

Exploring history teachers' perceptions of outcomes-based assessment in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to restructure the unequal South African education system of the apartheid regime, Curriculum 2005 – with an Outcomes-based Education (OBE) approach – was introduced by the ANC government in 1998. This new teaching approach implied, amongst other things, modified assessment practices, which set new demands and challenges for History teachers. A national survey was conducted amongst a stratified random sample of History teachers in South Africa to explore their perceptions of Outcomes-based Assessment (OBA) practices. The purpose of this article is to share the findings of this survey. The findings emanating from the research revealed that, in general, History teachers' perceptions about OBA were positive, but that they experienced problems with the practical implementation thereof. Factors such as inadequate training, the lack of resources and other support material in learning and teaching, an increased workload and a lack of support from subject and curriculum specialists contributed to the perception that there was insufficient support for effective OBA implementation. Inadequate knowledge and an ineffective understanding of the complex assessment requirements and practices of OBA were also cited as implementation issues.

KEYWORDS: Outcomes-based Assessment, History of Education, curriculum development, Outcomes-based Education, educational change, history teachers' perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

After the first national democratic election in South Africa in 1994, the then newly elected ANC government initiated a process of educational reform to bring an end to the fragmented and unequal education system that was a legacy of the *apartheid* era (Waghid, 2001). The end result was the implementation of a new education framework in 1998, which became known as Curriculum 2005 (C2005), thus reflecting the year when its first learners would finish their final school year. The philosophy of C2005 is grounded on the principles of an outcomes-based approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Since 1998, Outcomes-based Education (OBE) was progressively implemented in schools in South Africa (Harley & Wedekind, 2004), a process that was only concluded by the end of 2008 (Ngqengelele, 2006).

The implementation of C2005 was described as a complete paradigm shift in the South African educational context. This shift implied that teachers had to make adjustments with regard to the traditional approach to teaching, learning and assessment (Naicker, 1999). In contrast to the content-based and prescriptive traditional didactic approach that focused on the transmission of factual information, teaching, learning and assessment practices within the OBE paradigm became more learner-centred and activity-based with the focus on the mastering and demonstration of learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and values (DoE, 2002).

The successful implementation of C2005 in South Africa was vested in the provisions of the so-called National Curriculum Statement (NCS). In this document, the importance of assessment was emphasised as a “critical element” of OBE (DoE, 2003:35). In educational terms, assessment can be described as a continuous and planned process of gathering, interpreting and reporting learner information and learning data in order to measure learner achievement (Lambert & Lines, 2000).

In spite of the acknowledged importance of assessment in the NCS, Kanjee and Sayed (2008:24) of the Centre for Education Quality Improvement of the Human Science Research Council in South Africa were of the opinion that assessment “was the most neglected aspect of the new governments' efforts to transform the apartheid-based education system”. These researchers indicated that, at the time of the transformation from traditional teaching to OBE, “limited information” existed “on the impact of assessment policies and practices on teaching and learning within the new education dispensation in South Africa” (Kanjee & Sayed, 2008:24).

Taking into consideration the aforementioned, the researchers wanted to ascertain how History teachers' internalised the altered assessment requirements and practices induced by the implementation of OBE in South African schools. In other words, what are History teachers' perceptions (i.e. understanding, attitudes, beliefs and experiences) with regard to this “new way” of assessment?

ASSESSMENT BEFORE AND AFTER OBE

In an attempt to explore South African History teachers' perceptions of assessment in the OBE paradigm, it is necessary to indicate how and to what extent assessment differed before and after the implementation of OBE. Such a comparison will represent a more balanced impression of the impact of curriculum reform on the assessment process in particular, and on the adjustments that teachers had to make with regard to their traditional assessment practices. Before the implementation of OBE in South African schools, assessment was viewed as a practice that stood, to a great extent, apart from teaching and learning events. As an add-on activity, traditional assessment normally occurred at predetermined intervals after a section of work was completed. This type of assessment was mostly once-off formal paper and pencil tests and examinations that represented the foundation for determining the promotion of learners. Prior to OBE, assessment mainly focused on the ability of a learner to recall memorised learning

content. Learners were seldom actively involved in the teaching-learning events and played a passive role in the assessment process. Opportunities to demonstrate the mastering of skills and how to use mastered knowledge in practice were seldom provided. Other than tests and examinations, variations in assessment methods and techniques were usually not in evidence. Assessment criteria were also rarely made available to learners before any attempted assessment task (Hogan, 2007; Jansen, 1998; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003; Van Eeden, 1999). Furthermore, the purpose of traditional assessment practices was often norm-directed, whereby the achievement of a learner was compared to that of a group, placing such a learner in a certain ranking in terms of the norm (the group's achievement) (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2003). In a traditional teaching approach, the class average was often used as the norm (Marnewick & Rouhani, 2004). As a rule, norm-directed assessment was recorded and reported in quantitative terms and oftentimes it did not adequately gauge an individual learner's progress (McGaw, 2006).

To a great extent, the traditional assessment practices over-emphasised short-term achievement and were summative in nature. When assessing the learners, the teachers were normally the primary assessors. If compared to traditional assessment practices, OBE assessment requirements and practices differ significantly. The NCS viewed Outcomes-based Assessment (OBA) as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment was not considered as an additional routine task to be completed at the end of the learning process. Rather, assessment should be meaningfully utilised as an integral and continuous activity during the teaching and learning processes. The important role of Continuous Assessment (CASS) was emphasised in order to gather valid and reliable information of learner progress and achievement over a longer period of time against clearly defined assessment criteria (DoE, 2003; DoE, 2007; Warnich, 2010).

OBE is characterised by a movement away from traditional teacher-centred teaching to a more learner-centred, self-enquiring teaching-learning approach. Assessment criteria also transform from a mere reproduction of memorised factual information to the demonstration of critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving strategies, skills, values and attitudes (Kotzé, 2002). Strong emphasis falls on learning outcomes that require of learners to not merely know certain things, but to also be able to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and values in certain practical situations. By means of clear assessment standards – which show progression in the development of concepts, knowledge, skills and values from grade to grade – learners must provide evidence of the extent to which they have mastered the different learning outcomes. For assessment to be effective in this paradigm, it is important that the results of every learning process must be assessed in order to determine progression towards the mastering of the learning outcomes. To provide for the different learning styles and preferences of learners, OBA requires that a variety of teaching and learning methods and techniques, as well as assessment tools, be used when assessment data is gathered (DoE, 2002; DoE, 2003).

For pupils to become effective, independent, self-regulated and reflexive learners – as was envisaged in C2005 – it is essential for them to completely understand the assessment criteria and the expected level of proficiency as required by the expected outcomes (DoE, 2002). After completion of the assessment task, learners must be provided with constructive feedback that can be related to the attainment of the assessment criteria as required by the learning outcomes (Leahyet al., 2005). The feedback must include suggestions regarding how learning can be improved in order to master the set outcomes. In this way, assessment is not only focused on the end product of the teaching and learning process, but it becomes part of a formative process whereby continuous support and guidance are available to learners via monitoring of progress and diagnosis of possible learning obstacles with a view to remedial intervention (DoE, 2003; Hogan, 2007). The formative and continuous

process of reflection on and revision of learning progress affords learners the opportunity to determine their own learning tempo and objectives on their way to the mastering of every learning outcome (Siebörger & Macintosh, 2004).

While the traditional model of assessment advocates that the teacher is primarily responsible for all assessment tasks, OBA is more transparent, involving others as assessors in and outside the classroom (Le Grange & Reddy, 1998). Other assessment agents involved in OBA include the learners themselves, peers, a group of learners in the same class and even the parents. When the learners themselves act as assessors, teachers can involve them in the design of the assessment tools and the assessment criteria to be applied for a specific assessment task. If the learners are involved in the assessment process, it encourages reflective teaching since it is in reality not only to the benefit of the one being assessed, but also to the peers acting as assessors (DoE, 2003; Warnich, 2010).

One of the most important determinants for the successful implementation of an OBA approach would be equipping History teachers with sufficient knowledge and assessment skills. These skills and knowledge will make it possible for teachers to make adjustments in their assessment practices in order to ensure an easy transition from the traditional to an OBA approach.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIM

The primary research question was: “*What are History teachers' perceptions of OBA*”? Related to above-mentioned research question the overarching research aim was to explore History teachers' perceptions of OBA.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In order to explore South African History teachers' perceptions of OBA, a national survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire that gathered both quantitative and qualitative data.

The data collection instrument

Quantitative data were gathered in Sections A to G of the questionnaire which consisted of structured items such as dichotomous, multiple options and 4-point Likert scale items. In Section A biographical data about the participants were gathered. Section B and Section C respectively focused on the participants' understanding of the formal OBA policy assessment documents and related training that they received from the Department of Education. Section D to Section G examined the participants' knowledge, experiences, convictions and attitudes with regard to OBA.

The qualitative data were gathered in Section H of the questionnaire where two open-ended questions invited participants to share any other perceptions of OBA which were not covered in the structured part of the questionnaire. According to Ivankova, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) the phenomenon studied is best understood in cases where quantitative and qualitative data were collected in combination.

Consult Warnich (2008:421-433) to gain access to the questionnaire.

Population and sampling

In this study, the population referred to all the Grade 10 History teachers teaching in public schools in South Africa during 2006 (when OBA was first implemented in Grade 10). A list of all the public schools per province offering History to Grade 10 learners was obtained from the Emis-data of the National Department of Education. With the help of Statistical Consultation Services (SCS) of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) in South Africa, a stratified random sample (Gray, 2004) of schools [n=424] was selected in each of the nine provinces.

Data gathering procedures

After a pilot study had at first been undertaken, the questionnaire was adjusted and finalised. One questionnaire was sent to each of the schools included in the sample with the request that one Grade 10 History teacher should complete and return the questionnaire. A total of 122 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 31,1%. According to Williams (2003), a response rate in the region of 30% is a very common phenomenon for surveys conducted by means of questionnaires by mail.

Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis

In order to determine the participants' perceptions of OBA, their responses to the structured items in the different sections of the questionnaire were tabulated and presented as frequency tables (See composite frequency tables in Appendix). The quantitative results were supported by the results emanating from the qualitative data analysis.

Qualitative data analysis

An open coding method was used in the analysis of the qualitative data of the questionnaire. According to Gibbs (2007) coding implies that the same code is given to a qualitative response with a similar meaning. Through coding the qualitative data process enabled the researchers to identify themes (De Vos, 2005) which served as the qualitative findings of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biographical data

An analysis of the participants' biographical data revealed evidence of their considerable experience in History teaching: at the time of the study, 35,54% of the

participants had 10 to 20 years' experience and 20,66% had more than 21 years of History teaching experience. Furthermore, most of the participants were academically well qualified: 60% of them had passed History on a third year level at a tertiary institution while 9,48% and 1,64% were respectively in possession of an Honours or Master's Degree in History. However, there was also a smaller percentage of participants who were inadequately qualified to teach History to Grade 10 learners at the time of the study: 10% had only Grade 12 certificates and 2,50% had only passed Grade 10 or 11 History at school level. With regard to professional training, 36,89% of the participants were in possession of a Bachelor's Degree and a teaching diploma or certificate, while 34,43% were in possession of either a teaching diploma or a teaching certificate.

At the time of the study, just over half of the respondents (52,14%) were teaching in schools with an urban character, while 46,15% were employed in schools in rural areas. The vast majority of respondents (70,25%) used English as the only medium of instruction (Warnich, 2008).

History teachers' views about OBA

Results from the quantitative data indicated that the majority of the participants expressed a positive attitude towards OBA for reasons such as: the availability and clarity of OBA documentation (70,64%); the provision of in-service training programmes (64,71%) and the contribution of Continuous Assessment (CASS) as a steering mechanism for the teaching and learning process (85,72%) (see Table 1 in the Appendix).

The accessibility of OBA documentation could possibly be attributed to the effective functioning of the assessment teams at the participating schools who, after nearly ten years of OBE implementation, were well-structured and organised to ensure the effective distribution thereof.

The participants were furthermore of the opinion that *“the national assessment protocol is a very positive document”* and that *“the process of assessing seems fair, democratic and transparent”*. They were also convinced that the *“assessment standards make it easy for both learners and educators to know exactly what to assess and how to assess it”*. Assessment was also considered to be *“...essential for both learners and teachers as it exposes the weaknesses that need to be addressed.”* These participants recognised that OBA essentially differed from the traditional methods of assessment by describing assessment as *“... integral to (the) teaching and learning (process)”*; and by indicating that assessment *“addresses skills, attitudes and values and it can...take place in many forms”*. Furthermore, OBA *“helps the educators to provide feedback”* and *“it assists learners with identification of learning barriers”*.

The positive responses were possibly the reason why many of the participants were more than willing to adjust their assessment practices. At the time of the study, the majority of participants acknowledged that they were already using alternative assessment strategies such as open book assessment (70,59%), project work in groups (96,26%), performance assessment and source-based assessment (98,17%). The participants admitted that their assessment practices were more *“learner-paced”* and recognised it as *“an on-going process”*. This can serve as a reason why 70.84% were prepared to provide oral feedback to their learners after assessment took place in an effort to empower them *“...to judge their own work and adopt goals for self-improvement”*.

Constraints in the effective implementation of OBA

Despite their positive perceptions regarding this “new way” of assessment, the participants also identified certain constraints impeding the effective and smooth implementation of OBA practices:

Inadequate in-service training regarding OBA

In this study, more than half of the participants (54,46%) who received in-service training in OBA were not totally convinced of the merits thereof, or felt insecure regarding the extent to which the training had professionally empowered them to effectively assess History in accordance with the principles and requirements of OBA. (see Table 2 in the Appendix). Some of the participants felt that OBA was “...a good and better way of assessing our learners, but the educators needed more training as far as the way of assessing was concerned”. Most of the participants were convinced that the training sessions were “*always rushed*” and that a time frame of merely two to six days was too short a period for proper in-service training. They also emphasised the importance of “*follow-up (activities) from time to time*”. Over and above the short duration of the training programmes, a significant number of participants also expressed their general concern with regard to the level of competence of the trainers who were responsible for the in-service training programmes as organised by the Department of Education. In this regard, they reported as follows:

“People employed to train us were not adequately equipped”; “Facilitators were not clear on how OBE operates”; “Usually the presenters themselves were not sure and couldn't give solutions to most issues raised in the documents”; “Facilitators were not informed regarding the new curriculum”; “The Department (of Education) should get people properly trained to run workshops of that nature”; “I was given a manual which the facilitator read. I still do not know what was expected of me”.

Other aspects of the in-service training that some of the participants found problematic were the theoretical nature of the training and the subsequent lack of practical operationalization of OBA:

“It lies with the practical implementation (of OBA) by the teachers and what is expected of them by the Department of Education”; “The workshops gave more emphasis to policies and catered very little to the critical areas such as planning and assessment”; “There were no practicals during workshops”; “Educators were not

sure of how and what they had to assess”.

The need for enhanced OBA training opportunities

Although the majority of the participants (89,47%) received in-service training in OBE as organised by the Department of Education, 64,71% indicated that they would have preferred more enhanced training with regard to certain aspects of OBA (see Table 2 in the Appendix). These aspects included different “*forms of assessment*”; “*assessment techniques*”; “*assessment strategies*” and the “*use of assessment tools*” like “*...rubrics (and) checklists*”. All of these assessment practices required practice-related training, which was absent during the initial OBA training workshops (see Section 4.3.1). Ignorance with regard to how assessment was supposed to be done in practice in an OBE paradigm might be the reason why 67,8% of the participants relapsed to the application of familiar assessment practices that had been acceptable before the implementation of OBA. This deduction is strengthened by the 81.2% of the participants who indicated that they still used norm-directed formal summative assessment at the expense of formative assessment because they “*...are not sure of how and what...to assess in the OBE paradigm...*” (see Table 2 in the Appendix).

This finding correlates with research conducted by Matshidiso (2007) in schools of the Bojanala western region (Rustenburg) of the North-West Province where it was found that 86.7% of the teachers were not satisfied with OBA and therefore gave preference to the traditional way of summative assessment (tests and examinations).

However, the implementation of summative assessment at the expense of formative assessment is not a phenomenon unique to the South African context. This was also the case when OBE was implemented in the USA (Stoskopf, 2001; Olson, 2001), England (Jones & Tanner, 2006) and New Zealand (Mansell, 1999). Summative assessment in these countries was seen as a convenient way that

required relatively little effort to adhere to the principle of accountability that was expected from all schools.

The feeling of powerlessness to do justice to the complex assessment requirements and practices of OBA contributed to a growing negative perception regarding the effectiveness of OBA. Some of the participants were of the opinion that *“too much of OBA was implemented too soon”* since *“teachers have to deal with confusing assessment types, tools, strategies, forms, criteria...”* A mutual feeling prevailed that *“the standards being set (are) too high, especially for learners from formerly disadvantaged backgrounds”* and OBA was generally *“just too complicated for the average teacher”* to understand. Therefore a *“more simple, yet effective method to streamline the assessment programme”* was requested.

Furthermore, training in *“...working with learning outcomes and assessment standards”* was another aspect of OBA that participants singled out as important. Especially *“the integration of learning outcomes with the assessment standards”* was experienced as problematic. With regard to the assessment standards in particular, 68.0% of the participants indicated that the implementation thereof was moderately to extremely problematic (see Table 2 in the Appendix). One of the reasons cited for this problem was the wide range of different interpretations of the assessment standards, which increased the difficulty of selecting correct assessment activities related to each standard. Whenever values had to be assessed, many of the participants were not certain as to what extent it manifested within the learning outcomes and the assessment standards.

A large number of the participants also indicated that they found it difficult to adhere to all the requirements of the assessment standards in the mastering of certain learning outcomes. For this reason, they asked for more training in *“the development of learning activities from assessment standards”*, and also in *“the*

whole range of aspects on lesson planning” where additional training would empower them to meaningfully integrate and align content, learning outcomes and assessment standards.

Assessment standards were also experienced as problematic by teachers in the USA who complained about the high standards set by them and the huge impact that they have on the assessment process (Ruenzel, 2000).

Lack of resources and other support material in teaching and learning

Sedibe (1998) believes that for the successful implementation of C2005, which is described by some as a “resource hungry” curriculum (Harley & Wedekind, 2004:207), it should have been dependent not only upon successful teacher training, but also on the availability of appropriate learning and teaching support material. In this study, a significant number of participants (64,11%) experienced the availability or lack of resources and support material in teaching and learning as moderately to very problematic for the effective implementation of OBA (see Table 2 in the Appendix). This finding was confirmed by Matshidiso (2007) in the research that was conducted in the North-West Province.

According to these participants, the “...*lack of resources was a pull-down factor for the new system*”. They were convinced that “*assessment cannot be implemented effectively*” because of the shortage of “...*classrooms and educators*”; “... *adequate resource materials like computers, photocopy machines, etc.*” and “*adequately equipped libraries and research resources for rural areas*”.

The participants also complained about the “*shortage of learner support material, e.g. textbooks*”. In cases where textbooks were provided, the books were

seemingly not always of a good quality: *“Textbooks are generally poor (in the manner in which they are written – not user friendly – vast differences despite a common curriculum”*. *“The availability (or lack) of suitable materials like visual aids/archive material”* was another problem that was highlighted and the participants proposed that *“the DoE (Department of Education) should come with readymade lesson plans”* in order to assist with the effective implementation of OBA.

Increased workload

In the spirit of OBA, teachers are expected to assist with and monitor individual learners' progress towards the achievement of outcomes. This requires from teachers as the facilitators of the assessment process a large degree of individual attention to learners, continuous diagnosis of additional learning needs, the development of enriching and often alternative remedial learning opportunities which, in turn, increase the demand to create and develop additional assessment opportunities and strategies (Schoeman & Manyane, 2002). For the maintenance of comprehensive assessment records, all types of assessment data must also be diligently recorded and reported by the teacher.

Most of the participants reported difficulty in adhering to all the assessment requirements and expectations since it meant that there was so much more to assess. The increased assessment opportunities not only led to a greater administrative workload, but for more than half of the participants (53,04%) it was also problematic and stressful to maintain a balance in the relationship between teaching time and assessment time (see Table 2 in the Appendix). The frustration of the participants in this regard is summarised in the following comments:

“To me all forms of assessment are important. The main problem is time management. More of the time is wasted in assessment than in teaching and learning”; *“There's a lot of paperwork that needs to be recorded. There must be a*

way of reducing the assessment”; “My cupboard is full of files and papers. This is confusing and stressful. Most of the time is spent on the administration of the paperwork.”

To strike the right balance between teaching on the one hand and assessment and reporting on the other hand, was also an issue of concern for Australian teachers when OBE was first introduced in Australia (Watt, 2006; Gosch, 2005).

For 75,63% of the participants the marking, processing and preparation of the CASS marks (as a more formative way of assessment) were a contributing factor to the increased workload (see Table 2 in the Appendix). The CASS assignment marks were also subjected to external moderation normally performed by colleagues at nearby schools. This type of so-called cluster moderation was not an acceptable or popular practice with 77.97% of the participants. They felt that it was unnecessary and that it further increased their workload: *“External moderation all the time. Teachers...moderating other schools' work. Have enough work of my own; do not get paid!”*

More than half of the participants (51,29%) reported that the large number of learners in classes not only contributed to an increased workload, but was also a factor that inhibited healthy OBA practices (see Table 2 in the Appendix): With the *“...number of learners between 50 and 60”* in a class *“it is difficult to assess the slow learners...”* because *“there are too many learners with learning problems. I know about them, but I cannot do anything about it. I do not have the time to tend to learners with learning problems.”*

A further contributing factor to the greater workload caused by OBA was the fact that *“most materials (were) only available in English”*, which was *“very time consuming to*

translate". English and Afrikaans, the only two languages of instructional materials in South Africa for Grade 10, are the first languages of respectively only 8,2% and 13,3% of the South African population (Steyn, 2008). The participants experienced this "*language barrier*" as problematic in the teaching-learning situation. For a vast majority of African learners neither English nor Afrikaans is their first language, which means that by far the majority of learners do not receive instruction in their mother tongue. This is a huge problem when taking into account that a subject such as History is strongly language-based. For this reason, some of the participants translated the learning and teaching support material into the mother tongue of the learners in an effort to make the content more accessible and understandable to the learners.

Lack of in-service support by subject and curriculum advisors

For the majority of the participants (78,99%) the support received from specialists in the form of subject and curriculum advisors was moderately to very problematic (see Table 2 in the Appendix). Some of the participants complained that "*there (are) no subject advisors in my area*" and that "*subject advisors don't visit us regularly...*" and "*educators are therefore not getting any assistance*". These participants indicated that it was important that "*school-based curriculum advisors...should regularly visit schools to inspect teachers' work and to comment thereon*".

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for the Department of Education, schools and History teachers in an attempt to reduce or even eliminate in the course of time the deficiencies and problems identified in this research with regard to OBA.

With regard to in-service training programmes, the following recommendations are made for the Department of Education:

- the nature of in-service training programmes should be revised. The training must be made more practice-oriented. A preliminary list of specific problems that teachers experience is important, so that the OBA training can occur purposefully and in accordance therewith;
- persons presenting the in-service training programmes must be better trained to ensure that practice-oriented application of OBA will also be given its proper share in the training.

With reference to a lack of in-service support, the Department of Education is advised to:

- ensure that teachers are more involved regarding future curriculum issues. This will confirm co-ownership on the part of teachers who can contribute to the improvement of current negative attitudes and mind-sets;
- guarantee that qualified subject advisors visit schools more regularly in order to monitor History teachers and to provide them with specific training in accordance with particular needs that may exist;
- provide as an urgent priority more resources and learning and teaching support material to schools.

Schools can assist History teachers' in relieving their increased workload by:

- ensuring that a school-based assessment policy based on provincial and national assessment guidelines is in place – one that will provide direction regarding all assessment aspects in every school;
- establishing an assessment team in every school. The task of said team will be to continually update and manage the assessment policy before communicating it to teachers, learners and parents. The assessment team must, on an on-going basis, also provide guidance and support to those teachers that experience difficulties with assessment;
- creating networks with other schools in order for colleagues to exchange

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their knowledge, skills and learning as well as teaching support material among themselves.

- encouraging teachers and create opportunities to attend in-training courses offered by the Department of Education or other institutions.

In their effort to effectively implement OBA, it is recommended that History teachers should:

- create their own interactive OBA networks with colleagues of other schools. In this way, important information regarding assessment can be shared and learning and teaching support material can also be exchanged;
- attend in-service training opportunities on a regular basis for further professional; development;
- become a member of a professional History Society since it offers History teachers the opportunity to remain well-informed with regard to new developments and schools of thought in the field of OBA.

CONCLUSION

From this study, it is evident that the participants' perceptions about OBA were to a large extent shaped by the discrepancy between the government's intended objective with C2005 (teaching policy) and the mechanisms created to implement C2005 (teaching practice).

Inadequate training, the lack of resources and other support material in learning and teaching, as well as an increased workload and a lack of support from subject and curriculum specialists were factors that contributed to the perception that there was insufficient support for effective OBA implementation. Inadequate knowledge and an ineffective understanding of the complex assessment requirements and practices of OBA were also cited as implementation issues. All of these factors lead

to feelings of impotence and frustration that have contributed towards History teachers' negative perceptions of OBA.

The findings in this study were to a large extent echoed by the findings of a Ministerial Task Team that was appointed in July 2009 by the Minister of Basic Education in South Africa, Ms Angie Motshekga. She appointed a committee of experts to investigate the nature of the challenges and problems that were experienced with the implementation of the OBE curriculum (DoE, 2009). One of the major outcomes of this committee's recommendations was the compilation of the Curriculum and Assessment Statement (CAPS) documents for the different subjects (DoE, 2010).

The authors sincerely hope that the CAPS documents will adequately address and eliminate the problems and challenges that South African History teachers experienced with OBA.

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Appendix: Frequency tables

Table 1: Positive statements with respect to OBA

Category	f	(%)
Availability and clarity of OBA documentation	80	70,64
Opportunity for in-service training programmes	77	64,71
Continuous Assessment (CASS) for it provides direction to the teacher in a manner that the learning process is assessed regularly and reports are kept of learners' progress throughout the year	102	85,72

Table 2: Constraints in the effective implementation of OBA

Category	f	(%)
Inadequate in-service training to professionally and adequately empowered the teacher to effectively implement OBA for Grade 10 History learners	61	54,46
The need for more enhanced OBA training opportunities	77	64,71
The use of summative assessment at the expense of formative assessment	95	81,2
The availability of teaching and learning resources	75	64,11
Maintaining a balance between assessment time and teaching time (contributing to an increased workload)	61	53,04
The marking, processing and preparation of the CASS marks (contributing to an increased workload)	90	75,63
The process to assess CASS marks of colleagues from other schools during cluster moderation (which add to an increased workload)	92	77,97
The assessment standards are open to a series of different interpretations	81	68,0
Large number of learners in classes	60	51,29
The lack of support from subject and curriculum advisors	95	78,99