identifying individual training and support needs, if used correctly. The principal sources of support in the form of education officials at provincial, district and local levels (subject advisors) as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), teacher unions and other professional organizations design and deliver training programmes that enhance the professional status of teaching (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold, 2003). These workshops offer a platform for reflective practice where teachers develop the curriculum to suit the context, evaluate and try to improve their own practice, and mentoring new recruits (Day & Sachs, 2004). The introduction of the new curriculum for schools (C2005) led to the contracting of an NGO to induct twenty officials from each province as 'master trainers'. These master trainers would then cascade this knowledge to district officials who would in turn, relay information to teachers (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold, 2003; Day & Sachs, 2004).

Though these workshops did not meet the expectations of teachers regarding curriculum implementation, this is normal in any context where the new curriculum has to be executed. In England and Wales this problem occurred where teachers had to go back to their schools after a workshop training programme, to find that on-going supplementary support expected by them was negligible while the local education authorities (LEAs) on the other hand, did not have the capacity to service large numbers of schools (Day & Sachs, 2004). The reason for this being that all training activities were primarily driven by the government oriented-reform agenda that aimed at achieving quick results through short training courses which eventually proved to be weak at promoting sustained change (Day & Sachs, 2004, p. 42).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers has to take into account experiences of teachers in the past. In defining CPD, Day and Sachs (2004 p. 34) have this to say:

“It consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct and indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitments as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching and by which they acquire knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence critically”.

Day and Sachs (2004) found that many teachers, especially in developing countries, had themselves had inferior schooling and basic teacher training. Significant to this is the critical question that seeks to uncover factors influencing teachers’ abilities to engage with the new FET economics curriculum, as this impacts negatively on teachers’ abilities to comprehend the theory underlying new professional practice. Therefore, workshops as a form of professional development in terms of the above definition should be based on programmes that take into account the level of development of a particular group of teachers (Day and Sachs, 2004).

#### 2.4.2.3 Teacher community development

Teacher community development as a form of teacher professional development is based on the assumption that teachers can learn best in groups resembling smaller communities that accommodate intellectual features of co-operative learning environments (Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001). Ainscow (1999) argues for the transformation of the structure so that teachers are encouraged to work co-operatively in ‘communities’ to explore new curriculum dimensions that affect their work through mutual observation, leading them to talk about detailed aspects of their practice as a means to improve classroom practice. An emphasis on the creation of teacher partnerships is a good example of how a commitment to this idea has to be matched by organizational arrangements that make it happen in practice (Ainscow & Booth, 1998). The capacity of teachers in a group to respond to learners’ diversity is facilitated by the atmosphere of collaboration in which everyone is engaged co-operatively in the task of learning, since co-operative learning has important social, emotional and moral functions apart from its cognitive value (Pettigrew & Arkhurst, 1999).

A practical model of teacher community development exists in the form of what is known as a cluster of Grade 12 Economics teachers. This development was established in terms of document EMS 1 of 2001, in terms of which the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN-DoE) established a method of ensuring that continuous assessment (CASS) in a Grade 12 subject was going to be monitored at quarterly intervals by teachers drawn from senior secondary schools in the neighbourhood

The concept of professional networking has been mentioned several times as a feature of teacher community development (Day and Sachs, 2004) where teachers from different schools work co-operatively to pursue a common purpose, such as moderation. Professional networks in this case will not be limited by boundaries, as the case may involve teachers within the school sites, extend beyond schools to include other schools across education districts, regions or even states. Learning opportunities in the form of a teacher community and collective strategy to work on improving the quality of teaching at a school or/and individual classroom level are accessible to individual teachers through these professional networks (Day & Sachs, 2004; Shulman & Shulman, 2004)

### **2.5 Teachers' experiences of implementing the new curriculum.**

Jansen (1999) and Chisholm (2004) assert that the way teachers experienced the new curriculum in the form of outcomes-based education (OBE) and curriculum 2005 (C2005) had a range of meanings implying a lack of coherence and focus in the communication of both policies. To some extent teachers held different understandings of OBE in terms of its synonymy to group work and learner activity on the one hand, and C2005 on the other hand. This gave rise to considerable uncertainty about whether teachers' practices actually constituted OBE or not, irrespective of their years of experiences and resources (Jansen, 1999, pp. 206-207). This uncertainty was prevalent for both well-qualified and experienced teachers as well as poorly-qualified and inexperienced teachers, as teachers appeared not to know the distinction between past and present practices.

This was further complicated by the difficulty in generating continuous assessment (CASS) experienced by teachers who implemented the new curriculum (C2005) in its inception (Chisholm, 2004), with an overwhelming half of the primary schools in rural areas failing to implement the new curriculum. Alongside this uncertainty, came a cloud of confusion that complicated issues of pedagogy with major implications for teachers' personal and professional identity where learner centredness quickly became one of the teachers' defining characteristics of the new curriculum (Chisholm, 2004). This characteristic extended to the practice whereby teachers allowed learners more time to explore and articulate their own learning as a means to encourage group work and learner activity (Jansen, 1999). This displays a context in which there is inadequate understanding of C2005 which, if combined with evidence of shortcomings in the subject knowledge of many teachers, false clarity and symbolic displays of C2005 practice may well be widespread (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevoold, 2003).

The way teachers experienced the new curriculum is that it came in a language that was incommunicable to them with regards to curriculum terminology. It only invoked teacher participation on the level of implementation and not in its conceptualization (Jansen, 1999). The new curriculum from the teachers' perspective, also suggested a curriculum policy that all schools and learning sites were similar contexts whether white or black oriented, rural or urban, privileged or disadvantaged (Jansen, 1999). As all teachers received the same training and schools provided with the same learning programmes, the consequences were that well-resourced schools in the form of former Model C schools were better able to manage the new curriculum successfully than disadvantaged schools (Jansen, 1999 and Chisholm, 2004).

Christie (1999) and Jansen (1999) note another striking experience of the new curriculum by teachers, to the effect that teachers uniformly felt that their preparation for OBE and C2005 was rather inadequate and incomplete. All the teachers who attended training in OBE in its inception clearly emphasized that the five-day training block period was inadequate; hence OBE was not implementable (Jansen, 1999). For this reason teachers found themselves teaching the same way as they did before OBE whilst they generally claimed their classroom curriculum practice experienced



constant changes. Christie (1999) claims that most teachers have not been actively engaged with the new curriculum as it is imposed on them in top-down ways similar to the imposition of apartheid curriculum. Poor planning and over-hasty introduction of the new curriculum rendered teachers insufficiently prepared for OBE and CASS.

While teachers in most classrooms had the basic C2005 documents for implementing the new curriculum in the Foundation Phase, it is doubtful that they actually used these policy documents in designing and reviewing their lessons. Claims by many teachers that they were not implementing OBE due to problems they experienced in the early part of the Grade 1 year inform this doubt (Jansen, 1999). Among some reasons noted by Chisholm (2004) which further compounded the implementation problem is that of inadequate teacher development coupled with inadequate co-ordination and management.

Evidence to this is the major tensions identified by evaluators regarding the implementation of C2005 by Foundation Phase teachers, in particular, those who did not know what was required of them to the point that they did not know whether they should teach reading and writing or not (Bertram et al., 2000: p. 243). Teachers' common sense and beliefs about teaching had been contradicted and completely brainwashed by what they thought C2005 required of them. Many teachers, as per evaluators' findings, may have changed some of their teaching practices such as re-arranging learners to sit in groups, but they had continued teaching in the same way as before in which learners worked individually (Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999, p. 150). Teachers eventually held vastly different understandings of OBE (ibid), even within the same school (Jansen, 1999).

Teachers also experienced that OBE was not implementable with young children in the early part of the school year due to the fact that OBE, in terms of C2005, requires active learners who construct their own learning with the teacher playing the role of facilitator of the process (Jansen, 1999). Chisholm (2004) confirms this by revealing that teachers' understanding of the C2005 situation as based on their experiences was seen to require learners with a high level of communicative skills. Hence, learners were found to be at a disadvantage because their communication skills were not yet fully developed.

Based on their experiences, teachers generally claimed there were some things that they were doing differently since the introduction of OBE but that they were mainly teaching as they did before OBE (Jansen, 1999). Innovation in real terms was only limited to allowing learners more time to explore their own learning, as teachers vaguely conceived OBE as one of the principles that underpins the new curriculum (Bertram, et al., 2000 p. 72). Chisholm (2004) confirms this by quoting a senior teacher in a rural secondary school who confessed that time-tabling and teaching followed traditional subject divisions, with the only concession being the grouped-seating arrangement in some classes. However, the teaching did not resemble learner-centredness due to lack of resources, as the pedagogy was strictly formal in spite of the relaxed seating arrangements.

Another finding by Jansen (1999) with a bearing on teachers' experiences was that teachers understood and implemented OBE in very different ways within and across different resource contexts. This is because most of the teachers preferred to do what they felt comfortable with and what was familiar over years of practical experience. This, according to Chisholm (2004) was also influenced by uncertainty amongst teachers (ibid) which eventually led to implementation failures, with certain teachers expressing strong feelings regarding departmental support which they branded inadequate and unevenly distributed among teachers in the system.

## **2.6 Implications for the research process.**

Whilst it has been noted as a socially accepted norm that the relations between research and practice seldom go in one direction only and where these differ, they often become irreconcilable (Chisholm, 2005), it is important to conclude this chapter by linking the insights and ideas gained from the review of the literature. The literature reviewed in this chapter reflects how Economics differs from other related subjects within the same learning field and this suggests that a particular frame of conceptual understanding independent of these other subjects in the learning field is important. Literature reviewed also reveals some features of modern forms of teacher

professional development that can be practiced to eliminate problems affecting teachers' abilities to comprehend and implement the new FET curriculum.

- ❖ The insights inherent in the literature review provided guidelines for the data that was collected during the research process so as to gain a better understanding of Grade 10 economics teachers' experiences of the new FET curriculum, and the factors influencing these experiences.

## **2.7 Conclusion.**

This section has reflected on the practices underlying professional development in general and in the field of economics education in particular, by locating Economics as a discipline in the relevant learning field. It then explored the latest trends in the teaching of Economics in the classroom and traces further developments in the field of economics education. It further explored professional development initiatives appropriate in the new economics curriculum and traces teachers' experiences of implementing curriculum 2005. Finally, it focused on the implications the chapter has for this research. What follows in the next chapter, is research design and methodology of this study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction:**

Various patterns of inquiry have been designed to suit the nature and kind of research undertaking. Research studies are sometimes conducted for the purpose of gathering numerical data used to discover the magnitude of a particular problem or phenomenon in practice. For this reason, a quantitative research inquiry has to be conducted.

However, in cases where a phenomenon has to be explained or explored in full detail by collecting and analyzing rich and thick descriptive data, researchers often find it necessary to conduct a qualitative inquiry (Henning, 2004). Some studies are of such a nature that they require a design that accommodates tenets of both qualitative and quantitative research in answering research questions involved. Since this study seeks to explore Grade 10 Economics teachers' experiences of teaching the new FET curriculum by social observations in practice that must be interpreted by means of a hermeneutic approach, the design type that mixes both quantitative and qualitative research has to be adopted.

This chapter will therefore, in the first place, present a theoretical orientation of this research study in an attempt to create the context for establishing its conceptual framework. The foundation for this will be a review of symbolic interactionist practice in qualitative research as a form of inquiry in the interpretative epistemology. This will be followed by a brief analysis of Woods' (1996) principles of symbolic interactionist practice, namely, perspectives, context and strategies, as these concepts have significant implications for Grade 10 economics teachers' experiences in terms of how they perceive the new curriculum for Economics in their respective contexts where they use different strategies to implement this curriculum. It will then present the methodological settings of this research study in terms of the nature of inquiry and paradigm issues. This will be followed by a focus on questionnaires, interviews and observations as data collection instruments used in the design for this study. Finally, an overview of the type of sampling used to select participants and the reflection on issues of ethical relevance will be made.

### **3.2 Symbolic interactionist practice in qualitative research:**

Symbolic interactionist research, which derives from the hermeneutic/interpretative paradigm in social and educational research (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003) involves identifying a set of symbols and understandings that have emerged to give meanings to peoples' interactions (Henning, 2004), and is most likely to be applied in the qualitative research paradigm as an approach that enables researchers to understand how people make sense of their everyday interactions and why they behave in socially defined ways. It involves interpretative research that is concerned with how people see things and how they construct their meanings (Woods, 1996) and is located in the qualitative paradigm.

Since research is empirical in nature (Cohen & Manion, 1989), symbolic interactionist practice entails conducting research by observation and participation and not by testing, measuring and experimenting. It assumes that all human action is largely symbolic and meaningful and must therefore be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices (Delamont, 1976; Usher, 1996). This study focuses on teachers' experiences of the new Grade 10 Economics FET curriculum; hence an approach that is qualitative engages the principles of interactionist practice and is deemed effective in capturing the inner feelings and experiences of teachers regarding their understanding of and engagement with the new curriculum.

Qualitative research that is rooted in the interpretative paradigm is more likely to provide opportunities to discover meanings, rich tones and shades of the research context (Henning, 2004). Qualitative interpretative paradigm focused on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education (Merriam, 1998). To understand how teachers engage with and make sense of the new FET economics curriculum requires the exploration of human interaction in context, since human action is inherently meaningful in interpretive research. It is important for the researcher to grasp the meanings that constitute a particular action and for him to understand that social action. The meaning of an action can only be grasped in terms of the systems to which it belongs (Schwandt,

2003). However, one must take cognizance of the fact that meaning to human action is given by interpretive schemes or framework (Usher, 1996).

Symbolic interactionist practice in conjunction with qualitative research techniques provides excellent opportunities to research both the science and the art of teaching (Woods, 1996). This is based on the assumption that if educational improvement has to be made through research, it has to be done by teachers as people who understand teacher-pupil interactions in context, and must impact upon professional development and practitioner reflexivity. Symbolic interactionist practice places emphasis on the role of the self (researcher) and the hidden assumptions behind his appearance on the one hand, while questioning the nature of knowledge and concentrating on process on the other hand (Woods, 1996). Much activity is symbolic, involving construction and interpretation, both within the self and between the self and the others.

Social interaction as embedded in symbolic interactionist practice, therefore, is a process of construction, not a simple response to factors manifesting in a person's behavior such as psychological drives, social norms and personality factors (Woods, 1996). Human interaction is not a neutral mechanism that operates at the instigation of external forces as Woods (1996), asserts that human interaction is formative in its own right. Interaction can be built up through different constructions of reality and conflicting understandings of the situation, leading to a breakdown in order. The reading of situations lays the foundations for how we perceive and interact with others, and it guides the orientation of our conduct in terms of the given situations.

Cohen and Manion (1989) identify three postulates of symbolic interactionist practice, wherein the first one defines human beings as acting towards things on the basis of meaning they have for them. In terms of this, man is said to inhabit two different worlds: the 'natural' world wherein he is an organism of drives and instincts and where the external world exists independently of him, and the social world where the

existence of symbols, like language, enables him to give meaning to objects (Cohen & Manion, 1989). It is through this attribution and interpretation of meanings that he becomes human and social. For this reason, symbolic interactionists focus on the world of subjective meanings and the symbols by which such meanings are produced and represented. In terms of this study, teachers' symbolic meanings with learners will be used as a basis for the construction of subjective meanings that constitutes teachers' experiences of the new FET Economics curriculum.

Secondly, the attribution of meaning to objects and symbols is not a once-off activity, but a continuous process. A misinterpretation of one economic concept at initial stages of the lesson is not enough to justify a conclusion that the teacher struggles to engage with subject content-topics, because he/she could get his/her act right as the lesson continues. Action, therefore according to Cohen and Manion (1989), is not simply a consequence of psychological attributes such as social drives, attitudes, personalities (*ibid*), but results from a continuous process of meaning attribution which is always emerging in a state of flux and is subject to change. In social research, knowledge is concerned not with generalizations, prediction and control but with interpretation, meaning and illumination (Usher, 1996).

Thirdly, the continuous process of attributing meaning to objects takes place in a social context. This suggests that each individual aligns his actions to that of others by 'assuming the role of the other', by making indications to his 'self' about the other's likely response (Cohen & Manion, 1989). This way he predicts how others wish or might act in certain circumstances, and how he himself might act. Symbolic interactionists direct their attention at the nature of interaction, rather than focusing on the individual, and his or her personality characteristics, or how the social structure or social situation causes individual behaviour. By focusing on the interaction itself, the symbolic interactionist creates a more active image of the human being and rejects the image of the passive, determined organism. Symbolic interactionists perceive people as interactive individuals; hence societies are made up of interactive individuals (Cohen & Manion, 1989).

People are constantly undergoing change in interaction and society is changing through interaction, according to Cohen and Manion (1989). Teachers' experiences of the new curriculum can best be explored through symbolic interactionism and interpretive epistemology, while opportunities to engage with new professional development practices as an endeavor to improve classroom learning, can best be detected through symbolic interactionist behaviour. Interaction implies human beings acting in relation to each other, taking each other into consideration, acting, perceiving, interpreting, and acting again. This way, a more dynamic and active human being emerges, rather than an actor merely responding to others (Cohen & Manion, 1989).

### **3.3 Woods' principles of symbolic interactionist practice:**

Woods (1996) spells out the basic principles of interactionist practice and their methodological implications by tracing the involvement of the researcher's self through the various stages of the data collection and analysis. Many ways of knowing, thinking and being moral are seen as legitimate modes of representation within the interactionist field, and these ways manifest in one or some of the following principles.

#### **3.3.1 Perspectives:**

These are deduced beliefs, linked to our orientations in terms of which situations are defined according to how participants interpret these situations (Delamont, 1976). People's own thoughts about reality, and ways through which they define and interpret situations in a way that enables them to make sense of the world, are heavily



influenced by personality factors, social norms, structural as well as cultural factors (Woods, 1996). The researcher observing a teacher who misinterprets a concept in a Grade 10 economics lesson may interpret the state of affairs differently from the observer who conducts a performance evaluation exercise. This is because the researcher does not have keen interest in judging the participant, but tries to understand the phenomenon being observed. Interpretations of reality and conflicting definitions of the situation offer the foundation upon which human interaction can be built (ibid). The manner in which we perceive and interact with others is based on the definition of situations and guides the orientation of our conduct. Smooth interaction will be achieved as long as we all interpret situations the same way (Woods, 1996).

The development of co-ordination and the ability to adopt the perspectives of others are important as it provides a framework within which people can construct their meanings as they act towards situations. A teacher's perspectives denote the boundaries within which the teacher makes sense and interprets experience and act rationally (Clarke & Peterson, 1986). This study seeks to explore teacher's experiences of the new curriculum and this makes teachers' perspectives important in the process. Modern societies with a more complex degree of social interaction (as in multi-racial school contexts), frequently have more situations arising (such as a diversified school-curriculum) which requires more flexibility in schemes of interpretation of human interaction varying from verbal to non-verbal (Woods, 1996), since symbolic interactionists view people's perceptions as inherent in their conduct as they interact in a situation.

Developing perceptions about other people and their behaviour requires researchers to put themselves in these people's positions and view the world with them in terms of the researchers' understanding of social life, what motivates them, what their interests are, what links them to and distinguishes them from others, what their cherished values and beliefs are, why they act as they do, and how they perceive themselves and others (Woods, 1996). This provides opportunities for the researcher to obtain relevant knowledge of the social reality under study. For the researcher to understand

people's perceptions and experiences, he or she must remain close to them, live with them in various situations and in various moods, appreciate changes and contradictions in their behaviour, explore the nature and extent of their interests, as all these have implications for the construction of their perspectives as individuals (Woods, 1996).

Symbolic interactionist theory 'sees the self as socially constructed' and therefore it is never possible for the self to arise outside the social experience (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003). The meaning of things is derived from or arises out of the social interactions that one has with one's fellows in the environment, and different interpretations are attached to these situational interactions from time to time (Woods, 1996). These interpretations build up into human perspectives derived from human experiences of interpreted human interactions with the environment (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003). Therefore meaning is acquired from our experiences with the world, and because we are in engagement with the world, meaning is constantly being modified, if not completely changed (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003). As an ever-emerging relativistic human perspective, life experience is seen as 'the shifting of reality with a person's life as people act towards things on the basis of their understandings, irrespective of the "objective" nature of those things'. Thus 'symbolic interaction' is the interaction that takes place among the various minds and meanings that characterize human societies and their perspectives (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003).

### 3.3.2 Context.

Context provides space for interaction to take place and can be defined as a situation created as a result of interaction among people and the ways in which they interpret symbols around them (Woods, 1983). However, the manner in which a person defines context in terms of prevailing circumstances heavily relies on his or her personal

understanding of what seem to be real to him or her. To understand the interaction under study, one must also understand the context within which it occurs, because the context on the one hand, can affect perspectives and behaviour, and perspectives on the other hand, can affect context (Woods, 1996). The extent to which the context affect perspectives is evident in the changes that occur when a teacher conducts his/her lesson using methods and resources that are completely different from those indicated in his/her lesson plan, which he/she prepares in another context.

Cohen and Manion (1989) assert that knowledge by means of which we are able to typify other people's behaviour and come to terms with social reality varies from context to context, subjecting humanity to live in the world of multiple realities. The social being keeps on moving between these varying degrees of meaning in the course of his/her everyday life. Grade 10 Economics teachers may engage with the new FET Economics curriculum in different ways according to context, while factors affecting their abilities to engage with the new subject-content topics may also differ from context to context. Schools are contexts with different situational factors and people may interpret school contexts differently. Context interpretation must therefore be based on understanding how the context was constructed (Cohen & Manion, 1989). Very often interacting individuals are normally competent to shift from one contextual experience to another, however, the flexibility of consciousness is necessary to overcome the differences between different contexts (Cohen & Manion, 2003).

In a school context, the word 'break' may loosely be interpreted as time-off for both teachers and learners to temporary disengage from classroom learning in order to have a short rest. However, in a billiard competition-context, it means starting the game afresh by disseminating balls from the central spot using the cue and the white ball. Cohen and Manion (1989) use the concept of 'indexicality' to refer to the ways in which actions and statements are related to the social contexts that produced them, and to the way their meanings are shared by the participants but not necessarily stated explicitly. Indexical expressions are therefore used as the designations imputed to a particular social occasion by the participants in order to locate the event in the context

of reality. It is therefore necessary that symbolic expressions are always linked to observed behaviour and the context in which they occur, because they are likely to vary among contexts and over time (Woods, 1996)

The significance of life experiences of mankind is that they enable an appreciation of how a person reacts, not in finite terms but in the context of his or her own environment. This same person might have acted differently faced by different social, political, psychological or religious influences (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003). Therefore people are likely to behave differently in different contexts with different situational factors. O' Donoghue and Punch (2003) further asserts that the individual cannot exist and develop in isolation from his/her context, but different individuals in the same context may react differently, and their reactions may change as circumstances change. Meaning is negotiated, maintained and adopted in a continuous process of interpretations of the individual, rather than a definition of the facts by some external umpire, that will influence perceptions and actions because perception is reality (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003; Woods, 1996).

O' Donoghue and Punch (2003) argue that meaning is always undergoing a process of adjustment or change through the input of fresh information derived from a social context. It is therefore correct to suggest that meaning is subject to change as contexts change, since meaning is never a fixed entity. The 'designatory capacity' (Woods, 1996) of symbolic interactionist practice assumes that, that which will be provided by the participant is of use in itself. It assumes that the language used by the participant in the environment represents and provides a way of speaking about the wider context of, for example, the various discourses of both teachers and theorists (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003).

### 3.3.3 Strategies.

These are methods used to achieve certain goals and the concept of “strategy” is derived from interactionist research (Woods, 1980). This study has as its purpose, and also embedded in the research question, the exploration of how teachers engage with the new FET curriculum for Grade 10 in Economics hence, some attention to the question as to ‘what strategies’ do teachers employ in getting down to work with this new curriculum, is necessary. In traditional African cultural societies, different communities use different methods to respond to the same cultural tradition, for example, Zulus slaughter a goat to communicate with ancestors while Xhosas slaughter a sheep to perform the same ritual. This explains that, due to the unique orientation of the human factor, methods applied to implement a particular practice are likely to differ from person to person and from context to context. Strategies will, therefore, be those pedagogical means and methods or devices formulated by teachers in their unique contexts, to come to terms with difficulties under which they work (Woods, 1980).

Symbolic interactionist practice does have a view on social structures and systems or methods as wider concerns. In some cases, the imperatives of the system are mostly acted out directly in people’s behaviour. However, people do not merely respond to imperatives in such a manner, but they construct a response which to a certain extent might vary from what the wider system might lead us to expect (Woods, 1996). ‘Coping strategies’ that identify patterns that exhibit both personal creativity and external constraints require the study of the situational constraints in response to which they are fashioned, and of the relation of such constraints to wider structural concerns. Strategies are not only two dimensional (micro-macro). They are series of day-to-day operations invented to serve ‘long term’ rather than ‘short term’ objectives, and are linked to broad general aims (Woods, 1980).

Strategies are embedded in the way other people act towards the person in relation to the phenomenon in a social context, hence this study will inherit the assumption that it is individuals who develop their social roles in relation to others using different strategies (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003). Therefore, meanings to social roles and interactions are modified through an interpretive process used by the individual in dealing with the things he encounters in the environment. This study seeks to determine how teachers experience and make sense of (interpret) subject-content topics in the FET Economics curriculum hence, various strategies used by teachers in various contexts where the new curriculum is implemented are important.

Strategies may, in some social contexts, manifest in the form of discourses, with talk and text operating as social practices (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003). Discourses are socially constructed and recognized ways of doing and being in the world, which integrate and regulate ways of acting, thinking, feeling, using language, and believing (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003). The concept 'discourse' may also refer to all aspects of communication as a strategy to interpret or give meaning to a phenomenon in practice.

The social construction of essential characteristics of the discourse, such as methods of representation, is closely connected with elements of texts or accounts applicable to the complex origins and motivations that produce types of language as a common method of interpreting and giving meaning to a concept or action (O' Donoghue & Punch, 2003).

### **3.4 Methodological settings of the study:**

#### **3.4.1 A mixed-method approach to an inquiry.**

Mixed-method research is a form of inquiry that seeks to establish some reconciliation between the qualitative and quantitative paradigms in an effort to quell paradigm

‘wars’ on the one hand, and to demoralize the *incompatibility thesis*, a propaganda which posits that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, including their associated methods, cannot and should not be mixed (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This method of research is characterized by its methodological pluralism or eclecticism which frequently results in superior research as compared to the other two (qualitative and quantitative) methods. While paradigm wars have a distinguishing characteristic of relentlessly focusing on the differences between qualitative and quantitative research, mixed-methods research recognizes the importance and usefulness of both research orientations by drawing from the strengths and minimizing the weaknesses of both in single research studies and across studies (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The mixed-methods research approach offers the opportunity for practicing researchers to see methodologists describe and develop techniques that are closer to what researchers actually use in practice. As the third research paradigm, mixed-methods research attempts to bridge the hostilities between quantitative and qualitative research, by identifying commonalities between the two traditional paradigms. Common to both paradigms is the fact that both quantitative and qualitative researchers use empirical observations to address research questions. They describe their data, construct explanatory arguments from their data, and speculate about why the outcomes they observed happened as they did. They both attempt to provide warranted assertions about human beings and the environment in which they live and evolve. For both of them, this goal of understanding leads to the examination of different phenomena such as intentions, experiences, attitudes and culture.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17) defines the mixed-methods research as

“the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study”.

This approach to an inquiry makes use of the pragmatic method in providing workable explanations to a phenomenon under review, and its logic of inquiry includes the use of induction (discovery of patterns), deduction (testing of theories and hypotheses), and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best of a set of explanations for understanding one's results). The philosophical basis of pragmatism is the assumption that communication can be improved among researchers from different paradigms in an attempt to advance knowledge, through the use of the mixed-methods research which uses a method or philosophy that attempts to merge the fundamental understandings provided by qualitative and quantitative research into a workable research project (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Mixed-methods research views the research question as most fundamental to decisions relating to the choice of research methods, as the latter should always follow research questions in a way that offers the best chance to obtain useful answers. Many research questions are best and most fully answered through mixed research solutions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). According to the fundamental principle of mixed research, researchers should collect multiple data using different strategies, approaches, and methods in such a way that the resulting combination is likely to end in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. The effective use of this principle serves as a justification for mixed-methods research because the product will be superior to mono-method studies. A good example is that of adding qualitative interviews to survey data both as a check as well as a way to discuss issues under investigation, and tapping into participants' perspectives and meanings will help avoid some potential problems with the survey method.

Another example, which happens to be a mirror image of this study on Grade 10 teachers' experiences of the new FET curriculum with regards to data collection methods, is a qualitative study where the researcher might want to qualitatively observe and interview, but supplement this with a closed-ended instrument (questionnaire) to systematically measure certain factors considered important in the relevant research literature (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).



Various options for a mixed-methods research design can be developed from the two major types of mixed-methods research: a *mixed-model*, which mixes qualitative and quantitative approaches within or across the stages of the research process, and a *mixed-method*, that includes a quantitative *phase* and a qualitative *phase* in an overall research study. An example of a within-stage mixed-model design would be the use of a questionnaire that includes a summated rating scale (quantitative data collection) and one or more open-ended questions (qualitative data collection), according to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). Based on this example, it will be true to say that this study is a within-stage mixed-model design (as the questionnaire used in this study has the above features) that has a mixed-methods orientation. While the questionnaire is a primary source of data collection in this study, the use of observations and interviews in qualitative case studies of the three teacher-participants makes this a qualitatively-dominated mixed-methods research design.

However, in constructing a mixed-methods design, care has to be taken that the researcher makes two primary decisions: whether one wants to operate largely within one dominant paradigm or not, and whether one wants to conduct all the phases concurrently or sequentially. Contrary to mixed-models designs, mixed-methods designs are similar to conducting a quantitative mini-study and a qualitative mini-study in one overall research study. Nevertheless, to be considered a mixed-method design, the findings must be mixed or integrated at some point such that a quantitative phase is conducted to inform a qualitative phase as the case is for this study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004)

In the final analysis, it remains a principle of mixed-methods research that researchers should mindfully create designs that effectively answer their research questions; which is contrary to the common approach in traditional quantitative research where students are given a menu of designs from which to select (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004)

### 3.4.2 Paradigmatic positioning by the researcher.

Researchers taking a compatibilist, non-purist or mixed-methods position allow themselves an opportunity to mix and match design components that offer the best chance of answering their specific research questions. This is because these researchers will not be limited by paradigm in their choice of research methods, as they can freely choose to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods. For this reason I have positioned myself in a mixed-research paradigm (pragmatic positioning) so as to provide for systematic variation between qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Today's world of research is becoming increasingly overwhelmed with interdisciplinary, complex and dynamic methods, making it necessary for many researchers to complement one method with another, bringing about a need for a solid understanding of multiple methods used by various scholars. One needs, therefore, to take cognizance of the reality that research in a content domain that is dominated by one method often can be better informed by the use of multiple methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

This enabled me to capture the lives of participants in order to understand and interpret the meanings embedded in the participants' lives (Henning, 2004). The purpose of this study is to explore Grade 10 teachers' experiences of the new FET curriculum (ibid), hence, understanding and interpreting teachers' real life practices, by objectively determining their actual encounter with this curriculum, is an underlying principle that constitutes reality around this study. This theoretical position describes a philosophical understanding that stresses the need for a focus on meaning and human beings as meaning-making and meaning-using creatures (Yates, 2004). Much qualitative research is a combination of the pragmatic (interpretive) paradigm and the phenomenological position, leading to a focus on the planned actions and interactions with objects that human beings find 'meaningful', (Yates, 2004).

### 3.4.3 Epistemological implications of the study.

The epistemological implication of pragmatism is the discovery of the meaning of the idea by learning its consequences, which involves a great deal of experimentation in the process. In an event where pragmatism is used as a method of settling metaphysical disputes, its purpose is to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences, and this suggests that the mixed-methods research paradigm is also interpretive in nature (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Essentially, when judging ideas we should consider their empirical and practical consequences as these together with empirical findings, could help in understanding the importance of philosophical positions and most importantly, in deciding which action to take next as one attempts to better understand real world phenomena (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004)

Since for both social and natural sciences, data are not detachable from theory, the pragmatic (interpretive) paradigm is based on the assumption that phenomena of all kinds must be interpreted by researchers, knowing that facts do not speak for themselves and have to be interpreted (Usher, 1996). This means that we do not have data that exists as given and can speak for itself; hence such data cannot therefore function as the ultimate grounding for the validity of knowledge claims (Usher, 1996). Educational research is a social practice; therefore, the assumption on which the pragmatic (interpretive) paradigm is based becomes valid for this study. In social and educational research, knowledge is concerned not with generalization, prediction and control but with interpretation, meaning and illumination (Usher, 1996).

Usher (1996) further acknowledges that hermeneutic or interpretive epistemology in both social and educational research focuses on social practices, which are in turn embedded in human actions and interactions. The pragmatic paradigm further

assumes that all human action is meaningful (ibid) and hence has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. To explain the social world and what it constitutes, we need to understand it, to make sense of it, and hence we necessarily have to understand the meanings that make up and are made up by interactive human behaviour (Usher, 1996). This implies that interpretive schemes have to be used by qualitative pragmatists as a means to give meaning to human action. Usher (1996) further acknowledges that, for as long as sense seeking is from an interpretive framework, then all knowledge points to a particular perspective and is partial in relation to this framework.

#### 3.4.4 Three individual cases as a basis of the study.

A case study approach has been used in this inquiry to establish the magnitude of the factors influencing each teacher's experiences of the new FET curriculum in Economics from a teacher professional development, practical engagement with the new curriculum as well as biographical points of view. A case study in this set-up provided a rich and thick description of what it is like (Bertram, 2003) for teachers to participate in the implementation of the new curriculum. It also enabled me to capture the reality of the participants' lived experiences (ibid) of and thoughts about the new curriculum and its challenges, since case study data is strong in reality. A case study recognizes the complexity and embeddedness of social truths as it offers support to interpretations in presenting data in more publicly accessible form (Cohen & Manion, 1997).

Three teachers from three different schools with different contextual and/or situational factors were observed and interviewed to elicit rich data on how they experience with the new FET curriculum in their schools. This means that data collected from observing and interviewing a particular teacher in practice provided evidence of the nature of each teacher's experience with the new Economics curriculum, and this is a

case in point. A case study is based on the assumption that a phenomenon is investigated as a 'bounded system' (Henning, 2004), where this 'system' may be a group of people, a set of documents or a television series.

Any social entity that can be bounded by parameters, revealing information that can be captured within these boundaries may be a case study, according to Henning. This study seeks to locate the new Economics FET curriculum as a bounded system in the context of Grade 10 teachers' experiences of implementing such a curriculum for the first time in 2006. In defining the case study, Merriam (1998, p.18) has this to say

“It is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a programme, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group. The bounded system, or case might be selected because it has an instance (unit) of concern, issue or hypotheses”.

A case study is important when the objective of an evaluation is 'to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of a programme. When it is necessary to be responsive, to convey a holistic and dynamically rich account of an educational programme, case study is a tailor-made approach', according to Merriam (1998). Since qualitative methods of collecting data needed to explore and examine the case in the form of interviews, observations and the reflective journal are used in this study, the study will be more of a qualitative case study. Henning (2004, p. 41) acknowledges that:

“While case studies can be quantitative and can test theory, in education they are more likely to be qualitative. A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Case studies are distinguished from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and

analyses of a single unit or bounded system such as an individual, a program, event, group, intervention or community”.

A case study offers useful insights into the practice of exploring the processes and dynamics of real practice in an educational innovative curriculum (Merriam, 1998) like the Grade 10 Economics curriculum in this study, whose implementers (teachers) are an empirical field, with a focus on their experiences. A qualitative case study approach is often the best methodology for addressing critical problems of practice (such as factors influencing teachers’ abilities to engage with the new economics curriculum) and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education. It also provides for an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded system such as a person, a process or a social unit (ibid) while its design can also accommodate a variety of disciplinary perspectives, test theory or build theory, incorporate random or purposive sampling, and include both quantitative and qualitative data (Merriam, 1998), making it appropriate for this study which uses the tenets of both quantitative and qualitative research.

It is in terms of this understanding that it can be ascertained at any given time, that a design format for a case study will always be characterized by a focus on a phenomenon that has identifiable boundaries (Henning, 2004). It will therefore be inappropriate for the researcher to utilize data that is not applicable to the case unless such data indirectly reflects the nature of the case. Data may have a direct reflection to the case as long as it describes how, where, when, and why things happen in the case as this form an essential part of the study, and this makes the process an integral part of the outcome, as Henning (2004) acknowledges. However, one must not lose sight of the fact that the context is more than part of the case, knowing that the case and the interaction between context and action is usually the unit of analysis or empirical field (Henning, 2004).

Merriam (1998) asserts that a case study has its own strengths and weaknesses as an approach. The benefits of using a case study as an approach are inherent in the following strengths:

- It is a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon.
- The case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon since it is anchored in real-life situations.
- It offers insights and illuminates meaning that expands its readers' experiences.
- It plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base and is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education.

Case studies have the following limitations:

- They can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs. Readers can be made to think that case studies are accounts of the whole, whereas they are part of social life. However, this study has no intention to generalize beyond the case but only to generate ideas around economics education.
- The sensitivity and integrity of the researcher as the main data collection and analysis instrument is a problem due to non-availability of training in observation and interviewing for case study researchers, with only their instincts and abilities to rely on during throughout the research effort. However, guidelines for observations and interviews in the form of both the observation and interview schedules have been prepared for this study.
- Ethical problems in data selection and illustration give rise to biases that can affect the final product. Related to this bias is the inherent problem of power-relations at all levels. However, triangulation in paradigm (mixed-method) that combines tenets of both quantitative and qualitative research as well as triangulation in data collection (questionnaires, observations, interviews) reduce bias to a minimum.

However, a quantitative analysis of questionnaires used as a preliminary source of collecting data was conducted as a prelude to interviews. This quantitative analysis provided a pool of facts from which interview questions were formulated. Since many forms of quantitative analyses rely upon ‘observations’ of human behaviour, as based on the assumption that one can observe and measure the social world (Yates, 2004), it was appropriate to complement questionnaires with an element of observation in this study.

### **3.5 Setting up the design for the research.**

#### **3.5.1 The questionnaire**

The use of questionnaires in this study as a foundation for the design of the research process enabled me to assemble the required data in a short space of time with as little administrative responsibility as possible. Questionnaires also help to ensure that the study accesses a fair amount of overall reliability if the substantial response rate is achieved (Wiersma, 1969). Whilst more time is required to design and develop a questionnaire, it simplifies the process of answering on the part of the respondents and this is important as respondents do not have much time to spend on answering detailed questions.

While the two main ways of administering a questionnaire varies from a more personal face-to-face or telephonic interview to a less personal self-completion by participant model (Yates, 2004), this study relied on the latter method to enable the respondents to go through the questionnaire at their own individual pace, in the sanctuary of their own privacy. This ensured that reliable data pertaining to the



experiences of teaching the new FET curriculum was collected from Grade 10 Economics teachers. This also helped to eliminate the possibility or likelihood that the interviewer may have some influence on the responses given by the respondents (Yates, 2004), and also ensures that respondents maximize their right to decide whether to respond or not, at the complete exclusion of any kind of pressure by the researcher. However, care also had to be taken to ensure that the terminology used in the questionnaire as well as the language were more relevant to the Grade 10 Economics teachers as the target respondents.

Questions contained in the questionnaire were designed in such a manner that they varied from a closed format to a more open format. On the majority, the questions were closed and kept as short as possible to eliminate confusion on the part of the respondents while also ensuring some degree of simplicity with which the questionnaire can be completed. In terms of this, each question had a limited number of options from which respondents had to choose an answer (Yates, 2004). These questions conformed to the principle of relevance to research objectives in terms of answering to the critical research questions and also provoked independent thought and insight on information regarding Grade 10 Economics teachers' experiences of the new curriculum.

Knowing that Grade 10 teachers, as the new FET curriculum practitioners, have so much to do in terms of lesson planning as well as actual delivery of lessons in their classrooms, questions were, as already mentioned above, kept short and simple to interpret. This is in view of the fact that the respondents normally have very little time at their disposal to respond to the questionnaire (Yates, 2004). However, the quality of the questions that constituted the questionnaire allowed for the flow of complex knowledge and/or information from the respondents to the researcher, as teachers had to make a fine distinction between new curriculum practices and old practices drawn from their experiences in teaching the subject over the years, according to Yates (Yates, 2004).

The open format questions were used on the assumption that qualitative research provides rich descriptions of the social world (ibid) which are valuable in uncovering the meanings that subjects of research bring to their life experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Since open questions are answerable in quite a number of ways, as they are not bound to one particular answer, these questions should be designed in such a way that they encourage participants to 'open up' about their attitudes, thoughts or feelings (Yates, 2004) that have a bearing on their experiences of the new FET curriculum. However, open questions were used on a smaller scale in the design of the questionnaire, for the simple reason that respondents often do not have much time at their disposal to respond to numerous open-ended questions (ibid).

However, the use of questionnaires in the process of collecting research data is not immune to disadvantages; therefore researchers have to be vigilant to ensure that care is taken to quell a possible influence of such disadvantages on any research undertaking. These range from the low percentage rate of returns from respondents as well as a possible misunderstanding of questions by respondents which may not be addressed by the researcher (Cohen & Manion, 1997). The inability of people of limited literacy to respond to questionnaires, incomplete responses by respondents, the time it takes to develop a questionnaire and the possibility that respondents may select answers without even reading the questions thoroughly (Wiersma, 1969) or even worse, respondents' unwillingness to write their answers for one reason or another (Cohen & Manion, 1997), all become the factors influencing the trustworthiness of the questionnaire as a data collection tool.

Taking the above limitations into consideration, I however, had to pre-contact with respondents to ensure that a maximum response rate was achieved while also containing a manageable size of the sample by limiting the number of would-be respondents to 48. All 48 teachers were from the same education circuit as the researcher and were quite familiar with him, making the process of sampling more

purposive in nature. Questionnaires were personally handed to the teachers who were constantly cautioned by the researcher, and reminded in the questionnaire not to reveal their identities in the event of the questionnaire being completed, which they indeed remembered.

An arrangement in terms of which the completed questionnaires were to be retrieved from respondents through personal collection by the researcher, in one of the several economics cluster gatherings was made and accomplished accordingly. It must, however, be pointed out that of the 48 questionnaires that were disseminated to teachers, 24 were retrieved from the respondents, making a response rate of 50% of the total issue.

Since these questionnaires were issued to a professional population of Grade 10 economics teachers who are familiar with the content of the questionnaire that was professionally relevant to them, the response rate as well as respondents' interest to respond was hopefully stimulated (Cohen & Manion, 1997). To attract the respondents' attention so that respondents were motivated to respond, the attractiveness in the layout and design of the questionnaire was enhanced by the appropriate varying of typing fonts and font sizes. The questionnaire was piloted three times; each time ambiguity was captured and corrected, the questionnaire was re-piloted with a local Grade 11 economics teacher in order to eliminate any form of misunderstanding and / or ambiguity in its content.

### 3.5.2 Lesson observations

To access further data necessary to complement the preliminary data collected through questionnaires, observations were conducted with the three Grade 10 Economics FET educators. This is because observational data are attractive in the sense that they offer the researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from 'live' situations (Cohen & Manion, 1997). This allows the researcher the opportunity to look at the phenomenon revealing itself in 'situ' rather than at second hand, such that

he / she is able to understand the context of programmes and see things that might otherwise be consciously missed. Cognizance should be taken of the fact that observations extend opportunities to the researcher to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations, thereby moving beyond perception-based data to access personal knowledge (Cohen & Manion, 1997).

Cohen and Manion (1997) further argue that observations enable researchers to gather data on the following:

- the human setting in the mould of how people are organized, the characteristics and make up of the groups or individuals being observed such as gender, class, race, etc;
- the physical setting in the form of the physical environment and its organization;
- the interactional setting inherent in the way people interact, formal or informal, planned or unplanned, verbal or non-verbal, etc;
- the programme setting as it manifests in the resources and their organization, pedagogic styles, curricular and their organization.

Observational data should also enable the researcher to enter and understand the situation that is being described. However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the use of observations must be based on the principle that what is observed (seen and heard) is the researcher's version of what is 'there' (Henning, 2004).

Different types of observations range from structured to unstructured, pre-ordinate to responsive (Cohen and Manion, 1997). While a structured observation has a pre-set agenda of issues as well as pre-determined hypotheses that will either be confirmed or refuted by observational data, semi-structured and unstructured observations on the

other hand are more geared towards generating hypotheses than testing the validity of the hypotheses. Therefore semi-structured and unstructured observations tend to review observational data before giving a conclusive explanation for the phenomenon being observed, according to Cohen and Manion (1997). Since this study seeks to explore Grade 10 Economics teachers' experiences of the new FET curriculum which are not yet known, a semi-structured observation that generates some explanation and provides a description of the nature of these experiences from observational data has been conducted.

While the semi-structured observation allows the researcher to see the elements of the situation speaking for their own, it also provides opportunities for the researcher to focus on certain aspects of the phenomenon being observed (Henning, 2004), having a bearing on critical research questions as well as literature reviewed in the study, such as how teachers make sense of the new subject-content topics for their learners to understand in their classrooms, as well as identifying factors influencing teachers' abilities to engage with the new FET Economics curriculum in practice.

Semi-structured observations take into account the agenda of the participants in the sense that these observations respond directly to what they find and therefore it is correct to say, by definition, they are honest to the situation which they find (Cohen & Manion, 1997). In this case, selectivity comes from the situation rather than from the researcher since key issues emerge and follow from the observation, rather than the researcher knowing in advance what those key issues will be, according to Cohen & Manion (1997). As an interpretive researcher, I had to search for the way in which these social actors made meaning on the stage of action that I was observing, and duly record in field notes and other transcripts in a way that inevitably reflected this meaning (Henning, 2004). I found this necessary for the simple reason that qualitative research tends to draw the researcher into the phenomenological complexity of participants' worlds as situations unfold, and connections, causes and correlations are observed in practice over time (Cohen & Manion, 1997).

The most serious limitation of using observations as a data collection method is that of observer bias as Henning (2004) argues that what is observed is the researcher's version of what is "there" (ibid). This manifests in situations where a researcher focuses, often without awareness, on certain aspects of the social stage and realizes this focus when reviewing field notes and other recordings after exiting the field.

However, this limitation was neutralized by observing and recording, during the lessons, in a way that data become usable as building blocks when I eventually become the author of the research text (Henning, 2004). By then I had looked at observational data twice – first when I observed the actions and interactions of participants and recorded observational data in the observation transcript during the lessons where they talked, used gestures and symbols, agreed and disagreed. Secondly, I observed through my field notes when observational data had to be systematically entered in the observation schedule as a first step towards the process of data analysis. Usher (1996) and Henning (2004) use the concept of double hermeneutics to refer to the practice of interpreting text that has already been interpreted.

Participating in the actions and interactions of participants also minimized the effect of observer bias as this offered the opportunity of seeing the social act while simultaneously observing with my other senses (Henning, 2004), while also ensuring that any contrasting data was not ignored by documenting the phenomenon being observed in the process. This helped to strengthen the argument in favour of empirical data, to the effect that such data was free of any bias.

### 3.5.3 The interview

Interviewing has become a social way of life in modern society, on account of the fact

that research interviews are but one of the many types of interviews, and are based on the assumption that the individual's perspective is an important part of the fabric of society and of our joint knowledge of social processes and of the human condition (Henning, 2004). The most ideal and relative approaches to social research are more concerned with finding meanings through oral interaction rather than measuring aspects of the social world (Yates, 2004). In our modern society our lives are saturated and widely diverse in experiencing with interviews be it for employment or workplace promotion, as well as for therapy and counseling (Henning, 2004). This practice will continue for as long as finding information out about people is best done by way of asking them. Tactical interviewing remains the best way of eliciting peoples' innermost experiences, and of discovering how our pleasures and pains correspond to the experiences of other people (Cohen & Manion, 1997; Henning, 2004).

Qualitative researchers often make use of in-depth interviews as they are concerned with the perspectives of the participants in the way they understand the social world and the meanings things have for them (Woods, 1986; Yates, 2004). This study will also use in depth interviews to gather data on Grade 10 teachers' experiences of the new FET curriculum, in a way that stimulate the continuous flow of such data. While Yates (2004) describes an interview as a means to develop a shared understanding or view between two or more people, Cohen and Manion (1997, p.271) define the research interview as

'a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction and explanation'.

An interview is therefore seen as an unusual method in the sense that it involves gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals, and differs

from the questionnaire where the respondent is required to record in some way his / her responses to set questions (Cohen & Manion, 1997).

Cohen and Manion (1997) identify four kinds of interviews that may be used as research data collection tools. The structured interview has its content and procedures organized in advance and the interviewer has very little or no influence over the wording and sequence of questions as these are determined by means of a schedule that can hardly be modified. Henning (2004) acknowledges this as a standardized interview where the standard remains the guidance without interference or conversation from the interviewer. Researchers use the structured interview to elicit information in order to achieve understanding of the participant's point of view or situation, as it is focused, discursive and allows the researcher and participant to explore an issue. It is used to determine individual's perceptions, opinions, facts and forecasts (De Vos et al., 1998).

A direct opposite of this kind is the unstructured interview, which is a more open version, with a great measure of flexibility and freedom on the part of the interviewer to influence the content, sequence and wording of the interview schedule. Other researchers use the concept of 'in-depth' interviews to refer to these, as they are conducted without utilizing any of the researcher's prior information, experience and opinions in a particular area (De Vos, et al., 1998). The 'non-standardized' way of interviewing as Henning (2004) calls it, means that researchers who interview participants are co-constructors of the meaning, whether they intend to be or not, because of their interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (De Vos, et al., 1998).

The non-directive interview as a research instrument is characterized by minimal direction or control exhibited by the interviewer and the freedom the respondent has to express his or her subjective feelings as fully and as naturally as she wants. Open-



ended questions contained in the interview transcript have no pre-determined framework for answers as the interview is confined to rephrasing the respondent's answers and to probing generally. Researchers sometimes refer to this as a semi-structured interview, and will be used in this study as a means to access rich data on teachers' experiences of the new FET curriculum. These interviews are often defined as those organized around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth (De Vos, et al., 1998). Since the researcher has a particular interest in the new FET curriculum in terms of how teachers experience with it, using these interviews will be appropriate for this study, so as to elicit information in order to understand each participant's point of view or situation regarding this new curriculum.

Qualitative researchers use semi-structured interviews to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of a particular topic while simultaneously allowing the researcher and participant much more flexibility in the process. However, these types of interviews are especially suitable where the researcher has some particular interest in complexity or process, or where the issue is controversial or personal (De Vos, et al., 1998), as is the case in this study. These interviews on the majority contain the relationship where the participant is perceived as the expert on the subject and should therefore be allowed maximum opportunity to tell the story. This is, amongst others, the reason for the use of semi-structured interviews in this study as Grade 10 teachers participating in this study are presumed to be the experts in the teaching of Economics as a subject.

A semi-structured interview was a suitable option for this research undertaking as it made me benefit from gathering relevant data on the nature and relevance of factors influencing teachers' abilities to engage with the new FET Economics curriculum.

The focused interview could be used in an effort to introduce more control by the interviewer into the non-directive situation. This interview is characterized by a focus on the respondent's subjective responses to a known situation in which he/she has been involved and which has been analyzed by the interviewer prior to the interview.

The choice of interviews as a method of data collection in this study originated in advantages offered by interviews in that they allow for a greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection, their ability to be used as a means of gathering information with a direct bearing on the research objectives, their possibility to measure what a person knows, likes or dislikes. However, Woods (1986) argues that interviews have to be used in conjunction with other collection methods such as observations, as there is a very strong bond between interviews and observations, and this study conforms to this idea since multiple methods of collection are used around the interviews. Interviews may further be used to test hypotheses or suggests new ones, and may also easily be used in conjunction with other methods of data collection in a research undertaking (Cohen & Manion, 1997).

However, the use of interviews as a data collection method in this study required that I guard against certain disadvantages that could negatively affect the research findings. The challenge was to maintain a balance between flexibility and consistency in data collection, how to establish rapport in order to gain information from participants and their prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer. The problem of developing a satisfactory method of recording replies to open-ended questions in instances where participants did not want to be tape-recorded had to be considered. The possibility that participants could misunderstand or misinterpret questions directed at them also had to be considered as a limitation of interviews (Cohen & Manion, 1997).

In the light of the above disadvantages interviews have as data collection tools, I, however, had to rely on the sympathetic relationship and understanding already existing with participants, based on collective affiliation as members of the same moderation cluster, to deal with the challenge of having to establish the rapport necessary to gain information from participants (De Vos, et al., 1998). To ascertain that minimal or no bias was involved, data recorded had to be reviewed with participants for them to confirm as to whether the researcher's records were a true reflection of what participants said or intended to say.

I made a reasonable effort to seek permission from participants in a very cordial manner, for the use of the tape recorder by negotiating a kind of 'contract' that gave them a right of control over the tape with regards to editing and amending of the transcript (Woods, 1986), and this paved the way to valuable information and to securing assurance of a consistent recording of replies to open ended questions. The use of multiple methods of data collection (triangulation) guaranteed a flexible and consistent process of data collection in this study. Follow-up questions were also used to bring about clarity in the event where participants appeared to have misunderstood or misinterpreted the questions due to ambiguity or phrasing not being crystal clear (Cohen & Manion, 1997; De Vos, et al., 1998).

### **3.6 The study sample, limitations and counter-limitations**

The type of sampling used in this study for the selection of participants was very purposive in nature. This is because I noted that participant observation would be much less complicated (Walford, 2001) if participants were selected on the basis of existing human connections and relationship emanating from collective affiliation as members of the same moderation cluster (ibid). The three Economics teachers that were observed and who also participated in in-depth interviews are members of the moderation cluster which I regularly convene and co-ordinate. This was very

important and also essential to the idea that it has been my intention to play a role of main research instrument in this mixed-research study.

The limitations of this study relate to its findings, which could not be generalized to a broader education society beyond the case studied. However, the purpose of this study was not to generalize beyond the case, but to generate ideas on professional development affecting Economics education. The study was also not open to cross checking; therefore subjectivity, selectivity, and bias are highly probable whilst observer bias, despite attempts to address reflexivity, was also probable.

However, through triangulation of data collection methods as well as the use of multiple-interpretive schemes or plans envisaged in double-hermeneutic observational research practice (ibid), subjectivity and bias was eliminated and trustworthiness in this study could be confirmed.

### **3.7 Gaining access and acceptance**

To secure an ethically negotiated access to teachers in the cluster, letters requesting their consent to participate in the proposed research undertaking were written and addressed to the selected teachers, while letters to the respective principals as authorized gate-keepers in the schools where these teachers are employed, were written and addressed to them in a formal manner by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education on my behalf, on request by the University of KwaZulu-Natal as the institution that has mandated this study, and under whose supervision the study is conducted.

Letters of request to the three Grade 10 Economics teachers who participated in this study expressed a formal declaration of my enthusiasm to have their co-operation, and followed after informal conversations between myself and three Economics teachers. During the conversation I made it explicitly known to the teachers as to what the research study was about in terms of purpose and focus, as well as the institution with which I am enrolled and type of qualification for which the study was conducted. The reciprocal arrangement in terms of which I made an open declaration of my commitment to provide academic and curricular related material and assistance to teachers where desired by them, in exchange for the secured co-operation by teachers was also made open for negotiation. This arrangement was based on the understanding that gaining access to participants must prelude the requests for entry into research contexts.

The formal letter of request to the Grade 10 teachers, hereafter referred to as the informed consent, to seek their participation in the study also divulged the researcher's current engagement with the institution where he is enrolled, as well as the purpose of the research study in which teachers were requested to participate. The letter also made a note of the contribution the study is likely to make to Economics education; hence their participation would be invaluable for future teaching of Economics. A statement to the effect that any information collected during the process of their participation would be handled with strictest confidentiality was made (Yates, 2004), as the findings are not meant for public consumption as the final study will be transmitted to the institution with which I am enrolled for safe-keeping.

A declaration that participants would not be mentioned by their names in order to safeguard their identity when the research report is written for purposes of publication was also made, as I had to conform to the anonymity clause of ethics in social research. This informed consent also made it explicitly known to the participants that they had every right to withdraw from participation at any level of their involvement should they wish to do so, as they were not obliged in any way to continue participating in case they felt their comfort was under threat (Yates, 2004). The

researcher then drew the participants' attention to the fact that the formally accepted way for them to express their willingness to participate in the study was that of signing the declaration to tender their informed consent

As soon as the agreement was reached with individual teachers by way of securing their informed consent to participate in this study, the next logical and appropriate step as a follow up was that of making formal requests with the respective principals of schools where these teachers are placed. Principals are relevant people in the sense that they control and exercise power within the research contexts or schools proposed for the intention of my exploration in this research study (Yates, 2004).

The letter containing the formal request for entry into these schools was written on my behalf by the KZN Department of Education and issued to me via the University of KwaZulu Natal. This was my permit to conduct research in these three schools and I had to produce it each time I engaged with the principal in an effort to gain entry into his school. It explained my current engagement with the institution where I am enrolled in terms of intended qualification, nature of research focus as well as the purpose of the research study. A declaration to the effect that under no circumstances will I interfere with the normal programme of the school was made and the fact that the identity of the school and that of the principal would be kept anonymous at any level of reporting on the study was confirmed in this letter (Yates, 2004).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has created a context for establishing the conceptual framework for this study. It has successfully explored a platform to review symbolic interactionist practice in qualitative research and has analyzed Woods' principles of symbolic interactionist practice in the form of perspectives, context and strategies. This section

has also presented the methodological settings of this study through the exposition of its paradigmatic implications and types of methods in paradigm, as well as data collection methods including questionnaires, observations and interviews. It has also clarified the methods of sampling used as well as issues of ethical relevance. The following chapter will now seek to analyze data and give meaning to such data by way of interpretation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1 Introduction:**

The purpose of this study was to explore Grade 10 teachers' experiences of teaching the new FET curriculum in Economics. This chapter will present data elicited from the participants in response to the critical research questions. The chapter will therefore proceed as follows;

- ❖ Narrative vignettes of each participant.
- ❖ The nature of professional development available to Grade 10 economics teachers.
- ❖ How teachers experience and make sense of the new subject-content topics in the FET economics curriculum.
- ❖ Factors influencing teachers' abilities to engage with the new FET economics curriculum.
- ❖ Discussion
- ❖ Conclusion

As mentioned above, this chapter will begin with an exposition of the narrative vignettes of the three cases studied in this research.

### **4.2 Narrative vignettes of each of the three participants:**

#### **4.2.1 Profiling Mr. T and his School.**

Mr. T was born in Port Shepstone on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 1979 in the area known as KwaNositha location and is one of the three sons from a family with two daughters and three sons, and is born of a businessman father who owns a bottle store in another neighbouring location in Port Edward. He attended his primary and secondary education in local schools and went on to enroll for a three-year Secondary Teachers' Diploma at the then local Gamalakhe College of Education, a former subsidiary of



what is now known as the Durban University of Technology, specializing in Accounting and Economics.

Mr. T currently teaches Economics Grade 10 at McHeights High School, a new school that came into existence because of limited floor space at the old neighbouring high school, which could no longer contain ever-increasing student enrolments because of the influx of new households from the Eastern Cape, a neighbouring coastal province south of KwaZulu-Natal.

McHeights High School is situated at Bomela, a rural location about fourteen kilometers to the inland east of Port Shepstone and is under the control of a tribal authority. Traces and scars of apartheid become obvious as soon as one disengages from the main Paddock Road into the dirt/gravel road leading directly to the school. The school is fenced right-around with barb-wire and has one main gate, which is manned by a security guard for twenty-four hours a day. The first period following morning devotions begins at eight-hours in the morning, and the gates are locked from quarter-past-eight until the first break at eleven-hours, so learners and teachers who come late have to taste the wrath of having to wait until first break to enter the school premises.

The school has fifteen classrooms of which one has been converted into a computer-room, a very spacious principal's office incorporating one strong-room, one deputy principal's cum administration clerk's office and one staff-room. Heads of school departments occupy and share one office as middle managers where they perform their operational management responsibilities. The school has a library with the material limited only to books supplied by the publishers of the national curriculum statement (NCS) related textbooks as well as textbooks previously used in teaching the Nated 550 syllabus. Classrooms as well as the library do not have ceiling-boards while the offices and the staff-room have ceiling boards. The school also has a computer-room with thirteen computers, which are used for teaching basic literacy to Grade 12 learners. Since the school has no hall for mass gatherings, two of the fifteen classrooms are divided by a partition which, when removed, allows for the combination of the two classroom into a hall-like structure. The school does not have

learning centres such as laboratories, technical drawing-offices or wood workshop and does not have a sick bay for temporary accommodation of sick learners.

The school is of a block-under-asbestos construction in terms of physical build-up and the walls are plastered, rough-cast and painted. Classroom floors are plain while floors in all offices are covered with plastic tiles. Rain gutters are aligned alongside the asbestos around the roof to ensure a smooth passage of rainwater from the roof through the down-pipes to the drains, thereby avoiding the erosion of the soil and the depletion of the dusty terrain. Pit-toilets are situated about fifty metres away from the school buildings for hygienic purposes and the water supply to the school is facilitated by one centrally-situated water tap between parallel blocks of classrooms and this provides drinking water. Non-drinking water is also accessible through a bore-hole next to a large plastic water tank. The school is fully electrified and has a meter box for a prepaid supply system provided by the Electricity Supply Commission (Eskom), while the fixed or landline telephone service provided by Telkom is the means by which the school is connected with outside stakeholders. However, the school has neither an electronic siren nor an internal communication system.

Concerning the finance portfolio, the school is a section 21 non-profit making public institution. This means that the education department's finance section directly deposits the subsidy allocation by the provincial Department of Education (DoE) to the school, in the school's bank account by means of electronic money transfer, and the school's assets and liabilities are the sole responsibility of the school's governing body.

The DoE subsidizes twenty-eight teachers in favour of the school in full complement and two non-teaching personnel while the other two non-educators receive their salaries from the school's governing body. There are no sports facilities within the school; hence, the school uses the facilities of the local community. This school is in an economically embarrassed environment in terms of contextual situation, as evidenced by the records maintained by the school indicating that approximately 70% of parents of learners are pensioners while 30% work for local retailers in town. The school has registered 845 learners in the 2008 academic year.

#### 4.2.2 Profiling Mr. X and his school.

Mr. X was born in 1957 on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April in a place known as Glebelands within the vicinity of the Durban Metropolitan Municipality. This place was later on converted from a family residential area into a men's hostel. He is the only child born of an unmarried couple and he grew up in KwaMashu. He attended his primary and secondary education in local KwaMashu schools before going on to enroll for a three-year Secondary Teachers' Diploma at Indumiso College of Education, the present Pietermaritzburg campus of the Durban University of Technology, specializing in Accounting and Economics. He then registered on a part-time basis with the University of South Africa. Mr. X currently teaches Economics Grade 10 at Sea-view High School, the oldest of the three schools participating in this project.

Sea-view High School is situated at Gamalakhe Township, situated about 16 kilometres inland to the east of Port Shepstone and is under the administration of the Hibiscus Coast Municipality. The school has a caretaker's cottage standing adjacent to the main school-gate leading to an asphalted parking area opposite the administrative clerk's office. Traces of apartheid are still visible, though at a diminishing rate as one embarks on the tar road with frequent speed control humps leading to the township, courtesy of the municipal infrastructure grant, an initiative by the district municipality directed at socially developing the historically disadvantaged communities. A concrete-built fence surrounds the school with one main-gate attended by a security guard for the whole day, making entry into and exit from the school subject to the security guard's approval. The first period follows the morning devotions at eight hours and gates are locked until first break at ten hours for security reasons.

The school has twenty classrooms, which are all occupied. The principal has his office located opposite the administrative clerk's office adjacent to the walkway leading to the staff-room at the far end facing the staff toilets. One of the two deputy principals occupies her own office while the other one inhabits a spacious sickroom that is currently not equipped with relevant material such as beds. Three out of four heads of school departments (HoDs) each occupy a separate office while the fourth HoD

occupies a duplicating room. The school has an agricultural science-learning centre, which it uses as a supplementary staffroom since the existing staffroom cannot accommodate all teachers due to its size.

The school library is not well equipped while the computer room has ten computers for literacy lessons. The Physical Science laboratory, which is yet to be equipped, is under the supervision of the Physical Science teacher while the Biology laboratory, which is also not yet fully equipped, is placed under the supervision of the Biology teacher. One fully equipped Consumer Studies centre is taken care of by a specialist teacher in this subject. The school does not have a hall for its mass gatherings, but two of the twenty classrooms have a removable partition that separates these, making conversion into a hall possible.

The school is of a face-brick under asbestos construction with aluminum windows, in terms of physical structure. Vinyl tiles cover all classroom floors, including floors in all offices as well as the staff-room, duplicating room and sickroom. Rain gutters are aligned alongside the asbestos around the roof to ensure a smooth passage for rain-water from the roof through the down-pipes into the drain, so that minimal or no soil erosion occurs and flowers in the front terrain facing the parking lot are not depleted. Flush-toilets for learners are situated in a central block that separates the computer-room and the agricultural science learning centre.

However, flush toilets are not in a good working condition and the school management team is considering hiring makeshift toilets while waiting for the renewal of this old flush system. Water supply to the school is facilitated by a pipeline system connected to a local water reservoir. The school is fully electrified and consumes electricity on account from Eskom, and receives a monthly statement or invoice payable at the end of each month. Telkom provides the fixed or land-line telephone service to the school, also against issue of a monthly bill to the school payable at the end of each month. An electronic siren is functional but, though wires have been attached, no internal communication system has yet been connected.

The school is a section 20 public institution in terms of finance portfolio, bearing a status of a non-profit making institution that has its allocation of subsidy funds kept

and administered by the regional education's finance office. While requisitions for school needs and payment of monthly bills are the responsibility of the school and its governing body, the regional office settles all accounts on behalf of the school.

The post establishment of the school as determined by the post-provisioning model (PPM) counts to thirty-one educators who are all subsidized by the provincial department of education and a complement of five non-teaching personnel including one administrative clerk, one security guard, two general or cleaning assistants and one grounds-man. Three of the five non-teaching personnel are employed and paid by the school's governing body. The school has a dual-purpose sports-ground for both soccer and cricket situated horizontally opposite the caretaker's cottage, as well as a netball cum volleyball facility. This school is situated in a lower-middle to middle class township environment but most of the learners in this school come from a surrounding informal settlement neighbouring the township, as most of the township residents have chosen to send their children to former model C schools in sub-urban areas around Port Shepstone. The school has registered 894 learners in the 2008 academic year.

#### 4.2.3 Profiling Mr. M and his school.

Mr. M was born on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1974 in the rural settlement of Izingolweni (now known as Eziqoleni), a magisterial area for the rural locations surrounding Port Shepstone, and is under the control of a traditional authority. Izingolweni is highly elevated and centrally situated between Port Shepstone and Harding, a town inland to the east of Izingolweni. Mr. M attended his primary and secondary education at local schools before pursuing tertiary education at the Gamalakhe College of Education, a former associate of the Durban University of Technology. He teaches Economics Grade 10 at Gian-com High School, a community-established institution that initially served as an extension of the existing Sea-view High School. When the local population exploded to the extent that available floor space and other resources at the latter school could not accommodate further entrants because of a heavy influx of people from the neighbouring province of the Eastern Cape, the only option was for the community to build another school in the area.

Gian-com High School is situated at Gamalakhe Township and is under the control of the Hibiscus Coast Municipality. The school is located next to the tar-road and mini-bus taxis have identified the main school-gate as a popular drop-off zone for teachers and learners coming to school in the morning. The school has a structural appearance of a rural school yet it is in the middle of the township, legacy of the separate development policy of the apartheid government that based the development of schools in black communities on the principle of rand-for-rand partnership terms with local communities. While the school is situated next to a tar-road, things begin to change as soon as one enters the school and has to negotiate a hard-to-contain smooth passage over a rocky and bumpy terrain leading to the parking area. The school is fenced right around with barb-wire and a security guard remains in attention at the school's main-gate through-out the day, making entry into and exit from the school premises subject to the security guard's approval. Morning prayers are conducted between 7h30 and 7h45 after which the first period begins. The gates are then locked until first break and then relocked until the school closes for the day, for security reasons.

The school has fourteen classrooms and are all fully occupied. There is a principal's office, one deputy has his office located opposite the principal's office while the other deputy principal shares another office with the HoD for Human and Social Sciences. The HoD for Science and the HoD for Commerce share another office located adjacent to the principal's office, while the HoD for languages occupies one office alone. The administrative clerk occupies an open reception area opposite the entrance door so that anyone entering the office block is in full view of the administrative clerk. The school has a computer-room, which is not yet functional due to non-availability of computers and accessories, while both the Physical Science and the Biology specialists alternatively patronize a science laboratory, as well as the school library that is yet to be equipped. The staff-room is on the same block as offices and extends towards the upper block of classrooms. The school has no learning centres for subjects such as Consumer Studies or workshops for Woodworking as commercial schools often do not offer these.

The school is of a block-under-asbestos construction, imitating rural schools in terms of physical structure, with all the walls plastered and painted. Classrooms floors are

plain while vinyl tiles cover floors in all offices including the staff-room. Rain-gutters align alongside the asbestos around the roof to facilitate a smooth passage of rainwater from the roof through the down-pipes to the drain. Flush toilets for learners are detached from classroom blocks and form a separate block. These toilets are clean and in a good working condition and teachers' toilets extend to the lower classroom block. A pipeline system, which facilitates water supply to the school like in any other township, connects to a water reservoir. The school consumes electricity from Eskom on account against a monthly statement or invoice payable at the end of each month. The school connects to the outside world by way of a fixed line telephone service that Telkom provides and is fully functional, though there is no siren or internal communication system in this school.

The school is a section 21 non-profit making public institution in terms of finance portfolio; hence, it has the capacity to exercise full control over funds raised from parents' subscriptions and those received from the provincial department of education as subsidies. The school governing body, through its finance sub-committee, manages the school funds.

The school boasts a complement of twenty-seven teachers who receive salaries from the Department of Education as determined by the PPM in terms of the norms and standards for educators. In addition to this, four other non-teaching personnel complement the staff of which two of these are employed and paid by the school's governing body. The school uses sports facilities of the local community in the form of the Gamalakhe soccer stadium, as there are no sports facilities inside the school due to terrain restrictions. The school is situated in the lower middle to middle class township environment, though the majority of learners come from the surrounding informal settlement as most parents in this township send their children to former model C schools in sub-urban areas around Port Shepstone. The school has registered 684 learners in the 2008 academic year.

### **4.3 The nature of professional development available to Grade 10 economics teachers.**

Data gathered from respondents and participants using questionnaires, observations and interviews provide valuable information required to answer critical research questions that are central to this study. When asked about the nature and kind of professional development made available to Grade 10 Economics teachers, 19 of the 24 teacher respondents (79.2%) who completed the questionnaire overwhelmingly indicated that workshops were the only form of professional development by which they were trained in the new NCS curriculum. However, one respondent (4.2%) indicated that in addition to the workshops, he/she had once attended a seminar while the other four (16.7%) did not respond to this question. The following table serves as evidence to this state of affairs.

Table 4.3.1. Nature of professional development available to teachers.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Workshop	19	79.2	79.2	79.2
1&3	1	4.2	4.2	83.3
Missing	4	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Furthermore, interviews conducted with three teachers who participated in this study also revealed that all of them had undergone training in the new NCS curriculum provided for Grade 10 Economics teachers in the form of workshops, with one of them having also attended workshops for Grade 11 and 12 in the subject. The teacher with the least number of workshops attended started teaching Grade 10 Economics in 2007 (a year before these interviews were conducted) and has attended three five-day long workshops. However, the teacher with the most number of workshops attended has been teaching Economics in Grade 10 since 2003 and had attended six, five-day long workshops in Grade 10 Economics NCS to date. All teachers interviewed



indicated that workshops were the most popular form of professional development available to them in the new curriculum. To a lesser extent cluster-based, professional development has been offered, where teachers from five to seven schools in the neighbourhood or ward, meet quarterly to moderate common assessment (CASS) marks and go on to use this platform to explore different ways of simplifying the NCS curriculum and its content topics. They also plan their team-teaching programmes in these gatherings that were initially meant for CASS moderation.

It is however, noted that this state of affairs is in contrast with the professional development practices of the past. Taylor et al (2003) and Shulman and Shulman (2004) claim in the literature reviewed in this study, that in-service training is a form of teacher professional development practice that has been excessively used during the period before the new dispensation (ibid), as opposed to the new workshop-inclined teacher development practices of the post 1994 dispensation.

Since professional development is an on-going process, it is often conducted as a supplementary activity to revive teachers' prior engagements with the process of orientation to a particular teaching practice, such as the NCS curriculum. For this reason, I asked teachers in the questionnaire whether they had attended orientation workshops in this curriculum or not. An overwhelming 22 of the 24 respondents (91.7%) indicated that they had attended these workshops indeed while two of them (8.3%) had not attended orientation workshops on the NCS. This was because the department appointed them in 2007, the year in which I disseminated this questionnaire to the respondents. The following table serves as evidence to the above revelation.

Table 4.3.2. Orientation workshops offered to teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	22	91.7	91.7	83.3
No	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Interviews conducted with the three teachers revealed that all teachers attended orientation workshops in 2006 and 2007. Two teachers indicated that they attended these workshops twice, that is, in both 2006 and 2007 while the other teacher attended this workshop only once, as he started teaching Grade 10 Economics in 2007.

Interviews also revealed that professional development offered to Grade 10 economics teachers comprises of employer-initiated (departmental) workshops, cluster meetings allowing for professional networks and to a lesser extent, in-school development through sharing and collegiality.

#### 4.3.1: Departmental workshops

In the transcripts below we see evidence of the number of times teachers attended workshops and the duration of each workshop session. Teachers attended these workshops for at least twice a year during the period from 2006 to 2008. Each session ran over a period of five days and was facilitated by the subject advisor (curriculum-subject specialist) and teacher-trainers. The first few workshops introduced teachers to aspects of pedagogy, followed by those which mainly dealt with subject-content topics in economics curriculum. The following extracts from interviews with teachers show how teachers felt about these workshops;

**I.** Have you attended orientation workshops in the new FET economics curriculum?

**Mr. M.** Yes, I have

**I.** When?

**Mr. M.** In 2007 when Grade 10 economics teachers met for district workshops at Marburg Secondary School

**I.** How many did you attend?

**Mr. M.** Three workshops in March, July and September (each lasting for a period of five days)

**I.** Did you find these workshops useful?

**Mr. M.** Very much, they provided exposure to new teaching approaches that helped us a lot on how to introduce new topics to learners and were quite informative and relevant to assessment standards and how economics content is integrated to other subjects

**I.** Which aspects of the workshops were useful?

**Mr. M.** Aspects relating to Grade 10 subject content topics such as the production possibilities curve were made simpler and clearer than I understood these, through consultation with group members in the workshops. Labour relations is also an aspect that was presented in a way that opened my eyes and scope of understanding. Teaching approach and method-related aspects also empowered me.

The above transcript shows that departmental workshops as a form of professional development had a double impact on teachers professional practices in the sense that they improved teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject on the one hand, while developing teachers' pedagogical practices on the other hand. Another teacher, Mr. X, had this to say.

**I.** Have you attended orientation workshops in the new FET economics curriculum?

**Mr. X.** Yes I have

**I.** When?

**Mr. X.** In 2006, 2007 and 2008

**I.** How many have you attended?

**Mr. X.** Four workshops between 2006 and 2008

**I.** Did you find these workshops useful?

**Mr. X.** Yes they were useful in the sense that differences in the new curriculum and the old curriculum were unpacked and simplified

**I.** Which aspects of the workshops were useful?

**Mr. X.** Provision of support material in the form of teacher's guide, work schedules, specimen lesson plans, assessment programmes and other working documents helped me a lot as these guided me

**I.** Would you say that these covered both methodological aspects as well as subject content topics?

**Mr. X.** Yes

From the above transcript we learn that workshops were so planned and arranged as to ensure that all teachers, irrespective of when they were appointed, had an equal chance of attending these as they were held repetitively over the years since the inception of the new FET curriculum.

(Mr. T had this to say)

**I.** Have you attended orientation workshops in the new FET economics curriculum?

**Mr. T.** Yes

**I.** When?

**Mr. T.** In both 2006 (at Umbumbulu Coastal FET College) and 2007 (at Marburg Secondary School)

**I.** How many of these workshops did you attend?

**Mr. T.** Approximately 10 workshops

**I.** Did you find these workshops useful?

**Mr. T.** Yes, very useful in empowering us in terms of the approach to teaching the new curriculum. They were quite enlightening

**I.** Which aspects of the workshops were useful?

**Mr. T.** They helped with familiarizing us with preparation for lessons, subject framework and work schedules as they were outlined. Issues relating to assessment were also explained. Both method and content related aspects were addressed in these workshops.

In addition to both aspects of pedagogy and aspects relating to content being addressed in these workshops, evidence from the above transcript reveals that the use of curriculum tools such as the subject frameworks and schedules was also reviewed.

#### 4.3.2: Cluster meetings

Evidence from the transcripts reveals that teachers conduct these meetings once per quarter for the primary purpose of moderating continuous assessment. After moderation, teachers then embark on matters pertaining to teaching and learning in their classrooms, as a secondary activity. This exercise is often facilitated by the subject-cluster coordinator, who sets the scene for teachers to participate in what often take the form of an open discussion of problems affecting the teaching and learning of Economics in their schools. This discussion often takes about two hours. The following extracts from interviews with teachers express their opinions on these meetings;

**I.** Have you undergone any professional development training in Grade 10 Economics other than these workshops?

**Mr. M.** Yes.

**I.** At what level?

**Mr. M.** At cluster level.

**I.** Tell me, how is this cluster constituted?

**Mr. M.** Economics teachers from the local or neighbouring schools offering Economics as a subject of instruction at Grade 10 in their schools become members of this cluster, who suggest and elect one of them to be their coordinator. The coordinator's responsibility includes inviting members to meetings at certain intervals (quarterly) for them to moderate their learners quarterly work needed to accumulate their continuous assessment mark (this is the primary purpose of these clusters). After moderation, teachers then deliberate, exchange information and share challenges they face in their classrooms regarding the teaching of the subject, initiate team-teaching and networking across schools in the cluster. The cluster helps consolidate knowledge and sharing of information among the teachers. Cluster meetings are held at different schools over the year, so as to vary in terms of context. Eight schools participate as members of this cluster.

**I.** What have you achieved from this professional development exercise?

**Mr. M.** It allowed me to learn different approaches from different colleagues, hence the saying that different minds work better together, is true. Team teaching enabled me to experience different methods of presentation in class. When comparing teacher B's method of presentation to that of teacher A with reference to my method, more opportunities for reflecting on my practice in terms of teaching methods open up.

The above transcript describes how cluster gatherings facilitated learning among teachers through collegiality, and how they provided a platform for sharing problems common to all teachers in the new curriculum. Teachers were able to reflect on their practices through team teaching while they observed and learned new approaches in the process. However, Mr. X had very little to say about the cluster.

**I.** Do you have any colleague/s with whom you discuss your economics problems?

**Mr. X.** Yes, in the cluster of economics teachers.

**I.** How many colleagues with whom you discuss.

**Mr. X.** One of the seven colleagues in the cluster, with whom I often interact from time to time on Economics as a subject.

**I.** Do you share teaching resources with other colleagues teaching Economics?

**Mr. X.** No, except for subject related challenges we often discuss in cluster meetings such as assessment and work schedules.

From the above transcript, we can observe that different teachers have different understandings of these cluster meetings. While some see clusters as serving the purpose of group networking and team-teaching, others view clusters as contexts meant for designing common assessment and work schedules. However, Mr. T had this to say about the cluster.

**I.** How often do you have discussions at your school about teaching Economics?

**Mr. T.** Not much, actually we do not have them, except at cluster meetings.

**I.** What do you often speak about?

**Mr. T.** We often discuss learner performance as determined by continuous assessment, as well as factors affecting the teaching and learning of Economics in our schools, with specific emphasis to the availability and sharing of resources.

**I.** Are these sessions useful?

**Mr. T.** Yes.

**I.** Why?

**Mr. T.** Problems are shared among educators such that a variety of possible solutions originates from members in the cluster, who even offer themselves to assist in cases of emergency. This facilitates networking beyond the level of the school, which would otherwise have not been possible if this arrangement was not in force. Seven teachers, each representing his/her neighbouring school, participate and set-up team teaching within this cluster.

From Mr. T's view of the cluster in the above transcript, we can observe that opportunities for sharing resources, generating solutions to common problems, and networking among teachers represent a number of ways in which the cluster makes an impact on the professional development of teachers and improve classroom practice.

#### 4.3.3: In-school support

Support of this nature occurs through additional material often provided on request, informal discussions with other colleagues teaching the subject in other grades of the FET band, formal discussions set-up to take place weekly on Fridays. This extends to live class demonstrations of lessons where the teacher observes a colleague teaching critical content-topics, to allow both teachers to reflect on their approaches and methods. The following extracts from interviews conducted with teachers confirm this;

**I.** Do you receive professional support from your school with regards to teaching Economics? (Did your principal, HoD or senior teacher offer help to you?)

**Mr. M.** Yes, my principal provides any additional material that I request through my HoD, while other teachers in the department of commerce often show keen interest in discussing current economic issues.

**I.** So the principal encourages you in your efforts?

**Mr. M.** Yes, to keep on consulting with my HoD whenever I need anything.

**I.** Do you have a colleague/s with whom you discuss your economics problems

**Mr. M.** Yes.

**I.** How many of them.

**Mr. M.** It's my HoD, and another teacher who currently teaches Grade 10 Economics.

**I.** So you feel comfortable with these two teachers sharing their experiences in Economics with you?

**Mr. M.** Yes, very comfortable. They are always willing to offer help.

**I.** How often do you have discussions at your school about economics teaching?

**Mr. M.** Weekly on Fridays

While this development exercise may not entail training for improving teacher performance, it does make an impact by providing support towards enhancing teacher classroom performance. However, Mr. T had very little to say about in-school development.

**I.** Do you receive any professional support from your school with regards to teaching Economics? (Did your principal, HoD or senior teacher offer help to you?)

**Mr. T.** Yes, I do receive support especially from one senior teacher that I often consult whenever I am not comfortable with any aspect in the subject, and she is always willing to hold discussions with me. She even demonstrates lessons in class with me observing her approach and method of dealing with difficult content.

The above transcript shows that the extent to which in-school support is accessible to teachers varies from school to school depending on how willing and able the teachers in a particular school as context, to assist and interact with one another.

#### 4.3.4: Gains from professional development training

Teachers were also asked as to what they had gained from the workshops attended. Their responses varied from having acquired a better understanding of assessment standards and the NCS process, how to link content to assessment standards, new teaching methods in Economics acquired, understanding the new terminology as well as the ability to use the subject statement.

Of note in these responses is the indication by six respondents out of twenty-four (25%) who responded, that in addition to new methods of teaching in Economics being achieved from these workshops, emphasis on planning helped them to learn how lesson plans can be prepared according to relevant assessment standards of each learning outcome. However, five of the 24 respondents (20.83%) indicated that they had nothing in particular, were not sure or did not have answers to this question. The reason for this indifferent position, as revealed by the process of interrogation, is that three of the five were newly appointed in 2007 and had only attended one orientation workshop, while the other two had not attended these workshops. Interviews also indicate that one of the three participants attended these workshops only once, as he was appointed in 2007. The following table shows how varied the responses were in terms of gains from these workshops:



Table 4.3.3. Benefits/gains from professional development

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	New NCS methods	3	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Assessment standards, tools & NCS process	1	4.2	4.2	16.7
	Economic issues, tools & NCS process	1	4.2	4.2	20.8
	Improved assesment skills	1	4.2	4.2	25.0
	Insight into assessment	1	4.2	4.2	29.2
	Linking content to AS's of each LO	1	4.2	4.2	33.3
	More information	1	4.2	4.2	37.5
	New Economics teaching techniques in NCS	1	4.2	4.2	41.7
	New teaching methods in Economics NCS	1	4.2	4.2	45.8
	New terms used in NCS	1	4.2	4.2	50.0
	Non	2	8.3	8.3	58.3
	Not applicable	1	4.2	4.2	62.5
	Not Applicable	1	4.2	4.2	66.7
	Not sure	1	4.2	4.2	70.8
	Plan acc to AS, understanding AS	1	4.2	4.2	75.0
	Planning accord to AS's, understand AS's	1	4.2	4.2	79.2
	Planning accord to relevant AS's	1	4.2	4.2	83.3
	Teach & learn knowl, syllabus tackling	1	4.2	4.2	87.5
	Tool dev, lesson integrate, use_ass methods	1	4.2	4.2	91.7
	Understanding latest terminology	1	4.2	4.2	95.8
	Use_subject s/ment with textbook	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

During the interviews, participants mentioned what they gained from these workshops. Their approach to teaching the new curriculum and new content topics had improved. Planning lessons with assessment standards in mind, integration within the subject as well as across the curriculum divide, use of the subject framework in coordination with the work schedule, and constant coverage of new subject-content topics through demonstrations were all amongst other things that they learn from these workshops.

#### **4.4 How teachers experience and make sense of the new subject-content topics in the FET economics curriculum.**

As to how teachers experienced and made sense of the new subject-content topics in the FET economics curriculum, observations conducted in their classrooms provide insight into this. While all teachers displayed a clear understanding and competence with regard to content knowledge, all three lessons originated from teacher-initiated question and answer dialogues on particular issues, to explanations of concepts and their applications, use of real-life examples to link concepts presented in class and integrating their economic meaning to that of other subjects in the learning field, and allowing interventions by learners through questions as the lessons progressed.

##### **Lesson 1: McHeights High School on 05/09/2007**

**T.** (enters the class with me and greets learners, then introduces me as one learner arrives late and condemns him for late-coming, then explains the purpose of my visit). This lesson follows-up on the presentation and project previously assigned to you and you all remember as well as I do that you did not conduct your presentations well enough, while the projects you submitted were way below standard. This lesson aims at revising by way of throwing light on issues that should have been covered in the project. What examples could you provide for free goods?

**L1.** Water

**T.** Is water not paid for?

**L1.** In the place where I stay, we get it free from the tap near the road.

**T.** Is this the case with all of you?

**L2.** Where I stay, a man from the municipality come to read numbers from something near the tap, and municipality gives statements for people to pay for water

**T.** So how do you classify water under these circumstances?

**L3.** Water is a free good and economic good

The lesson goes on and on following the same question and answer pattern with the teacher controlling the flow of the lesson.

##### **Lesson 2: Seaview High School on 05/09/2007**

**T.** (Greets learners as we enter the class and introduces me. He then asks learners to feel free as I only join them to observe the teaching and learning of Economics. He then confirms with learners as to whether the exercise previously assigned to them as homework on utility, value and price had been completed or not. Learners responded positively.) What are the two forms of value?

**L1.** Value-in-use, derived from the article's ability to satisfy want, even if nothing is given in exchange and value-in-use, derived from from the ability of an article to be exchanged for something.

**T.** It means that goods may either have value-in-use or value-in-exchange. Give examples of goods with value-in-use but not in-exchange.

**L2.** Water.

**T.** What else?

**L3.** Soil

**T.** This means that goods that are not paid for (free goods) only have value-in-use but non in-exchange, while economic goods have both the value-in-use and the value-in-exchange (price). What are the various forms of utility?

**L4.** Utility of form.

**T.** What is utility of form?

**L4.** Is seen when the form of an article is changed in manufacturing.

**T.** What examples can you use to clarify this?

**L4.** Changing wood into desks and tables.

As in the first lesson, the question and answer pattern dominates the presentation as the lesson develops step by step.

### **Lesson 3: Gian-comm High School on 27/05/2008**

**T.** Good morning learners.

**L.** (In unison): Good morning, Sir.

**T.** (Introduces me as an economics teacher at a local school who is on visit to observe the teaching and learning of Economics. He goes on to introduce the lesson on the law of demand). What is the meaning of the concept 'demand'?

**L1.** Demand is the quantity of a good that consumers buy at a given time.

**T.** Demand is governed by the law of demand. What does this law entail?

**L2.** It says consumers buy more when price is cheap

**T.** When the price is low, not cheap (with specific attention to L2), and what will happen when the price increases, according to this law?

**L2.** Eh...., I think consumers will buy little.

**T.** Consumers will of course buy fewer goods at a higher price. (Draws the demand schedule on the board for use both as a reference to the definition of the law and as a follow up on learners' answers). How many loaves of bread are bought at R5 per loaf?

**L3.** 30 loaves

**T.** How many loaves at R6 per loaf?

**L4.** 20 loaves

**T.** ...and at R7 per loaf?

**All learners** (unanimously): 10 loaves.

The dialogue-type narration continues as the lesson develops on the board, with both teacher and learners negotiating the derivation of the demand curve on the system of axis using the demand schedule. All three teachers appeared to be competent with regards to the subject-content knowledge of the discipline. They confidently taught new concepts in each topic they presented.

The manner in which learners were seated in class resembled the contexts of traditional classroom arrangements. The teachers consistently controlled the lessons as they varied their movements between rows of desks to influence learner behaviour through their effective use of proximity gestures, while the lessons were in progress.

However, teachers attempted to link new content-topic related concepts to the way these are interpreted and used in other related subjects in the learning field such as Business Studies. The principle of integration further manifested in situations where teachers linked new subject-content topics and concepts to real life situations. These situations are often observable in day-to-day experiences by learners from their immediate neighbourhood, for example, water from a household tap is an economic good as it commands a price while water from a stream is a free good, as we do not pay a price for it. This way teacher attempted to help learners to recall their prior-learning experiences from environmental observations and indigenous knowledge, and use these as a scaffold for conceptualizing and understanding new subject-content topics.

Teachers followed a consistent pattern of developing the content-topics alongside learning outcomes set-out at the beginning of each module in the subject framework, though teachers did not outline these outcomes at commencement of their lessons. This consistent practice displayed by teachers in their approach made learning in Grade 10 Economics similar to learning set alongside outcomes.

Since lessons observed indicate that new subject-content topics were introduced by linking them to knowledge that learners bring with them to school and their environmental experiences, teachers were more inclined to use demonstrations involving learners in order to give meaning to concepts and processes. One example where the teacher used illustrations in his lesson was when he asked a learner to take a good deep breath, then he asked the learner as to how much it cost him to consume some nice fresh air, and the learner indicated that he paid nothing. The teacher then asked learners as to whether fresh breathing air has ‘value-in-use’ or ‘value-in-exchange’ and learners could easily note the difference between the two concepts. This shows how teachers used practical examples to make sense of subject-content topics in a way that would give meaning to and understanding of basic concepts. This is what Hazlett (2003) refers to as the use of practical examples to allow learners to learn in ways that enable them to experience social conditions that prevail in the environment by bringing abstract concepts to life through powerful demonstrations (ibid), in the literature reviewed in this study.

The fact that only one teacher made provision for class-work during the lesson, where learners had to work in pairs to complete a certain activity set in the prescribed book, suggests that teachers either did not see value in using textbook activities or were not sure of how to structure teaching to include these activities.

#### 4.4.1 Challenges experienced by teachers in implementing the new curriculum.

Responses by participants to the question on challenges experienced in implementing the new FET curriculum suggested that there were common challenges, though individuals had unique challenges. Teachers consistently stated that the availability of resources and teacher support material, varying from the different publications of

economics textbooks, newspapers, journals, economics dictionaries and the quarterly bulletin issued by the South African Reserve Bank could assist in making it possible for them to teach the new curriculum. However, teachers confirmed that they were facing serious challenges in implementing the new curriculum with regards to the scarcity of these resources. The following extracts from interviews conducted with teachers articulate this.

**I.** Does your school has a library?

**Mr. M.** No, we do not have a library at school

**I.** How then do you access information necessary to supplement the textbook?

**Mr. M.** I visit the public/community library

**I.** Does this library has the material relevant for Economics?

**Mr. M.** It has relevant information necessary to conduct research, which I supplement with consultations with colleagues from neighbouring schools, with whom we exchange information and ideas on Economics.

**I.** What are some of the challenges you experience in implementing the new economics curriculum in Grade 10 FET?

**Mr. M.** I spend a lot of time reading before going to class. I often search for more information from various sources other than the textbook.

**I.** You say a serious challenge relates to lesson planning/preparation?

**Mr. M.** Yes, it is unlike in the previous curriculum that I have come to know since I conducted practice lessons as a college student.

**I.** Do you have sufficient time to do research into new topics in Economics?

**Mr. M.** Not really sufficient, since my personal time table is fully engaged.

The above dialogue confirms the non-availability of the school library and time as challenges facing the teacher in implementing the new curriculum in this school. Mr. X had this to say in an interview with him.

**I.** Does your school have a library?

**Mr. X.** Yes, although it is not equipped.

**I.** Does the library has the material relevant for Economics?

**Mr. X.** Not very much in terms of literature.

**I.** Don't you have?

**Mr. X.** I do have it in the form of the Gamalakhe community library, but I have not yet had time to visit it as I am new in the area.

**I.** What are some of the challenges you experience in implementing the new economics FET curriculum in Grade 10?

**Mr. X.** The shortage of learner-support material in the sense that the supply of textbooks is limited to one textbook for every four learners, making it extremely difficult for learners to complete assessment activities requiring the use of the textbook as a reference at home. Another problem is that of access to the Internet, as a teacher I cannot access it, how much more about learners. Those who access it by chance do not know how to browse it.

**I.** Do you have sufficient time to do research into new topics in Economics?

**Mr. X.** I do not have enough time and to make matters worse I do not have access to resources such as newspapers and the Internet, and this makes it difficult for me to conduct research on economic issues.

Another teacher, Mr. T, had this to say regarding challenges in implementing the new FET curriculum in Economics.

**I.** What are some of the challenges you experience in implementing the new Economics curriculum in Grade 10?

**Mr. T.** The greatest challenge is that of language as learners struggle to understand in English. This disables them from providing the necessary feedback during the lesson, while others fail even to follow instructions. Another challenge is that of individual attention that can hardly be given to learners as classrooms are overcrowded to 60 learners and above, making it difficult to control the whole class while paying attention to individual learners' problems.

The above extracts note learner support material shortages, inequipped school library and linguistic limitations of learners as contextual problems that affect the teaching and learning of Economics at Grade 10, most of which are a legacy of the past dispensation.

#### 4.4.2 Teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach the new curriculum.

Teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach the new curriculum were overwhelmingly positive, as all of them claimed to know how the NCS in Economics is supposed to work. They also expressed having no problem with teaching economics content so that it covers learning outcomes in such a way that these outcomes can be assessed using standards set for assessment. The following are extracts from interviews conducted with teachers that describe their views on their ability to teach the new curriculum.

**I.** Do you understand the learning outcomes for Economics in the FET phase?

**Mr. M.** Yes I do.

**I.** Do you understand the assessment standards?

**Mr. M.** Yes.

**I.** Will you be able to explain to a new teacher how the new NCS in Economics is supposed to work?

**Mr. M.** Yes I will since I have been in a number of workshops and I have already taught in this curriculum for two years.

Mr. X from another school had this to say in express of his perceptions of his ability to teach the new curriculum.

**I.** Do you understand the learning outcomes for Economics in the FET phase?

**Mr. X.** Yes, I do.

**I.** Do you understand the assessment standards?

**Mr. X.** Yes.

**I.** Will you be able to explain to a new teacher how the NCS in Economics is supposed work?

**Mr. X.** Yes I can explain to another teacher as to how the NCS work.

**I.** Do you use the NCS to plan for your daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly teaching of Economics?

**Mr. X.** Yes, I have recently started to use it, though I have been so used in doing things the old way.



The third participant in the form of Mr. T, had this to say about his perceptions of his ability to teach the new curriculum.

**I.** Do you understand the learning outcomes for Economics in the FET phase?

**Mr. T.** Yes I do.

**I.** Do you understand the assessment standards?

**Mr. T.** Yes I do .

**I.** Will you be able to explain to a new teacher how the NCS in Economics is supposed to work?

**Mr. T.** I will be able to, and I would like to do that

**I.** Do you use the national curriculum statement to plan for your daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly teaching of Economics?

**Mr. T.** Teaching Economics in the FET band cannot effectively be done without using the NCS as a reference. I use these statements on a daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly intervals.

This shows how confident teachers felt about the new curriculum in Grade 10 FET in terms of how they viewed their capacities to respond to the challenges in the teaching of the new curriculum. However, the following table shows how teachers conducted their lessons in terms of approach, method of assessment and resources used during observations.

Table 4.3.4. Analysis of teachers' lessons

Teacher	Teaching approach	Assessment method	Resources
Mr. T	<p>Introductory question and answer approach.</p> <p>Answers by individual learners to questions by the teacher are approved by the whole class.</p> <p>Textbook as a primary source of knowledge.</p> <p>Narrative method.</p> <p>Teacher-centred participatory lesson.</p>	<p>Question and answer method dominates lesson.</p> <p>Questions varies from short-objective to moderately-higher order questions.</p> <p>Learners corrected one another.</p>	<p>Teacher's textbook.</p> <p>Learners shared textbooks of the same publication as that of the teacher.</p> <p>Teacher's journal with pre-planned questions</p>
Mr. M	<p>Teacher initiated question and answer approach.</p> <p>Teacher probing of learners' answers and asking for examples.</p> <p>Prior knowledge links to the present lesson.</p> <p>Indigenous knowledge used to explore learning experiences.</p> <p>Textbook as primary source of reference.</p> <p>High level of learner engagement.</p>	<p>Question and answer method at elementary levels.</p> <p>Questions relate mainly on prior learning experiences, and require short answers.</p> <p>Learners complete an activity from the book, requiring them to apply knowledge assimilated during the lesson.</p>	<p>Teacher's textbook.</p> <p>Revision activity from learners textbook.</p>
Mr. X	<p>Teacher-led question and answer approach.</p> <p>Teacher probing of incorrect learner responses.</p> <p>Textbook used as primary source of knowledge.</p> <p>Narrative-cum-discussion method.</p>	<p>Question and answer method dominant.</p> <p>Short-objective questions prominent.</p> <p>Leading questions used to probe responses.</p> <p>No complementary task to learners during or at the end of the lesson.</p>	<p>Teachers textbook.</p> <p>Learner's reference books.</p>

While teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach the new curriculum may have improved through development, their classroom practice however did not reflect this as table 4.3.4 shows. It appears as if there is a disjuncture between teachers' thinking

or perceptions of teaching Economics in the new framework and their actual practice of teaching Economics. Theory learned from workshops differs from teachers' classroom practice. However, assessment as part of lesson presentation that cannot be divorced from classroom practice is common to all three lessons. The NCS links assessment standards to each learning outcome to measure learners' level of understanding in outcomes-based learning, therefore lessons that are NCS compliant have to include elements of assessment.

#### **4.5 Factors influencing teachers' abilities to engage with the new curriculum**

Literature reviewed in this study states that an important methodological development in Economics which enhances the ability to engage with and understand a range of economic issues is the development of the personal computer, a resource necessary to investigate properties of realistic problem situations in Economics (Ormerod, 2003). Along with the computer, teachers mentioned the importance of access to the Internet as another factor that makes it easier for them to unearth valuable information, if accessible.

Furthermore, participants unanimously mentioned team-teaching and networking among teachers from neighbouring schools as another factor that influenced their capacities to teach the new FET curriculum. Teachers often referred to this as cluster-based professional development because it emanates from the context of moderation clusters, and offers teachers a wide variety of options to engage with the new economics curriculum while they learn from each other in groups. Ainscow (1999), Ainscow and Booth (1998), and Pettigrew and Arkhurst (1999) argue in the literature reviewed in this study that teachers must be encouraged to work in groups and explore new curriculum dimensions that affect their work (ibid), hence the creation of teacher partnerships offers teachers in a group more capacity to respond to learners' diversity and improve classroom practice.

Participants also indicated that, other things being equal, professional development initiated by the Department of Education in the form of workshops gave a major boost to their abilities to engage with the new curriculum, as they were unsure of how they

were going to plan and teach before attending this workshop-oriented professional development. Workshops also offered participants the opportunity to meet teachers from other circuits within the district, with whom they shared diverse experiences as well as resources, and ways in which they engage with the new curriculum. This influenced their ability to teach Economics in the new curriculum.

Participants also noted that the new economics curriculum constitutes certain subject-content topics that were previously covered at the level of university and have been now included in the FET band. This poses a great challenge for teachers who did not study Economics at university as it hampers their abilities to engage with the new curriculum. Participants therefore considered registering with higher education institutions for correspondence courses or part-time evening classes to improve their knowledge of Economics as well as their qualifications. (Colander, 2004) argues in the literature reviewed in this study, that mastery of subject-matter is equally as important as improving teaching methods because, no matter how good one is at delivering, if one does not have something to say, one will not be a good teacher (ibid).

Keeping track of current economic events is, amongst others, a factor that influences teachers' abilities to engage with the new curriculum. This enables teachers to engage their learners in debates necessary to explore current economic issues and provide meaning to processes having a bearing on the economic environment. Greenlaw (2003) proposes in the literature reviewed in this study, the use of more productive participatory learning where students actively participate by exploring economic issues of the day and views under the guidance of the teacher. Taylor et al. (2003) also propose in the literature reviewed, learner activities to centre on customized worksheets as teaching aids that make curriculum content relevant to and directed towards the real world.

Another participant who revealed that he was once a member of the Commerce Teachers' Society of South Africa stated that membership of such an organization is a factor that contributed towards influencing teachers' abilities to engage with new curriculum issues. This organization offered its members access to audio and audio-visual teaching aids, computer programmed tests and assignments, and other valuable

teaching resources from time to time. For example, the American Economic Association (AEA) has its National Council on Economics Education (NCEE) to which financial grants are often pledged so that it can explore ways to improve the teaching of Economics (Becker, 2000), according to literature reviewed in this study. The Test of Economic Literacy is one of the standardized units of measurement administered by the NCEE.

#### **4.6 Discussion.**

Responses by the participants to the critical research questions central to this study have been presented and tabled in the above preceding paragraph. It then follows that what respondents and participants said as their views about the new FET curriculum for Economics in Grade 10, must be given meaning to. This paragraph seeks to give meaning to the above responses, through a systematic process of interpreting data elicited from the participants, as findings.

Quantitative data, gathered through questionnaires issued to Grade 10 teachers who responded, indicates that workshops are the prominent form of professional development made available to the Grade 10 teachers of Economics in the FET band. Whilst the likelihood, as inferred from their responses, is that respondents would have preferred a variety of alternative ways in which they are developed, it also transpires that workshops helped them to attain a better understanding of how to implement the new FET curriculum. Claims made by the respondents to the effect that attending these workshops helped them acquire abilities ranging from knowing how to link content to assessment standards, to improved outcomes-based assessment skills, informs this.

Qualitative data, in addition to quantitative data, as reflected in the interview transcripts indicated that workshops are a popular form of professional development offered to Grade 10 teachers of Economics. However, teachers also found other ways of developing themselves in addition to the workshops, in the form of moderation clusters for economics teachers. These clusters offered teachers a platform to share

common problems and experiences by way of discussing, and arranging team-teaching and networking activities among themselves.

Respondents also indicated in the questionnaire that prior to the professional development workshops in the NCS, they attended orientation workshops that introduced them to the new economics curriculum a year before its implementation. These workshops helped level the ground in a way that ensures continuity in the training offered to teachers, hence became building blocks for further training that was to follow. Two participants attended these workshops in 2006 and 2007 respectively to ensure that every newly appointed Grade 10 economics teacher has an equal chance to undergo introductory training in the new curriculum.

In making sense of, and giving meaning to the new subject-content topics brought about by the new curriculum, participants used the same approach embedded in the traditional techniques of delivery in all lessons observed. However, their classroom practices showed traces of the new curriculum practices such as integration of concepts across the curriculum divide which they learned from workshops they attended. Despite lessons being teacher-centred, learning outcomes became the point towards which lessons were directed from the beginning to the end of all lessons. Assessment of learners' progress during the lesson related to the assessment standards of each particular learning outcome.

One special characteristic of these lessons was some consistent reference to real life examples and environmental experiences as teachers persistently made illustrations that triggered learners' indigenous knowledge (knowledge that learners bring with them to school) in explaining new subject-content topics. Learners were quick to answer questions with a connection to real life experiences and indigenous knowledge, making the lessons more interactive.

Though all lessons covered the full duration of the lesson period, two participants did not assign any work during the lesson for learners to do either in pairs or in groups. The nature of the new curriculum seeks to promote learner-activity at all levels of learning. This was unusual for lessons not to engage learners in some form of class activity, given the fact that NCS textbooks have case studies and other direct and

short objective questions in all study-units. This indicates that gaps between teachers' classroom practices and the theory that underpins the working of the new curriculum are still existent.

Participants mentioned a number of factors influencing teachers' abilities to engage with the new economics curriculum, including the availability of resources. It is common knowledge that the productivity of the human factor in a working environment is, to a greater or lesser extent, determined by the quality and quantity of available working tools at the disposal of the worker. Access to computers is another factor that influences teachers' abilities because the computer has accessories necessary to support teaching and learning, such as the calculator as well as components to in-set hard drives for viewing lessons in compact discs or memory sticks. Connecting computers to the Internet also enables teachers to access information in Economics as a subject of instruction from as far as the rest of the world. Support material in the form of printed matter includes textbooks of different publications in the NCS, newspapers, journals, and quarterly bulletins from the South African Reserve Bank.

Team-teaching emanating from cluster-based teacher partnerships, as well as networking among economics teachers from schools in the neighbourhood, is among some other factors that positively influence teachers' abilities to engage with the new curriculum in Economics. Teacher professional development, initiated by the national and provincial departments of education in the form of workshops, helped teachers by providing them with skills necessary to implement the new curriculum. Enrolling with one of the higher education institutions offering a study package with Economics as a course, for teachers to improve their qualification as well as knowledge of the subject, is another factor that influences teachers' abilities to engage with the new curriculum. This is important given the fact that the NCS also includes subject-content topics with a university orientation.

Keeping abreast of current economic news and events on the international front by giving constant attention to newspapers and other news media, emerges to be another factor that influences teachers' ability to engage with the new curriculum. As equally important as the rest of the other factors, membership to a national teachers'

organization that administer the teaching of Economics does add an extra influence on teachers' capacities to come to terms with the new curriculum. This offers teachers the opportunity to access valuable resources necessary to teach Economics and improve teachers' classroom practice.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed the biographical orientation of the teachers who participated as subjects of observation and interview. It has also analyzed the responses by the respondents and participants to the research questions contained in data collected, as findings. The chapter has also gone through the process of interpreting these findings, as data cannot speak on its own. Finally, drawing from the literature reviewed above, data collection instruments used and findings from the study, it provides the background upon which recommendations that seek to contribute towards improving teacher professional development as well as classroom practice in the teaching of economics are made in the following chapter.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH SYNTHESIS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction:**

This chapter seeks to provide a synthesis to this research study, as well as an outlay of its findings and recommendations as informed by the findings. It will also identify limitations as well as opportunities for further research.

### **5.2 A synthesis of the research study:**

This study set out to understand Grade 10 teachers experiences of the new FET economics curriculum from a professional development perspective, and also to identify factors influencing teachers abilities to engage with and make sense of the new curriculum in practice. Literature reviewed on the new curriculum, and on economics education provide the basis for this study, by exploring available information on professional development in the teaching of economics which is relevant to this study. The literature uncovered that economics teachers have not engaged with interactive learner-centred methods of teaching in the past and hence suggests a change from traditional 'chalk-and-talk' method. This requires a review of professional development methods currently used in the development of teachers.

Along with the traditional workshop approach, the literature reviewed reflected on teacher-community development, intensive in-service training, master-teacher as staff-developer and the training of the trainers programme as other methods of facilitating the professional development of teachers in Economics. Teacher-community development (referred to as the cluster approach in the previous chapter) seems to appeal to most teachers in practice as it offers them more freedom and opportunity to express their views and share common problems affecting their professional practice. Moreover international researchers on teacher-learning

emphasizes the importance of encouraging teachers to work co-operatively in groups to explore new curriculum dimensions as this has an impact on improving classroom practice (Ainscow & Booth, 1998). Literature reviewed also reveals that social interactions among teachers learning in groups provide opportunities for teachers to form team-teaching partnerships and teacher-networks necessary to engage with the new curriculum.

This study is informed by the conceptual framework that draws on the practice of symbolic interactionist research (Woods, 1996). The three principles of symbolic interactionist practice expose my involvement in data analysis where context played an important role in capturing teachers' experiences of the new FET curriculum in Economics. Context refers to space where interaction takes place and is defined as the organizational and cultural situation in which teachers work. An analysis of the different contexts enabled me to understand how the teachers in their respective schools defined and interpreted their actions. Data analysis revealed that teachers had to deal with situational factors relating to their working conditions, which retarded their efforts to practice in their classrooms what they claim to have learned from professional development workshops. Teachers' abilities and strategies to make sense of the new curriculum content in Economics were, to a greater extent, influenced and affected by the situation in which they found themselves in the classrooms that constitute the school context.

Using the critical research questions as a guide, I elected to use open coding in the event of analyzing data. I then discovered teachers' experiences of the new economics curriculum at Grade 10 level of the FET band, and the factors influencing their abilities to make sense of the new curriculum content, with indicators pointing their direction towards contextual factors as major influences. Teachers consistently claim that workshop training helped them understand how the national curriculum statements work in terms of innovative methods and assimilation of new content-topics, but their classroom practice as informed by lesson observations seem to have differed from their claims, especially with regards to learner-centred teaching and learning.

### **5.3 Summary of the key findings:**

Critical questions that are central to this study gave rise to the responses that led to the generation of the following key findings.

#### **5.3.1 Workshops as the only formal method of facilitating professional development in the teaching of Economics may not be an end on their own, but a means to an end.**

Quantitative data, to begin with, gathered through questionnaires issued to Grade 10 teachers who responded, indicates that workshops are the prominent form of professional development ever been made available to the Grade 10 teachers of Economics in the FET band. Whilst the likelihood, as inferred from their responses, is that respondents would have preferred a variety of alternative ways in which they are developed, it also transpires that workshops helped them to attain a better understanding of how to implement the new FET curriculum. Expressions by the respondents to the effect that attending these workshops helped them acquire abilities ranging from knowing how to link content to assessment standards, to improved outcomes-based assessment skills, inform this.

Qualitative data, in addition to quantitative data, as depicted in the interview transcripts indicated that workshops are the only form of professional development offered to Grade 10 teachers of Economics. Respondents also indicated in the questionnaire that prior to the professional development workshops in the NCS, they attended orientation workshops that introduced them to the new economics curriculum a year before its implementation. These workshops became building blocks on which to advance teacher development as they laid down the foundation for further training that was to follow.

5. Certain contextual variables hampered teachers' efforts to implement what they learned from workshop training.

Teachers interviewed in this study identified the availability of resources as one of the factors influencing their abilities to engage with the new curriculum. The availability of computers with unique distinctive features that support teaching and learning such as the calculator, as well as cubic holes and openings necessary for inserting memory sticks and compact discs to observe recorded lessons, is another factor that could stimulate teachers' abilities and interest. Access to the Internet enables teachers and learners to visit websites that lead them to academic and applied knowledge of Economics from all over the world. The availability of textbooks from different publishers, newspapers and other academic support material are all factors that provide additional capacity to engage with the new curriculum on the part of the teachers. However, shortages in any of these, as is the case with contexts observed in this study, hamper teachers' abilities to carry out duties expected of them in implementing the new curriculum.

In making sense of, and giving meaning to the new subject-content topics enshrined in the new curriculum, participants used the same approach that dominated classroom presentation before 1994 in all three lessons observed. Obviously, this is not without reason as they are now familiar with these methods, and probably because they had a different understanding of what the new curriculum is about. However, their classroom practice indicated evidence to the effect that they, to a certain extent, had inherited the influence of the new curriculum as they experienced it in workshops they attended. Despite lessons being teacher-centred, didactic flexibility in the delivery of the lessons saw teachers integrating concepts in Economics by linking them to their interpretation in other related subjects in the learning field. One teacher's assessment practice was characterized by links to assessment standards as he assigned a task to learners indicating the learning outcome that was being assessed.

### 5.3.3 Teachers learned well within cluster-based teacher learning communities.

Seeing that workshops alone do not provide teachers the required platform for them to engage in consultative practices in a less than formal way, they found other ways of developing themselves in the form of moderation clusters for Economics. Team-teaching emanating from cluster-based teacher partnerships (Ainscow, 1999; Pettigrew & Arkhurst, 1999), as well as networking among economics teachers from schools in the neighbourhood, was among other factors that positively influenced teachers' abilities to engage with the new curriculum in Economics. These clusters offered teachers a platform to share common problems and experiences by way of discussing, and arranging team-teaching and networking activities among themselves.

### 5.3.4 Environment or context influences curriculum implementation.

It has been noted in this study that traces of innovation in curriculum practice manifest in the manner in which teachers presented their lessons under observation. However, deviations from normal NCS practices were also prevalent. The causes of these deviations could be attributed to environment/context as determined by the conditions under which teachers had to practice what they had learned. Numerous environmental challenges that influenced teachers' abilities to implement the new curriculum for Grade 10 in the FET band have been noted in the preceding paragraphs. These range from large class sizes, learners' linguistic limitations, teachers' qualifications as well as shortage of resources

## **5.4 Recommendations.**

Literature reviewed in this study, data collected from the respondents and participants through questionnaires, observations and interviews, as well as the ultimate findings

generated from this study all provide useful information necessary to generate recommendations pertaining to the continued professional development of teachers on the new economics curriculum. Drawing from the experiences of participants in this study, this paragraph provides the following recommendations:

- Varying methods of professional development to complement workshops should be considered to cater for diversity among teachers.
- Teachers and curriculum subject specialists should consider consulting banking institutions regarding access to economics journals and the quarterly bulletin.
- A comprehensive plan to provide special training for teachers who have been in the system for a decade or more should be considered to enable them to assimilate change.
- The Department of Education should arrange for teachers to access the Internet and computer facilities as each of these serves as a rich source of knowledge and facilitator of learning respectively.
- The Department of Education, in consultation with organizations with interest in commerce education, should consider establishing a teachers' association that administers the teaching of Economics in the various regions, such as the National Council on Economic Education (NCEE) in the USA.
- Improving the current model of teacher development by staging these workshops regularly during the course of the academic year. Extending the duration of each workshop session beyond one week is also recommended as this could provide more opportunities for interactive learning between facilitators and teachers, and also between teachers themselves. Extending the opportunity for teachers to take control of their own development by creating a platform for them to teach one another is ideal, as more than enough activities that encourage interaction among teachers can be organized to stimulate professional development.

## **5.5 Limitations.**

Since this was a study of three individual cases in their respective contexts, we cannot generalize beyond the cases studied as data is limited to what was collected from the three research participants. The number of questionnaires returned and lessons observed does not justify reasonable capacity to determine teachers' experiences of the new economics curriculum in general. The issues of subjectivity, selectivity and observer bias are also probable despite attempts to address reflexivity, as the study is not open to cross checking.

## **5.6 Possibilities for further research.**

An inquiry into the following areas still has to be conducted:

- The nature of assessment experienced by Grade 10 FET economics teachers in the new curriculum.
- What are the Grade 10 learners' experiences of the new FET curriculum in Economics.

## **5.7 Conclusion.**

The purpose of the study was to understand Grade 10 FET teachers' experiences of the new economics curriculum so as to determine how teachers cope with its implementation and the development of new classroom practice. The findings reveal that, while teachers had undergone workshop training and were passionate about what they learned in these NCS workshops, more has to be done to improve the contexts in which they practice what they learn in training. Contextual factors influence teachers'

abilities to engage with the new economics curriculum. It is clear that the only way to deal with teachers' diversity in learning is to complement workshops with some other rigorous methods of teacher professional development, as workshops may not appeal to all teachers. It is therefore important to design professional development methods with due consideration of the context in which teachers will practice.



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8. Does the school have a library?

Yes.....

No.....

9. How large is your economics class?

0-30.....

31-40.....

41-50.....

51-60.....

61+.....

10. Does the school have economics textbooks for every learner?

Yes.....

No.....

11. Does the school provide a current newspaper?

Yes.....

No.....

12. Do you use these newspapers?

Yes.....

No.....

C. Curriculum

13. Have you attended orientation workshops in the new FET Economics curriculum?

Yes.....

No.....

14. Have you undergone any professional development training in Grade 10 FET Economics after orientation?

Yes.....

No.....

15. If yes, what was its nature/kind?

Workshop.....

In-service training.....

Seminar.....

16. What did you achieve from this professional development session? (If any)

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17. Do you receive professional support/development from your school with regard to economics teaching?

Yes.....

No.....

18. What are the challenges in implementing the new Economics curriculum in grade 10 FET?

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19. Do you have a personal copy of the economics subject statement and the subject-assessment guidelines?

Yes.....

No.....

20. Have you read the contents of this subject statement?

Yes.....

No.....

21. Do you understand the learning outcomes stipulated in this subject statement?

Yes.....

No.....

22. Do you understand the assessment standards laid down in this statement?

Yes.....

No.....

23. Do you use the national curriculum statement to plan for the daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly activities?

Yes.....

No.....

24. Have you been implementing the national curriculum statement for economics grade 10 FET in 2006?

Yes.....

No.....

25. Which aspects of the grade 10 fet economics curriculum would you require help with?

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## CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Observation of teacher-pupil interaction at Gian-Comm High (Mr. M's school), date is 05/09/07. Starting time is 09:30, the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period that will last for one hour. The letter 'T' denotes teacher and the letter 'L' denotes learner.

T: (enters the class with me and greets the learners, then introduces me as one learner arrives late in class and condemns him for late-coming, then explains the purpose of my visit). This lesson follows-up on the presentation and project previously assigned to you and you all know it as well as I do that you did not conduct your presentations well enough, while the projects you submitted were way below standard, hence this lesson aims at revising by way of throwing light on issues that should have been covered in the project. What examples could you give for free goods?

L1: Water.

T: Is water not paid for?

L1: In the place where I stay, we get it free from the tap near the road.

T: Is this the case with all of you?

L2: Where I stay, a man from the municipality come to read numbers from something near the tap, and get statement that we must pay for water.

T: Then how do you classify water under these different circumstances?

L3: Water is a free good and economic good.

T: What other examples?

L4: Air

T: Ok. What examples can you give for economic goods?

L5: Clothes.

T: What else?

L6: Household furniture.

T: Ok. Why are these called economic goods?

L5: Because they are paid for.

T: How do they differ from free goods?

L5: Free goods are not paid for.

T: Why are they not paid for?

L5: (HmMMM) Eh, I think eh,...

T: You, Thami.

L7: I think it's because they come in large numbers from nature.

T: We agree that free goods are not paid for, what other differences we have from the two types of goods?

L3: Free goods are found in large quantities and economic goods are found in small quantities.

T: Why are economic goods available in small quantities?

L3: Because eh, things used to make economic goods are not enough?

T: Under which type of goods would you classify infrastructure?

L: (all humming in unison)

T: (reminds them that this is not a choir, one must raise his/her hand to claim the right to speak)

L8: I think it is a free good and economic good.

T: Why?

L3: Because taxpayers and motor-license payers pay for infrastructure, and others use it without paying for it.

T: Now we have categorized free and economic goods in terms of differences, but we must also not forget that they also have something in common, that is, they both satisfy human wants/needs. What are consumer goods?

L9: Goods that are used by us so that we satisfy our wants.

T: Correct; these goods are divided into certain groups. What are these groups?

L9: Durable, semi-durable and non-durable consumer goods.

T: What are durable goods?

L9: Are goods that can be used repeatedly over time.

T: Thank you; do you have an example in mind?

L9: A fridge.

T: What else?

L6: A house.

T: Good, so you might have been born when your existing family house had been built and you still live in it today. How many of you live in houses that existed when you were born?

L: (In majority, they raise their hands to affirm the teacher's question)

T: Good, what are semi-durable goods?

L10: Are goods that are used repeatedly over time, but which is shorter.

T: Do you have an example in mind?

L10: A light-globe used at home.

T: Good, what else?

L11: Clothes we wear.

T: Good. What are non-durable goods then?

L2: Are goods we use and finish them at the same time.

T: Any example?

L2: Amagwinya (Zulu word for 'fat cookies' and other learners laugh)

T: That is food, what else?

L2: Nandos (other learners laugh)

T: Ok, we accept your Nandos example, but it is same as food. What are other things that satisfy wants which were not mentioned as consumer goods?

L12: Services.

T: Any example?

L4: The dentist who took one teeth out of my mouth. (Other learners laugh)

T: The dentist rendered a service to you when he did that, what else?

L5: The plumber who fixed a tap with dropping water at home.

T: Now, where are these goods and services found by those who need them?

L8: In the market, Sir

T: What is a market?

L8: Is where buyers and sellers meet, Sir.

T: Why do they meet in the market?

(Learners are quite for some time, until I raise a hand to answer that they meet to negotiate the exchange of goods and services at an agreeable price.

T: So in the market, there are those who want (demand) goods and those who offer (supply) these goods. What do you understand by the concept 'demand'?

L11: Demand is what buyers want.

T: Anytime, for free?

L11: Is what they want to buy at a certain time and at a certain price.

T: Good; a demand curve is used to represent various quantities that buyers are willing to buy at different prices (quickly derives a demand curve from an imaginary table). What will happen if there is an increase in demand?

L13: The demand curve will move to the right.

T: 'Shift to the right, not move'. What will cause the increase in demand and the eventual shift of the curve to the right?

L7: The increase in the price of a good.

T: No, an increase or decrease in the price will only cause a movement along the curve, remember?

L: (Jointly agree with a loud 'yes').

T: What are the factors that affect changes in the demand, then?

L10: Prices of related goods.

T: Ok, lets take complementary goods, how do you describe these?

L10: Goods like Rama and Rondo.

T: No, who else want to try?

(Learners are quite until I raised my hand to answer that complementary goods are goods that are used together, or in the same process) The bell rings to indicate the end of the period before I could give learners an example.

## INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

**PARTICIPANT:** Mr. M

**SCHOOL:** GianComm. High School

**VENUE:** Gamalakhe Community Library

**DATE:** 06/05/2008

### **A. BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS:**

**I. When were you born?**

**Mr. M:** On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1974 (34 years of age)

**I. How long have you taught?**

**Mr. M:** I have been teaching for six years to date

**I. Always at a high school?**

**Mr. M:** Yes always since I started teaching

**I. How long have you taught Economics?**

**Mr. M:** Four years

**I. Where did you do your teacher training?**

**Mr. M:** At Gamalakhe College of Education (the then DIT affiliate)

**I. What degree/diploma did you qualify with?**

**Mr. M:** Secondary Teachers' Diploma, a three year teachers course.

**I. Did you study Economics as a major in this qualification?**

**Mr. M:** Yes I did

**I. Do you enjoy teaching Economics?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, as it affects aspects of our everyday lives

**I. Are you confident about teaching Economics?**

**Mr. M:** Very confident indeed



## **B. CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS:**

### **I. Does your school have a library?**

**Mr. M:** No, we do not have a library at school

### **I. How then do you get information necessary to supplement the textbook?**

**Mr. M:** I visit a public community library (the one we are occupying right now)

### **I. Does this library have material relevant for Economics?**

**Mr. M:** It has relevant information that helps me whenever I conduct some research and I also supplement it by consulting with colleagues from neighbouring schools with whom we exchange information and ideas regarding the subject we teach (Economics)

### **I. Does the school have Economics textbooks?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, for both teachers and learners

### **I. How many different publications of textbooks does the school have?**

**Mr. M:** There's Heinemann's Enjoy, McMillan's Economics for all and Nasou's OBE for FET for Grades 10 to 12. As educators, we combine these textbooks and consult with colleagues who use a variety of these books.

### **How recent are these publications?**

**Mr. M:** They are mostly 2006 and 2007 publications.

### **I. Do these textbooks relate to the national curriculum statements (NCS)?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, they do in all respect.

## **C. CURRICULUM QUESTIONS:**

### **I. Have you attended orientation workshops in the new FET Economics curriculum?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, I have

### **I. When?**

**Mr. M:** This was in 2007 when Grade 10 Economics teachers met for district workshops in Economics at Marburg Secondary School

### **I. How many did you attend?**

**Mr. M:** Three workshops in March, July and September (each lasting for a period of five days).

### **I. Did you find these workshops useful?**

**Mr. M:** Very much, they provided exposure to new teaching approaches that helped us a lot on how to introduce new topics to learners and were quite informative and relevant to assessment standards (AS) and how economics content is integrated to other subjects

**I. Which aspects of the workshops were useful?**

**Mr. M:** Aspects related to Grade 10 subject matter topics such as the production possibilities curve (PPC) were made simpler and clearer than I understood them, through consultation with group-members in the workshops. Labour relations is also an aspect that was presented in a way that opened my eyes and scope of understanding. Teaching approach and method-related aspects also empowered me.

**I. Did these workshops help with your teaching of Grade 10 Economics?**

**Mr. M:** Yes

**How?**

**Mr. M:** They built confidence in me and made me conscious about what I am going to do in class. This helped to minimize, if not, eliminate possible confusion that I would have caused with learners due to lack of knowledge and information in Economics.

**I. Have you undergone any professional development training in Grade 10 Economics other than these workshops (At school, union, etc.)**

**Mr. M:** Yes

**I. At what level**

**Mr. M:** At cluster level

**I. Tell me, how is this cluster constituted?**

**Mr. M:** Economics teachers from local or the immediate neighbourhood offering Economics as a subject at Grade 10 in their schools become members of this cluster, who suggest and elect one of them to be their coordinator. The coordinator's responsibility includes inviting members to meetings at certain intervals (quarterly) for them to facilitate the moderation of their learners work necessary to accumulate their continuous assessment mark (as per original purpose of subject cluster formations), then exchange information and share challenges they face in their classrooms regarding the teaching of the subject, initiate team-teaching and networking across schools in the cluster. The cluster helps consolidate knowledge and information sharing among teachers. Cluster meetings rotate among these schools in terms of context. Eight schools participate as members of this cluster.

**I. Could you describe and explain this kind of development in terms of where, when, and what it entailed?**

**Mr. M:** cluster meetings for teachers, as already mentioned, for teachers to exchange information and share their knowledge and understanding of the subject take place in schools on a rotational basis so that each school has an equal chance to host these cluster meetings

**I. What else do you do in these cluster meetings?**

**Mr. M:** We moderate learners' academic performance for each term to confirm the authenticity of the continuous assessment marks. Each school's work is moderated by a teacher from another school. Then the date for the next moderation is negotiated and elected.

**I. What did you achieve from this professional development training?**

**Mr. M:** It allowed me to learn different approaches from different colleagues, hence the saying that different minds work better together, holds true. Team teaching made me experience different ways of presentation in class. When comparing teacher B's method of presentation to that of teacher A with mine at the centre of this exercise, more opportunities for reflective practice in relation to teaching methods were created.

**I. Do you receive professional support from your school with regards to teaching Economics? (Did your principal, HoD or senior teacher offer help to you?)**

**Mr. M:** Yes. My principal who provides any additional material that I request through my HoD, as well as the other teachers in the department of commerce who shows interest in discussing current economic issues.

**I. So the principal encourages you in your efforts?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, to keep on consulting with my HoD in case I need anything.

**I. What are some of the challenges you experience in implementing the new economics curriculum in Grade 10 FET?**

**Mr. M:** I spend a lot of time reading before going to class. I often hunt for more information from various sources other than the textbook.

**I. You say a serious challenge relates to lesson planning/preparation?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, it is unlike in the previous curriculum that I have come to know for as long as when I was conducting practice lessons.

**I. Do you have a personal copy of the economics subject statement and the subject assessment guidelines?**

**Mr. M:** Yes I do have these.

**I. Have you read the contents of this subject statement?**

**Mr. M:** Yes I have

**I. Do you understand the learning outcomes (LOs) for Economics in the FET phase?**

**Mr. M:** Yes I do

**I. Do you understand the assessment standards?**

**Mr. M:** Yes

**I. Will you be able to explain to a new teacher how the national curriculum statement (NCS) in Economics is supposed to work?**

**Mr. M:** Yes I will since I have been in a number of workshops and I have already taught in this curriculum for two years.

**I. Do you teach Economics Grade 11 currently?**

**Mr. M:** Yes

**I. Do you use the NCS to plan for your daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly teaching of Economics?**

**Mr. M:** Yes I do

**I. Which aspects of the Grade 10 FET Economics curriculum are you unfamiliar with? What sections/topics would you like training on?**

**Mr. M:** I do not have a specific problem in Grade 10 Economics now. I feel I have had enough training in Grade 10 Economics to suggest topics for further training.

**I. If you do not receive this training, how will you manage your economics teaching? Let's say you had never received training.**

**Mr. M:** I will have to remain in constant consultation with my HoD, colleagues at school and other schools, conduct research to gather as much information as I possibly can. I will also have to seek assistance from the cluster.

**I. Do you have sufficient time to do research into new topics in Economics?**

**Mr. M:** Not really sufficient, since my personal time table is fully engaged.

**I. How is your school programme constituted, in terms of when do you start the day and when do you call it off?**

**Mr. M:** We start at 7h30 in the morning to 14h45 in the afternoon. A shortage of manpower forced me to teach other learning areas (LAs) such as Life Orientation and Technology and this tightened my programme.

**I. Do you have a colleague/s with whom you discuss your Economics problems?**

**Mr. M:** Yes

**I. How many of them?**

**Mr. M:** It's my HoD and Ms M who teach Grade 10 Economics this year.

**I. So you feel comfortable with these two colleagues sharing their teaching experiences in Economics with you?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, very comfortable. They are always willing to offer help.

**I. Do you share teaching resources with other Economics colleagues?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, I do

**I. What resources do you often share?**

**Mr. M:** Economics textbooks with information relevant to other grades, newspaper extracts and information from the world-wide web having a bearing on current economic topics. Learners then gain from this.

**I. How often do you have discussions at your school about Economics teaching?**

**Mr. M:** Weekly on Fridays

**I. What do you speak about?**

**Mr. M:** Like how can we get Economics dictionaries explaining the new terminology (ASGISA) and other teaching aids such as weekly or monthly journals for Economics.

**I. Are these sessions useful?**

**Mr. M:** Yes

**I. Why?**

**Mr. M:** Because if we have individual issues to raise, they provide the best platform for us to do so without having to call a meeting, since other issues are too urgent to wait for a meeting.

**I. Do you consider outside stakeholders (institutions) to provide material help?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, my HoD is an acquaintance of the manager at Walton's Stationers and is currently arranging with the manager for the supply of these dictionaries at concessionary rates to our learners.

**I. If you were the Economics subject advisor, how will you help teachers in your area? What specific help do you think they need?**

**Mr. M:** I would organize and encourage team-teaching

**I. What about networking?**

**Mr. M:** Exactly

**I. Do you believe in the idea that learners benefit from diversity among teachers?**

**Mr. M:** Yes I do and in fact I appreciate it

**I. Do you take part in team-teaching activities?**

**Mr. M:** Yes, but I often first inquire as to whether my partner is or not threatened by the presence of another person accompanying him/her to class, otherwise I do not have any problem teaching a class with someone in company.

**I. But team-teaching emphasize going to class with company, is that not right?**

**Mr. M:** In most cases we often divide the work. I take this aspect, you take that one. I complete my aspect with you in class, if you mind I go out and leave you alone teaching your own aspect that you will integrate to what I taught.

**I. You have mentioned working within the cluster, to what extent do you network?**

**Mr. M:** We meet once a month for this purpose throughout the year where we discuss various issues relating to Economics teaching?

**I. Have you thought of the possibility to network beyond the cluster?**

**Mr. M:** Not yet

**I. Do you find keeping networking within the cluster sufficient and helpful?**

**Mr. M:** So far it has been helpful in allowing diversity of knowledge and approaches to spread to all teachers in the cluster. However we will also consider networking beyond the cluster as learners could further benefit from this

**I. Thank you Mr. M for your time, we have reached the end of the interview**

**Mr. M:** Ok, thank you too.