CURRICULUM DELIVERY IN MULTI-GRADE RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE BREEDE RIVER / OVERBERG EMDC

by

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DECLARATION

I, David Joseph Faroö, hereby declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signed

2009. 11. 12

Date

ABSTRACT

The phenomena of multi - grade schools has been absent both in educational policy making, educator training and only represented in a few local educational curriculum research projects. However, the practice of multi-grade is common in South Africa and especially in rural and farming South Africa. Our National Curriculum Statements implies that all schools are the same. This study addresses this anomaly.

Farm schools, which started as a political means of cheap labour (Act 47 of 1953) presented a further complication to the ministry: public schools on private property govern by section - 14 contract failed farm education (*Forgotten Schools*, 2004; *Ministerial report on rural education*, 2005; *Commission on Human Rights*, 2006). The political and ideological shift from **People's Education**, which, at first envision human rights in line with international treaties such **Education For All**, **Convention on the right of the child**, **Africa Charter on the Rights of the Child** to **Human Capital Development** has marginalize the farm and rural learner.

Curriculum changes since Curriculum 2005 accepted the same political and economic vision. The first world technical National Curriculum Statements mismatch farm education as systemic results since 2004 has shown. The government's deficit view and national curriculum influence farm and rural teaching and learning negatively. This study focuses on curriculum delivery (intended / implemented) planning. How the educator adapted the curriculum to suit the needs of third world farm learner, its multi-grade context and the ideology of the hegemony. The qualitative paradigm will be that of the critical theory and grounded theory methodology with the goal of uncovering the educators' views and practice. This has been done by holding interviews with various foundation phase educators and looking at the seating arrangements and planning. The sample was from the Breede River District. A focus group of nineteen ACE students with 312 collective years experience has been involved in the coding and analysing. Current practice and planning have been juxtaposed with international multi-grade practice.

The research questions were aimed at uncovering how rural and farm educators plan for their multi-grade classes when faces with a national mono-grade curriculum. Various research methodologies were used. The planning for should reflect their knowledge of the curriculum and its implementation, knowledge of multi-grade pedagogy and generally their ideology teaching and learning about education.

The findings given in chapter five, provided some valuable information. The training for the new curriculum was inadequate and no training was provided for multi-grade adaptation or pedagogy. This, not only led to various interpretations of the curriculum, but also uncertainty as to how planning should be done. This resulted in official and un-official planning and "window dressing where departmental or other planning was merely taken over. Framing of the curriculum was poor at most schools due to the principal being also a educator and administrating overload. The ideology of rural and farm education as not the norm still negatively influences education. Inadequate training that leads to falling back on old methods plaques our education – this is rife in remote or isolated schools. Educators planning bears witness of:

- trying to adhere to normal mono-grade teaching;
- trying to "listen" to the principal, subjects advisors and phase coordinators;
- copying and adapting other's planning;
- seeking and selecting "good" lessons from other – without having a sound knowledge of what constitutes good practice (pedagogy);
- adhering to historically proven methods of multi-grade teaching – this may or may not reflect in the planning and
- Uncertainty of multi-grade planning and practice.

The discourse of multi-grade teaching in the research correlates to what Martin Haberman called the pedagogy of poverty. This concept is fully examined in chapter 5. This would present a glimpse of what many has called the crisis of education.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to my Heavenly Father,

Who blessed me with the search for Knowledge and Truth

And my late father, Dawie Faroö

who inspired me to become more, always more ...

To my wife Elaine

who endured and inspired and shared the blood, sweat and tears,

To my children: Denver, Dolan, Lana Dee, Desmé and Jordan

who albeit silently shared my sense of high ideals and commitment

To my soul mates and friends: John Goliath and Anthony Koopman

For being sound boxes and filtering critical thinking.

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ABBREVATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACE	Advance Certificate of Education
AS	Assessment Standards
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEPD	Centre for Policy Development
CO	Critical Outcomes
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DFID	Department for international development
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EEA	Employment Equity Act or Employment of Educators Act
EFA	Education for all
ELRC	Educational Labour Relations' Council
EMDC	Educational Management and Development Centers
EPC	Education Policy Consortium
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Partnerships
ERP	Education for Rural People
ESEA	Elementary and secondary education act
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAS	Fetal alcohol Syndrome
HCDS	Human Capital Development Strategy
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEP	Individualized Education Plans
IMPACT	Instructional Management by Parents, Community and Teachers
INNOTECH	Innovation and Technology
INSET	In-service training
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LA'S	Learning Area Statements
LO	Learning Outcomes
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
LTSMs	Learning and Teaching Support Material
MEDS	Micro-economic development strategy
MG	Multi-grade
NBI	National Business Initiative
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEA	National Educational Association
NECC	National Educational Crisis Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWREL	Northwest Regional Education Laboratory
OBE	Outcomes-base Education
OSD	Occupation Specific Dispensation
PEI	President's educational Initiative
PERO	Provincial Economic Review and Outlook
PROBE	Probe Report on Basic Education
PSoPL	Public schools on private property
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SASA	South African School Act
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

CHAPTER ONE
PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Purpose of the study

Multi-grade teaching is difficult and beset with contextual problems, such as poverty, lack of training, lack of resources and policies. The purpose of the current study is to examine how teachers of multi-grade classes in farm and rural schools plan and deliver the national curriculum. The study is also aimed at comparing the practice of such teachers in the South African context to international practice in similar classes. The aim of the enquiry is to raise the level of consciousness regarding, and to facilitate the transformation of what is seen as, the deficit model of multi-grade teaching which is currently being delivered in such schools (see Chapter 4). The methodology of the current study is developed within the interpretive paradigm, and draws heavily on critical theory, in terms of which the educator is defined within the structure of hegemony, with knowledge being sourced by means of differential access, due to socio-political processes.

The thesis argues that the low achievement levels attained in rural schools are due to schooling being predicated on a mono-grade norm, which neglects the policy development, curriculum, and training and support needs of multi-grade schools. The thesis intends to demonstrate that teachers who are not well prepared to handle either the curriculum and multi-grade set-up, have been found to tend to fall back on the approaches that they were trained to use and on what they found seemed to work in their experience. Such a failing has resulted in the 'pedagogy of poverty' being delivered.

In the introduction to the current thesis, the aim is to show how such practices came about both historically and ideologically. In an era of accountability and the measurement of degrees of effectiveness and efficiency, the thesis seeks to establish how rural and farm schools have come to be labelled as 'poor performing' schools. The research study attempted to look for solutions in terms of both local and international education practices.

1.2 Rationale for the study

The importance of the study lies in the number of learners who are affected by such pedagogic practices in rural multi-grade schools (amounting to 9% of school-going learners in South Africa – see Chapter 4 for the rate of prevalence in South Africa, and both Little and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) 2005 Report for the rate of prevalence in other countries). Not only do we not have policies that are specifically geared towards multi-grade teaching, but the practice of teaching at such schools is also seldom researched, especially in the Western Cape, with most research being conducted in the 'poorest of poor' areas. The sample covered in the research comes from the district of South Africa that contains the most rural schools. The current thesis, if read together with the other research that is already available in this field, might present a wider view of education in the rural areas.

Given the background of poverty and reference framework of international treaties, the current thesis is intended to contribute to the recovery from poverty and to improvement in multi-grade practice. Internationally, the paper examines the goals of, and answers in response to such treaties, such as Education For All (EFA), Education for Rural People (ERP), Rights of the Child, which have been co-signed by

South Africa with the intention of adding to the search for educational development that is currently under way internationally.

The research question stems from the following premises:

- Both mono-grade and multi-grade classes are different from conventional ones, to the extent that they require different pedagogic and methodological approaches.
- Educators need to plan their curricula in line with the National Curriculum Statements (NCSs).
- Educators must adhere to curriculum dictates, as demanded by booklets, circulars, 'blue boxes', minutes, and other relevant documents.
- South Africa has a first-world technical curriculum for all learners.
- In contextualising planning, the curriculum is restricted by the conditions that are imposed by reality (such as a farm, or rural, environment, limited classroom resources, whether more than one grade must be accommodated in a single classroom, and the grading of outcomes).
- Multi-grade teaching is different to mono-grade teaching, which implies the need for curriculum reorganisation and contextualisation.
- The farm context (which is typically that of the third world) is different to that of teaching in an urban environment (which is typically a first-world context).

The research question (to be discussed in Chapter 4) consists of the following two aspects:

- How do teachers of multi-grade classes in farming and rural communities reorganise their curriculum planning, when using the national curriculum?
- Can such teachers who have to respond to the multi-grade context be called multi-grade teachers in the same sense as that described by the literature research?

1.3 Introduction of background to the study

The current study is about the teaching of multi-grade classes. It deals with those problems facing multi-grade classes (in respect of educational planning), as well as those school-related problems, which are encountered when educators try to deliver the national curriculum at a multi-grade rural school.

Before the background and overview of the problem are discussed, a definition of the key terms that are used in the study will be provided, with the aim of setting the parameters of the study. Various definitions exist for such terms, so that, in defining them, the problematic nature of educational concepts should be revealed.

The thesis will start by describing the background in terms of historic context, which is a critical approach that is known as historical realism (consisting of the shaping of virtual reality by social and political views). The aim of adopting such a realistic approach is to show how inequalities in curriculum delivery in South African schools crystallised over time. What should be apparent in such an approach is that it considers the development of structural asymmetries, such as the disparities between mono-grade and multi-grade and between farm teaching versus urban teaching, over time. As part of the consideration of the historic transition to which education has been subject in South Africa, this chapter discusses the ideology of human capital.

After the tracing of the historical setting of the problem, the difficulties that an educator in a multi-grade class experiences, namely the configuration of performance levels, and how to adapt the curriculum accordingly, receives attention, against the backdrop of a consideration of international multi-grade practice and treaties.

Problems relating to rural education are not isolated, but are, rather, interwoven with the poverty prevailing on some farms and in some rural communities, which tends to have a negative effect on life in general, and on education in particular.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical framework, within which the key concepts are further, and more widely, examined. The painting of the broader picture prepares for the literature review, which is covered in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the relevant literature. The chapter presents a criticism of existing claims which place this study within the ambit of related research discourse, synthesizing it in such a way that it can add to the canon of existing research on the subject.

Chapter 4 provides a critical epistemology of the subject, using grounded theory as the main methodology. The chapter reflects the research design, starting with the goals of the study, and how such goals may be operationalised in terms of grounded theory. The epistemology of critical theory is synchronised with various issues to explain the theoretical stance assumed in the thesis. The methodologies employed coincide with the different phases of the study, and culminate in a discussion of the ethical considerations of the study. The discussion covers data management, among other topics, parallel with the data which has been gleaned by means of using each method. The account of the data analysis is largely theoretical, due to grounded theory being characterised by extensive debate, which calls for clarity (see Charmaz, 2006:509). A mind map of the methodology concludes Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 presents the data analysis and interpretation related to the current study. The chapter is split up in the same sequence in which the research was performed: Phase 1 presents the case study, and Phase 2 the interviews which were conducted at the sample schools, followed by a description of the group interview. Various comparisons are also made in this respect.

Chapter 6 consists of the findings and recommendations made in terms of the research, with appropriate bearing on Chapter 2. The research questions and theoretical framework guide the layout of this chapter.

1.4 Definition of terms

In the following subsections of this thesis, the key terms that are used in this study are explained.

1.4.1 Curriculum delivery

The concept of 'curriculum delivery' refers to the process in terms of which the NCSs are shaped into learning programmes and lesson plans, which is a process that is central to the planning of teaching and learning. The process of delivery for multi- and mono-grades is similar, though that for the former is much more complicated in terms of the reorganisation that is required in multi-grade classes (see Figure 1.6). The importance of such planning and reorganisation lies in the fact that such a process entails consideration of the following factors:

- As the same national curriculum is prescribed for the whole of South Africa, the same curriculum must be delivered throughout the entire country.

- Where the context (whether socio-cultural, demographic or otherwise) differs, reorganisation of planning is needed to ensure that the delivery is consistent throughout, allowing for the attainment of the same product.[1]
- No training (whether in-service training for teachers [INSET] or pre-service education and training [PRESET]) or policy outline is available concerning the reorganisation that is required for effective multi-grade teaching, since the phenomenon is not recognised as a distinctive issue in its own right.
- Without proper planning, proper delivery is impossible.

The current thesis focuses on the planning of the curriculum and not on the teaching (or implementation) thereof, since the curriculum is mostly regarded as being "the planning of teaching and learning" (see Smith, 2005). Planning may sound simple; however, it presents its own problems, as is shown by Smith's (2005) critique of Stenhouse's (1975) concept of planning. The explanation of the phenomenon of curriculum delivery will lean towards Grundy's (1987:77) concept of praxis, which is seen as a committed process, comprising the core duties of educators (South Africa, 1998:C-91).

The term 'curriculum delivery' is also used in the Employment of Educators Act of 1998, in which it refers to office-based educators, ranking from directors of education to education specialists.

[1] Since not all schools are the same, the reorganization of the curriculum is a constant factor.

Under 'core responsibilities', The Employment of Educators Act specifies such responsibilities as the following:

- to assist equitable deployment of staff and resources;
- to provide pastoral support;
- to maintain effective partnerships between parents and school staff;
- to develop systems for monitoring and recording progress made by learners;
- to support initiatives to improve numeracy, literacy and information technology to facilitate curriculum development at institution/district/provincial/national level;
- to provide guidance/assistance in learner assessment and
- to promote the National campaign on Culture and Learning and Service.

(South Africa,1998:C-69)

The core duties of educators on post level 1 do not refer to curriculum delivery, but to the activity of class teaching as such (South Africa, 1998:67), which is required to be "consistent with learning areas and programmes of subjects and grades as determined (...)." In such terms, therefore, curriculum design is seen not to be a core duty of educators, though educators are expected to plan their learning programmes for teaching. The disparity lies in the ideological basis on which understanding of the concept of 'curriculum' is attained. Teachers or educators are expected to implement a technical (product-focused) curriculum – as will be shown later in this thesis – characterised by the conveyance of content-filled concepts. The related outcomes are fixed, as they are the 'stepping-stones' that must be crossed in order to achieve the set learning outcomes (LOs). Such stepping-stones are the assessment standards (ASs) that form part of each distinct learning area.

Curriculum experts tend to be curriculum advisors and assessment co-coordinators, rather than educators. Nevertheless, they are expected to compile learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans (see also Smith, 2005:3). The net effect of such expectations might be that teachers, who are regarded merely as experts of curriculum design (planning), rather than of the curriculum, are unaware of

whose expertise to rely on in terms of curriculum planning: the principal; the advisors; or even the circuit managers. As a result, they often have to resort to 'official planning' (to satisfy the relevant officials, including the principal, and 'unofficial' planning for their own use in class. So far, reference has been made to 'normal' teaching and teachers, though the absence of a proper understanding of what constitutes 'multi-grade' in terms of educational policy makes the situation even worse for those educators who have to work in such an environment.

The situation is aggravated by the continuous flow of assessment policies, policy guidelines, government gazettes and circulars on assessment, which can, and do, lead to different interpretations and confusion. The post-provisioning document refers to such a situation as "policy confusion" (National DoE, 2006:13). The discrepancy in job descriptions[2] for educators is more evident when one looks at the core criteria (the primary elements of the responsibility of the person's job) of post level one educators under the IQMS (Integrated Quality Management System). The IQMS is the system under which educators are appraised (judged and formatively assessed for pay progression). Curriculum development, which is the first criterion for such appraisal (South Africa, 1998:C-91), is defined, along with the associated expectation, in the following terms (see Table 1.1).

[2] The issue of discrepancies in different job descriptions was also investigated by task teams for Occupation Specific Dispensation in July 2008, between the employer and union parties.

Table 1.1: Definitions, and associated expectations, relating to curriculum development.

Definition	Expectation
Interpretation of learning programmes, development of learning materials and assessment methods, and selection of appropriate strategies.	The educator plans and designs teaching and learning activities, where learning is a collective enterprise, integrative, and goal-orientated.

Source: South Africa, 1998:C-91.

In the new Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD), which was signed on 3 March 2008, the situation seems to be unchanged. Only 'teaching skills' are required of class teachers, whereas 'curriculum development' is expected of office-based education specialists. On page six of the OSD, job titles are described in the following terms (see Table 1.2 below).

Table 1.2: Description of job titles.

SCHOOL-BASED	
General classroom teaching	
JOB TITLE	**JOB PURPOSE (SHORT DESCRIPTION)[3]**
Teacher (Intern)	provides class teaching...
New teacher entrant (community service)	provides class teaching...
Teacher	provides class teaching...
Senior teacher	provides class teaching...
Master teacher	provides class teaching...
School-based specialist	
Teaching and learning specialist	provides class teaching
Senior teaching and learning specialist	provides class teaching
School-based management	
Head of department	to engage in class teaching...
Deputy principal	to assist the principal...
Principal	to ensure that the school is managed in compliance with applicable legislation...

Source: Education and Labour Relation Chamber, 2008:6.

[3] The concept of 'class teaching' is explained later in the chapter.

What the DoE sees as an improvement in curriculum delivery might not, in fact, affect delivery at all, since such improvement consists of structural changes, which implies that the envisaged curriculum changes lie in changes of structures alone. (See Cornbleth, 1990 in this regard.) The concept of 'class teaching' has, as yet, been defined inadequately. The concept is implemented by schools as meaning teaching all learning programmes to one class, as well as teaching one learning area per phase, such as teaching Mathematics to grades one to three. Some schools are forced to split up the learning areas, or programmes, among the foundation phase staff. Such splitting up of responsibilities happens especially in small multi-grade schools. In the new dispensation, curriculum support and management still lie in the hands of office-based educators. In terms of curriculum delivery, the circuit manager is obliged to:

> [p]romote, facilitate and monitor the implementation of General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET) policies in all learning sites...
>
> (South Africa, 2008:60)

As can be seen in the above specification, the requirement of mere implementation is obvious. Such implementation is seen as being the work of the circuit manager, and not of the educator.

In the current thesis, 'curriculum delivery' is taken as referring to the planning process of teaching, which Stenhouse (2005, cited in ed. Van den Akker et al., 2003:1) sees as a principle:

- for the selection of content;
- for the development of a teaching strategy;
- for the making of decisions about sequence;
- on which to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and to differentiate the general principles 1, 2 and 3 above to meet individual cases.

Walker (cited in Van den Akker, 2003:1) mentions three major planning elements: "content, purpose and organization of learning". The shift between product and process is essentially one from teaching (product) to learning (interaction between

teacher and learner as subject, and not as object). Such a shift will be examined still further in Chapter 2.

In the research that was undertaken for the current thesis, the planning of the multi-grade curriculum has been studied in terms of the requirements laid down in the NCSs and the above-mentioned sources. Such parameters were used, since no criteria for the multi-grade planning to be done by South African educators was available at the time that this thesis was written. Such a lack of criteria has led to the use of international best practice multi-grade definitions for purposes of scrutinising the multi-grade planning that is performed in South Africa.

1.4.2 Multi-grade[4] schools

In order to find an internationally acceptable definition of the concept of 'multi-grade', Little's definition was found to be most useful. Little is a seasoned multi-grade researcher who has worked extensively in Nepal, India, Vietnam and other developing countries. Her internationally accepted definition of 'multi-grade' is as follows:

> Multi-grade teaching refers to the teaching of students of different ages, grades and abilities in the same group. It is referred to variously in the literature as 'multilevel', 'multiple class', 'composite class', 'vertical group', 'family class', and, in the case of one teacher schools, 'unitary schools'. It is to be distinguished from 'mono-grade' teaching in which students within the same grade are assumed to be more similar in terms of age*[5] and ability.
>
> (Little, 1994:63; see also Juvane, 2005)

[4] See also the term 'multi-grade pedagogy', as it is defined in Chapter 2.

[5] In South Africa, where the school-going age is 7, being over-age for a particular class is calculated by means of the following formula: 7 + grade + 2. Accordingly, in a multi-grade class, the age difference between the different learners might be as high as four years (with a learner only being allowed to fail once per phase).

Three important aspects are of note in Little's definition:

- Issues of class composition, classroom organisation and diversity of skills, with both older and younger learners from more than one grade being taught simultaneously, are of key importance.
- The differences that exist in mono- and multi-grades require the adoption of different approaches to the methodology employed (with Catherine Mulryan-Kyne calling the need to adopt such a range of approaches the need for "specific multigrade emphasis".
- If the assumption is that, in a mono-class, same-age learners have the same ability, a multi-grade class should consist of learners with a greater variety of levels of ability (though multigrade classes are not to be confused with multi-level classes).

In addition, such assumptions should lead to the conclusion that multi-grade is a teaching strategy, in terms of which all the characteristics (reflecting wider age / skill level) are used to benefit both educators and learners.

Though use of the term 'multi-grade' is not universal, the term is widely used. In many countries, schools started out as one-room buildings, in which all the learners were taught by a single teacher, in an ungraded way. According to Little, the provision of graded classes only started when Horace Mann, the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education at the time, after visiting a Prussian school, started to introduce graded classes in 1843 in schools in North America and Europe. According to Bruck (as quoted in Little, 1994), "the principle of the division of labour holds good in education, as in mechanical industry."

In 1987, 73 million children were receiving schooling in Africa, with the figure increasing to 106 million in 2001 (Juvane, 2005). Nearly 30% of schools worldwide are estimated to provide for multi-grade classes, whereas in Africa more than 50%

have to make provision for such classes. More than 2 million children attend multi-grade schools on a daily basis in South Africa (Joubert, 2006 a). The concept of 'multi-grade'*[6] is neither used in our national curriculum, nor does such a concept form part of curriculum policy documents. The phenomenon is of an international nature – the 'multi-grade' concept is not mentioned in the following works: *Aims, influence and change in the primary school curriculum,* which is edited by P.H. Taylor; Blenkin and Kelly's 1987 *The primary curriculum: a process approach to curriculum planning*; Boyd's 1984 *Understanding the primary curriculum and curriculum*; or Hawes' 1979 *Reality in African Schools* (all of which works are cited in Little, 1994):

> Rural people have no real political voice, so when there is competition for limited resources – and education for remote areas can be costly – they tend to lose out, says Lavinia Gasperini, senior officer at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Joubert, 2008.

Multi-grade education occurs when there are fewer educators allocated to a school than there are grade groups. In such cases, the school is "forced to merge one or more grades" (National DoE, 2006 a :20). In the current study, such terms as 'combination grade/class, 'mixed-age class', 'split-grade class', 'double-grade class' and 'unitary school' are used.

Our national curriculum is graded into an age-cohort curriculum. This means that in each learning area the LOs for each grade are split up into (mono-graded) ASs. Within a multi-grade setting, teachers have to envisage the LOs of both grades by adapting their planning to accommodate the various LOs of the two or more grades concerned. Such an adaptation requires the devising of one set of plans (including learning programmes, work schedules and especially lesson plans) for both grades.

[6] A distinction needs to be drawn between the phenomena (two or more grades and one educator) and the characteristics of the practice set out in the current thesis (see Chapter 5).

Devising and executing the planning for two grades separately is not feasible, as Joubert would say:

> Multi-grade is not... one teacher running between two classrooms to teach two separate grades with separate programs...[or]... two classes working in isolation in the same classroom, seated at each end of the classroom and being taught separate programs by one teacher.
>
> (Joubert, 2006 a)

Tambulukani, cited in Virgilio Juvane's work (2005), adds to this list of misconceptions, seeing multi-grade teaching as consisting of the following:

- teaching a number of different grade pupils at the same time;
- teaching many grades together, using the syllabus of one group of learners;
- providing learning opportunities for two different grades in the same room; and
- teaching more than one grade in one room.

If Joubert's and Tambulukani' definitions are compared with that of Little, it should be obvious that the phenomenon of accommodating two grades in one class is distinguishable from the practice of multi-grade pedagogy (peer teaching, self-directed learning, and other methodologies)[7]. Such teaching should be evident in the planning of the teacher.

The aim of the current study is, therefore, to determine what approach should best be taken in the planning of the educators concerned. The study deals mostly with the way in which teacher have to adapt their teaching strategy or methodology to the requirements of their own classrooms. Accordingly, for the purposes of the current study, multi-grade teaching is seen as a teaching strategy, which might be applied in either mono- or multi-grade classes.

[7] The current study is also intended to ascertain whether, in South Africa, where teachers have not been trained in multi-grade methods, a teacher might, by chance, come to adopt the practice of multi-grade through necessity and/or years of practice.

Multi-grade research has, previously, mainly consisted of comparative studies (vis-à-vis mono-grade), with the findings of such studies having bearing on educational, reading, mathematical, and other benefits or disadvantages (see Mason & Burns, 1996; Veenman, 1995, 1996, cited in Naylor, 2000). The current study was undertaken using a multitude of methods (see Chapter 5).

Such a study of multi-grade must heed the amount of research done by Bruce Miller (1989) and Susan Vincent (1999) on the multi-grade, as well as the local work done by Jordaan (2003). Miller's work, together with that presented at a conference in Ashland, Oregon in July 1989, resulted in the compilation of the seven-volume *The multi-grade classroom: a resource handbook for small, rural schools*. The resource handbook covers extensive research, which was conducted over a decade. Jordaan (2003) referred to the text in his Western Cape Multi-grade Intervention (see Chapter 3).

1.4.3 Rural schools

The term 'rural' in South Africa refers to farms or small towns, since the characteristics (see quotation below) above can be applied to both of them. What complicates the situation is that, often, learners in small town schools live on farms. What characterises a rural school is that the schools are situated in the following type of area:

> Space where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only a small share of the landscape; natural environment dominated by pastures, forest, mountains and deserts; settlements of low density (5 – 10 000 persons); places where most people work on farms; the availability of land at a relatively low cost; a place where activities are affected by a high transaction cost, associated with long distance from cities and poor infrastructure.
>
> (FAO and UNESCO, cited by Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003)

Most farm schools are multi-grade in nature, but not all town schools have multi-graded classes. The schools into which research has been undertaken in terms of the current study, the sample, fit the description above. They are both multi-grade farm and small town (rural) schools. Therefore, the terms 'rural school' and 'farm school' are used interchangeably in the study.[8]

Farm schools refer to those public schools that are situated on private property owned by farmers, mines, hospitals or churches. Such schools are intricately linked to the existence of agricultural labour. Such schools are generally accepted as having been established to discourage migration to the cities (see Nasson, 1988, cited in Ministerial Report, 2005:48). The spatial term 'farm' refers to a specific group located on a certain premise, on which activities are carried out for economic purposes. For the purpose of the current study, 'farm' refers to privately owned commercial land, church, mine, or hospital property, either provided with section 14 contract or not. Such a contract regulates the management of a public state-aided school which is conducted on such private premises.

The negative terms that are used in relation to farm education, which arise from seeing mono-grade as the norm, such as 'oppression', 'deprivation', 'disadvantage' and 'deficit' are important for the study, as such perceptions as are associated with the use of such terms in relation to farm teaching inevitably influence the delivery of such. The government also shares such a negative view of farm teaching:

> Specifically, it can be taken *as a given* that it is *unacceptable* from a curriculum delivery point of view to merge learners from different curriculum phases. Currently, many schools are forced to do precisely this. There are two possible solutions to this problem: provide more educators, in line with the number of phases being offered, or

[8] The term 'rural', as used in the title, is used inclusively. The difference between 'farm' and 'rural' is unimportant, as the curriculum is focused on the urban environment, and, therefore, the difference between 'rural' and 'urban' is more important than that between the two previously mentioned terms, which, in the case of South Africa is minimal.

merge small schools, so that *unsustainable* (own emphasis) enrolment patterns are eliminated.

(DoE, 2006: 35)

Such demographic (rural/urban) distinctions are important for the following reasons:

- Rural poverty and illiteracy, according to Atchoarena and Gasperini (2003), are not just transitional problems, or indicators of a crisis of adjustment in the process of modernisation, but are fundamental challenges of a structural development nature.
- The challenge for education is to satisfy the needs and demands that are posed by both rural and farm contexts.
- Satisfying such needs and demands cannot occur if such contexts are disregarded in educational policies. If rural and farm learners are discriminated against merely because they do not stay in urban areas, such treatment amounts to a form of demographic discrimination. An ideology that holds that 'real' schools are situated in towns is stifling for both educators and learners.
- Agriculture has been valued as an intrinsic part of the rural school curriculum in such countries as Benin, Burundi, Colombia, the Congo, Gambia, and the Seychelles, among others (Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003). In such a context, such a curriculum is relevant. In themed teaching, such a theme as 'the sea' might be chosen (as it appears in a textbook) for those learners who have never even seen the sea.
- Despite such efforts and programmes as EFA and ERP being undertaken, the provision of education for rural learners has deteriorated (see Chisholm Report, 2003; DoE, 2003; Fiske & Ladd, 2004).
- According to Tomasevski (2002, cited in Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003) "[i]nvestment in human capital for agriculture and rural development is also increasingly recognized, starting with basic education". (For the goals of the Human Capital Development Strategy (HCDS), see Hartley, Naiker, Lewis, Myalashe and Sigamoney, 2007:25.).
- When considering equal educational opportunities for all (rural and urban), "The test (...) is not a matter of whether the system produces equal educational outcomes (...), but whether it eliminates differences in the educational opportunities ..." (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

- The multi-grade model of education is currently attracting new interest and attention as a model that can provide a viable opportunity for educational delivery, so helping to achieve EFA and EFR-related goals.
- Ironically, while multi-grade teaching might be a solution for educating rural people in many African countries, governments tend to focus on improving the provision of education at conventional schools. Often, as a result, the development of multi-grade schooling is left up to local initiative, which tends to be non-existent (Birch & Lally, 1995). (See Juvane, 2005 for the reasons behind such neglect in various African countries.)
- "The recognition of the heterogeneity of schools and classes are more akin to family and community groupings than the forced and disruptive artificiality of homogeneous grouping on the basis of age" (Birch & Lally, 1995) argues for a multi-grade approach to be adopted in the rural or farm setting.

The MCRE (Ministerial Report, 2005) noted that the social and economic relations on farms have a significant impact on both the learners and the farm owner (MCRE, 2005:49), in terms of the lack of school development.

The provision of education at farm schools[9] differs from that in other schools, such as urban or rural schools, in terms of the following factors:

- inadequate staffing (with, on average, the number of staff consisting of from 2 to 6 educators, who tend to travel to the farms concerned);
- remoteness (characterised by distance from the district office and home; inadequate transport; and professional isolation);
- the nature of support (from the school governing body; business; parents; the community; and the farm owner);
- means of ownership (with some schools belonging to churches, mines, businesses, or farmers);
- the lack of a distinct policy for such education, which is called a non-problem by Little (1994);

[9] The term 'farm schools' is used to include rural schools, as has been previously explained in the current thesis. The difference between the two types of school is less than that between such schools in Europe and North America.

- the nature of governance (in terms of the input from owner, farm community, and school governing body, schools are governed by section 14);
- inadequate facilities (a lack of running water, toilets, buildings, and offices);
- social vulnerability, due to such factors as migration (with learners moving from farm to farm), seasonability (with such movements being determine by seasonal fluctuations in job opportunities);
- the 'legal limbo' referred to by the former national minister of education Kader Asmal (in a speech made on 13 May 2000), in which such schools have been placed by the requirement that the relevant school contract be signed no later than June 1997, else the school concerned would have no legal status;
- relative instability (due to the closure of farm schools, the tendency of the learners to migrate together with their families, and the amalgamation of some schools into one);
- the perception that such schools are 'other', and that 'real' schools can only be found in cities and relatively large towns;
- poverty (with 25,4% of the households in the area being classified as poor, and 38,8% being classified as very poor (Statistics SA, cited in Simbi & Aliber, n.d.)[10]; and
- lack of accessibility (not always being easily accessible by car, requiring the learners to walk through difficult terrains and for distances of up to four kilometres to school) Such inadequate transport infrastructure limits the access to learning opportunities available to learners at such schools (Joubert, 2008:6).

In addition to the factors enumerated above, Joubert adds inadequate access to communication and Information technology, the relatively impoverished health, educational and economic status of the community, and activities relating to the organisation of political and civil society (Joubert, 2008:6).

[10] According to Joubert (2008), "[r]ural people are often caught in the vicious cycle of poverty, having no access to the services and opportunities that might lift them out of poverty, education, gainful employment, adequate nutrition, infrastructure and communication."

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1.4.3.1 Multi-grade rural schools*[11] by province

Table 1.3 below shows the number of farm schools existing throughout the country. The information on farm/rural schools that is currently available is poor and often unreliable, due to such factors as are listed above. According to Schindler, a common trend with such schools is that they are shrinking in number (MCRE, 2005:49). The number of learners who are affected by multi-grade teaching has served to justify the conducting of the present study. The prevalence of such a phenomenon also shows the relevancy of the study. The negative impact of a prevailing policy should always justify a related study. Given the number of learners who are negatively impacted in South Africa by the inadequacy of the current educational policy, there is a crying need for such research.

Table 1.3: Number of farm learners per province in South Africa.

Provinces	**2000**
Eastern Cape	18 333
Free State	56 618
Gauteng	12 576
KwaZulu-Natal	55 304
Limpopo	24 877
Mpumalanga	32 847
Northern Province	8 321
North-West	35 503
Western Cape	**11 769**
TOTAL	256 148

Source: Ministerial Report (2005:49).

1.4.3.2 Breede River / Overberg EMDC[12]

The whole of the Western Cape has been split up into different educational districts, with each district also being split up into circuits. Such a situation occurred at the end of 2007, when, in the redesign of the previous educational administration, such areas

[11] The term 'rural schools' is used as broadly as possible, since most farm schools are multi-grade, but all multi-grade schools are not on farms.
[12] Changed to Cape Wineland District in July 2008.

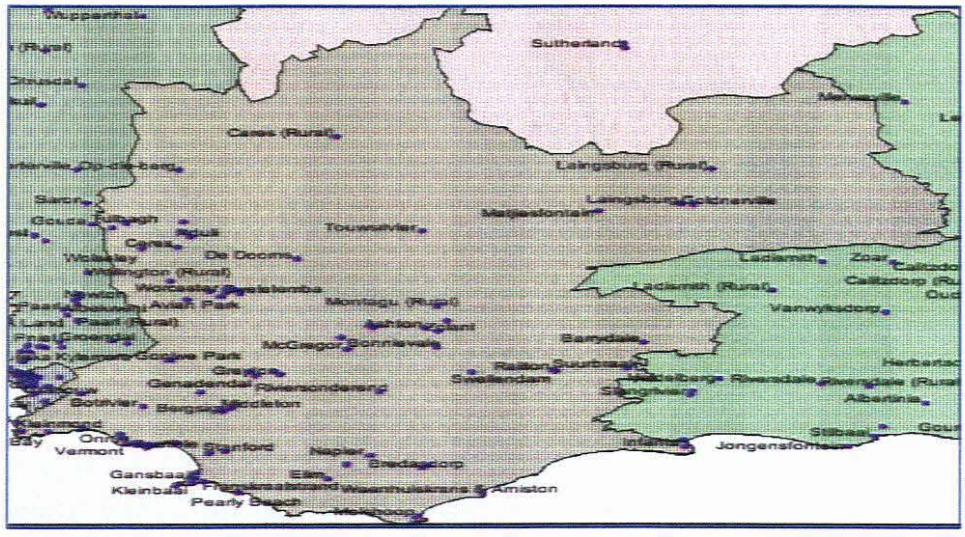
came, once more, to be called districts. One such educational, management and development centre (EMDC), or district, is comprised of the Breede River area, which stretches from Merveville to Grabouw and the Koue Bokkeveldt, with Worcester as its main centre. Such a demarcation has changed with the renaming of the area as the Cape Wineland District in July 2008. In terms of the redesign that took place in 2007/2008, those three rural districts which housed the most multi-grade schools changed, as can be seen in Table 1.4 below.

Table 1.4: School districts and number of circuits in the Breede River Overberg District.

DISTRICT	NO. OF CIRCUITS
Metro South	7
Metro North	7
Metro East	6
Metro Central	6
West Coast	5
Overberg	3
Eden and Central Karoo	8
Cape Winelands	8

Source: WCED Circular 0017 (2008:2).

Figure 1.1: Demographic location of the Breede River District.



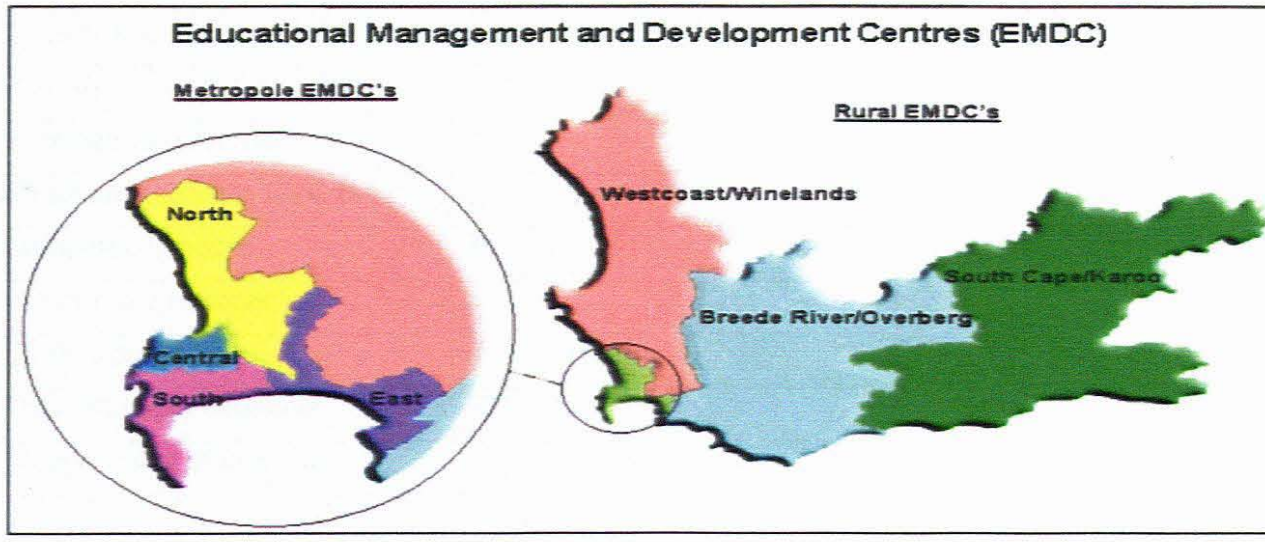
How, and whether, these and other changes (such as newly structured support teams) will affect curriculum delivery remains to be seen. The redesign was intended to bring the experts nearer to the relevant district/schools. That the constant changes that are made to benefit the curriculum usually occur within the relevant educational structures, rather than in the school setting itself, is noteworthy. Historically, it has been the experience that the larger the multi-disciplinary team is that services such schools, the more diversified the interpretations and expectations seem to be, whether within, or among, different teams or across districts.

The demographic location of those districts where the schools to be researched are located is indicated below. Two points should be evident regarding the said district:

- its remoteness from the educational centre (with its Head Office in Cape Town); and
- the vastness of the area included in the district.

Both such factors inevitably have implications for the delivery and the support of the curriculum.

Figure 1.2: Location of the Breede River / Overberg District EMDC.



Source: DoE, 2007 (subject to revision in 2008).

Figure 1.2 shows the three rural EMDCs, with an inset of the Breede River District. The vastness of the area, as well as the distance between the towns concerned, is obvious. The farms in the district, though not indicated, are equally remote and distant form one another, and especially when they are considered in relation to the regional centre (Worcester). In the newly redesigned municipality, boundaries have been accepted as demarcating the different circuits. For the purpose of the current study, the map given above still held valid at the time at which the fieldwork was done.

Given the prevailing definitions of farm and rural schools, it is difficult to distinguish between certain small towns and farms in educational terms. Data from EMIS do not characterise farms as such, rather choosing to use such indicators as quintile (the poverty index), section 21, the number of classes and learners, and other educationally based criteria. In the current study, the schools that were visited were located on fruit and animal, or on combined, farms. Circuits four (Ceres area) and five (Tulbagh area) were the focus of the study.

1.4.3.3 Curriculum delivery in the Breede River EMDC

Table 1.5: Statistics relating to curriculum delivery in the Breede River EMDC.

Type of school	Number of schools
Primary schools (Grs.1-7)	174
Intermediate schools	30
Secondary schools (Grs. 8-12)	31
Combined schools	16
Pre-primary schools	2
LSEN schools	9 (1 466 learners)
Total number of schools	262
Total number of learners	106 459

Source: DoE, 2005:21.

No common link between the qualitative data above and the results of the quantitative testing was sought, or is given, as the consideration of such a linkage is not the purpose of the research. Table 1.5 above shows that there are more primary schools than high schools in the district (with multi-grade teaching being much more common in primary schools).

Certain anomalies exit in the composition of schools and in the application of the curriculum. Schools tend to be split up across the different phases, with, for example, Grade 7 being accommodated by some high schools, and combined schools (which accommodate Grade R to Grade 12) having to provide instruction across the entire band of both GET and Further Education Training, which is a daunting, if not impossible, task. ABET and ECD schools have been excluded from the list below.

Table 1.6: Systemic numeracy results attained for Grade 3 (District).

RESULTS (%)	NO. OF SCHOOLS	% OF SCHOOLS
Very weak (0–19)	173	83,9
Weak (20–39)	6	2,9
Average (40–69)	18	8,7
Good (70–100)	9	4,4
Total	206 (all schools)	100

Source: EMIS.[13]

Table 1.6 above shows how those schools that are in the district have fared in the past.

[13] The schools have been classified, in terms of their performance, as very weak, weak, average and good. The correlation between the results in regard to numeracy and literacy was 100%.

The following factors should be taken into account when considering the summary:

- All schools were regarded as being on an equal footing in the administration of the test.
- The shortcomings of the instrument were acknowledged, with resultant implications for its reliability.
- The results were not weighted.

The Western Cape, in general, cannot claim to be an 'under-privileged' province (in terms of access, equity and quality indicators, as defined by the DoE, 2003). In any case, such a status cannot be considered to be a suitable criterion for research. However, some areas in the Western Cape are as poor as any other in the country (see the National Report on Systemic Evaluation, 2003:13-22, and the number of quintile very poor schools). Table 1.4 indicates that the performance of many of the learners is lagging behind by more than two years in terms of numeracy and literacy standards, according to Joubert (2006). Systemic evaluation found a link between the quality of teaching in outcomes- based education (OBE) and learners' performance. Further, the multi-grade, farm / rural and remote schools were found to be the worst non-performers in terms of the evaluation. Such observations were found to warrant an investigation into the relevant findings.

The aim of the current study was neither to establish causal linkages between indicators and evaluation, nor to make use of input and output models. All indications are that farm/rural schooling is failing (see Anon, 2005; DoE, 2003; Linda Chisholm, 2003; MCRE Report, 2005). The research that was undertaken for this thesis was intended to establish how farm educators plan to undertake multi-grade teaching. In the context of the current study, the capacity to multi-grade is taken as a positive force that can help to solve various problems in teaching, one of which is related to the quality of teaching. Such a conceptualisation also marks a shift in the

government's position on multi-grade teaching, as is evident in the following quotation:

> Multi-grade teaching needs not be regarded as an obstacle to effective teaching and learning. However, it is important that schools and educators be skilled in delivering this kind of service.
>
> (DoE, 2006:33)

1.5 Background and overview of the research problem

1.5.1 Historical and ideological transformation and farm/rural education[14]

The question with which the MRCE (2005:48) starts relates to why the quality of education that is provided at schools on commercial farms is patently inferior to that provided at other schools, and why it is so difficult to improve delivery in this regard.[15] Within the topic of planning and the definition of the curriculum (as context and process), such a question should be viewed within the wider socio-political and historic framework. The following synopsis, which is aimed at contextualising farm education, sheds some light on the historical marginalisation process.

1.5.2 From (oral) tradition to mission schools

African societies placed a high priority on traditional forms of education well before the arrival of Europeans, which is evident from those rock paintings that depict the pre-1600s culture. Both the Khoisan and the Bantu-speaking societies, such as the Nguni chiefdoms, transmitted cultural values and skills within their own tribal groupings and villages. Such oral education conveyed tales of heroism and the practising of skills, the mastery of which was key to survival. The first Europeans who settled in South Africa focused on teaching basic literacy skills, so that the local

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[14] For a complete overview of the South African curriculum / educational history, see Fiske and Ladd, 2004.

[15] Such a question was also asked in the Human Capital Development Report, compiled by Lewis *et al.* (2007:23).

inhabitants could learn to read the Bible, which was essential for them to be confirmed as Christians (Lawson, 2007: 235-273). Those Dutch Reformed Church schools that held sway in the country from 1823 to 1842, in keeping with their religious curriculum, attempted to transform the 'preliterate' tribal education of native Africans. First established in 1789, such schools were dedicated to converting the natives to Christianity, as well as generally to inculcating an attitude of service and subservience to the white residents of South Africa. According to Lawson (2007), "some mission schools included a mixture of race, but, by and large, segregation was established by custom".

The first ideological clash took place between traditional African education and Eurocentric values, in other words between the oral education of the former and the written word, and religious or cultural differences, of the latter. With regard to the inculcation of "an attitude of service and subservience", it should be noted that such aspects were already part of African life, resulting from an extension of lineage and kinship. Servitude was part of one's position in a clan, tribe or family. Ethnic rivalry, hostilities, and even ethnocentrism between tribes and villages were common – what was new was the concept and practice of racism (Anon, 1999).

1.5.3 The language of politics

The second tide of ideological transition took place when the British mission school was established in 1799, with the intention of promoting the English language and British values. Dutch settlers of the time resisted the government's aims, seeing the English language and curriculum as irrelevant to the maintenance of rural life and Dutch values. Though Africans and Coloureds attended mostly mission schools, Xhosa learners were allowed access to other government-supported schools in the

Eastern Cape, as were Nguni learners in Natal. The three types of schools that were in existence at the time consisted of small rural schools, with one or two teachers; district schools, which taught the learners from several small towns; and the relatively few high schools that accommodated the learners in the cities.

After the British victory in the South African War (1899–1902), Lord Milner brought thousands of British teachers into the country in order to establish a sound system of English-dominated schooling throughout South Africa. The Afrikaners of the time responded to such a foreign import by founding their own educational philosophy, the system of Christian National Education, on the basis of which they developed a distinct curriculum. Christian National Education came, in time, to be used to entrench the National Party's programme of apartheid. In terms of such a system, educators were called upon to recognise cultural diversity and to rely on 'mother-tongue' instruction during the first five years of schooling. Such a philosophy also espouses the idea that a person's social responsibilities and political opportunities are defined, in large part, by that person's ethnic identity.

English and Afrikaans schools were established for white Europeans. Politics after the War led to the establishment of separate schools for different (Afrikaans and English) language-speaking groups. Farm owners sent their own children to such ethnically divided schools.

The system of education applied to Africans was paternalistic, being based on principles of trusteeship and segregation. The curriculum was designed to equip African children to take on only menial jobs, with their potential being limited to "the level of certain forms of labour" (according to Verwoerd, then Minister of Bantu Affairs). In terms of the so-called 'Bantu' system of education, the facilities provided

for such learners were deliberately kept inferior, the teachers were not as well educated as were those from other racial groups, and their per-capita spending was one-tenth that of Whites. By attempting to enforce both English and Afrikaans as languages of instruction, such resistance was caused that it led to systematic school-based unrest in 1976.

Earlier in the twentieth century, the governance of schools was left in the hands of each province, in terms of the South Africa School Act of 1909. When the Union of South Africa was first established in 1910, it took the form of a bilingual state, with both English- and Afrikaans-speaking schools being established for white Europeans (Lawson, 2007).

The Native Land Act, dating from 1913, stated that natives might not own land, stay in reserves, or work elsewhere than on the farms and mines. Such reserves provided pools of migrant workers for White-owned farms and urban- based industry.
The following anecdote of Sol Plaatje relates to such a situation:

> The baas has exacted from him the service of himself, his wife and his oxen, for the wages of 30 shillings a month, whereas Kgobadi had been making over £100 a year (...) when he refused the extortionate terms, the baas retaliated with a Dutch note (...) which ordered him to "betake himself from the farm".
>
> (Anon, 1999).

The implementation of the system of Bantu education, together with other salient reasons (such as the enforced use of passes, in terms of the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923; the reservation of certain categories of work for specific categories of worker, in terms of the Job Reservation Act; and the designation of certain areas for residence by certain racial groups, in terms of the Group Areas Act), gave rise to the resistance movement. The effort to establish free schools was hampered by political

(English/Afrikaner; national/ local interest) and linguistic (English/Afrikaans) difficulties.

1.5.4 From state-aided schools to public schools

The Eiselen Report (1951) expressed its concern for African education with special regard to the 1948 government's separatist racial view. W.M. Eiselen and Dr Hendrik Verwoerd both studied in Germany and, as Minister of Bantu Education, Verwoerd's concept allowed for blacks only to be educated for employment in certain forms of labour.

Only since 1980 have farm schools been allowed to teach higher than Grade 4 (Ministerial report, 2005:48). Ever since the Bantu Act, which addressed the existence of farm schools, was promulgated in 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953), farm schools were in a difficult position. As the schools are state aided, the farms are mostly privately owned. Some farmers would simply refuse to sign a contract with the state, or failed to adhere to its stipulations, with the state being unable to enforce the relevant regulations (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005:51).

To improve matters in African education, the National Policy for General Affairs Act 76 of 1984 was passed. Segregation was maintained in terms of the Act, with the Minister of Education being able to determine the general policy for syllabuses, examinations, and certification qualifications at all institutions. Such legislation did not help the cause of Black education. The Department of Education and Training was responsible for Black education outside the homelands, with each of the Houses of Parliament (coloured, white and Indian) having its own education department. Black learner enrolment was low, and the drop-out rate of Black learners was high. Very few studied as far as high school. Many Black learners were educated in factories,

mines or farm schools. Though some mission schools were racially mixed, the principle of segregation was established in terms of tradition.

During the 1980s, an educational debate revolved around whether to support the principle of 'liberation before education' or 'education for liberation'. The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), which was founded in March 1986, had as its slogan 'People's education', which was aimed at linking the educational struggle with the broader political struggle: When the NECC was banned, so, with it, were the pedagogic principles of Freire. Many universities then established dedicated Education Policy Units (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

South Africa addressed the crisis in education in the early 1990s. The Renewal Strategy was brought out in 1993, and a single Ministry of Education was established in 1993. When the system of apartheid was dismembered in 1994, the government was faced with many overwhelming challenges in respect of education. According to Lawson (2007), "[c]lass differences and geographic considerations began to become more characteristic of social division than race in South African schools." Two trends were evident: a decline in employment levels and an increase in the number of casual workers on farms. Between 1988 and 1998, 140 000 jobs were lost (Simbi & Aliber, n.d). The MCRE (2005:49) gives the decline in the number of jobs as being from 724 430 in 1988 to 625 451 in 1996. Evictions from farms contributed to such a decline in job opportunities. What happened to the younger generation during that time is debatable. (See also Fiske & Ladd, 2004; MCRE, 2005).

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Table 1.7: Number of agreements signed in the provinces.

Province	No. of schools	No. of agreements
Mpumulanga	494	135
Limpopo	317	15–20
North-West	316	50
Eastern Cape	400	146
Western Cape	"almost all"	643

Source: MCRE, 2005:51.

As can be seen in Table 1.7 above, few farm owners have signed the agreement[16] so far, resulting in the government's being unable to enforce compliance with stipulations made in the agreement. When the contract is not signed within six weeks of its having been drawn up, schooling on a farm becomes illegal. The merging or closing of schools or the expropriation of the relevant premises is also problematic, as such action calls for consultation with all stakeholders concerned. Table 1.7 is important, for it shows the difference (in ideology) between the state and the landowner. The legal implication of such a ruling was that those schools for which the agreement was not signed were, thereby, rendered illegal. The MCRE was informed of many negative experiences in this regard. The related clash between the state and the owner resulted in the school or its learners becoming victimised, with gates to certain school being locked; learners from nearby farms not being allowed onto the farms housing the schools; and conditions of child labour being imposed, over which the principal had no say (Human Rights Hearing, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2004; MCRE, 2005).

[16] The need for the conclusion of such an agreement has rendered many such schools 'illegal', as was the case in Kentucky in the United States (Rose v. Council, 1989). The case was 'won' by multi-grade teaching, when the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 was passed, and all the relevant schools implemented such teaching (Hoyt William, 2005).

Such difficulties have had various implications for curriculum delivery on farm schools. Some of the implications have related to the following aspects of the dilemma:

- School governing bodies have had to contend with levels of illiteracy among the parents, and with conflicts of interest with the farm owner regarding the attending of meetings on another farm than that on which the relevant school is situated.
- Due to their being illiterate, some parents are unable to help their children with their homework, or have been unable to understand the curriculum.
- The new curriculum requires the undertaking of a wide range of reading, which is difficult for those parents who can neither afford to buy magazines or newspapers, nor can read.
- Having to talk to the farm owner / church representative about the maintenance of their school can be problematic.
- The use of child labour (during contact time in school) and the demands that are made on the learners during the high season can disrupt the smooth flow of schoolwork.
- Some labourers are too tired after a long day's work to care about their child(ren)'s education. (See also DoE, 2003:23 in this regard.)

The law on basic service conditions for farm workers, which was passed in 2005 and consequently revised in March 2006, also negatively affected farm schools, as many farmers, consequently, opted for making use of migrant workers rather than employing workers who had lived and received their schooling on their farm for generations (Ewert & Hamman, 1999:1). Previously, farm schools had provided cheap low-skilled labour, with little interference from government, so that "farmers ha[d] a vested interest in the maintenance of the regime" (Ewert & Hammam, 1999:1).

The literature suggests that the farmers' collective decision to shed permanent workers was, in large measure, driven by 'non-economic' considerations, including, above all:

- their fear of losing control of their land to resident farm workers (...); and
- their sense that, because of the newly established form of democratic governance and the commitment by the state to safeguard human rights, farm workers were increasingly viewed as being more difficult to manage than they were prior to 1994 (Simbi & Aliber, n.d.; MCRE, 2005:49).

The basic features of South African education remained in the post-apartheid era, with three four-year cycles, consisting of the foundation phase (grades R to 3); the intermediate phase (grades 4 to 7); and the senior phase (grades 7 to 9). All three phases formed the GET band (consisting of grades R to 12). (See also Joubert, 2007, in this regard.)

In 1996, President Nelson Mandela asked the international community to help with education in South Africa. Nineteen countries responded, in terms of the President's Educational Initiative (PEI), which was managed by the Joint Educational Trust. The PEI started its work in November 1998, with looking at best practice in teaching. Nick Taylor and Penny Vinjevold (1999) published their report, *Getting learning right*, on the process.

Some of the main findings that were contained in the report were:

- ... that progress towards the twin goals of educational excellence and expanded educational opportunities has been severely constrained by institutional malfunction in all parts of the system;
- their litany of unmet needs ranged from more efficient management systems and a better work ethic among teachers to empirical research;
- teachers by and large support the intentions of the new curriculum (C 2005- author), but lack the knowledge resources to give effect to these in the classroom;
- there were flaws in the design of the curriculum e.g. focusing on everyday experience (...) led to unorganized confusion or contrived realism;
- teachers stopped using textbooks, and reading was not taught in some cases; and

- international assessments, such as the TIMM-R study, showed a lack of conceptual teaching.

(Fiske & Ladd, 2004)

The report, together with the steerage of educational reform by the new Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, led to the establishment of the Review Commission in February 2000, which ultimately led to the compilation of the new Revised NCSs.

The South African Schools Act of 1996 (Act No. 84) was supposed to help state-aided schools, by transforming them into public schools, giving all schools the same status:

> This agreement should provide for the provision of education and the performance of the normal functions of a public school (with respect to governance, access, security of occupation, maintenance and capital improvements) together with the protection of the owners' rights.

(MRCE, 2005:50)

On 13 May 2000, the national Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, opened the Congress of Farm Education with the following words, in which the historic context of educational failure could be seen:

> About fifty years ago, another Minister of Education also recognized the significance of farm schools. He affected policies to stabilize labour force on farms, maintain the presence of women and children on farms as part of the labour force, and prevent migration from farms to cities and towns. That Minister was Hendrik Verwoerd (...) Because we are not equal, some children are at the centre of a technological revolution while others are left far behind, in a world that is fundamentally different.

(Asmal, 2000)

Since the age of Verwoerd, little has changed for farm schools. The latter part of Asmal's quote reveals the devastating effects of inequality in education, which has worsened since then, due to the rapid pace of globalisation that impacts on the urban environment much more than it does on the rural (see Fiske & Ladd, 2004, with regards to the granting of equal educational opportunities).

1.5.5 Human capital ideology

The third ideological/political change that has impacted on education has been the shift from 'education for human rights'[17] to 'education for human capital development'. In the first instance, pre-1994 education was seen as the vehicle with which to: "heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights" (WCED, 2003:7). The holding of such a view led to education being drawn from the country's constitution and the Manifesto on Human Rights being made an educational version of it. The new vision now is to develop human capital in the following way:

> We see human capital as that set of individual and collective capacity (education, knowledge, skills, experience, health, motivation, entrepreneurship, etc.) that enables people to participate in and contribute to the overall development of their society
> (Lewis et al., Nyalashe, Vumile, Hartley & Naiker, 2006:7).

The concept of human capital was first used by Arthur Cecil Pigou in 1928. More recent exponents of the concept have been Jacob Mincer and Gary Becker, who are both economists. In the above quote, the 'economic' aim for education might seem sound, but, as an economic concept applied in education, it goes against the very grain of education, because it refers to training, rather than education. In both the National Department's application and Becker's book *Human Capital* (1964), the term is flimsily wrapped in with a vision of higher "social consciousness (values, morals and attitudes)", which fails to hide the totally capitalistic intent of looking at the learner with high capabilities as a commodity to be trained instead of as a human being to educate.

The first application of the concept – the building of a science and technology academy in Cape Town for those with high potential (sourced from all over) –has

[17] The first slogan has People's Education at its very heart (see Fiske & Ladd, 2004:49).

been to grant even more privilege to the already privileged, and to deplete rural and farm areas to the detriment of those left behind. Such an application shows the economic (capitalist) ideology which is the basis of education. Though the Department does not promote academic discourse, it mentions Bourdieu's concept of human capital. What the Department is not saying is that Bourdieu's work identifies symbolic capital as being superior to any other form of capital. No such wealth of resources exists in multi-grade (rural or farm) communities, mainly due to historically determining factors, such as the presence of those who could afford to send their children to urban schools. The allowance that was made for such a deduction was clear in the report of the Human Rights Commission:

> We have two educational systems in South Africa. On the one hand we have rural and townships schools characterized starkly by poverty, and on the other we have former model C schools (...). Dysfunctionality, vulnerability, alienation and a lack of social cohesion characterized many of the township and rural schools. (...) The Department is clear that the current model of having public schools on private land, does not work.
>
> (MCRE, 2005:13)

According to such an ideological outlook, the shift was from a relevant socio- political equity curriculum to a curriculum that was characterised by economic capitalism. Ideologically, then, the shift can be seen as taking place from the restoring of human dignity that had been ravaged by apartheid to the development of first-world capitalism. How the making of such change affected farm school education is explained by Deacon and Parker:

> The one-size-fit all approach failed to address the stark inequalities in education. Proposed policies have not sought to overcome these inequalities by replacing racial capitalist education with non-racial socialist education as envisaged by People's Education. Policies have been aimed at reconstruction and development, in the process producing new tensions, "elaborated discursively, spatially and temporally, between equity and growth, rural and urban and the traditional and the modern".
>
> (Deacon & Parker, 1996)

The making of such an ideological shift has led to the observation that the form of racial discrimination that is associated with the apartheid of the past has come to be

repeated in spatial terms (in terms of isolated, remote farms), with the mining of human capital by the already privileged corporate world. Such economic capitalist determinism has led to the acceptance of a first-world curriculum and its benchmarking, which has resulted in the neglect of the third-world multi-grade school community. Most multi-grade schools are sited in locations, on farms or in remote under-developed regions.

> Even though South Africa scores favourably when compared with the developing countries, it is important that South Africa is always benchmarked against developed countries to gain a global view of our performance – (or adhere to the Washington Consensus-writer
> (DoE, 2005:12; see also Stiglitz, 2003, cited in Kalb, Panster, & Siebers, 2004:17)

In a report on skills development, the Head of Education remarks that:

> [a]s with all human capital development strategies, the key lies in ensuring the Education system is positioned to deliver knowledgeable, skilled, critical and flexible young people who can take advantage of future opportunities, but who will also be able to adapt to, manage, and transcend future challenges.
> (Swartz, reporting on skills development within the WCED; Lewis et al., 2007)

Despite the report heralding the successes of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), with its acknowledgement of the "need to broaden the economic participation of the majority of the disadvantaged population in South Africa", the lack of programmes directed at rural and multi-grade schools is evident. Though special attention is paid to certain schools (in terms of the Dinaledi and Focus Project), all schools require special attention, and the multi-grade schools even more so. Schools require an educational approach more than they do economic strategies, such as the Micro-Economic Development Strategy (MEDS) and the Provincial Economic Review and Outlook (PERO; WCED Planning minute 0007/2007).

In terms of the findings of the Commission on Human Rights, the first-world curriculum has been found to complicate the already poverty-stricken farm learners' life (MCRE, 2005). Education has been seen as capable of promoting human capital, though it would seem that the globalisation of human capital, despite not excluding the need to redress poverty, certainly does not prioritise such a need.

As the DoE (2003:1) states:

> ...we must also be realistic about what a curriculum can and cannot achieve. Inequality and poverty still plague the educational experience of too many families and their children.

The slogan of 'first liberation, then education'[18] comes to mind. The Department appears to be saying 'first economisation (in the form of globalisation), then education'. Globalisation has lead to more capital-intensive farming, and more job losses for women and low skilled workers. Such marginalisation stems from the fact that our rural and farm learners, with their educational backlog, are not part of the 'human capital' that should be 'tapped'. The DoE even admits that the context in which it operates can be summarised as consisting of "a context of growing unemployment and poverty, growing inequality and poverty, a poor skills base, leading to decreased uptake of available employment ..." (Lewis et al., 2006:7; see also Chossudovsky, 1998; Fiske & Ladd, 2004:72). Such international benchmarking in terms of first-word criteria in a context dominated by third-world conditions is not helping our education system. Input regarding the international benchmarking phase was requested from the UK's Foundation for Education Research, as well as from those US and Canadian bodies that have expertise in the area, or which run similar programmes (DoE, 2003:7). It is unknown to what degree, and in what regard, such

[18] More detail on the National Educational Crisis Committee, which was founded in March 1986, is provided by Fiske and Ladd (2004:49).

first-world countries have similar expertise to that which exists about rural South Africa.

In the first report on the progress of the HCDS, which was published in September 2007,[19] key questions were asked in the context of Amartya Sen's book *Development of freedom*, in which development is seen as "removing the major sources of unfreedom", as can be seen in the following:

> (...) what role can we play in ameliorating the poverty and poor economic opportunities as well as social deprivation in the Western Cape, which can be characterized as follows:
> - More than 65% of our population do not have matric or beyond.
> - Between the ages of 16 and 24, about 49% of people are unemployed.
>
> And closer to us in education, despite the significant interventions and progress, the Western Cape Education Department is concerned about:
> - Unacceptable low levels of literacy and numeracy in the formative years (...).
> - A phenomenal attrition rate, with large numbers of children dropping out of school.
>
> (Naiker, in his foreword to Lewis et al., 2007)

After such a bold "confession of failure", the normal capitalist reasoning in terms of budgeting, rather than in terms of education, is followed. Such a remark as "[t]he budget must tell the story of the values a society celebrates" reveals much about the ideology of education. Naiker returns in his foreword to the answering of various pertinent questions, which the study also attempts to answer. The questions relate to:

- what the pedagogical and social problems associated with failure and drop-out are;
- what the difference between first and second economies is;
- that there is no shotgun approach to the implementation of education policy;
- that there is no one-size-fits-all recipe in relation to the curriculum; and
- that globalisation seems to fast track the privileged sectors of society (Lewis et al., 2007).

The questions raised above show a concern for the role of teachers (as civil servants) and for the outcomes of strategies and programmes. The alignment of educational goals with the concerns expressed by Mbeki in 2004 in reference to a

[19] This report will only use the rural / urban dichotomy and the HCDS strategy, rather than the critique in full.

"developmental state" seems to be failing in respect of rural education. A developmental state is one that is characterised by the following factors:

> ...people orientated, democratically responsive, interventionist in favour of the poor, well-managed, partnership-based and globally connected. It is integrated on the provincial level and coordinates effectively across the spheres of government. (...) Capable of directing the economy on a path of innovation, sustainable growth redistribution, and poverty reduction in order to manage the delicate balance between growth and social development.
>
> (Lewis et al., 2007:25)

Against the backdrop of the vision of such a developmental state, the WCED embarked on its HCDS in March 2006. iKapa Elihlumayo (Growing the Cape) was to be the key strategy for education in the Western Cape.

Such a strategy was regarded as being capable of:

> (...) lead[ing] growth creation and identif[ying] the mayor beneficiaries, implement[ing] growth through active interventions, such as in infrastructure investment, State-owned enterprise (SOE) initiatives, sector support, targeted procurement or direct spatial development and recognis[ing] its position as a key facilitating, partnering and collaborative economic agent through its fixed investment and development spending.
>
> (Lewis et al., 2007:5)

Such a strategy is very different to that held in terms of oral traditional African schools, mission schools and state-aided public schools. It is even further from the ideology of Human Rights in relation to People's Education and the Manifesto of Human Rights (or values) to a full-blown Neo-Capitalist ideology, with HCDS as its strategy. Perhaps we have reverted to looking after a developed (already privileged) few in the cities and have forgotten to include considerations of rural learning in iKapa. Of all the goals of iKapa, only the following specifically refers to rurality:

> [to] restructure [the] urban areas and [to] integrate populations across the cities, towns and rural areas.
>
> (Lewis et al., 2007:9)

The practical implications of the abovementioned reference are not clear, as the filtering down of money, partnerships and support is not taking place. Though the

restructuring into districts and the redesign of support teams was in progress (from September 2007 to April 2008), how such developments affect delivery remains to be seen.

The report states that:

> An overriding distinction relates to the urban or rural location of the school. These contextual differences must be borne in mind when we consider improvements to delivery, so that recommendations take account of local milieus...
>
> (Lewis et al., 2007:11)

One may wonder what such a description has to do with multi-grade teaching, as any consideration of such a form of teaching is absent from the discussion. Though rurality is now recognised as a distinct phenomenon, it is still absent from strategies and programmes. In terms of the above-mentioned report, the educator is still left without an epistemology and teaching strategy for both mono- and multi-grade.

Moving beyond the broad overview of the historical and ideological context of the problem statement that is given above, the next two sections of the current thesis will focus on the implications of the policies in terms of the multi-grade classroom. The purpose of describing such implications is to show how difficult curriculum delivery becomes within such contexts.

1.5.6 From mono-grade policy framework to multi-grade configuration

The pertinent question is how the above ideological shifts and the adoption of such an economic paradigm have affected education in multi-grade schools. Whether the educators agree and comply with such a vision is debatable. If globalisation and first-world education practices lead to even more poverty, what outcome are such practices likely to have on multi-grade education? Has the simplification of Curriculum 2005 into several different NCSs been accepted? How do you construct learning programmes with 'orientation', the Constitution and the Manifesto on Values

as the only guides to adapting a first-world curriculum for the teaching of a third-world child?

Such rhetorical questions form the pivot of the current research. My primary approach to the problem entails uncovering how educators realise that their context calls for the reorganisation of the curriculum, and how they have responded to such a realisation in the past. In brief, can multi-grade educators plan for such curriculum delivery?

Delivery refers to more than merely teaching the curriculum framework relating to the eight learning area statements (LASs). Educators have to develop or design relevant learning programmes, to fill them with content, to infuse the learning matter with appropriate values, and to adapt the material to make it suitable for multi-grade teaching. Curriculum delivery, in terms of the current research entails interpreting the LASs, designing the intended curriculum and implementing such teaching. Such curriculum delivery refers to the following in relation to the curriculum:

- its design (see Chapter 2);
- its framing (see Chapter 2); and
- its reorganisation (see chapters 2 and 5).

In terms of such curriculum development, age and grade differences are used as strategic methods of teaching, irrespective of whether such teaching takes place in a mono- or multi-grade setting. The term is also used in the *Education Law and Policy Handbook*, in which text it refers to various educator tasks, among which is "to facilitate curriculum development ..." (South Africa, 1999:3c-17).

The framework of the eight LASs is formed by the LOs, the ASs, and the critical outcomes (COs). The learning programmes consist of Numeracy, Literacy, and Life Skills (DoE, Teacher's Guide, 2003:2). In both mono- and multi-grade teaching, the

educators have to match the level of the child's performance with the appropriate ASs. Such a process is, inevitably, more intricate within the ambit of a multi-grade learning programme.

The learning programme is "a structured and systematic arrangement of activities that promotes the attainment of Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards for the phase" (DoE, 2002:2). The learner's performance of the set activities are assessed in turn, with promotion to other, more advanced, activities taking place in keeping with the learner's development, the understanding of concepts and the gaining of core knowledge. At the end of each school year (not phase) the learner is either rewarded with promotion to the next grade, or is allowed to stay longer in the same grade. Such a scheme is indicated in Figure 1.3 below.

Figure 1.3: The National Curriculum Statements.[20]

Constitution Manifesto on Values	Learning Area Statement	Principle	Learning Area Statement
Democracy	1. Languages	Social justice	Introduction
Social justice	2. Mathematics	Healthy environment	Learning
Non-racism & standards of non-sexism	3. Natural Science	Human rights	Assessment
Ubuntu	4. Technology	Inclusivity	Assessment
Open society	5. Social Sciences	Outcomes-based education	
Accountability	6. Arts & Culture	Critical and developmental education	
Respect	7. Life Orientation	High level of skills and knowledge	
Rule of law	8. Economics and Business Science	Clarity & accessibility	
Reconciliation		Progression & integration	

[20] See also Chapter 2 for a discussion of the curriculum.

As shown in Figure 1.3 above, the curriculum flows from the Constitution, which is embodied in the Manifesto on Values (which also provides 16 teaching strategies relating to how to attain the set values). However, such statements are not built on an epistemology. The curriculum consists of a framework of eight different LASs, built on the principles cited above. Each LAS consists of an introduction, the enumeration of the relevant LOs and ASs, followed by a chapter on assessment. What is unclear in Figure 1.3 above is where the new emphasis on the HCDS fits in (see last section of Chapter 1.).

Curriculum planning is aimed at ensuring that the intended (the NCS), the implemented (planned) and the attained curricula are all the same (ed. Van den Akker, Hameyer & Kuiper, 2003:2).

With multi-grade teaching, one could have as many as three different multi-aged groups in one class, which, within this one class, triples the number of levels of performance. Splitting up the learners conventionally into different groups would result in having three different groups (poor, average and exceptional) in a single grade. In a multi-grade class, nine groups would result. The main problem for multi-grade teaching stems from the (im)possibility of having such a configuration, which could easily become unmanageable, as is illustrated in Figure 1.4 below.

Figure 1.4: The difference in the composition of multi-grade and mono-grade.

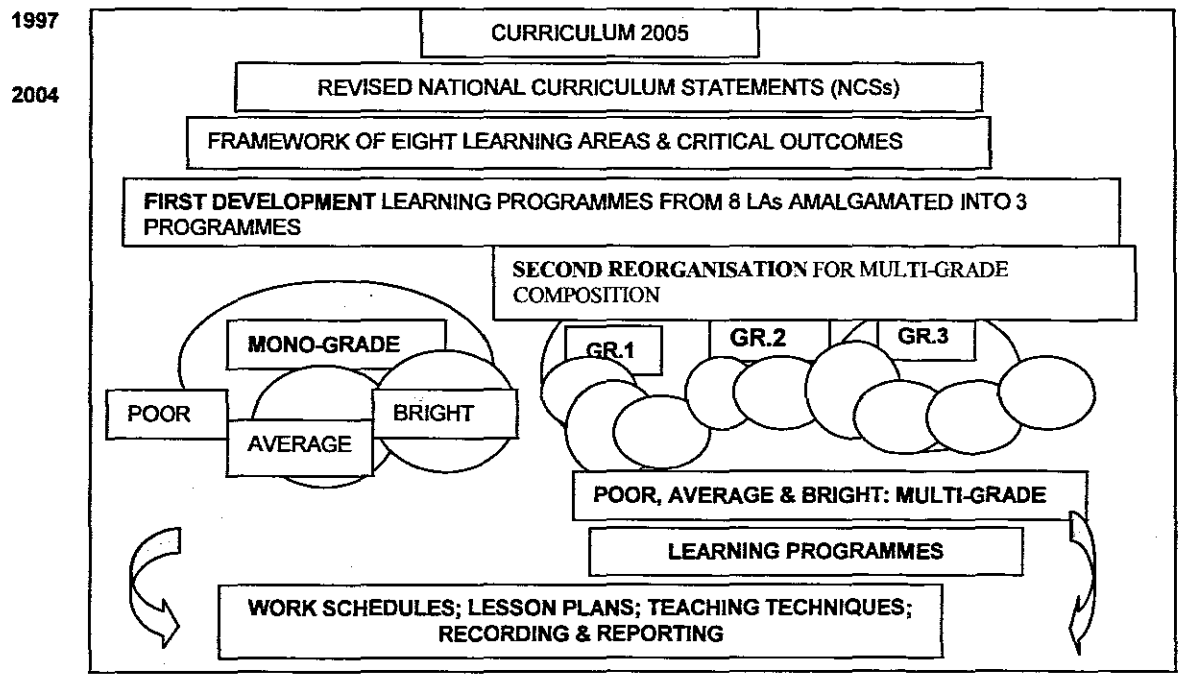


Figure 1.4 above provides an historical view of the development of the curriculum from 1997 to 2004. The figure also shows the difference in configuration, or multi-levelness, of the multi-grade class, in an attempt to provide the rationale for the relevant planning and teaching, which cannot be the same as that for the mono-grade class.

No policy governs how many learning programmes multi-grade educators should design. The suggestion is that they should plan for the phase, rather than for the grades, as the mono-grade teacher would do. More integration of learning areas and clustering of ASs should be undertaken, and more open activities should be provided, accommodating both the challenged and the bright learner.

Regarding multi-grade schools as the norm would lead to a deficit view. Such negativity has not only to do with our standard cultural perceptions, but also with more specific aspects of such teaching practice.

According to Berry (2004), some of the negative aspects of teaching at multi-grade schools include the following:

- a lack of faith in the multi-grade pedagogic (with mono-grade being seen as the ideal);
- the relative professional and social isolation; and
- the difficulties experienced with teaching multi-grade, and the ownership of multi-grade education.

According to Birch and Lally (1995), some of the negative aspects of teaching at multi-grade schools include the following:

- the relatively low remuneration (due to the travelling expenses involved);
- the lack of access to professional development opportunities;
- the extra workload, due to having to prepare for both multi-subjects and grade levels;
- the multiple extracurricular activities;
- the inadequate housing provision ;
- the lack of promotion possibilities; and
- the inferior status of multi-grade teaching, in relation to mono-grade teaching.

According to Miller (1989), some of the negative aspects of teaching at multi-grade schools include the following:

- the lack of support for the educators concerned;
- the limited resources available;
- the inadequate budgets;
- the perception that farm or rural appointments are seen as "hardship appointments" ;
- the paucity of in-service support;

- the openness to scrutiny of the private lives of educators;
- the cultural and geographical isolation (with no medical or shopping services readily available);
- the loneliness; and
- the often extreme weather conditions that have to be endured.

According to Naylor (2000), some of the negative aspects of teaching at multi-grade schools include the following:

- the relatively low level of job satisfaction;
- the increased workload;
- the scant supervision in remote areas; and
- the more complex and demanding class organisation involved.

Stigsworth and Bell (1987, cited in Mulcahy, 1992), found that small rural schools were often seen as "dwarf varieties of larger schools (...) still less that they need be taken seriously".

The ideological stance taken by the government, in terms of which it focuses on first-world (economic) teaching conditions can be seen in its educational programmes, as well as in the selection of curriculum outcomes for such programmes:

- iKapa Elihlumayo ("Grow the Cape"), the White paper on Preparing the Western Cape for Knowledge Economy (2001);
- the MEDS, A framework for a Provincial Human Resource and Skill Development Strategy (2003);
- Education Vision 2020; and
- the WCED's 5-year strategy.

The farm schools and the education that they provide are not a priority in such provincial initiatives (see Lewis et al., 2007). Although the current thesis is not a comparative study of mono-grade and multi-grade teaching, references to the

differences between the two types of teaching show that they are not only ideological, but that they are also of a practical nature, requiring innovative thinking. Table 1.8 below should be read across the rows, as those differences that are enumerated refer to specific aspects. The list is far from complete, but that was not the aim. The purpose was the show practical (not ideological) delivery differences.

Table 1.8: Differences between mono-grade and multi-grade teaching.

MONO-GRADE TEACHING	MULTI-GRADE TEACHING
With only one grade, planning for just one curriculum is required. Such planning is relatively easy, as the curriculum statements are graded.	With as many as three grade to teach simultaneously, only certain aspects of the curriculum can feasibly be chosen, in the absence of relevant policy guidelines. The notional (teaching) time of one year is insufficient to allow for coverage of all the relevant ASs for all the grades concerned.
The range of levels of performance is fairly limited (since the variation in age is not more than two years).	The levels of performance tend to range widely academically, developmentally, and socially, with as much as four years age variation. For instance, in a combination of grades 1 to 3, one child might be 7 years old and in Grade 1, whereas another child might be 10 years old, and in Grade 3, if the latter spent more time in the phase.
Since the learners are mono-aged, they are likely to mature at approximately the same time.	Maturation presents a problem, due to the wider age range of the learners concerned.
In general, only the slower learners tend to require assistance.	All the learners concerned tend to require extra help. Teaching a multi-grade class is, therefore, more labour intensive and demanding.
The notional time required for planning and preparation is normal.	Extra time and more adjustments are needed during such teaching. Notional time tends to be irrelevant.
Mono-grade educational theory applies.	No multi-grade theory exists.
Mismatches often occur between age and grade.	Age-grade matching does not apply.
Matching age/performance with the ASs is difficult.	Matching a range of ages / levels of performance with various ASs is much more difficult.
Legal obligations exert relatively little pressure.	Legal obligations exert pressure.
Sticking to the curriculum is relatively easy.	Adaptations of the curriculum are necessary, though where reorganisation stops and a start is made with the new curriculum is debatable. The nature of such adaptation also requires consideration.
All ASs in the foundation phase must be covered.	All ASs must be covered. The educational soundness of having to juggle ASs is questionable.
Operational routine tends to prevail.	A routine beset by operational problems if the

	teacher is not seasoned in multi-grade teaching.
The integration and clustering of classes is easy.	Integration and clustering are geared towards accommodating up to 3 grades in 1 year, so are more problematic.

Sources: Manitoba (2003); Mulcahy (1992); Naylor (2000); Vincent (1999).

How to cope with the differences between mono- and multi-grade teaching in terms of sound international practice requires consideration. Subsection 1.5.7 shows how, and where, multi-grade practice has managed to attain sound results in other countries.

1.5.7 From international multi-grade programmes to local multi-grade lesson plans

Multi-grade teaching in farm schools is widespread all over the world (see Birch & Lally, 1995; Cash & Terry, n.d.). As in South Africa, such farms arose through necessity, rather than through choice. Various countries throughout the world have started to move from mono-grade to multi-grade schools, as the latter have been shown to be more beneficial (see Malcahy, 1992a, 1992b; Naylor, 2000; Russel, 1998; Vincent, 1999).

A short review of the development of multi-grade teaching follows. In 1965, the inauguration of the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) in the United States started a period of intensive research in multi-gradedness, headed by Bruce Miller. Such research, which was spearheaded by the holding of an international conference, resulted in the publication of seven books on rural education. The Malcolm Moffat Teacher's Training College (MMTC), in keeping with such developments, introduced relevant in-service teacher training courses.

According to Hoyt (2005), the following programmes have been developed around small, rural and multi-grade pedagogic principles:

- The Colombian multi-grade ***Escuela Nueva*** (new schools) programme is already 30 years old.
- **Project Impact** started as a reform-directed initiative in Indonesia and the Philippines, there after spreading to Liberia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Jamaica.
- The US **No Child Act** of 2001 complemented the existing Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (Hoff, 2004) in that country, with the state of Kentucky, in terms of the promulgation of Kiri, reforming its primary education to make it compulsory multi-grade.
- **Project Hope** (Wang, 1999) was implemented in China.

Hartwell, DeStefano and Benbow (2004) provide an overview of the programmes listed above. The adoption of such a positive approach towards multi-grade teaching as a matter of choice can also be seen in the rest of Africa. Both Ethiopia (in terms of its Educator's Sector Development Plan) and Zambia have opted for multi-grade instruction (Juvane, 2005:5). All national ministers of education, from such countries as Uganda, Namibia, Zambia and Ethiopia, who attended the multi-grade conference in Ethiopia (which was held in September 2005) expressed their belief that multi-grade education is an important strategy for enabling the improvement of the quality of education (Juvane, 2005:9).

The global experience of multi-grade teaching has been so positive that such teaching has been made compulsory in the states of Kentucky, Mississippi, and

Oregon in the United States, as well as in several African countries, such as Zambia, Uganda, Namibia, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

As can be seen above, multi-grade schooling is becoming a matter of choice internationally, while South Africa still upholds that there should be a single curriculum for all schools throughout the country.

In an attempt to introduce educational reform in the Philippines, the small **No More Schools** Project was started in the early 1970s at the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH), based in Quezon City. The project was directed towards replacing the normal system of mono-grade schools, textbooks, teachers and grades with learning centres, self-instructional materials, a peer and tutor mentoring system, and community support. Over time, the project become known as Instructional Management by Parents, Community and Teachers (**IMPACT**). The project also spread to Bangladesh; Indonesia; Malaysia (in the form of Project **INSPIRE** [Integrated System of Programmed Instruction for the Rural Environment]); Jamaica (in the form of **PRIMER**); and Liberia (in the form of **IEL**). (See Cummings, 1986, cited in Little, 1994:12.)

Education for those living in rural areas lies at the heart of rural development, and is a fundamental means of reducing poverty. In 2002, the FAO and UNESCO launched the global **Education for Rural People** (ERP) flagship partnership during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Another programme that targets rural people is **Education For All** (EFA), which aims at:

- overcoming the urban–rural gap in education;
- increasing access to basic education and the quality of life for all those living in rural areas; and
- fostering the national capacity to plan and implement ERP, as part of the EFA and rural development plans.

The Dakar Framework for Action outlines a number of goals intended to satisfy the demands of EFA, with each having special reference to ERP. Such goals are:

- to expand the provision of early childhood care and education;
- to provide free and compulsory education of good quality by 2015;
- to promote the acquisition of life skills by adolescents and the youth;
- to increase the adult literacy rate by 50% by 2015;
- to eliminate any remaining gender disparities by 2005;
- to achieve gender equality in education by 2015; and
- to enhance educational quality.

(Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003)

The Framework calls for ensuring that, by 2015, all children, though with a special emphasis on girls and children in difficult circumstances, have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality (see Joubert, 2008).

The **Millennium Declaration**, which was adopted by 189 heads of state at the Unite Nations Millennium Summit, has the following goals:

- to eradicate extreme poverty;
- to achieve universal primary education;
- to promote gender equality and empower women;
- to reduce child mortality rates;
- to improve maternal health levels;
- to combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases;
- to ensure environmental sustainability; and

- to develop a global partnership for development.

Other treaties that the South Africa government has signed include:

- the Jomtien Declaration (EFA, 1990, together with its follow-up Dakar, 2000);
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education; and
- the African Charter on the Rights of Children and the Welfare of the Child.

In its 2005 report on **EFA**, South Africa states the following:

> The reform plans of the education system in South Africa incorporate the EFA principles, goals, targets and guidelines, as contained in both the World Declaration on Education for All and the Dakar Framework for Action. *South Africa, therefore, does not have a separate EFA plan* (...) [own emphasis] EFA goals that are embraced in South Africa's education policies, national strategic plans and programmes assist in the accomplishment of these constitutional obligations.
>
> (DoE, 2005:1)

On the Millennium Goals, Tumelo Modisane and David Masango reported South African' progress to be as follows:

> Social grants have increased from R10 billion to R37 billion, public works have expanded, agricultural starter packs were provided, the proportion of poorest is shrinking, expenditure on HIV/Aids has increased from R30 million to R342 million, etc.
>
> (Modisane & Masango, 2005).

Their report makes it clear that the key to all solutions lies in allocating more money to fund the solution. The report acknowledges that the government lacks adequate data, which the UN requires for its own record-keeping. In Equip2 UNESCO warned that: "almost one-third of the world's population lives in countries where achieving EFA will remain a dream (...) This is true of sub-Sahara Africa where 42 million children are out of school". (Hartwell, DeStefano, & Benbow, 2002).

The same issue of EQUIP2 called for reaching the underserved, using complementary approaches and curriculum alternatives, in connection with which multi-grade teaching was cited as an example.

Locally, South African teachers have been trained in neither multi-grade pedagogic, nor in multi-grade teaching strategies. Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) only recently (2002) started to offer an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), specialising in multi-grade teaching. CPUT has played a key role in the development of multi-grade education in South Africa. Whereas the district offices (EMDC) have been able to give little support to such development, since 2002, CPUT has produced numerous ACE, B.Ed. and M.Ed. students, who have chosen to specialise in multi-grade education. Jurie Joubert, a senior lecturer at the University, states the objectives of such multi-grade training as trying to answer the following questions:

- What is the extent of multi-grade teaching in the country?
- What are the qualifications and educational backgrounds of those teachers who teach in multi-grade settings?
- Do nationally prescribed pre- and in-service teacher training programmes (both face-to-face and distance) include content on effective teaching in multi-grade settings?
- Is multi-grade teaching a recognised field of specialisation at teacher training institutions?
- Is there provision in nationally prescribed teacher training curricula for the practice, as well as the theory, of teaching in multi-grade settings?
- Have multi-grade techniques been considered for use in mono-grade settings?
- Have attempts been made to structure the content of the national curriculum and all associated curriculum materials (e.g. syllabi and teacher's guides) in a way that supports multi-grade teaching (e.g. with integrated subject matter, i.e. teaching the same subject at different

conceptual levels; or a modular curriculum, i.e. allowing the student to proceed at his/her own pace through learning modules)?

- Have self-study materials been developed for extensive parts of the curriculum? Are textbooks and self-study materials available to students in adequate numbers?
- Have, or could, adequate resources and other materials necessary for supporting self-learning be allocated to libraries? (Joubert, 2006).

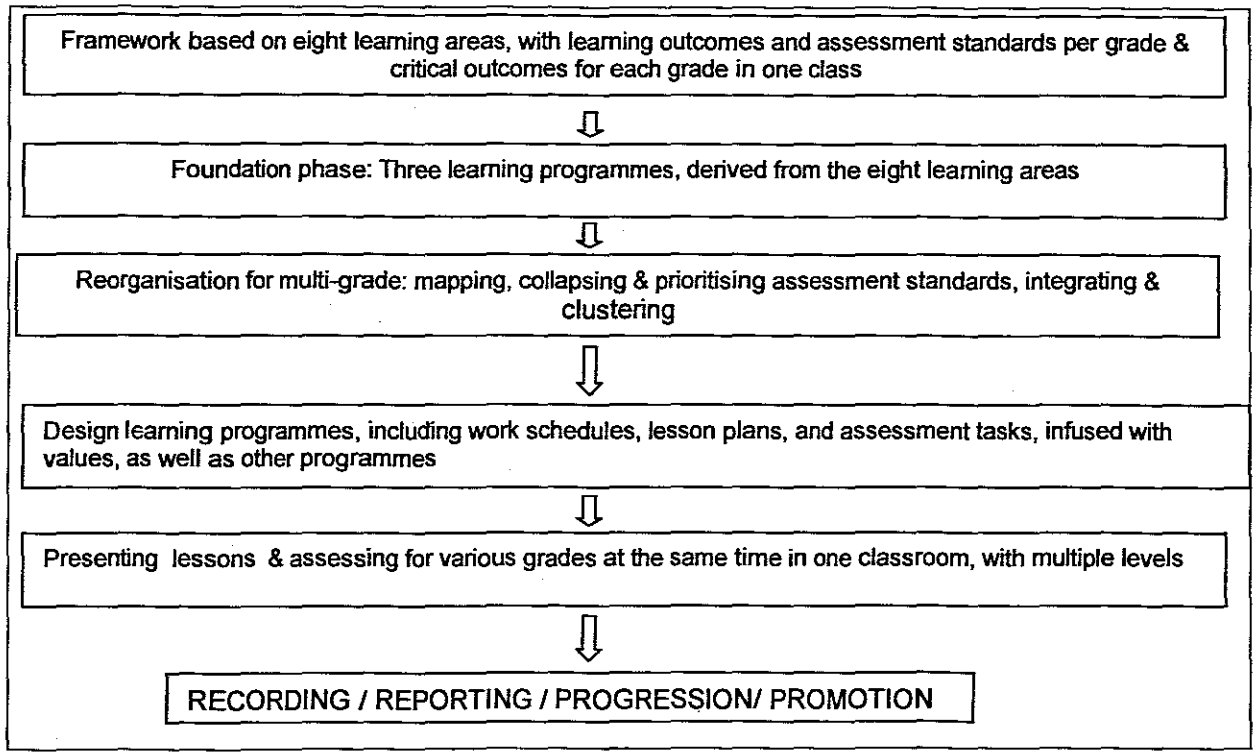
Despite the international scene robustly trying to adhere to those treaties that assert multi-grade to be a way forward, South Africa's educators are struggling to cope with one system for all, as well as serious backlogs in numeracy and literacy. One of the basic problems for rural educators is how to plan for a multi-grade class, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The various stages in the design and reorganisation of the curriculum, following the dictates of practice, are given below in both textual and graphic (see Figure 1.5) form:

- First, the eight learning areas are required for designing the three learning programmes for the foundation phase.
- The five learning programmes for the intermediate phase are then also designed on the same basis.
- Such a procedure only applies in a 'normal' school, to which a sufficient number of educators has been allocated (equal to the number of class sections).
- Such design must be infused with those values that permeate the Manifesto and other departmental programmes, such as READ, EDUPEGG and others.
- Multi-grade teachers must adapt their design further to accommodate the multi-graded class. Such design entails the educator focusing on phase competency levels, rather than on the grade (see page 38 of the research report).
- The educator needs to decide between whether to do all three kinds of planning for each grade, or whether to plan only for the multi-grade.

- The various ways in which to employ the lessons, as well as the number of LOs and ASs, are also indicated.
- The final stage of lesson plan design consists of where multi-grade educators have to go one step further in adapting one lesson plan to two or three grades.
- The aim of the current study is to see to what degree educators have done such planning.
- The current study is primarily interested in the final phase of design planning. The study aims to critically explore how farm educators are doing their planning, whether as one set of planning, or in keeping with the number of grades taught.
- The amount of recording and reporting that is done for multi-grade teaching is the same as is done for mono-grade teaching, usually per grade in both cases.

Figure 1.5: The process of designing and adapting the learning area statements.



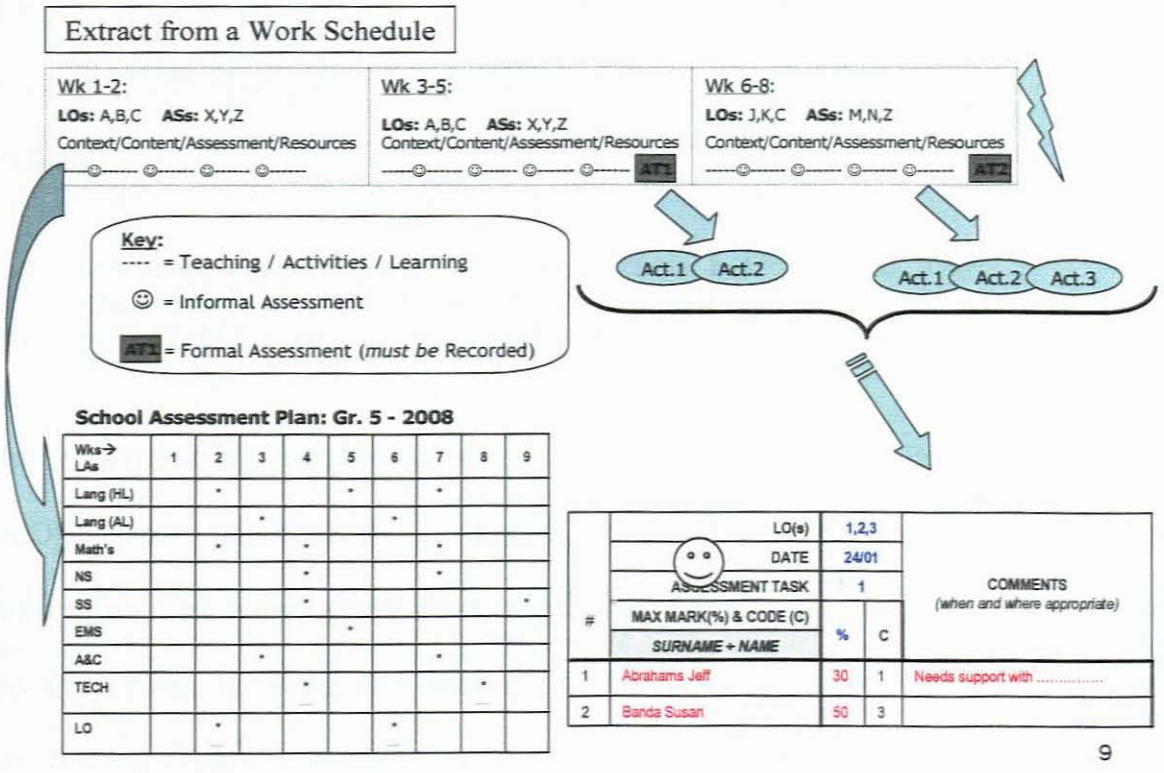
The (multi-grade) educator can follow the steps enumerated below in the design of learning programmes:

- Step One: View all the ASs in, for instance, the learning programme of Numeracy that require to be covered over a year.
- Step Two: Cluster those ASs that belong together naturally, keeping the following pointers in mind:
    - The more you cluster, the better control you have over the material and content, so that it increases the manageability of the material and content concerned.
    - Do not cover too much material in one go, since learners tend to forget what they have been taught, unless it is revised on a regular basis.
    - Decide on cut-off points for summative assessments, remembering the number of tasks required to be completed per term.
    - Add the resources that you require for the assessment.
- Step Three: Consider other learning areas to see which provides the best background, to facilitate integration.
- Step Four: Split up the entire year's work into four terms.

- Step Five: Slot the learning programme, work schedule and lesson plans into place, based on what you have done in the previous steps.
- Step Six: Specify as much detail as possible in your lesson plans, such as what methodology you will use.
- Step Seven: In planning for multi-grade teaching, specify how you will reorganise peer teaching, self-directive learning and other necessary variations in terms of the various levels of performance.

Figure 1.6 gives an example of how planning should be done for a senior mono-grade class. No multi-grade example can yet be given, as securing such formed part of the current research.

Figure 1.6: Curriculum design and assessment.



In the example given above, the Work Schedule covers weeks 1 to 8 and various LOs and ASs (with each block representing two weeks of planning). During the two

weeks concerned in each case, the informal assessment is carried out as part of the teaching, which consists of various activities. At some point, the educator needs to conduct formal assessment for recording purposes (see the right-hand lower corner of the example). The number of formal assessments that are required to be done should coincide with the school's assessment plan for each learning area (intermediate and senior phase), and the relevant programmes (foundation phase). Evidence of both informal and formal work must be gathered, with the latter forming part of the learners' portfolio.

The 'product' of the design process will not only be based on training (NCS orientation, and 'old' teacher training), but on ideological (regarding educational beliefs) decisions, and how to cope with a multi-grade class, as well as on the relevant skills, content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Both the lack of related training and the need to contextualise the curriculum lie at the heart of the problem.

> Education Departments did not "train" teachers, but "orientated" them (...)
> Issues relating to epistemology which provide the conceptual tools to guide teachers to navigate the new educational pedagogy were underemphasized
> (WCED, 2006 Executive Summary)

The numerous ideological problems, different configurations, lack of training and EMDC support, and the fact that the circuit managers and curriculum advisors expect them to plan as mono-grade educators result in farm educators having few options (as they need to serve the interests of both the farm learner and the national curriculum). They are, in brief, limited to the following options:

- planning three learning programmes and three work schedules for each grade, as well as three lesson plans, which they deliver alternatively;
- planning three different learning programmes and work schedules, but developing only one lesson plan, which could be either multi- or mono-grade;

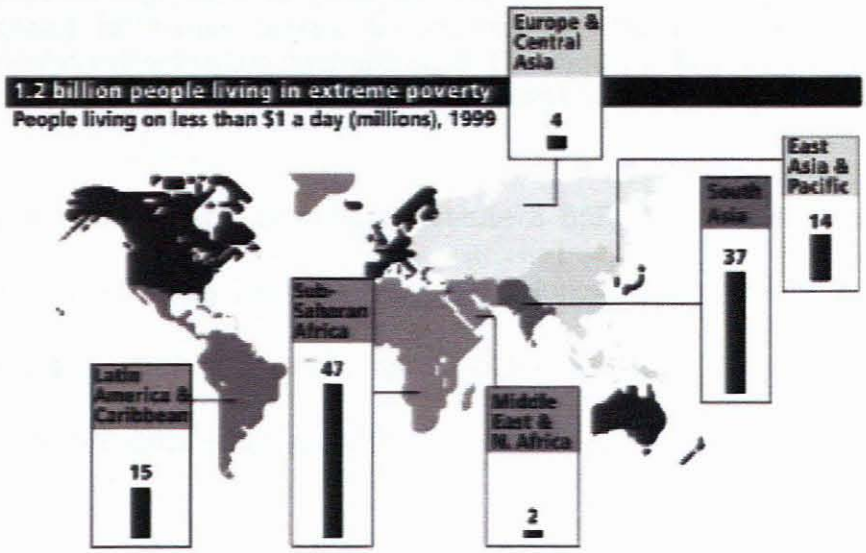
- using the LOs of one grade as the benchmark for the lesson plan, such as using the learning outcomes of Grade 2 and integrating them with those for grades 1 and 3 (in which case, normally the ASs for a particular grade are retained for recording and reporting);
- having three separate lesson plans for record-keeping purposes, despite using a different one in practice.

1.6 Impact of poverty

Poverty, evictions from farms, and unemployment among rural workers (see Human Rights Watch, 2004) have a negative effect on learning and teaching. South African studies all agree that the poverty levels on farms, which affect the both the learners and educators at rural schools, have impacted greatly on the performance levels attained by such schools (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2004; Ministerial Report on Rural Education, 2005).

SA 2000 Statistics revealed that 16,5% of households are poor and that 24% are very poor, so that very little has changed over the past decades in terms of the position of both those parents who live and work on farms and of the farm school. In developing government indicators, it is stated that the per capita income of the poor has increased by R105 from R783 per month (in 1993) to R1032 per month (in 2007), with the highest level of income increasing from R71055 per month (in 1993) by 10% to R98639 per month. This means that the gap between rich and the poor has increased significantly over the specified period (Duvenhage & Hennie, 2008:8).

Figure 1.7: World poverty map.



Source: United Nations Secretariat, 2003.

Source: Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003.

From Figure 1.7, it is evident that the poorest of the poor can be found in Sub-Saharan Africa. Such poverty, inevitably, has consequences for curriculum delivery, especially in rural areas. The philosophy of economic determinism and how it affects education are both key to the current study, as such a philosophy allows for an appropriate understanding of context. The following citation might suggest that the socialistic inclinations which were present in South Africa prior to 1994 have given way, since then, to capitalism, with the wishes of the people being undermined by the prevalence of forces of globalisation:

> Was the adoption of neo-liberal macroeconomic policy in 1996 an example of the capacity of global forces to undermine the autonomy of the nation-state and to make irrelevant the power of the people? (...) Does the acceptance of macro-economic policies (...) indicate that power lies not with the people at all, but with faceless corporate bankers, financial speculators, and their bureaucratic allies in the treasury departments?
>
> (Bond, 2002:4)

The National DoE admits, in its EFA Status Report, that:

> Poverty and unemployment rates are still considerably high and encourage dropping out, low achievement and exclusion of the poor. The two economies in one country – the developed and developing – continue to be a reality in South Africa. Challenges of infrastructure degradation and maintenance, which play themselves out in many of the rural and farming communities, and the transport and travel of learners to and from rural schools.
>
> (DoE, 2005:11).

In its reference to farm schools, the Commission could foresee certain problems resulting from the implementation of the RNCS. A number of 'tensions' are mentioned in the report, which further strengthens the case for the conducting of the present study, since such tensions (MCRE, 2005:3) complicate the delivery of education at farm schools still further.

> - How does education serve rural development, when much of its attraction is that it provides the avenue for some successful individuals to escape to modernity [in cities];
> - A strong stress on building education in partnership with communities and respecting indigenous knowledge and cultures may be in tension with curriculum policy (learner centeredness, creativity, critical thinking, etc.);
> - Faith in integrated, multi-sectoral partnership approaches is strong, but it assumes a convergence of interest and a social consensus [among farmer and state, farmer and school, school and district that does not always exist].
>
> (MCRE, 2005:3)

Such 'tensions' are real, stemming from the historical picture that was presented. The historical disposition has not changed much over the last few decades for either the learner or the farm teacher. Such a disposition resulted from a combination of history and ideology. At the end of 2006 (at the time at which the current thesis was being written), the government started a process that should, hopefully, benefit farm schooling.

The background of poverty to which many farm learners are subjected includes:

- alienation from the community;
- food insecurity;
- crowded homes;
- the usage of basic forms of energy;

- the lack of adequately paid secure jobs; and
- fragmentation of the family.

The very nature of critical theory has necessitated the adoption of an historical view on the situation, as such problems as are enumerated above have crystallised over a period of time. Such a problem will not influence the focus on the topic of the current thesis. As was stated in the introduction to the thesis, rural or farm curriculum delivery cannot be seen in isolation. All relevant aspects impact on one another on an ongoing basis.

1.7 Conclusion

In essence, the question posed by the MCRE, which was cited at the start of the overview, has only partially been answered so far. Historical inequalities led to the provision of poor-quality education, as well as to the marginalisation of farm and rural schools. The part of the question that relates to improvement of the educational system forms part of the rationale of the current study. The submissions of the respondents were not conclusive, nor did they really provide new insightful recommendations. The closure, or phasing out of, public schools on private property (PSoPL) as a category does not solve the problem. Clearly, the promulgation of SASA has exacerbated the existing problems regarding farm schools.

Joachim Ewert and Johann Hamman have the following to say about the above:

> Neither export revenues, nor democratization or pro-worker legislation have fundamentally changed the labour regime [or the nature of education] on South African wine farms since the demise of apartheid in the early 1990's. Whilst new labour and tenure legislation have set limits to the length of the working day and created a considerable measure of social security for farm workers, power relations remain visibly unequal, i.e. in most cases the farmer still determines, unilaterally,

> working rules, wages and housing conditions. In general, the labour regime could be described as one of 'neo-paternalism'.
>
> (Ewert & Hammam, 1999:1)

The historic overview suggests that farm learners (and their parents) are victims of circumstances beyond their control, consisting of the ideologies of others (i.e. the state; the farmer; the church; and other owners), in the form of conflicting power relations (Ewert, 1999). Historical accounts suggest that what started as an ideology of civility, religion and subservience, (language) politics, cheap labour (due to globalisation), separatism or Euro-centrism, and ethnocentrism became distorted into full-scale racism and apartheid, which developed headlong into capitalism (as a form of globalisation). The educational aspirations and political ideologies of farm learners did not form part of the vision offered to them by the hegemonic authorities. Even with the promulgation of SASA, they were still marginalised or subjected, in the same way that they had been decades before. In a Country Analytic Review, a group of researchers on the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (Creates) website found that:

> Despite these major achievements, access to basic education remains problematic for substantial segments of the school population. Small low quality farm schools persist, migrant populations, especially those in rapid growing townships, remain underserved by local schools, the legacy of apartheid persists and undermines efficient and effective school operation, and it proved difficult to embed new curricula in practice, except in the better performing schools.
>
> (Veerle, Fleisch, Karim, Motala, Moyo & Ngobe, n.d., cited in Create South Africa)

The main thrust of the current study is to uncover and explore rural teaching plans, in an attempt to explain their reorganisation in terms of multi-grade teaching, and to develop some theory, or generalisation, about multi-grade pedagogic, as well as some of its philosophical underpinnings, within a critical genre. Such new findings must be seen against the backdrop of much-needed discussions of political, ideological and future guiding principles. Subjected to the domination of first-world economic determination and globalisation, the forgotten third world, which is

characterised by its ever-increasing levels of poverty, is crying out for assistance, and appropriate research and policy intervention. The current research sought to find out much-needed information about a curriculum that was introduced in the absence of an appropriate epistemology, pedagogic, and relevant training and research. The study asks basic questions on behalf of those teachers who are in dire need of guidance and directions, who are entrapped in a situation about which they can do little.

CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The current chapter considers the influence of the ideology of technocratic product foci on the decontextualisation of the curriculum in the multi-grade context. The influence that teacher pedagogic might have on curriculum delivery is the examined. The underlying assumptions of such an examination consist of the following:

- The South African curriculum is one that is technical and product- focused.
- In a one-size-fits-all context, the curriculum requires decontextualisation.
- Even before the phenomenon of planning is examined, the ideology behind such planning directs and impacts on it.
- Any difference in ideology (between that of the curriculum planner and the teacher) inevitably impacts on teaching.
- The difference between a first (developed) world and third (developing) world focus of a national curriculum lies in the political/ideological treatment that is necessary for it to influence both the planning and the outcomes of multi-grade teaching.
- Whether the national intended curriculum is aligned with the multi-grade curriculum that is attained in multi-grade farm / rural settings remains to be seen.

The main topic, namely curriculum delivery, in terms of framing and multi-grade requirements, will be discussed. The fields that are covered by such terms are too wide and exhaustive to do justice to in a single chapter, therefore only an overview of the fields is presented. Chapter Two covers more or less the same area as that covered by Chapter One. However, the aims of the two chapters is different. Whereas the relevant terms were clarified in Chapter One, by way of applying international definitions to local conditions, the current chapter lays the way for the research design that is described in Chapter Four.

Chapter Two presents the theoretical framework employed by the researcher to highlight his viewpoint. Reference is made to multi-grade research institutions, the work of Birch and Lally in regards to APEID; the seven books started by Bruce Miller (NWREL); and the Kentucky Educational Reform Act, among others. Common concepts are used as grounded theory to guide the data collection and analysis process (see Chapter Four in this regard). Whereas Chapter One focused on defining the terms 'learner' and 'historical realism', the current chapter focuses on the educator and related historical realism.

The grounded theory will be used in the interview process as the basis for obtaining responses from the participants in the study, as well as for the main data analysis. Since the stance taken is that of a grounded theorist, it is also important that the data (whether research or reviewed) are not seen as evidence of naïve realism, with the attendant meanings or utterance (...) being taken as straightforward and linear with reality (see Henning, et al, 2004:6). As Holliday (quoted in Henning et al., 2004:6) suggests, the researcher will work with rationalised data that are "accessed and systemized, organized". Such an approach should affirm the research methodology as being that of a methodologist-in-action (Henning's term) or philosophical practitioner or, as Denzin and Lincoln would have it, as being that of a "researcher-as-interpretive-bricoleur" (2006:367). Valerie Janesick's criticism of "methodolatry", or preoccupation with method (Janesick, in Denzil and Lincoln, 2006:369), should be avoided. The end result of the process renders "thick descriptions", consisting of "an integration of empirically related findings with theory and other empirically related information" (Henning et al., 2004:37).

2.2 Multi-grade educators: Teacher training

As has been the case with those learners who have been subjected to the various ideological changes referred to in Chapter One, so has the educator (and his training) been a subject of the educational politics of the ruling party during the apartheid era, as well as thereafter. In the past, teachers were subjected to the ideology of National Christian Education, which was the vehicle for instilling a servile attitude in South African citizens. The impact of such an ideology was further strengthened by the imposition of an approach in keeping with Fundamental Pedagogy, which was directed towards persuading educators that such an ideology was acceptable, and that teaching was a non-political activity. Such ideologies have not only had an influence on the teaching of educators, but also on the development of their own ideology and practice.

The smooth implementation of the curriculum (in terms of its intention and attainment) requires that the government and the teaching fraternity share approximately the same ideology. According to Combleth (1990:15), "[a]ccounts of use in US and elsewhere portray considerable discrepancy between intended and actual use, suggesting that new curriculum documents and materials often are *adapted to pre-existing beliefs and practice* [own emphasis]." Such could be the case in South Africa, where the new curriculum comes with no pedagogic attached, with the pre-existing pedagogic being fundamental in nature. Such a process might have been enhanced by the role of the teacher changing to that of the facilitator, who is no longer considered as the source of knowledge. As a facilitator, the learning process is accommodated and the responsibility for learning relinquished.

Since the adoption of the NCS took place, the curriculum advisors, planners, and writers assumed responsibility for the curriculum from the educators, learners and principals. Such disempowerment (which was reflected in the relevant job descriptions) might have had dire consequences for the delivery of the curriculum.

The conceptual decontextualisation[22] of the curriculum meant "separating curriculum as product (...) from curriculum policy-making, design and practice" (Cornbleth, 1990:13). The curriculum is treated apart from its structural and socio-cultural context as something requiring to be 'implemented' in a society, whatever its social context, educational practice or history. The design features, the learning programmes, the work schedule, and the lesson plans are discrete components that can be constructed and assembled in relation to a coherent curriculum. Such a curriculum is seen as a scientific management model, according to Cornbleth (1990). Teachers merely have to disseminate the LASs, restructure them into lesson plans, and present them to the learners, who, if they strive to attain the set ASs, should reach the outcomes concerned. The experts who are involved with such a technocratic process are the curriculum advisors, developers and writers, who are distanced from the school and its social milieu. When the process fails, as is suggested by the Systemic Testing results, the teachers are blamed, since they are merely required to implement a soundly scientific and effective process.

Curriculum experts are responsible for planning the curriculum, and not for the education of the learners itself. Their role requires them neither to question the curriculum nor the curriculum advisors. Educators' objections with regard to the socio-cultural conditions and influences are refuted as a 'road show' by the

[22] Such a definition also relates to Aikman and Pridmore's (2001) concept of "remoteness" in the Vietnamese context.

curriculum planners and expert teams. Many such objections added to the grievances that were voiced in the form of the labour strike that occurred on 1 June 2007.

The national Department of Education expects schools to strive to attain national goals, though such goals could be a mismatch with the farming or rural reality. As the South African teaching curriculum encourages communication, rather than debate, it implies consensus. A critical stance is encouraged by the setting of critical outcomes, though such does not relate to the curriculum itself. The educational paradigm is reduced to a matter of "how to". Such a phenomenon is Taylorism as it was practised in America (Cornbleth, 1990). In terms of such a theory, cultural, educational and political debate was replaced by considerations of technical efficiency. Schools were seen as neutral systems, and the role for teachers was that of "objective" non-political educators. Some critiques claim that such a move reduced teachers and learners to the position of subjects (see Cornbleth, 1990 and Apple, 1981). Rather than regarding such a technical exercise as an education, Datnow (1998) calls it 'replication' or 'scaling up'. The approach was not child- centred, but rather in line with psychological behaviouralistic objectives. Such an approach to curriculum calls for an emphasis on assessment, since behaviour can be mechanistically measured. The curriculum is a set of documents that requires only to be implemented. The learner becomes a shopping list of smaller units, with the overall picture not being taken into account. The concern would be that, unless the skill model co-incorporates farming skills, the resultant mismatch might lead to the education on offer being irrelevant for the learner, resulting in an increase in the drop-out rate (Smith, 2005:6) and educational poverty (Habermans, 1991).

Traditionally, South African educators were trained in Fundamental Pedagogic.[23] After the new democratic government came into power in 1994, teachers received training in People's Education and other critical pedagogic. Deacon and Parker declared such educational discourses to be:

> (...) fundamentally similar modernist underpinnings about the nature of knowledge, language, reality and human subjects (...) that the current hegemonic policy consensus in education, which conceives of itself as transcending the divisions of the past (...) conceals the persistence of inequalities and its own continuity with previous discursive formations.
>
> (Deacon & Parker, 1996:164).

For those educators who "have to adapt to pre-existing beliefs", the most damaging approach to teaching was that of Fundamental Pedagogics, which was used as the vehicle for conveying the hegemonic form of apartheid education.

According to Higgs:

> Fundamental Pedagogic (...) is responsible for reproducing and maintaining the ruling social and political ideology in S.A., namely Christian National Education. (...) the South African child has to be educated according to Christian National principles and that Fundamental Pedagogic is indispensable for devising the basis of an accountable and sound Christian National Education system.
>
> (Higgs, 1994:17)

Such a system, in effect, meant that the South African educator would revert to Fundamental Pedagogic, so that no change would take place. Bernstein sees Pedagogic as a: "fundamental social process through which cultural-reproduction takes place" (Bernstein, 1996:17). In contrast, the adoption of a critical pedagogic would have led the learner to question the ruling hegemony, thereby not allowing history to repeat itself. Such a move would have given education the revitalisation that was required.

[23] Teacher colleges were closed in the late 1990s. CPUT, as the leading provider of ACE Multi-grade educators, had its first intake in 2002. Therefore, students trained in a sound epistemology would only have started teaching in 2006.

With the absence of a literate civil public sphere on some farms and in some rural towns, the educators being who they are, and the government having shifted from human rights teaching (in addressing issues relating to poverty) to human capital development, little has, in fact, changed for the farm child or educator.

In the light of such lack of change for the farm learner and educator, it came as no surprise when the Commission on Human Rights heard that:

> Teachers lie at the heart of many challenges [problems?]. Teachers lack passion and a culture of learning and teaching. Teachers have not been trained to implement the new curriculum. Teachers use old methods of teaching. Teachers are disconnected from the community in which they teach.
>
> (Human Right Hearing, 2006:25-27; see also DoE, 2003:44.)

As has been quoted in the NCS Overview document, a rationalisation of the curriculum forms part of educational politics. One can deduce from this that, though the National Department has taken cognisance of the plight of farm schools, it was decided to focus on the development of a single decontextualised curriculum framework for all schools. Such a focus resulted in a power play regarding the ideology of the dominant (ruling) group, and legitimising its dominant hegemonic position. The practice of teaching was not considered in terms of the social, economic and educational way of life in an unequal society, but rather in terms of the global requirements of first-nation states.

Questions about how the various changes in ideology affected the educators, and whether they were aware of such ideological change must be considered in relation to how they dealt with the revised curriculum and changed teaching methods. In other multi-grade studies, it has been shown that the adoption of a negative attitude tends to undermine the extra effort that multi-grade teaching requires. It is debatable whether those educators who do not align with the relevant changes in ideology, risk

their planning and implementation become irrelevant, or whether the following circumstances then prevail:

> Educators see education as separate from politics. Therefore the learner and learning is divorced from larger societal movements which might make the curriculum more relevant. This is evident in the various neutral themes that educators adopt, such as: Transport, My Body, My Family, water, etc. – which are treated in isolation from societal realities.
>
> (Apple, 1981).

According to Apple, there are two requirements for ideological hegemony. The economic order creates categories and structures of feelings, which saturate our everyday lives, with everybody being assumed to know it should be so. Teachers find it difficult to see their 'neutral' education in politico-economic terms, or to view education as part of a mechanism for cultural and economic reproduction (Apple, 1981:11).

2.3 Educator/Principal: Framing of the curriculum

Most multi-grade farm schools require that the principal has to teach. Such a situation leads to the individual concerned coming to have to fulfil a dual role, of which they may not even be aware. Framing the school's roster and aligning it with their educational framing and the teaching of multi-grade classes is an example of what such an individual is required to do. The educator/principal has to take control of the curriculum, deciding who teaches what, and to which grade, which themes will be covered, and, in general, how to provide for the school's assessment plan (see Bernstein, 1996). Ironically, such individuals are not trained to assume both such roles simultaneously.

The government's working paper on Post Provisioning refers to the "policy confusion" relating to the curriculum, in terms of which the binding policy for educators is not the curriculum, but the various resolutions arrived at by the Education Labour Relation

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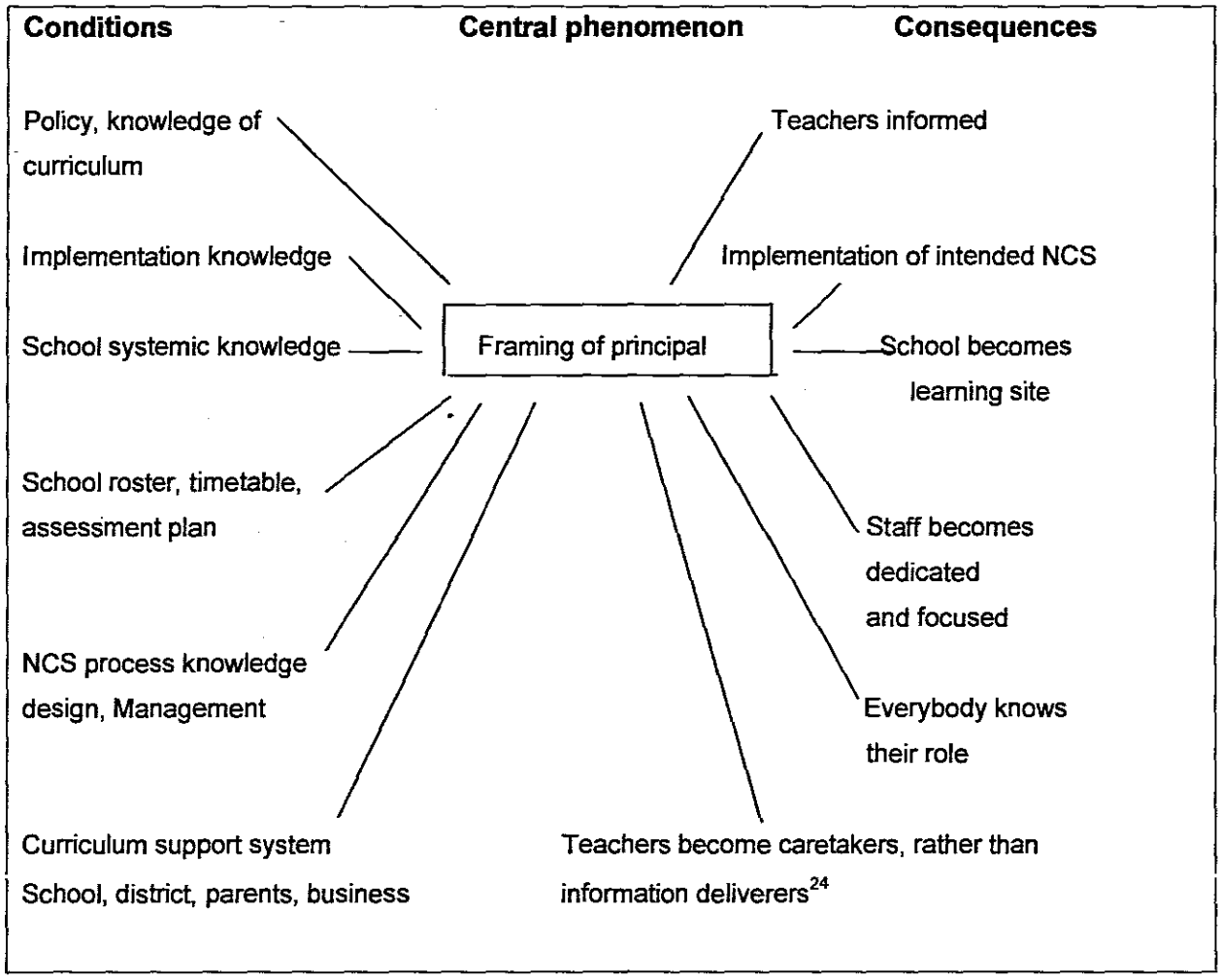
The government's working paper on Post Provisioning refers to the "policy confusion" relating to the curriculum, in terms of which the binding policy for educators is not the curriculum, but the various resolutions arrived at by the Education Labour Relation

Council (DoE, 2006:13). Though the labour chambers are not a curricular body, their status is higher than that of the WCED's Curriculum Board. Such a situation causes confusion among principals, since all curricular disputes are dealt with in the ELRC, rather than by the curriculum board of the WCED. Class visitation by curriculum advisors to support and assure the quality of teaching has, for example, become a labour, rather than a curricular, matter.

Though the current study focuses on foundation phase teachers, how principals (irrespective of whether they teach or not) manage a school can affect curriculum delivery and teaching. Principals need to be considered, and taken into account, as a power source, relating to their position, and not to their ability to manage the curriculum. Thus, the relationship between the principal and foundation phase educators is relevant to the current study. To illustrate such a condition in relation to curriculum delivery, a conditional matrix is used in the Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Conditional matrix of framing.



Source: Adapted from Datnow, 1998.

> ...a conditional matrix, (is) a web of interrelated conditions and consequences, where the consequences of actions in one context may become the conditions for the next according to Hall and McGinty (1997).[25]
>
> (Datnow, 1998)

Figure 2.1 above illustrates the conditions for good curriculum delivery. In rare instances, teachers might teach in isolation, though such is the exception, rather than the rule. Such is especially the case with the NCSs, in accordance with which all educators in a phase need to plan their learning programmes together, with those educators who teach the same grades holding meetings about the work schedule

[24] 'Information deliverers' is a term used by Kinshelo (2004).
[25] Conditional matrices, as part of grounded theory, will be discussed in terms of research design in Chapter 4.

design, and all the relevant teachers being equipped with lesson plans. Such procedures typify conventional mono-grade curriculum delivery. In multi-grade schools, a pre-condition for the attainment of a close-knit teaching unit is that the principal and the class teacher work together well, that all involved are fully cognisant of what their roles require of them, and that the multi-grade class is supported by the key role-players at school and in the community. In an insightful paper, Little (2005) argues that whether multi-grade teaching is chosen or imposed impacts on the quality of learning and teaching involved. She adds the following conditions for the effective implementation of multi-grade teaching: increased awareness about the requirements of such teaching; the need for curriculum adaptation (according to one of four types: multi-year spans; differentiated curricula; quasi mono-grade; or learner- and material-centred); the transformation of the philosophy of learning; the introduction of relevant learning materials; the appropriate social organisation of learners; applicable teacher preparation; fitting assessment; and the assurance of cost-effectiveness (Little, 2005:10).

Principals of multi-grade schools, in their role as managers of the curriculum, were excluded from in-service training for Curriculum 2005, as only those educators involved with foundation phase teaching were trained in the implementation of such a curriculum. Such principals were included in the training that was undertaken prior to the implementation of the NCS in 2003. However, they were trained separately from the teachers, with their focus being on school management, rather than on the development of learning programmes. Even if they had been trained in the implementation of the curriculum, such training would have been of little assistance, as the principals concerned tend mostly to teach grades four to six (multi-grade). In general, the role of framing, and the social context of scaling up or replication, have

been ignored by the Education Department. Such neglect has resulted from the Department's having perceived the implementation of an externally developed curriculum as being a "uni-directional, technical, mechanical and rational" process (see Carlson, 1965 and Havelock, 1969, in Datnow, 1998).

One of the major problems has lain in attending the training, since most of the farm school principals are teachers as well. The net result of having to fulfil such a dual role has meant that the principals concerned were disempowered, as they learned to manage that which had to be developed, monitored and quality assured, without knowing how the learning programme in the foundation phase actually came about. Such limitations affect their framing in the following way:

> Framing is about who controls what [subject advisor, circuit team leader, principal, teacher]. Framing refers to control over: selection of communication [e.g. themes, planning], its sequencing [roster and school time-tabling], its pacing [the number of tasks being stipulated by the assessment protocol and the need for pacing], the criteria and the control over the social base, which makes the communications possible (Bernstein, 1996:118). (See Apple, 1981: 31 on issues of power and labelling, and Hodges, 2001:69 on the pedagogy of poverty, in terms of which poor framing amounts to the use and creation of poor pedagogic.)

Framing is important, and often accounts for the difference in the performance of schools. Where framing is strong, multi-grade teachers know what is expected of them, and know that their principal is both in control, and conscious of their role. Framing determines which grades are to be combined, and who should take the resultant multi-grade class. Poor framing leads to uncertainty and to related uncertainties with curriculum delivery.

In accordance with Van den Akker (2003), Bernstein differentiates between the official (intended) curriculum and that which is attained, which he calls the pedagogic device (the formal model) and its practice (the realisation model). The difference

between the two often displays an ideological transformation or disjuncture, in the case of non-compliance.

In October 2004, President Mbeki asked for research to be conducted into the question of the challenges posed by the need for economic development and poverty eradication. The main question pertained to whether "the state machinery ha[s] the required number of properly qualified, motivated and resourced people dedicated to ensuring the success of our social and economic development initiatives" (DoE, 2006:3). Some of the findings and recommendations[26] related to the topic are:

- The guidelines for principals were to be finalized by March 2007.
- By March 2007, education officials will be made to play a greater role in the process of recruiting and selecting principals.
- A Senior Management System and Performance Agreement will be introduced.
- Special measures for schools that have fewer than three teachers will be introduced.

(DoE, 2006:4).

The recommendations included that it was not mandatory for principals to teach, and that those principals who head schools at which there are fewer than three teachers will be treated accordingly by the Department (DoE, 2006:4). The making of such a recommendation has resulted in implementation of the new Occupational Specific Dispensation, which was mentioned in Chapter One.

Although the above-mentioned recommendations have been accepted and partially implemented, five task teams have been set up to further investigate some aspects of the problem. The Council of Education Ministers has approved a policy related to the South African Standards for Principalship (SASP). The need to take such action has reaffirmed that the role of the principal was neglected in training around the curriculum.

[26] Due to the resistance that was encountered from the relevant unions, the implementation of such agreements only started in April 2008.

2.4 Curriculum[27]

This section of the current thesis should be read in conjunction with Subsection 1.4.1 ('Curriculum delivery') in Chapter One. The NCSs have been printed in the form of nine booklets (with one covering each learning area and one providing an overview of them all – see Figure 2.2 below). The South Africa curriculum can, consequently, be seen as a fixed body of knowledge, which can easily be transmitted. According to the international curriculum website, Infed (Smith, 2005), the focus in the development of any curriculum should be on the curriculum product, rather than on the process or praxis of curriculum delivery.

Figure 2.2 (below) shows the Natural Sciences, Economics, Management Sciences, and Languages booklets. The blue booklet is the Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes. The original resource booklets were regarded as the 'source' documents for curriculum development.

Figure 2.2: Booklets containing the Learning Area Statements.

[27] See also Figure 1.4 in Chapter 1.

Each of the booklets concerned contained a chapter on the following:

- guidelines for the development of learning programmes;
- the Learning Area statements;
- the Intermediate phase;
- the Senior phase; and
- learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs).

(DoE, 2003)

Many more additional sources were soon added, consisting of circulars, government gazettes, aids, pace setters and others.

Figure 2.3 below shows the compilation of documentation that is needed for curriculum delivery. The four types of documents are:

- the revised national learning area statements;
- the national policy on assessments and qualifications for schools;
- the Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes; and
- the assessment guidelines for GET.

Figure 2.3: An example of curriculum and assessment documents.

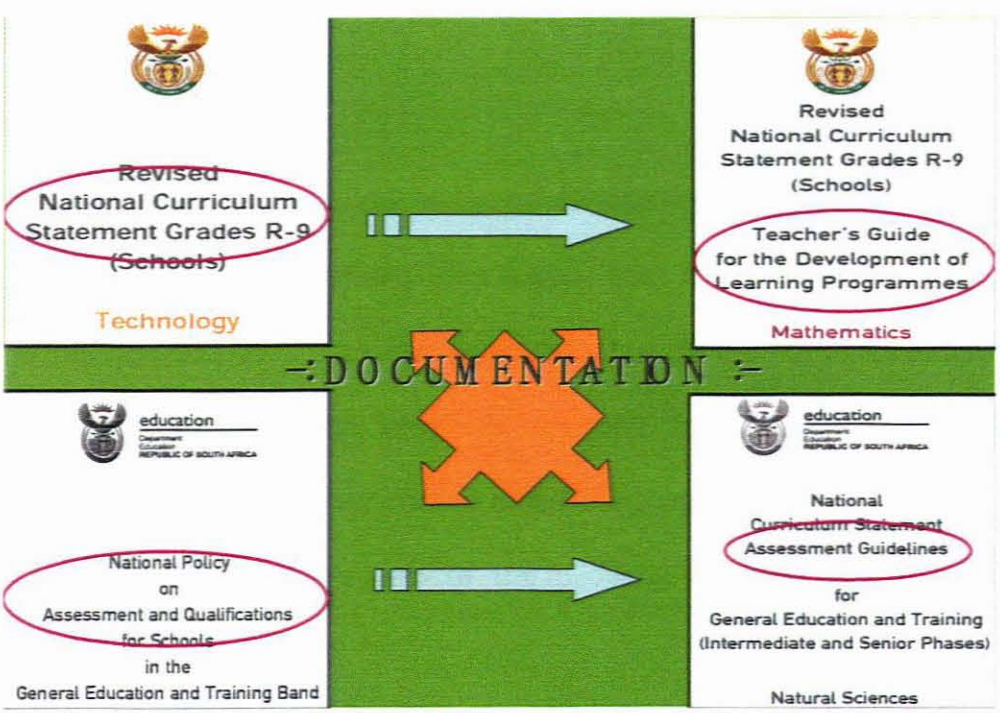


Figure 2.3 above shows the four different types of documents: the curriculum statements (in accordance with learning area); the National Policy documents (in the form of Government Gazettes); the Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes; and the Assessment Guidelines. Other documents are the Manifesto on Values, as well as numerous circulars and minutes, most of which are sent to the different schools by e-mail or post.

Many educators fail to see that the above documents do not constitute the curriculum per se, but are policy documents. The curriculum, in contrast, is made up of how the educators give meaning to it, as well as the interactive process that takes place between educator, learners, learning material and the school, as well as the overall socio-economic context in which the school is located. Confusion and frustration surrounding the curriculum is caused by different interpretations of the curriculum (by all role-players in the process, including sometimes even curriculum advisors; the amount of reading that is required; the heavy administrative and teaching workload; the prevailing low level of morale; the differences in teacher training; and ideological differences.

What is of special interest is how the farm and rural educator respond to such a confusing state of affairs. Ironically, the Latin term 'currere' referred to a straightforward linear chariot course to be run. In the educational context, 'curriculum' refers to that learning which is planned and guided (Smith, 2005), or to a "systematically organized course of teaching and learning" (McLean, 2004:1, cited in Smith, 2005). On Infed's website, the following four definitions of the term are given:

- curriculum as a **body of knowledge** to be transmitted;
- curriculum as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students **(product)**;
- curriculum as **process** focused on the interaction in classes, in terms of which "curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to scrutiny (...); and
- curriculum as **praxis**, which follows the same route as process, but specifies a commitment to the emancipation process (Smith, 2005:8). Praxis links theory with practice, according to Grundy: "curriculum is a social process that develops through the dynamic interaction of action and reflection (...) [it] is not simply a set of plans to be implemented (...) (see also Cornbleth, 1990).

It could well be that all the above-mentioned kinds of curriculum are being practised in different schools. In some cases, schools have opted for the extensive use of textbooks or modules, with the educators concerned having relinquished their right to choose knowledge content, accepting any book branded 'new curriculum'. Such educators might be regarded as 'training' or 'coaching' the syllabi.[28] Those educators who have decided to abandon any reference to 'politics' or 'ideology' and who see themselves as 'neutral' are likely to deliver the curriculum as product or syllabi, in a form of rote learning, which is not in the spirit of the NCSs.

> A ministerial committee on rural education has recommended a new school curriculum with particular reference to rural life (...) some may question the idea that rural schools have a Curriculum that differs, even in small ways, from urban schools. There are, however, strong grounds for elaborating on a common core curriculum in ways that speak directly to different rural setting.
>
> (Anon, 2 June 2005)

The implementation of a new curriculum especially for rural schools is unlikely, as, in terms of the NCSs, all 29 outcomes for the foundation phase must be covered. What must change is how farm teachers plan, integrate their outcomes, cluster the ASs, choose their themes, and arrange their grouping in alignment with teaching methodology.

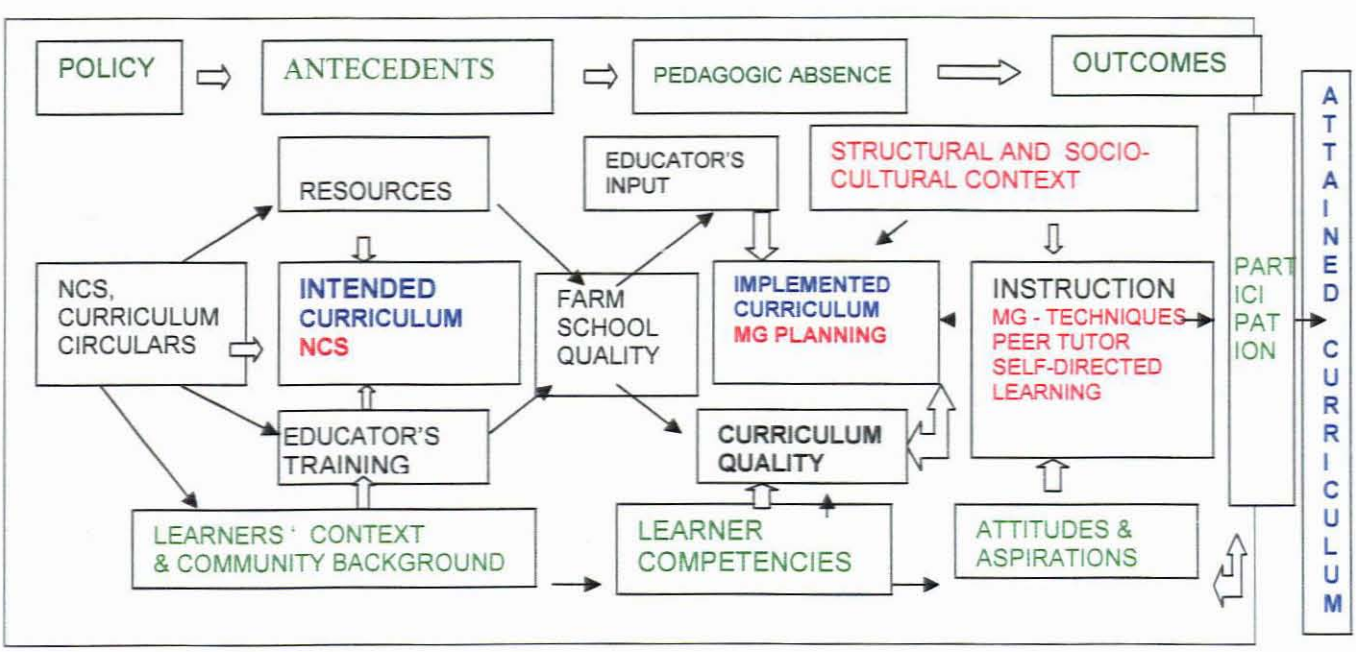
[28] Such relinquishment of rights occurred in 2008 when 'content' (pace setters) was provided from grades 10 to 12.

In multi-grade rural schools, agricultural settings provide for a richness of relevant stimuli that can be utilised in providing quality farm education in the following ways:

- the promotion of farm living;
- the conduction of demographic studies;
- the debating of the ethics of agribusiness;
- the conduction of environmental studies, using water samples;
- the establishment of hiking trails; and
- the implementation of eco-studies.

Such are the dynamics of an embedded curriculum, which is illustrated in Figure 2.4 below. The figure shows the various interactive components that can influence the curriculum delivery process, as well as those areas that might be problematic. 'Pedagogic absence' is the major obstacle in the process. The figure illustrates the fact that a framework curriculum, such as that of South Africa, can or might change when it is contextualised. Both the learner and the structural and socio-cultural context can, accordingly, be seen to become active agents in education.

Figure 2.4: Curriculum embedded in social context.



Source: Adapted from Shavelson, 1987.

The various variables that influence the national intended curriculum can change it to such a degree that what is eventually attained is completely different to what was originally envisaged. Some such variables are shown above:[29]

- the resources in multi-grade farm settings, which differ from school to school and farm to farm;
- the educators' training and political willingness (which affects the educators' input);
- the learners' competencies, which is the key determinant, as farming communities vary;
- the differences between rural to rural and rural to urban.

To conceptualise the interdependency among the different contexts or agents, the term 'conditional matrix' is used:

> Neither human social life in general nor school reform in particular takes place automatically, in isolation, or in discrete, autonomous situations. At the same time, social actions are not generated entirely and spontaneously in locally organized contexts. To capture the interrelations among social contexts, we treat the reform process as a conditional matrix.
>
> (Datnow, 1998)

As captured by Shavelson in Figure 2.3, Hall and McGinty suggest that each context generates outcomes, comprising the conditions that are likely to apply in the next context of the political chain (Datnow, 1998). Curriculum delivery by the multi-grade teacher may be co-determined by the principal, supportive businesses, and the district curriculum advisors, among others. The epicentre of such dynamic movement can be anywhere (either top–down or bottom–up). Such movement does not occur in chronological fashion, nor does the one agent have more political power than the

[29] Research and debates regarding the variables is inexhaustive. (See Apple, 2004; Berstein, 1996; Kinschelo, 2004.)

other. One's location in the chain, combined with one's perspective, or that of one's group, determines one's response. Datnow uses the terms 'co-constructed process' and 'mediational system' for such macro structures and micro social actions (Datnow, 1998).

Since the beginning of the new curriculum (in 2003), each directive (circular) from the WCED has been sent to the relevant principal by e-mail, who then decides whether or not to print it out. After the school's management team has determined the relevant school policy on the matter, the learning areas committee and the heads of department at the school respond to the circulars concerned. However, the various factions that exist at the school are not recognised as a distinct factor. Such exclusive groups have the political power to kill both the messenger and the message at a particular school. Educators may see education as being apolitical, but their responses to policy change have political consequences.[30]

The context of both the learner and the community are equally important in respect of ensuring farm school quality. For instance, in those rural areas in which much drinking takes place, many learners tend to suffer from foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). In contrast, if pre-schooling is available on farms, and the local farmers take an active interest in the schooling that takes place at the farm school serving the area, the positive impact of such educational support is inevitably felt in the improved performance of the learners concerned.

In Figure 2.5 below, it is obvious that the 'normal' triad of learner, educator and learning material inadequately describes farm and rural conditions (see Table 2.1

[30] Bernstein (1996) and Apple (1981) explore the political ramifications of such responses in detail.

below). The focus of the current study is multi-grade planning, as indicated above (multi-grade techniques). However, such planning should not only be seen in relation to intended and attained outcomes, but also in relation to whatever international multi-grade practices are prevalent, as well as to the NCSs. Taylor and Vinjevold (1999) used a similar schema when they examined the curriculum.

Figure 2.5: Curriculum mediational processes.

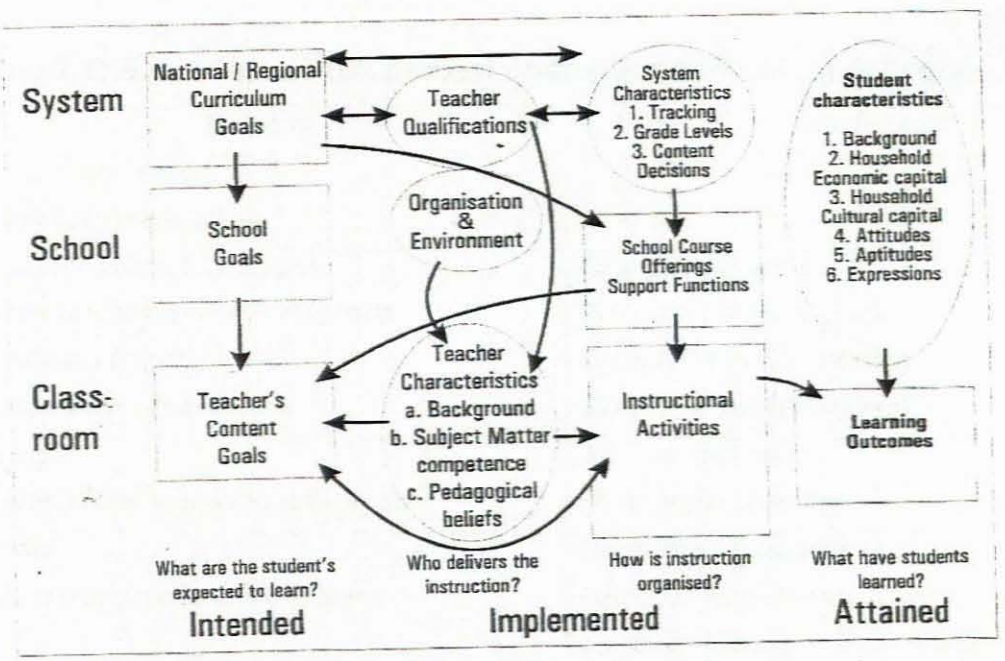


Figure 5.1: Outline of the curriculum process (Adapted from Schmidt et al 1997a : 182)

Source: Taylor & Vonjevoldt, 1999.

What is evident in Figure 2.4 is that the national curriculum is aligned with the framing of the goals of the school and the educators' content goals, which form part of the intended curriculum. The contents of the NCS documents, therefore, cannot simply be implemented as such. As the figure shows, implementation is an interactive process, in which the organisation and environment, as well as the educator's background and beliefs, influence delivery.

More emphasis should have been paid to the student and their home context in the implemented 'phase'. Both Taylor and Shavelson acknowledge the various influences on curriculum delivery. Curriculum was defined as an interactive process (in which the interaction took place between the teacher, learner and context, as well as between different learners in the multi-grade context) and praxis as being focused on the emancipation of the younger learner. The following axial coding framework can best illustrate such mediational processes.

Table 2.1: Basic framework of axial coding for curriculum delivery.

Element	Description
Central phenomenon ***Teaching in multi-grade***	
Causal conditions & strategies ***Curriculum design for multi-grade*** ***Curriculum framing*** ***Curriculum reorganisation***	Events or variables ***Planning for multi-grade*** ***Planned learner's framing*** ***Class and social contexts***
Strategies ***Adapting form mono to multi-grade***	Activities that result ***Multi-grade teaching***
Context ***Wide spectrum of skills and ages***.	Conditions or variables (e.g. values or beliefs) in which the phenomenon is taking place ***Learners can teach (self-directed, peer tutor)*** ***that multi-grade setting is beneficial***
Intervening	Narrow and broad conditions that influence the phenomenon or strategies ***Coaching the coach*** ***Directing the process*** ***Facilitating / accommodating learning*** ***Individualisation of teaching (IEP)***
Consequences	Outcomes of strategies: intended or unintended ***Good multi-grade teaching, as opposed to pedagogy of poverty*** ***Multi-grade pedagogy***

Source: Adapted from Cottrel & McKenzie, 2005:224.

Table 2.1 above makes it clear that multi-grade teaching conditions differ from mono-teaching conditions. Such conditions are planned for and serve as pre-conditions in a

chain of teaching and learning process, which is both horizontal (learner–learner) and vertical (teacher–learner). In addition, the process should be framed within the social context (whether it is farm or rural).

2.5 Context of the rural and farm community and multi-grade curriculum

The community in which a curriculum is delivered can play a role in the delivery process. Prescribed curriculum is always mediated locally, which is why schools differ. Such mediation is brought about by the opinion of the dominant public. Habermas' theory postulates that civil and public life in general (though particularly on farms with theirs uncontested power relations, according to the current researcher) have dwindled and can no longer effectively operate to influence political (or educational / curriculum, according to the current researcher) decision-making. The consequence that such decision-making has on farms is the growth of a destructive privatism, consisting of an unhealthy, unrestrained focus on the self (cited in Brookefield, 2005).

Habermas notes the widespread belief that, since one has no way in which to influence discussions and decisions in the wider society, one might as well pursue private goals without regard to the effects that such goals have on others, or on the learner's education. He notes the condition to be that of a "structurally depoliticized public realm", in which administrative decisions are made by the farmer, principal or educators independent of input from others.

> We have the "application of institutions and procedures that are democratic in form, while the citizenry, in the midst of an objectively political society, enjoy the status of passive citizens with only the right to withhold acclamation" (...) In such a situation civic privatism 'political abstinence combined with an orientation to career, leisure and consumption' is bound to flourish.
>
> (Habermas, cited in Brookfield, 2005)

On certain farms and in small rural towns, the adoption of such an approach has led to an excessive use of alcohol among both parents and learners. The high prevalence of FAS among learners in farm schools is evidence of such use. Cultural practices can be read as ideological signs of contemporary history. What is often regarded as the farm parents' ignorance or apathy can be seen as resistance to dominance. The apathy of uneducated farm and rural parents is a negative influence on the quality of multi-grade farm education. Apathy functions as a form of resistance, with those concerned being unable to fight the dominant ideologies and master narratives of such as the DoE, the WCED, and the farmer.

How education and the 'meester' (headmaster) have been seen in the past has changed over the years. People are no longer merely subordinate, nor totally manipulated (Datnow, 1998). Consequently, the relationship between school bodies and parents is complex and contradictory.

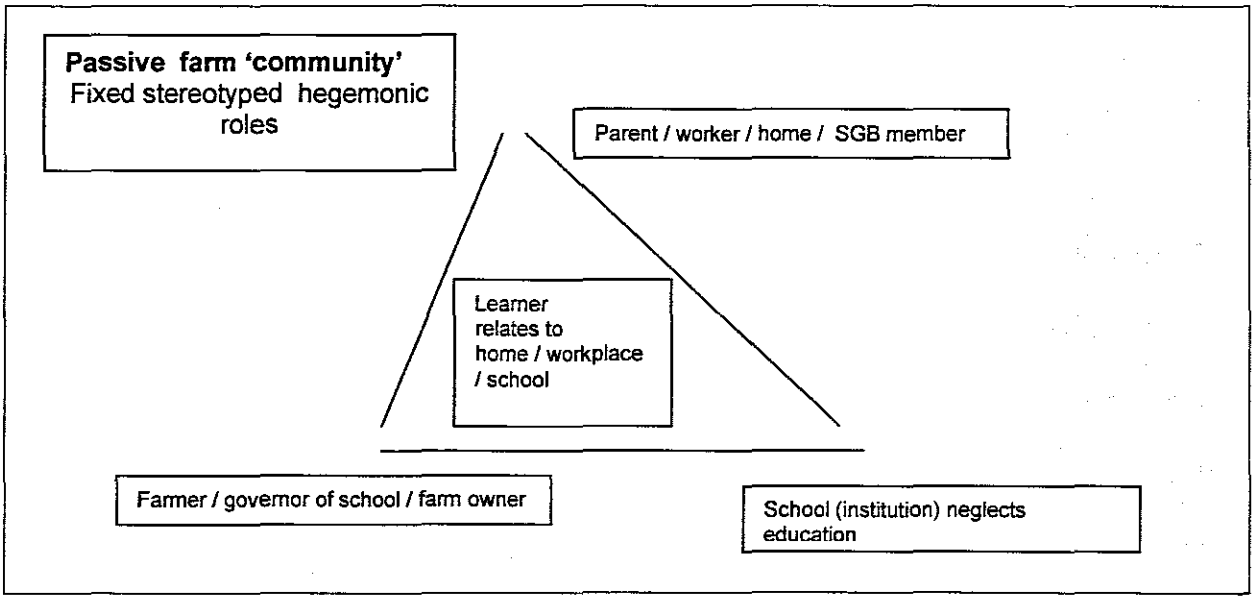
The poverty cycle, the failure of farm schooling, and the government's shift to human capital education, as well as the fact that the situation has deteriorated for farm parents, elicit a fear that only a small percentage may be able to benefit from education.

The drop-out rates potentially resulting from an irrelevant curriculum, stemming from poor content selection or curriculum reorganisation, according to the Human Rights Report, are as follow:

- the drop-out rate between grades 1 and 3 is 26,2%;
- between grades 4 and 6 is 3,5%; and
- between grades 9 and 10 is 19,6% (Human Right Hearing, 2006:21).

Such a drop-out rate, in turn, could be the result of a lack of input by the community or even by the farmer, who is the recipient of the unskilled product. A worst case scenario would be a situation in which nobody intervenes: unskilled low-salaried drop-outs suit the farmer and, by providing a cheap income, suit the parents. The teachers concerned can shirk their responsibility, due to the lack of supervision of multi-grade farm schools.

Figure 2.6: Farm–school relationship.

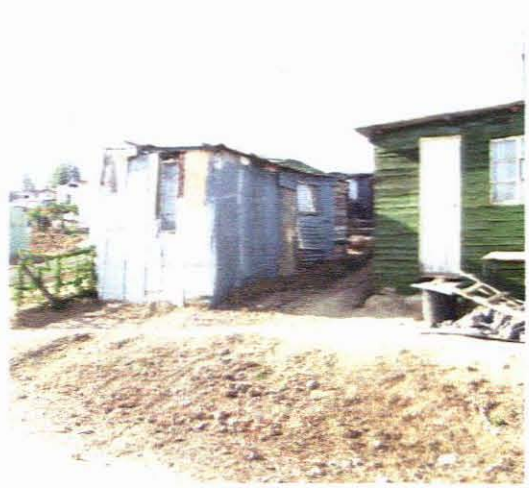


Each participant in the process has a role to play, with their action not exceeding their (hegemonic) defined role. Parents work on the farms, leaving their children in the hands of educators, who mostly do not live on the farms. Educators teach, remaining apart from farm life. Learners' homes are removed from school both literally and figuratively, in terms of both the school setting and the curriculum content. The farm owners only intervene in the schools when they deem such intervention to be necessary. To move beyond that with which you have been entrusted (by the powers that be) is taken as usurpation of role.

No community can be perceived to exist, as the groups involved share ideas, address issues and respond to change, or act, as a civic body. Such a scheme shows no closure, due to the lack of communication, the lack of identity and recognition, and the lack of any sense of belonging or empowerment. It is evident, if one were to visit the farms involved, how removed the schools are from the communities involved. The schools on such farms are mostly placed away from both the houses and the workplace. Contact between school and community life is minimised to attendance at those school functions that have to do with such extramural activities as athletics, or else with fund-raising efforts, rather than with the curriculum as such.

School schedules are not synchronised with other activities that take place on farms, making it difficult for parents to visit the schools to monitor their children's progress. As most of the teachers at farm schools do not stay on the farm concerned, but travel to school, they tend to leave school before the parents become available at the end of the working day. Such isolation between school and the community, and between school and work activities, is to the detriment of school life, with school themes not being incorporated in farming activities so as to make the curriculum more relevant.

Figure 2.7: Idyllic school and real home.



De Keur in the Koue Bokkeveldt Chris Hani Informal Settlement in Tulbagh

In Figure 2.7 above the school is pictured placed well away from the community, in an almost idyllic setting, in contrast to the actual farmhouse (to the left in the picture). The question that arises in relation to such isolation is not only why the school is so disconnected from farm life, but what effect such isolation can have on education. The social distance between the school and the farm, and the school and the home, is marked.

Figure 2.8: The family home class.

Figure 2.8 depicts a typical multi-grade foundation phase classroom at a school in the Ceres region. Such a classroom tends to be colourful, bright, and homely, with, in some cases, even a bed being present. With adroit classroom organisation, it serves as a substitute home where 'family' members help and support one another. Such a picture should be viewed in conjunction with Figure 2.6, and in relation to the discussion on classroom organisation. The contrast between the two environments shows how such a homely class could be alien to a child who comes from an informal settlement house,[31] where such 'luxury' is unknown.

Often sight words are placed next to articles in the house to let learners associate the names with the labelled objects. Such labelling forms part of curriculum delivery. The

[31] Due to the sensitive nature of the home circumstances involved, a picture of the inside of the house was not taken.

same process is illustrated in Figure 2.9 below, where a first-world classroom is shown beneath a home of a sample case school.

Figure 2.9: A comparison of two learning sites (with the first portraying a sample case school building in Chris Hani Squatter Camp in Tulbagh, and the second a first-world classroom in W.F. Loots Primary School in Wolseley).

The home is a child's primary learning site. Curriculum delivery should start with the specific child and his/her abilities. Looking at Figure 2.9, it would seem almost impossible to start with the child and his/her home in such instances. Educators mostly lack insight into the specific conditions prevailing with a child's home. Moreover, classrooms tend to differ greatly from the learners' own homes. Educators have been seen simply to ignore the difference between the two, and to teach without due consideration of the child's home circumstances.

Curriculum-related tasks are isolated from the child's reality, tending to consist of neutral themes. From observation, it seems that primary school and foundation phase teachers see their work as consisting of teaching the 'basics'. To them, such basics consist of reading, writing and mathematics. They feel that such teaching does not have to be contextualised. Phonics and mathematics are treated as ends in themselves, and not a means to life. Whether such teaching makes the curriculum irrelevant is debatable.

Van den Akker's (2003) and Bernstein's (1996) approach to the curriculum have been discussed in the current study. The reason for the use of such an approach is that, whatever the official curriculum is, educators will have to operationalise it, with the contextual factors playing a role in ultimately determining whether the intended curriculum is attained. Bernstein calls such operationalisation "re-contextualization" (Bernstein, 1996:118), with the technical curriculum (the NCS) having been decontextualised to become nationally applicable.

Accordingly in this study curriculum is defined as the social discourse that takes place between teacher and learner, subject matter and social organisation (in short, the framing of the curriculum by all relevant role-players). In materialising such, discourse, the rural educator has to face the following challenges:

- The educators' training in pedagogy took place long before, in a different political context.
- The educators' NCS training was inadequate.
- No pedagogic training was given in relation to multi-grade schools.
- INSET for multi-grade is non-existent.

Jurie Joubert also noted the following problems that tend to be encountered by rural educators:[32]

- The curricula are not covered in full.
- Reading is not properly taught.
- Available resources are not optimally used.
- The educators have not been trained to teach in a rural context.
- Rural education should be an educational pedagogy.
- Effective support for rural educators should be provided by out-reach officers, teacher resource centres and networks (Joubert, 2007:15; see also Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

[32] Various actions have been taken by CPUT to address the problems of rural educators, see Joubert 2007:19.

2.6 Multi-grade pedagogy*[33]

2.6.1 Researching multi-grade pedagogy

Reading and working in multi-grade teaching has presented the current researcher with some ideas and observations about what is happening in the multi-grade classroom. The raw data become part of a pre-existing theory, with coding and analysis becoming an active part of the research as a study progresses. Ongoing research entails the revisiting and adaptation of the pre-existing theory, in a form of grounded theory. What is presented here is the grounded theory of multi-grade pedagogic. The raw data are presented in terms of different categories or themes, with the coding of the data allowing for the development of new categories and themes.

> The categories of analysis are derived through logical deduction from the pre-existing theory. In this way pre-existing theory is tested against empirical data (...) thematic analysis, allows categories to emerge from the data.
>
> (Ezzy, 2002:82)

By categorising the data, the collection of data (by means of reading and observation, or the use of such research methods as interviews) and their coding become the same process. Charmaz sees "[c]oding in thematic analysis and grounded theory [as] the process of identifying themes or concepts that are in the data" (cited in Ezzy, 2002:87).

Therefore, the presentation of the coded categories forms a two-step process together with the analysis (in terms of the concurrent collection and analysis of data). The sets of data are juxtaposed (in keeping with the constant comparison that is

[33] All of the titles concerned have been covered in Bruce Millers' work, as well as in the later work of Susan Vincent – what is given here is a synopsis relevant to the study.

required in grounded theory) with the 'in vivo' (verbatim) coding in the final chapter of the current thesis, in terms of the findings made in relation to the data obtained in the present study.

Such grounded theoretical processes include the following:

- theoretical sampling;
- investigation of the theme;
- note-taking, regarding the progress of the research;
- the rearrangement of content; and
- the use of the data for context, as well as other grounded, theory methodologies.

2.6.2 Defining multi-grade pedagogy

What follows is a discussion of the categories used in the current study. The current practice of multi-grade teaching requires exploring, as the subject forms the basis of the research question.

Through the process of axial coding, the researcher wishes to explore the data gleaned in relation to the pedagogy, and to present the data in a more manageable way by clustering the main codes together with their properties. Table 2.2 below represents the result of open coding of multi-grade pedagogy.

Table 2.2: Open coding: A thematic analysis of multi-grade education.

Categories/ Themes	Properties
Responsibilities	The learners share instructional responsibilities with the teacher.
Schedules and routines	A context of clear rules and routines makes such shared responsibility productive. Students know what the teacher expects.
Instructional grouping	Instructional grouping practices also play an important role in a multi-grade classroom that is soundly managed. The teacher emphasises the

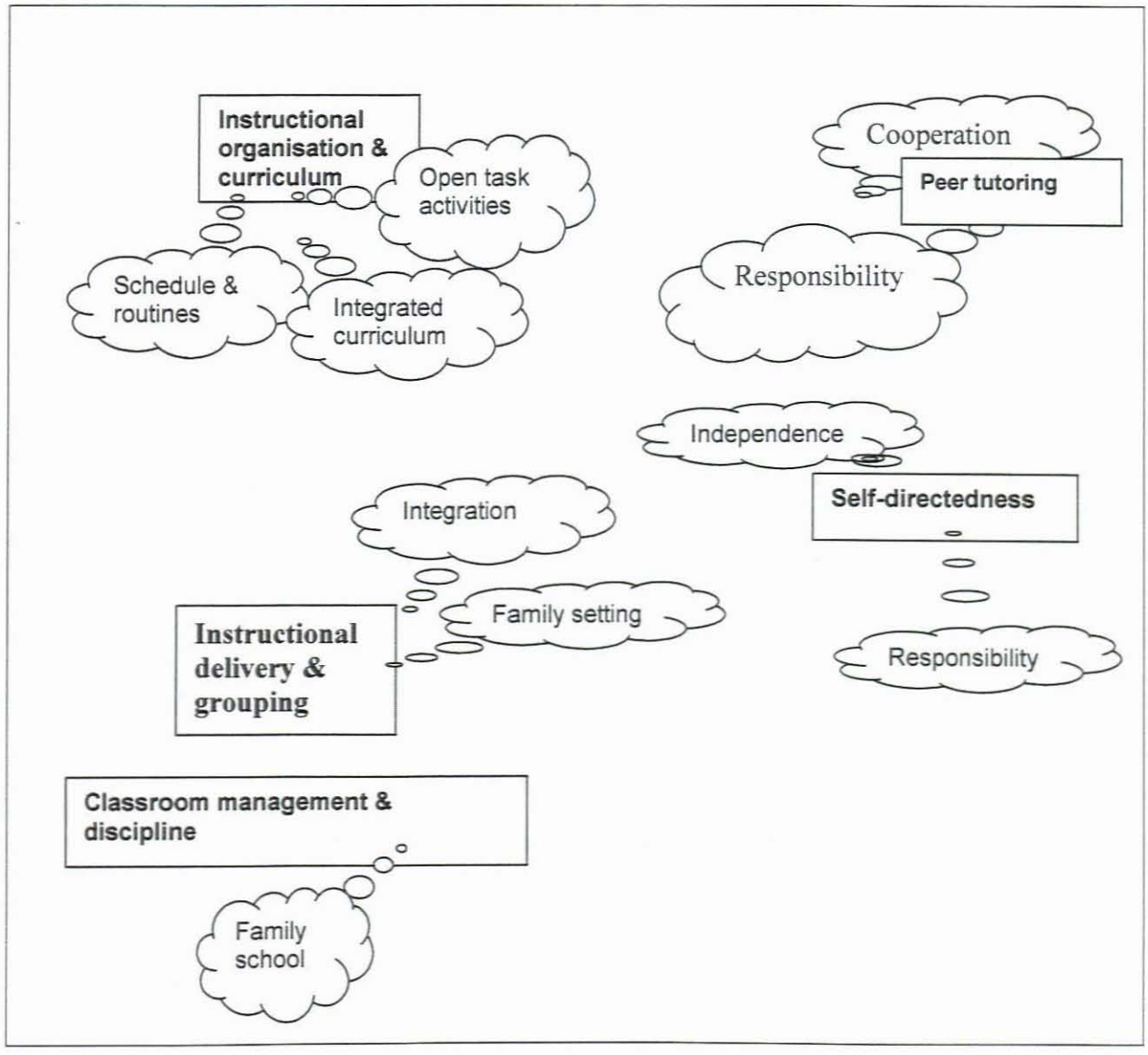
	similarities among the different grades, taking them into account in teaching, thus conserving valuable teacher time. For example, whole-class (cross-grade) instruction is often used. However, whole-class instruction in the effective multi-grade classroom differs from what can generally be founds in a single-grade class.
Independence	The learners learn how to help one another. Learners are expected to develop at an early age. The effective multi-grade teacher establishes a climate that is conducive to the promotion and development of such independence. When young learners enter the classroom for the first time, they receive help and guidance, not only from the teacher, but also from the older learners.
Open task activities	Multi-grade teachers recognise that whole-class instruction must revolve around open task activities, if all learners are to be engaged. For example, a teacher can introduce a writing assignment through topic development, during which all the learners 'brainstorm' ideas. In such a context, learners from all grades can discuss different perspectives. They can also learn to consider and respect the opinions of others (Miller, 1989).
Cooperation	Cooperation is a necessary condition of life in the multi-grade classroom. All ages become classmates, and such closeness extends beyond the walls of the school to include the wider community.
Family school	The context of learning is similar to that of an extended family.
Integrated curriculum	Integration of the eight learning areas into three learning programmes should be further adapted for multi-grade.
Classroom organisation	Such organisation reflects the home setting and facilitates all types of learning.
Classroom management and discipline	Routine and predictable patterns facilitate discipline. Mentors become co-managers.
Instructional organisation and curriculum	Management of grouping within, and across, grade.
Instructional delivery and grouping	Activities within and across grades and learner levels.
Self-directed learning	All learners must accept responsibility for their own learning, and mentors for mentoring. Learning is self-directed, self-managed, self-monitored, and self-modified.
Peer tutoring	Learners must be trained by other learners, with both being credited for their related efforts.

Sources: Berry, 2004; Birch & Lally, 1995; Cash, n.d.; Hoyt, 2005; Mason & Burns, 1996; Muller, 1989; Veenman, 1996; Vincent, 1999.

Figure 2.10 shows the rearrangement of the data and the pursuance of the theme. By this stage in the study, the core categories of multi-grade teaching have been

identified, and their sub-categories clustered. The results of such a stage form the framework for the fieldwork, in terms of which the categories of the practitioner are examined. The interpretation of the different categories and their properties will be dealt with by both the investigator and the teacher concerned. Some categories might be found to fit, whereas others might be irrelevant or used entirely differently. The properties of the different categories will, above all, be determined by the teacher to uncover an own or identical pedagogy.

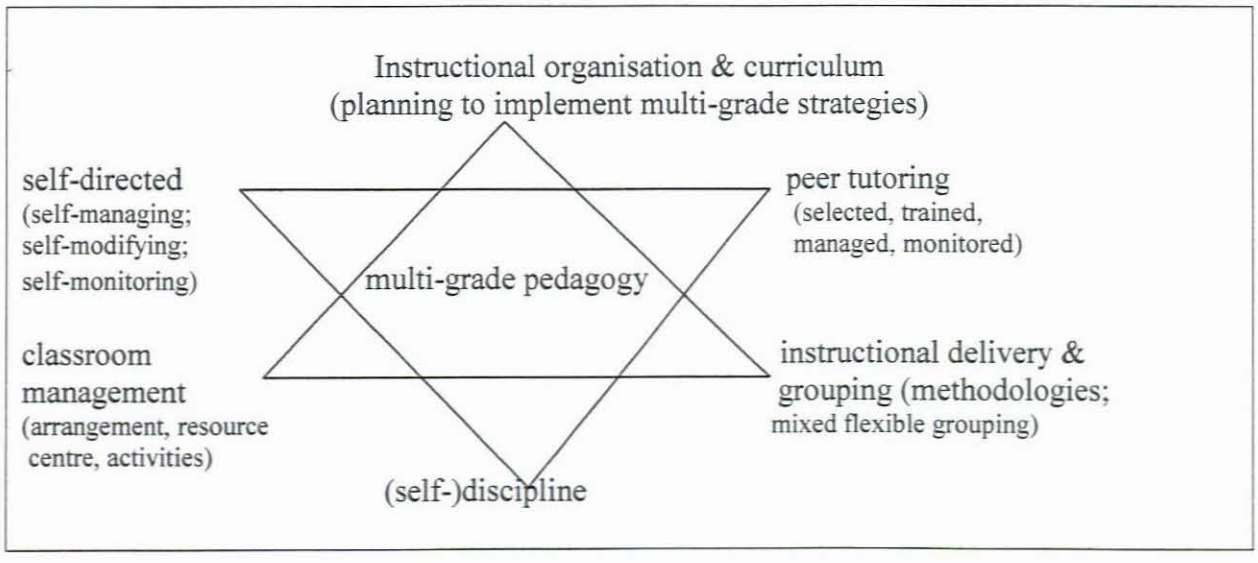
Figure 2.10: Axial coding of multi-grade pedagogy.



None of the categories shown in Figure 2.10 is exclusive, as they are all interrelated. Each category is the precondition for the next, with the categories together forming the unity of multi-grade pedagogy.

Such a flow diagram reveals a certain dependency or condition that exists between the multi-grade teacher and the learners concerned. Each such entity has a part to play in order for the education to become a multi-grade pedagogy, and for the phenomena concerned to become a methodology. Such categorisation is expressed in Figure 2.11 below.

Figure 2.11: Core categories of multi-grade pedagogy.



Most literature defines multi-grade or combined classes as classes consisting of two or three grades in one classroom, with one teacher (Manitoba, 2003:13). Multi-grade teaching, in the current study, is also regarded as being an educational strategy used in multi-grade classes to optimise the teaching experience. Multi-grade teaching is, therefore, not to be found in the multi-grade classroom alone, since the concept of 'multi-grade' refers not only to two or more grades in one class being taught by one teacher, but also to a particular teaching strategy.

As an educational strategy, multi-grade teaching has the following distinct features:[34]

> 1. Classroom organization: arranging and organizing instructional resources and the physical environment in order to facilitate student learning, independence, and interdependence
>
> 2. Classroom management and discipline: developing and implementing classroom schedules and routines that promote clear, predictable instructional patterns, especially those that enhance student responsibility for their own learning; developing independence and interdependence is also stressed.
>
> 3. Instructional organization and curriculum: planning, developing, and implementing instructional strategies and routines that allow for a maximum of cooperative and self-directed student learning based on diagnosed student needs; also includes the effective use of time.
>
> 4. Instructional delivery and grouping: instructional methods that will improve the quality of instruction, including strategies for organizing group learning activities across and within grade levels, especially those that develop interdependence and cooperation among students.
>
> 5. Self-directed learning: developing skills and strategies in students that allow for a high level of independence and efficiency in learning, individually or in combination with other students.
>
> 6. Peer tutoring: developing skills and routines whereby students serve as "teachers" to other students within and across differing grade levels.
>
> (Vincent, 1999)

Mono-grade mainstream schools can also adopt the multi-grade method to explore and use the different levels of performance of their learners. The larger the age differences involved, the more multi-grade can be used as a teaching method. The shift entailed in such teaching is from teaching the curriculum to teaching the child.

Various terms have been used as synonyms: composite classes; combination classes; double classes; mixed age; split classes; vertically grouped classes; open classrooms; and mixed-ability grouping (Veenman, 1995, cited in Russel, 1998). In the present study, multi-grade teaching refers both to the teaching of combined grades by a single teacher and to a teaching methodology. The foci of the phenomena remain multi-grade rural schools.

[34] See also Jordaan (2003).

In the following subsections of the current thesis, the core categories are discussed with reference to multi-grade education in South Africa. As such topics have already been researched by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory,[35] the categories employed by the Laboratory serve as reference for the present research, in which the focus was on contextualising them.

2.6.2.1 Classroom organisation

From the need for coding that is illustrated above, it is evident that the key categories should be linked. Therefore, classroom organisation is closely linked to self-directed learning, to peer tutoring and to instructional delivery, all of which reflect the instructional organisation (planning) required. Such organisation is what distinguishes multi-grade classes from mono-grade ones.

A typical foundation phase classroom would usually consist of designated areas, in which various learning programmes are delivered. However, such teaching is still very much teacher-centred, with the whole group moving from reading area to mathematics area, for example. However, the teacher might differentiate between the different grades or levels according to which questions he/she asks.

[35] See Vincent (1999).

The various types of rooms are:

- the activity centre, which uses certain areas in the class for specific purposes, such as pair work;
- the learning centre, which consists of a self-instruction activity, including instructions and evaluations, that has been placed in a specific area in the class; and
- a subject area resource centre, consisting of areas related to a specific subject or theme.

The activities that are carried out in such classes include:

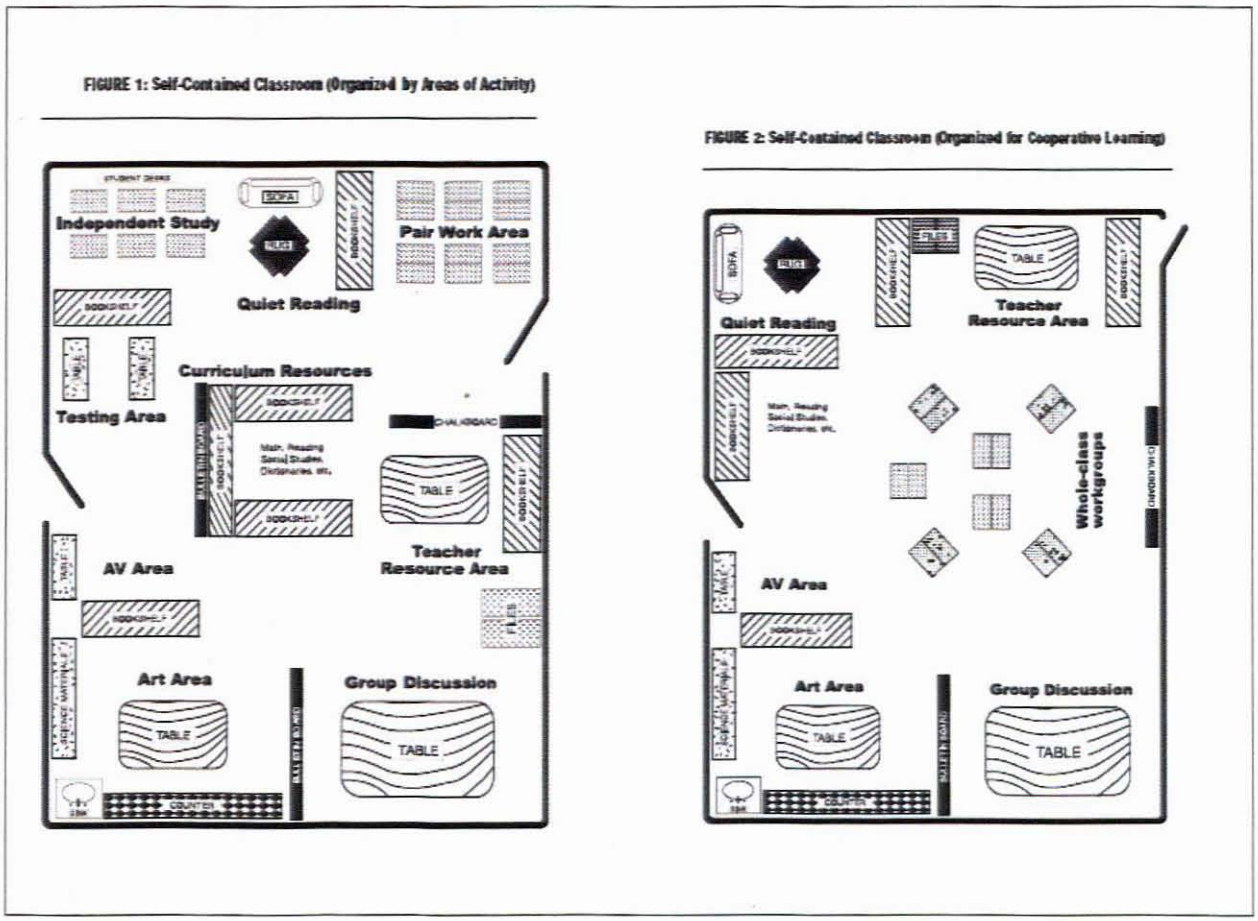
- quiet or individual study;
- testing;
- whole-class instruction;
- partner work;
- group discussions;
- audiovisual and reference work; and
- teacher tutoring, or small-group instruction (Miller, 1989).

Furniture and equipment are arranged to accommodate such activities. According to Miller:

> (...) in the typical multigrade classroom, where multiple activities are likely to occur at the same time, classroom organization is a critical factor in developing smooth, predictable routines. We also know from research on effective classroom practice that when students have a clear understanding of classroom structure, procedures, and rules, they are more likely to follow them.
>
> (Miller, 1989)

The multi-grade teacher should arrange the class so that there is minimal instruction, supervision and disruption by the teacher.

Figure 2.12: Floor plan design of the multi-grade classroom.



Source: Vincent, 1999.

In Figure 2.12 above, it is obvious that the learners' movements are controlled systematically, according to the methodology of the teacher concerned and the amount of self-directed or peer tutoring involved. The number of available resources, as well as the number of learners (class size), might limit the physical arrangement of the classroom, but the alignment between the classroom organisation and curriculum delivery should reflect that the classroom is multi-grade.

2.6.2.2 Classroom management and discipline

The foundation phase class is like a family in relation to education and nurturing. The multi-grade class, with its accommodation of a wider age span than the mono-grade class, becomes like an extended family (see Feng, 1994; Hallion, 1994; Marshak,

1994, cited in Vincent, 1999). The need to accommodate such an age range requires of the multi-grade teacher to take special care in managing the extended roles and responsibilities of each learner concerned.

At the start of each school year, the setting of each educator is ascertained, and appropriate class rules, procedures and routines are established.[36] The timetables are fixed, and the materials and activities put in place, in keeping with what was planned in the previous year. New learners learn to adhere to such a pattern at an early stage, and, after a month, the early morning crying of first years stops. The awarding of rewards, stickers, and praise helps to establish a routine that no learner will willingly break with ease. In a multi-grade class, the older learners help to establish the routine. The lessons progress according to a fixed sequence (of reading, mathematics, story-telling), and in some classes even the learner's going to the toilet is fixed. Both educators and learners are responsible for class management, monitoring and discipline.

In general, seasoned teachers are able to establish and maintain discipline with relative ease, since parents often bring their child(ren) to class, which enables them to chat, and build up a relationship, with the teacher. Each educator has a particular signal for attracting the attention of the learners: bells; non-verbal cues; handclapping; shouting; or whistling. Heeding such a signal is the first rule for learners. One of the techniques that works well is consensus, with the whole class agreeing on how to deal with any one learner's misbehaviour, including even suggesting what might be an appropriate form of punishment. Assigning tasks to learners is good practice, which the learners love. To the learners, such assignments

[36] The current researcher is a primary school principal, who has visited (and observed) numerous classes.

indicate that they are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning, which they greatly appreciate. Well-seasoned practising multi-grade teachers are able to treat the learners in their class as individuals in their own right.

2.6.2.3 Instructional organisation and curriculum[37]

The organisation of teaching curricula for multi-grade teaching is a crucial parameter for providing adequate quality education. Usually, the teachers are supposed to implement the graded curriculum, which has been designed for mono-grade education. No specific provision is generally made for multi-grade classrooms, and professional support for multi-grade teaching does not exist. In addition, when teachers apply multi-grade teaching strategies, such as different forms of grouping or self-directed learning, they have to modify graded curriculum practice in order to meet the learners' needs.

Integrating the curriculum is not the same as adapting the curriculum. All educators have to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the learners in their classes by using those themes that relate to the context of the school, as well as by adhering to the demands of the framing of the curriculum. Such adaptation of the curriculum entails recontextualising it. Integration of the curriculum (which is also known as interdisciplinary teaching, thematic teaching, and synergistic teaching) is defined as follows:

> Education that is organized in such a way that it cuts across subject-matter lines, bringing together various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful association to focus upon broad areas of study. It views learning and teaching in a holistic way and reflects the real world, which is interactive.

[37] Instructional organisation and curriculum have been discussed at some length in Chapter 1.

(Schoemaker 1989, cited in Kathy Lake, 1994:2)

Integration has to do with combining the outcomes of various learning areas. Such combining of outcomes occurs both within and across a learning area, as well as in all three learning programmes for the foundation phase. Often the second learning area is used to provide context or progression in the learning programme. For example: if the first LOs of Mathematics stipulate counting, counting of what is not specified, so the Natural Sciences may be use to count the number of body parts, providing an appropriate context for the learning experience. Progress is mostly accounted for in terms of the ASs, with more difficulty in attaining such progress the more demanding the standard is. The clustering of ASs facilitates the teaching process, in that such clustering helps to reduce the number of standards that require to be covered, and provides key stops that signal when formal assessment should take place. Seasoned teachers know to limit the amount of work to be covered, else the learners might forget what has been covered. Too little work can also not be covered, else the learners might lose track of the whole picture. As a rule of thumb, the handling of no more than three bullets and no less than two bullets should provide some guidance.

Palmer (1991, cited in Lake) acknowledges the following components of integration:

- developing cross-curriculum subobjectives within a given curriculum guide;
- developing model lessons that include cross-curricular activities and assessments;
- developing enrichment of enhancement activities with cross-curricular focus, including suggestions for cross-curricular 'contacts' following each objective;
- developing assessment activities that are cross-curricular in nature; and
- including sample planning wheels in all curriculum guides.

(Palmer, cited in Lake, 1994:2)

The reorganisation of the curriculum should be focused on overcoming those problems encountered. The first step in such reorganisation is to try to identify the

minimum learning competencies that all children must achieve in the set grades. The taking of such a step conflicts with the simplicity of outlook of those who view education as the mere implementation of a technocratic curriculum. Curriculum delivery is neither simple, nor singular. The solutions to such delivery should be equally comprehensive and inter-sectoral (entailing retraining, and the involvement of parents, the relevant farmer, the governmental support structures, and the community).

Lake (2005) provides for a number of different kinds of integration: fragmented; connected; nested; sequence; shared; webbed; threaded; integrated; immersed; and networked. If care is not taken with integration, a new learning area could easily be created if the parameters of the various sciences are not adhered to. Curriculum design is demanding, because the limitations of integration are not given, and adaptation is a teaching method, which is not required to be stated in the planning.

2.6.2.4 Instructional delivery and grouping

The last remark under Subsection 2.6.2 crystallises in the teacher seldom letting go of her responsibility to teach. Talking, telling, instructing and teaching the basics takes up 60% of the learner's time (Goodlad, 1984, cited in Vincent, 1999). In terms of the lecture-recitation format, the learner passively listens, or does seatwork. Such teaching is all about historically proven methods, which hold by primary school education seldom changing. In terms of such teaching, the teacher sees her/himself as responsible and in control, which s/he regards as 'good teaching'.[38]

Lecture-recitation has three distinct parts:

[38] Such an ideology will be fully examined in Chapter 5, in the discussion on pedagogy of poverty.

1. Explanatory presentations of organized information (often by teacher presentation or independent study);
2. Monitoring student 'learning' through questions requiring a single, correct-answer response;
3. Publicly evaluating student responses for correctness.

(Vincent, 1999:4)

For the multi-grade teacher, who feels pressurised by the number of ASs and tasks to be finished in a term, balancing recitation with whole-class teaching is a daunting task.

Delivering the curriculum on the same level as that at which the child is essential in the multi-grade class. Some educators in such classes use the mid-range group for teaching. For example, if the grades range from 1 to 3, such educators would use the Grade 2 ASs as a starting-point for teaching, and the appropriate levels for formative assessment. The dictates of formal formative assessment would be used to guide him/her as to where the child is on the continuum of ASs. Such a continuum remains the same graded course of standards, with the difference being that the child concerned can continue with the next year's work on completing those of the current year, since age is not a restriction in the multi-grade class. Often educators differentiate in terms of classroom arrangement, with the use of a certain section of the classroom implying the conducting of a particular activity on a certain level. Due to the flexibility of such a class, adjustments can easily be made to existing schedules. From such practice, a continuum of learning emerges, which helps the teacher to get his/her teaching right an increasing amount of the time, as she gains experience by teaching the same child for more than one year. The same process is followed with a teaching strategy.

Normally, the foundation phase teacher starts with activities to determine performance level and to prepare the learner for participating in Writing, Reading and

Mathematics. Such a teaching pattern changed in 2007, when an instrument using (perceptual) activities was first introduced for 15 days, with it being reduced to 10 days in 2008. The instrument determines the grouping to be used in the various learning programmes, as well as those cases requiring intervention, for which an individual education plan has been designed. If alternative teaching and assessment does not work, the educators can then resort to remedial studies and perceptual training, for which they can develop individualised education plans (IEPs). Such plans are intended for those learners with special needs, who need more time to master certain skills. They also can opt for instructing a peer tutor if too many learners require IEPs. Referrals to school clinics and learner support persons are other options that can be employed. In most cases, referrals to special schools are not viable, since parents are often unable to pay the fees charged by such schools and their attendant hostels.

By means of initial assessment, the learner is placed on a continuum, along which path progress is made. The teaching and assessment task and resources also match the learner's level of performance. Many such tasks are open-ended, with the child's progress taking place at their own pace, since the task are self-directed.

If the old saying of "two heads are better than one" holds true, in multi-grade teaching it is said that "an older (more skilled) and a younger head is better than none (no teacher)". Instead of making grades or groups wait their turn of being instructed, other, more experienced, learners can be used to teach them. Such groupings are flexible and vary according to the LOs, as well as the teaching objective and methodology. Mixed-ability groupings strengthen bonding and the sense of a family class. Such grouping can be alternated with same-ability (heterogeneous) grouping

(streaming) to avoid labelling and other negative effects of mixed grouping. The grouping should also be different for each learning programme, to counter labelling or self-fulfilling labelling.[39]

2.6.2.5 Self-directed learning

Due to the challenges offered by the span of multi-level learners, multi-grade teachers have little option but to pay less attention to some groups, in an attempt to tend to struggling ones. For those learners who have been with the same teacher for three years, some of the success of teaching might have resulted from self-directed or proactive learning.

> An emphasis on student self-direction and efficacy means that students are taught and engaged in specific strategies that offer them opportunities to make decisions and solve problems on their own without being told what to do at all times. It means providing students with strategies designed to help them process information effectively and be self-confident, believing that they have the ability to succeed.
>
> (Vincent, 1999:1)

Multi-grade teachers often share their concerns (regarding such restraints as time, curriculum, and resources) with the older learners in the class, who also experience the circumstances at first hand. Such a sharing of experiences might lead to those learners taking the initiative over their own learning. They do so by venturing further than might otherwise be expected of them – taking on more work; reading higher level books; or doing more difficult sums.

Such self-directed learning sometimes occurs during computer lessons, when the pace of the teacher is too slow. Some learners might then surpass the teacher's goal, and set their own. The best way for the teacher to respond to such a situation is to provide:

- appropriate demands;

[39] For debates on mixed and homogeneous grouping, see Vincent (1999:34).

- instructional support;
- adequate opportunity; and
- appropriate goal structures (Vincent, 1999:9).

Such has been the major challenge posed by the implementation of the new NCSs, in terms of which the training was inadequate, leaving the teachers concerned feeling deskilled (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). The challenge is to let go when learners respond on their own to their learning experience, so that they can dictate their own pace.

2.6.2.6 Peer tutoring

Peer tutoring occurs incidentally where one student helps another, irrespective of age or grade. Self-directed learning often results in peer tutoring, with the learner, who, having accepted responsibility for his/her own learning, then extends such learning to others. In multi-grade classes, such peer tutoring should be planned, with the tutors also being trained to take on such a task. The tutoring concerned is then known to be structured. At the Ashland multi-grade conference in 1989 (cited in Vincent, 1999), those conditions conducive to peer tutoring were set as follows:

> 1. Structured tutoring is more effective than tutoring on an incidental basis.
> 2. Tutoring of shorter (zero to four weeks) duration appears to produce the best results. When tutoring continues past four weeks, there is a diminishing return.
> 3. Tutoring where lower level skills are taught and tested produces the best student outcomes.
> 4. Greater results occur in math, followed by reading, than in other subject areas.
>
> (Vincent, 1999:4)

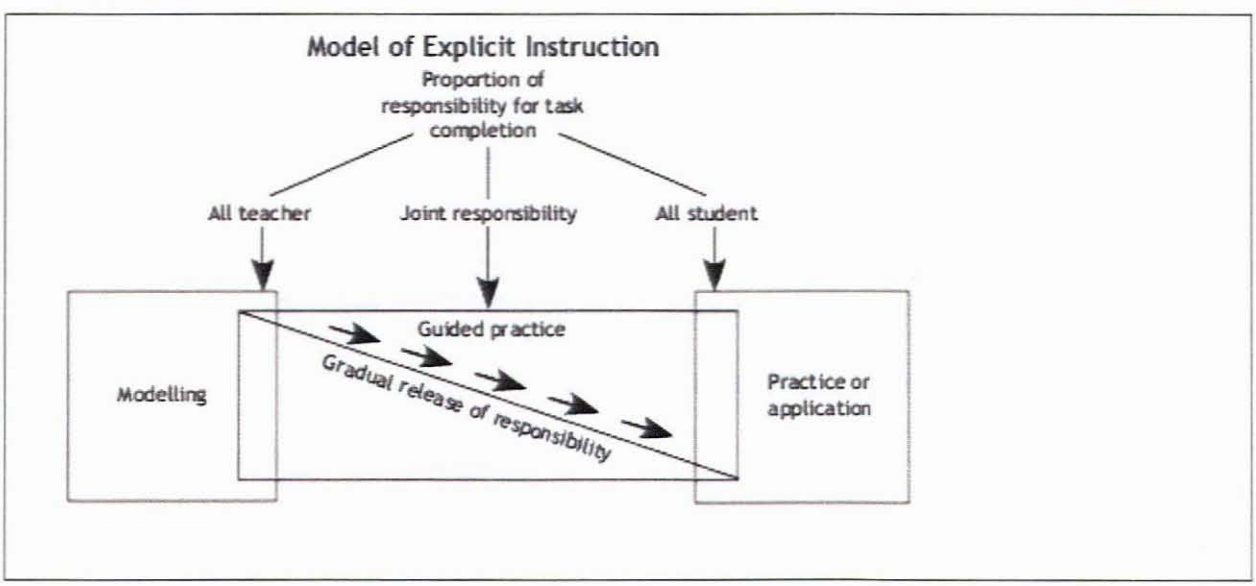
A simple truth that has been observed in schools, in relation to learners, is that 'those who did not understand then, understand those who do not understand now, better'. Such learners explain concepts in simpler terms and relate better to any problem that arises during the learning experience. Whereas planning for peer tutoring is difficult, creating those conditions that are conducive to such tutoring is relatively easy.

Facilities for test screening those with the ability to peer tutor are non-existent in rural South Africa. Identifying at-risk learners is neither trained for, nor perceived as requiring specific focus. Matching trainees with tutors is unheard of.

Despite such limitations, conditions that are conducive to peer tutoring can be created by doing the following:

- allowing mixed grouping as often as possible;
- observing those who incidentally do tutoring;
- encouraging and praising those who tutor others;
- exchanging trainees from time to time; and
- coaching the discovered tutors further.

Figure 2.13: Moving from teacher responsibility to learner responsibility.



Source: Vincent, 1999:337.

The creation of such conditions will help to develop a programme of tutors, facilitating a situation in which tutors can help to discover other tutors, thus helping to establish a system of self-reliant, self-directed learners, who are capable of supporting one another, as well as the teacher. In this way, learners can be encouraged to become

involved in the teaching process under supervision. The 'where' and 'how' of the process should be subjected to minimal time restraints, though it does require monitoring. As the process of peer tutoring can seldom be forced, scheduling it is difficult. The tutors involved need to be involved in discussions about materials, outcomes and strategies. Though tutoring tends to be successful when planned, research shows that it still largely occurs both spontaneously and informally (Vincent, 1999).

As has been suggested in Figure 2.13, various conditions for multi-grade pedagogy exist for both the teacher and the learner. Whether such conditions have been attained in South Africa is the object of the current research.

The curriculum process should, therefore, focus on fostering the above conditions in terms of its design, framing and reorganisation. The distinction between multi-grade as a phenomenon and multi-grade as a methodology lies here. The latter must take place for the learning process as a whole to be called 'multi-grade'. To foster such conditions calls for careful planning, firm discipline and holistic knowledge of the learner in context. The educator's function is to establish a 'family' for learning within a caring and highly flexible environment.

Figure 2.14: Planning for self-directed learning and peer tutoring.

The Four-Column Planner (Example)

Integrated Theme/Topic Teacher choice, negotiated, or student choice **Duration** 4 to 8 weeks

Goals	• What do I want my students to *know and be able to do* to show and celebrate their learning? • What do I need to do to facilitate the success of my students' inquiry?
Performance(s)/ Demonstration(s)/Product(s)	• How will my students show what they *know and can do*?
Classroom Processes	• How will I design the learning-teaching context? (Choose one or two of: inquiry, workshop approach, multiple intelligences....)

Curricular Connections What subject areas do I want to integrate?	**Curricular Outcomes** What do I want students to know and/or be able to do?	**Instruction: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategies*** How will I find out what students already know? / What will I see and hear? How will I facilitate student inquiry? / What learning will I see and hear? How will I/they know what they have learned? / What quality of learning will I/we see and hear?			**Learning Resources/ Sources** People, technology, print, multimedia.
☐ English Language Arts ☐ Mathematics ☐ Science ☐ Social Studies ☐ Physical Education/ Health Education ☐ Information and Communication Technologies ☐ The Arts	What general learning outcomes or strands will connect across the curricula? What specific learning outcomes will I assess? (Target a manageable number of learning outcomes for formative assessment. In addition to the targeted outcomes, other enabling outcomes may evolve throughout the inquiry. Students generate criteria for formative and summative assessment.) **Summative Assessment** (Using new learning in a process and/or to create a product.) • Criteria • Task: performance/ demonstration/product • Reflection	**Inquiry Process**			
		Activating	**Teacher-Led**	**Shared/ Negotiated**	**Student-Led**	☐ Primary Sources ☐ Field Trip ☐ Expert ☐ Artifacts ☐ ☐ ☐ Secondary Sources (Text Set) ☐ Multimedia ☐ Print ☐ Web ☐ ☐
		• Choosing a theme or topic.				
		• Identifying and recording prior knowledge.				
		• Asking initial questions.				
		• Exploring and selecting primary and secondary sources.				
		• Planning for inquiry.				
		Acquiring				
		• Gathering, processing, and recording information.				
		• Focusing the inquiry.				
		Applying				
		• Planning to express learning.				
		• Creating performance(s)/ demonstration(s)/ product(s).				
		• Celebrating and reflecting.				
		Optional				
		• Culminating Event				

* See Appendix B: Planning Model (The Third Column) for possible learning contexts that may take place during inquiry.

Source: Vincent, 1999.

In Figure 2.14. the "inquiry process" is the important column, which shows how the teacher concerned plans to use learners or a shared method of teaching. Such planning is progressive (starting with "activating", advancing to "acquiring", and resulting in "applying").

2.7 Conclusion

The context in which educators work is neither ideal, nor ever likely to be so, given the socio-economic backlogs in South Africa. The national curriculum can be contextualised only with great difficulty. Educators are not prepared for multi-grade teaching within the prevailing contexts. The socio-economic context is ill suited for the full-scale implementation of a first-world curriculum. The lack of resources and paucity of parental involvement complicates the effective delivery of the curriculum. Multi-grade pedagogic, which is ideal for farm and rural conditions, is counter-productive under such circumstances. The government's disinterest in creating a policy that is specifically directed towards rural education is worsening the situation. Given the historical backlog, as described in Chapter 1, which is shown in the disparity in job descriptions, the lack of pedagogic support, and the inadequate training provided to teachers, it comes as no surprise that farm and remote rural schools are falling below par in systemic evaluations.

Chapter Two, together with the problem statement in Chapter 1, presents the basic framework of the research problem, as well as describing its setting and the theoretical framework that will be used in the research. In Chapter 3, other relevant research on the same topic is discussed and critiqued.

CHAPTER THREE
LITERATURE REVIEW OF STUDIES AND REPORTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

The objective of the current chapter is to review the current literature on the topic, to discuss the research that has been undertaken; to synthesise (critically examine) the findings made in the studies; to critique the methodology and the significance of such; and to site the thesis among the relevant literature. Overall, the main purpose of the review is to demonstrate an understanding of both the moral and ethical standpoint and the political and ideological perspective in the literature.

The following factors have complicated the review:

- Berlinger's identifying of "the messy, complicated nature of problems in education ..." (2002, cited in Boote & Beile, 2005) refers, in the context of the current study, to generativity*[40], with the same holding true for the reviewing of locally multi-graded educational problems, due to the lack of relevant research and the ignoring of the phenomena, or the focusing on mono-grade teaching alone.
- Educational research in South Africa has mainly been focused on mainstream mono-grade research, with causal reference being made to "other types of education". International research needs to be locally mediated (see, for instance, Jordaan, 2003). Such mediation is difficult regarding such terms as 'rural' or even 'farm', which do not have the same meaning in South Africa as they do in other countries.
- Both research into farms and into access to farms (where all the schools are multi-graded) is plagued with such problems as accessibility, legal standing (Article 14), and the need to obtain consent from the farmer.
- Little research has yet been conducted into multi-graded farm or rural schools. Whatever research has been done in this respect is not regarded as

[40]*"Generativity is the ability to build on the scholarship and research of those who come before us" (Shulman, 1999:162, cited in Boote & Biele, 2005; see also Creswell, 1994, 2002, cited in Boote & Biele, 2005.

'academic' research per se (Ministerial report, 2004). Any research that is not verifiable is unscientific.

- Data on rural or farm schools differ and change frequently. Most often, the criteria on which the data are based are not mentioned. Consequently, the current study uses the criteria employed in the work undertaken by Bruce Miller and by Susan Vincent, as did the Multi-grade Intervention Project (Jordaan, 2003).
- The discrepancy between a first-world (developed) curriculum and a third-world (developing) context relates to ideological and hegemonic viewpoint.

The following South African studies have been selected for the way in which to address the discourse of education and, more specifically, the farm and rural education context:

- *Emerging voices*, by the Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005;
- the Ministerial Committee Report on Rural Education, 2005;
- *Forgotten schools*, by the Human Rights Watch, 2004;
- the Multi-grade Rural School Initiative, by Van As Jordaan, 2003; and
- the Report of the Public Hearing on Rights to Basic Education, by the Human Rights Commission, 2006.

3.2 Review of sources

3.2.1 *Emerging voices*

Emerging voices is a report on the status of education in South Africa's rural communities, which is based on the research conducted by the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Education Policy Consortium (EPC). The study is in the form of a narrative, relating the stories of the people, as is suggested by the title. The report deals with such topics as the school and community, democracy, and rural education and development. The project started in 2003, with poverty as the focus. Linda Chisholm was project leader, with The Education Policy (Kim Porteus) being responsible for the research design

and fieldwork. The poorest of the poor provinces in South Africa were covered, namely KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo. The intention of the research was to find out what the rural poor experienced as education and what such communities thought should be done to deal with the problems of education in the context of rural poverty (Chisholm, 2003).

The study used the survey and participatory research method to explore the perceptions and experiences of 4 305 respondents. The methodology employed in the study had previously been used in a study on basic education in India (Probe), which took place over a period of three to four months (1999). The study attempted to replicate the Probe Report on Basic Education in India, which was undertaken in 1996. The South African version of the study was conducted from 5 May to 5 June 2003. The sample consisted of 595 households and 144 primary schools. The schools involved in the study were considered to be the poorest and worst performing schools in the former homeland areas. The random sample was taken from the three provinces concerned with the study. After a detailed survey of the relevant schools was conducted, the households were selected in relation to the schools, of which 50% were found to have an annual income of less than R6 000.00. Ten such districts were selected from the three provinces concerned. Five were selected by means of stratified sampling. The focus was on 6 to 16-year-olds. Interviews were conducted, and questionnaires were administered to adults, enrolled children, never enrolled children and out-of-school children. The total number of respondents was 4 332, which included 149 principals, 565 educators, 2 867 learners, 156 ECD centres and 595 household caregivers. Responses to the questionnaires, which were in the home language of the respondents, were received from 600 adults. The conditions under which the learners attended school were

investigated, with the linkage between poverty and education being made. As with *Emerging voices*, participatory action research was the method of choice. The following three core questions were asked:

- What is the experience of rural communities and education?
- What is the relationship between education and rural poverty?
- How can education better serve rural children and communities in the future?

Some key findings of the study were:

- The history of oppressive power relations within rural development is deeply entrenched in history.
- The communities are used to quick-fixing paternalistic studies.
- The commitment to processes that ultimately have the chance of seeding local power relations requires a clear consciousness around the history of power relations, strict principles of collaboration, extended time, a sense of humility, and an appreciation for investing in human relationships of trust.

(*Emerging voices*, 2005:156).

The principle of equality in education was approached in the study in terms of the concept of the right to education, according to the UNESCO definition of the term:

> Broadly speaking, the report argues that the historical development, contours and consolidation of power relations between urban and rural and within rural areas, have resulted in neither formal nor substantive equality for people living in rural areas.
> (*Emerging voices*, 2005:xii)

Formal equality refers to the access to, and participation in education, while substantive relates to the experiencing of, as well as the quality and outcomes of, education. The contribution that the study made to research in this field lay in how it reflected the voices of the poor, and what needed to be done for rural elders, learners and educators at the time.

Emerging voices differs from the current research not only in design, but also in aim. The overarching poverty of the rural areas impacted then, and still impacts, on rural education. The current research is seen as a curriculum study, which focuses on how planning is done in relation to multi-grade teaching. Curriculum delivery within an

(often) poverty-stricken rural area is investigated, being found to make use of little, or poor, planning, resulting in the pedagogy of poverty. The approaches of both studies overlap, with conclusions being drawn about how planning influences teaching and the reaching of national goals (in the form of the NCSs).

3.2.2 Ministerial Committee Report on Rural Education

The subtitle of the Ministerial Committee Report on Rural Education is "A new vision for rural schooling". Though the study started in September 2003, the report itself was published in February 2005. The brief of the study was to produce a report containing practical recommendations to help the DoE and the Provincial Education Departments develop an integrated multi-faceted plan of action for improving the quality of schooling in rural areas.

Officials of the national DoE, PED, and other stakeholders were interviewed, and public submissions were accepted. In total, 70 submissions and 30 interviews were conducted with the relevant stakeholders. Recommendations were grouped into the following themes: poverty; funding; size and shape of education; governance and management; curriculum reform; educators; and roles and responsibilities. Ben Parker chaired the group with Adele Gordon from the Centre for Policy Development, Evaluation and Management (CEPD), and Agri-South Africa's CEO, Mr Van der Merwe, as well as the representative from the Mandela Foundation. Both group and individual interviews were used.

As a "new vision for rural schooling", the report failed for various reasons. The data from the interview were taken as data (reflecting naïve realism – see quote below) and not scientifically analysed, such as in terms of textual or discourse analysis. Only

seven submissions were made in regards to the curriculum (p. 80), which were insufficient both to allow for the generalisation of findings, and to substantiate the recommendations: "Notwithstanding the unfortunate fact that parents and learners did not make submissions, the activities outlined are testimonies to the commitment and passion of a wide range of parties..." (MCRE, 2005:77).

Only four of the nine South African provinces responded to the call to submit data. Of the provinces who responded to the call, only the Western Cape had a "Rural Education Provisioning Framework", which referred to the amalgamation or closure of those schools with fewer than 25 learners. Those schools with fewer than 100 learners and transport for the learners were allowed two phases in which to amalgamate or close (MCRE, 2005:71). The two phases per school meant that only two additional educators were allocated to each school concerned. In 2007, certain small schools were allocated one additional post. One year later, certain of the larger schools were allocated an additional foundation phase educator. The schools concerned included both multi-grade and mono-grade schools. The current study treats small farm and rural schools on an ad hoc basis, since it is the number of posts involved that determines whether multi-grade classes are used.

The MCRE Report made the following recommendation with regards to the curriculum in their report to the National Minister:

> Sub theme: Facilitating the implementation of C2005
> Recommendation 47: Introduce a coordinated programme of teacher development that includes on-site school support and an adequate supply of LSMs [Learner Support Materials];
> Recommendation 48: Ensure district offices and officials have the capacity to support C2005 at schools, either at individual schools or at CLCs / nodal schools.
>
> (...)
>
> Sub Theme: NGO-driven curriculum reform.
> Recommendation 53: Promote dialogue between NGO and government-funded projects on C2005 to ensure professional development programmes work in tangent with each other to avoid confusion and to optimize the benefits of all programmes.
> (MCRE Report, 2005:38-41)

Recommendation 47 above falls short of pinpointing the problem. The struggles of the current teaching body are due to the lack of pedagogic, regarding an epistemology to guide their teaching practice. Such a lack explains why many teachers have not yet made the paradigm shift that is required in terms of the new curriculum. The report refers to Curriculum 2005, and not to the NCSs of 2003, the latter being an abridged version of the former.

Departmental officers have failed to realise that recognising the needs of multi-grade teachers constitutes their sole support. Ignoring their existence, and expecting the same amount of planning from them as from mono-grade teachers, is problematic for both the teachers and teaching concerned. As with safer school programmes, feeding schemes and inclusive education, multi-grade teachers need their own representative at district level.

The findings of the Ministerial Commission are echoed in the current findings, in terms of which teacher retraining is regarded as a viable solution, especially when it comes to multi-grade techniques and teaching methods. Textbooks specially adapted to the multi-grade setting should be provided. The retraining of multi-grade educators should include training district officers to give the necessary support to schools. All community-based organisations and programmes should be linked, so as to enable them to improve the supply of farm-based education. Such recommendations might have been accommodated by the redesign of district in July 2008, but it remains to be seen what the outcomes of the work of a multi-disciplinary team will have on schools.

3.2.3 Forgotten Schools

The research[41] into forgotten schools was undertaken in the Free State, Limpopo and Mpumalanga in 2003, and documented cases where the accessibility to, and availability of, schooling were compromised. Researchers visited 28 schools, and conducted interviews with educators, parents, learners, farm workers and farm owners. Interviews with the DoE, the various labour departments, land rights organisations, and social workers were also held. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child's definition of a child was applied, including anyone under the age of 18 years old.

The report covered such topics as the following: obstacles to the rights to education on commercial farms; the current legal status of farm schools; the rights of children living on commercial farms; and domestic and international legal obligations and recommendations. The experiences of those at the targeted schools was examined in relation to each of the topics, with a hands-on approach being in clear evidence in the report.

The study is framed by the legal (and political) approach that was followed in this study. *Forgotten schools* reveals the socio-economic and legal background to the related problems that rural and farm learners and educators experience. The report aligns itself with *The Provision of Education for Black Pupils in Rural Areas*, which appeared in 1986, and the 2000 DoE report *Education for All: The South African Assessment Report.* The various acts, such as the Extension of Security of Tenure Act of 1997 and the Land Reform Act of 1996, that had a bearing on the lives of

[41] The relevant research was conducted by Nobuntu Mbelle (African Division) and Tony Tate (Childrens' Right Division).

learners and educators at the time are examined in the course of the report. The *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* states: "Every child shall have the right to an education" (Article 11), which right is also expressed in the *U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

South Africa does not fall within the ambit of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which monitors compliance with the provisions and interpretations of the right to education. The report states in all cases that the South African government has failed to adhere to such treaties. With regards to farm schooling in particular, Human Rights Watch notes that the Constitutional Court cites the findings of the UN Committee in relation to the right to education,[42] stipulating that:

- The state itself should not hinder the enjoyment of the right to education.
- The state should take protective measures to prevent a third party from frustrating the enjoyment of the right.
- The state should steps to assist individuals and commu8nities to access this right (...).

(Human Rights Watch, 2004:46)

The Human Rights Watch also states that, in the case of the third party right in respect of those farm owners who might, or might not, have signed the Section 14 Agreement which regulates farm education, the government has failed to intervene.

The value of the report lies in the legal framework that it provides, as well as in the narratives of "evidents". In relation to the study, the term 'forgotten school' refers to education in general, with no mention being made of the curriculum or the curriculum design features, even in those cases in which educators or learners are quoted. How quality education is hampered is also not specified. The report focuses on such basic

[42] See Government of the Republic of South Africa and Others v Grootboom and Others 2001 (1) SA 46 (CC) (MCRE, 2005).

issues as water, food and sanitation. Though the legal imperatives regarding such situations have been adequately examined, the report fails to give an account of the specifics in regards to education. Accordingly, the study is a legal one, rather than an example of educational research. However, in conjunction with the current curriculum study, the report has the potential to provide a fuller content-rich picture of farm and rural education.

The Human Rights Watch starts its report with "The South African government is failing (...)" and concludes the (mostly legal) argument with:

> The legal framework put in place by the South African government is generally compliant with its international obligations. In practice, as this report documents, the implementation of these laws can fail to respond to the needs of poor pupils at farm schools. Frequently the specificities are not taken into account in the implementation of policy. The effect is a failure to fully guarantee the right to primary education for children living on commercial farms.
>
> (Human Rights Watch, 2004:50)

The report provides the researcher with the added imperative of seeing whether rural and farm educators fail to plan adequately to manage their schooling well.

3.2.4 Multi-grade Rural School Initiative (MGRSI)

Starting out, in 1999, as the Education Quality Improvement Partnership (EQUIP) initiative on the West Coast, which was run by the WCED and the National Business Initiative (NBI), the need for the Multi-grade Rural School Initiative was originally envisaged in the following terms:

> A systematic survey of the special needs of multi-grade schools was conducted during this period and led to a report that emphasized the urgency of an intervention in this domain.

Van As Jordaan was asked to plan and present two smaller pilot projects to do with multi-grade teaching. A committee undertook the international literature research concerned, which was piloted in 2001 in both Wellington and Piketberg by Van As

Jordaan and Hendrina Rossouw, a circuit manager. The project office opened on 1 April 2002 in Wellington. The second pilot project was set up in Piketberg by Jordaan and Johan Joubert, who was also a circuit manager. The two pilot projects led to a demonstration at WCED headquarters, and the formulation of a formal business plan. The second project was called an intervention rather than a project due to its 3-year life span. A total of 55 teachers participated in the first cycle, which ran from August 2002 to 5 December 2002.

The initiative was influenced by:

- the Multi-grade Education Conference, which was held in Canada in 1992;
- the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in Oregon, Canada; research funded by DFID (the Department for International Development) at the University of London;
- research conducted by Bruce Joyce (1999); and
- a visit to the University of Twente in 2000.

Prof. Mouton (of the University of Stellenbosch) developed the systematic logic model for the intervention.

The intervention was built on the following four pillars:

- a particular philosophy in relation to classroom management and instructional strategies;
- a particular interpretation of INSET;
- a strong emphasis on training and support to be provided by means of information and communication technology (ICT); and
- the value of mental Mathematics.

The MGRSI is the closest study to the current research, as it uses the same theory in respect of multi-grade. The following key areas were identified as target areas of the study:

- the configuration of learning spaces and classroom organisation;
- classroom routines and discipline;
- curriculum structuring and planning;
- teaching strategies;
- self-directed strategies; and
- peer tutoring.

The model suggested by the work of Bruce Joyce consists of the following:

- the presentation of theory;
- modelling and demonstrations;
- practice in a workshop setting, or under simulated conditions;
- structured feedback; and
- coaching for classroom application.

Various publications and practices influenced the intervention:

- Bert Moonen's 2001 online *Teacher Learning in In-service Networks*;
- Pat Maier and Adam Warren's *Integrating Technology in Learning and Teaching*; and
- the SLO's (Nederlandse Institute vir Leerplanontwikkeling) *Kinderen leren rekene* and *Jonge kinderen leren rekenen*, which were obtained during visits to the Institute in 1999 and 2001.

The overall aims of the intervention were to: "develop multi-grade teaching in rural primary schools through professional growth, resources and support to gain a measurable improvement in learners' performance in reading, writing and mental mathematic with a positive attitude under teachers towards lifelong learning." The

intervention has been successful, as was evident during the fieldwork undertaken for the curriculum-related research conducted for the present study into many different aspects of the four main pillars. The intervention is the nearest in intent to the work done by the current researcher.

Van As Jordaan has reported extensively on both the successes and the weak points of the intervention (Jordaan, 2003). It is the express purpose of the current study neither to evaluate the intervention, nor the progress made by its educators in terms of their multi-grade performance. By random chance, some of the sample schools have formed both part of the intervention and of the current study. However, the variable will be kept in mind during the analysis, with some teachers coming to benefit from the extra training in multi-grade planning provided in terms of the study. The basic assumption remains that the teachers have not been adequately trained as regards the implementation of either the NCSs, or in terms of multi-grade pedagogic practice. Table 3.1 below compares the two studies.

Table 3.1: MGRSI and curriculum delivery.

MGRSI	Curriculum delivery
Conducted within WCED structure	Independent study conducted at university
Fieldwork as part of workload	Fieldwork as part of studies
Selected schools ← overlap with →	Random sample schools
Initially run over 3 years (still active)	Conducted for limited period only
Wide-ranging in design and execution	Limited, with single design and aim
Intended as intervention	Intended as postgraduate degree study and fieldwork
Focus on multi-grade teaching and mental Maths	Focus on curriculum planning
Development of database for intervention	Use of the same database for fieldwork

3.2.5 Report of the Public Hearings on the Rights to Basic Education

After receiving a number of complaints relating to the right to basic education, the South African Human Rights Commission decided to hold public hearings to determine the validity of the complaints received. The methodology that was used

was a public hearing, which provided "a platform that contributes to the dialogue" in terms of section 184(2) of the Commission Act (Act No. 54 of 1994).

The public hearing provided an opportunity for those who did not make written submissions to come forward and express themselves. The public hearing was held from 12 to 14 October 2005 in Johannesburg. Among others, the panel consisted of Jody Human (chair), Commissioner Tom Manthata (SAHRC), Linda Chisholm (SAHRC) and Ms Thandi Chaane.

The legal framework for the hearing was the four As referred to by the UN Special rapporteur, Katrina Tomasevski, consisting of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability.

The issues comprising the hearing consisted of nine key elements:

- poverty;
- HIV/Aids;
- violence and abuse;
- (the lack of) inclusivity;
- infrastructure;
- educators;
- the language of learning and teaching;
- governance; and
- service and monitoring.

A detailed discussion of each of the grievances was presented in the report. Of the findings and recommendations presented in the report, the following are of special note to the current study:

- Farm schools need urgent attention.
- Poverty and dysfunctionality impact on education.
- Poor learners, who live far from schools need support.

- The drop-out rate is a cause for concern (Human Rights Commission, 2006:39–45).

The Commission found that the education of many children in South Africa, particularly of those in the rural and township schools, conformed neither to the requirements of the legislation governing education, nor to the policies of the national DoE. According to the Commission, "[t]here exist neither the capacity nor the humility in the national educational system to concede and indeed deliver on the deep inequalities in the provision of basic education in our country" (Human Rights Commission, 2006:18).

The Commission used both the Bill of Rights, as well as the EFA Dakar goals, to examine the nature of the right to education. The report is not a well-research scientific document, representing merely a compilation of complaints which it contextualised within the broader legal framework. In relation to the curriculum, the Commission refers to life orientation as one of the learning areas, as well as to the importance of a safe environment and the adaptability of education. Though it refers to the NCSs, it is clear that neither the complainants, nor the Commission, were capable of expertly examining the curriculum.

3.3 **Synthesis**

The samples in all the above-mentioned studies were small – *Emerging voices* had 4 332 respondents; the Ministerial Report considered 70 submissions, and conducted 30 interviews, Forgotten Schools surveyed 28 schools within its tight time schedule. The studies that presented the most noteworthy data were Jordaan's Intervention and Emerging Voices. The sampling methods used, which were not thoroughly explained, were problematic, due to the generativity of the findings and the substantiation of recommendations. However, it must be kept in mind that reports

and scientific investigations do not have the same research value. A report is a compilation of inputs that is transformed into a scientific framework. A qualitative scientific investigation is based on a research design using sampling in such a way that it yields findings that are of sufficient importance to be included in a database and new knowledge, which adds to the existing canon of knowledge about the research topic.

Anecdotes were used as a reference, in addition to UNESCO's definitions and the definitions of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The shortfall of such anecdotes is that they were taken as pockets of 'truths'. No textual, contextual or discourse analysis, or any other scientific method (e.g. coding) was used in the analysis. Such an approach is called naïve realism, which consists of a linear relationship between what was said and ontology. Since the studies were all qualitative in nature, the use of some such method was, in fact, called for.

The concept of 'education' was dealt with in generic terms, in the absence of any real definition. The subject of the curriculum was not dealt with in detail, with the hearings only containing seven reports on such. The result was that the field was not adequately covered. The common variables that was very prominent in all the studies were poverty and the rural, or farming, component. However, the relationship between the variables and education, teaching or the curriculum was not dealt with in detail. Consequently, a wide gap was left in the research discourse, which the current researcher hopes to fill by means of the present thesis.

The literature was chosen for the review on the grounds of its importance in the public domain, as it was sourced from the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Human Rights Commission, the Human Right Watch, the EPC, and the WCED (in the case of Jordaan's work). Another ground for being chosen was the fact that it covered the same discourse (relating to issues of poverty, rural or farm education) as does the current research. The literature covers many aspects of farm or rural teaching, such as quality education, rights and infrastructure, as well as a range of formats: hearings; narratives; interventions; and studies.

The following studies were not included in the review of South African research dealing with the curriculum:

- *Getting Learning Right: Report of the President's Education Initiative Research Project* (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999);
- *Curriculum: Action on Reflection Revisited* (Lovat & Smith, 1993);
- *Managing Educational Change, the State and School Reform in South Africa* (Fleisch, 2002);
- *The Quality of Primary Education in South Africa* (Chisholm, 2003);
- *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (ed. Jansen & Christie, 1999).

While the above are excellent studies, they mostly deal with Curriculum 2005 and the OBE, or adopted a different perspective, such as that of the non-educator, policy-maker. or outsider. The aim of the current research was to add to the canon of curriculum studies as a practising educator.

- Some international works,[43] among others, that were excluded from the review were: *Understanding Curriculum* by Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (2000); *Heuristic and Curriculum Theory* by Dr Otherine Neisler of Boston College;
- the presentation of seven doctoral students in the form of a Curriculum Theory Chart, which cites such thinkers as Kliebard, Schiro, Klein, DeMarrais, LeCompte, Marsh and Willis;
- *Thinking Again: Education after Postmodernism* by Nigel, Smeyers, Smith and Standish (1998);
- the work by Bergin and Garvey; and
- *The Curriculum: Problems, politics, and possibilities* by Beyer and Apple (1998).

If such studies had been reviewed, deviation from the primary aim of the current research, which was to explore the planning of actual multi-grade pedagogic practice, would have occurred.

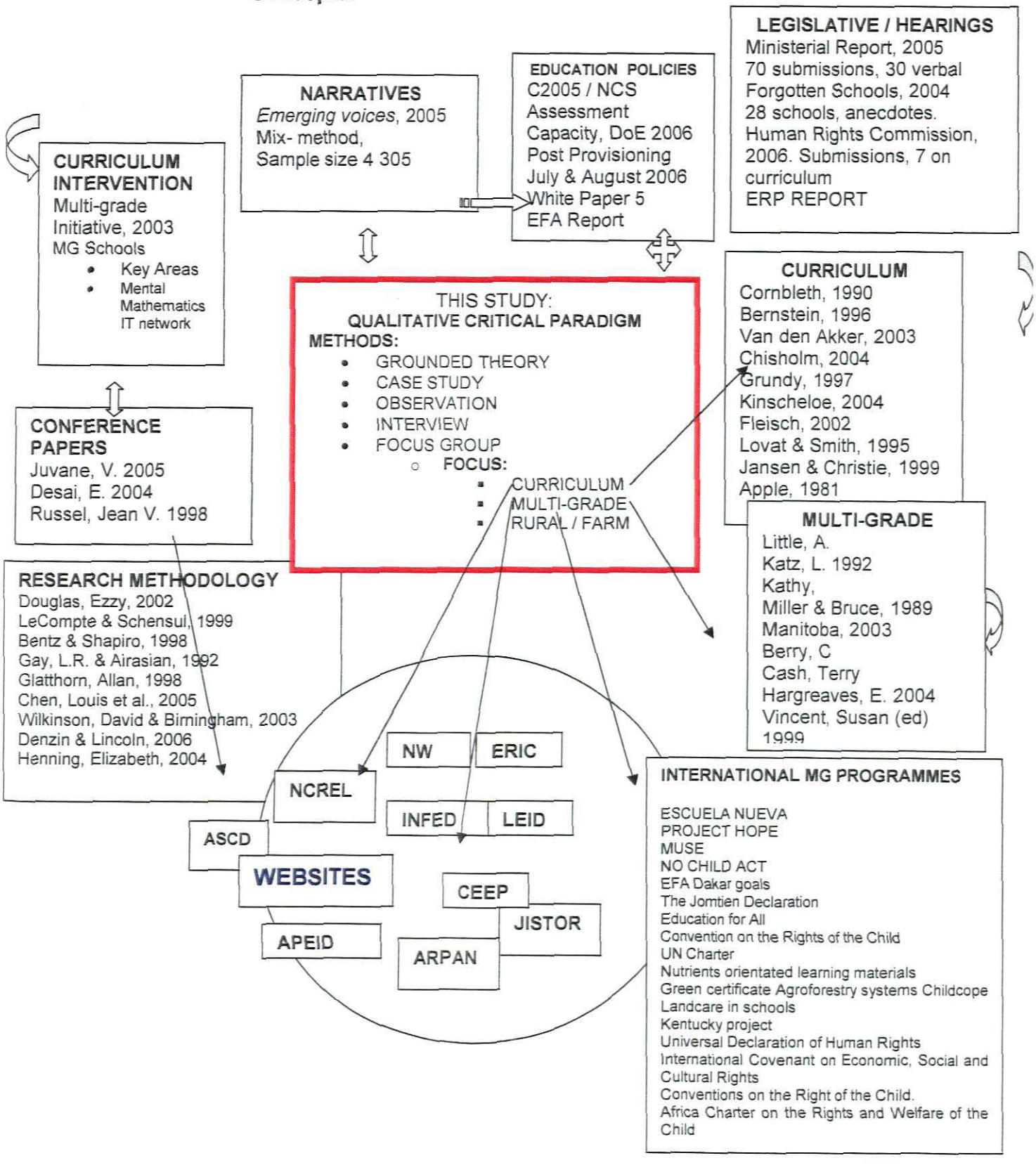
Figure 3.1 (below) presents a summary of the literature review which, if one were to look at the recommendations or conclusions of the studies reviewed, would all agree on various aspects of farm education: the poor social, physical and political context; the lack of social and educational support; and the need for policy or intervention. The figure also shows the discourse between international interventions and programmes.

Of all those studies to which reference has been made, Jordaan's Intervention Programme was most successful in intervening in the field of multi-grade education.

[43] The other works have not been listed, as they were not used in the study.

His programme has provided some teaching strategies, of which those for mental Mathematics have been the most helpful and necessary, in terms of considering the systemic evaluation that is required for remote, rural and farm schools. The fact that some of those problems that have been encountered at rural schools have led to a public hearing and the formation of a Ministerial Commission shows that there might well be a crisis in the offing. The blame for such a crisis is likely to be blamed on the educators concerned, rather than on insufficient funding or resources (see Subsection 3.2.5). Rather than bewailing the lack of cooperation between the community, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the farm owners, the current researcher would suggest that the government rather look at the benefits that can be gained from multi-grade pedagogic.

Figure 3.1: A literature discourse map: Literature review and main concepts.



The current study differs from the five chosen works in various ways:

- The researcher will use multiple methodologies (interviews, case study, focus group, grounded theory, observation) to obtain the data for the thick or rich description of multi-grade teaching.
- The various methods should help to validate or triangulate the findings.
- The researcher will use grounded theory within a critical paradigm.
- The study will be qualitative, making use of a small sample and in-depth discussions.
- Due to his wide-ranging experience and dealings with multi-grade educators, the various policy-makers and the current research, the author of the thesis will draw on his phronesic knowledge (resulting from the practical wisdom that he has gained as part of his multi-grade experience), as distinguished from epistemic knowledge.
- The study has been independently conducted, and is not a response to human right violations or to an intervention programme as such.

The study is intended to give voice to teachers' concerns with multi-grade education. Together with the other studies reviewed in the current chapter, the thesis is intended to present a comprehensive picture of rural and farm curriculum delivery.

CHAPTER FOUR
METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

As can be seen in the research question below, the current research will focus on the degree and manner in which the educators surveyed have adapted the curriculum and teaching strategies, particularly in terms of self-directedness and peer tutoring. All aspects are dealt with in an inductive, interactive and recursive way, which entails building theories, models or concepts and investigating in collaboration with the participants.

Due to the diversity within the critical paradigm, the work of Glaser and Anselm Strauss (*The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 1967; Glaser's *Theoretical Sensitivity*, 1978; Strauss's *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientist*, 1987; Strauss and Corbin's book *Basic of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, 1990), as interpreted by Kathy Charmaz in Denzin and Lincoln (2006) forms the backbone of the interpretation of the methodology. Other theorists' work that will be drawn from is that of Douglas Ezzy, Michael Apple, Cornbleth, Henning and Bernstein.

4.2 Research design

The research questions are:

A. How do farm/rural teachers of multi-grade classes design/ reorganise their curriculum planning (of the intended curriculum) when using the National Curriculum Statements? (Such a question falls within the ambit of exploratory critical research.)
B. Can the South African educator's response to farm school multi-grade teaching be called multi-grade teaching in the same sense as the

international definition of such teaching? Such a question falls within the ambit of applied research.

The questions could be split up into sub-questions, as follows:

A. Do the multi-grade teachers concerned do separate planning (learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans) per grade or per phase, and is such planning official or unofficial?

B.1. How are the instructional practices modified to suit the multi-grade classes concerned?

B.2. How do the multi-grade teachers organise their classroom?

B.3. Do the teachers plan to use peer tutors?

B.3. How do the teachers plan to group their classes?

The product of such questions will be a high-quality interpretive reconstruction of curriculum delivery as it takes place in farm and rural schools. The terms 'inductive' and 'deductive' require clarification. The researcher agrees with Ezzy's conclusion in respect of the following:

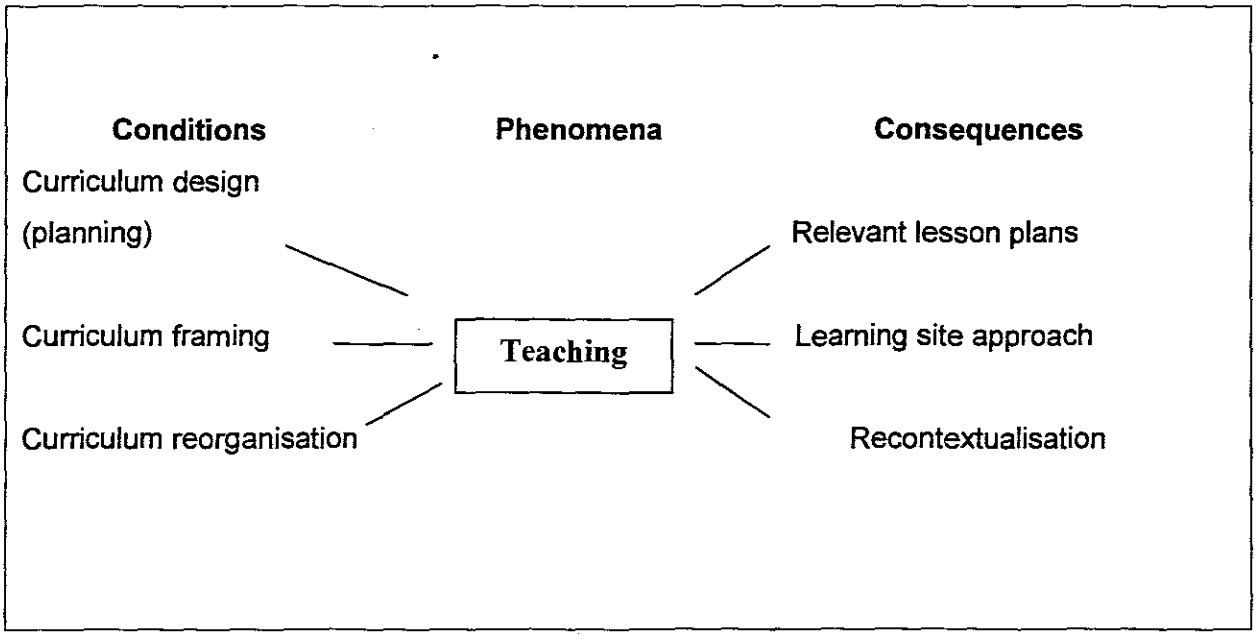
> The researcher should enter into an ongoing simultaneous process of deduction and induction, of theory building, testing and rebuilding (...) The danger identified by grounded theory are twofold: either, through overemphasizing theoretical deduction, the researcher will not be prepared to reformulate theories in response to new evidence or an overemphasis on inductive theory grounded in 'data' will result in a failure to be explicit about the preexisting theoretical sources of ideas.
>
> (Ezzy, 2002:10)

The researcher begins the study with a broad idea of what multi-grade teaching entails, and how reorganisation of the curriculum should take place in respect of such teaching. The appropriate concepts, categories and themes are developed in terms of the given topic. The deductive theory used in the study was derived from general propositions. At the start of the research, the theory was 'tested' by means of inductive observation and empirical data collection. Such theory is, in turn, infused by abduction: "a form of synthetic knowledge that introduces new knowledge through the generation of new hypothesis" (Ezzy, 2002:14). According to Pierce, "... abduction followed by induction and deduction involved a complex process of

inference, insight, empirical observation and logical reasoning. This shuttling back and forth between general propositions and empirical data is central to the process of discovery" (cited in Ezzy, 2002:15).

To illustrate such goals, a conditional matrix is used in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Curriculum delivery.



The topic of multi-grade teaching has been expanded upon to illustrate what conditions are conducive to good teaching. Such teaching is the opposite of the concept of a pedagogy of poverty (which amounts to poor teaching), which is a term of reference that is used in the analysis of the data presented in Chapter 5. The process sets the conditions for the next phase, which are illustrated in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2: Multi-grade teaching.

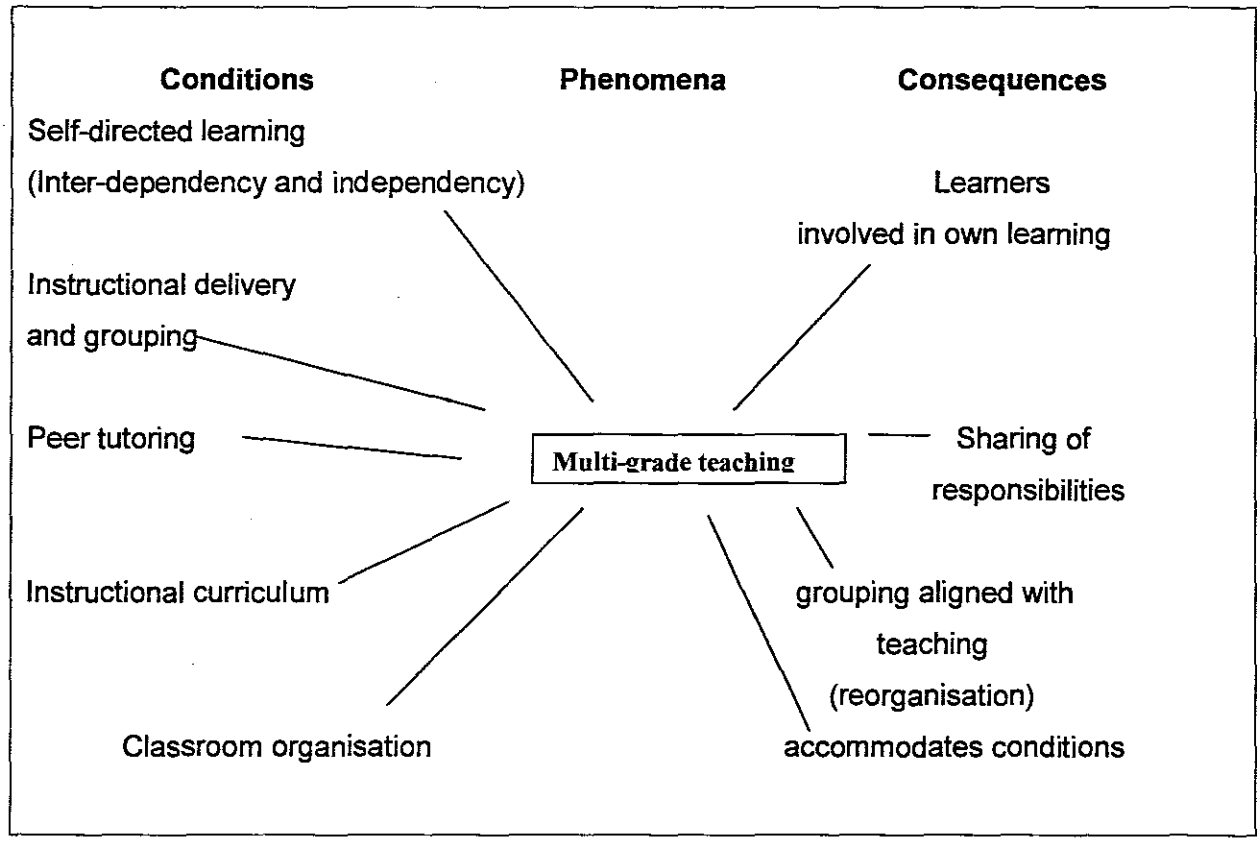


Figure 4.2 depicts 'normal' multi-grade pedagogy, based on the texts discussed in Chapter Two. The findings of the research, which relate to the ways in which rural educators adapt their pedagogy to suit South African learners, are covered in Chapter Six.

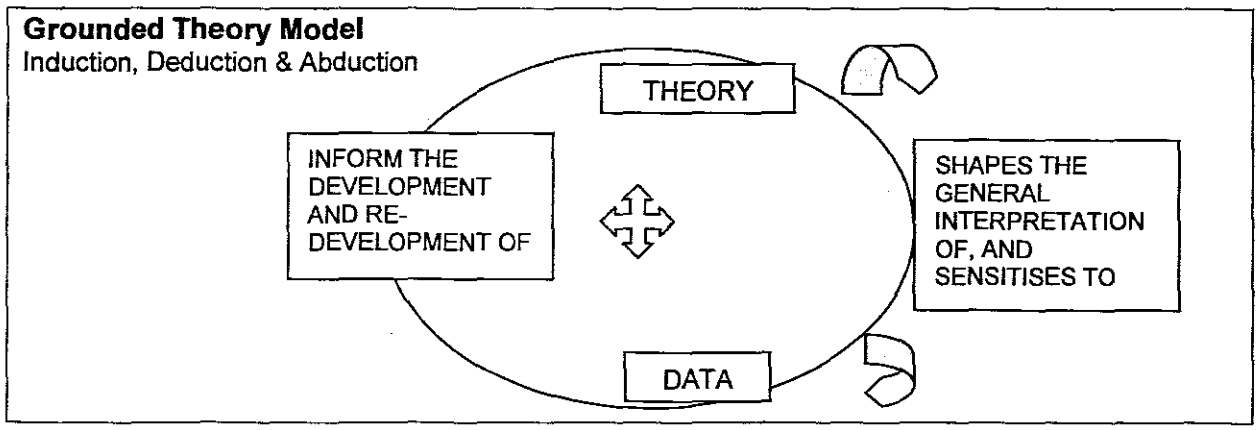
To reach such goals, the researcher used inductive, interactive, recursive and analytic strategies, framing human behaviour and beliefs within their context in order to construct a theory of curriculum delivery. All the aspects covered were used to build understanding, models or concepts, which were investigated in collaboration with the participants involved in the study.

The researcher was guided by the experience of data gathering, as well as by his knowledge of the categories of curriculum delivery and curriculum re-organisation, in his search for appropriate categories. The data which were collected during the first phase (which consisted of the observation and interview) were informed by the existing categories, allowing for the exploration of even more categories, and the discarding of some, which were discovered to be of little relevance to the current study. During the second phase, the process was repeated. On completion of the necessary observation and unstructured interviewing, the theory was revisited, clarified, and modified.

The same method was followed at each school, with the relevant theory being revisited and reexamined as the research progressed, constituting a form of recursive analysis (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Merriman, 1988, cited in LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Creswell's grounded theory, and Charmaz cited in Henning et al., 2004:47–49:114, and Glaser, cited in Ezzy, 2002:10). According to Shensul (1998):

> Recursivity refers to the cyclic nature of this kind of analysis; it moves back and forth between inductive analysis – which uses specific items to build more general explanatory statements – and deductive analysis – which applies general explanatory statements to groups or specific items.
> (cited in LeCompte & Schensul 1999:15). (See also Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:509).

Figure 4.3: The research model.



Source: Ezzy, 2002:13.

Inductive theories are built up by means of observations made during systematic empirical data collection, with one set of data illuminating another, and seeing what patterns emerged. Deductive theories are logically derived, more general propositions, which narrow down in application from a general rule to specific cases.

The concern is whether, in terms of the culture of curriculum delivery, the rural educator changes the curriculum to suit the needs of the rural learner and the approach that is centred around multi-grade teaching, or neglects to do so.

From the systemic test[44] results obtained so far, the conclusion can be drawn that the current form of teaching is not as effective as it should be (see DoE, 2003). Such one-size-fit-all tests have had a negative impact on education in general, and on rural education in particular. Remote farm and rural schools delivered the worst results, showing that the form of education that they offered was inadequate. Such results have, since then, been widely publicised, with it becoming politically correct to blame

[44] Systemic test are national tests in Numeracy and Literacy, which test whether the set outcomes have been obtained. The results of pilot tests that were sent to schools in September 2003 were kept secret from 2003 to 2007. Rural and remote farm schools were found to do worst in the tests.

rural education for the poor results obtained. Most of the schools concerned were multi-grade. Such an assumption is ironic, since, as was discussed in Chapter One, multi-grade schools in other countries have received renewed attention, due to their successes and the benefits that they provide for both teachers and learners. Despite the test instrument acknowledging its weaknesses in terms of neither taking context into account, nor weighting schools, current literacy and numeracy teaching practices have been under fire since the results were first published.

Though various aspects can influence the process of multi-grade teaching, the current study focuses on only two aspects of such teaching: curriculum modification, and multi-grade teaching pedagogic or strategies. In line with such a focus, and in discourse with international multi-grade practice, a theory or generalisation of how multi-grade is practised in the Breede River / Overberg District, as well as in South Africa as a whole, will emerge.

4.2.1 Sample, participants and population

4.2.1.1 Prevalence of multi-grade schools in South Africa

The data on multi-grade schools are scarce and often conflicting. The National DoE estimates the following:

> Around 8% of learners in the country are in schools where some multi-grade teaching takes place. Around 4,5% of learners are in multi-grade classes. This figures varies greatly between provinces, from 9,4% in the Eastern Cape to 0,7% in Gauteng (...) it is important to note that although only around 4,5% of learners are at any point in time in multi-grade classes, a full 30% of schools are forced to practice multi-grade teaching.
>
> (DoE, 2006:8)

Joubert estimates the 30% of schools cited above as catering for "more than 4600 country wide and possibly 600000 children who visit these schools" (Joubert, 2006:6). As shown in Table 4.1 below, the current study can be justified in terms of the number

of learners who are adversely affected by the neglect of multi-grade schools in South Africa.

Data on the number of multi-grade school differ because of the following reasons:

- the lack of research that has so far been conducted into rural education;
- whether the principal concerned, based on the number of posts allocated to the school, decides on combining classes, as well as how many classes are to be combined, or whether an additional school-governing body post will be added to minimise the number of multi-grade classes, which is a situation that might change in the space of a year; and
- the focus on mono-grade urban schools.

The only planning that seems to be done in relation to schools is that which relates to mono-grade teaching. Multi-grade schools seem to be marginalised, with what is expected from mono-grade schools also tending to be expected from multi-grade schools. Such unrealistic expectations also add to the prevailing administrative confusion and curricular disarray. The current study uses the national DoE's statistics, as well as those of Jordaan (2003), since he conducted research into many of the schools.

Table 4.1: Prevalence of multi-grade schools in South Africa.

PROVINCE	MULTI-GRADE SCHOOLS (%)	ALL LEARNERS (%)	LEARNERS (%)
Eastern Cape	42,5	20,3	9,5
Free State	58,5	6,2	5,0
Gauteng	5,2	1,5	0,7
KwaZulu-Natal	24,6	8,4	4,4
Limpopo	19,4	6,0	3,2
Mpumalanga	33,6	6,9	5,0
Northern Cape	35,9	8,0	4,6
North-West	29,6	7,4	4,5
Western Cape	**27,3**	**5,4**	**3,2**
South Africa	30,6	8,6	4,6

Source: DoE, August 2006:34, data for 2004/2005 period.

The second column ('Multi-grade schools') in Table 4.1 above indicates the proportion of schools in South Africa that are currently multi-grade. The third column ('all learners') indicates the proportion of learners who attend a school that has to do some multi-grade teaching. As the source of such data is a working document, such figures are not necessarily accurate. In reality, around 9% of learners are currently estimated to be in multi-grade classes.

'Forced multi-grade' is seen as "teaching more than one grade in the same class as a result of there being more grade groups than educators" (DoE, 2006:5). Such a definition holds true for the current situation, since determining on whether to allow for the teaching of multi-grade is an internal arrangement made by the principal of the school in each case. The figures used in this section of the thesis are basically used to show that many learners and educators are affected by multi-grade.

Table 4.1 clearly indicates which provinces are 'farm/rural' – the Free State and the Eastern Cape. Most previous research into multi-grade teaching has taken place in these provinces. The Western Cape was chosen for the present study, due to the limited number of such studies that have taken place in the province in the past, as

the literature review shows. The figures relating to multi-grade teaching in the district under consideration are presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Multi-grade statistics relating to the rural districts.

EMDC / CONFIGURATION / STAFF INDICATION	GRs. 1–6	GRs. 1–3 4–6	GRs. 1 2–3 4–6	GRs. 1–3 4–5 6–7	GRs. 1 2–3 4–5 6–7	GRs. 1–2 2–3 4–5 6–7	GRs. 1–2 3 4–5 6–7	GRs. 1–2 3–4 5–6	OTHER	
				LARGER SCHOOLS						
West Coast / Winelands	7	28	2	3	9	7	1	10	6	36%
Breede River / Overberg	**6 13%**	**39 86%**	**3 6,6%**	**5 11%**	**8 17%**	**7 15%**	**0 0%**	**19 42%**	**4 8%**	**45% 223**
South Cape / Karoo	12	37	2	7	5	3	3	15	0	41%
TOTAL	25	106	5	15	23	16	3	45	10	496

Source: Jordaan, 2003.

The figures in Table 4.2 above apply only to the specific year in question, as they change each year, in keeping with the 'basket' number of posts available and allocated to the schools. Such a situation is also reflected in the heading 'Other' of the last column. The indication of 'larger schools' is based on the number of learners, the teacher: learner ration and the number of grades (classes and grade sections) in the school. On what basis Jordaan selected such figures is unclear. The current researcher chose them on the grounds that Jordaan worked actively with the schools involved. The Breede River / Overberg area clearly has the largest concentration of multi-grade schools in the rural districts. The configuration of grades 1 to 3 and grades 4 to 6, which is typically that of schools with only two educators, is the configuration of the large majority of schools (86%). How the principals concerned decided on which classes to combine is unclear. Two principles might have applied: the number of teachers, in relation to the number of learners in a class. The principals might have considered the availability of quality teachers and their

experience. The current study focused on such a configuration, due to its high frequency of occurrence, as well as the fact that they were the most vulnerable to difficulties in coping with the curriculum. What is clear in respect to the combination of grades is the fact that the principals concerned do not tend to make the decision based on pedagogical grounds. An overview of the sample schools is given in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Sample schools data.

Name of school	Configuration / No. of learners	Comment on school
La Plaisante Primary	Grades 1 to 3	A typical 3- to 4- person small* poor school, situated near a rural town.
Drosdy Primary	Grades 1 to 3	Remote rural small poor school, situated on a farm. Relatively good conditions, but poorly staffed, with little support.
Tweejongen Gezellen	Grades 2 to 3	Situated on a farm with very poor conditions.
Laerskool Breerivier	Grades 2 to 3	Ex-model C school, with white learners and staff. Relatively good conditions and more educators. A remote farm school.
Montrouge Primary	Combined intermediate phase	Remote rural school, attended by farm-based learners. Small and poor.
Irish Quela	Grades 1 to 3	Black rural school near De Doorns. Relatively good conditions. Large** school.
Laerskool Koue Bokkeveldt	Grades 2 to 3	Wealthy, well-supported white school. Large and well staffed. Remote rural school, attended by farm learners.

Name of school (cont.)	Configuration / No. of learners (cont.)	Comment on school (cont.)
Rietfontein Primary	Grades 1 to 3	Small, poor farm school. Remote, in idyllic setting on farm.
De Meul Primary	Grades 1 to 3	Small, poor remote farm school. Situated away from all farm activities.
Tandfontein Primary	Grades 1 to 3	Deeply remote rural school. Small. Poor farm learners, but well-supported school. SGB staff.
W.F. Loots Primary	Grades 1–2, 2–3, 4–5	Large poor, community-based school. Adequate staff, but poorly supported. Afrikaans and Xhosa learners.

Note: *Small = 1 to 100 learners, staffed by between 3 and 4 educators.
**Large = 100 to 700 learners, staffed by 6 to 21 educators.
Average ratio for all schools: 39 learners: 1 educator.

The schools concerned were selected randomly from the Breede River population of multi-grade schools. The following applies in respect of the sample schools (11 out of 223 multi-grade schools: 24,5%):

- One former Department of Education and Training school (Irish Quela) is included in the sample.
- One school (W.F. Loots) is a typical Afrikaans school, with a Xhosa–Afrikaans parallel-medium (LoTL) system.
- Two of the schools (Laerskool Breeriver and Laerskool Koue Bokkeveldt) are former Department and Education (ex-model C) schools.
- Seven of the schools (La Plaisante; Drosdy; Tweejongen Gezellin; Rietfontein; De Meul; and Tandfontein) are small (with a learner enrolment of fewer than 100).
- Three of the schools (W.F. Loots; Irish Quela; and Laerskool Breeriver) are large, with a learner enrolment of more than 400).
- Three of the schools (La Plaisante; W.F. Loots; and Laerskool Breede River) are located near small towns.
- Seven of the schools (La Plaisante; Drosdy; Tweejongen Gezellin; Rietfontein; De Meul; and Tandfontein) are remote farm schools, with all of the schools being situated in rural areas.

Table 4.3 appears to show that the sample has been stratified, in that subgroups appear to have been identified or included in the same proportion in which they exist

in the actual population. However, such was not the case, with the sampling involved being simple random. The occurrence, frequency and randomness of the samples might explain why the results seem to have been stratified, making the study appear more credible.

The participants in the study were multi-grade rural or farm educators in the Breede River / Overberg District.[45] From the total number (population: 223) indicated below, a random selected group of 11 schools was chosen, with the first school being used for an unstructured interview and for observation, and another group being used for structured interviews. Random selection took place from a list of the names of all the schools, from which each alternate school was selected, with the process being repeated until the names of only 11 schools were left on the list. Some of the schools were found to have discontinued multi-grade classes at the time of the study.

The first priority of the researcher was to ascertain the perspectives and planning of the foundation phase educators concerned, as they had received the most training in both Curriculum 2005 and NCS. They also had had the most experience (since 2003) in the planning of the curriculum. The educators were randomly selected, with no other variable, such as training, age, community support, gender, or years of experience, being taken into account. Some classes were found to accommodate all three grades, whereas others accommodated merely two grades.

Whether the configuration, or any other variable, influenced the delivery or planning involved is debatable. The assumption is that it might have had an influence (such as the larger the age difference, the better co-operative learning would be). However,

[45] The name of the educational district has since been changed, but the relevant data were collected in, and during, the previous EMDC dispensation.

such a difference would only have been in the degree of difficulty concerned. For example, teaching at a school with only one educator accommodating grades one to six would be much more difficult than teaching at a school with two or three educators. However, all educators were found to have to design and adapt their planning and teaching in terms of the official requirements. Such planning included that for the phase (consisting of the compilation of learning programmes); that for the grade (consisting of the compilation of work schedules); and that for the lesson (consisting of weekly or fortnightly planning).

Other factors that might render such schools vulnerable were:

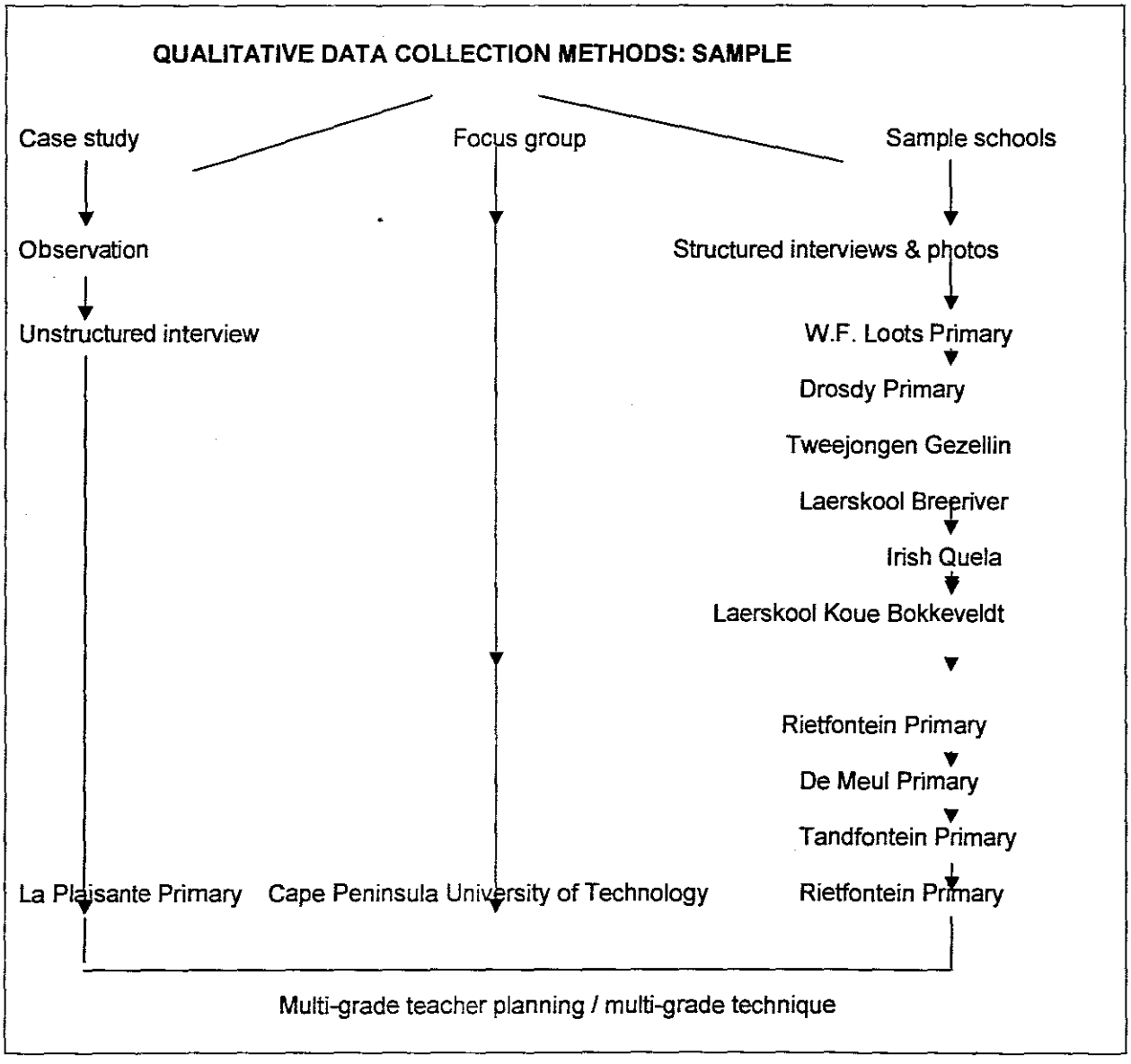
- All of the schools are small farm or rural schools, which are subject to high levels of migration, due to the seasonal nature of the work done by the parents.
- After the closure of one-person schools, such schools were considered the second most likely group to be closed down, or amalgamated.
- Wherever possible (such as when they were on the same government transport route as a nearby school), such schools have, in fact, since the study been closed down or amalgamated (resulting in the re-routing of the learners involved).
- They are often situated the furthest from the district offices concerned, so that they tend to receive the least support and fewest number of visits.
- Distance from other schools often means that there is less contact with the larger schools, and less access to INSET opportunities.
- Due to the need to travel to any INSET, whenever the educators concerned are required to attend training, the school, as a whole, must close.

The final product of the study, which is discussed in Chapter Five, is a holistic cultural portrayal of how farm school educators make sense of the curriculum.

The multi-grade theory that is generated by the current research should be applicable to a much wider field than the three rural farm districts concerned. The researcher will

use rigorous methods and data collection techniques in the study to avoid any bias and to ensure the accuracy, credibility and validity of the research.

Figure 4.4: Sample schools and methods.



4.2.1.2 Instruments and procedure.

4.2.1.3 Grounded theory

The grounded theory methods (deemed the best method for the current research), especially as proposed by Charmaz (2006), will serve as systematic inductive guidelines for data collection and analysis. The researcher will maintain the position of a critical theorist. The assumption of a critical stance entails the realisation of

multiple social realities and a mutual construction of meaning. The basic idea is that the 'theory' must be grounded in data. The data cannot be based on the basis of pre-conceived ideas. The systematic collection of data, or continuous comparison, should guide theory.

The strategies that are operational in terms of grounded theory include the following:

(a) simultaneous collection of data and analysis of data;
(b) a two-step data coding process;
(c) comparative methods;
(d) memo-writing, aimed at the construction of conceptual analyses;
(e) sampling to refine the researcher's emerging theoretical ideas; and
(d) integration of the theoretical framework.

(Charmaz, 2006:511)

Grounded theory is specific regarding analytic strategies, but not regarding data collection methods. The following tables summarise the methods and theoretical underpinnings that will be used in the study.

4.2.1.4 Synchronising epistemological underpinnings, procedure and methodology

Choosing a paradigm becomes like setting parameters (in terms of width and depth), since each paradigm dictates, to a certain degree, its own guiding epistemology, axiology, ontology and methodology. However, within any one paradigm there are many different variations that, in the case of the current study, consist of a selection of what best suited the research.

The selection has been derived from the sources mentioned. In each case, the description was adapted to the study. An alignment between the various aspects was seen as being more important than a full description of each aspect.

Such alignment would help with the triangulation of the findings and the credibility of the research. In hindsight, it must be said that to adhere to the 'correct' content of each aspect in the actual fieldwork is a nightmare, unless it becomes part of your research personality. The results are given in Table 4.4a below.

Table 4.4a: Synchronising epistemological underpinnings.

Epistemology	Procedures	Process	Goals	Focus
Critical Science: Educator, as defined by the hegemonic structure. Origin of knowledge: differential access to knowledge regarding historical context, political and social conditions.	Defined by researcher. Coding by both researcher and educators. Constant comparison.	Achieving of change in perception of multi-grade. Promotion of multi-grade techniques.	Analysis of results to unmask multi-grade practice. Development of an emancipating perspective.	Structural asymmetries regarding mono- and multi-grade education. Critical consciousness in respect of multi-grade teaching, meaning and assumptions. Patterns of oppression. Explanation of variance and bias.

Source: Adapted from: Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:166; Henning et al., 2004:138; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999:59.

The epistemology of critical theory was applied in presenting the historic perspective of the research problem in Chapter One. The procedures employed will be further elaborated on in tables 4.4b and 4.4c, in which a procedure is synchronised with the specific objective and method used. The goals and focus have been highlighted in the section on research questions in Chapter Two.

Table 4.4b: Synchronising epistemological underpinnings (cont.).

Values	Ontology	Quality criteria	Methods
Emancipation; empowerment; social change; egalitarianism; enlightenment.	Historical realism – virtual reality shaped by social and political values	Historical situatedness; erosion of ignorance and misapprehensions.	Participatory; case study; focus group interviews.

Source: Adapted from Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:166; Henning et al., 2004:138; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999:59.

Research needs to be undertaken into rural education. Those principals involved with multi-grade teaching need to emancipate themselves from their current marginalised position, becoming sufficiently empowered to be able to use their contextual circumstances to the advantage of curriculum delivery.

The multi-grade setting and the rich farm and rural environment provide such an advantage. The ontology of principals of schools in these areas needs to grasp the benefits to be gained from their position, and they need to turn the ideology of poor rural education around. Such an about turn of the situation is what is meant by the alignment of ontology and quality criteria. The various methods are in alignment with grounded theory, and adhere to the criteria of the triangulation of methods (see Figure 4.4). Such methods will be further explained in Table 4.4c, with the objective of each method being shown.

Table 4.4c: Synchronising epistemological underpinnings (cont.).

Foundation relationship	Ethics	Control
Critical theorist tends towards foundational perspectives. Rather than locating foundational truths 'out there' locating truths in specific historical, economic, educational and other infrastructures, or false consciousness of multi-grade.	Intrinsic (regarding perception of multi-grade) tilt toward revelation of benefits of multi-grade.	Shared between inquirer and participants.

Source: Adapted from Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:166; Henning et al., 2004:138; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999:59.

In the discussion of the historic development of education for both learners and teachers, a foundational truth was sought in relation to political, economic and ideological changes. The existing ideology surrounding multi-grade teaching was juxtaposed against international tendencies, to show that such teaching could be beneficial.

In the case of two-person schools, at which grades are shared, teachers might even be forced to make use of other, older learners to help with the teaching. The compulsion to seek such help is often due to the same amount of administration being expected from them, as from teachers at larger, better resourced schools.

Both the researcher and the researched are responsible for the coding performed in relation to the current study, as defined by the epistemology. The goals of the study are to inform the researched about multi-gradedness and to empower the educator to use multi-grade techniques. The pursuance of such goals will lead to the formulation of an ethical code that will reveal the benefits of multi-grade pedagogy.

4.2.1.5 Qualitative epistemology and methods

The adoption of a critical approach to the study seems to be the best way of determining what inequalities exist between mono- and multi-grade teaching, as well as what disparities exist between multi-grade schools. The adoption of such an approach also allows for exploring of the hegemonic role of district officers, circuit managers and curriculum advisors, as well as delivery at local school level.

The various methods, with their accompanying objectives, are shown in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Synchronising qualitative epistemology and methods

Qualitative approaches	Objectives	Methods
Grounded theory	Simultaneous data collection and coding	Participatory coding, constant comparisons
Case study	Characteristics of multi-grade curriculum teaching	Participant observation, unstructured interview, observation
Sample interviews	Cultural patterns of adapting the curriculum	Individual structured interviews

Membership categorisation analysis – Focus group interview	Discourse between practice and theory and group dynamics.	Membership categorisation analysis, coding & analysis, elicitation methods

Source: Adapted from Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:166; Henning et al., 2004:138; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999:59.

The synchronising of the approaches, objectives and methods (as shown in Table 4.5 above) is aimed at strengthening the findings and ensuring the coherency of the methodology. Each approach should, with its particular method, provide data to be verified in terms of another (vertical) approach. Such verification relates to issues of validity, accuracy and credibility.

4.2.1.6 Data management: Analytic pendulum

All data will be treated as text, as words (the signifiers) derive their meaning (the signified) in relation to other signs (the signifiers)[46]. Collecting the data, and comparing it with the grounded theory and coding, will take place immediately (see Subsection 3.2.3.9). The coding will be done line by line, in an attempt to look for "processes, actions, assumptions and consequences" (Ryan & Russel, 2006:780). The outcome of such a continuous comparison method will be neither the grounded theory itself, nor the data itself, as in the case of naïve realism,[47] or 'haecceity',[48] but rather the discourse between the two. Lemke refers to such discourse as covariation.

Spoken language only becomes data if the researchers transcribe, present or recontextualise it into text (Bernstein, 1990; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The

[46] See Saussure (1974) and Wittgenstein (1968), cited by David Silverman in eds. Denzin and Lincoln, 2006:822.
[47] The use of such a method is in contrast to that used by Miller and Glassner (1997), who try to see the world through the eyes of the researched, sharing authenticity in relation to ontology, see also Gubrium, 1993; Voysey, 1975, cited in eds. Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:824.
[48] The "just-thisness" of Lynch & Bogen (1994), cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:493.

interviews consist of large bodies of utterances (including enunciation / enonce) or instantiations, which allow for comparisons to be made between texts. Covariation between the texts allows for the appearance of patterns. Such textual analysis is also contextual, such as in a classroom or in various classrooms, with the schools providing the interrelatedness, juxtapositioning or intertextuality (discourse) that takes place.

According to Williams (1977, cited in Fairclough, 1999), "Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is based upon a view of semiosis as an irreducible element of all material social processes." Hilary Janks states the following dimensions of discourse:

- the object of analysis (verbal, visual, or both);
- the processes by means of which the object is produced (...) and received (...); and
- the social-historic conditions which govern the processes.

According to Fairclough (cited in Janks, 2005:97-110), each of the following dimensions requires a different kind of analysis:

- text analysis (description);
- processing analysis (interpretation); and
- social analysis (explanation).

Fairclough's CDA model forms the basis of meaning making in relation to the data gathered in respect of the current research. Table 4.6 below provides a synopsis of the data management methods employed. Chapter Five contains the description, interpretation and explanation of the data obtained.

Table 4.6: Data management methods.

Method	Purpose	Target	Procedure	Data content
Case study – observation	Records multi-grade in action Non-casual, explanatory	Classroom teaching	Structured form, field notes, tape recorder, photographs	Physical setting, acts, interaction, meanings, spatial actions
Sample interviews	Planning, implementing and adapting multi-grade	Multi-grade teachers	Structured interviews	Transcripts on multi-grade pedagogy
Focus group	Pedagogy of multi-grade	ACE multi-grade practitioners	Interview Membership categorisation	Local and international multi-grade theory (grounded)

Source: Adapted from Denzin & Lincoln, 2006; Gay & Airasian, 2003; eds. Henning et al., 2003; Le Compte & Schensul, 1999.

Table 4.6 above depicts how the methodology is aligned with the various purposes and targets of the current study. Each method has its own purpose. The different methods, therefore, are not duplications, but serve the aim of both triangulation and comparisons.

In the final interpretation, the data analysis will consist of content, discourse and narrative analysis. In terms of such analysis, the fine detail will provide information regarding meaning making, the forming of patterns (categories), and connections of understanding and explanation, allowing for the interpretation of the relation between theory and patterns.

In content analysis, the emphasis falls on coding and patterns. In discourse analysis, the focus is on how language and other signs (the signifiers) are used, as well as on the system of meaning (the social structures and action) from which the participant draws. Discourse as a social practice refers to:

- genres (ways of acting);
- discourse (way of representing);

- styles (ways of being);
- acting, representing and being;
- different genres as ways of (inter-)acting in discourse;
- different discourses representing the same area of the world from different perspectives; and
- style as discourse – constituting particular ways of being - of identifying oneself (Janks Hilary, 2005).

How the rural multi-grade educator's identity comes about is by way of acting, representing and being. The discursive constitution of such an identity is discussed in the final analysis in Chapter Five of the current thesis. The dialectics of discourses lies in the fact that the actor derives three types of meaning from such discourses, namely actional, identificational and representational.

Discourses (of teaching) are socially constituted, as well as socially conditioned – they constitute the reality (of teaching). Such rule-governed behaviour relates to a chain of similar realities that presents itself as forms of knowledge, in a cross-articulation of ideologies and hegemonies. The discourse of teaching, in relation to the teaching that takes place on a farm or in a rural area, leads to the reality and identity of the farm or rural educator. Such a reality and identity relates to the discourse of the multi-grade educator (in reference to the phenomena discussed).

In the data, discourse makers can be named (identified) and their patterns of meaning making explained. The various methods will be combined, using the same set of data, with different ones being used to obtain alternative perspectives, as well as to enhance the reliability and validity of the research concerned.

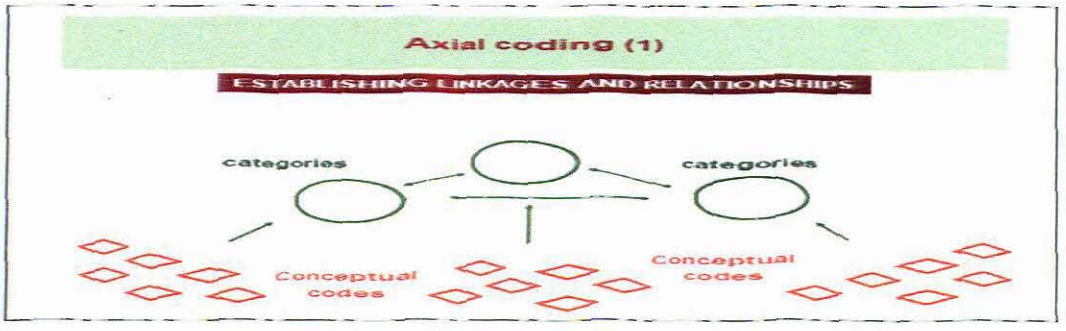
4.2.1.7 Procedure: Coding data, analysis and interpretation

As part of the interpretation, and as a form of explanation, the following strategies will be applied as part of the grounded theory. Cases will be systematically reconstructed in respect to the research topic.

4.2.1.7.1 Axial coding

Axial coding entails making connections between categories and sub-categories; between their context and action or interaction; and between the strategy processes and consequences (Ezzy, 2002:91).

Figure 4.5: Axial coding.



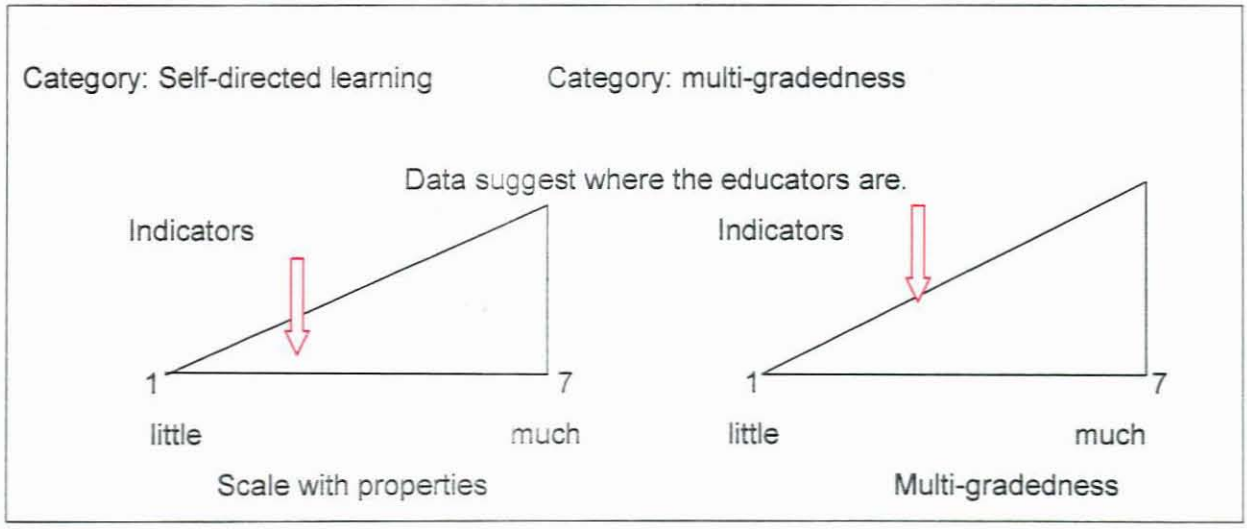
Source: NVIVO.

In Figure 4.5 above, the core categories of multi-grade teaching will be used, with the sub-categories of the data being examined. Comparisons between schools, practice and theory will be made to see whether the conceptual codes repeat themselves among the different schools concerned. (See Figure 4.5 for the categories involved.)

The question is whether such categories resonate in the practice of multi-grade teaching, or whether new categories are discovered. If such resonance is established, a degree of multi-gradedness, or aspects thereof, might be found. Such dimensionalisation would enable the properties concerned to be split up into

dimensions that lie along a continuum. The identified profiles can then be expanded into the defining properties of a category.

Figure 4.6: Dimensionalisation.



4.2.1.7.2 Conditional matrix

From the data, a conditional matrix was developed to determine whether multi-grade techniques are practised, as well as under what conditions, if they are. The conditional matrix is seen as "an analytic diagram that maps the range of conditions and consequences related to the phenomenon 'an ... if, then – model'" (Ryan & Russel, 2006:783). An example of such a matrix has been provided in Chapter Two.

The (multi-grade) model depicts those conditions that gave rise to categories, their contexts, their social interactions, and their consequences. Explicit selections between codes enable the checking of the fit between practice (reality) and multi-grade theory. The focus group, with their extensive collective experience of 312 years, would provide clear links between coding and empirical reality. The focus group was not asked to respond to the research questions, but in terms of the various categories. The ethnographic decision models (EDMs) comprise the

qualitative causal analysis that predicts behavioural choices under specific circumstances (Gatewood, 1983; Gladwin, 1971; Quinn, 1978, cited in eds. Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:788).

4.2.1.7.3 Membership categorisation

Membership categorisation analysis (in accordance with Sacks, 1992b, 2006:826; Silverman, 1998b; Watson, 1997, cited in eds. Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:827) "aim[s] to find out how they go about choosing among the available set of categories for grasping some event". Such analysis took place with the focus group after the sample school interviews had been conducted. How the group made meaning was in reference to questions regarding which categories they applied as codes or categories; and to how they contextualised the curriculum. Since the group consisted of students who had enrolled for the ACE course in multi-grade education, no selection was made, as the presence of a certain student in class on the day on which the analysis took place was seen as occurring by chance. The focus group consisted of 14 males and 5 females, all of whom were Afrikaans home language speaking educators, with 8 not teaching multi-grade classes, and the racial group of 11 being White and 8 Coloured. The discussion lasted two hours.

The research process was highly specific and mediated at each school, or in each context, with the interpretation of (international) categories taking place discursively. The focus throughout was on the process. Ezzy found such a process to entail "the identification of the core category or story around which the analysis focus and comparing coding scheme with pre-existing theory". Multi-grade categories were defined and the related properties were examined. The constant interaction with the

data was retained throughout, thus constituting the process of theory development. New codes became new categories, rather than being forced into existing categories.

The strength of the methodology employed in the study lay in the continuous checking that took place, as well as in the avoidance of the forcing of codes. Between the coding that took place in relation to each school, memo-writing, which formed the first step in the analysis, took place. According to Charmaz (2006:518), memo-writing helps with the following:

- grappling with ideas about the data;
- setting an analytic course;
- refining categories;
- defining relationships among the various categories; and
- gaining a sense of confidence and competence in the ability to analyse data.

The interview that was conducted with the focus group supplied substantive information as to how meaning was constructed. The interview and its transcription were seen as text, requiring relatively little interpretation, which took place on an equal partner base. Henning (2004:121) warns that "analysis should move beyond the language as speech utterance in a speech context, but it should include meaning at the ideational level (conceptions, values, beliefs)".

The coding of the interview took place in units, as they made sense to the researcher. The inductive process of analysis was aided by recorded verbatim transcription, in the form of memoing. Names would be given to the units, as they flowed into categories, in a form of in vivo coding. The categories fell into themes, since the researcher let the data 'speak to him', in a way that produced concept maps.

The topic of the curriculum is so wide that it allows for many interpretations. The structured interview was employed as a way in which to systemise the themes. From such systemisation, the bigger picture of theory or theories, featuring relationships between the different categories or themes, became clear. The thesis explains what was done, and how, in relation to the various steps and processes.

The study took place from its design to the collection of raw data, after which the theory was revisited and built up by coding and analysis. Each theme presented a basis for validating an argument, with each method triangulating another (see also Gay & Airasian, 2003:228; Henning et al., 2004:116; McCracken, 1988:30; Ryan & Russel, 2006:783). The whole process is depicted in Figure 4.7 below.

4.3 Triangulation

The case study was regarded as Phase One of the study. The checking of members was done by means of asking the observed educator to check what had been observed. The case study was correlated with the sample interviews, which were triangulated with the photographs taken during Phase Two. The case study provided the 'grounded' base of the study. The dynamics of the group interview, comprising Phase Three, were taken as appropriate, meaningful and useful. The product of the focus group was not the total of the literature, nor the discussion of the group interview, but consisted of the dynamics between the two. After the focus group had taken place, the pedagogic theory was revisited after each sample interview, starting a process of constant reference to the grounded theory, as well as to the conceptual framework (see annexures).

Triangulation took the form of a process between different methods, consisting of the observation, interview, focus group and case study. Such triangulation helped to ensure the validity and reliability of the study (see Gay & Airasian, 2003:141). Gay cites Denzin's three types of triangulation: "comparing multiple sources of data across participants, times and size"; "comparing the results of multiple independent investigators"; and "comparing multiple methods of data analysis", of which the first and last were used in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006: 299).

> Validity is a trio rather than a trinity. Craftsmanship with precision, care and accountability, open communication throughout the process and merging the process in the conversation of the discourse community – as well as a good dose of pragmatic ethical validity may help researcher judge the value of the inquiry. Reliability and generalizeability are part of the trio. Reliability is the precision of procedure and documentation. All steps should recorded so that the research is replicable – the consistency lies in the internal logic and cohesion.
>
> (Henning et al., 2004)

A high level of interceded agreement is evidence that a theme has some external validity (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:785). Valid measurement makes for valid data, though validity itself depends on the collective opinion of the scientist concerned.

4.4 Ethical considerations

Internationally, literature often refers to the National Research Act of 1974 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Gay & Airasian, 2003:80)[49]. Such legislation was used as the reference for the ethical approach taken in the study. In using such a reference, adherence to the general principles of the code of conduct of the American Psychological Association was maintained, which Gay sees as the best measure of ethical conduct. Such conduct relates to such ethics as competence,

[49] The latter Act requires that, to ensure the protection of participants, proposed activities involving human participation be reviewed and approved by an authorised authority prior to the execution of the research. Participants may not be harmed in any way, and they may participate only if they agree to do so, and are of age. Consent should be specified as to from whom, and what purpose, it is required.

integrity, professional and scientific responsibility, respect for people's rights and dignity, concern for others' welfare and social responsibility (Gay & Airasian, 2003:80).

The aim of the study was made clear to all the parties concerned in the form of a letter known as informed consent (see the annexure). The use of such informed consent was intended to ensure that no deception took place. In the letter, issues of privacy, confidentiality and accuracy were guaranteed. No approval of parents was sought, as the focus was on the teachers concerned, in relation to which the approval of both the department and the relevant principals was granted. Although no approval to publish photographs was sought, permission to take photographs in a class of learners was obtained. The issue was also explained to the principal of the school concerned.

A letter of permission was sent to the schools explaining what the study was all about, with another letter being sent to the principal whose informed consent was sought. The letters were sent to the schools prior to the holding of the meeting concerned. During the interviews, care was taken not to interrupt the school programme, by conducting them during break times, or after the learners had gone home. The visits were conducted in the following way:

- The researcher and the purpose of the visit were identified.
- Permission to access the school premise was obtained from the principal concerned.
- The location for the interview was indicated.
- The aims and procedure of the interview were stated.
- The appropriate guarantees (regarding issues of confidentiality; protection; reciprocal rights and expectations; trust; and anonymity) were given.
- The interview proceeded in a formal and structured fashion.

In education, abiding by an ethical code of conduct is a standard form of professionalism, which is expected from any responsible educator. Therefore, conducting the study in an ethical way formed part of its natural execution.

Abiding by such standards of etiquette was adhered to throughout the analysis and dissemination of the data. Figure 4.7 below presents a summary of the methodology explained thus far in the current thesis.

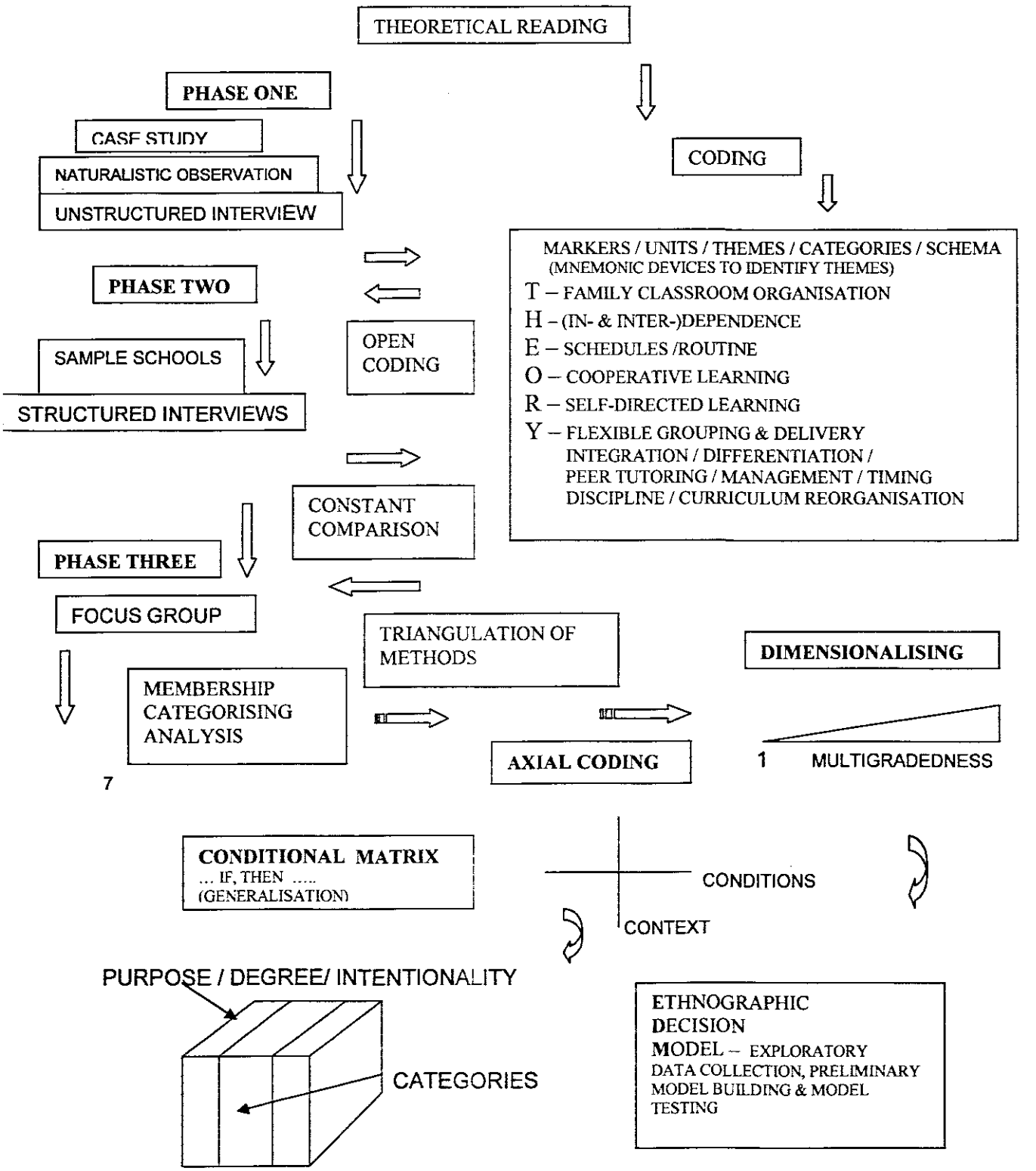


Figure 4.7: Summary of methodologies.

CHAPTER 5
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

True to the analytic procedure of the grounded theorist, sets of data are coded, categorised and compared in terms of the relevant theory. Chapter Five presents the analytical procedure along with the methodological position of the study, and consistently and coherently manages the analysis (and interpretation) process according to the principles of the study design. Such a presentation consists of the following continuous comparison, in keeping with the recommendations of Henning et al. (2004:101):

- the comparison of practice with theory (Phase One);
- the comparison of school with school, and of theory with practice (Phase Two); and
- the comparison of schools with ACE group, and of theory with data (Phase Three).

The data, interpretations, and conclusions of the study will be dealt with simultaneously. Starting with the first phase, and with first impressions of the discourse between data and theory, and extending to more sophisticated levels of abstraction, and to the conceptual understanding of the data, will lead to the development of a substantive theory.

The presentation in Chapter Five will take the form of that which is indicated in Figure 4.7. The writing will be descriptive, narrative, expository and analytical in nature, with references to the data being made throughout. The last section of the chapter will consist of the findings and suggestions for further research.

The fist school, La Plaisante Primary School, that is described in this study was used as a case study. The reason for using such a pilot study was:

- to check, by means of the unstructured interview, both the theory and instruments used;
- to refine the theory by means of observation; and
- to use the insights gained by performing the abovementioned actions to shape the questionnaire for the sample schools.

5.2 Phase One – Case study

The current researcher conducted observations and held an unstructured interview with a teacher in the case study school. All the procedures and ethical considerations of the study were adhered to during both procedures. Accordingly, the educators and learners concerned knew in advance that they would be visited. The visit took place over two days, with Day One being spent on observation. The following day was used for the interview and for becoming acquainted with the school routine in terms of curriculum delivery. Care was taken not to intrude in the teaching, as well as to allow for a natural teaching situation as much as possible.

Case study: La Plaisante Primary School
Date of observation: 22 August 2006 to 23 August 2006
Grade combination: grades 1, 2 and 3
Educator: Ms Magda Snyders (Coloured female, married, with 36 years experience)
Principal: David Perrang (Coloured male, with 39 years experience)
Number of lessons: Three 40-minute lessons, over the space of two days
Type of lessons: Reading; Mathematics; and Literacy

Table 5.1: Statistical data relating to the case study.

GRADE TOTALS	EDUCATORS' COMBINATIONS
GR. 1 = 14 GR. 2 = 12 GR. 3 = 13	Ms Snyders GRs. 1–3 = 39

The case study school, La Plaisante Primary School, consists of two main buildings – a cement structure housing four classrooms, and a temporary wooden structure. The buildings are well kept, and in a reasonable condition, being surrounded by a wire fence and gate. Running water and toilets are provided. As such, none of the physical conditions should adversely affect learning and teaching. The school has an administrative staff (a cleaner and a Grade R educator). In 2008, a learner-support employee was appointed to attend to the learners, with learner barriers being added. La Plaisante Primary School is a typical farm school, situated along a busy road. The school, which accommodates various farm learners in the vicinity, belongs to the Dutch Reformed Church and is supported by the farm owner concerned. In 2006, the school was declared free from school funds, so that the parents concerned have been freed from the burden of having to pay school fees.

Figure 5.1: La Plaisante Primary School.

Figure 5.1 above shows the main building, the front entrance and the playground. The multi-grade class is next to the principals' office in the main building. The wooden structure is on the right-hand side of the picture on the right. Typically, the school is not situated near any houses or places of work. A transport service is in place to allow learners from other farms to attend the school.

5.2.1 Curriculum delivery

5.2.1.1 General overview

The educator is highly qualified and holds a B.Ed. degree in multi-grade education. She, supposedly, should have ample knowledge of multi-grade pedagogy. She sets up her own timetable with little interference (framing) from the principal. He encourages and supports her implementation, interpretation of the curriculum and its delivery. By his own admission, he has limited knowledge of the foundation phase curriculum, which leads to little monitoring and assessing of the educator's work. Due to the physical proximity of the class and the office, he relies on 'eavesdropping' to establish that the educator is 'always busy' while he is also teaching.

In the discussion that follows, the curriculum delivery is discussed in reference to the terms of reference that havebeen used throughout the current thesis. The issue of classroom management is also included in the first two topics.

5.2.1.2 Instructional delivery and grouping

The tables in the classroom were arranged in accordance with the dictates of OBE, with the learners in each grade sitting in three rows. A small section was reserved for those learners who struggle, who consisted mainly of those Grade Ones who did not attend pre-school classes. Pre-school classes only started in 2005 at the school. The class was found to have ample material, as Figure 5.2 below shows, and the class rotated to face the material on the wall that was used in a particular lesson.

The administrative work was available on the shelves against the wall, and took up an extensive amount of space. All the portfolios and planning were readily available and on display. Samples of learners' work was also placed on the walls (see Figure 5.2 below).

Figure 5.2: Seating arrangements.

Note: The photographs have been taken of the learners as they normally sit in class. Coloured cards are used to indicate grade, with another card, on which the grade has been indicated, placed in front of the learner.

Since the way in which the class was arranged is very important for multi-grade strategies, a photograph of the arrangement was taken. Such a photograph might even act as a measure of triangulation, enabling the correlation of what the educator said about the grouping or seating with the real situation that prevailed in class. An educator could not use peer teaching if the learners were to sit in grades or randomly mixed. The following three options for seating exist in a multi-grade classroom:

- seating is totally random (learners choose or teacher ignores seating arrangements);
- seating is graded (rows/tables for each grade or grouped);
- seating is grouped according to levels of performance, with mixed grades (eds. Denzin & Lincoln, 2006:717).

The non-mixing of the grades correlated with the work being done, and was fixed. The seating rotated according to the lesson that the educator had to present. Such grouping did not refer to ability, but to age. Those learners who experienced barriers to their learning were seated apart.

Any advantage that might have been gained from the more skilful learners peer teaching members of such a group was lost in such a seating arrangement, since the multi-grade class did not use multi-grade methodology, resulting in the teacher still being the pivotal force, with the learners listening to her, and answering questions that she asked. What was surprising was that fact that the learners were also seated or shifted according to discipline. The 'difficult' learners were spread out throughout the class. Such an arrangement has no pedagogic grounds, and attests to the practice of a pedagogy of poverty.

5.2.1.3 Classroom management, organisation and discipline

Figure 5.3: Classroom management and discipline.

The display in the learning centre was colourful and helped to create a work and learning environment. Whether such a display represented 'window-dressing', the presence of a genuine resource centre, or was merely due to lack of storage space, what was clear is that the learners were not allowed to touch the material. During the researcher's observation of the class, the material was not used, referred to or utilised by the learners in any way. The material included portfolios, thematic learning material, and that related to assessment tasks and planning. To some degree, such material correlated with the teaching of Mental Mathematics, as certain corners were used for certain lessons. The groups moved between different corners of the room, with the educator teaching and the learners repeating what she had said, or answering the questions that she asked, either individually or in groups. The administration took up a great deal of the teacher's time, and was done over a period. Such work was available for visitors to see.

The class was well-managed, and a well-established routine was evident. Since the learners sat in graded rows, the educator selected each learner in turn either to read or to do mental maths. Such teaching was done in a graded manner, in terms of which the educator worked with numbers, as was prescribed in terms of the curriculum and not by the child's ability. As a result, two rows idled, though they had

received instructions, as no tutor had been appointed. The educator relied on the fact that the other learners learned by listening. Though the class was noisier than the usual mono-grade classes, the learners were not ill-disciplined.

5.2.1.4 Instructional organisation and the curriculum

The educator's planning was found to be up to date, though a gap could be seen between the work schedules and lesson plans, and between the planning and delivery. No multi-grade strategies were indicated in her planning, which was strictly graded. The same learning outcomes were used for all grades for a certain theme. No ASs were indicated. The lessons were linked by such themes as 'transport'. Teaching was negotiated per grade, with two grades 'sitting out' at any one time. Though the grades that were not being actively taught were given such instructions as 'read your page from the portfolio', no monitoring or tutoring took place.

Though clustering was found to take place, it was not indicated as such, and integration was arbitrary. In most cases, a theme was supposed to hold the curriculum together. A pedagogic base for planning was absent, implying that there was a lack of base for instructional organisation and curriculum delivery. The educators were not trained in reorganising the curriculum for multi-grade, but merely in designing the learning programmes for mono-grade teaching.

Figure 5.4: Lesson planning at the case study school.

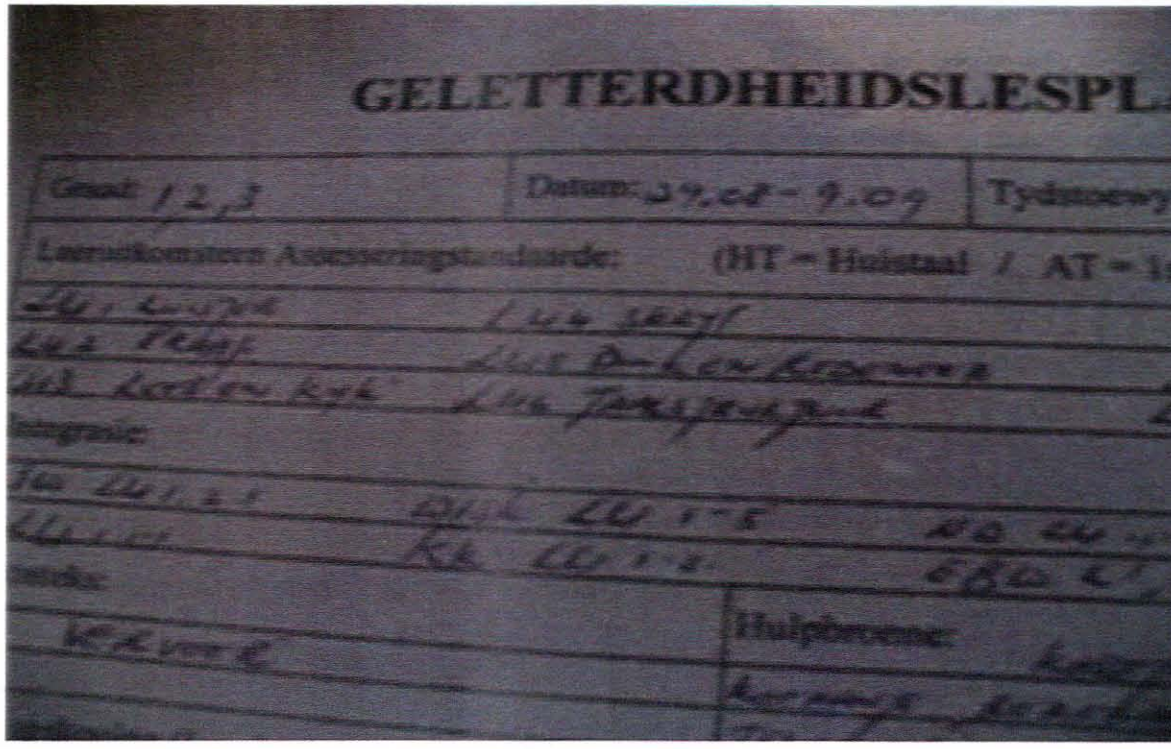


Figure 5.4 above clearly shows that all the LOs for all the grades were indicated for the lesson units concerned, with no further breakdown into smaller lessons. The lesson plan shown in the figure stretches from 29 August to 9 September. The period covered by the lesson plan is too long, as teachers tend to lose track of what they last did, or where they should start a lesson. In most cases, the teachers would ask the learners concerned at what point they had ended the previous class. The planning was found to be vague, making use of such indicators as 'lees' (read) or 'skryf' (write). The purpose and intent of such teaching is unclear, providing no indication of differentiation between the different grades, or of progression within or across the ASs concerned. Integration with other LAs was indicated under a single theme/topic.

A departmental (mono-grade) form was used for the lesson planning. The use of such a form is unsuitable for multigrade, and does not allow for further breakdown of the lessons. The lesson plans were indicated per grade underneath the LOs, with no ASs being indicated. During observation, no reference was made to the theme, topic, previous lessons, to work that had been made, or to farm life. The theme was 'vervoer' (transport). How, and why, certain LAs were integrated was unclear. The setting of Mathematics LOs 1 to 5 and Art and Culture LOs 1 and 2 covered too much ground. The learners would not have been able to recall most of the content over the period concerned. Any integration seemed to be ad hoc, and the coverage of vast areas was indicated for the lesson plans concerned. The alignment with the work schedule and the learning programme was unclear.

Assessment and recording per grade, in keeping with the grading of the forms, was done after the classes had taken place, when the learners had already left to go home. Accordingly, such assessment received no learner input, though both positive and negative feedback was continuously provided during teaching, resulting in a highly emotive teaching environment. The reprimanding of learners during such feedback caused concern.

No reorganisation of the curriculum, whether in terms of multi-gradedness or not, was evident in the planning. In multi-grade schools, the planning was found to be the same as that for mono-grade schools. No methodology was stated in the planning, as such was not prescribed in the NCSs. Currently, scant, if any, change in teaching techniques seems to be required for multi-grade teaching.

During the lessons observed, it was apparent that only one grade/same-age group were given attention at any one time, with the other grades being made to wait their turn (see Figure 5.5 below). The teacher was instrumental in all the lessons, as a giver of instructions to the learners, or in reading together with them. The groups answered in rote fashion as a group. Communication took the form of rhymes or recitations, with little explanation of why a particular answer was right, or of the methodology employed, in order to progress from concrete to abstract concept formation. Such lack of explanation would lead to a learner knowing the melody and the words, but not the meaning (as far as the understanding of a concept is concerned).

Figure 5.5: Mental Mathematics.

Figure 5.6: Reading.

The lessons were delivered as they were indicated in the planning of the case study school. It is unclear which grade's ASs were used, as such was not stated in the planning (see Figure 5.4). For example, in Mathematics all the learners (from grades 2 and 4) counted in groups of ten, with Grade 1s sitting idling in front. No reference was made to integrated LAs. Those learners requiring intervention, who did not perform at their age or class level, were made part of the group who sat in front. They merely attended and followed the same routine with which they had not coped in the previous year. No individual education plan (IEP) was designed for them. IEPs were designed only for struggling learners who would be referred to special schools.

Routine work was strongly present, with a learner reciting mathematical calculations or reading pieces of writing, with each individual and group then taking turns. The material was graded according to the age of the learner concerned. Interaction between groups at various levels was absent, with the learners addressing the educator, rather than one another. All work was teacher-oriented, with no facilitation.

5.2.1.5 Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning took the form of an instruction: "Haal julle leesboekies uit en lees verder" (*Take out your reading books and continue reading*), which seemed to be routine. However, such learning was done without the supervision of either tutors or a teacher, since she was busy teaching the other group at the time. Peers were appointed to keep the learners quiet or to write up the names of those misbehaving on the blackboard. Since the class, grouping, the adjustment of the ASs, and the instruction were strictly graded, few multi-grade strategies or techniques were used. Despite changes in grouping, the learners remained in their grades. The principles of dependent and inter-dependent grouping were not applied. The instruments (such as the official lesson plan or the instruments used for Mental Mathematics) employed should be adjusted to allow for 'graded teaching' in multi-graded classes.

Teachers, clearly, tend to assign their own meaning to the concept of 'self-directedness'. In the case study classroom, those learners who could read had to read further on their own, while the teacher attended to those who could not read. Her focus remained on those who struggled with single sounds or words. When it comes to the concept as it is used in multi-grade reorganisation, such self-directedness refers to:

- self-management, in that the learners might be aware of what outcomes are required of them, but lack all other facilities (such as planning, data management, performance indicators, etc.);
- self-monitoring, in that no monitoring can take place without the permission to self-manage;
- self-modifying, in that an awareness of the desired outcomes is fruitless without the appropriate planning;
- self-reflection, in relation to the what, how, and why of learning (which might be the most serious problem); and
- self-development, in that learners often do not see the sense of schooling.

None of the above processes were found to be being followed in terms of the case study class, as the teacher herself had not been trained to introduce self-directed learning as a method. As a result, the self-directed learning that was observed had become a matter of the learners keeping themselves occupied, rather than a form of 'do as you have been taught'.

5.2.1.6 Peer tutoring

As can be seen in Figure 5.7 below, tutors were found to be being used in the case study class. However, the role of such tutors was limited. In the case of the observed class, they were not used for tutoring in the specific lessons. Their functions differed only slightly from those of class monitors, in that they had to:

- monitor that the learners in a particular group kept busy;
- maintain the discipline of the group;
- take down the names of those who misbehaved;
- report to the teacher on issues relating to discipline, rather than on issues relating to skills or outcomes;
- show other learners how to read, by reading to them or doing Mathematics with them; and

- inform on the other learners (respecting who did what).

Such tutors were not trained, but chosen because of their greater degree of skill. They might have either been older, or the same age, as the other learners whom they tutored. They were chosen for being they are the success stories of the teachers' methodology, though they might not have understood the teaching concepts concerned. The tutors' methods of coaching were the same as those used by the teachers.

Whether such tutoring can be regarded as peer tutoring, as visualised by Vincent (1999), or whether it should be seen as a local brand of peer tutoring, is debatable. Such concerns, as well as others referring to the whole question of multi-grade pedagogy, are the main focus of the findings of the current thesis.

Figure 5.7: Teaching the tutors.

Although Figure 5.7 above suggests that peer tutoring was being implemented in the case study class, observation showed that such tutoring was taking place only on a relatively small scale.

5.2.2 Interview

The interview took place in the classroom, after the learners concerned had gone home, during April and August 2006. Arrangements were made for the current researcher to sit at the back of the class. Notes that had been taken during the observations were used to clarify matters and to ask certain questions pertaining to the observation. Permission was granted for the interview to be recorded.

The educator concerned admitted that her planning was not done in accordance with departmental prescriptions, because she had found that such prescriptions were not suitable for multi-grade teaching. In other words, neither mono-grade nor multi-grade planning was done by the teacher. Such a finding implies that planning for multi-grade teaching cannot be done, or has not been taught. The planning that was presented was directed at meeting the requirements of the education office or the educational officials. There was a disjuncture between planning and teaching. The educator explained that her teaching was aimed at allowing learners to help one another during assessment tasks.

Peer teaching was not the reason for the grouping. The actual reason for grouping seemed to be more logistical than pedagogic in nature. Mental Mathematics was done per grade, with each grade taking turns to answer the questions asked, though,

during such lessons, they all stood together in the corner where the learner support material hung.

Two timetables were used – one for grades 1 and 2 and one for Grade 3, with those learners who required intervention forming a third group. The latter group consisted of those learners who had not attended formal Grade R, and of those who were unable to keep up with the progress of the rest of the class. The presence of such a group was not reflected in the timetables. From the timetables, the following could be deduced:

- Notional time could not be followed, because the notional time for such a group differed from that of the various other grades. Grades 1 and 2 could not be grouped together, due to their different notional times.
- Timetables are drawn up for the principal or subject advisors.
- Planning bears very little witness to the reality of teaching.
- Adhering to mono-grade timetables is difficult.
- The two timetables are poorly aligned, with the multi-grade techniques dictating one lesson plan for all, with a planned methodology, which maximises learner interaction.

In the case study class, a range of alternative programmes was used, including those of READ, EDUPEGG, MST, AC and TECH-kits, which were, however, not indicated in the timetables concerned. Timetabling is difficult, as teaching and learning have their own pace. The pace conformed to could be dictated by the learners concerned. Due to her studies, the educator participating in the case study had read material relating to multi-grade. In her opinion, mono-grade techniques could be used in multi-grade teaching, meaning that the latter did not require reorganisation, or a unique pedagogy. She claimed that peer tutoring was used in her classes, which was not evident neither during the observation nor in the planning. Intervention, which was an official requirement, was being done, mostly in the form of carpet groups, while the

others were busy. The other grades were kept busy with activities, without peer supervision.

The national curriculum is differentiated in terms of age-cohort mono-graded teaching, which is based on principles of developmental psychology. Such differentiation occurs horizontally, in terms of age or grade, and vertically, in terms of progressively more difficult ASs. The problem is that such differentiation falls within set LAs and needs to be integrated with other LAs and clustering. Teachers in multi-grade classes who do not know how to deal with such a complexity of levels can, and do, differentiate merely by assigning more difficult work, in terms of more, or less, advanced ASs. Such differentiation, which is a form of mono-grade teaching in a multi-grade classroom, implies that the assessment differs in keeping with the grade. The option of mid-range learning outcomes, which some educators use, might be viable, as long as they are used as a guide for determining the range of the learner's level or needs. Since differentiation entails responding to the learner's needs and educating the learner, not the curriculum, the problem of how to assess still persists. The ideal remains that each learner should have an IEP that addresses their specific learning needs, and be subjected to assessment based on his/her performance level. Such assessment should take place by means of the application of a variety of tasks, which are mostly open-ended and flexible. To differentiate is to make sure that the learner is successful, and that learning does, indeed, take place. Curriculum differentiation requires adapting the curriculum to the needs of the learner, in terms of their level of performance and ways of learning. Such differentiation can be done by

contextualising the content, adapting the method of teaching, and assessing. Alternative teaching and assessing methods could also be used for some learners.[50]

Other, lower grade ASs can only serve to bridge the gap caused by the lack of performance in a specific grade. Such bridging of the gap, which is known as intervention, cannot be used for formal assessment. When recording, or assessing and reporting are done, such intervention is strictly graded. The following types of administration are done after school at home:

- planning amendments (in the form of lesson plans);
- the completion of forms;
- the recording of informal assessment;
- the maintenance of a daily register;
- the marking or grading of tasks; and
- the preparation for the next day.

The educator in the case study class claimed that no support was provided by the district office, and that she would have appreciated receiving more training. What she meant by this was that no support for multi-grade was given. Only mono-grade and phase support was provided by the district within which her school fell. The interview was hampered by her inability to express herself in curriculum-relevant terms, and by the lack of a common understanding of concepts between her and the researcher concerned. South African educators still lack the ability to conceptualise effectively, being able merely to explain what and why they were doing something, without being able to place their activity within the appropriate conceptual framework. Such an inability is logical, given their lack of training as scientists (epistemologists) and multi-grade pedagogists.

[50] In a book that has yet to be published, Joubert and Jordaan (*Multi-grade Teaching: Solutions for Africa*, 2009) mention other typologies: multi-year curriculum spans; differentiated curricula; quasi mono-grade; and learner and materials-centred. Since the current chapter focuses on the researcher's own fieldwork, such typologies are not dealt with in terms of the study.

The teacher in the case study class reported seeing the new curriculum as positive, and expressed a wish to use it. She was also found to be knowledgeable about multi-grade pedagogy, actively seeking to satisfy the learner's needs. However, she said that she had to obey district regulations and use the forms that the district provided. She was also mindful of the fact that she would be visited by mono-grade subject advisors in order to assess whether she was a suitable candidate for promotion and progression. In relation to the framing of the curriculum, she mostly felt that she was left alone a great deal of the time, with little guidance from the principal.

Structural bureaucracy, the dictates of reality and ideological differences make her wishes impossible to satisfy. Trying to cover too many aspects superficially and broadly was necessitated by her having to deal with two or more grades.
Figure 5.8 below reflects the conflicting requirements present in the educator's situation.

Figure 5.8: Planning, in respect of the coverage of learning outcomes.

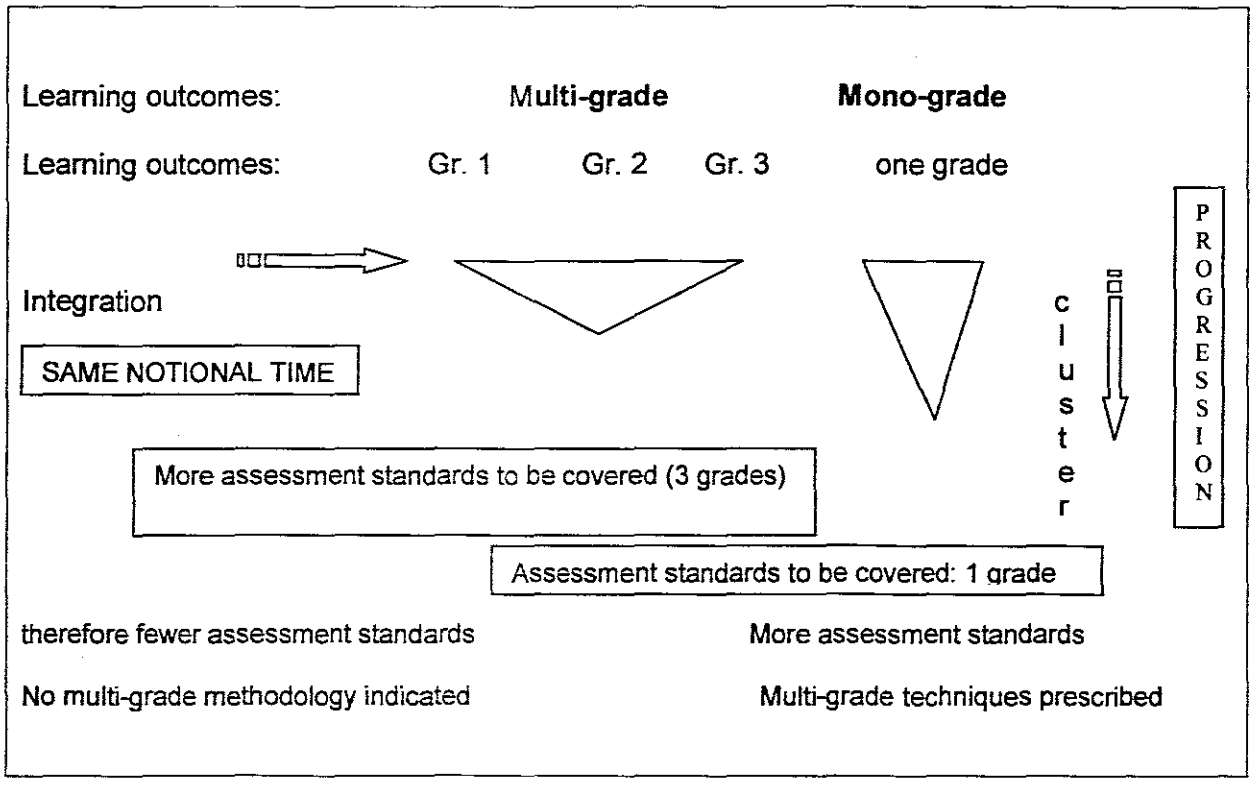


Figure 5.8 shows that trying to plan in a mono-grade way for multi-grade teaching only results in an inability to cope with all the ASs within the given timeframe. To level the playing field would require the multi-grade educator to spend more (notional) time with the learners concerned. Allowing extra time for a multi-grade class to flow into the following year would not resolve the problem, as the following year (grade) has its own specific number of Ass that require to be covered. The answer seems to lie in teaching 'faster', which would allow less time for conceptualisation by the learners concerned. Such pressure is made still worse by the fact that schools have sessions, which are termed 'promotion and progression', at which the work that the educators have done over the past year (in terms of planning, the overseeing of the compilation of portfolios, and all related evidence) is displayed and checked. Having to hold such sessions shortens the school year (of 200 days), since most educators strive to present a finished product, and work stops after the session ends in November of each year.

During 2009, such sessions took place every term, so that they functioned as a pace setter, with the ASs requiring assessment being tabled in accordance with each learning programme or LA per term. Such scheduling is bound to result in the imposition of further pressure to teach quickly and to assess more, irrespective of the learners' needs or own pace of learning.

5.2.3 Comparison of practice with theory

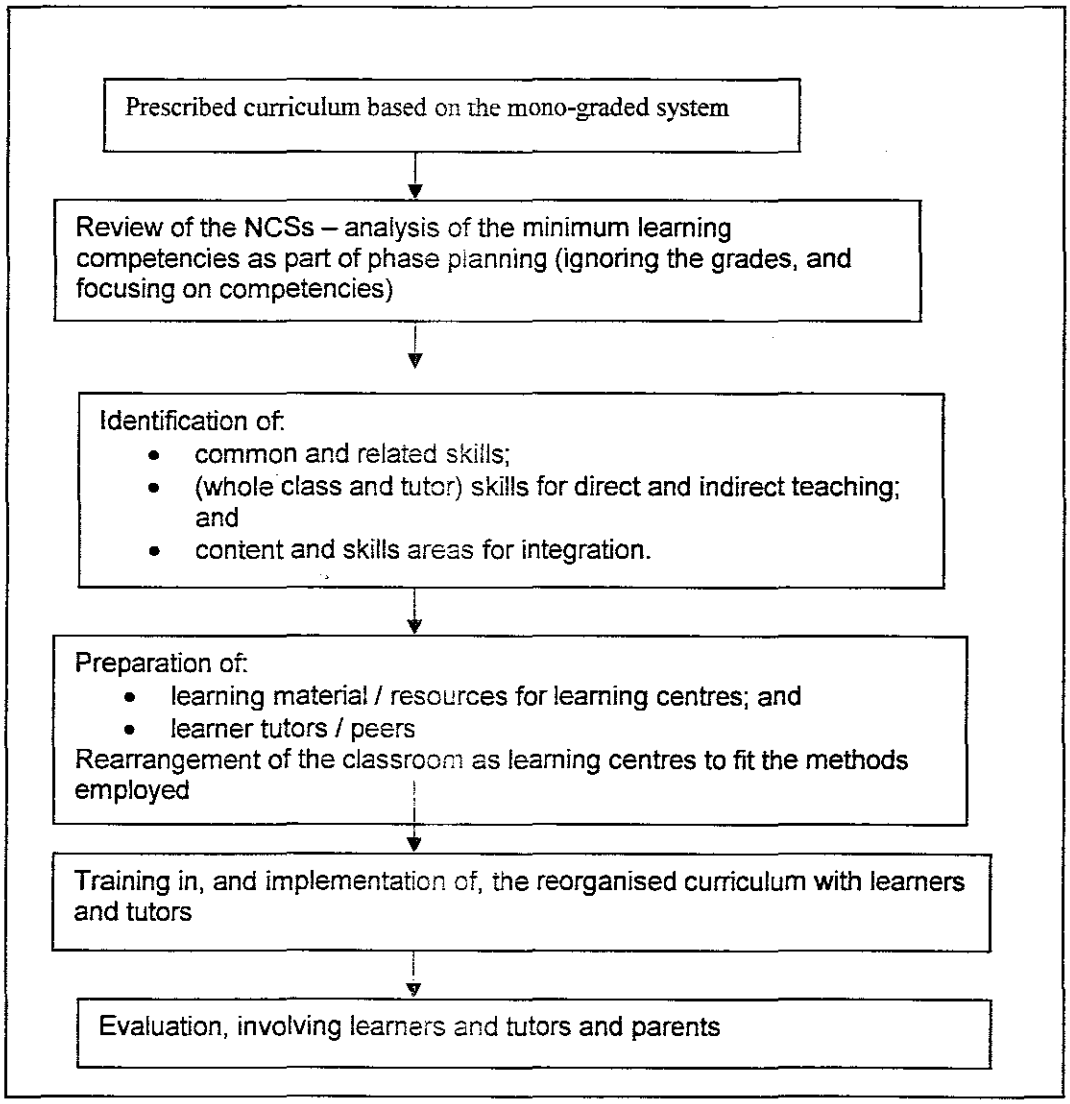
The current comparison aims to capture what multi-grade practice entails, by using the international multi-grade pedagogy, as it was presented in chapters 1 and 2. However, the NCSs have to be taken into account. Therefore, both aspects will be

used as reference points to see what the case study school was doing in terms of curriculum delivery, as well as to develop those instruments needed for the investigation still further. Such a process coincides with the following discussion of coding.

5.2.4 Axial coding of multi-grade categories: Selective coding

At this stage of the research, it would seem that the curriculum cannot be planned for in a multi-grade setting. The attempt of multi-grade educators to satisfy all neither satisfies anyone, nor manages to satisfy the learners' needs. Even if the educators are knowledgeable about multi-grade pedagogy and the NCSs, the two do not mix well in practice since a mono-grade curriculum is not designed for multi-grade settings. The educators concerned were not trained to design or reorganise the curriculum to suit multi-grade education. The process of adapting the curriculum, as tabled in Chapter Two, can be refined as shown in Figure 5.9 below.

Figure 5.9: Reorganisation of the curriculum for multi-grade.



Source: Jordaan, B.Ed. *CPUT manual*, 2007:39.

When teachers plan together with learners and tutors, a sense of self-responsibility evolves, which should lead to self-directedness, in accordance with which everybody learns from everyone else. Included in the table is phase planning, which lets all learners learn at their own pace. Such a model, which has been followed in the Rishi Valley in India, is called a school-in-a-box, in terms of which every learner knows which colour code applies to him, and which resource to use. The curriculum involved can only be proposed, as it is a discourse between the learner, the

resources, the parents and the influence of various aspects, such as absenteeism, sports, and the available transport.

The theory of multi-grade has been discussed earlier in the current thesis. The key question relates to how such a theory crystallises in practice at the case study school. Does the educator's knowledge of multi-grade pedagogy and the NCSs help with curriculum delivery? Is the South African practice of multi-grade the same, or different from, international practice? To answer such questions, both the planning of the educator and the attendant observation will be used. The key features of multi-grade that were encountered in practice in juxtaposition to the theory were:

- self-directedness;
- peer teaching;
- instructional delivery and grouping;
- classroom organisation;
- classroom management and discipline; and
- community involvement.

Each of the key features listed will now be explored in turn.

5.2.4.1 Self-directedness

In terms of self-directedness, learners learn by themselves and with others, so that they can modify and assess their own learning. In the case study, the teacher concerned did not allow the learners to manage their own learning. She remained the pivotal drive who decided, managed, modified and assessed the learning process. Such a patronising aspect led to the development of the pedagogy of poverty (see Habermans, 1991:115). The term 'self-directedness' relates to the teacher's denial of the learner's strengths and to focusing on the latter's weaknesses. A pedagogy that confirms the teachers' perception of what the child cannot do ensures failure.

The case study teacher leaves two groups of learners alone, while she is busy with the other group, with the former two groups being instructed to continue where they left off before being actively taught. Though the learners know what to continue reading or writing, the educator retains overall responsibility for their reading or writing. She does not trust them enough to manage their own learning. The learners are neither interdependent nor independent. Though the learners do occasionally help one another, no coaching is given to the coach. Educators who enforce 'doing it alone' and who encourage learners to tell who is 'peeking' often discourage such a form of education. All communication is teacher-directed.

5.2.4.2 Peer teaching

The unique difference between mono- and multi-grade lies in the widespread age or skill difference that is stretched over the span of three grades. As in a family, the older or more skilled learners should help the younger, new or less skilled ones. No teacher can teach all the learners all the time in a multi-grade setting. In the case study, the teacher was found to still be trying to teach all the learners all the time.

5.2.4.3 Instructional delivery and grouping

All the teachers were found to group their learners, because they saw doing so as a pre-requirement for OBE. Multi-grade teachers group their learners, so that they can learn from one another. The age or skill advantage that exists between learners in a multi-grade setting necessitates the use of such a strategy. Three kinds of instructional strategies are important:

- peer instruction;
- cooperative group work; and

- individualised learning programmes, which should reflect in the planning, as well as in the classroom arrangement and resources.

Grouping is done in line with teaching outcomes and curriculum-related instructions. Such grouping requires planning by the teacher to use such groups, and the setting of a clear outcome for each group, who have their resource material ready. The groups can either be of the same age, or differently aged, depending on what the teacher concerned wants to achieve. Jordaan (2007:21) distinguishes between the following four kinds of groups:

- the sequential learning group, which learns in a sequence of stages;
- the topic group, with each smaller group working on a topic, or part of it;
- the practice group, with each group being kept busy with a particular activity; and
- learner interest groups, in which learners with the same interest do an activity together.

Such group work freed up the educator so that she could individualise her teaching, and she was able to rotate among the groups. If she were to have used a few select learning outcomes and assessment standards, such a workshopping of teaching would have enabled her to attain her targets in a short enough space of time for her to be able to ascertain whether teaching had, indeed, taken place, or whether any form of intervention was required. Such grouping was seen to be applied with the learners seated in the case study class.

Both the time constraints and the doubling up of learning outcomes and ASs to be covered meant that the planning involved had to be effective. Integration and clustering are of paramount importance in the multi-grade class. As is shown in Figure 5.6, the teacher in the case study class tried to do too much in too short a space of time.

Having more grades caused the educators in the focus group to combine more LOs and more ASs than they might otherwise have had to do in the case of the conventional mono-class. Combined with the requirements of the NCSs, the principal's framing, the wishes of the foundation phase subject advisor, and the needs of the learners, the case study teacher sincerely tried her best to satisfy all four, failing in the process.

5.2.4.4 Classroom organisation

The multi-grade classroom should be organised into different activity centres and work stations. Certain areas should be designated for specific purposes, or for learning activities. The case study class could not be seen as a learning centre directed towards the enhancement of self-directed learning. The resources, which were limited, were placed in such a way that all the learners knew where they are. However, such self-directed learning was observed to happen only when the teacher allowed it to. Not only was access to the resources restricted, but the furniture was all placed against the wall so as to maximise traffic flow. Accordingly, no designated corners were set aside for greater seclusion, which can be seen in figures 5.5. to 5.7. Such an arrangement might have been the result of the number of learners involved, in terms of the amount of seating space needed. The classroom management was of such a nature that the teacher remained in charge, with all the learners continuously facing her.

In Table 5.2 below, a comparison is drawn between the classroom arrangement in the case study and that of the arrangement that is made for activities in a typical

multi-grade class. Such a comparison reveals the activities that are catered for as a result of the different organisation of the two classes.

Table 5.2: A comparison of multi-grade classroom activities with case study classroom activities.

MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES	CASE STUDY CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
Quiet, or individual, study	
Testing	
Whole-class instruction	
Partner work	Work in pairs, but not in grades
Group discussions	Same-age group discussion
Audiovisual and reference work	Neither audiovisual nor reference work
Teacher tutoring, or small group instruction	

From the comparison that is tabulated in Table 5.10 above, the same activities seem to take place in both types of classroom. The classroom organisation differs, which is likely to influence how effective the activities are, especially where more secluded spaces are created. In all, the overriding factor that the teacher considers when arranging a class is maximising space for whole class teaching and management, which will be considered below.

To be capable of effectively teaching in a multi-grade classroom, the teacher concerned needs to be able to align classroom management and methods. The comparison shown in Table 5.2 would suggest that the sample schools used multi-grade methods. However, if Figure 2.12 and the photographs of the class are compared, the difference is obvious. Though dedicated corners are present, they are for the use of the teacher, who tends to move with the whole class, with all other activities taking place at the learners' desks. The class was arranged with traffic and

whole class teaching in mind. Figure 5.10 below shows an example of an ideal multi-grade class arrangement.

Figure 5.10: The ideal multi-grade class arrangement.

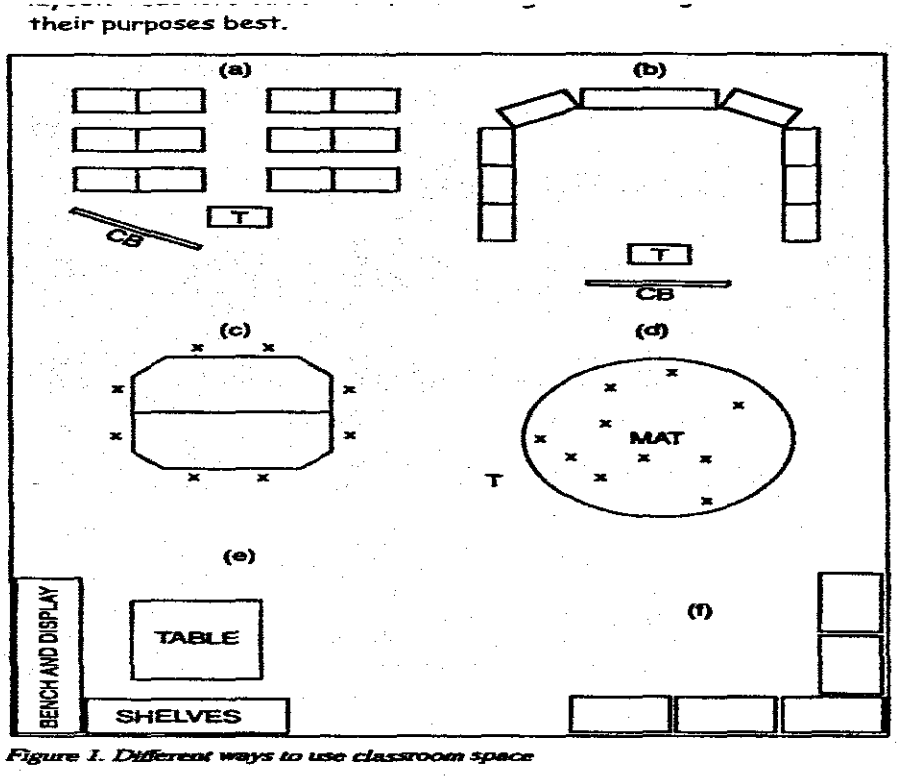


Figure 1. Different ways to use classroom space

Source: Jordaan, 2007:23.

In Figure 5.10 above, area (a) provides for group/section/ grade teaching; area (b), which is in the shape of a horseshoe, provides for teacher-oriented / led activities; area (c) provides for unsupported/advance group work; area (d) provides for remedial work that requires more time; and sections (e) and (f) allow for individual/ resource-based/independent work.

The reason that teachers of the sample schools give for their arrangement has to do with the number of learners that they are required to teach, as well as the fact the whole-class teaching expedites the process of teaching, allowing them to cover more LOs and ASs within a short space of time. Therefore, even if the learners cover the

same type of activities, they are never left completely alone, allowed to move from one corner to the other by themselves, to or use resource material on their own.

Whole-class teaching does not consist of the hourglass method (workshopping), but of teaching a theme to all the grades concerned, with the appropriate differentiation of assessment tasks. The periods covered range from 90 to 60 minutes, with the teacher teaching most of the time and only letting the learners apply their learning after the teaching has taken place.

5.2.4.5 Classroom management and discipline

In multi-grade pedagogy the class represents a family, with the learners crying during the first month of the school year (and the older ones helping to calm them down), and the teacher being seen as the mother figure. Coping with a potentially difficult class involves grouping the learners, securing their cooperation and maintaining a strict routine.

In the case study classroom, timetabling, routines, and even the delivery of the lesson plan were fixed. Both the learners and the teacher were involved with management and disciplining. No learner dared to disturb the schedule, with reprimanding often being done by the older learners.

Such a predictable instructional pattern could be harmful to education, since it did not lead to independent self-directed learning. The educator remained in charge of management, with the learner becoming very dependent on her guidance until the routine of instruction was established. No interdependence, in the sense of taking

responsibility of one's own and others' learning, was seen as an appropriate outcome.

In the case study, the school was in the fortunate position of having the support of the farm owner concerned. Such is not the case in all schools. With rural schools tending to be placed at a distance from the working environment and the parents tending to have to work long hours, together with their high rate of illiteracy, such parents seldom manage to become involved in school affairs, except in the case of some fundraising efforts. If the themes and content of the curriculum are extended to consider aspects of both the workplace and the immediate environment, and the school, as a whole, is seen as the centre of activity, together with considering the parents as resources, the quality of teaching will be enhanced.

The introductory phase of the current study was crucial for the research process, and clarified several theoretical issues concerning epistemology and methodology. The phase was essential for the design of the research instruments concerned. In the section that follows, the visits to the sample schools are described.

The sample teachers were multi-grade farm educators in the Breede River / Overberg District.[51] Out of the total population of 223, a randomly selected group of eleven schools was chosen, with the first school being used for an unstructured interview and for observation, and another group for structured interviews. Random selection took place by means of selecting the sample schools at random from a list of all the schools, though some of the schools concerned had discontinued multi-grade classes by the time that the research was conducted.

[51] The name of the district has since been changed, but the data were collected during the previously existing EMDC.

5.3 Phase Two: Sample school interviews

5.3.1 Background setting

All the sample school interviews were conducted in class, in the presence of the learners. They were assigned tasks to do, while the researcher and teacher sat at the desk doing the interview. The questions were structured, with the same questions being posed at every school. The responses were recorded, and notes were taken during the process. Where necessary, clarity was sought, or probing was done.

In the analysis that follows, a summary of the interviews is given, following the discussion of the theory of Fairclough (1999) and Janks (2005), which was described in Chapter Four.

5.3.2 Analysis

The reporting on the interviews with the sample school was done in the following way:

- The categories in the questionnaire were covered after the case study was done.
- The interviews and memoing were completed.
- After the textual analysis (the description) was done, the information was processed (the interpretation); and the social analysis (the explanation) was performed.
- The six categories of multi-grade were used as the reference of the study.

5.3.2.1 Classroom organisation

The classroom organisation did not form part of the questions, but was observed, with photographs being taken of the classroom in each case. The texts below were used in the interpretation, together with the other questions.

In all cases, the classrooms were found to have activity centres. However, such centres did not correspond with the LAs, integrated areas or themes, but with a fixed pattern of teaching, as in the case of the teaching of spelling, mental mathematics and other skills, as can be seen in figures 5.11a and 5.11b below.

Such classroom organisation did not correspond with the methodology of multi-grade pedagogy, but with teaching as it has been practised for many decades. No classroom was changed after the NCS training. The deciding factors regarding such organisation were:

- the accommodation (the class size);
- teacher control and observation (the monitoring of classes);
- traffic flow (in relation to the teacher and beautification);
- the number of learners and grades (the ratio 39:1 applied to all the sample schools);[52] and
- the grouping of grades.

Figure 5.11a: Classroom activity corners at the sample schools.

Laerskool Breerivier

Drosdy Primary School

As phonics and chorus answering played an important role in the teaching process, they assumed a prominent place in the class arrangement (see figures 5.11a and b).

[52] For 2008, all schools were allocated based on the given ratio, though later a ratio of 37,5:1 was used, provided that all the ad hoc posts were provided (see Circular 31 / 2008).

A comparison of the number of available resources showed a lack of them at some of the schools (such as Irish Quela, which is an isiXhosa school).

Figure 5.11b: Classroom activity corners at the sample schools (cont.).

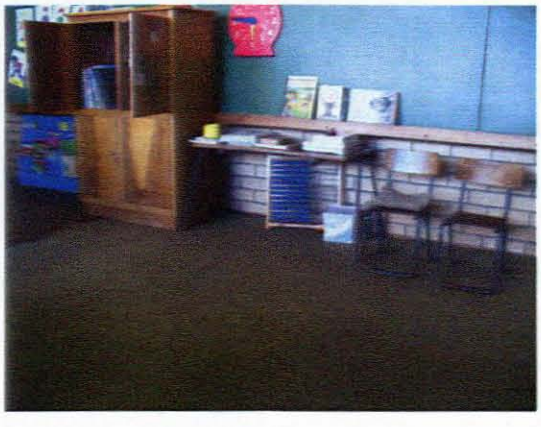
Tandfontein Primary

Irish Quela Primary School

The classes were well decorated and colourful. An effort had been made to create a homely atmosphere, which was mostly in contrast with the child's own home setting. In all cases, the educators had tried to create the best 'home away from home, to provide a better home than that in which they actually lived. In rural schools, the class sizes are small, which, together with the furnishings, helps to ensure an intimate setting.

Figure 5.12: Space orientation.

De Meul Primary School



Breerivier Laerskool

Often, the spacing of the furniture was found to lead to time wastage, because of the need to move furniture around for a particular activity.

Such organisation might be the result of the learner:educator ratio for primary schools being 39:1. However, since 2007, an extra post was made available at rural and farm schools, with, in some cases, farm schools having some school-governing posts made available. In those cases where the multi-grade combination of grades 1 to 3 has been affected, the principal has, since then decided either to allocate the post to the intermediate phase, to give himself more periods free, or to the foundation phase, with Grade1 being given a separate space for teaching.

5.3.2.2 Classroom management and discipline

In all the classes concerned, the amount of teacher control was obvious, which coincided with the strict discipline and fixed pattern of teaching that prevailed.

Figure 5.13: Classroom management.

The ideology of control and monitoring over methodological flexibility and teaching strategies involving learners suggested the practice of the pedagogy of poverty. As

can be seen in the following quote from one of the teachers involved in the study, routine was regarded as being much more important than pedagogy, or perhaps *was* the pedagogy:

> Ek het 'n streng roetine en werk elke dag daarvolgens. Die roetine is baie belangrik; dit
> *[I have a strict routine and work according to it every day. The routine is important; it* maak die kinders rustiger en kinders weet wat ek gaan doen en ek ook. Maak die kind
> *calms the children down, and they know what I am going to do and so do I. It helps the* meer selfstandig, want hulle weet wat gaan volg nou.
> *child to be more independent, because they know what is going to follow.]*

Such routine stifles creativity, which the teacher concerned confused with independence. The ultimate aim of the routine was control and classroom management, which did not serve the learners' needs well.

5.3.2.3 Instructional delivery and grouping

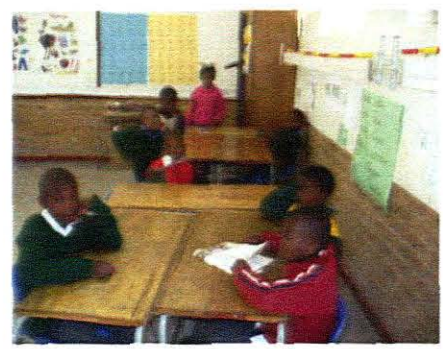
Planning was found to be very difficult. Some teachers planned their activites in a diary. Such a find was surprising, as it meant that she had to compile three learning programmes, three work schedules, three lesson plans, and a diary, which could be graded or grouped for one lesson.

The previous teaching regime required that they compile diaries, which could prove whether the educators concerned had reverted to standard procedures and methods. They had one context for all the grades concerned. Themes, such as that of wild animals, were mostly used. Such themes were adopted for all the grades. The themes were mostly fixed, and seldom changed over the years. Common themes were 'my body', 'my school', 'my family', 'our town' and 'healthy living'. In the case of the NCSs, the theme often stemmed from the integrated learning area, which provided the context. Sometimes the theme came from the school's planning or from the occurrence of a particular event, such as athletics in term one and sport (rugby

and netball) in term two. The levels of performance or the ASs are difficult to convey in practice, because of the amount of work that had to be covered. The themes were not only dictated by the NCSs, but also by the number of levels in a multi-grade class, as well as by the fact that many of the learners had not attended pre-school (Grade R). How the learners were grouped can be seen in Figure 5.14 below.

Figure 5.14: Grouping of classes.

De Meul Primary School



Irish Quela Primary School

Figure 5.15: An example of a school programme.[53]

TWEE JONGE GEZELLEN (V.G.K.) PRIMÊR

0106: OBOS : O:BERG/B-RIVIER
EMIS NO.: 0129338788
TEL/FAX: 023-2300713

POSBUS 116
TULBAGH
6820

TYD SOMER		MAANDAG	DINSDAG	WOENSDAG	DONDERDAG	VRYDAG	TYD WINTER
7:30-8:00	30	BYEENKOMS	LEES VIR GENOT	LEES VIR GENOT	LEES VIR GENOT	LEES VIR GENOT	8:00-8:30
8:00-9:30	1H30	SYFERKUNDE	SYFERKUNDE	SYFERKUNDE	SYFERKUNDE	SYFERKUNDE	8:30-10:00
9:30-9:50		P	O	U	S	E	10:00-10:20
9:50-9:55	5	SYFERKUNDE	SYFERKUNDE	SYFERKUNDE	SYFERKUNDE	SYFERKUNDE	10:20-10:35
9:55-11:43		LEES KLANKE MOND/ORAL	LEES KLANKE MOND/ORAL	LEES KLANKE MOND/ORAL	LEES KLANKE MOND/ORAL	LEES KLANKE MOND/ORAL	10:35-12:13
11:43-11:50	7	SKRIF	BYBEL	SKRIF	BYBEL	SKRIF	12:13-12:20
11:50-12:00	10	P	O	U	S	E	12:20-12:30
12:00-13:00	30	LEES VIR GENOT LEWENS-VAARDIG-HEID TEG	LEWENS-VAARDIG-HEID MSW	LEWENS-VAARDIG-HEID NW	LEWENS-VAARDIG-HEID EBW	LEWENS-VAARDIG-HEID KK	12:30-13:30
		4H30	4H30	4H30	4H30	4H30	
13:00-14:30		VOORBEREIDING					13:30-15:00

[53] As the school programme is an actual plan, taken from the fieldwork, it has not been translated.

Syferkundigheid	=	35%	1h35	per dag
Geletterdheid	=	40%	1h48	per dag
Lewensvaardigheid	=	25%	1h07	per dag

As can be seen, the planning for the foundation phase is wide-ranging and vague, since the educators concerned have to match the requirements of the NCSs with multi-grade teaching. Within such framing, the teachers have to do their own planning. The themes derived for such planning can either come from the NCSs, or from the schools programme concerned. The time indicated relates to the prescriptions of the NCSs, referring to the allocation of time, rather than to the actual practice of teaching.

The whole school conducted reading during the first period and (mental) mathematics in the second. Such a structure was implemented in order to adhere to specific programmes of the school, which did not form part of the allocated notional time for each learning programme.

> My roetine is ons doen Godsdiens, Skrif – ons doen dit alles saam – maar*[My routine is Religious Studies, Writing – we do it all together – but each grade*
> elkeen doen sy eie. Ek het geen LOs of ASe nie. Ek voel dis nie nodig om elke *does its own. I have no LOs or ASs. I feel it is not necessary to indicate each* dag (s'n) te skryf. (Ek) kyk in die begin van die jaar wat ek gaan doen en skryf *day's.I check at the beginning of the year what I am going to do and write it* in woorde. Hoekom moet ek skryf AS 3 as ek vandag die u-klank met hulle
> *down in words.Why must I write AS 3 if I'm going to do the u-sound with them, it* doen, dis mos tyd mors, want nou moet ek loop opsoek.
> *is a waste of time,since I have to go and look it up.]*

As can be seen from the quote, theory and practice differ. The rationale is not whether to implement or not, but that of teaching in conformity with the ideology of the pedagogy of poverty. Changes in the policy documents do not mean that the teachers concerned will necessarily change their practice. Changes should suit

historical practice, rather than ideological and political changes. The teachers see themselves as such, and not as politicians.

The teachers in the sample schools kept the grades in their classes apart, because they addressed them separately. They grouped them so that were socially together, facing one another. Grade 3 sat as they would sit in Grade 4. Such was the way in which the teachers reasoned, based on practical, rather than on pedagogical, grounds. The changes in either the grouping of LOs, or in how they grouped the learners for teaching depended on practicality, not theory. One of the reasons for grouping the Grade 3s was that they were then unable to copy from one another.

> Ek beplan afsonderlik, maar bied gesamentlik aan. Dan doen ek dit so in grade
> *[I plan separately, but present them together. Then I do so in grades,*
> volgens watter leeruitkomste hulle moet doen.
> *according to the outcomes they should reach.]*

According to the above teacher, the Grade 2s used to sit together, and the Grade 3s apart, then they were placed together, but such a seating arrangement did not work. "It works for me" was a phrase that often emerged during the interviews. The pace of learning was also a deciding factor. A completely new dimension was created to the study, as the levels of performance formed a category, with 'pace' being a new one. They do not regard pace[54] as being equal with level, as 'level' in their interpretation refers to alignment with the ASs, which is also confusing, as grouping the learners in terms of their pace or levels is easier than grouping according to the ASs. Pace relates to individual performance and grouping is either per level of performance, or per grade. The conceptuality of both can only be acquired by dealing with a multitude

[54] The pace at which a learner learns might not tally with the number of tasks that require to be carried out within a certain period, which causes much stress. Such lack of tallying happens most of the time since learners generally write slowly and evidence is required that the set tasks and portfolio work have been carried out (formal assessment).

of levels of performance, as in multi-grade, though the teachers seldom articulate it in a scientific way, due to their lack of multi-grade pedagogic training.

5.3.2.4 Instructional organisation and the curriculum

The teachers were found to handle all LAs separately, though they integrated them progressively. Such integration consisted of an ad hoc insertion of an LO of another LA that suits the theme, which has no bearing on the progressiveness (in-depth nature of ASs) of the key LO. The typical lesson plan, which is shown in Figure 5.16 below, is the same type of day plan as was followed prior to the implementation of the new curriculum. The plan shown was compiled as if it was for mono-grade teaching, without specifying exactly what was going to be done in the specific lessons. In the example, grades 1 and 2 were shown, with the Grade 2s having an extra period each day. The timetable was compiled in order to show that the prescribed notional time of the NCSs was adhered to.

Figure 5.16: Weekly plan.

WF Loots Primêr

GRAAD EEN EN TWEE DAGINDELING 2008

TYE		MAANDAG	DINSDAG	WOENSDAG	DONDERDAG	VRYDAG	DUUR
7H45-8H25	1	L	E	E	S		40
8h25-9h25	2	SYFERKUNDIGHEID / AANBIEDING					60
9h25-9h45	3	GELETTERDHEID / FLEKSIE					20
9h45-10h05		P	O	U	S	E	9h45-10h05
10h05-10h25	4	SYFERKUNDIGHEID					20
10h25-11h45	5	GELETTERDHEID					80
11h45-12h05	6	NW	KK	EBW	LO	MSW	20
12h05-12h20		P	O	U	S	E	12h05-12h20
12h20-12h40	7	TEG	NW	KK	EBW	MSW	30
		Opsomming:	Syferk. 400 min (29%)		LV.: 250 (18%)		270
		Geletth. 500 (37%	LEES 200 (15%)		KONTAKURE: 1350=22,5		

A pertinent question that remains is to what extent reorganisation can take place before a new LA is designed. Foundation teachers have no knowledge of the philosophy or epistemology behind the differentiation of subjects or LAs, nor is having such knowledge part of their job description.

Instructional management means adapting the curriculum to multi-grade circumstances, as well as to the level of the learner. Such adaptation translated, in the case of the sample schools, to using one LA (and integration) for all grades, but differing in (graded) presentation or in implementation (in terms of assessment tasks). On some days the teachers were able to work faster than they could on other days, depending on the pace of the learners being taught. Teaching faster forced the teachers concerned to use whole-class teaching.

At some point, the teachers had to decide to continue with the following lesson plan (in terms of the LO or ASs [requiring clustering]), which means that those learners who were unable to reach the required level of performance within the set time period would be classified as cases requiring intervention. They would be given more time to master the learning, in terms of an alternative methodology, or in terms of being referred to as a learner support person (ELSEN).

Although the NCSs are flexible, which means that a learner can move from one grade to the next in the space of a year, in reality end-of-year summative evaluation (which is termed 'progression and promotion') and classification still were found to prevail. Such a system meant that a learner might be kept behind for a whole year, despite the benefits to be gained from multi-grade teaching.

Class lists are used to keep the recording of the grades apart. Though computerised templates for formal recording are issued by the DoE, they were sometimes found not to be used, for the following reasons:

- different interpretations;
- lack of understanding;
- lack of computer skills; and
- persistence on writing, rather than on making use of the computer.[55]

A major problem with the NCSs is the amount of administration that they require, since evidence of all progress is required. Recording in the multi-grade class requires double the amount of recording than is required for the mono-grade class.

> I integrate it, but sometimes the languages force me, even with numeracy [to do AS alone] they don't know in Xhosa, so I have to switch, so it is Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. Integration is like having one theme and more than one learning area. Where you take the learning outcomes of one LA and you also include certain assessment standards of certain (other) learning outcomes.

In the sample school referred to above, the timetabling was adapted according to each grade's allocated amount of notional time. The planning was done in this way because the times differed for the various grades involved. They felt that they could not work with the NCS notional time allocation. The intervals were different for the different grades. When the Grade 1s had gone home, the grades 2 and 3 were attended to. When the Grade 1s were present, the grades 2 and 3 did their written work.

The organisation of the instruction was aligned with the classroom layout. Each group had its own corner. Alternatively, according to the learning programmes, the

[55] Often a computer is for the sole use of the principal during the year, whereas it is used for formal administration only towards the end of the year.

groups changed corners. In each of the corners, different assignments were allocated. The workstations were for, among others, Reading, Mental Mathematics, Writing, and Arts and Culture. Some of the corners can be seen in the figures in this chapter.

The teachers took care of the intervention themselves (in the form of carpet groups). In some cases, the parents were asked to help out with the intervention. In cases where the parents were illiterate, the teachers believed that no homework should be given, since they wanted to be present when it was done. A few teachers used other learners to help with the intervention, as can be seen in the following quote:

> There are times that I mix them for intervention. I also help the poorer ones in one grade, R level. How I mix depends on my aim, but I plan according to grades. Then I merely test afterwards. I look at each grade's lesson plan to see what I must do. This is difficult, as those on lower levels are not catered for within the grade. Grade 1 may be busy with phonics while grades 2 and 3 are busy with sentences. Some may sound, while others read. This is chaotic, as there is no supervision.

In the quote above the teacher can be seen not to have realised that letting other learners help with intervention actually forms part of multi-grade pedagogy – it is not intervention as such. The lower levels to which she refers show that she does not realise that she should look at the levels of the lower grade and teach phases, rather than grades.

The teachers in the sample schools were found to be extremely conscious of grade. They expressed a desire to control, monitor, and observe everything taking place in all the grades, which was, however, not possible. They upheld a paternal and paternalistic ideology, in terms of which they believed that the learners could not manage on their own. Therefore, they seldom 'let go' of the learners sufficiently to

enable them to benefit from self-directed learning, in terms of which the learners could take responsibility for their own learning. In Figure 5.7 below, the graded organisation of the planning is shown horizontally, whereas the teaching activities are shown vertically. Little indication is given of the methodology employed, but if it was graded, it would have been mono-grade.

Figure 5.17: Daily plan.

DAGBEPLANNING: **DATUM:**

GRAAD 1: GRAAD 2: GRAAD 3:

Syferkunde:

Tel:			
Mat:			
Taak:			
Speletjie			

Geletterdheid:
Mond. / Oral:

Klanke/Spel/Phonics			
Taak/Task			
Lees/Read			

Lewensopvoeding:

Musiek:	
LO:	
Kuns en Kultuur / Teg.:	
Algemeen:	
Assessering:	

What the teachers concerned wanted to do with such planning was to see what was commonly shared by the grades and to search for activities thst they could use. The results of their activities, which were seen as being very important, were filed in their portfolios. The teachers did one form of planning according to the levels. Though some activities were more or less the same, others were not. They were found to use

whole-class teaching, though the activities (and accompanying assessment) were performed at the various levels. The activities were seen as keeping the learners busy, as can be seen in the following quote:

> Matching levels with activities is difficult. Either I know a learner needs more time or slower teaching, or the learner gives the wrong answer or can't do the activity. It is very difficult, but I keep records all the time. Whenever I have time, I would record.

The parents were not involved in the teaching, and responded six months after they had been asked to come to school. Such a situation was difficult. For example, if the teacher stayed in Worcester, and used public transport, whereas the parents lived in De Doorns, and were also without transport, the situation was problematic.

> Ek verkies die ou syllabus bo die nuwe kurrikulum. Die ou pienk boek het vir my
> *[I prefer the old syllabus [Report 550] to the NCSs. The old pink book [on*
> makliker gewerk as dié een. Ek dink dis moeiliker vir die plaaskind, omdat hier
> *foundation phase methodology] worked more easily than this one. I think it is*
> nie bibioteke is nie. Op die dorp kan kinders in graad 2 al graad 3 werk doen.
> *more difficult for the farm learner, because there are no libraries here. In towns,*
> Plaaskinders het '*n* agterstand. Ek doen nog *Boet en Saartjie* – dis maklik vir
> *Grade 2 learners can do Grade 3 work. Farm learners have a backlog. I do Boet and Saartjie [a very old reading series] – it is easy for*
> die kind om te leer.
> *the child to learn.*

5.3.2.5 Self-directed learning

Such learning was neglected in the sample schools, as has already been stated in the current thesis, since the teachers felt that they were solely responsible for the learning of those learners in their class. Those learners who had acquired certain skills were left by themselves, with no accelerated teaching taking place, and the

teachers retaining responsibility for all the teaching and learning that took place in their class.

5.3.2.6 Peer tutoring

The teachers in the sample schools were found to be letting the learners help one another. Such mutual assistance does not constitute peer tutoring, as the learners were not trained to help one another, but merely did so of their own accord. Such assistance did not figure in the planning. On the farms surveyed in the current study, peer involvement was often found to take the form of letting learners 'hear' what others were saying, so that they could 'learn' from one another. Grade 3s were found to be helping the grade 2s regarding only intervention.

> So af en toe laat ek die graad 2 tussen die graad 1 sit.Nie juis volgens die vlak *[Every now and then I let the Graad 2s sit among the Grade 1s. Not according*
> nie, maar om mekaar te ondersteun.
> *to levels, but to support one another.]*

The teachers were found to let the various grades socialise fairly often. Such socialisation consisted of letting them become friends, share their food and stories with one another, and generally constitute a 'family' set-up. Such was not a form of tutoring, though the teachers see it as very important for the class to become a family. Various efforts in this direction were made, such as trying to remember birthdays and class parties.

5.4 Comparison: Phases One and Two

Most foundation phase teachers had received the same training.[56] Therefore, it was not surprising that they dealt with multi-grade teaching in the same way. What was

[56] All teacher training received had been dominated by National Christian Education and Fundamental Pedagogy (see Chapter 2).

observed at the case study school was also found at the sample schools. Such similar observations helped with the triangulation and verification of data.

A variety of practices exist at the various schools. Though the schools might differ, the practice of multi-grade teaching was found to be more or less the same at all the sample schools. Those differences that were encountered might have been ascribed to the personality of the teacher concerned, her training, the resources available, the framing of the principal, or the involvement of the parents or of the farm owner. Such variables had no causal influence on the actual practice of the teacher, since teaching on a farm or in a rural setting often means working in isolation with little interference from others, even from the principal.

The third group that was used for theoretical sampling came from a diverse group spread out across the province, which was doing a specialised course in multi-grade teaching at fourth-year level. It formed the focus group in discourse with phase one (the case study) and the sample schools. Those forming the members of the third group were selected as a group and did not form part of the original sample group. They were randomly chosen, in the sense that any of the students could have been in the class at the stage at which the discussion took place. The reason for choosing such membership categorisation was given in Chapter 4. The importance of such a group lay in the fact that they were able to add to the existing categories, as well as to how they would code them.

5.5 Phase Three : Analysis of membership categorisation

5.5.1 Background and setting

The meeting with the third group of participants took place on CPUT's Wellington campus. The participants were students who were doing the ACE, specialising in multi-grade education, and having had experience of such classes.

The focus group was used to gain a much wider, yet immediate, response in terms of the grounded theory, which was informed by the literature on multi-grade pedagogic, the case study and the interviews conducted at the sample schools. Their combined experience and studies relating to multi-grade teaching were advantageous to the researcher. The purpose of MCA was to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and of the meaning of such teaching for those involved. The interest of the researcher lay in the process, rather than in the outcomes of such a process. The results of the focus group were not generalised beyond the group, nor is any opinion ascribed to any one individual. The purpose of conducting such a focus group was to stimulate new and creative ideas in relation to multi-grade teaching, as well as to triangulate, validate and verify the findings concerned.

5.5.2. Methodology

The lecturer introduced the researcher to the 19 students who participated in the focus group, as they were seated in a classroom. The purpose of the meeting and what was required of them was explained to them. The various categories, taken from both the research conducted into the multi-grade phenomenon and the different categories used in the fieldwork, were each written down on a separate flash card, and shown to them in turn. No explanation of the concept (theory) was given. They had to respond to and discuss the discourse that had taken place around the concept

and around the related practice in South Africa in general, as well as in their respective schools. During the discussion, they were able to critique and introduce new categories particular to the South African context. The free-flowing group dynamics imparted a wealth of data to the study (Morgan, 1997, see also Charmaz in eds. Denzin & Lincoln, 2006).

Probing was not needed, as the participants responded of their own accord, as they were eager to share their experiences. The aim of the focus group was to collect their thinking and experience. The participants were allowed to debate and to share their views, though no consensus was sought about what they said. Notes were taken by means of 'memoing'.

5.6. Summary

In terms of the fieldwork conducted during the current study, the multi-grade class was found to resemble a family, with its organisation and management being very dependent on the available funding and resources. The principal's willingness and knowledge were also factors. Discipline had been found to be more important in the multi-grade class. At first, the teachers concerned had experienced discipline as a problem, though it had improved over time, as the learners got to know each other and adapted to the routine.

Notional time (contact teaching time) in respect of the grades of the different combinations was found to differ. The teachers surveyed found it very difficult to adhere to the prescribed time allocations for the set learning programmes. At times, the teachers continued teaching beyond the set time limits, especially when the learners were very slow. In most cases, the teachers tried to teach at the level of the

learners. Matching the learners' performance levels with one another was found to be easier then matching the learners with the relevant ASs. The key was to get to know the learners concerned. The extent of such knowledge was found to improve through home visits.

The educators themselves questioned whether curriculum delivery could be achieved in a multi-grade class. The teachers involved were subject to time constraints, due to the prescribed number of assessment tasks set in terms of each LA, as well as the need to collect a great deal of evidence. Balancing teaching the learner with the need to pay a great deal of attention to the curriculum was difficult. Some of the teachers surveyed were found to be using the material of a previous curriculum, which they had found to work better for them than did the new. Though such material was not always contextually appropriate, they nevertheless still used it. The curriculum was organised around themes, in order to simplify the teaching process.

Grouping was undertaken as part of the requirements of OBE. Opinions about same-level and same-age grouping were found to differ among the various participants in the study. Grouping generally related to what lessons were being delivered. Such grouping was routine and fixed, so that learners knew where to go and what to do. The teachers spent much time giving instructions, so that each group could manage to do the work that they were allocated.

According to the teachers involved in the study, self-directed learning was being practised. They had no option but to let the learners learn by themselves at times. Peer tutors were educated by the teachers concerned, which was problematic at times, as the amount of time allocated for teaching did not allow for guidance of

tutors. The tutoring system was found to work better when older learners were used as tutors. Both self-directed learning and tutoring largely depended on the type of learners available, and on how long they had stayed on the same farm or in the same rural setting. The older children seemed to want to help the younger, or less well-skilled, learners.

Practitioners of multi-grade teaching tend to improve over time, though theirs is a difficult learning curve. Learning proceeds, not in the sense of a formal multi-grade pedagogy, but by discovering what works for a particular school or class in a particular year, in relation to particular learners and their needs.

In Chapter Six, the findings are discussed in relation to the research questions and the key concepts are highlighted against the background of the theoretical framework and the aims stated in the introductory chapter.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. General overview

Chapter Six concludes the findings of the research. It is arranged similarly to chapters 2 and 4, in terms of the synchronising of the theoretical framework, followed by the description of the paradigm and the fieldwork involved. The chapter also, however, explores and examines additional categories. Such would be the case of the concept of pedagogy of poverty, which was reviewed regarding its relevancy to the research question and the idea of 'what works'. As with the other chapters, the funnel down from international reference to local field findings is maintained.

6.2. From practice to ideology: General findings

At the start, all teaching of education in general was multi-grade, as was the case with the absence of the rural/urban dichotomy. Such polarities came about in modern times. Both previously existed as phenomena in their own right, but it was not an issue until the accepted ideology became the norm. Mono-grade teaching was accepted by the hegemony of the day, from the National Party's Bantu Education Act of 1953 to the ANC's SASA Act in 1996. The promulgation of such legislation led to the privileging of the mono-grade form of teaching over that of multi-grade, which led to marginalisation, problematisation and stereotyping, which affected all spheres of life: economic (regarding job opportunities and poverty); politics (regarding policymaking, centralisation and governance); culture (regarding lifestyle) and education (regarding rural, urban, multi-grade, and mono-grade teaching).

Rurality was first seen as idyllic and desirable, which was reflected in the prevailing national legislation at the beginning of the 20th century. The transformation happened gradually (see Chapter One), with solutions not being sought in time to resolve problematic conditions. Such conditions worsened with globalisation, technologisation, economic rationality, genetic technologies, and other developments, such as those to do with the postmodern condition. According to Martin Habermans (1998), the pedagogy of poverty is not a professional methodology, as it "is not supported by research, by theory or by best practice; (...) It is actually certain ritualistic acts".

Conventionally, 'good teaching' consists of teaching that is done in accordance with mainstream ideology, and within an urban setting. Such teaching has led to a deficit model in terms of education, as can be seen in the following description:

> In urban schools, due to a deficit model of children (denial of strengths focus on weaknesses: What don't these kids know? What skills do they lack? What can't they do?) Schools are seen as warehouses, and places for remediation and repair where hopelessness and despair describe the climate.
>
> (Black & Latino Policy Institutes, 2005)

Habermans focuses on the poor methods that led to poor pedagogy. Other examples of poor pedagogy are what was uncovered in the current study as 'knowing what works' or 'best practice', which is applied by the peer group, irrespective of context and the nature of the assessment activities involved (with it being copied from other (different) schools). Such had become the pedagogy in the case of the fieldwork conducted for the current study. When the new curriculum was introduced in the absence of pedagogy, the conditions were right for an epistemology of 'what works', 'common best practice' or/and an ideology of 'knowing what multi-grade teaching is about'. Such pockets of knowledge in the absence of a sound scientific base are mere "ritualistic acts" (Habermans, 1998).

Each new educator learns from 'well-seasoned' practitioners, with whose practices he is expected to conform, no matter whether the pedagogy learned within the academic environment and the practices themselves differ, is not relevant, as the novice is expected to fit in with the prevailing conditions. By means of such a process, education is reduced to the performance of 'good' assessment tasks and activities. Teachers are always looking for 'good' activities to use. Little or no contextualisation of the curriculum is undertaken to make it relevant to the learners, with the curriculum itself being decontextualised. Coupled with such decontextualisation, without the teachers concerned realising it, is the paternalistic view of 'helping poor rural learners', which has been developed within the framework of the pedagogy of poverty.

An ideology of '*help die arme bloedjies*' / 'helping the poor things' is rife among those teachers who do not live in the same area, and under the same conditions, as those in which they teach. Such an ideology is also enforced by means of the fixed step-by-step teaching that is common among foundation teachers, linked with the overburdened responsibility of 'I must teach' (no matter that it is in isolation from other teachers, but because to do so is my duty).

Foundation educators believe that they can walk into any class and start teaching, because the curriculum is in their head. They know the procedure ('pedagogy') by heart. Little comes from the interactive dynamic curriculum concept, or of the concept of teaching the child, not the curriculum. In terms of such a paradigm, there is no room for a multi-graded self-directed tutoring pedagogy. Even if the learners were to

be taught how to teach, it would be the same teaching as the educators concerned taught them.

If cultural settings, such as rurality, ask for the reorganisation of such 'good' teaching (planning), the failure to reorganise effectively will, inevitably, result in the pedagogy of poverty. Alternative teaching practice, such as that for which the new curriculum asks, is hardly feasible under such circumstances. If the teachers concerned revert to what they were taught prior to the implementation of the NCSs, such teaching will be in line with mainstream mono-grade, fundamentalist-based pedagogy and Christian National Education. All textbooks have been written in keeping with such mainstream metro-pedagogy, which is merely replicated in the rural settings.

Whether one's identity as a multi-grade educator or one's discourse is likely to be determined by mainstream metro-pedagogy is a matter requiring consideration. Whether rural education can ever bring about positive results (for the educators and learners) if such is the case, is debatable. If all training in education is geared to conforming to the requirements of mainstream pedagogy, few chances for change in a rural setting are likely. Overcoming the stereotype of the 'plaasteacher', or any wishes to become a 'real' metro-educator, is a daunting task. Such issues are some of the problems that rural educators have to face.

The pedagogy of poverty is not a bad methodology per se, but if used exclusively out of context or merely to conform to what is seen as the right way of teaching, it constitutes a pedagogy of poverty, according to Kinschelo (1998). The teachers are teaching, and the learners are listening, in a non-facilitatory way, as to do elsewise would be regarding as deviating from the accepted ideology. Such an approach

inevitably means that the teaching concerned is a form of control, indoctrination, conditioning and coaching, which is part of conforming to the pedagogy of poverty.

> Poor and minority children are systematically bludgeoned into low academic performance with a steady dose of low level, boring, if not downright silly assignments and curricula.
>
> (Dougherty & Barth, 1997, cited in Hodges, 2001)

Methods are 'proven', even if the ages of the learners and the times of teaching are different. The recipe is known: Instructions or explanations, homework, and grading all are taking as equating with what is meant by 'good' teaching.

The NCSs exemplify a techno-efficient and effective engineering approach, which new entrants must know and practise. The adoption of such an approach implies that those of the lower classes who live in the rural areas need a pedagogy of poverty, as they need directives, as they can neither critically think nor reason. Teachers should teach what is 'appropriate', and are responsible for implementing policy. Appropriate behaviour is learned in class. Taxonomisation is paramount in education, in terms of grouping, clustering, ranking, classifying, segregating and labelling. All 'basic' skills that are required by learners are taught and learned in class. Such teaching leads to irreconcilable differences between what teachers provide and what the learners require in respect of the given social context, as has been seen in the planning of rural educators. The difference between teaching practice and learner needs also exists between metro-pedagogy and rural reality (in respect of pedagogic needs). Learners are called upon to accept such an untouchable 'methodology' since teaching is for teachers to decide about, as they are meant to know what is best for the 21st century.

The mismatch between the teacher and the learner widens in relation to the one national curriculum for all. Enforcing only mainstream methodology results in only one ideology (requiring conformity to the pedagogy of poverty) being regarded as what constitutes quality teaching, which can only lead to dire consequences. Such has been proven by means of the application of a single systemic evaluation test for all. Since the more remote rural or farm schools fared the worst in the test, it seems that such application was a self-fulfilling prophecy. The results achieved in response to the systemic tests serve to confirm the (un)worthiness of the ideology relating to the quality of metro-education, or the poverty of hegemonic rural education, as well as that of the rural educators.

In less well-disciplined multi-grade classes, the learners often tend to manipulate the teachers by making them believe that the former are in power.

- Learners reward teachers by means of their compliance.
- They punish teachers by means of their resistance.
- Teachers believe that some methods work, and that others do not.
- Teachers becomes hostages to bouts of compliance and resistance, as well as disruptions.

Such observations are more prevalent in multi-grade classes, as they are more prone to ill discipline, due to the wider age gap between the learners and the fact that poor planning leads to the educators tending to leave some grades or sections by themselves. This is especially noticeable during the first few months of the year, when newcomers need to settle in, and the routine still needs to be established. Educators should convert such a discipline of consequences resulting from the learners' (ir)responsibility regarding their own learning, for discipline as a prerequisite for the teacher's teaching. Education is about what the learner does, rather than what the teacher does. Rural education involves developing an identity befitting the

context of teaching, as well as developing a methodology fitting the rural or farm context.

In terms of both ideology and attitude, rural educators require more than a change of mind, transforming from merely 'knowing what works' or copying mostly metro-pedagogy will require intensive INSET. To be able to establish an identity of the rural teacher with all the negativities involved will require some effort from all sectors concerned. The establishment of such an identity will be more fully explored in Section 6.6 below.

6.3 Specific findings in relation to the research questions

The research questions investigated in the current study were:

- How do teachers of multi-grade classes in farming and rural communities reorganise their curriculum planning, when using the national curriculum?
- Can such teachers who have to respond to the multi-grade context be called multi-grade teachers in the same sense as that described by the literature research?

Such questions can be split up into sub-questions:

- Do such teachers plan separately (in terms of learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans) in accordance with each grade or phase, both officially and unofficially?
- How were the instructional practices concerned modified to suit the multi-grade classes?
- How do such teachers organise their classroom?
- Do they plan to use peer tutors?
- How do they plan to use grouping?
- What pedagogy/methodology does their planning suggest?

In Chapter One it was said that the answers to rural educational problems are neither singular nor simple. Such was proven to be the case during the fieldwork. Though the following observations serve neither as causal links, nor as explanations, they impact on the interpretation of the findings. Some answers to the above questions have been hinted at in the course of the discourse analysis (Chapter Five). In the discussion that follows, the two main research questions have merged, since the planning and practice (of multi-grade teaching) are inter-related.

6.3.1. Reorganisation of official and unofficial planning

Planning relates to the attempt that is made by teachers to satisfy the prescriptions of the NCSs, the interpretations of the principal and the subject advisors, and their own idea of 'what works'. Double planning entails such planning, with one set of plans being compiled for the 'office' and another for the teacher's own use. In some cases, extra sets, such as learning programmes, work schedules, lesson plans and daily planning, are also devised. Such planning is done separately, suggesting that it is not multi-grade planning, nor can such mono-grade planning be effective in a multi-grade setting.

The reorganisation of the curriculum that has taken place has led to wide-ranging and vague thematic planning, with no indication of the appropriate methodology to be used. The learners' needs did not form part of the modification, as the prescriptions of the curriculum were adhered to. Though those teachers who participated in the current study were still largely teaching the curriculum, but they were not teaching what is required in terms of the NCSs. They were teaching as they had originally

been taught to teach as foundation phase educators, basing such teaching on the use of Christian National Education as epistemology.

Their planning suggested that they were capable of teaching the basics, without paying any consideration to the context and relevance of the socio-economic conditions to which their learners were subject. The assessment activities discussed in Chapter Five confirm that such basic teaching asked little of learners, but to repeat what they had learned, critical outcomes notwithstanding.

The median age of the teachers in the study group was between 40 and 50 years (as taken from the sample schools), so that each of the teachers had between 15 and 20 years experience on average. Their initial training as teachers had taken place during the apartheid years, with orientation to the NCSs being provided during 2003. In brief, they seemed not to have changed their mindset. Those teachers who received their training after the implementation of OBE had, in contrast, to adhere to what was seen as best practice (of the pedagogy of poverty).

Figure 6.1: Preconditions for curriculum delivery.

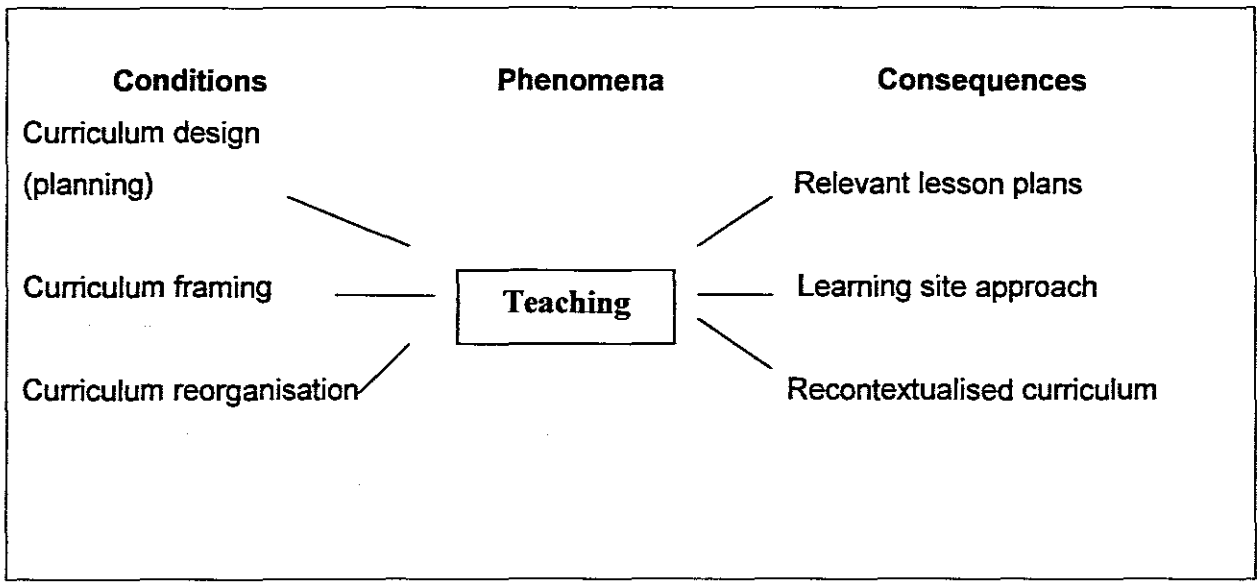


Figure 6.1 above shows the preconditions for the delivery of the pedagogy of multi-grade, in relation to which the consequences of non-compliance would have been the pedagogy of poverty. All the relevant particulars relating to such delivery have been discussed in all three phases of the fieldwork in Chapter Five.

All three phases of the research are similar in terms of planning and practice, suggesting the 'what works' approach as comprising the discovery of a new category. Such a finding might reflect an accepted ideology that is prevalent among seasoned multi-grade teachers in the Breede River EMDC indicating that newcomers learn their practice, not from colleges, but from the relevant and prevailing practitioners or ideology.

Such practice might also be a politicised response to subordination by the NCSs to mono-grade training and (hegemonic) dominance, as well as to a clash with multi-grade reality. In philosophical terms, those who are subjected to marginalisation play an active role in the process. Accordingly, one's denigration as a farm educator or a 'not good' teacher, who is partly responsible for inculcating the pedagogy of poverty, is likely to lead to an approach to teaching that is reactionary, apologetic, shameful and unvoiced among 'normal' mono-grade metro-teachers.

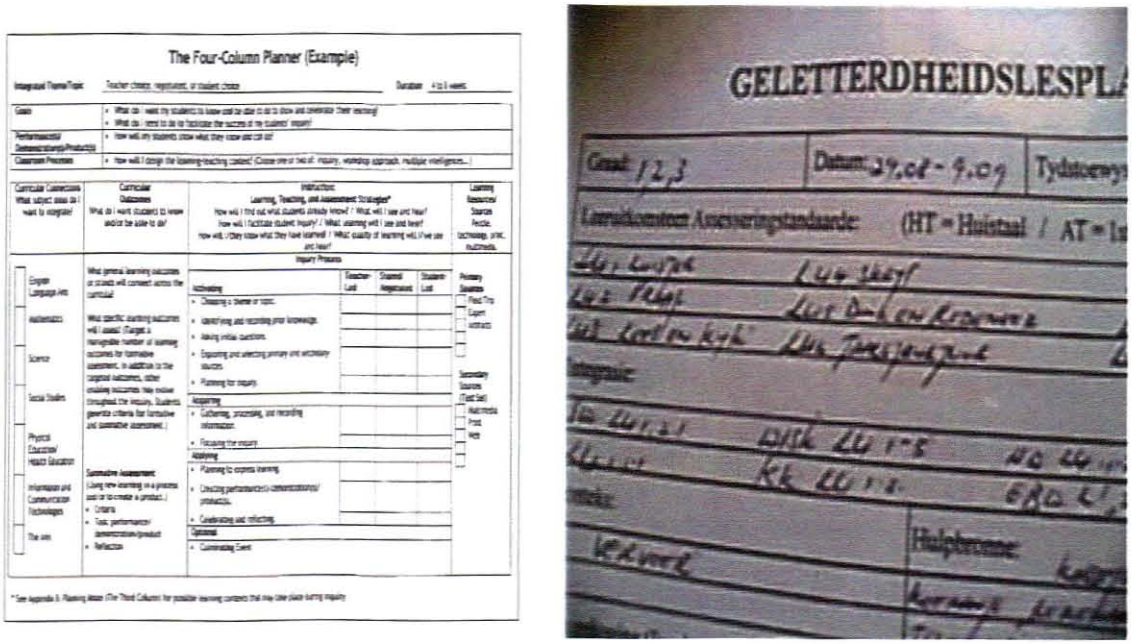
Multi-grade pedagogy and teaching that is in compliance with the NCSs is non-compatible in the following ways:

- Multi-grade works in a critical theoretical (often postmodern) fashion, while the NCSs constitute first modern world (re-)constructivism,
- Mono-grade teaching requires first-world technical thinking, which is in opposition to multi-grade's critical thinking approach.

- Multi-grade teaching requires the participation of an open-minded learner-peer-tutor or facilitator, while teaching in conformity with the requirements of the NCSs use a top-down educator;
- Multi-grade critical thinking incorporates the socio-economic context in its definitions of an interactive curriculum, while teaching in conformity with the NCSs is product- or outcome-focused.

An interesting phenomenon is that the ideology of 'good basic teaching' (the three R's: reading, writing and arithmetic) 0practice, in contrast to the developments that have taken place in primary educational research, requires pedagogic planners and scientific thinking. Multi-grade foundation practice requires practical-minded practitioners. Whether such scientific thinking and practical-mindedness exist in one person is debatable. The interviewees found it difficult to explain what they are doing, or why they were doing it, using educational terms, Even the planning of the two is different, as can be seen in Figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2. Comparison of planning in multi-grade teaching.



Note: Planning in multi-grade, in academic terms (Vincent, 1999) and in actual practice (Breede River District).

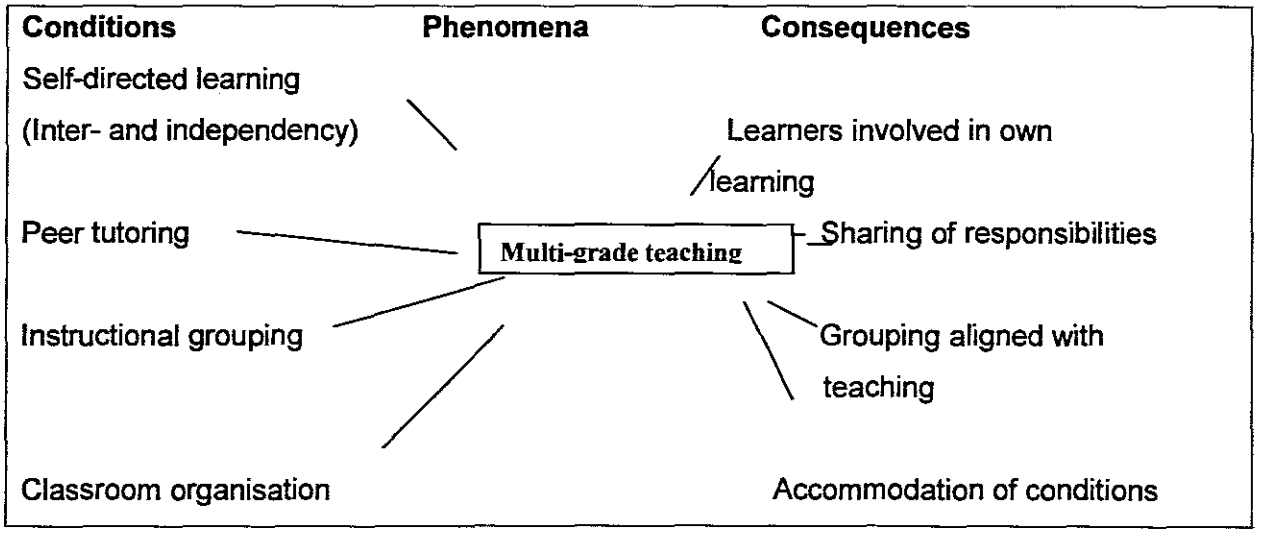
In Figure 6.2, it can be seen that the multi-grade planner takes the active role of the learner into account, with the simulateous relinquishment of at least some of the teacher's responsibility. The teacher strives to activate, and slowly relinquish, the responsibility of learning in, and to, the learners. In so doing, the teacher accommodates the process and provides the necessary resources. In the example of the sample schools, the planning for such a process was vague, and bore little resembles to multi-grade pedagogy. Outcomes seemed to have been combined in such a way as merely to provide context, with littler progression being indicated. The methodology was entirely absent in the case of the sample schools in the Breede River EMDC.

6.3.1 Planning and multi-grade practice

The denial of the rural educator identity does not mean that such educators deny such a phenomenon. They know that multi-grade strategies are required of them, and that the reorganisation of the curriculum forms part of such strategies. The required expertise for such strategising and reorganising is, however, simply missing. The resources, such as copies of the Constitution and the Manifesto of Values, with which the educators were provided during their orientation were not enough to ensure change in the epistemology. The reality of practice within the farm school environment has not led to the establishment of the positive identity of a rural educator per se. Such an identity is still seen as negative. So, even if teachers acknowledge that, after decades of teaching in a rural area, they are rural teachers, the ultimate goal of transferring to a mono-grade metropolitan school still exists. Such a discursive ideology leads to the formation of a negative identity among rural and

farm teachers. Being seen as a rural teacher is still shameful, since the mono-grade big town schools are the only ones to be regarded as 'real'. Rural teachers tend to identify with certain components of the situation (by emphasising with the learner, but not with the setting; with teaching, but not with rural or multi-grade teaching), but to retain their sense of 'differentness' in relation to the norm. Such an identity could be seen in the planning and interviews conducted with the rural teachers. The requirement for an multi-grade planning and pedagogy is shown in Figure 6.3 below.

Figure 6.3: Preconditions for multi-grade pedagogy.



In multi-grade pedagogy, there is synchronisation between the planning (instructional organisation and grouping), classroom organisation and curriculum delivery. Such synchronisation clearly shows learner involvement, as can be seen in Figure 6.3 above. In the sample schools, the learners were seen to be at the receiving end of the pedagogy. Self-directed learning was absent, with control being exerted by the teacher concerned, Classroom monitors were used as tutors. Groups were on the same level, or of the same age, or merely mixed to socialise. There was no room for accommodating multi-grade strategies.

Whether such practice can be considered as the local multi-grade ideology or what constitutes multi-grade South African practice is debatable. Such teaching can be equated with what Habermans (1991) terms the ideology of poverty. Such an ideology is poor, since it negates the reality of, and the developmental changes in, education. Instead, it adheres to common local and individual thinking and practice, which is untested and non-validified, and therefore unscientific. knowledge. The pedagogy of poverty is compared with rural pedagody in Table 6.1[57] below.

Table 6.1. Comparison between pedagogics.

Pedagogy of poverty	**Rural pedagogy for multi-grade in the Breede River District**
Giving of information (teaching → listening)	
Asking of questions	Asking of fixed questions
Giving of directions (instructions)	
Providing of assignments	
Monitoring of seatwork	Graded seating, with traffic control
Reviewing of assignments	
Administering of tests	
Reviewing of tests	
Assigning of homework	Little homework ("they cannot work alone")
Reviewing of homework	
Settling of disputes	Settling of disputes, with learners from other grades shouting out answers
Punishing of noncompliance	
Marking of papers / Awarding of grades	

[57] The comparison requires to be substantiated by still further evidence in this regard, before it can be regarded as conclusive

Though the pedagogy of poverty stands in opposition to good (scientific) practice (teaching), such opposition does not mean that international practice is seen as ultimate 'good practice' in terms of the current thesis. The terms concerned are used as are terms of reference to establish the nature of local multi-grade. The above comparison suggests that the multi-grade practitioners of the Breede River District are practising a pedagogy of poverty, rather than a pedagogy for poverty. They tend to be more compliant with the ideology of practice ('what everyone knows as good teaching') than with the dictates of contextuality (whether rural or farm). They conform more to what is expected from their own peers than to reality. Being seen as a good large school mono-grade teacher is better than being seen as a (well-adapted, reorganised) rural teacher. Aspects such as control and who is responsible for teaching are uppermost in their mind. The planning of the educators suggests that they do not abide by multi-grade pedagogy. In the absence of both multi-grade and mono-grade, one wonders what pedagogy the planning suggests, and how that planning which is done takes place. Table 6.2 below compares the findings of the current study in relation to some categories of multi-grade theory.

Table 6.2: Multi-grade findings.

Research aspect	Findings
Instructional practices modified for multi-grade	Instructional practices consist of fixed rituals that every learner knows. The pattern is that of chorus answering, grade group answering, individual responses, and writing on the board or in books. Teaching is graded, with no modification being made for multi-grade. Such grading is reflected in the planning and field observation.
Organision of the classroom	Classrooms are organised to maximise traffic and to keep everybody in sight of the teacher (to facilitate control). Consequently, most of the furniture is placed alongside the walls, rather than being used to form learning centres. Classroom organisation is only synchronised for certain lessons, such as mental Mathematics, during which the material is on the wall, with all the learners moving towards it. Such work is performed in grades, and not at the

	different levels. Golden moments of teaching are lost when one learner shouts out the answer to show that s/he knows it. According to the NCSs, s/he is not supposed to know the answer, and therefore should keep quiet. The classroom arrangement cannot be said to be of a multi-grade nature, else it would be geared towards learners teaching of one another. A multi-grade classroom would also encourage individual learners moving to spaces supplied with self-help material.
Peer tutors	In the sample schools, peer tutors are used as monitors to help ensure discipline. Since they are seated in a graded way (to minimise any differences in level), it is difficult for the Grade1s to be helped by a Grade 3 who sits at a distance from them. Peer tutors are not selected, trained and evaluated. Incidental tutoring occurs, but not in a planned fashion, or as a result of the teacher requiring it.
Grouping	The grouping is the same as that which is done in the mono-grade class. It is not align with the teaching. The pattern and groups are fixed. She teaches, while they listen and learn, after which they show that they can all write in their books. Ssometimes two books are used, with one being a rough draft one and the other for display, indicating that all the corrections had been done. Grouping in Grade 1 is done via an instrument (the setting of a test), and afterwards is fixed. The groups are not only graded, but also sometimes isolated, with Grade 1 sitting in front. The teachers try to address one group at a time. A seasoned teacher groups learners within grades, according to the different levels, though such grouping is done for her own purposes, and not for the purpose of peer teaching.
Schedules and routines	A context of clear rules and routines makes such shared responsibility productive. Learners know what the teacher expects.
Independence and interdependence	Learners learn how to help one another, as well as themselves. At an early age, the learners are expected to develop. The effective multi-grade teacher establishes a climate that is conducive to the promotion and development of such independence. When young learners enter the classroom for the first time, they receive help both from the teacher, and ,from the older learners.
Open-task activities	Whole-class instruction revolves around open-task activities, if all the learners are to be engaged. For example, a teacher can introduce a writing assignment by means of a topic that all the learners 'brainstorm' for ideas. The assignments are then presented at different levels. Often the assessment standards are used for such presentations. The problem is that the activities are seen as teaching, and the learning as having taken place when the learner can complete the activity concerned. Engaging with the activity, and deliberating, debating and interacting around the topic or activity is ignored. The question should not be 'Have you completed the task?', but 'What have you learned from it?'

Integrated curriculum	The integration of the eight learning areas into three learning programmes should be further adapted for multi-grade. Such adaptation has been found to be the most difficult part of multi-grade teaching in all cases. To plan from learning areas to learning programmes using integration and clustering is not difficult, but to further reorganise into multi-grade teaching units combined with what works is proving to be an ongoing challenge.
Instructional delivery and grouping	Activities are performed both within, and across, grades and learner levels. Such cross-grade and -level activities have been a bone of contention. Most rural teachers say that they work with the same level groups, though the seating is not done in accordance with such a statement. The learners tend to sit in grades. There is also a mismatch between the planning and the execution of the planning. The planning is to adhere to the requirements of the NCSs, whereas the teaching takes place according to 'what works', with, most often, the two being different to each other.
Self-directed learning	All learners must accept responsibility for their own learning and the mentors are responsible for mentoring, self-directed learning, self-managing, self-monitoring, and self-modifying. Such was not found during the fieldwork. Multi-grade teachers are intent on remaining responsible for their 'children'.
Peer tutoring	Learners must be trained by other learners, and both credited for their efforts. Such was not found in the fieldwork. In general, prefects are still used. Nevertheless, some learners do help one another, whether such help is planned or unplanned.

A crucial finding of the current study was that there is a difference in what planning is understood to be. Planning for the curriculum can be done; planning teaching can be done, provided that the stance taken towards it is that of product curriculum. If the curriculum is seen as an interactive praxis or process, in terms of which the teacher becomes the facilitator, facilitating the process, and where the attained outcome can be different from the planned one, then planning is a guideline. Whether it is a guideline depends on whether the overall outcome of the process can be predicted, or whether, ultimately, it is only an educated guess. However, assessment, test and systemic evaluation are all product-based, the validity of which becomes questionable if the teachers are process-focused. How to measure the teaching interactive process requires consideration. A difference in perceptions must lead to failure, in terms of systemic evaluation. The situation is exacerbated if categories such as 'what works' are not in line with the NCS-intended curriculum, with the attained product not being a function of the curriculum, but of the notion of 'what works'.

Time management is poor, which leads to frustration. The teachers always feel pressured for time.
The teachers have poor planning skills, due to their lack of training and understanding about the NCSs. Such poor skills lead to a dependency on textbooks, manuals, and material compiled by others, which might be irrelevant to the needs of the learners at a specific school.
The teachers tend to believe that they 'know what should be done'. They rely upon their intrinsic knowledge of the curriculum and methodology.

Foundational rural educators think of learners not in conceptual ways, but rather in terms of what they can or cannot do, and not in assessment standard terms, but in real terms. Such thinking is due to their own training, which occurred several years ago, and also to the fact that they were not trained in pedagogy in terms of the NCSs.

The findings of the current study suggest that, though the rural and farm educators do not practice multi-grade methodology, they see themselves as multi-grade practitioners, referring to the phenomenon as such, rather than to their teaching strategies. Such reference, in turn, suggests they are skilled in practical thinking, rather than in conceptual understanding, as a result of lack of pedagogic training.

The differences in the various sizes of the schools, the number of resources available, and the racial history concerned has had a severe impact on the delivery of the curriculum. Schools, in general, do not change quickly (either in relation to their curriculum or their methods). To former model-C schools, tradition is very important. When the NCSs were first introduced in 2003, they were seen as comprising a political document that would set the previously disadvantaged groups free from the imposition of National Christian Education. Ironically, the schools were unable to cope with the drastic change that the new system entailed. In the current study, they were found to respond positively towards the new curriculum, which is politically correct, though, in actual practice, they prefer the step-by-step prescription of the old

syllabus (Report 550). During their INSET training, various emotional responses were clearly stated by the white trainees. Back at school, they continued to proceed as usual. This was, in part, because the principal was excluded from the training. When the educators from the previously disadvantaged groups were back in class, they realised, to their dismay, that they were unable to cope with the curriculum. While many of the latter teachers were positive about the new curriculum, because it was easier than C2005, their lack of understanding about what was really required of them, as well as the methodology concerned soon led to them reverting to the previous methods of teaching.

Having more resources at their disposal, the former model-C schools were able to create SGB posts, so that they were able to keep their classes relatively small, to use computerised tests and to utilise learner support material during lessons. As a result the formerly white schools accepted the NCSs over time, so that they performed better in the systemic evaluation test. Parental involvement in the formerly white schools was also at a much higher level than it was in the previously disadvantaged schools. Remote poor farm schools performed worst in the systemic evaluation (see Chapter One). The differences in resources and numbers can be seen in the illustrations that appear in Chapter Five.

6.4 Generalisation of findings

Phase 3 made use of practitioners of multi-grade from over a wider spectrum than the case study, or the sample schools. Allowing for such wider participation meant that the findings could be generalised, which would otherwise have been hampered

by the small sample of schools and students used. However, the similarity in experience between the 19 students, coupled with the 11 sample schools, indicates that the experience of multi-grade does not differ that much and allows for speculations.

The fact that many of the educators were in a multi-grade class for years has led to an individual view in regard to of what multi-grade pedagogy consists. All the educators participating in the study were found to have shared the same experiences and problems, with each having used specific coping skills to adapt. Such skills are not based on a specific pedagogy, but rather on what works. However, what works for the one school does not necessarily work for another school, though this did not stop them from copying material from one another.

Such a finding made the making of deductions regarding a common approach or theory difficult. However, certain teaching patterns did emerge, as can be seen in tables 6.1 to 6.3 above. Incoherencies also came to the fore. It was obvious that any aligning of mono-grade practice with international theory and practice was opportunistic. The frames of reference were a problem, with the focus not being on a common learned pedagogy but on 'our school', the NCSs and the mono-grade situation. The most frequent response was that of complaints about problems and issues. The teachers' experience of multi-grade was the same of that of the teachers at the sample schools. The learnings from the current research are given in the following discussion.

6.5. Key findings

6.5.1 Teaching multi-grade in the rural Breede River District is problematic and difficult. This is because:

6.5.2 of lack of training in multi-grade, as well as lack of support from the district officers;

6.5.3 educators trying to reorganise a national same-size-fits-all curriculum, answering to learners' needs or dictates relating to the school context;

6.5.4 the lack of (mono- and multi-grade) teaching methodology; and

6.5.5 the absence of multi-grade policy, or the ignoring of its existence.

6.5.6 Educators know what and how to teach, due to their experience in multi-grade, not to learned theory. Such a lack of theoretical knowledge, and the reduction of teaching to activities 'that work', cannot be accounted for in a pedagogical sense. The research uncovered various categories:

6.5.6.1 a historic sense of what worked in the past in multi-grade;

6.5.6.2 a sense of 'I know' (as multi-grade educator), and that policymakers do not;

6.5.6.3 the blending of national Christian pedagogy with the practice of reversion to previous teaching methods, resulted from poor pedagogy;

6.5.6.4 the pockets of ideology (as a set of beliefs) constituting the educators' 'basic' education, which is a concept that requires much more research;

6.5.6.5 due to teachers and learners living in different socio-economic circumstances, the former tending to have a paternalistic view regarding the helping of 'poor kids', leading to the strengthening of their own poor pedagogy of poverty; and

6.5.6.6 such ideologies leading to a South African brand of multi-grade education.

6.5.7 The educators participating in the study were not found to have a negative attitude towards working in a multi-grade class, but found themselves unable to cope with multi-grade teaching and the burden of having to cope with the requirements of the NCSs and administration. The educators stated that they loved working in a family context, and learning how to cope with the difficulties of multi-grade. However, 'official' interference was found to be problematic.

6.5.8 Teachers have moved away from mere mono-grade teaching, but are still not teaching multi-grade as they think they are, which is due to their lack of training and scholarship. The development of multi-grade curricula is a scientific endeavour, rather than a pragmatic one.

6.5.9 Matching planning (regarding NCS formats or templates) and execution (multi-grade pedagogy) was difficult. Such matching became a choice between official dictates and the needs of the child, with the latter winning. The result of such a choice led to a second set of planning.

6.5.10 The responsibility for teaching is neither shared with other older, or higher level, learners or co-teachers, nor does it accommodate self-directed learning. Teachers direct, teach and drill, as they have done for years, and as they have become used to 'know'. Group work is done because it is seen as part of OBE.

6.5.11 Such an approach has led multi-grade teaching to be isolated from mainstream thinking and practice. Distanced from international practice and educational discussions, and from local socio-economic practice, to which education is central, as well as from farming and rural reality, such teachers do what they know 'best'.

6.5.12 Such attitudes towards rural multi-grade education are based on the following (untested) assumptions:

- All teaching is the same, devoid of context (in the same way that the school is placed away from the world of work);
- Teaching the 'basics', to contextualise the curriculum is left to the theorists, as the basics are the same everywhere.
- Education and real life are separate.
- Urban/rural disparities (social contexts) do not exist for such educators.
- Education can take place in isolation.
- Teaching within an urban/rural context is regarded as being the same, with 'we can make it work' as a common ideology.
- Teaching is reduced to a number of 'good' assessment activities, strung together to align with the NCSs.
- The Constitution, 'orientation' and the Manifesto for Values can provide pedagogy. The current researcher found that none of the aforementioned

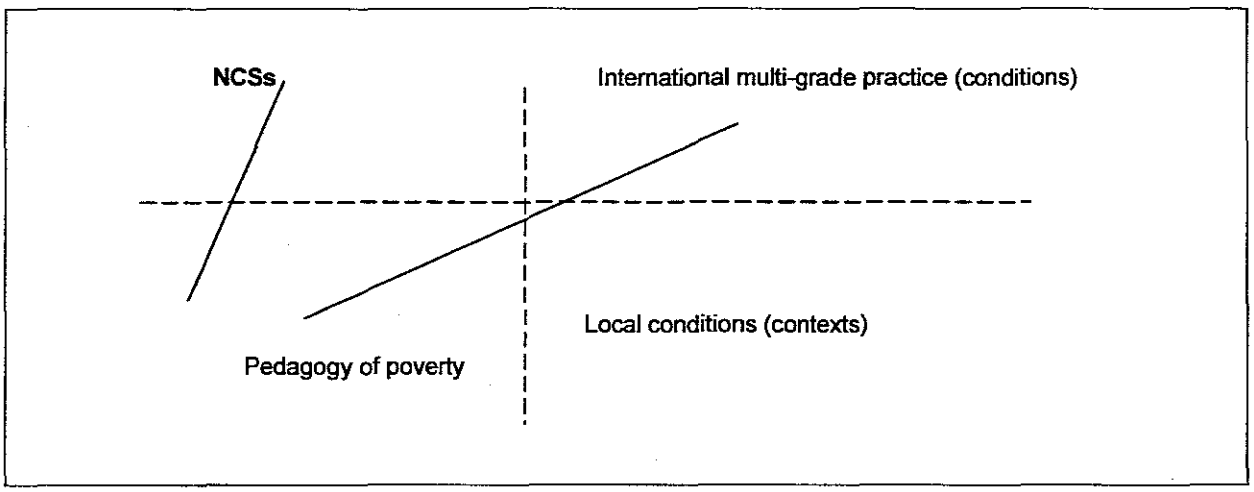
documents seemed to have been studied by the educators, nor were they able to provide the pedagogic rationale to substantiate their methods of teaching.

- Teaching does not change. Only documents need to be changed to achieve the implementation of a new methodology/pedagogy (such as the NCS). Often such implementation is more administrative than it is methodological.
- Deficit models of rural multi-grade education affect pedagogy.
- Teachers must teach and learners must learn, even if the curriculum suggests differently.
- Labelling in education does not exist.
- Good planning and good teaching are two different entities. Planning is seen as being for the office and officials, with the teachers concerned having their own system of teaching for the class.

Conditions of teaching have to be dictated by the socio-cultural setting, no matter whether it is rural or farm, since such a context has a significant impact on teaching. The current practice consists neither of adherence to the setting nor adherence to the multi-grade setting, which is the reality. The practice is more in line with the official requirements, circuit manager dictates, mono-grade examples, OBE, and the framing of subject advisors and principals (or lack of it). The lack of belief in multi-grade, the negativity of multi-grade, and the lack of training undermine belief in multi-grade and its positivity.

Such variables led to a disparity between the conditions and the context. Education regarding rural and farm conditions is in disjuncture with the reality of the social context and with the multi-grade reality and needs.

Figure 6.4: Social context and the multi-grade reality.



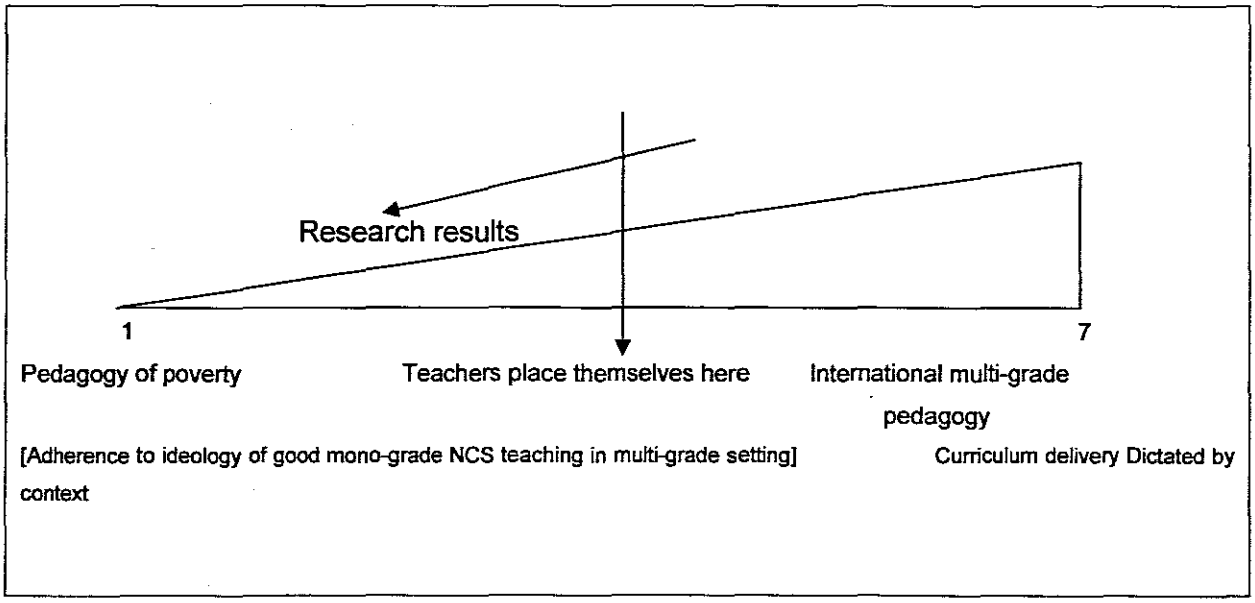
In Figure 6.4 above, the disparity and non-alignment that characterise the situation are shown. Such is evident from the planning, with its being for those who 'interfere', such as curriculum advisors. Educators tend to have greater trust in their experienced 'sense of knowing' (regarding what has worked in the past) than in what is seen as (opposing and new, as well as often conflicting) pedagogy.

NCS pedagogy cannot be compared with multi-grade pedagogy, since the implementation of the NCSs took place with scant pedagogic support. The assumption that the Constitution could provide guidance is false, since it implies human rights-oriented education, and the prevailing ideology has since shifted to one of human capital development. Such an ideological shift means that the NCSs cannot be delivered within a multi-grade setting. What is planned is neither NCS mono-grade nor multi-grade pedagogy. Such a comparison would require a degree of similarity between the NCS and multi-grade teaching, and between the epistemologies or

paradigms to which they subscribe, or the same terms of reference. Such similarities are absent in this instance.[58]

The philosophy that was supposed to be the foundation of education, namely constructivism, has not yet been conveyed to the educators concerned. In the fieldwork, the multi-grade educators were clearly seen to see themselves as multi-grade practitioners, rather than as scientists. Such self-perception is reflected in Figure 6.5 below.

Figure 6.5: Self-perception as multi-grade teachers.



Accordingly, the conclusions in terms of the research questions are as follow:

- We cannot plan for what we do not understand (or for what we disagree with), or plan one thing and execute another, in order to satisfy everyone with our teaching.
- Our practice in rural multi-grade classes is neither multi-grade nor NCS.
- Mono-grade, mainstream ideology cannot be used as the criterion, else what results is a pedagogy of poverty.

[58] Such an approach changed in 2009, when the 'Literacy-Numeracy strategy' was published. which spelled out constructivism as epistemology, in terms of Piaget's and Vygotsky's thinking. However, the change is not considered in the current study.

- Rural and farm teachers work within a setting such as that envisaged in section 14, with the schools at which they teach legally being in limbo, as they are neither multi-grade, nor in keeping with the requirements of the NCSs. Such teaching is not a form of fundamental pedagogy, nor without traces of it.
- Without proper pedagogic training, teachers are unable to express themselves in pedagogic or educational terms. They are unaware of their own lack of knowledge in this regard.
- In order to achieve quality rural multi-grade pedagogy, and to plan for it, the classroom setting, the instructional organisation and the curriculum delivery must be synchronised.

6.6 Recommendations

The recommendations that follow stem from the research and the management of a rural multi-grade school. An attempt is made, in respect of the recommendations, to address all levels of education.

6.6.1 General overview

Other key issues that emerged during the analysis of the findings were that, in an urban/rural or first and third-world dichotomy:

- Can a first world curriculum for all be prescribed?
- Can all schools be tested using the same systemic test, and, if some schools perform poorly, is it not the fault of the educational system, rather than of the schools involved? The quantitative notion of systemic evaluation aligns with the post-positivism and positivism paradigms, in terms of such characteristics as 'real' reality, dualist/objectivist. Experimental methodology also aligns with prediction and control, excluding aim, values and ethics. Though the hegemony is firmly in control, the critical criteria of the NCSs encourage critical thinking, with third-world (often rural) schools existing in a postmodern

condition or in the terms of the critical theorist paradigm. Such a disjuncture, which was not part of the research question, might well have a bearing on the findings of such research.

6.6.2 Policy

The challenge to government is to recognise what other countries have done in regard to multi-grade strategies that can benefit both mono- and multi-grade schools. Multi-grade rural education is likely to be an enduring phenomenon. As such education is not an abnormality, the government should provide policy guidelines for such a distinct form of education. Multi-grade teaching has been proven to be beneficial in mono-grade schools, as well as in other countries. Rurality asks from the curriculum that it be contextualised, which policy should enforce and for which it should provide guidelines. Policy with regard to the implementation of multi-grade pedagogy in any school is likely to benefit the South African educational system as a whole.

In this regard, the potential for multi-grade pedagogy is:

- to provide a pedagogic approach to increase access and retention, while improving education;
- to provide a strategy in terms of which to address teacher shortages, particularly in small and remote schools; and
- to encompass teacher development, curriculum reform, language issues, learning, support materials and tutor pedagogic awareness. The improvement of all such fields is what South Africa currently needs. Therefore, multi-grade courses should be made mainstream within existing pre-service and INSET programmes.

6.6.3. Changing attitudes

Multi-grade education has become seen as negative over the years, due to mono-grade mainstreaming. The government has tended to focus on conventional mono-grade schools, in terms of both policy and resourcing. The management of rural schools was left up to the local initiatives, which might have led to poor results. In Africa, as a consequence of the shortage of teachers, teacher absenteeism owing to HIV/Aids-related causes and the budget restraints facing many countries, multi-grade classes have become an inevitable option.

The indifference that has been expressed towards rural people as the result of a strong urban bias has left rural people without a political voice. Ensuring that Education for All also includes all those living in rural areas is a task that must be tackled urgently for the sake of the South African community as a whole. The Dakar framework for action outlines a number of goals that must be met in order to meet the EFA challenges, with special reference to education for rural people. The Working Group on the Teaching Profession (WGTP) has participated in specific multi-grade activities. One of the first meetings took place in 2004 in Uganda. At the second such meeting, which took place in Tanzania, eleven countries were represented which reported on their trials of various models of multi-grade teaching. In 2007, the following countries participated in a follow-up workshop, which was held in Lesotho: Botswana; Cameroon; Lesotho; Mauritius; the Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Sudan; Ghana; Kenya; Nigeria; Zambia; and Gambia. The attitudes of countries towards multi-grade education have changed throughout the world . The recommendation is that South Africa should foster a positive attitude among educators, parents and education officers, which will create an understanding of the value of multi-grade

teaching as a pedagogy that promotes quality, rather than denigrating it as an inferior cost-effective option. Evidence of such a change in attitude can be seen in the establishment, at the beginning of 2009, of a research centre at CPUT for rural educational research, funded by the Netherlands.

6.6.4. Curriculum recommendations

Ways should be found of reorganising the NCS content-based, mono-graded, centralised curricula into an integrated, thematic outcomes-based curriculum that suits the diverse needs of all learners in multi-grade schools.

The curriculum, its resources and teaching materials are all mono-grade, while 45% of South African learners attend rural schools, which are often multi-grade. Such materials should neither be copied for, nor prescriptively supplied to, all schools, as is current practice. Just as urban and rural schools are not the same, neither are mono- and multi-grade schools. In fact, each school is unique and should be treated as such. Teachers are not trained to adapt the materials that they use to meet the needs of their classes. The following current practices are detrimental to the South African educational system:

- the copying of the (planning and other) materials of the 'better performing' schools;
- the buying of urban-based modules to apply in rural education;
- the appointment of 'normal' educators at multi-grade, or even special, schools without proper INSET;
- the adaptation of the mono-grade curriculum for multi-grade teaching;
- the separate (official and unofficial) planning for teaching, in the absence of sound pedagogic knowledge or philosophy;

- the practice of that which is 'best' known, or the collection of 'excellent' assessment activities and the compilation of the assessment task (to satisfy the requirements of the advisors, rather than the needs of the learners); and
- the use of examplars or pace setters, without understanding their true nature.

What is recommended is a paradigm shift that encapsulates the recognition of multi-grade rural education. For such education to be allowed as an authentic pedagogy in its own right, rather than being regarded as an exception or inferior version, usually to the disadvantage of the poor, the government should, at least, embrace the following changes:

- a substantive change in the philosophical, sociological, psychological and pedagogical base of education, which would acknowledge other theories than that which is the foundation of the developmental post-positivist approach;
- the recognition of the heterogeneity of school communities, which are more akin to family settings than they are to the forced artificiality of homogeneous groupings, based on age;
- the recognition of the whole context of the child, comprising more than the merely cognitive;
- the adoption of a more holistic approach to teaching;
- the transformation of the image of the rural teacher from that of a stereotypical practitioner of the pedagogic of poverty to that of a more resourced, confident advisor or facilitator; and
- the provision of a core flexible national curriculum, which schools themselves can adapt to make it an economically viable and socially integrated one that is relevant to the context in which it is implemented.

6.6.5. Resource and support structures

Those policies relating to multi-grade education should be supported by means of the appointment of multi-grade advisors to all provincial and district educational structures. Such advisors should be capable of facilitating the implementation, resourcing and administration of a multi-grade form of education. Some of the rural multi-grade schools are situated in remote and isolated areas. Such demographic

isolation leads to their professional, psychological and social isolation, which tends to undermine their delivery of the curriculum. Specially adapted resources, including learner-centred guides and various methodologies, should also be provided in order to address the needs of all learners.

From the 1970s to the 1980s, a travel grant was provided to rural educators, who would, otherwise, have had to spend much of their own salaries on travel and the maintenance of vehicles. Such a grant is no longer available, leaving many educators, who also help to provide transport for the rural poor, having to foot the bill for those costs that are incurred not by their own doing, but by teaching in the 'wrong' place. They are forced to travel long distances, due to the unavailability of suitable local housing for their own families.

6.6.6. Training

All teachers require training, with multi-grade teachers requiring more training than others do. Remote farm school educators require the most training. No pedagogic training was provided when the NCSs was first introduced. Support materials did not address such training, merely adding to the burden of re-designing, reading, managing and administrating. A sound epistemology is urgently needed to provide focused procedures, processes, goals, values, and quality criteria befitting the ontology (reality) of schools. Such an epistemology would include a suitable methodology and sound ethical principles, directed towards empowering educators to develop and move away from 'knowing what works' and from the pedagogy of poverty to a new vibrant ethos of discovering and life-long learning. Constructivism has proved to be inadequate as a theory, with critical theory being suggested as a

more suitable basis for conceptualising the critical outcomes of the NCSs. Such theorisation would provide an appropriate way forward.

The improvement of training should be based on the sound establishment of a multi-grade rural identity as its outcome, in order to address the negativity surrounding teaching in the (remote) rural areas.

6.6.7. Position of learners

Those learners who accept responsibility for their own (self-directed) education, as well as for the education (tutoring) of their peers, are to be encouraged. Educators should be trained to foster such learners, so that they can relinquish their sense of having to be totally self-reliant. Such training should accommodate the recognition of the importance of self-directed learning and peer tutoring, so that they can become imbued with an appreciation of the importance of lifelong learning and teaching.

On the one hand, learners, on average, tend to find education irrelevant and boring, with, on the other hand, educators tending to see learners as disinterested, lazy and irresponsible. Educators, while sometimes being ill- equipped for assuming their rightful place in the technological postmodern age, tend to emerge from the modern world. Consequently, they have to prepare the learners to face a world in which they themselves feel uncomfortable, as well as a new world that they themselves can hardly begin to imagine. Many ethics and truths that, in the past, were accepted as being of universal value, have been eroded by the impact of postmodernism, in terms of which no epistemology is regarded as sufficient, in itself, to provide a final answer or methodology. In a milieu that is dominated by such thinking, education does, and

must, take place. Educational policy-makers should bear such realities in mind when prescribing hard and fast curricula in an ever-changing world of few certainties.

6.6.8. Research

Rural education in South Africa has been neglected when it comes to research. What the current research has uncovered, requires much more research, in regard to such aspects as an ideology of 'what works' which would seem to persist, no matter what curriculum is followed. How such research is able to affect education will be determined by the prevailing pedagogy of poverty. Rural education can be distinguished from metro-pedagogy. The distinction between the two in South Africa is debatable. What needs to be explored is how the variety of contexts in South Africa affect education. The interplay between home contexts and their removed school setting requires consideration. How the values of educators and families differ affects the delivery of the curriculum. Such issues require urgent consideration, so that a quality education and leaders who are well-equipped to respond effectively to future change can be secured.

6.7. Reflection

The research that was undertaken for the current thesis has consisted of a learning curve for the researcher involved. Moving from theory, or planned research, to fieldwork and back has required a great deal of effort. The commonality of other researchers' experience of multi-grade in other remote rural areas, such as that of Suzuki in Nepal, that of Ames in Peruvian Amazon, that of Vithanapathirana in Sri Lanka, and that of Aikman and Pridmore in Vietnam (all cited in Little, 2005) has been rewarding.

Many recommendations have been found to be common in all the studies. The ultimate realisation to do with the current study is that much work is still required before multi-grade schools truly come to reap the full benefit of multi-grade teaching.

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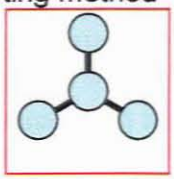
APPENDIX A: Observation Form

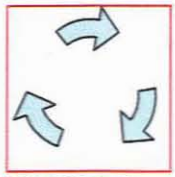
- To be use per observation per learning programme/period
- Specific grouping as per teaching aim?
- Grouping varies?
- Grouping: same levels, different levels, grades, co-operative,
- interdependent, intra-dependent, interactive, varied.

LEARNING PROGRAMME: .... GR. .....

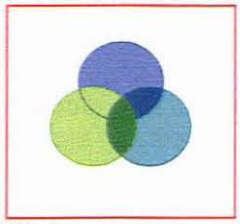
PHASE 1
Whole Class Teaching
Starting method



PHASE 2 OR
Independent Group Teaching
3 same level / mix or different
Each group on it's own / Tutor
READING GROUPS
INTERACTIVE / SEPERAT



PHASE 3
Dependent/Project/Co-ordinate Gr
On their own/with tutor
3 common level/mix or different



GROUPING 1 or 2 or 3 or 4	DURATION /FREQUEN CY	FOCUS / TEACHER TALK	**COMMENTS** TUTOR USE / NOT USE

PEER TUTORING	SELF DIRECT	WHOLE CLASS

PHASE 4
INTERVENTION / COMMON/ INDIVIDUAL (IEP) / CARPET GROUPS

Date: .....

Appendix B: Admission to visit school.

From the Desk of the Principal	**Ivela kwiDesika yenqununu**	Die kantoor van die hoof

7 Augustus 2006

Geagte Heer / Dame

TOESTEMMING OM U SKOOL TE BESOEK

Ek is tans besig met 'n ondersoek na multi-graadskole in die Brederivier OBOS. Die doel is om die beste praktyk vir multi-graad onderrig te bepaal. Ek het toestemming van hoofkantoor wat ek aan u sal voorhou. Ek het monsterskole uit die totale populasie van multi-graadskole getrek, en u skool val ook in die lys. Derhalwe vra ek graag u toestemming om die skool te betrek by die ondersoek.

My bemoeienis sal twee aspekte betrek:

- 'n Gestruktureerde onderhoud met die grondslagfase opvoeder wat ongeveer 30 - 40 minute sal duur,
- 'n Self-verslag wat sy moet voltooi en wat ek later kan afhaal,
- 'n foto van die multi-graadklas en
- 'n afdruk van die juffrou se rooster.

Indien u enige besware het teen van die items, kan dit uitgelaat word, die belangrikste sal die onderhoud wees – 'n kopie waarvan beskibaar sal wees voor die tyd. Die ondersoek sal die normale etiese protokol volg, waarin sekere ondernemings gegee sal word en wat die skool se naam sal beskerm. Die vorm is by die brief ingesluit. Ek sal dit baie waardeer as u die vorm sal onderteken en aan my sal faks/pos.

Die hoofdoel van die ondersoek is om op gestruktureerde wyse ondersteuning aan die multi-graad skole te verskaf, sodat leerders en opvoeders kan baat vind.

Ek sal dit baie waardeer indien u meegaande aanhegsel getiteld Standard Ethic Protocol sal voltooi deur slegs u naam by participant/interviewee in te tik en dit terug te e-pos.

Met dank
Die uwe

.....
David Faroö

CONTACT: 023-2310155
CELL PHONE: 073 1711206
ADMIN@wfloots.wcape.school.za
FAX: 023-2310435

Appendix C: Standard Ethics Protocol

[TO BE USED AT INTERVIEWS; HAVE SIGNED AND FILE]

I, David Joseph Faroo, am a researcher on the project entitled:

"Curriculum delivery in multi-grade farm schools in the Breede River/Overberg EMDC."

I am registered for the D.ED degree at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology under the supervision of dr.Jurie Joubert.
This project is aimed at:

- Highlighting the problems facing multi-grade farm schools;
- Helping educators with curriculum delivery by providing teaching strategies,
- Providing educators with international best practice based on research.

Permission has been granted by the WCED for the project – see letter attach.

My contact particulars are as follows:

- Cell.: 073 1711 206
- Work: 023-2310155
- Home: 073 4766880
- Street Address: 10 Golaith Cresent, Ceres 6835
- P.O. Box 129, Wolseley 6830
- Fax: 023-2310435
- E-Mail: admin@wfloots.wcape.school.za

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the project. Your input is appreciated. As a participant the following rights will be respected and adhere to:

- Your participation in the whole project is voluntary,
- You are free to refuse any question during interviews,
- You are free to withdraw at any stage,
- You can be assured of total confidentiality of the project,
- The result of which will be made know to you/your school,
- You name and reputation of the school will be protected,
- If, needed, feedback on the whole project will be provided.

Data and/ or excerpts of the study / interview may be use for publication / thesis writing – your name and that of your school will not be used. In cases where this is compromised, your permission will be sought. The study and its findings remain the intellectual property of the said university.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to show that your have read and understand the content.

.....	.....	.....
Participant / Interviewee	Capacity	Date

Appendix D: Informed Consent:

1. Title of Project:
Multi-graad kurrkulumlewering in plaasskole in die multi-graadklas.
2. Principal Researcher:
David Faroo M.A. B.ED.
3. Collaboration from Outside:
Kaapse Skiereiland se Universiteit van Tegnologie. Studie-leier: dr. Jurie Joubert
SANPAD – Samewerkingsooreenkoms tussen Nederland en Suid-Afrika vir Opleiding van Navorsers.
4. General Statements of the Problem and Research Questions:
    - In Suid-Afrika is mono-graad die norm. Alle opleiding bv. Kurrikulum Stellings en Protokol vir Assessering is vir mono-graad.
    - Multi-graad se skole het 'n lang geskiedenis in Suid-Afrika. Die aard van die klasse dwing die opvoeder om veranderings aan die Kurrikulum te maak asook hul onderrigstrategiee aan te pas.
    - Navorsingsvrae:
        - Hoe word die kurrikulum aangepas in multi-graadskole?
        - Hoe word onderrigstrategiee aangepas vir die multi-graad?
5. Description of the Overall plan procedure and methods

6. Relevant characteristics and source of participants. How they were recruited.
Totale populasie van Wes-Kaapse multigraad skole: Verkry 'n ewekansige monster.
Veranderlikes van taal, grote, demografie, ondersteuning en rol (opvoeders en leerders)
7. Selection of participants & remuneration.
Grondslagfase opvoeders van die 16 skole vir onderhoudvoering. Geen vergoeding.
8. Status and Qualifications of researcher / Assistance.
Hoof van multi-graad skool. Sitting op Kurrikulum Raad (WKOD) en Asseringskomitee. Professionele portefeulje van KPO en SADTU. Doktorale student. Opleding in kwalitatiewe navorsing deur Nederlandse Groep (SANPAD). Verteenwoordig Kaapse Skiereilandse Universiteit van Tegnologie by RCI. Vorige pos: senior dosent in Letterkunde en Remediering (Sohgne Kollege).
9. Source and funding
Navorsingfonds van CPUT.
Nederlandse Scholarship RCI
10. Expected starting and completion of project.
Januarie 2005 – Desember 2006. SANPAD's RCI eindig Februarie 2007.
11. Benefits
Eerste wereldse opleiding deur kenners op elke aspek van navorsing. Een van die eerste navorsers in kurrikulumaspekte en kurrikulumkenmerke en multi-graad in die land.
12. Risk
Geen.
13. Procedure wrt protection of anonymity and confidentiality
Geenopvoedersname of skole-identiteit word benodig nie.
14. Copyrights of intellectual property
Skiereilandse Universiteit van Tegnologie. SANPAD.
15. Exposure to intervention
Geen intervensies nie. Beoefenaars van multi-graad se perspektiek, kennis van multi-graadheid, manipulering van of modifikasie van kurrikulum is die fokuspunt.
16. Specify risk
Geen.

APPENDIX E - Interview Form

ONDERHOUDSVORM – DATA KOLLEKSIE

VRAE	RESPONS
1.Hoe het u voorsienning gemaak vir die verskillende grade in u **beplanning** van leerprogramme en lesse. *[how did you make provision for the different levels in your planning of learning programmes and lessons?]*	
2. a.Hoe **rangskik** u die leerders in die klas? *[How do you arrange your learners in class?]* b.Bly die indeling dieselfde vir alle leerprogramme?*[Does the arrangement remains the same for all programmes?]*	
3. a. Watter leerareas hanteer u alleen? *[Which learning areas do you teach alone?]*	
4. Hoe werk u u rooster uit? [Gee afskrif] *[How do you work out your time table]*	
5. Hoe maak u gebruik van mentor (portuur-) *How do you utilize peer groups?]*	
6. Hoe hanteer u intervensie gevalle? *[how do you handle intervention cases ?]*	
7. Wat maak die ander groepe as u met een groep besig is? *[What do you do with the one group if you are busy with the other group?]*	
8. As u alle groepe onderrig (klasonderrig) – hoe onderskei u die prestasie vlakke? *[If you are busy with class teaching, how do you distinguish between the various levels?]*	
9. Beplan en onderrig u per graad of per fase? *Do you plan and teach per grade or per level of performance?]*	
10. Hoe verseker u dat alle leeruitkomstes bereik word*? [How do you ensure that all the outcomes are being covered?]*	
11. Hoe goed word die skool ondersteun deur: Ouers (SBL), Plaaseienaar of ander?*[Do you get any support from parents, farm owners or others?]*	
12. Hoe hanteer u optekening en rapportering*? How do your recording and reporting?]*	
14. Wanneer doen u u administrasie? *When do you do your administration?]*	
15. Hoe voel u oor multi-graad onderwys? *How do you feel about multi-grade teaching?]*	
16. Beskou u die HNKV as geskik vir die plaaskind? *[Do you see the NCS as suitable for the farm learners?]*	
20. Hoe en waar differensieer u in u onderrig*? How and where do you do your differentiation?*	

Skool: ..... Opvoeder: ..... Datum: .....

Appendix F: Focus Group – MAC

KAAPSE SKIEREILANDSE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE
ACE: MULTI-GRAAD STUDENTE. SATERDAG 18 NOVEMBER 2006 – 11h15 - FUNDERINGSMULTI-GRAAD PEDAGOGIEK

Doel: Diskoers tussen praktyk (S.A. & Internasionaal) en teorie (S.A. & Internasionaal).
Metode: Membership Categorization Analysis (Deelnemende Kategoriserende Analise)
LET WEL: Ons vergelyk nie mono- en multi-graad nie, maar multi-graadheid.

INSTRUKSIE:

- Werk in groepe van twee of drie.
- Bepaal eers, **uit u ervaring**, of u saamstem of verskil oor die 6 sleutelaspekte hieronder:
- Gebruik nou die **Flitskaartstroke** en bepaal:
    - Wat verstaan u daaronder? (Ontleding)
    - Binne die konteks van u **ervaring,** hoe pas dit in die / U multi-graadklas?
    - As onderstaande sleutelaspekte (volgende Miller, B) van MG is:
        - Wat verstaan u onder die begrip? Hoe kom dit in U MG-Klas voor?
        - Pas dit in enige van ONDERSTAANDE hofies? (Kategorisering)
        - Of vorm dit 'n ander / aparte sleutelaspek? (kategorisering)
        - Of pas dit glad nie by MG nie? (Kategorisering)
    - U moet / mag insette lewer op verskillende groepe se sienswyses.

1. KLASKAMER ORGANISASIE

2. KLASKAMERBESTUUR EN DISSIPLINE

3. INSTRUKTUELE ORGANISASIE EN KURRIKULUMLEWERING

4. INSTRUKTUELE LEWERING EN GROEPERING

5. SELFGERIGTE LEER

6. MENTOR LEERDER

Ek bedank u hartlik vir u samewerking.

David Faroö

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