Cape Peninsula University of Technology

The missing curriculum: preparing English Home Language teachers for the practice of assessment

by

MARYNA MARIETTE DE LANGE

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Supervisor: Assistant-Prof AJF Dippenaar
Co-supervisor: Prof C Winberg

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DECLARATION

I, Maryna Mariette de Lange, declare that the contents of this dissertation/thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation/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.

30 September 2023

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ABSTRACT

A theory/practice divide is a challenge in many fields, and potentially can lead to graduates being unable to complete the core tasks required of them competently once in the workplace. To be adequately prepared, they need to realize theory informs practice, and vice versa. One such example is preparing teachers who can assess the language development of their students effectively. By the time pre-service teachers (intermediate phase) qualify, they are expected to be well acquainted with the policies governing assessment of English as Home Language. However, there is a widespread perception that many are not 'classroom ready', which affects their ability to monitor and assess the language development of primary school children.

The purpose of this study was to understand the nature of the theory/practice divide in teacher education at a university in the Western Cape, South Africa. It explores how pre-service teachers are prepared to implement assessment strategies as required by the national policy for language teaching at primary school level. The study draws on Legitimation Code Theory's Semantics dimension. Semantic gravity is used as an organising concept to track the context dependence in a language teaching curriculum of the teacher preparation programme and the policy documents. A specific translation device defines eight strengths of semantic gravity. This was used to code the data in order to identify possible gaps and weaknesses with regard to the theoretical and practical underpinning of assessment. Areas of focus were the principles of assessment policies, pre-service teacher education, classroom practice, and school management. A semantic analysis reveals changes between stronger and weaker forms of semantic gravity, and the relation between them. A comparison of their semantic waving shows convergences and discrepancies between teacher preparation and the demands of policy.

The study found that there was more that constrained than enabled novice teachers' preparation for assessment practice. An imbalance between theory/practice in the teacher education curriculum and expectations of policy was revealed. Examples of findings such as novice teachers' and final year students' limited understanding of assessment principles, the purpose of assessment, their uncertainty of being assessors and inability to implement policy were identified. School managers were not aware of the lack of assessment knowledge of novice teachers and did not provide the necessary support required for assessment practices once these novice teachers entered the workplace.

Several recommendations arose from this study. It was recommended that policy documents clearly explain the assessment theory and principles on which the policy is founded; be less prescriptive and use precise terminology. Lecturers have to ensure that teacher educators in

English Home Language are exposed to effective pedagogy and reflection in assessment literacy and accreditation. Collaboration is necessary between higher education institutions and the National Department of Basic Education to address and strengthen the linkages between conceptual and contextual forms of assessment knowledge in the preparation of pre-service teachers to ensure that they become competent practitioners. The “missing curriculum” was a term created and used in an open discussion involving lecturers and education officials to generate a solution for bridging gaps between teacher training and the education system.

Researching the “missing curriculum”, was identified as a lack of practical knowledge on assessment which is important to create a balance between teacher education and teaching practice. Further research is needed on assessment policy, teacher education curricula, classroom practice, and assessment management that are underpinned by a principled account of practical knowledge as well as theoretical knowledge. Without a thorough understanding of practice-based and contextual knowledge, there is a danger that theoretical knowledge itself will be undermined. The tools provided by semantic gravity laid the groundwork for an understanding of practical assessment knowledge and its relation to theoretical assessment knowledge, and it was illustrated that a deep understanding of both conceptual and contextual assessment knowledge is necessary to prepare novice teachers for assessment practice.

Keywords: assessment, teacher education, policy documents, theory/practice divide, curriculum.

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Postnet Suite 248, Private Bag X1, Melrose Arch, 2076
Textsolved@gmail.com
082 782 7376

EDITED

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Author: Maryna Mariette De Lange

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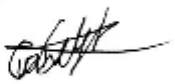

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Explanation of the abbreviation
ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DS	Data set
DS1 S1	Data set 1 (FYS questionnaire) and participant 1
DS2 L1	Data set 2 (Lecturer) and participant 1
DS3 NT1	Data set 3 (Novice teacher) and participant 1
DS4 P1	Data set 4 (Principal) and participant 1
DS5 SA1	Data set 5 (Subject advisor) and participant 1
DS6 NT1	Data set 6 (Novice teachers' individual interviews) and participant 1
DS7 S1	Data set 7 (FYS focus group interview) and participant 1
DS8 L1	Data set 8 (stakeholders focus group interview) Lecturer 1
DS8 CO1	Data set 8 (stakeholders focus group interview) Curriculum Official 1
DS8 T1	Data set 8 (stakeholders focus group interview) Teacher 1
EHL	English Home Language
FYS	Final-year student
GET	General Education and Training

HE	Higher Education
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LCT	Legitimation Code Theory
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NPA	National Protocol for Assessment
NPPPPR	National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NT	Novice teacher
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Literacy Study
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACMEQ	Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SG	Semantic gravity
SD	Semantic density
TEC	Teacher Education Training

GLOSSARY

Term	Description
Assessment	Measuring the performance of learners in a continuous planned process of identifying, gathering, and interpreting information in the most effective and efficient manner by ensuring that adequate evidence of achievement is collected using various methods.
Assessment task	An assessment activity which is designed to assess a range of skills and competences (SBA Government Gazette, 2017: 31).
Assessment practice	Assessment practice is a system of gathering a profile on a learner's progress as a student in the context of time, abilities, resources, and language level.
Curriculum	A curriculum stipulates content, methodologies, and assessment of teaching and learning for learners/students as set by legislation.
Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)	The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement stipulates the content, methodologies, and assessment to be implemented in each grade and each subject.
Department of Basic Education (DBE)	The South African Department of Basic Education has been responsible for Grades R to 12 curricula since 2009.
Department of Education	Department of Education: the South African government had one "Department of Education" until 2009, when it split into two parts, Dept of Basic Education and Dept of Higher Education and Training.
English Home Language (EHL)	English Home Language level provides for language proficiency that reflects the basic interpersonal communication skills required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum (CAPS, 2011a: 8). As for Higher Education, English Home Language is referred to as English First Language. For the thesis, the terminology will refer to English Home Language.

Final-year student (FYS)	A student in his/her final year of a four-year teacher training qualification at a higher education institution.
Formative assessment	Formative assessment, also referred to as informal assessment or Assessment for Learning, requires teachers to use “daily activities” in a systematic way of evaluating learners’ progress in a grade and in a particular subject.
Higher Education (HE)	Higher education institutions or universities train teachers in the theory and practice of teaching.
Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS)	The Integrated Quality Management System is a South African public school teacher appraisal system that focuses on assessment amongst others.
Foundation Phase	Grades R to 3 include learners between 6 and 9 years old in the South African public schools with a Home Language and a First Additional Language. One of these languages has to be English.
Intermediate Phase	Grades 4 to 6 include learners between 10 and 12 years old in the South African public schools with a Home Language and a First Additional Language. One of these languages has to be English.
Senior Phase	Grades 7 to 9 include learners between 13 and 15 years old in the South African public schools with a Home Language and a First Additional Language. One of these languages has to be English.
Large scale assessment	Large-scale assessment is undertaken at provincial, national, and international levels to monitor trends in the education system and inform intervention strategies.
Legitimation Code Theory (LCT)	Legitimation Code Theory is as a realist sociological approach for analysing knowledge practices.
Mentor teachers	Experienced teachers in the primary schools who mentor inexperienced/novice and pre-service teachers.

Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ)	The 2015 Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) policy suggests a knowledge-based approach and requires that all curricula include specified proportions of theory, pedagogical learning, practical learning, situational learning, and foundational learning of which "being an assessor" is one of the required "roles of a teacher".
"Missing" Curriculum	The "missing" curriculum refers to the areas that might be missing from Higher Education as experienced by pre-service and novice teachers.
National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (NPA)	National Protocol for Assessment is a South African education policy document for Grade R to 12 that explains the aim, purpose, principles, requirements, and procedures of assessment within the school system.
Novice teachers	A novice teacher refers to a person starting his/her teaching career and who is in his/her first or second year in the teaching profession.
Pre-service teachers	Pre-service teachers are students at higher education institutions studying to become full-time teachers. The students are mentored by experienced teachers during their practicum.
School-Based Assessment (SBA)	Any assessment activity, instrument, or programme where the design, development, administration, marking, recording, and reporting has been initiated, directed, planned, organised, controlled, and managed by the school as stated in National Protocol for Assessment Grades R to 12, Government Gazette No. 34600 of 12 September 2011.
Summative assessment	Summative assessment is also referred to as formal assessment tasks (FAT) or Assessment of Learning (AoL). This assessment happens after a period of teaching has been completed.
Stakeholders	Provincial education officials (as decision makers), lecturers (training of teachers), school management staff (principals and heads of departments), and teachers (experienced teachers and mentors) from the Western Cape Education Department are all involved in supporting and mentoring pre-service and novice teachers.

Teacher Education Curriculum (TEC)	B Ed (Intermediate Phase) curriculum documents are referred to as the Teacher Education Curriculum (TEC, 2016). In compliance with MRTEQ, the TEC's aims and content for each subject for the B Ed Intermediate Phase degree are described in the purpose statement of the subject; concise description of the subject content; competences to be addressed in the subject; and the roles of a teacher in school.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: ASSESSMENT PRACTICE IN ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE

Assessment is probably the most important thing we can do to help our students learn (Brown, 2005).

1.1 Introduction

This thesis studies novice teachers' preparation for assessment practice in English Home Language (EHL) which is a subject that is offered at all school levels in South African schools. The focus is on Grade 6 which is in the intermediate phase of primary education. The study was guided by the overarching research question: What enables or constrains novice teachers' assessment practice in the field of English as a home language?

Section 1.2 of this chapter contextualises the study within the specific language environment of the Western Cape province and explains the role that English plays within this context. Section 1.3 introduces the background to the research problem and locates the study within the changing policy environment in the school system and in teacher education. The problem statement and research questions as well as the aim and scope of the study are stated in Section 1.4. A rationale is provided for the focus of the study in Section 1.5. In Section 1.6, the study's contribution to knowledge is explained. In the last section of the chapter, Section 1.7, an orientation to the thesis is provided.

1.2 Context: EHL in the Western Cape province

South Africa suffers one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. Inequality is evident in the skewed income distributions and unequal access to opportunities as well as in regional disparities (International Monetary Fund, 2020). The context of the study is the Western Cape province of South Africa which was identified as second only to Gauteng as the most unequal province in the country (International Monetary Fund, 2020). The Western Cape includes wealthy cities and affluent suburbs, where many children attend private schools, as well as impoverished rural areas and townships, where public schools struggle to accommodate large numbers of learners and lack adequate human and material resources. Social and economic inequalities are abundantly evident in the school system, despite the many attempts to redress these (Spaull, 2013). An inequality that is particularly germane to this study concerns home language education.

In the Western Cape, the majority language is Afrikaans (49.7%), followed by isiXhosa (24.7%), and then English (20.3%) (Western Cape Government, 2002). The Western Cape Language Policy intends "to ensure the equal status and use of the three official provincial

languages, Afrikaans, English, and isiXhosa. It also supports and promotes South African Sign Language, marginalised languages, and the other official South African languages" (Western Cape Government, 2002c).

Despite the Western Cape Language Policy's stated aims, English is increasingly dominant in the Cape Town metropolis and is beginning to make inroads into the traditionally Afrikaans-dominant interior (Plüddemann, Braam, Broeder, Extra & October, 2004). Many isiXhosa-speakers have traditionally had unilingual homes (Plüddemann et al., 2004), but recent studies show a language shift towards English in the private sphere of the family, as well as in the public sphere of schooling, across all language groups in the Western Cape (Posel & Zeller, 2019). For example, English is the language most widely used by the political and economic elite (Alexander, 2000), which is one of the reasons why, for many parents, it is the preferred medium of instruction (Heugh, 2007). Consequently, the majority of learners who speak an African home language, even though they do not speak English as their home language, are educated through the medium of English and enrol for EHL as a school subject (Weideman, Du Plessis & Steyn, 2017). Language diversity is common across public schools in the Western Cape (Collins, 2017), but EHL educators often have not been adequately prepared for the reality of the Western Cape's multilingual classrooms (Prosper & Nomlomo, 2016) or for the large numbers of learners whose home language is not English who enrol for the EHL subject (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009).

1.3 The background to the 'real world' problem

Public education is directed by legislation. Apartheid education was characterised by inequality, division, and fragmentation (Shalem & Pendlebury, 2010). Post-apartheid educational legislation was an attempt to change the educational system to one of equality, inclusion, and coherence. The 'missing curriculum', as mentioned in the title (explained in Chapter 7), is seen as a gap between what is offered by teacher education and what is needed by novice teachers to assess English HL in practice through legislation and policy documents.

One of the first pieces of legislation, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act 58 of 1995, intended to provide for the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that would ensure the quality of educational provision across all levels in South Africa. The SAQA Act was repealed in 2008 when it was replaced by the NQF Act 67 of 2008. The NQF Act had the following aims: to implement the South African NQF, to define the responsibilities of the Ministers of Education and Labour with regard to the NQF, to establish SAQA, and to create Quality Councils. The Act was implemented on 01 June 2009 (Gazette 32233 of 22 May 2009). It underwent several amendments, in particular, the NQF Amendment Act 12 of 2019 which, amongst other matters, clarified definitions and

provided a register of professional designations, including those for teacher education (Gazette 42646 of 19 August 2019).

These legislative changes are intended to provide all South Africans, especially the poorest of the poor, with meaningful access to quality education and training. However, the new legislation posed many challenges to the public school system. Due to the size and scope of the task and the progressively authoritarian approach to policy making, as well as the many changes that were made to policies, implementation became increasingly challenging (Fleisch, 2008). As a result, there is a general consensus that the post-apartheid education system in South Africa is in crisis (Fleisch, 2008; Shalem & Pendlebury, 2010).

The subsections that follow focus on the changes in school curricular policies and teacher education from 1994 to the present.

1.3.1 Changes in school curriculum policy environment

Pre-1994, South African education was racially divided and unequal. There were four separate public education systems and each required different competency levels (South African Council on Higher Education, 2010: 8). In the post-1994 era, attempts were made to heal these divisions through policies that were inclusive and affirmed the basic human right of all learners to quality education provision. The South African school educational system underwent a considerable transformation in the post-apartheid era (Du Toit & Kempen, 2018). This transformation was enabled through the new legislation and policymaking that guided educational provision across different levels of the educational system. These policy imperatives led to numerous curricular changes (Jackson, 2016; Du Toit & Kempen, 2018). The new curriculum policies were intended to transform the education system in alignment with the values enshrined in the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) (South African Department of Basic Education, 2011a: 3). Consequently, in 1997, the curriculum changed from Christian National Education to Outcomes-based Education (OBE). OBE was seen as the means by which unequal educational provision could be transformed and made more equitable. Policymakers assumed that, because the same outcomes would be required across all levels of schooling, provision would be equalised (Allais, 2010). The practice intended with the introduction of OBE was that learning should take place at each learner's own pace, thereby enabling each learner to develop the same knowledge and skills by the end of a learning phase. Thus, OBE was introduced into the South African education system as an attempt to rectify the inequalities in education during the apartheid era. There have been extensive critiques of OBE in the South African general education system, in particular the idea that equality of outcomes can be achieved without equality of inputs (Allais, 2010).

There were considerable challenges in implementing OBE in the South African school system. Consequently, the OBE system was reviewed in 2000 which led to further curricular revision (South African Department of Basic Education, 2011a: 3). In partial recognition that the OBE curriculum had failed to address national educational needs, it was replaced with Curriculum 2005 (South African Department of Education, 2000a). Curriculum 2005 was, in turn, replaced by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). By July 2009, the Minister of Basic Education had appointed an independent panel of experts to investigate and address the challenges reported by schools with regard to the implementation of the NCS, and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) appeared (South African Department of Education, 2002b). The RNCS Grades R to 12 has strong roots in OBE but brought a more authoritarian approach to teaching and learning. The RNCS stipulates the content, methodologies, and assessments to be implemented in each grade and in each subject (South African Department of Basic Education, 2011a: 2). The RNCS consists of four documents that govern the school curriculum:

1. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS);
2. General Education and Training (GET) CAPS Amendments;
3. National Protocol for Assessment (NPA); and
4. National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR).

CAPS (2011)

There is a CAPS document for each school subject. The CAPS instructs the teacher on what to teach, how to teach it, when to teach it, how to assess it, when to assess it, and which records to keep. The CAPS documents have been critiqued for being extremely restrictive and for overburdening teachers with administrative tasks, such as maintaining records of “daily assessment” (Weideman et al., 2017). For many schools and educators, the implementation of the CAPS remained a challenge (Du Plessis & Marais, 2015).

GET CAPS Amendments (2019)

Due to the difficulties experienced in implementing the CAPS, the GET CAPS Amendments were introduced for foundational (Grade R to Grade 3: ages six to nine), intermediate (Grade 4 to Grade 6: ages ten to 12), and senior phases (Grade 7 to Grade 9: ages 13 to 15). The amended documents, which followed a consultative process, addressed some of the difficulties experienced by schools, for example, reducing the number of assessment requirements (GET CAPS Amendments, 2019). The GET CAPS Amendments are generic documents (one for each level). The CAPS subject-specific guides continue to guide practice but need to be used in consultation with the GET CAPS Amendments. A review of the individual subject guides is current at the time of writing.

NPA (2011)

This document governs the assessment of Grades R to 12, including formative and summative assessment requirements, continuous assessment practices, guidelines for the end-of-year examination, protocols for recording and "reporting of learner performance" (NPA, 2011: 23), requirements for teachers' files, the management of school assessment records, management of learners' profiles, the "assessment of learners with special needs" (NPA, 2011: 30), and the repeal of policy and transitional arrangements.

NPPPPR (2015)

This policy document has the purpose "to determine minimum outcomes and standards, as well as the processes and procedures for the assessment of learner achievement" (NPPPPR, 2015b: 1). The document has been critiqued as taking a "top down" approach to learner promotion because, despite the considerable burden of assessment that each teacher has to undertake, it does not take teachers' assessments of learners' performance sufficiently into account (Mabusela, 2017).

The constantly changing South African policy context has had concomitant effects on both experienced and novice teachers who might have been prepared to teach a particular kind of curriculum but were expected to implement another. Some of the impacts of curriculum and assessment policy changes on teachers and teacher education are briefly discussed in the next section.

1.3.2 Changes to the teacher education policy environment

In South Africa, during the apartheid era (pre-1994), teacher training was "highly fragmented, both racially and geographically, and managed by 19 different government departments, each with their own requirements" (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018: 3). Teacher education qualifications included a wide variety of programmes offered by different institutions and at different levels, such as secondary teachers' diplomas awarded by teacher education colleges and four-year qualifications, including degrees such as Bachelor of Arts (Education), Bachelor of Pedagogics and Bachelor of Primary Education, offered by universities (South African Council of Higher Education, 2010: 8). These qualifications varied in quality and teachers were, therefore, "unequally schooled, qualified, and trained" (Chisholm, 2012: 81).

The intention of the post-apartheid teacher education policy was to improve the qualifications and professional practice of teaching in South Africa by ensuring that all teachers were provided with the knowledge, skills, and professionalism to engage learners in meaningful educational provision. Post-1994 legislation dismantled the previous systems of teacher education to rebuild a single system for pre-service and in-service teachers. The introduction

of the NQF ensured a single higher education and training system in South Africa and was intended to improve the quality of education and training across all systems of provision, including teacher education, while SAQA registered teacher qualifications. Additional key policies that influenced teacher education included White Paper 3 (1995) and Green Paper (1996) which responded to the school curriculum changes (South African Department of Basic Education, 1997: 7-8).

The first policy document that focused exclusively on teacher education was the Government Gazette on Norms and Standards for Educators which specified the new norms and standards to guide teaching practice (South African Department of Education, 2000c). This was the first formal policy on academic qualifications for educators as it attempted to bring teaching qualifications in line with the NQF and the OBE school curriculum. The document explains the competences (norms) and qualifications (standards) required for the development of teachers. It introduced the idea of "applied competence" as the key to assessing whether the requirements of a learning programme had been achieved. The Norms and Standards for Educators document describes seven roles for which teachers need to be trained, one of which is the role of "assessor".

SAQA registered the Bachelor of Education in Intermediate Phase Teaching (No. 96405) which is a current qualification for primary school teachers in this phase. The purpose of the qualification is described as "primarily intended to provide a well-coordinated training in education that provides learners with the required content knowledge base, educational theory and practice, and methodology that enable them to demonstrate competence and responsibility as academically and professionally qualified intermediate teachers" (SAQA, 96405). The qualification stipulates that one of the key objectives of the teacher as assessor is to "monitor and assess learner progress and achievement in the area(s) of specialisation".

The NQF and SAQA were intended to strengthen and ensure the quality of educational provision. However, the NQF and SAQA quite often found themselves to be misaligned which impacted teacher education (Smith, 2004). There were also concerns about misalignment between school policies and teacher education as well as the negative impact of these misalignments on the professional practice of teaching in South Africa. The Department of Basic Education (DBE), that develops and oversees school policies, and the Department of Higher Education and Development (DHET), that develops and oversees teacher education, co-developed an Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2015 to bring schooling needs, teacher education, and teaching practice into better alignment (DBE, 2011a; DHET, 2011c). The policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) (Government Gazette

34467 of 15 July 2011c) replaced the Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE, 2000c). It was the result of an extended policy research and development process. Accompanying documents included The Roles of the Educator and Their Associated Competences, the South African Council of Educator's (SACE) Code of Professional Ethics, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), and the Basic Competences of a Beginner Teacher.

1.4 The research problem

School and teacher education policies and programmes have not been clear on what constitutes teachers' assessment requirements or how the theoretical and practical elements of assessment are related to teaching (Morrow, 2007). As a result, teachers have not been prepared adequately for their role as assessor. The Department of Education in South Africa has established policy minimum requirement frameworks that educators in schools are supposed to implement. However, it is debatable whether these educators have the necessary skills to implement the expected educational policy or whether they have engaged with the content or are skilled enough to do more than merely fulfilling the policy (Nunan, 2003; Ogan-Bekiroglu. & Suzuk, 2014; Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018). Novice teachers in particular are expected to carry out specific tasks and exhibit specific competences as mandated or inferred by evolving educational policy frameworks, but they may not always be equipped to do so (Adams, 2004). Without the adequate training of teachers and without sufficient teacher trainers, the implementation of educational policies is unlikely to be successful (McLaughlin, 2003).

Novice teachers of EHL are not always prepared for the realities of assessment practices in the primary school system (Adams, 2004; Collins, 2017). They are often left to their own resources to cope as well as they can (Du Plessis & Marais, 2015.). The final research question emerged after engagement with the literature and in alignment with the theoretical framework. The problem which is the focus of this study, 'problem in preparation', will be explained in the next section through the research question, sub-questions, aim, objectives, scope, and delimitation of the research.

1.4.1 Research questions

The focus of the study, which addresses the preparation for assessment in the intermediate phase EHL through policy, teacher education and management. The problem is formulated in terms of the guiding research question and sub-questions.

What enables or constrains novice teachers' assessment practice in the field of English as a home language?

Sub-questions

1. How do assessment policies enable or constrain novice teachers for assessment practices in EHL?
2. To what extent does teacher education in EHL and Professional Studies prepare pre-service teachers, and novice teachers, in EHL for competent assessment practice?
3. How do pre-service and novice teachers experience the assessment of EHL sixth grade learners?
4. How are pre-service and novice assessors' EHL assessment practices managed in the intermediate phase school environment?

1.4.2 Aim of the study

The overarching aim of this research study is to improve assessment practice in EHL in the intermediate phase, specifically the sixth grade, in order to benefit learners' social and intellectual development. The aims were disaggregated as follows:

1. To propose improvements towards an effective and inclusive EHL assessment policy;
2. To propose improvements to teacher education in support of effective and inclusive assessment practices in EHL;
3. To propose effective and inclusive ways for managing EHL assessment within school environments; and
4. To propose ways to adequately support novice teachers in effective and inclusive assessment practices in EHL.

1.4.3 Research Objectives

In order to achieve the aims stated above, the study built a knowledge base to underpin and guide assessment practice in EHL. The objectives were:

1. To analyse and evaluate policies on the assessment of EHL in the intermediate phase;
2. To determine the extent and nature of assessment training for EHL in the intermediate phase at a Western Cape higher education institution;
3. To study the management of assessment in primary schools;
4. To describe and analyse the experiences of assessment practices of pre-service and novice teachers' of EHL in primary schools;
5. To build knowledge on intermediate phase EHL assessment practices in primary schools; and
6. To contribute to the 'missing' curriculum in higher education assessment training.

1.4.4 Scope and delimitations of the research

Scope

The scope of the research includes: the policy frameworks that guide assessment practices in the EHL subject, the teacher education curriculum for the methodology of teaching EHL assessment in teacher education, and guides for how assessment is managed in schools. In order to go more deeply into these areas, interviews with teacher educators and managers were included. An important part of the study was to understand how newly qualified teachers experienced EHL assessment practices as prescribed by policy and the application of assessment training they have been exposed to. The study offers recommendations, based on an analysis of the findings, toward the enhancement of EHL assessment.

Delimitation

The thesis is delimited to the study of assessment practices of novice teachers who teach Grade 6 EHL as a subject. There is a further delimitation to the Western Cape province of South Africa, with the specific nature of the context explained in Section 1.2 above.

1.5 Rationale for the study

The justification for the focus of the study on the preparation of teachers for the assessment of the EHL subject has five sections: the central role played by assessment in the South African school system, the importance of the EHL subject, the significance of Grade 6 in childhood literacy development, the need for teacher education with regard to assessment practice, and the role of competent assessment practice in the school appraisal system.

1.5.1 The central role of assessment in the South African school system

In South Africa, education has undergone considerable change since 1994. A key component of the change has been the emphasis on the assessment of learners' progress and attainments (Beets, 2012). South Africa's approach to educational transformation has been described as "assessment-led education reform" (Reddy, 2004: 31). South African researchers have confirmed (and critiqued) the central role that assessment plays in both policy and practice. Assessment is the means whereby learners' progress and attainment are measured globally (Broadfoot & Black, 2004) as well as in South Africa (Du Plessis & Marais, 2015) but, beyond measurement, assessment had become a dominant pedagogical strategy (Kanjee & Sayed, 2013). Additionally, the quantity of assessment tasks performed by learners is seen as an indicator of quality of educational provision (Reddy, Le Grange, Beets & Lundie, 2015).

1.5.2 Rationale for the focus on EHL

The term 'Home Language' in the South African context refers to all 11 official languages. All learners need to study their home language as home language proficiency is central to learners' social and intellectual development:

> The Home Language level provides for language proficiency that reflects the basic interpersonal communication skills required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum (CAPS, 2011a: 8).

The EHL subject plays a complex role in the school system, particularly as the majority of learners who enrol for the subject do not speak English as a home language (see Section 1.2). The EHL subject is a key subject for the majority (80%) of South African learners' academic success at their level, as well as for advancement through the educational system, as it is the language of learning and teaching (South African Department of Basic Education, 2010).

1.5.3 Rationale for the focus on Grade 6 learners

The sixth grade is globally understood to be a critical stage for childhood literacy development (Cárdenas-Hagan, 2020; Smith & Salgado, 2018; Walldén, 2020). Grade 6 marks learners' transition from mastering the four literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) to applying these skills in increasingly complex contexts and developing more advanced literacy practices. As Grade 6 is the exit phase of the intermediate phase, learners must show independent learning in deeper and more rigorous ways to enter the senior phase (Cárdenas-Hagan, 2020). Grade 6 learners, as in the South African context, are often required to produce more extensive independent work, specifically in writing in different subject areas, which calls for greater independence and organisational skills (Walldén, 2020). Various national and international literacy assessments, such as the Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS), the Annual National Assessment (ANA) and the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), take place at Grade 6 level. Studies on the PIRLS conducted in 2000, 2006, 2011, 2007, 2013, and 2016 show that most of the South African intermediate phase learners were performing considerably below the norm in literacy skills (Spaull, 2013; 2016). Studies on ANA and SACMEQ conducted by the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality Assessments report that 27% of Grade 6 learners were functionally illiterate (Van der Berg & Louw, 2007). These compelling reasons support the focus on EHL in Grade 6.

1.5.4 Training in assessment

Teacher education is crucial for the successful implementation of educational policies, such as the CAPS document on the EHL subject. Educational policy in the South African school system

has resulted in teachers having to manage a large assessment load which makes assessment training of particular importance in the South African context. Teachers in general struggle with the implementation of formative and summative assessment tasks to promote and measure learners' progress (Biggs, 1996). In addition, many newly qualified primary school teachers have not been adequately prepared for the current realities of practice in the multilingual EHL classroom (Reys, Reys, Lapan, Holliday & Wasman, 2003). Although this reference refers to Mathematics education, the same applies to EHL as the same teachers often teach Mathematics and EHL. Furthermore, assessment is a highly skilled practice which needs to be aligned with planning, teaching, learning, and promotion (Pryor & Lubisi, 2002). For these reasons, assessment knowledge and skills are an important part of teacher education programmes (Popham, 2009).

Schools appointing novice teachers expect of them to know the importance of assessment, its principles, relevant policy documents, how to interpret assessment procedures, practical experience in assessment practices, and the effect assessment could have on their teaching, their learners, and their careers (Broadfoot & Black, 2004) A number of studies show that the theory-based training that student teachers receive in higher education does not always prepare them for classroom practice which leads to gaps in their preparation for the classroom (Du Plessis & Marais, 2015). The term "missing curriculum" was first used by Frumkin (1990) in an editorial in the Annals of Emergency Medicine entitled "Residency Training: The Missing Curriculum". Frumkin (1990: 2) argues that, unlike medical doctors who undertake regular supervised clinical practice, the relatively new field of emergency medicine is "missing the practice curriculum". The 'missing curriculum' in this thesis is explained as a gap between what is offered by teacher education and wat is needed to assess English HL in practice. Furthermore, it appears that teacher education pays insufficient attention to assessment training (Beets, 2012; Kanjee, 2009). Clearly, pre-service teachers are expected to be "assessment literate" (Xu & Brown, 2016: 149. Pre-service teachers require a strong foundation in the principles of assessment, and they also need exposure to actual assessment practice in the classroom (Pryor & Lubisi, 2002). Therefore, it is necessary to establish the extent to which teacher education in South Africa addresses the theory and practice of assessment effectively and provides pre-service teachers with a broad base of assessment knowledge on which to address further changes in educational policies.

1.5.5 Appraisal in South African schools

Assessment tends to dominate school activities in South Africa. The South African public schools' appraisal system is guided by the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which covers four areas of teaching performance, one being the implementation of assessment practices against which teachers' assessment practice is scored. The appraisal system

requires teachers to possess knowledge of assessment techniques as well as the ability to apply these techniques in designing appropriate assessment tasks, providing feedback to learners on their progress, and managing learners' assessment records (South Africa. Department of Education, 2009c: 1-9). Appraisal or performance management is particularly intimidating for novice teachers as they could lose confidence, tend to doubt their abilities, and may fear losing their positions or want to leave the profession (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). The Bachelor of Education degree is expected to prepare teachers sufficiently to design assessment tasks confidently and to attain satisfactory scores against the appraisal criteria.

Several research studies show that educational graduates generally are not adequately prepared for practice (Adams, 2004; Collins, 2017), and in the South African school system they are not prepared for linguistic diversity in the EHL classroom (Du Plessis & Marais, 2015.). It is this gap between what is being taught at universities (theory) and what the profession expects (practice) to become an effective teacher that is referred to as the 'missing curriculum' in this study. This study explores the nature of the theory/practice divide in teacher education and aims to enhance higher education training in assessment to ensure that novice teachers are better prepared to apply assessment confidently in the school system. This study intends to determine whether students are adequately prepared for assessment and designing assessment tasks and to explore if there is a gap between theory and practice.

1.6 Knowledge contribution

This thesis contributes to knowledge on the assessment of EHL in multilingual contexts. It contributes to understandings of the importance of home language education for social and cognitive development in the sixth grade, as well as how such social and cognitive development could be extended to learners who enrol in EHL even though they are not EHL speakers. This knowledge contribution underpins the contributions made to practice in terms of improving the EHL assessment policy, as well as how schools might better manage the burden of assessment in the current policy environment. The study also contributes to teacher education and makes recommendations to address the gaps (or 'missing curriculum') with regard to the preparation of novice teachers for assessment practice in EHL. Recommendations are made with regard to the provision of adequate support for novice teachers in effective assessment practices in EHL.

While the social and economic challenges that beset educational policy and provision are rooted in the South African context, the issues that are addressed in this study, in particular the curriculum and how teacher education may or may not be adequate preparation for practice in a complex environment, would be recognised in many parts of the world.

1.6.1 Dissemination and uptake

Dissemination of the research findings has been ongoing across the progress of the thesis. Conference presentations have been made, and an article has been published. The article won a best research article award in the *Reading and Writing Journal* (De Lange, Winberg & Dippenaar, 2020).

The uptake strategy has been to focus on the higher education institution that is the research site of the study and to offer workshops and seminars on assessment practice for EHL. Such workshops and seminars will continue beyond the thesis and will include the Western Cape Education Department. When opportunities to contribute to policy arise, these will be taken.

1.7 Guide to the thesis

In order to provide an explanation of how the study has been structured, a brief overview of the following eight chapters is provided. Chapter One provides the context, background, and rationale for the study.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature on assessment, English language assessment policy, balancing theory and practice in the training of pre-service teachers in assessment, the role of higher education institutions in the preparation of pre-service teachers towards competent assessment practices, experiences of assessment by pre-service and novice teachers, and gaps identified in the literature. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks were constructed based on the literature review.

In Chapter Three, the realist ontological position on assessment of the study is motivated by using the Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) as a framework for understanding EHL assessment. The research instrument used was from the LCT and the semantic gravity translation tool was designed to explore the meaning of data provided by the participants to uncover a knowledge base of assessment in the intermediate phase EHL.

Chapter Four describes the research design and the methodology: an interpretive paradigm was selected on a cross-sectional time scale. The site selection was a University of Technology and the participants were final year students, novice teachers, teachers, principals, lecturers, and education department officials. Questionnaires, in Google Forms format, as well as individual and focus group interviews were used to uncover the phenomenon. Data was collected, discussed, and analysed while trustworthiness and ethical considerations were respected. Piloting of the research instruments started after ethical clearance was issued.

Chapter Five covers the document analysis of the CAPS, CAPS Amendments, and NPA. From the analysis, using the LCT translation device, the impact of missing assessment principles as well as illogical and contradictory statements was discussed. The lack of guidance in practice for teachers impacts the training of teachers.

In Chapter Six, findings on teacher education made from document analysis of MRTEQ and assessment training in higher education are discussed. Data (Data set 2) from the questionnaires sent to lecturers were analysed on the alignment/non-alignment between the school assessment policies and higher education policy provision and practice. It appeared from the findings that there is a 'missing' link in teacher education between policy, curriculum, and practice. Questionnaires from pre-service (Data set 1) and novice teachers (Data set 3) as well as focus groups interviews' (Data set 7) and individual interviews' (Data set 6) data are discussed in Chapter Seven to determine if final-year students are prepared for assessment practice. Realities of practice and the depth of teacher education are discussed to identify a 'missing' assessment curriculum in training.

The management of assessment practices in primary schools from the perspective of principals (Data set 4), subject advisors (Data set 5) and education stakeholders (Data set 8) are discussed in Chapter 8. Different views, misconceptions, burdens of assessment, and shortfalls in assessment training are clear. Bridging the theory/practice divide and finding a way towards improving teacher education and improving teacher support are discussed. Chapter Nine concludes with summaries of the different chapters and highlights knowledge contributions to assessment and the implications for teacher education regarding the 'missing' curriculum in teacher education. Recommendations, arising from the analysis, are discussed to enable effective assessment practice in EHL in the Western Cape, South Africa.

CHAPTER TWO
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON HOME LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

The most important factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows … teachers should ascertain this, and teach accordingly (Ausubel, 1968).

2.1 Introduction to Chapter Two

This literature review establishes what is already known about EHL assessment practices in the intermediate phase of primary school. The research literature on assessment policy, assessment in teacher education, the management of assessment in schools, and pre-service and novice teachers' experiences of assessment implementation was reviewed. The purpose of the literature review was to identify the policies, pre-service teacher education provision, and school management practices that support novice teachers' acquisition of effective and inclusive practices in EHL assessment.

Chapter Two starts with a broad overview of assessment (Section 2.2). This is followed by a discussion of how policy is used to regulate assessment at primary school levels (Section 2.3). Literature on the role of higher education in preparing pre-service teachers for assessment practices is reviewed (Section 2.4). Literature, on the implementation and management of assessment in the EHL classroom in primary schools is reviewed (Section 2.5), and the research on pre-service and novice teachers' experiences and challenges with regard to school-based assessment practices is discussed (Section 2.6). Gaps in the literature are identified (Section 2.7) and the chapter concludes with a conceptual framework for EHL assessment (Section 2.8).

2.2 An overview of the literature on assessment

The literature on school-based assessment tends to be divided into formative and summative assessment studies: studies on 'assessment *for* learning' (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003; Ghaffar, Khairallah & Salloum, 2020) and studies on 'assessment *of* learning" (Marion & Shepard, 2010). Before key theorists in assessment, such as Ausubel (1968) and Bloom (1984), re-conceptualised the role of assessment in the promotion of learning, assessment was generally understood as summative: the evaluation of performance at the end of a learning phase. The distinction between formative and summative as applied to the assessment of learning emerged in the 1960s as new curricula and materials were introduced in schools (Dolin, Black, Harlen & Tiberghien, 2018). The foremost purpose of formative assessment is understood as "helping learning, while the main purpose of summative assessment is to provide information about what learning has been achieved at a certain time" (Dolin et al., 2018: 55). Formative and summative assessments share a common history but

have different purposes and usually utilise different forms of assessment. In this broad overview, the literature on formative assessment is presented first and followed by the literature on summative assessment.

2.2.1 Formative assessment

Ausubel (1968) argues the need for teachers to assess the learner at various points in a learning process in order to understand what the learner knows, or does not know yet, in order to teach accordingly. Bloom (1984) notes the effectiveness of feedback in one-to-one teaching and believes that such a system could be replicated in large classes through appropriate feedback methods. Earlier studies on formative assessment focused on interactions between teachers and learners in classroom settings, initially focusing on the effectiveness of teaching (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Angelo and Cross (2012) explain that:

> … teachers are the closest observers of learning as it takes place in their classrooms and thus have the opportunity to become the most effective assessors and improvers of their own teaching. But in order for teaching to improve, teachers must first be able to discover when they are off course, how far off they are, and how to get back on the right track (Angelo & Cross, 2012: 115).

In their classic study on classroom assessment techniques, Angelo and Cross (2012) developed a number of strategies and activities to help educators to measure the effectiveness of their teaching by determining what students were learning in the classroom and how well they were learning. Three key steps in formative assessment for teaching enhancement were subsequently identified: determining the learners' current learning stage, their intended destination, and the steps necessary to reach it, which are similar to the earlier findings of Ramaprasad (1983).

Attention shifted from formative assessment to enhance *teaching* toward formative assessment to enhance *learning*. A number of activities that help students become more efficient and effective learners were identified, for example, comprehension monitoring, self-assessment of knowledge acquisition, application of study skills, and seeking support (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Formative assessment is understood in terms of strategies that support learning, such as: defining and communicating learning objectives and success criteria, designing effective dialogues in the classroom and other learning activities that elicit evidence of student understanding, designing feedback that promotes learners' development, peer learning through which learners become educational resources for one another, and building a culture of learning in which students become the owners of their own learning (Wiliam & Thompson, 2007). Through participatory research with teachers, the following

formative assessment activities were identified: sharing success criteria with learners, classroom questioning (a practice that enables teachers to understand learners' needs and levels of understanding), comment-only marking (i.e. providing feedback to learners but eliminating the anxiety of receiving a mark for the work done), peer- and self-assessment (activities that enable students to take responsibility for their own learning), and the formative use of summative assessment tasks and tests which prepares learners for future summative assessments (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

2.2.2 Summative assessment

The aim of summative assessment is to evaluate learners' achievements or performance at a particular time:

> Assessment for summative purposes involves collecting, interpreting and reporting evidence of learning. Interpretation of evidence is in relation to the goals that students are intended to have achieved at a certain point, such as the end of a year, semester or stage. All assessment involves the generation, interpretation and communication of data (Harlen & James, 1997: 365).

Formative and summative forms of assessment differ in their purposes and in several other dimensions such as validity and reliability (Harlen & James, 2006). Formative and summative forms of assessment are complementary and the differences between them relate to differences in purpose, such as teaching, learning, and accountability (Dixon & Worrell, 2016). The same processes are required regardless of whether the assessment task is formative or summative. In both cases, information is required about learners' knowledge and skills, although the information will be used in different ways – in the case of formative assessment to support learning and in the case of summative assessment to measure learning (Dolin et al., 2018).

Summative assessment is usually seen as a "high-stakes" form of assessment and the quality thereof is particularly important (Kibble, 2017: 110). Assessment quality is usually judged by criteria of validity and reliability (Johnson, 2012).

> [Reliability refers to] the reproducibility of the measurement; validity asks whether there is a coherent body of evidence supporting the use of the assessment results for their stated purpose, i.e., does the test measure what it purports to? (Kibble, 2017: 110).

This paragraph highlights the shift in the responsibilities of teachers when it comes to assessing students' learning (Black, 2006). In the past, teachers took responsibility for the

summative assessment of learners as part of their area of competence. Standardized, external tests have more recently been developed, which some researchers feel are more accurate and reliable (Menken, 2008), but which others feel that the external "the lens of accountability" (Black, 2006: 213) has not always served teachers, learners, or schools. External summative assessment plays an increasing role in primary education, for example, in international assessments of educational achievement such as the PIRLS surveys (Spaull, 2016). In this regard, some teachers have come to perceive their roles in summative assessment to be increasingly marginalised (Rutkowski & Prusinski, 2011).

Summative assessment is one of the most important responsibilities that teachers are given, as the results of summative assessments can have a far-reaching impact on learners' lives. Teachers, therefore, are required to be competent in summative assessment practice. Designing a summative assessment task involves:

1. a 'backward design' that starts by defining the learning outcomes and what types of assessment are most suitable to measure the outcomes;
2. "a testing blueprint" that shows "what domains will be tested and how this matches the learning outcomes";
3. peer review during the test development process to avoid introducing "construct underrepresentation and construct irrelevant variance";
4. teachers including "enough items, and items of high quality, to assure adequate test reliability and defensibility of scores",
5. apply standard setting methods;
6. providing "clear instructions and practice materials and develop a plan to assure the
7. integrity of data throughout the testing process; and
8. "monitor[ing] the fairness, acceptability, and impact of testing over time with routine surveying of stakeholders and comparison of test scores with other measures of student outcomes" (Kibble, 2017: 118).

There is a tendency for summative assessments to take on more formative qualities (Broadbent, Panadero & Boud, 2018), for example, summative tests can elicit evidence of student achievement, and, if used constructively, feedback on summative assessments can move learning forward (Black & Wiliam, 2009). The literature also suggests that formative and summative assessment be integrated as part of effective assessment practice (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013).

2.3 The literature on language assessment policy

Education policies in general, and assessment policies in particular, reflect and shape "society's beliefs about schools, teachers, children, learning, and society, as well as the power structures embedded in our communities and decision-making processes" (Good, Barocas, Chávez-Moreno, Feldman & Canela, 2017: 504). Assessment policies more often are based on their "perceived political appeal" than "on a systematic knowledge of the scientific evidence concerning fitness for purpose" (Broadfoot & Black, 2004: 9). There is extensive literature on educational policy generally, as well as language policy and language assessment policy more specifically. The literature recognises the important role of policy in shaping the educational system (Eckstein & Noah, 1993), but also highlights the challenges, particularly with regard to policy implementation. Hall (2002) argues that assessment policies tend to focus more on measurement issues while largely ignoring the implementation of formative assessment prior to summative assessment. While many factors contribute to the success or failure of assessment policies, the key indicators of successful assessment policies are that they are coherent and evidence-informed (Coffield, 2012). The recognised link between the performance of a school system and its guiding policies makes it all-important that educational policies are grounded on a solid knowledge base (Aydarova & Berliner, 2018). The literature on educational policy, however, suggests that it is more common to find "epistemological weaknesses" than strengths in educational policies internationally (Hall, 2002: 92).

The development of a good educational policy requires "rigour of both process and intellect" (Althaus, Bridgman & Davis, 2007: 41). Therefore, according to Althaus et al., a logical approach to policymaking involves linking policy principles to policy requirements. As well as being based on educational knowledge and educational research, policies need to demonstrate a logical relationship between the purpose of the policy, the principles thereof, the guidelines it offers, and the demands it makes on the implementers of the policy. These logical connections have been described as "the causal theory" (Fullan, 2015), because it is the linkages that narrate why the policy is necessary and how it can guide and assist those involved in its implementation (who are usually teachers). Hopfenbeck and colleagues (2015) found that schools in which teachers understood the logic of a new policy were more likely to implement the policy effectively. Thus, good educational policies have "concrete goals, targets, and a causal theory" (Pont & Viennet, 2017: 29).

Policymakers are expected to understand the challenges of implementation and should regularly evaluate the results of policy implementation. Policies need to account for local contexts across institutions, "culture, demography, politics and economy", as different contexts will affect the ways in which a policy is understood and shaped in different institutions (Pont & Viennet, 2017: 6). It is rare that policies will be uniformly implemented. To achieve this,

authentic participation amongst stakeholders who share common views and experiences of education is required (Hopfenbeck et al., 2015). Teachers' involvement in the policymaking process is essential as their beliefs impact the implementation of a curriculum, particularly in relation to assessment (Caena, 2014; Orafi & Borg, 2009).

Policies that are innovative or require new practices can only be effectively implemented if they include "capacity-building plans for schools, and teachers" and achieve cooperation "with school leaders, parents and other actors to diffuse the programme more effectively" (Hopfenbeck et al., 2015).

A number of challenges related to assessment policies have been highlighted in the literature. Assessment is too often the focus of educational policy change as it is assumed to be "relatively low cost", able to be "externally mandated and controlled", and implemented with "relative speed" (Hamilton, 2003: 25). However, not all change is for the better as there are likely to be unintended consequences in trying to drive educational change through assessment policy, as several studies have discovered (Burner, 2018; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Hopfenbeck et al., 2015). The relationship between policy and practice is always indirect. The impact of policies is likely to be unpredictable and may "have major – if sometimes unanticipated – consequences" (Lucas & Villegas, 2013: 38). When assessment is used as the vehicle to change an educational system, but is not grounded in pedagogical theory and research evidence, it is unlikely to be effective and may even have detrimental effects on the school system (Hamilton, 2003). In fact, as Pedder asserts, "assessment policy has not improved practice as it can never be reduced to a curriculum and testing package" (2010: 470).

Home language learners at the primary level are at a crucial stage of their literacy development (Oxenham, 2017). For this reason, it is important that home language assessment policy at this level is evidence-based, logical, and functional (Kvernbekk, 2016). For example, it is particularly important for policy-makers to deeply understand the relationship between cognitive development and home language development at the primary level in order to develop appropriate policy guidelines (Tobia, Ciancaleoni & Bonifacci, 2017). The centrality of assessment in language education has resulted from policy-makers' recognition of the importance of literacy and home language development at the primary level "as curriculum standards around the world have closely linked curriculum specifications, recommended teaching practices, and the outcomes in language proficiency that students are expected to achieve" (Cumming, 2009: 516). However, not all policies understand how language assessment could support emerging and developing literacies. In fact, "current testing practices and policies appear to be based on deterministic views of language and linguistic

groups and erroneous assumptions about the capacity of assessment systems to serve home language learners" (Solano-Flores, 2008: 189).

With regard to language assessment policies that have the intention to drive curriculum change, a study of teachers in Libya responding to an English language assessment policy indicates that the policy "should from its inception, focus both on the pedagogical practices it wants to promote as well as the extent to which these are aligned with teachers' current practices and beliefs" (Orafi & Borg, 2009: 252). In "well-documented systems such as Hong Kong and Singapore… it is extremely difficult to sustain any significant teacher-based formative assessment practices in most traditional examination-dominated cultures" (Davison & Leung, 2009: 398). In fact, teachers generally may have "less autonomy in enacting the curriculum than popular images of schools as loosely coupled systems and teachers as curriculum brokers suggest" (Rowan, Camburn & Correnti, 2004: 41).

The international literature on language assessment warns against the use of assessment policies to drive curriculum change and emphasises the importance of teacher consultation in school policymaking. International studies, such as Orafi and Borg, 2009; Davison and Leung, 2009 and Solano-Flores, 2008, indicates that, without the training and support of teachers, it is unlikely that policies will be implemented or that implementation, in the absence of training and ongoing support, could have unintended consequences. In the next section, the literature on a specific policy, namely, the South African CAPS for Grades 4 to 6 in EHL (2011a) is reviewed.

2.3.1 South African policy on EHL at the intermediate phase

The cluster of policies guiding school-based practices in South Africa has been described as "assessment-led education reform" (Reddy, 2004: 31). A case in point is the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 4 to 6 English Home Language (2011a). This document (hereafter the CAPS document) guides the teaching and assessment of all subjects in South Africa. A number of studies cite insufficient consultation in the production of the EHL CAPS document and highlight the key role of consultation in policymaking:

> Consultation is imperative with persons working at various levels in the national and provincial education departments, experts in curriculum design, and people in higher education institutions who train educators, practitioners, academics and policy-makers (Govender & Hugo, 2018: 17).

As a result of insufficient consultation and, therefore, the questionable quality of input into the CAPS document, there have been calls for the urgent revision of the document and the

particular need for teachers "to be actively involved during the [CAPS document] review process" (Magagula, 2016: 1).

A key feature of critiques against the CAPS document is the way in which it ignores the unequal contexts of South African education. In her doctoral study, Sethusha (2012) points out that teachers' interpretation of the CAPS policy is strongly impacted by the school contexts, including "overcrowding, support, parental involvement, moderation mechanisms (internal and external), assessment planning, implementation and communication as well as lack of resources". In difficult contexts, she argues, teachers cannot be expected to implement a policy that makes unrealistic assumptions.

The CAPS document's assumption that all EHL learners use English as a home language set the policy on a path to failure.

> What are taught as home languages at school… may not be the learners' first language, as the term suggests... Pressures of both urbanisation and the scarcity of state resources allocated to education make the provision of single language schools for every language community virtually impossible (Weideman et al., 2017: 2).

A concern indicated in many studies is the number of inconsistencies and contradictions in the CAPS documents, such as the "misalignment of purpose and assessment" (Weideman et al., 2017: 6).

> …those who drafted [the CAPS document] evidently tried to accommodate a range of traditional approaches to language teaching. That compromise allows teachers who do not subscribe to the new perspectives, both on language and on language learning, to continue as before… Evidence for this accommodation can be found both in the continuing strong emphasis on "sentence structures", grammar and grammatical conventions and language "structure", and in statements that encourage the combination of the "skills" of listening, speaking, reading and writing, the conventional components of traditional approaches, with new, functional ways of interacting through language (Weideman et al., 2017: 8).

Reed (2014) similarly points out that the CAPS document joins together "both communicative and text-based approaches, together with a genre-based approach to teaching writing, each of which has implications for the design of learning activities" (Reed, 2014: 22). The inconsistencies in the recommendations made by the CAPS document have been identified

by several researchers (Reed, 2014; Weideman et al., 2017). Several studies similarly indicate that the CAPS document is contradictory and that its requirements are unreasonable:

> …the large number of assessments is a challenge for both educators and learners. This shortcoming reduces parts of CAPS to what is perceived as a set of onerous, prescriptive, administrative requirements, rather than a way to assist with improving literacy levels (Govender & Hugo, 2018: 29).

Govender and Hugo (2018: 18) find that topics are "not presented in a systematic and sequential manner in the CAPS document". An earlier study concluded that teachers were confused by the various CAPS documents in their subject areas and "as a result… they decided to continue with the way they had been working throughout their years of teaching" (Khoza, 2015: 179).

South African children perform poorly on international and national assessments of educational achievement, such as the PIRLS surveys. In fact, these and similar international assessments have consistently shown South Africa's performance to be amongst the lowest of all participating countries. Given that language disadvantages are significantly connected with characteristics which include historical disadvantage, socioeconomic position, geography, the quality of school management, and teacher quality, the extent to which inadequate language policies contribute to this low performance is unclear (Khoza, 2015; Rapetsoa & Singh, 2017). There are, however, many South African language researchers who feel that the CAPS EHL policy is one of the key determinants of poor education outcomes (Govender & Hugo, 2018; Khoza, 2015; Weideman et al., 2017).

The literature explains that educational policies should be grounded on a solid knowledge base which has logical relationships between the purpose of the policy, the principles of the policy, the guidelines it offers, and the demands it makes on implementation. An assessment policy should be grounded in assessment theory and research. The CAPS document lacks guiding principles (Weideman et al., 2017), is unsystematic (Govender & Hugo, 2018), and its requirements are unreasonable (Khoza, 2015). Teachers are confused by the CAPS document, because there is a mismatch between instruction and assessment in the policy document (Weideman et al., 2017). In comparison with the international literature on language policy, the CAPS document is extremely prescriptive. Policies that lack a strong theoretical foundation and evidence-based guidelines, and when there is a mismatch between instruction and assessment, do not provide adequate guidance for teachers on practice. (Torrance, 2017; Van Schalkwyk, Van Lill, Cloete & Bailey, 2022). This is exacerbated when there is little or no support for the teachers on whom the burden of implementation usually falls.

2.4 Assessment in pre-service teacher education

As far back as 1904, John Dewey pointed out the gap between theory and practice in education (Dewey, 1904). The relationship between theory and practice in professional education, including teacher education, remains an ongoing debate internationally. Many teacher educators call for a better link between theory and practice as teachers in general need "highly refined knowledge and skills for assessing pupil learning… and a wide repertoire of practice … to know when to use different strategies for different purposes" (Darling-Hammond, 2006: 5). Training institutions generally take some responsibility for balancing theory and practice in their training of pre-service teachers (Delandshere & Jones, 1999). Clearly, pre-service home language teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge and the skills for teaching language in order to teach and assess learners in alignment with curricular outcomes (Orafi & Borg, 2009; Looney, Cumming, Van Der Kleij & Haris, 2017).

In order to prepare for practice, connections between the theories taught at universities and the practicum in a classroom are required (Allsopp, DeMarie, Alvarez-McHatton & Doone, 2006: 30). Nolan calls teacher education a "brief detour" (2012: 111) since pre-service teachers do not always understand how the material they are given "manifest[s] in practice" (2021: 457), according to Christiansen, Sterling, and Skog. As a result, Zeicher noted that "the campus and school-based components of [teacher education] programs frequently fail to connect" (2010: 480). Due to different perceptions, Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith (2013) cautioned that there would always be a translation of lessons taught in the classroom. A change in teacher practice has resulted from this field's research, as revealed by a Scandinavian study on mathematics. Such disconnects can result in pre-service teachers not being able to apply assessment concepts to their practice. When pre-service teachers were provided with opportunities to observe effective assessment practices in the classroom, and had opportunities to practice formative assessment in a safe environment, the connection between practice and the underpinning concepts began to make sense (DeLuca, Chavez, Bellara & Cao, 2013). Eyers (2014) found that pre-service teachers started making connections between theory and practice mainly through two events: firstly, a compulsory course on assessment, and, secondly, a practicum with a significant period of full responsibility within a safe and supportive environment. Pre-service teachers who were not provided with opportunities to observe and practice teaching, from their first to final year, reported being "largely unprepared to effectively integrate assessment into their practice… lacking in confidence, analysing assessment data and reporting on achievement" (DeLuca et al., 2013: 128).

While many teacher educators understand the importance of practical experience, the complex relationship between theory and practice in pre-service teacher education programmes needs to be investigated in order to ensure that confident and effective assessors enter the primary

school environment (Qian, 2014). Österling & Christiansen suggested “teacher education to engage more critically with its practices … and challenge any taken-for-granted assumptions or values in researchers’ own practice” (2018: 7). Therefore, the role of teacher education needs to be discussed to prepare pre-service teachers for assessment.

2.4.1 The role of teacher education in the preparation of pre-service teachers towards competent assessment practices

Assessment is a complex and controversial topic (Franco, 2020). There are many debates and a variety of perspectives on the role of teacher education with regard to strengthening school-based practices to deliver the “desired teacher” (Christiansen, Österling & Skog, 2021: 439). Richardson (2022) claims that universities do not take assessment as seriously as schools do:

> The reality is that the kinds of experience and knowledge that are used to determine qualifications taken at school are far more rigorous than those determined by academics (Richardson, 2022: 113).

Therefore, as in the state of Florida (USA), South African universities also need to pay more attention to what is offered in their programmes – in theory and in practice. Österling and Christiansen (2018) pointed out that, as part of teacher education, students need to observe and/or engage theory in classrooms.

DeLuca and Bellara (2013) found that higher education pre-service teacher education curricula provided information on assessment theory but very little on assessment practice. The issues that pre-service teacher education tends to focus on are "assessment processes, measurement theory, and issues of assessment fairness" (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013: 363). Although the content of pre-service teacher education programmes is diverse (Xu & Brown, 2017), inadequate assessment training in pre-service teacher education programmes is common, and many programmes fail to address the "multiple purposes and practices of assessment in schools" (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013: 367). DeLuca and Bellara found that in Florida” many teachers struggled to integrate formative assessment practices and summative assessment… orientations into their teaching" (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013: 367).

A clear difference was found between the classroom practice of novice teachers who had been trained in assessment theory only and those who had been trained in both assessment theory and assessment practice in Australia (Mellati & Khademi, 2018). Novice teachers who had been trained in both theory and practice tended to align their classroom activities with curricular outcomes and assessment criteria and were able to provide constructive feedback to learners against these criteria. Novice teachers who only received theoretical training experienced

anxiety, were not able to plan formative assessment activities or conduct standardised tests, and found giving feedback to be stressful and challenging (Mellati & Khademi, 2018).

Several studies evaluated interventions that included both theory and practice in the pre-service teacher education curriculum (e.g., Campbell, 2013; DeLuca & Bellara, 2013; DeLuca & Volante, 2016; Eyers, 2014; Xu & Brown, 2017). These studies confirm that developing capable pre-service teachers requires both solid theoretical knowledge and practical assessment knowledge. Xu and Brown encourage pre-service teachers to consider "assessment as pedagogy" by integrating formative and summative assessment into the teaching and learning processes (2017: 149). Xu and Brown (2017) found this strategy to reflect more closely what happens in the classroom. Eyers (2014) proposed a strategy whereby lecturers pay attention to the different assessment preconceptions pre-service teachers might have and then altering their beliefs through modelling sound assessment practices in assessment tasks throughout the teacher education programme. Xu and Brown advocate that a "framework of assessment literacy education" should become part of teacher accreditation and certification and point to the concomitant need for universities to assess pre-service teachers' assessment capabilities to award their qualification (Xu & Brown, 2016: 150). This may be the case in SA too.

Campbell emphasised the importance of the practicum in which pre-service teaching could "experience [assessment] themselves" and through reflection on practice, understand assessment in theory and practice (2012: 8). As pre-service teachers are exposed to short periods of practicum in their training programmes, Campbell (2012) suggests that practicums be extended. The university's practicum grading system also needs to take into account "negotiations between tutors and trainees regarding the outcomes of their ungraded observations" and ensure exposure to classroom practice (Matthews & Noyes, 2016: 258). Where pre-service teachers are "placed in schools that are not easily accessible by university staff, the supervising teachers and/or principals should be required to submit an assessment of the student's teaching" (Reed, 2014: 13). A concern raised was that grading a practicum is not always reliable and could negatively impact students' certification (Matthews & Noyes, 2016). Universities could use practicum feedback more constructively to reveal how teaching practice could be improved in order to more effectively "induct student teachers into this practice" (Reed, 2014: 26). The results of a university's grading system could be used to "inform current and future employers" and teacher educators to obtain "the quantitative data they deem necessary to judge the quality of teaching and learning" that their students are exposed to (Matthews & Noyes, 2016: 258). This arrangement requires university and school-based teachers to be in contact with one another and to share their perspectives (Reed, 2014). In this regard:

> …a shift toward more democratic and inclusive ways of working with schools and communities is necessary for colleges and universities to fulfil their mission in the education of teachers (Zeichner, 2010: 479).

Universities have the autonomy to decide on their own approaches to pre-service teachers' "assessment literacy" (Xu & Brown, 2017). The current international trend is a more practice-based teacher education (Arbaugh, Ball, Grossman, Heller and Monk., 2015) for example in the UK "the state has declared itself expert in all aspects of education" (Lerman, 2014:198) where policy is based on set requirements. In the research of Österling an "increased privileging of a theory-independent perspective" (2022: 530) where the implementation of policy goals is emphasised. As academics, teacher educators tend to value "academic knowledge [which] is seen as the authoritative source of knowledge about teaching" (Zeicher, 2010: 491). While universities' right to decide on teacher education curricula is respected, pre-service teacher education has a responsibility to prepare teachers for practice (Woolfolk, Hoy & Davis, 2009). Reed (2014) warns that if teacher education does not respond more carefully to practice, there are likely to be increasing external pressures, such as quality assurance reviews of teacher qualifications, to better align teacher education programmes with national educational goals. It was evident from Nolan (2012) and Gainsburg (2012) that the hierarchy of the importance of theory and practice differed from university and schools' perspectives.

2.5 Literature on the management of assessment practices in the primary school

The maintenance of learners' assessment records has been identified as a key competence of school managers (Huber & Hiltmann, 2011). Assessment records show learners' progress, can be used to support teaching and learning, and assessment data can be used for planning or revising assessment practices (Freeman & Lewis, 2016). School managers have the responsibility of implementing large-scale external assessments, such as PIRLS (Taber, Riga, Brindley, Winterbottom, Finney & Fisher, 2011). Data from these assessments not only provide information on a country's global educational standing in language competencies but can profile the relative strengths and weaknesses of a school, measure its educational progress over time, inform changes to curricula, improve teaching and learning, collect in-depth information about the school environment, resources, and teaching, and highlight issues of equity in learning opportunities (Rutkowski & Prusinski, 2011). Thinking comparatively about education provides opportunities to learn from other countries and to understand local practices within a broader context (Williams, 2003). An analysis of Australian curricula over time show that teachers moved from "obedient servants of the authorities" to scholars of competence (Connell, 2009: 215). However, assessment is a field of expertise often identified as an area of controversy which is problematic to address. Richardson states that:

> Public understanding of assessment remains rarely discussed globally, yet the key outcomes related to assessment are continuously scrutinised ... What is apparent from only a brief look at these information channels is how poor the understanding of educational assessment actually is ... and those stakeholders invested in managing educational assessment … do very little to improve the situation (Richardson, 2022: 117).

The media, politicians, and policymakers "often misuse or oversimplify the results of large-scale assessments" (Rutkowski & Prusinski, 2011: 4). The results of such assessment are often used as a criticism of the quality of teaching and learning (Krause et al., 2013). Paran argues that the "ubiquity of tests, their powerful washback effect, which can ultimately dictate what is taught in the language classroom, and the narrowing vision of language tests have meant that one consequence of large-scale language tests has been to circumscribe the content that is taught in the language classroom" (2010: 3). School managers, however, can use the assessment data to express the needs of their schools (Weideman et al., 2017). The comparison of schools based on their results tends to shape assessment cultures in schools and influences teachers' instructional practices (Winterbottom, Brindley, Taber, Fisher, Finney & Riga, 2008). Schools with poor annual assessment results tend to be summative data-driven, whereas schools that met accountability criteria were more orientated towards "the planning of instruction and formative assessment" (Abrams, Varier & Jackson, 2016: 21). Largely due to the growing importance of assessment, there has been an intensification of management practices around assessment (Bell & Rhodes, 2002). This is particularly the case in South Africa, where the management of assessment is understood to be a tool for quality assurance (Beets, 2015), as well as a tool for managers to measure the performance of teachers (Krause et al., 2013).

2.5.1 What school managers should know about assessment

Assessment is a "high-stakes" practice that impacts learners, teachers, and the wider school community. Therefore, it is crucial that school managers understand the principles that guide assessment practices, as well as current knowledge on the development, implementation, and analysis of tests and other assessment tasks (Rutkowski & Prusinski, 2011). A range of assessment types and modes is available, and managers have to support and guide novice teachers on selecting suitable assessment (Deng & Carless, 2010). Managers are responsible for the assessment practices followed in schools, including: monitoring, recording, reporting and accountability (Headington, 2013), but managers should also be able to use assessment data to improve teaching and learning (Lenkeit, Chan, Hopfenbeck & Baird, 2015).

Managers in multilingual schools should be familiar with key studies on the role of home language in learners' development. For example, in the South African context, many studies show that learners who select English as a medium of instruction and choose EHL as a subject are likely to suffer poor educational achievement throughout school (Prinsloo & Heugh, 2013). Managers also should be aware of the ways in which these effects could be mitigated, for example, through multilingual strategies (such as 'translanguaging'), teacher training, learning material provision, teacher and learner support, and improved teaching practices (Heugh, 2015). As Johnson (2011) stated:

> … the increasing politicisation of assessment over recent decades has strengthened [the] need for a high degree of assessment literacy among practitioners and others involved in the business of education (Johnson, 2011: 121).

2.5.2 What school managers should do about assessment

It is the responsibility of school managers to lead curricular and pedagogic change as well as to develop the assessment capability of all their teachers in alignment with national policies (Charteris & Smardon, 2019; Bonner, 2016). With any curricular, pedagogic, or assessment change, teachers are be trained accordingly (Rapetspagoa & Singh, 2008).

Assessment training needs to be "long-term, sustainable, individualised, and 'on-the-job' [in order to] engage teachers in complex and deep learning about assessment" (Xu & Brown, 2016: 155).

When novice teachers are appointed, school managers need to provide opportunities for their professional development (Clark, 2012) and ensure that structures such as mentors or staff development programmes are in place (Holland, 2009). School managers need to be aware of the influence that more experienced teachers have on their novice teachers with regard to inducting them into assessment practices (Collins, 2017). Novice teachers are often "vulnerable in shaping their assessment beliefs" (Brown, 2004: 312). Thus mentor teachers should be carefully selected to guide novice teachers (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; MacLellan, 2004). Connell (2009) suggests that school managers identify experienced teachers, who are known for excellent assessment practice, to act as mentors for novice teachers. Effective mentoring, "regular developmental meetings and providing meaningful, instructive feedback [are] critical factors in novice teacher success" (Roberson & Roberson, 2009: 113).

Moderation processes at school, district, and national levels further shape novice teachers' knowledge and implementation of assessment (Davison & Leung, 2009). Internal moderation processes can shape schools' internal assessment policies and assessment practices, and

improve the management of formative and summative assessment (Taber et al., 2008). Through moderation, based on knowledgeable leadership and communication, novice teachers develop analysing skills and build an understanding of assessment (Aravena, 2017).

Stakeholders such as parents, the school community, education officials, local authorities, and society in general need to have clear communication from school managers about assessment practices and requirements (Winterbottom, Taber, Brindley, Fisher, Finney & Riga, 2008: 194). School managers have been "criticised for failing to meet stakeholders' expectations" in the context of the numerous transitions in South Africa's basic education curriculum and related assessment practices (Maddock & Mouran, 2018: 192). In order to manage a large group of stakeholders, national departments could be expected to coordinate school districts and school communities to collaborate in efforts to bring about change in the understanding and implementation of new assessment practices within and across systems (Santos, Darling-Hammond & Cheuk, 2012). Coordinated, sustainable, and committed professional development partnerships across the education sector enhance effective assessment practices and bring about intended changes (Santos et al., 2012).

School managers are ultimately responsible for the implementation of the curriculum and its assessment. They are required to report to various stakeholders on curricular and assessment matters, including large-scale summative results for accountability purposes (Collins, 2017). Ball explains accountability as the ability to "employ judgements, comparisons and displays as a means of control, attrition and change" (2013: 57).

To conclude this section of the literature review, the following quotation is pertinent:

> Good management is not an end in itself. The main purpose of schools is to contribute to the education of children. The processes of teaching and learning are central to this. The purpose of school management must be to promote and facilitate these processes (Bell & Rhodes, 2002: 21).

2.6 Experiences of assessment by pre-service and novice teachers

Pre-service and novice teachers are in the process of learning about assessment and developing the necessary skills to assess learners accurately and fairly. The effectiveness of their assessment practices lies in their knowledge of home language assessment at the appropriate level and the practical skills that they develop over time through reflection and "self-development" (its purposefulness) as called by Österling & Christiansen (2022: 9) in teacher education, on classroom-based assessment practices. Pre-service and novice teachers might experience conflict in coming to terms with assessment practices, as they are

influenced by their own past experiences, different sources of “input” to their thinking, exposure to the “new orthodoxy”, and their own interpretations of practical experiences at different schools (Taber et al., 2011: 182). The literature on the experiences of pre-service and novice teachers is discussed briefly below.

2.6.1 Pre-service teachers

During practice teaching experiences, and as part of their work-integrated learning preservice teachers are required to observe experienced teachers’ practices and practise their own assessment skills in a safe environment. Some of the difficulties experienced by pre-service teachers include "struggl[ing] to identify clear learning goals for students which adversely impacted their ability to plan their lessons and assess students" (Cavanagh, Barr, Moloney, Lane, Hay & Chu, 2019: 66). Pre-service teachers also found the "concept of assessment as an aid to learning relatively new" (Taber et al., 2011: 180). Pre-service teachers consequently found integrating assessments to "monitor, support, and communicate student learning" to be challenging (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013: 368). Pre-service teachers seemed to prefer formative assessment to summative assessment as it was "less stressful" for learners (Taber et al., 2011: 180). Even after their final practical experience, many pre-service teachers indicated that they needed a stronger foundation in assessment knowledge and skills as well as a clearer sense of the purpose of assessment in order to perform formative and summative assessment effectively (Howerton, 2016). Schools, however, preferred the pre-service teachers to have some familiarity with assessment tools (DeLuca et al., 2013: 206).

As not all pre-service teachers are aware of the assessment competences they will need for school-based assessment in their future classrooms, they do not have a voice to influence the teacher education curriculum. Pre-service teachers can only reflect on their training once they have started teaching and experience difficulties in linking course work and practice (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

2.6.2 Novice teachers

Novice teachers, after graduation, are usually keen to start their teaching careers. However, many novice teachers are not confident about "their ability to administer school-based assessment" (Senom, Zakarias & Shad 2013: 124). Several novice teachers reported that their institutions focussed on theory and expected them to apply the theory in practice on their own (Harrup, 2015: 34). Novice teachers felt that the current system of “academic” studies and a four-week practice teaching practical period in schools, twice per year at the start of a term, did not prepare them adequately for the realities of the classroom (Maddock & Mouran, 2018: 209). Assessment periods in South African schools are mostly completed towards the end of a term. The following comments by a novice teacher express these concerns: “We’ve learned

very theory-based and theoretical content and only about the perfect situation. I don't think we've learned practically what to do" (Walton, 2017: 102).

Schools expect novice teachers to "know the purposes of assessment... and what to do with the assessment information they gathered" (Eyers, 2014:191). DeLuca and Bellara, however, point out that novice language teachers are often not able to use classroom-based assessment effectively as "specialised information" for teaching and learning (2013: 517). Novice teachers also experienced difficulties with school-based assessment and were concerned about the "possible negative impacts the assessment would have on their students… due to [their] lack of understanding and training on assessment" (Senom et al., 2013: 124). Reflecting on their in-service programme, novice teachers felt that:

> …their pre-service teacher education was adequate in equipping them with subject matter knowledge and skills. However, in the real field of teaching, they faced various challenges, such as designing and applying motivating learning strategies and assessment procedures (Widiati, Suryati & Hayati, 2018: 628).

According to a study conducted in Taiwan, mentorship and constructive criticism from peers, mentors, and teacher educators boosted students' understanding of practicum and confidence (Lin & Acosta-Tello, 2017; Sterling & Christiansen, 2018). Lack of confidence in assessments could be overcome by a supportive environment.

Khoza (2015) stated that teachers in general struggle to manage new assessment requirements. Teachers tend to continue with the status quo of traditional assessment if their training in new practice has not been adequate (Suhirman & Rinantanti, 2019). Many novice teachers find themselves in a school environment that requires change and renewal and in such cases their colleagues' attitudes will greatly influence their assessment practices (Estaji & Tajeddin, 2012). It is not uncommon for novice teachers to have misconceptions of formative assessment within the assessment processes (Davison & Leung, 2009). When novice teachers struggle to successfully interpret policy requirements, apply their knowledge, or address their misconceptions, some opt to pursue further studies. This is often perceived as a threat by experienced teachers, as a novice teacher noted: "Most of our line managers are not highly educated and they become jealous if we further our studies" (Khoza, 2015: 191).

The literature shows the different experiences of novice teachers and how they cope with challenges. The shift from the training institution to the classroom is "a reality shock" for novice teachers when they realise that "the ideals they formed while training may not be appropriate for the realism they are faced with during their first year of teaching" (Semon, Zakaria & Shah,

2013:119). Novice teachers often relied on support from more senior colleagues, particularly when they experienced "bumpy moments" and needed to draw on problem-solving skills (Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 147). Teachers who experienced an internship programme described their training as “a kind of apprenticeship”, in which theory and practice were integrated, which enabled them to cope in their first year of teaching (Maddock & Mouran, 2018: 209). Internships and other forms of in-service training enabled novice teachers to acquire knowledge and skills about school-based assessment, particularly when supplemented with workshops and open discussions on the “challenges in implementing the assessment” (Senom et al., 2013: 124). Öztürk (2008) confirmed the need for both pre-service and in-service training but felt that ongoing training was also required. Professional development is usually needed "to bridge the gap between the pre-service and in-service teacher education" due to the complexity of assessment practices (Widiati et al., 2018: 621).

2.7 Gaps identified in the literature

The literature review on the research findings regarding the assessment of English as a home language revealed a number of gaps which are explained in the subsections that follow.

2.7.1 Addressing assessment knowledge in policy challenges

Several policies on language education at primary school levels were shown to lack guiding principles (Good et al., 2017), the principles were presented unsystematically (Eckstein & Noach, 1993), or the “implementation requirements were difficult to understand” (Aydarova & Berliner, 2016: 2). Such policies were described as setting schools up for failure (Weideman et al., 2017). The literature also showed that pre-service and novice teachers were confused by the misalignment, if not conflict, between inputs from universities, schools, and policy documents. The literature was less clear on how teacher educators, school managers, and teachers could address these policy challenges. The area of practising assessment effectively and inclusively in a context where policies are difficult to understand and implement is a clear gap in the literature on assessment in language policy.

2.7.2 Addressing assessment knowledge in teacher education

A number of studies showed that many pre-service teacher education programmes did not include assessment as a topic (Xu & Brown, 2017) or that the topic was “only very briefly covered in the programme” (Zeicher, 2010: 480). A difficulty is that assessment could be understood as a part of curriculum studies (Scott, 2001), and this is particularly the case in OBE where the outcome is based on assessment (Macayan, 2017). Assessment could be understood to be part of pedagogy as well (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 2018). Because of the increasing role that assessment plays in language education, Paran (2010) argues the need to include assessment in teacher education as an academic subject in its own right. The need

for the provision of opportunities for in-service teachers to practice assessment in a safe environment was noted as well (e.g., DeLuca et al., 2013; Eyers, 2014). The literature on assessment does not directly address what a curriculum for teacher education on the assessment of home languages should comprise.

2.7.3 Addressing the theory/practice divide

Studies like Akkoc & Yesildere-Imre, 2017 and Nolan (2012) reported on difficulties in addressing the theory/practice divide There were many examples in the literature of the disjunction between theory and practice in teacher education (Qian, 2014). While the literature is clear on the need for both theory and practice in teacher education, it is the relationship between theory and practice and how this relationship is structured in the curriculum that are not addressed. From the research, it is clear that pre-service and novice teachers need a strong foundation in assessment knowledge and a critical attitude towards assessment practice in order to engage in assessment practices independently post qualification (Aydarova & Berliner, 2016). Although some successful interventions were discussed in the literature (e.g. Maddock & Mouran, 2018; Senom et al., 2013), bridging the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge in teacher education curricula is not covered well in the literature. This is clearly a gap, and research in this area would be useful for strengthening teacher education for the purpose of ensuring that novice teachers are ready for assessment practice but without compromising the integrity of educational and assessment theory which should underpin assessment practice.

2.7.4 Addressing managers' assessment literacy

The literature on the management of assessment tends to focus on the logistics of school management, such as keeping records and reporting. There is literature that explains the importance of school managers' need to develop up-to-date knowledge about assessment principles in order to guide school practices effectively (Prinsloo & Heugh, 2013). The literature does not address issues of how school managers could be trained or supported in developing assessment knowledge.

Language assessment is "a ubiquitous phenomenon" that has a powerful influence on the way in which language is taught and learned (Paran, 2010). It is increasingly recognised that assessment practices can have powerful washback effects which are described as: "a set of relationships, planned and unplanned, positive and negative, between teaching and testing" (Cheng & Curtis, 2004: 7). These "effects extend throughout the educational system" and throughout society (Paran, 2010: 2). Policymakers, lecturers, school managers, officials, and teachers need to share an understanding of the principles and the purposes of assessment, in

particular, the ways in which assessment practice could be used to support effective and inclusive learning in home language.

2.8 The conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for EHL assessment arises from the literature on assessment. It includes a number of key features that are intended to guide EHL assessment policy, teacher education, assessment practice, and the management of assessment in schools. Key concepts in the framework are related to: the purpose of assessment, the principles of assessment, the types of assessment, effective and inclusive assessment practice and the management of assessment. The conceptual framework brings together the five key concepts that emerged from the literature and that informed the research methodology as well as the analysis of the research data. The conceptual framework of the research on assessment in language is summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: A conceptual framework for EHL assessment

	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**
Purpose of assessment	Measurement of learning (Dolin et al., 2018).	Feedback on learning (Ausubel, 1968; Bloom, 1984).
Principles of assessment	Validity (Johnson, 2012).	Alignment with summative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2009).
	Reliability (Kibble, 2017).	Target difficulties (Black et al., 2003).
	Fairness (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013).	Timeous constructive feedback (Harlen & James, 1997).
	Integrated language skills (Taber et al., 2011).	Focus on sub-skills (Xu & Brown, 2017).
Types of assessment	Assignments, comprehension, essays, examinations, oral presentations, Tests, etc. (Mellati & Khademi, 2018).	Part assignments, cloze tests, part essays, “mock” examinations, quizzes, oral micro-skills, etc. (Angelo & Cross, 2012).
Effective and inclusive assessment practice	1. Identify tasks that integrate language skills (Senom et al., 2013); 2. Design assessment task and assessment criteria in alignment with curricular outcomes (Black, 2006); 3. Contextualise task (Eyers, 2014); 4. Explain assessment criteria and/or rubric (Johnson, 2012);	1. Identify sub-skills for development (Ramaprasad, 1983); 2. Plan and develop formative assessment tasks in alignment with learner needs (Abrams et al., 2016); 3. Contextualise examples (linked to the summative tasks) (DeLuca et al., 2013); 4. Explain assessment criteria and/or rubric (Black & Wiliam, 2009);

	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
	5. Mark/grade learners' work against assessment criteria (Dixon & Worrell, 2016); 6. Negotiate mark/grade or co-assess (e.g. with lecturer and/or supervisor) (Matthews & Noyes, 2016); and 7. Provide constructive feedback to learners (Broadbent et al., 2018).	5. Create a low stress assessment environment (Taber et al., 2011); 6. Negotiate assessment outcome with learners and/or peer assessors (Zichner, 2010); and 7. Provide constructive feedback to learners (Reed, 2014).
Managing assessment	1. Evidence-based guide (Aydarova & Berliner, 2016); 2. Record keeping (Huber & Hiltmann, 2011); 3. School-based teacher training and support (Rapetsoa &Singh, 2017); 4. Co-develop assessment tasks (e.g. with supervisor); and 5. Continuous Professional Development (Widiati et al. 2018).	1. Evidence-based guide (Tobia et al., 2017); 2. Progress records (Freeman & Lewis, 2016); 3. School-based training and mentoring (Maddock & Mouran, 2018); 4. Observation of formative assessment (Senom et al., 2013); 5. Continuous Professional Development (Torrance, 2017).

Table 2.1, a conceptual framework for EHL assessment, links five key concepts in language assessment to clarify the relationship between the concepts and in relation to "real-world" assessment challenges. The different sections of the theses deal with issues of policy, pre-service teacher education, school management, and novice teachers' experiences of assessment. The concepts presented in the framework above are relevant to each area of the study.

For policy analysis, for example, an understanding of the purposes, principles, and types of assessment is necessary to understand likely policy impacts with regard to providing guidance to teachers and school managers towards effective and inclusive assessment practices. Similarly, the study of curricula and pedagogies in teacher education was structured around the purposes, principles, and types of assessment, including reflection on and the theorisation of the assessment principles on which English language teaching and learning is based. The policies and examples that students would be required to work in within the context of practice also were included in the analysis. The opportunities for pre-service teachers to practise assessment in a safe space also could be analysed and critiqued using the framework, including whether or not theoretical and practical knowledge of effective and inclusive assessment practice is provided over the pre-service teacher education programme.

The framework support the analysis of the extent to which school managers understood the purposes, principles, and types of language assessment that are appropriate in the school context in order to guide teachers in effective and inclusive assessment practice and whether or not school managers sought ongoing professional development to keep their assessment knowledge current. Finally, the framework was used to evaluate the extent to which pre-service and novice teachers understood the purposes, principles, and types of assessment in order to plan, design, implement, and evaluate formative and summative assessment for effective and inclusive language learning.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework for the study is developed and the conceptual framework for EHL assessment is located within the larger social realist theoretical framework of Legitimation Code of Theory (LCT) (Maton, 2014; 2016). LCT, together with the conceptual framework on the assessment of EHL, provided the explanatory basis for the study of assessment policies, teacher education, and the management and practice of EHL assessment for effective and inclusive teaching and learning.

CHAPTER THREE
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHING ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

A key task [is] to establish the empirical realisations of concepts within each specific phenomenon and to make this explicit in the form of a 'translation device' that relates concepts to data (Maton & Chen, 2019).

3.1 Introduction to Chapter Three

In this section, the ontological position and theoretical frameworks that guide this study are explained, and their relevance to the study is justified. Section 3.2 states the ontological underpinnings of the study and Section 3.3 introduces LCT (Maton, 2014) which is the underpinning theory. In Section 3.4, a brief overview of the use of LCT in primary education and pre-service teacher education is provided, and Section 3.5 justifies the use of LCT for this thesis. In the final section, a "translation device" (Maton & Chen, 2016) is developed for understanding assessment practice in EHL policy, teacher education, and practice at the intermediate phase of primary education. The translation device draws on the conceptual framework that arose from the literature review and LCT's concept of "semantic gravity" (Maton, 2014).

3.2 A realist ontological position on assessment

The basic premise of ontological realism is that reality exists but that our understanding of it can only be partial and imperfect. Maxwell (2012) distinguishes realism between ontology reality (what is there to know) and epistemology reality (what do we know and why it is). The realist ontological viewpoint adopted in this study on assessment practice is that it is a social phenomenon. Regardless of how people perceive or theorise social phenomena, they nonetheless exist and have a causal relationship to other phenomena (Maxwell, 2012). Thus, even while any understanding of assessment can be partial and imperfect only, assessment has an independent reality that has causal properties. The effects of assessment practices on learners are real, e.g. some are deemed to be competent in English as a home language and some are not, and we see these effects of assessment practice in the ways in which policies and educational practices are structured.

Realist ontology is a "depth ontology" (Bhaskar, 2010: 103) that explains why our understanding of social phenomena, such as assessment, can only be partial and imperfect. Firstly, our perception of the evaluation of English as a home language is constrained. As a result, the first, or "empirical," layer of a depth ontology consists of what we see or feel. There are various types of data about social phenomena apart from what one personally experiences. Secondly, the "actual" layer comprises that which can be substantiated, for example, through

written policies on home language assessment, such as the CAPS document or an assessment task that a novice teacher has produced. Finally, the deepest layer is that of the "real" that comprises the underlying structures and mechanisms: the slow-to-change deep structures of society and power. Assessment practices impact learners' lives by either helping them to develop the necessary academic success or condemning them to cycles of failure.

From a realist perspective, assessment is a powerful social structure, deeply embedded in educational mechanisms. As a social structure, assessment has causal powers (Bhaskar, 2011), such as controlling who achieves academic success and is valued in our society According to Baskar (2010), researchers have the obligation to uncover social structures at the level of 'the real' that undergird what we can observe at the level of the 'empirical', or demonstrated to have existed at the level of the 'actual'. Assessment, thus, exists at the level of the real. It has causal properties that strongly impact the nature of the events at the level of the actual, such as the many physical and online documents associated with assignments and examinations. It influences experiences and perceptions and, thus, impacts the empirical level, for example, how novice teachers experience the implementation of assessment tasks. This study, therefore, understands that reality is stratified and requires that the levels of the empirical, the actual, and the real are disambiguated in this study. The purpose is to uncover the different layers of reality as in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: A depth ontology for the study of EHL assessment

Ontological layers	Examples	Examples related to the study
The level of the empirical	Experiences, perceptions, and impressions.	In-service students, novice teachers, teacher educators and managers' experiences and perceptions of assessment in the context of the EHL subject.
The level of the actual	Documents, records, and media.	Policy documents (e.g. CAPS Grades 4 to 6 EHL), Curriculum documents, the PIRLS survey and results, and school assessment records.
The level of the real	Social structures and mechanisms.	Assessment practice. (Who is considered to be competent to assess? Who assesses? What do they assess? Who decides which teachers are competent in assessment and are promoted?)

(Adapted from Bhaskar, 2011: 103)

In accordance with realist ontology, this study recognises that assessment exists at the level of the real and has causal inclinations and capabilities. Assessment can only be examined by examining its effects, which may then be used to shed light on evaluation's qualities as an underlying causal mechanism. A generating mechanism assessment must be inferred from its consequences because it cannot be directly accessed. We can see evidence of the effects of assessment at the actual level in, for example, policy texts and assessment assignments. At the level of the empirical, we can discover lecturers', managers', students', and teachers' perceptions about their experiences of assessment. According to Baskar (2010), researchers have the obligation to uncover social structures at the level of 'the real' that undergird what we can observe at the level of the 'empirical', or demonstrated to have existed at the level of the 'actual'.

Because the realist ontological position distinguishes between ontology and epistemology, and because this study understands the process of knowing as fallible, it accepts a wide range of theoretical positions to be addressed. Maxwell describes his own position as the "combination of ontological realism and epistemological constructivism" (Maxwell, 2012: 1). In terms of its ontological positioning, LCT understands knowledge as incorporating both social and real qualities. LCT offers a "sociology of possibility" (Maton, 2014: 3) that embraces the "both/and" perspective of social realism which considers relations to and relations within knowledge. In this way, LCT supports the social aspect of knowledge and knowledge processes while also offering an ontological way of thinking. LCT incorporates and builds on the work of Bernstein's (1995) code theory and Bourdieu's (1971) field theory, amongst others. Using a theory such as LCT that is more clearly aligned with a realist ontological position to shape the research study can potentially clarify the causal powers and tendencies of assessment as a "generative and causal mechanism" through its affordances and effects (Maton, 2009: 55). Additionally, it can provide useful conceptual tools to analyse how concepts in teacher education, such as "professionalism", are "understood and transmitted through pre-service teacher education programmes" (Rusznyak, 2015: 3).

3.3 Legitimation Code of Theory (LCT): a framework for understanding EHL assessment

The review of the literature on EHL assessment showed that the successful execution of assessment is dependent on policy makers, lecturers, and teachers acquiring the core knowledge and application that underpin the principles, purposes, and forms of assessment practice. The literature suggests that there are many ways to acquire assessment knowledge by students and teachers, for example, through theoretical study and through a practicum. "Literature" as in (Rapetsoa & Singh, 2018) and (Headington, 2013) stated different views. The literature also concedes that there is a place for a focussed course on assessment in the pre-service teacher education curriculum (Rapetsoa & Singh, 2018) as well as a need to include

assessment practice in the practicum (Headington, 2013) due to the increasing importance of assessment in primary education. Organ-Bekiroglu and Suzak "suggests that teacher education programmes should highlight theories of assessment" and assessment principles for a clear understanding of assessment (2014: 1). However, the literature on assessment does not provide a theoretical underpinning for how assessment knowledge and assessment practice are interrelated.

Maton's (2014) demonstrates that if studies ignore or underestimate the knowledge base of practices, research can of suffer from unintentional "knowledge-blindness" (the paradox of limited engagement with knowledge structures in research that makes knowledge claims). What is, therefore, absent from the literature is an understanding of the knowledge structures and practices that underpin assessment policies, teacher education curricula, and pedagogies for efficient and inclusive assessment practices as well as how such guidance and training might enable the emergence of capable and assessment-literate subjects.

3.3.1 Why Legitimation Code of Theory (LCT)?

In order to probe more deeply into assessment as a knowledge practice, this study draws on LCT (Maton, 2009; 2010; 2014; 2016) to understand the underlying principles of assessment policies, pre-service teacher education, classroom practice, and school management. LCT is a social realist framework for analysing practices and their underpinning principles. Thus, LCT is a framework that "enables knowledge practices to be seen, their organising principles to be conceptualised and their effects to be explored" (Maton, 2014: 45). LCT has been used to study all levels of education, from school to university and beyond, and offers powerful explanations for why practices have evolved over time as well as how they might be enhanced. LCT is, thus, an appropriate framework for understanding how EHL assessment practice in the intermediate phase of primary school could be strengthened. LCT addresses the gaps and weaknesses in the literature with regard to the theoretical underpinning of assessment and clarifies the specifics of assessment practice. It is beneficial for policy-makers, academics, students, and managers to understand the underpinning principles of the forms of guidance, training, and support needed to enhance students' successful transfer from pre-service teacher to novice teacher. The intention is to reveal the underpinning principles in assessment theory and practice in order to improve policy, teacher education, and school support, by drawing on documents and the perspectives of teacher educators, students, and school managers.

LCT is a multifaceted framework that gives academics a wide range of "tools" for analysing educational (and other) activities. Thus, LCT offers both an analytical process and a conceptual toolkit. It is multidimensional by comprising five different dimensions: Specialisation, Semantics, Autonomy, Temporality, and Density. Each dimension examines a particular

collection of dispositions, behaviours, and fields' organising principles, which LCT conceptualises as legitimation codes.

An analysis of legitimation codes explores "what is possible for whom, when, where and how, and who is able to define these possibilities, when, where and how" (Maton, 2014: 18). Combining Bourdieu's (1971) relational way of thinking (where social power can have an effect) and extending Bernstein's (1995) code theory (to understand the shortcomings of an education system), LCT's concepts are seen in relational terms along continua rather than as typologies to overcome segmentation.

3.4 LCT in primary education and pre-service teacher education

The wide application of LCT in educational research demonstrates its usefulness and effectiveness in illuminating knowledge and practices to increasing numbers of researchers and educators. LCT's ability to make the "rules of the game" visible is central to this thesis on assessment knowledge and practice. LCT has been used to investigate a wide range of educational concerns and several studies are particularly pertinent to this thesis because it would uncover the educational concerns. Studies have explored primary school learners' English proficiency levels (Cowley-Haselden, 2020) as well as their acquisition of disciplinary discourses (Llinares & Nashaat-Sobhy, 2021) and domain-specific reasoning (Oliver, 2020).

LCT has been applied to emerging literacies as well, for example, in primary school learners' emerging visual literacies (Walldén & Larsson, 2021), digital literacies (Howard, Yang, Ma, Maton & Rennie, 2018), and multimodal literacies (Sindoni & Moschini, 2021). Studies on intercultural education (Chen & Bennett, 2012) and translanguaging as an inclusive pedagogical practice in English-medium classrooms for linguistically diverse students (Paulsrud, Tian & Toth, 2021; Tai, 2021) are pertinent to this thesis to uncover the assessment practices. Of particular importance to the social justice imperative of opening access to EHL to learners from disadvantaged educational backgrounds are two doctoral studies. The first is Ngcobo's (2015) doctoral thesis on Grade 4 learners in rural KwaZulu-Natal switching to English as a medium of instruction in new subject areas, and the second is Bassi's (2021) doctoral study on multilingual classrooms in Yola, Nigeria in which she found that it was not primarily the language of instruction that explained students' challenges but "the number of content iterations, combined with knowledge structures [that was] an important factor that enhances or explains the performance of students" (2021: 35).

LCT has also been applied in teacher education, such as in Rusznyak's (2015) study of knowledge selection in initial teacher education curricula, Macnaught et al.'s study of pedagogy in teacher education (Macnaught, Maton, Martin & Matruglio, 2013), Meidell-Sigsgaard's

(2021) study of conceptual and practical integration in teacher education, and Stolare, Hudson, Gericke and Olin-Scheller's study of "powerful professional knowledge" in teacher education policy and practice (2022: 205).

The examples cited above justify the suitability and appropriateness of a framework such as LCT to explore assessment knowledge and practice in English as a primary school subject across diverse contexts. The substantive concerns around the assessment of English as a home language are not limited to the South African context. LCT has been, and continues to be, used extensively internationally.

3.5 Semantic gravity: practical knowledge in assessment

LCT identifies a range of dimensions that underpin knowledge-based practices, namely: "Specialization, Semantics, Temporality, Resources and Autonomy" (Maton, 2014: 18). LCT is a practical theory that offers an array of concepts that can be used in empirical research to provide explanations of substantive problems (Maton, 2014; Maton, 2016a). Maton explains that LCT "enables knowledge practices to be seen and their effects to be explored" (2014: 11). Each dimension offers concepts for "analyzing a particular set of organizing principles underlying practice" (Maton, 2014: 44). Each research problem is unique and has different theoretical requirements. The implication of this is that using all LCT's five dimensions for the theoretical framework is not necessarily beneficial or appropriate.

The nature of the empirical problem at hand, assessment practice in EHL, calls for the close analysis of policy and curricular documents as well as the experiences and perceptions of teachers, students, and managers, to reveal the types of assessment knowledge and practice that are valued and why. To analyse assessment knowledge and practice, the dimension of Semantics was deemed to be the most suitable for its ability to expose reality as knowledge and provide meaning to the practical reality. Semantics affords insights into the "context dependence and condensation of meaning" (Maton, Hood & Shay, 2016: 4): the extent to which practices are determined by their contexts and the extent to which practices are determined by complex knowledge. A semantic analysis enables insights into the kinds of assessment knowledge and assessment practice valued by different groups, namely, policy-makers, academics, teachers, and managers.

Semantics explains that both semantic gravity (or degrees of contextuality) and semantic density (or degrees of complexity) are present in all knowledge practices. Semantic gravity is thus not equivalent to practical knowledge, but semantic gravity is expected to be stronger in practical knowledge than in theoretical knowledge. As the thesis focuses on assessment practice, semantic gravity was selected as a powerful way of explaining how practical

knowledge is shaped by degrees of decontextualised knowledge (e.g., assessment principles) and degrees of contextuality (e.g., logistical requirements). The Semantic dimension proposes that knowledge of current practices have varying degrees of theoretical knowledge (semantic density) and practical knowledge (semantic gravity) and can be used to determine the "levels of strengths and weaknesses across practices" (Maton & Doran, 2017: 49). This thesis attempts to build powerful understandings and insights into the roles and interrelationships between theoretical and practical knowledge in preparing pre-service teachers for effective and inclusive assessment practice in schools.

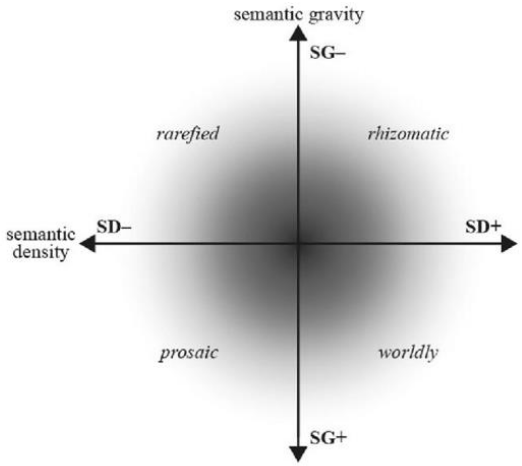


Figure 3.1: The semantic plane (Maton, 2014: 131)

The dimension of Semantics speaks to the heart of "meaning-making" and is, therefore, particularly appropriate for an inquiry into assessment, whereas, a semantic plane is an illustration of weaknesses and strengths. The semantic plane comprises two axes, the X-axis represents a continuum of semantic density; the Y-axis represents a continuum of semantic gravity (Figure 3.1). The semantic plane, like the Cartesian plane, thus includes a double continuum – so there is always some semantic density (theory) in practice and some semantic density (practice) in theory. Thus, the stronger the semantic density is, the more complex the knowledge is. In this study, the concept of semantic gravity was chosen to theoretically frame different understandings of assessment. Semantic gravity is located on the Y-axis and refers to:

> ...the degree to which meaning relates to its context. Semantic gravity may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (−) along a continuum of strengths. The stronger the semantic gravity (SG+), the more dependent the meaning is on its context; the weaker the gravity (SG−), the less dependent the meaning is on its context (Maton, 2014: 129).

The focus of the thesis is semantic density or knowledge developed for and in practice, because of the under- representation of practical knowledge in teacher education generally (Aglazor, 2017) and in assessment (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013). Maton (2014) argues that there is an inverse relationship between semantic gravity and semantic density. Weaker semantic gravity is less rooted in its context, thereby enabling the insertion of conceptual knowledge within practice. This is what has been shown in the semantic gravity waves used in this study. Semantic gravity waves show different kinds of practice (i.e., where conceptual knowledge is drawn on or where more local and contextual knowledge is required). The focus is on practice, with the understanding that practice is underpinned by different forms of knowledge. Maton developed semantic gravity as an explanatory framework that "reveals the principles underpinning practices" (2014: 197).

In applying the concept of semantic gravity to assessment, relatively weaker semantic gravity would reveal the general principles of assessment, which are abstract and independent of the particulars of a specific context or case. Stronger forms of semantic gravity, on the other hand, would involve assessment practice within a particular context. Studying the stronger and weaker forms of semantic gravity over a policy document, for example, provides a way of mapping variations across the document. The distinction between contextualisation and abstraction is particularly useful in the analysis of a knowledge practice, such as assessment, as it can reveal both the strengths and the weaknesses of different understandings (e.g. amongst teachers and students) as well as its gaps and blind spots.

Table 3.2: Semantic Gravity in Assessment

Semantic Gravity	**Range**	**Knowledge**	**Code**	**Examples**
Weaker semantic gravity		Less context dependent	SG-	Assessment theory and principles of assessment.
Stronger semantic gravity		More context dependent	SG+	Assessment practice, marking, and keeping records.

Table 3.2 shows how semantic gravity could be conceptualised across different assessment practices. Weaker semantic gravity in the context of assessment would include, for example, teaching pre-service teachers the general principles and purposes of assessment, which are abstract and independent of the particulars of a specific context or school (less context dependent), while stronger forms of semantic gravity could include pre-service teachers observing competent formative assessment practice within a school classroom or providing feedback to learners on a test during a practicum (context dependent). In a teacher education lecture semantic gravity is likely to be weaker, particularly if theories of assessment are

foregrounded, while in a Grade 6 classroom, the semantic gravity would be stronger, for example, if the novice teacher is engaged in marking a learners' comprehension test or recording learners' test results.

3.6 Connecting semantic gravity to assessment in EHL

Using a high-level theory such as semantic gravity requires a "translation device" (Maton & Chen, 2016: 27) to bridge between the abstract concept of semantic gravity and the specific concepts related to assessment knowledge and practice in EHL education. Semantic gravity in this thesis serves as a powerful tool for understanding the significance, relationships, and structure of the data sets. By quantifying the importance of terms and concepts in a qualitative approach, it enables the researcher to uncover valuable insights and make informed decisions based on the underlying semantic content (Maton, 2014). It was, therefore, necessary to develop and test a translation device that could determine the relative strengths and weaknesses of semantic gravity across different kinds of assessment practice. The translation device went through various iterations. The conceptual framework for EHL assessment (Table 2.1) that was developed from the review of the literature, suggested different areas of assessment knowledge and practice: purposes of assessment, principles of assessment, types of assessment, effective and inclusive assessment practice, and the management of assessment. The first translation device was based on ascribing semantic gravity values to the five concepts above. However, the literature, from which the conceptual framework was derived, does not sufficiently distinguish between the different kinds of theoretical and practical assessment knowledge or the relationship between these knowledge structures. After testing the device through analysis and re-analysis on policy documents and interview data, additional iterations of the translation device emerged.

Finally, a translation device was developed that was appropriate to the analysis of the variety of assessment data (written and spoken as well as formal and informal) collected for the study. Table 3.3 shows the final translation device. Drawing on semantic gravity, it was understood that practices would show varying strengths of contextual independence and contextual dependence. The data was initially clustered into categories of contextually independent and contextually dependent assessment knowledge and practice. Within the category of conceptual independent knowledge, two additional categories were identified, namely, conceptual assessment knowledge and applied assessment knowledge.

Conceptual assessment knowledge was generic and bore little relation to any context, while applied assessment knowledge was applied to assessment knowledge in language education. Applied assessment knowledge, understanding that education is an applied discipline (Shalem, 2014), was not directly applied to a specific school context, but it was applied to a

sub-discipline of education, namely, language education. Data that was identified as context dependent were subdivided into the categories of regulative assessment knowledge and operational assessment knowledge. Regulative assessment knowledge included knowledge of assessment policies, procedures, and other regulatory requirements. Such documents usually were applicable across a variety of contexts and, thus, not dependent on a single context but applicable across several similar contexts. The fourth form of assessment knowledge identified, operational knowledge, was the most context dependent as it involved, for example, conducting formative assessment exercises with a particular group of learners, marking their work, and giving them feedback. While the four types of assessment knowledge are presented separately for analytical purposes, it is important to note that they are interconnected. Clearly, a teacher cannot only possess operational knowledge as she or he cannot assess a learner's work competently without conceptual or applied assessment knowledge and will usually need to understand the regulatory frameworks in which the assessment occurs.

The four kinds of assessment knowledge, namely, conceptual, applied, regulatory, and operation (Shalem, 2014) were further subdivided, and eight levels of semantic gravity were identified following further classification and coding of the data. To avoid confusion, these eight levels of assessment knowledge were numbered in terms of the relative strength of semantic gravity, from Level 1 (the strongest level of semantic gravity) to Level 8 (the weakest level of semantic gravity).[1] Levels 8 to 5 represent relative context-independence in assessment knowledge.

At the least context dependent level, Level 8, are theories of assessment, such as those proposed by Ausubel (1968) and Bloom (1984), which are high-level theories that offer conceptual explanations of assessment and its role in educational systems. Assessment principles are extracted from these theories, and at the next level, Level 7, there are principles of assessment that generally apply to all kinds of assessments, such as validity, reliability, and fairness (Black et al., 2003; DeLuca & Bellara, 2013), although principles do vary, as the literature shows, between formative and summative assessment. Thus, the principles are slightly more context-sensitive than high-level theory. At Level 6 are the purposes of assessment, which are usually for measure of learning (Dolin et al., 2018) or for the promotion of learning (Harlen & James, 2007).

[1] Note that the reverse numbering for semantic gravity reflects the reversal of the poles on the Y-axis of the semantic plane. The reverse numbering enabled the representation of the semantic gravity profile of written and oral texts. In other words, with the reverse numbering weaker semantic gravity can be located in a higher position on the Y-axis, while stronger semantic gravity can be shown as closer to the bottom.

The next level, Level 5, represents a bridging point between contextually independent and dependent knowledge: knowledge that is generic but can be applied in practice, such as knowledge of assessment strategies. Levels 4 to 1 represent contextually dependent forms of assessment knowledge. At Level 4, there are guidelines for assessment practice which are usually applicable within a specific field, such as language education, and within a special context, such as the intermediate level of primary school. Many of these guidelines would be developed from assessment policies as well as individual schools' interpretations of the policies. At Level 3 there are types of assessment practice. Knowledge of types of assessment practice are usually contextually dependent, for example, the type of comprehension test, cloze test, creative writing topic, etc. that would be appropriate to the assessment of learners' English proficiency at a particular level. While some knowledge of assessment forms are generic, such as tests and assignments, the specifics of the test or assignment, what it assesses, how it assesses, and why the assessment is necessary, would be context dependent. Level 2 comprises practical knowledge of assessment, the ability to implement an assessment exercise at an appropriate level, take into account the needs of the particular group of learners, mark it accurately, and provide constructive feedback to the learner. Implementation is at the heart of assessment practice.

Finally, at the strongest level of contextual dependence, Level 1, are the logistics of assessment practice. Logistics are often associated with the management of assessment, such as planning, keeping records, and reporting.

Table 3.3: A translation device for identifying semantic gravity across contexts

Semantic gravity	**Range**	**Assessment knowledge**	**Levels**	**Descriptors**
Less context dependent		Conceptual	8	Theories of assessment
			7	Principles of assessment
		Applied	6	Purposes of assessment
			5	Strategies for assessment
More context dependent		Regulative	4	Guidelines for assessment practice
			3	Assessment planning
		Operational	2	Implementation of assessment
			1	Logistics of assessment practice
Non dependent		Non applicable	0	No semantic gravity in terms of assessment knowledge

In any assessment policy, curriculum document, or interview with teachers, students, and managers about assessment practice, it would be expected that a range of less context-dependent and more context dependent knowledge would be evident. For example, one would expect policy documents to include principles of assessment (Level 7), purposes of formative and summative assessment (Level 6), as well as regulatory guidelines (Level 4). One might not expect to find operational matters (Levels 2 and 1) in a policy document, as this is usually the role of teachers and school managers. In a teacher education programme, one would expect to find theories of assessment (Level 8) as well as assessment strategies (Level 7), for example, for language teaching. In a teaching practicum, one would expect pre-service teachers to gain some knowledge with regard to levels 4 to 1 by becoming familiar with a school's guidelines for assessment, the types of assessment tasks used in summative and formative language assessment, how tests and exercises are planned, how marking memoranda and rubrics are developed, how work is assessed against criteria, how feedback is provided, and how records are maintained.

The levels on the translation device represent the range of the Y-axis on the semantic plane (Figure 3.1). Identifying the levels across a policy document, curriculum, or interview transcription can produce the semantic gravity profile of the text, which reveals both the semantic gravity range available and the dominant features of the text. Thus, a text might show a limited semantic gravity range or a wide semantic gravity range.

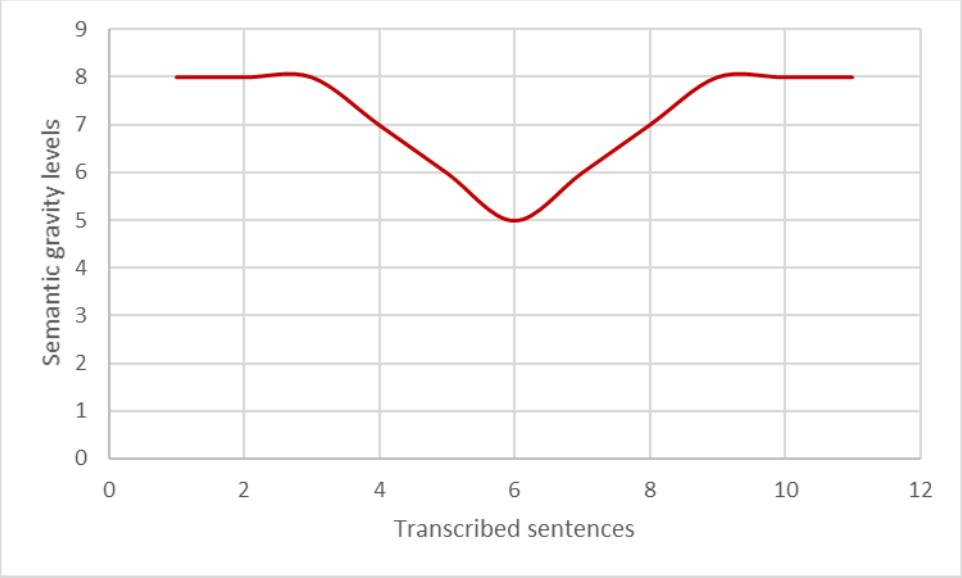


Figure 3.2: A limited semantic gravity range and tendency towards a high flatline

Figure 3.2 is an example of a text (e.g., a transcribed interview with a lecturer) from Data set 9 that has a limited semantic gravity range (Levels 4 to 8) and a tendency towards a high "flatline", thus, focusing on theory and principles of assessment.

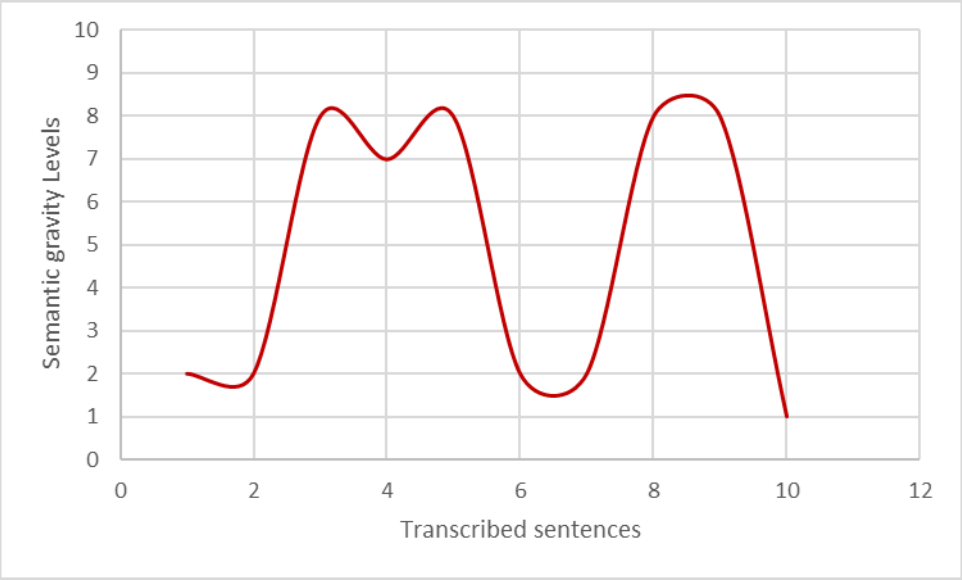


Figure 3.3: A wide semantic gravity range and an iterative wave

Figure 3.3 represents a text, for example, that of a teacher educator who is supervising a student undertaking a practicum. She might be explaining theoretically and relating the theory to assessment practice. Thus, a text might show a tendency towards "flatlining" at a particular level, illustrate a single downward trajectory, for example, from principles to guidelines, described as a "down escalator" (Maton, 2013: 10), or create a semantic gravity wave that connects more context dependent and less context dependent forms of assessment knowledge. The resultant semantic gravity wave might be iterated across a text in which a student, for example, is interviewed on her experience of a practicum. She might refer to assessment theory learned on the teacher education programme and draw on assessment theory and principles to explain how she developed an assessment rubric. A school manager, on the other hand, might show a wave that has a tendency to flatline at the level of logics of assessment records and all the forms and reports required by the school's policy. Semantic gravity, thus, affords insights into the nature of assessment as understood by policy-makers, teacher-educators, managers, pre-service teachers, and novice teachers.

The next chapter explains how the translation device guided the research methodology and explains the research design as well as the data collection and analysis methods.

CHAPTER FOUR
A METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCHING ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2007).

4.1 Introduction to Chapter Four

The previous chapter explains the theoretical framework and the development of the translation device, which underpinned the research methodology of the study. In this chapter, the research methodology is discussed in terms of the research design (Section 4.2), site, document and participant selection (Section 4.3), data collection methods (Section 4.4), and data analysis methods (Section 4.5). The limitations of the study are explained (Section 4.6) and followed by sections on the trustworthiness of the data (Section 4.7) and the ethical framework for the study (Section 4.8). The chapter concludes with a brief overview of how Chapters Five to Eight draw on the research methodology and methods described to address the research questions.

4.2 Research design for studying assessment knowledge and practice

In this section, the research design is explained in terms of the research questions, the ontological and epistemological positions of the study are stated, and the reasons for the qualitative approach are presented.

4.2.1 Research questions

Background information to the study, the research problem, research questions, aims, objectives, and rationale are presented in Chapter One, Sections 1.4.1 – 1.4.3. The research question and sub-questions are repeated here for ease of reference. The guiding research question is: What enables or constrains novice teachers' assessment practice in the field of English as a home language?

The related research sub-questions are:

1. How do assessment policies guide, or fail to guide, novice teachers for assessment practices in EHL?
2. To what extent does teacher education prepare pre-service teachers in the EHL for competent assessment practice?
3. How do pre-service and novice teachers experience the assessment of EHL sixth grade learners?

4. How are novice teachers' EHL assessment practices supported in the intermediate phase school environment?

The research design had to take into account the different "worlds" of policymaking, university-based teacher education, and primary school education. In order to build knowledge on how assessment was understood and enacted in these different worlds, relevant documents, such as policy documents on EHL assessment were studied. A variety of participants (teacher educators, principals, district subject advisors, students, and teachers) responded to questionnaires and was interviewed to determine how they understood their role in the preparation of EHL pre-service teachers towards competent assessment practice. School and district-level managers were questioned on how EHL assessment practices were managed in the primary school environment. Final year EHL pre-service teachers and novice teachers were interviewed to understand their experiences in the implementation of EHL assessment practices.

4.2.2 A realist ontological position on assessment

In Chapter Three, the realist ontological position of the thesis is explained. A realist ontology is a "depth ontology" which posits that our understanding of reality is layered or stratified. This understanding guided the research design. The study required, firstly, the disambiguation of the levels of the empirical, the actual, and the real. Data could be collected from the first or "empirical" layer which comprises what we perceive or experience. Participants could be interviewed or questioned about their perceptions and experiences of assessment. Data could be collected from the second or "actual" layer which comprises that which we can substantiate. Data such as policy and curriculum documents could be collected at this level of reality. Assessment is understood to exist at the level of the real: it has causal powers and tendencies. But as a generative mechanism, assessment cannot be directly accessed as its properties must be inferred from its effects. Although data can only be gathered at the level of the actual and at the level of the empirical, it is possible to discover how documents and participants understand the effects of assessment. The effects of assessment can elucidate its properties as an underlying mechanism. Using a theory such as LCT that has its roots in social realism to shape the research study helps to make more visible the causal powers and tendencies of assessment as well as its structures and affordances.

4.2.3 Epistemological underpinning of the research design

Being a critical realist at the ontological level does not require critical realism at the "epistemological level" (Maxwell, 2012: 5). The previous chapter, Chapter Three, explains that this study is situated within the paradigm of social realism (Maton, 2014), a paradigm that posits both the existence of social realities (ontological realism) and the provisionality of our

knowledge about those social realities (epistemological relativism). Chapter Three also explains the alignment between LCT and a realist ontology and, in particular, the appropriateness of LCT's Semantic dimension, and semantic gravity in particular, as the theoretical framework for the study as part of the research design.

4.2.4 A qualitative approach to researching assessment

A qualitative approach was used in this study because the research problem, enhancing assessment practice, required "inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems" (Creswell & Poth, 2016: 37). Maxwell (2012) points to the many synergies between a realist ontology and a qualitative approach, in particular, the "re-legitimation of ontological questions about phenomena we study" and the "nature of these phenomena" (2012: 13). In order to access the real, the generative mechanisms that underpin social phenomena, it is necessary to establish the presence of the phenomenon. It was, therefore, necessary to collect qualitative data in the form of participants' views, opinions, descriptions, and explanations. Scambler (2012) points out that we are all capable of expressing our perceptions, and opinions, describing our experiences, and offering explanations to external others. He contends that what matters in the data is the extent of the understanding produced by each participant's interview and how the researcher abducts inferences of the real.

The thesis draws on the work of others who have used qualitative approaches to build deep knowledge on the preparation of in-service teachers for competent practice in primary school education (e.g., Ruzsnyak, 2015; Macnaught et al., 2013; Meidell-Sigsgaard, 2021). Exploratory and in-depth interviews lend themselves to the probing of "different perspectives on the research problem" (Bhattacherjee, 2012: 109; Creswell & Clark, 2011: 104) and can give a voice to pre-service and novice teachers with regard to the extent to which their teacher education programmes have prepared them for practice (Korthagen, Loughran & Russell, 2006).

4.2.4.1 Using documents within a qualitative approach

The use of documents (and other artefacts) within qualitative research has a long history (Bowen, 2009). Documents are "any written material other than a record that was not prepared explicitly in response to some requests from the investigator" (Ahmed, 2010: 2). Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to the study topic (Bowen, 2009). In this case, the documents are policies and curricular documents intended to guide teachers' assessment practice. The reason for selecting the policy and curricular documents is that they are a logical point of departure for understanding the scope and requirements for assessment practice in EHL.

Table 4.1 Summary of the research design for this study of assessment practice

The translation device, as in Table 3.3, was used to code the data.

Research question: What enables or constrains novice teachers' assessment practice in the field of English as a home language?				
Research sub-questions	**Data sources**	**Data Collection Methods**	**Units of analysis**	**Data Analysis Methods**
How do assessment policies enable or constrain novice teachers for assessment practices in EHL?	Policies	Document study	Policy on assessment practice	Descriptive and theoretical coding
	Teacher educators	Document analysis Questionnaires Mixed focus group	Policy on assessment practice	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding
	School/district Managers	Questionnaires Mixed focus group interview	Policy on assessment practice	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding
	Novice teachers	Questionnaires Individual interviews	Policy on assessment practice	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding
To what extent does teacher education in EHL and Professional Studies prepare pre-service teachers, and novice teachers, in EHL for competent	Legislation and curricular documents	Document study	Assessment in pre-service teacher education	Descriptive and theoretical coding
	Teacher educators	Questionnaires Mixed focus group	Assessment in pre-service teacher education	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding
	pre-service teachers	Questionnaires Focus group interviews	Assessment in pre-service teacher education	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding
	Novice teachers	Questionnaires Individual interviews	Assessment in pre-service teacher education	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding
How do pre-service and novice teachers experience the assessment of EHL sixth grade learners?	Managers	Questionnaires Focus group interview	Management of assessment practice	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding
	Novice teachers	Questionnaires Individual interviews	Management of assessment practice	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding
How do pre-service and novice teachers experience the assessment of	Novice teachers	Questionnaires Individual interviews	Experiences of assessment practice	Descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical coding

Research question: What enables or constrains novice teachers' assessment practice in the field of English as a home language?				
Research sub-questions	**Data sources**	**Data Collection Methods**	**Units of analysis**	**Data Analysis Methods**
EHL sixth grade learners? EHL sixth grade learners?				

In Section 4.3, the brief descriptions of data sources and site and participant selection shown in Table 4.1 are explained and justified. In Sections 4.4 and 4.5, the data collection and data analysis methods are presented in greater detail.

4.3 Data sources: sites, documents, and participants

The research data sources are discussed in terms of site selection (Subsection 4.3.1), document selection (Subsection 4.3.2), and participant selection (Subsection 4.3.3).

4.3.1 The research sites

4.3.1.1 The education faculty of a university

The university was selected as it is a significant provider of pre-service education for intermediate phase home language teachers. The university offers the Bachelor of Education degree, which is the professional qualification required to teach in primary schools. The faculty of education in this study is situated across two campuses: one with English as medium of instruction and one with Afrikaans as medium of instruction. Both campuses were included in the study. Teacher education curriculum documents were provided by the university. The mixed focus group interview that included eight teacher educators took place on one of the university's campuses.

4.3.1.2 Schools in the Western Cape

The various schools where pre-service teachers undertook a practicum or where novice teachers took up teaching positions comprise the second site (or sites) of the study. Each school had various protocols for planning, implementing, and recording formative and summative assessment activities, texts, and marks. Some of the schools were in rural areas or townships that provided education for the children of poor and working-class families and some schools were in more affluent areas. The interviews with novice teachers took place at these schools in a private space, such as an office, or in a place in which the participant felt most comfortable, such as a nearby café.

4.3.1.3 The Western Cape District as a research site

The rationale for the Western Cape as a site was explained in Chapter One, Section 1.5. Classrooms in the Western Cape are linguistically diverse, and most of the children enrolled for the EHL subject are not home language speakers of English (Heugh, 2015). Provincial officials of the Department of Basic Education, such as the home language subject advisors, are located at the district level. Two district subject advisors for EHL took part in the mixed focus group. The brief description of the sites above is intended to support the transferability and possible applicability of findings across contexts (Walford, 2001).

4.3.2 Document selection

4.3.2.1 Policies on assessment

The overarching policy documents included in the study were selected as they are key documents that establish the policy guidelines for assessment practices in schools. Sections in the documents focusing on assessment requirements and guidance that were selected comprised of the following: the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2002, revised 2012b), Regulations pertaining the National Curriculum Statement (NCS Regulations), the National Protocol for Assessment (NPA) Grades R to 12 (2015b) and the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) (2015a). These policies guide curricular and assessment practices across all levels in South African schools. There are Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) that govern each subject offered in the school system. In this case, the CAPS Grades 4 to 6: English Home Language (2011a) was a key policy as it specifically guides practice in the EHL subject at the Grade 6 level. Recently, some general amendments were made in relation to the CAPS at the intermediate level, namely, the General Education and Training Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Amendments (GET CAPS Amendments) (2020), and these changes were also studied. The latter two documents have assessment as the core, and the documents foreground assessment in the intermediate phase in schools in South Africa.

The policies governing curricular and assessment in schools have changed many times since 1994. The latest versions of the policies have been used for the analysis, although the earlier versions of the policies were included when they had historical or other significance. Currently, a review of the CAPS is ongoing. Some general amendments were published in 2020, and these were included.

4.3.2.2 Assessment in the teacher education curriculum

In order to obtain a broad view of assessment practices and the training of students in assessment, the legal framework document on teacher education as well as the official curriculum documents on related academic subjects in the official curriculum for training

intermediate phase teachers were selected for inclusion in the study. The curriculum documents for pre-service teachers in English First Language, Education, English Methodology, and Professional Studies were studied to understand the scope of assessment theory and practice covered by the teacher education programme. The following documents were included in the study:

1. Minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications (MRTEQ) (Government Gazette 20844, 2011c); and
2. Teacher education subject guides:
    - English Methodology Years 1 to 4,
    - English First Language Years 1 to 4,
    - Professional Studies Years 1 to 4, and
    - Education Years 1 to 4.

4.3.3 Research participant selection

Participant selection for the study was what Miles et al. terms “deliberate, strategic and purposive” (Miles, Huberman & Saldaňa, 2014). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007: 204) explain that “sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable you to reduce the amount of data you need to collect by considering only data from a subgroup…” The participant selection for this study intended that the purposive and effective selection would result in rich and relevant data for the study.

A key participant subgroup was the 18 EHL final-year pre-service teachers studying towards the Bachelor of Education degree for intermediate phase teaching at the university site selected for the study. The students were selected from both education faculty campuses. The selection criteria were that they needed to be enrolled for the EHL subject and to consent to participate in the study, such as agreeing to participate in focus group interviews. The next group of participants comprised novice teachers. The selection criteria were that they had to have had less than two years teaching experience, and that they had received their qualification from the university selected as a site for the study. They also needed to be teaching EHL in the intermediate phase at a school in a Western Cape district. Lecturers who taught the final-year students, and who were staff at the university site, were selected to obtain their perspectives on assessment. Principals who were the novice teachers’ managers were invited to participate in a questionnaire, and the district subject advisors, who were located in Western Cape Education Department and who supported the novice teachers, were invited to participate in a questionnaire and were invited to a mixed focus group interview.

Table 4.2: Participant selection

Participant category	Research instruments	Number invited to participate	Number of participants
Final-year EHL Pre-service Teachers	Qualitative questionnaire	21	11
	Four focus group interviews	18	18
Lecturers/Teacher Educators	Qualitative questionnaire	5	2
Novice Teachers	Qualitative questionnaire	33	1
	Individual interviews	7	5
Principals	Qualitative questionnaire	5	1
District Subject Advisors	Qualitative questionnaire	16	5
Lecturers, Subject Advisors, and Novice Teachers	Mixed focus group interview	8 lecturers, 3 subject advisors, and 5 novice teachers.	4 lecturers, 2 subject advisors, and 1 novice teacher.

4.4 Data collection methods

This study used the following data sources and discussed it in four different chapters. The documents (including policy documents and curricular documents) were discussed in Chapter 5. The other data sets, qualitative questionnaires and interviews, were grouped into three parts and discussed in three chapters: teacher education (Chapter 6) pre-service/novice teachers assessment experiences (Chapter 7) and management of assessment (Chapter 8). The data collection methods are described in the sections that follow.

4.4.1 Collection of documents

4.4.1.1 Policy documents

All the policy documents selected (see subsection 4.3.2.1) included sections on assessment in South African public schools. These sections of the policy documents were identified and studied with a view to determine the extent to which they provide guidance with regard to assessment practice in home language education in the intermediate phase in primary schools.

4.4.1.2 Curriculum documents

Legislative and curricular documents that prescribed teacher education were selected (see subsection 4.3.2.2). Those sections that addressed assessment in EHL were identified for

analysis, with a view to determine the extent to which the teacher education programme prepared pre-service teachers for EHL assessment in schools. It was necessary to understand the training that pre-service teachers receive to understand how they were being equipped to implement required assessment practices.

4.4.2 Qualitative questionnaires

Qualitative questionnaires can provide "insights into participants' knowledge, competencies, feelings, and attitudes" (Kothari, 2004: 100). A Google Form was used for questionnaire data collection as it is free software and is accessible via a smartphone or laptop. It was, thus, viable to email the questionnaire to participants at the university, at schools, and at district offices. The design of the questionnaire was predominantly open-ended. Following Leedy and Ormrod (2010), when multiple-choice questions were included, participants were asked to explain their choice of answer. A combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions "can help respondents to focus on particular items" but also allows for unique ideas and contributions (Kothari, 2004: 102). The questionnaires were intended to establish participants' baseline understandings of assessment practice, and the qualitative questionnaires were designed for this and modified for each participant subgroup.

Five sets of open-ended questionnaires were administered. Section 1 comprised a consent form, Section 2 required biographical information, and Section 3 included the substantive questions intended to access the assessment knowledge of the different participant groups (final year pre-service teachers, novice teachers, lecturers, and managers).
The questions were intended to elicit participants' understanding of assessment practices. The topics covered included as seen in Appendix C:

1. The purposes of assessment;
2. The principles of assessment;
3. General guidelines for assessment tasks in the EHL subject intermediate phase;
4. Processes and management of assessment for CAPS EHL (CAPS, 2011c: 93);
5. Processes and management of the National Protocol for Assessment (NPA) (South Africa, 2011b);
6. The design of rubrics for EHL assessment;
7. Setting of comprehension tests for EHL, with reference to CAPS (2012b);
8. Difficulties experienced in assessment practices of intermediate phase EHL;
9. Books/readings on assessment practices found useful for the B Ed programme and/or as teachers/managers;
10. The importance of assessment for EHL in the intermediate phase;

11. Examples of participants' experiences in the implementation EHL assessment in the intermediate phase; and
12. Sharing of any additional information on EHL assessment.

The content of the questionnaires was similar for all the participant subgroups, although minor adjustments were made to account for their different contexts. An example of the changes made to accommodate the participants is shown in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3: Example of adjusted questions to the different participants: Data sets 1 to 5

Pre-service teachers	Lecturers	Novice Teachers	Principals	Subject Advisors
What concepts would you use to describe the purpose of assessment?	What concepts do you use to teach the purpose of assessment?	What concepts are used to describe the purpose of assessment?	What concepts do you use to address the purpose of assessment with your teachers?	When you present a workshop to teachers on the purpose of assessment, what are the concepts you use?

In the above example, the intention was to obtain different perspectives on the same issue, namely, the purposes of assessment. Questionnaires were distributed to the participant subgroups, as in Table 4.4. Responses to questions comprise Data sets 1 to 5 for the study.

Table 4.4: Questionnaire distribution

Data sets	Research instrument	Participants and reference	Number invited to participate	Respondents
1	Questionnaires	Final-year pre-service EHL teachers (DS1 S1)	21	11
2	Questionnaires	Lecturers (DS2 L1)	5	2
3	Questionnaires	Novice teachers (DS3 NT1)	33	1
4	Questionnaires	Principals (DS4 P1)	5	1
5	Questionnaires	Subject advisors (DS5 SA1)	16	5

Two lecturers completed the questionnaire on students' readiness for assessment practices. One lecturer was responsible for English First Language, teaching Literature and Language

studies with 15 credits which implies 150 notional hours per year. This lecturer is referred to as Lecturer 1 and is also the subject head of the English department. The other lecturer (Lecturer 2) lectured three subjects: Professional Studies, Education, and Teaching Practice. The subject Education carried 20 credits (200 notional hours), Professional Studies 20 credits (200 notional hours), and Teaching Practice 15 credits (150 notional hours). These were taught in the third year at the university.

4.4.3 Interviews

In order to obtain more in-depth knowledge and understanding through rich data that would supplement and enhance the responses to the open-ended questionnaires, three sets of interviews were used. The interview sets were individual interviews with novice teachers (Data set 6), focus group interviews with final year pre-service teachers (Data set 7), and a mixed focus group interviews with lecturers, subject advisors, and a novice teacher (Data set 8).

4.4.3.1 Interview schedule for pre-service and novice teachers

Individual and focus group interviews were planned to be neutral, not influenced by the interviewer, and participants were not to be lead in a particular direction. Audio recordings were made with the "permission of the interviewees" as agreed on the consent forms, following Dawson (2002: 66). Questions for the pre-service and novice teachers were similar as the pre-service teachers were in their final year and had experience of practical teaching in schools. However, the pre-service teacher interviews were focus group interviews. A semi-structured interview schedule was compiled and peer-reviewed, as recommended by Kothari (2004). The interview schedules were emailed to all the interviewees prior to the interview. The interview started with introductions and by explaining issues of confidentiality. Each interviewee was given a number, which was used instead of their name. The interview schedule consisted of questions and prompts that were used when necessary. Counter questions were asked for clarity and assurance of the "credibility of the data" (Kothari, 2004: 99). The interview explored the participants' personal experiences of assessment according to the categories listed below. (Examples of prompts: Were you expected to set up your own assessment tasks? Do you think you were competent to set quality tasks?)

1. Difficulties encountered regarding the assessment of intermediate phase EHL;
2. Examples of experiences in implementing the assessment requirements for EHL intermediate phase;
3. Understanding of assessment principles;
4. Training received on CAPS Home Language's processes and management of assessment as pre-service and in-service teachers;
5. Perceptions of role of an assessor; and

6. Recommendations on EHL assessment training for pre-service, in-service teachers, and their trainers;

Participants were thanked for their time and asked whether they would like to check the transcripts or to receive feedback on the outcome of the research.

4.4.3.2 Individual interviews with novice teachers (Data set 6)

The individual interviews with novice teachers (Data set 6) provided an in-depth and personal perspective on assessment practice. Individual interviews were conducted with five novice teachers. Quotations from the interviews were attributed to Data set 6, interviewee 1, and abbreviated (DS6 S1). Quotations from the five interviewees are attributed as DS6 NT1-5.

4.4.3.3 Focus group interviews with final-year EHL students (Data set 7)

The selection of participants for Data set 7 was purposive. Four focus group interviews were held with all of the English Home Language final-year students (FYS) (18 students), from both campuses, prior to their final English oral examination. They were referred to as DS7 S1-18. The questions were similar to those in the individual interview schedule (See 4.4.3.1).

4.4.3.4 Mixed focus group interview with lecturers, subject advisors, and teachers (Data set 8)

A focus group interview with purposefully selected participants who were closely involved with the preparation of students for teaching and/or who supported them as novice teachers was held at the university campus. The mixed group comprised lecturers, district subject advisors, and intermediate phase novice teachers at primary schools. Eight lecturers from both campuses were invited. Four lecturers responded and will be referred to as DS8 L1-4. Two lecturers were from the intermediate phase EHL department (DS8 L1 and L2), of whom one was the subject head and the other a former contract lecturer for EHL. The third lecturer was from the Teacher Education and Professional Studies department and was a subject head and coordinator for the Teaching Practice Module in the Intermediate Phase (DS8 L3). The fourth lecturer was from the Foundation Phase department and was involved with student/teacher training and had experience as a subject advisor (DS8 L4). A reason for including the foundation phase was to establish the different level of assessment practices. The intention was to establish whether novice teachers in the intermediate phase were sufficiently trained in assessment and what could be learned from each other. Unfortunately, only one teacher was able to attend (DS8 T1).

Subject advisors supporting intermediate phase EHL teachers were invited. None of them could participate due to other commitments. Instead, two provincial coordinators for General

Education and Training (GET), appointed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in the region, participated in the focus group discussion on their behalf. Both these provincial DBE officials are Chief Education Specialists for GET in the Curriculum Development Education Department (DS8 CO1 and 2). They are responsible for coordinating curriculum planners in the foundation and intermediate phases, and indirectly of subject advisors, in nine education districts in a province in South Africa. These provincial DBE officials explained their roles as National Curriculum developers via their provincial office and in the schools. Annually, they receive and analyse reports on various issues from the nine districts of the Western Cape. They initiate implementation procedures via subject advisors, such as programmes aimed at novice teachers who are mentored and supported when they enter into the school system. Their participation was purposive and relevant for setting up a collaborative forum.

Interview schedule for mixed focus group (Data set 8)

The interview schedule contained ground rules and a set of questions, prompts, and general comments made by pre-service teachers to guide the interview. Ground rules for the day included the signing of the consent form, permission for audio-recording (which will be destroyed after submission of the thesis), the structure of the interview, minimal eye contact by the researcher, reference to tag given by the interviewer (no mention of a name, an institution or the department). (If a name is mentioned, the interviewer will correct it during the translation. One person speaks at a time so that the transcriber will not get confused. A copy of the data will be made available after it has been transcribed.) Following introductions, each group member described their current position and provided background on their involvement with novice teachers. The questions asked were as follows and each question has a number of pre-prepared prompts:

1. Can you tell us about your assessment experiences with students and/or novice teachers?
2. Share gaps in assessment you have experienced or know about. Four prompt questions were prepared as well as statements made by students.
3. How do you think the gaps can be addressed?
4. Please share any other information or recommendation on assessment that you would like to bring to our attention.

Participants were thanked for their time and willingness to be part of the project. Table 4.5 summarises the interviews and the interview data sets.

Table 4.5: Interviews (Data sets 6 to 8)

Data sets	Research instrument	Participants	Number invited to participate	Respondents
6	Individual interviews	Novice teachers	7	5
7	Focus group interviews	Final-year pre-service EHL teachers	18	18
8	Mixed focus group interviews	Lecturers, district officials, and novice teachers.	8 lecturers 3 subject advisors 5 teachers	4 lecturers 2 district officials 1 novice teacher

4.4.4. Piloting of the research instruments

In order to provide more accurate data, piloting of the data collection instruments was done to determine if the intended method and data-collection instruments were valid and dependable. After ethical clearance had been obtained, the researcher tested the qualitative instrument to "eliminate any problematic areas" or discrepancies that might lead to unreliable findings (Creswell, 2008: 172). Each questionnaire was piloted and sent to 23 third-year students at the university research site, a lecturer from a department not included in the study at the same institution, a novice teacher in a permanent position at a local school, a principal who did not take part in the research, a retired language subject advisor in the Western Cape, and both supervisors of the thesis.

Based on the feedback received, as seen in Table 4.6, the data collection instruments were adjusted accordingly. Issues that were identified included layout, content, format, terminology, missing information, inflexibilities, misinterpretations, time constraints, rephrasing of questions, aligning with research questions, and setting up of schedules The terminology, content of questions, and the format were adjusted to "enhance validity", following Kothari (2004: 99). The length of the questionnaire was revised and the instructions rephrased to ensure that statements were less ambiguous.

Table 4.6: Piloting of data sets

Data set	Participants	Number of participants	Data collection method	Comments arising from the piloting
1	Final-year students / pre-service teachers	23	Questionnaire	Layout shifted due to different formats of Word, which was corrected. Some terminology was ambiguous, too many similar questions, and possible misinterpretation of questions. These were revised.

Data set	Participants	Number of participants	Data collection method	Comments arising from the piloting
3	Lecturer	1	Google Form Questionnaire	No ethical clearance or biographical information section in the form – it was added.
4	Novice teacher	1	Questionnaire	Novice teacher was satisfied. She suggested the questionnaire might be too long. The questionnaire was made more concise.
5	Principal	1	Questionnaire	Took time to accurately answer the questions. No changes were suggested.
6	Subject advisor	1	Google Form Questionnaire	It was suggested to revise two questions, indicate the number of words required in responses, and to rephrase one question. These were addressed.
7	Peer reviewers	2	Interview	Reviewed and commented on the flow and content. Suggested to exchange questions for better flow from easy questions to more challenging questions. Compared to the research questions, certain questions were inappropriate. Some questions suggested to be rephrased. These were addressed.
8	Peer reviewers	2	Focus group interview	
9	Peer reviewers	2	Focus group interview	

Following the piloting, the research instruments were implemented. Table 4.7 summarises the data collection methods for the study.

Table 4.7: Summary of data collection

Data sets	Research instrument	Participants	Number invited to participate	Number of participants
1	Questionnaires	Final year EHL students	21	11 DS1 S1-11
2	Questionnaires	Lecturers	5	2 DS2 L1-2
3	Questionnaires	Novice teachers	33	1 DS3 NT1
4	Questionnaires	Principals	5	1 (DS4 P1)
5	Questionnaires	Subject advisors	16	5 (DS5 SA1-5)

Data sets	Research instrument	Participants	Number invited to participate	Number of participants
6	Individual interviews	Novice teachers	7	5 (DS6 NT1-5)
7	Four focus group interviews	Final-year EHL pre-service teachers	18	18 (DS7 S1-18)
8	One focus group interview	Lecturers Subject advisors Novice teachers	8 lecturers 3 subject advisors 5 teachers	4 lecturers (DS8 L1-4) 2 district officials (DS8 CO1-2) 1 teacher (DS8 T1)

Data used in addition the list above, included:

- Policy and legislative documents; and
- Curriculum documents.

4.5 Data analysis

In the case of the teacher education policy documents, only those sections referring to assessment were coded, and the eight-part coding system (as demonstrated in Table 4.8) was adapted for teacher assessment. For example, MRTEQ was evaluated against the criteria of whether assessment theory was included in teacher education, whether principles of assessment were included in teacher education. Using the translation and inductive coding, made it possible to make informed judgements about the reliability and credibility of the data presented. The analyses of the data sets will be discussed below regarding the coding and analysis of the documentary data (3.6.1) and the coding and analysis of interview data (3.6.2).

4.5.1 Coding and analysing documentary data

The approach used to analyse assessment policy and curriculum documents followed Saldaña's (2013) "two level coding" method for rigorously and systematically analysing the contents of written documents (2013: 54). This approach is appropriate "to facilitate impartial and consistent analysis of written policies" (Wach & Ward, 2013: 1). The first round comprised "descriptive coding" (Saldaña, 2013: 87) in which key aspects of the policy or curriculum document, with regard to its understanding of assessment, were identified. The initial coding of the policy and curriculum documents built an understanding of the scope of teachers' expected assessment practice, including its underpinning values and the explicit and implied competences and qualifications required. The first round of coding includes "theming the data" (Saldaña, 2013: 175) or "lumping and splitting" (2013: 22) the data into relevant themes. The

second round of coding was one of “theoretical coding” (2013: 223). In the second round, the theoretical framework for the study was drawn on to establish greater levels of coherence and consistency. In this case, policy and curricular data were coded using the eight-level semantic gravity translation device (Chapter Three, Section 3.6). This enabled a shift from description of the content of the policy document to an explanation of the content to uncover the deeper level structures and mechanisms underpinning policy and curricular assessment requirements and practices.

The following documents were analysed using the above approach: the National Curriculum statement (NCS), consisting of three documents, namely, CAPS (2011a), CAPS Amendments (2019), and NPA (2011b); Higher Education Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification (MRTEQ) (2011c); and Higher Education curriculum documents, namely, English First Language, English Methodology, and Professional Studies training programmes in assessment practices. Following the “two level coding” approach, the documents were descriptively coded for requirements and theoretically coded.

4.5.1.1 Method of analysing the documentary data

In order to develop an overview of how the documents portray assessment requirements and guidance, keywords and emerging themes were identified in the descriptive level of coding. For the next level of coding, the translation device was applied and key sections of the documents were theoretically coded according to the eight levels of semantic gravity (SG 1 to SG 8) (See Chapter Three, Table 3.3). Each relevant paragraph (involving Grade 4 to 6 assessment) of the NPA was analysed. Each sentence was listed, read, and reread, keywords selected, emerging themes identified, and theoretical coding assigned in accordance with the translation device (Table 4.8). The coding was done by the researcher and supervisors independently and then discussed with reference to the eight levels: (8) theories of assessment, (7) principles of assessment, (6) purposes of assessment, (5) assessment strategies, (4) assessment guidelines, (3) assessment planning, (2) assessment implementation, and (1) logistical issues in assessment. Where there seemed to be contradictions or confusion in the documents, this was indicated but not given a semantic gravity code. Following discussion and reflection on the process, final codes were awarded.

Table 4.8: An example of how documentary data were analysed

ASSESSMENT IN HOME LANGUAGE (CAPS, 2011a: 88)				**Level 2: "theoretical coding"**							
				Content in-dependent				**Content dependent**			
#	**Paragraph and sentences (CAPS, 2011a)**	**Level 1: "descriptive coding" and "theming the data"**		**SG--**		**SG-**		**SG+**		**SG++**	
		Descriptive keywords	*Theming the data*	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
4.1	"Assessment is a continuous planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners."	Assessment is a continuous planned process...	Conceptual definition which implies principles.		X						
b	"It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating evidence; recording the findings and using information to understand and thereby assist the learner's development in order to improve the process of learning and teaching."	It involves four steps...	Guidelines start to guide practice, e.g. four steps.					X			
c	"Assessment should be both informal (Assessment for Learning) and formal (Assessment of Learning)."	Assessment should be…	These suggest strategies.			X					
d	"In both cases regular feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience."	Regular feedback should be provided to…	Explanation - a reason why regular feedback, some theorisation…	X							

The example above (Table 4.5) shows the final coding of a short section of CAPS (2011a). The same process was undertaken in the analysis of MRTEQ (2011c), the teacher education framework document, and the curriculum documents. The coding process built an understanding of both the official expectations around assessment, as well as the training student teachers receive in assessment and the scope of assessment provision at the university.

4.5.2 Coding and analysis of qualitative questionnaires

After the responses to the Google Form questionnaires had been received, responses were converted to Google Sheets and then to Microsoft Excel.

4.5.2.1 Analysing open-ended responses

Responses to each question were read and reread to familiarise the researcher with the content. The process of coding followed the steps discussed above. Firstly, the answers to each question were descriptively coded, which gave a sense of the different viewpoints regarding assessment. The responses then were categorised and synthesised into themes that emerged across the data sets. The translation device was applied to determine the relative strength and weakness of semantic gravity in the responses and to provide the explanatory level of analysis. Each response was given a semantic gravity code according to the translation device. Table 3.3 is an example of how the procedure was executed. DS1 S1 and DS1 4's open-ended responses are coded as an example of how the open-ended responses were analysed as in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: An example of how questionnaire data were analysed

SECTION 3 of Google Form: Responses by the participants (DS1 S1-DS1 S4)			**Level 2: "theoretical coding"**							
			Content in-dependent				**Content dependent**			
Question: What concepts do you associate with the purpose of assessment?	**Level 1: "descriptive coding" and "theming the data"**		**SG--**		**SG-**		**SG+**		**SG++**	
Responses	*Descriptive keywords*	*Theming the data*	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
The primary purpose of assessment is to promote learning. Assessment provides evidence of how learners according (DS1 S1)	Assessment is to promote learning… provides evidence.	Names two purposes: (1) learning and (2) provides evidence			X					
Rubrics (DS1 S2)	Rubrics.	Part of implementation							X	

4.5.2.2 Analysing multiple choice responses

The checkbox items were quantitatively analysed as a percentage of the number of participants that chose the response. An example is given in Table 4.10 and discussed in Chapter Six (Table 6.2). The results were captured in percentages and were arranged accordingly from the

highest to the lowest. Percentages higher than 80% were regarded as most students agreed, between 80% and 60% as some students agreed, and below 60% as few students responded.

Table 4.10: Example of analysing non-qualitative questionnaire data

We prepared informal and formal assessment activities and reflected on it.	89%
We compiled a teacher's file as an assignment.	78%
We used the relevant policies, aims, and principles of assessment during class discussions.	67%
We applied the weighting of School Based Assessment and End-of-Year examinations in an assignment.	67%
We completed schedules and report cards as expected during our training.	67%
We completed a Learner Profile.	67%
We used assessment coding and descriptions for recording and reporting.	56%

4.5.3 Coding and analysis of interview data

Kothari states that interviews with individuals offer "greater insight into practical aspects of the problem" (2004: 5). This was the case with interview data in this study which provided in-depth information from a variety of perspectives on assessment practice.

The interview data expanded on the open-ended questionnaire responses. As in other forms of qualitative data analysis, misinterpretation, bias, or incompatibility can occur (Kothari, 2004). To address these concerns, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by an external consultant for the purposes of "enhancing objectivity" (Dawson, 2002). The interview transcriptions were checked by the researcher for accuracy and compared to the audio recording. The transcripts were read and reread to develop a general understanding of the data set. Paying close attention to the actual words used enabled the researcher to determine the "units of significance" (Bhattacherjee, 2012) in the interview data. Certain quotes became evident as significant and these were included for close study. Afterwards, a similar process of double coding was followed as above. At the first level, "in vivo coding" (Saldaňa, 2012: 91) was used: keywords that were used by the participants were identified. Emerging themes were identified as well by drawing on the keyword codes. At the second level, theoretical coding was used by applying the semantic gravity translation device.

4.5.2.1 Coding individual interviews

The following extract from an interview with a novice teacher is used as an example of how the individual interview data were coded (see Table 4.11):

Well, during the first week, they threw it upon me that I am the English Subject Planner, so I have to plan everything – all the assessments, all the work that has to be done during the course of the term for Grade 5. So yes, that was definitely hectic because I felt very, very overwhelmed. I didn't know where to start. Obviously, I went to the CAPS Document first, but it's not always very clear on exactly what you should do so it was very overwhelming. But other than that I really enjoyed it. It was amazing meeting my kiddos and ja, we had a lot of fun in the first week – just getting to know each other and so on (DS6 NT1).

Table 4.11: An example of how interview data were analysed

Interview with participant DS7 S1			**Level 2: "theoretical coding"**							
			Content independent				**Content dependent**			
"Units of significance"	**Level 1: "in vivo" coding and "theming the data"**		**SG--**		**SG-**		**SG+**		**SG++**	
	In vivo coding	*Theming the data*	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Well, during the first week, they threw it upon me that I am the English Subject Planner, so I have to plan everything – all the assessments, all the work that has to be done during the course of the term for Grade 5.	Threw it upon me…planning	Thrown in at the deep end – need to plan						X		
So yes, that was definitely hectic because I felt very, very overwhelmed… I didn't know where to start. Obviously, I went to the CAPS Document first, but it's not always very clear on exactly what you should do so it was very overwhelming.	Hectic … overwhelmed …CAPS document… overwhelming	Feeling overwhelmed and seeking guidance					X			
But other than that I really enjoyed it. It was amazing meeting my kiddos and ja, we had a lot of fun in the first week – just getting to know each other and so on.	Enjoyed it… amazing	Teaching (enjoyable)							X	

Table 4.11 shows the coding levels, the selection of in vivo keywords, the emerging themes, and the semantic gravity codes attributed in the theoretical coding (SG 3 represents planning, SG 4 represents guidelines/guidance (which are highlighted in red as in this case they were not forthcoming), and SG 2 represents implementation/classroom activities).

Focus groups interviews

Four focus group interviews took place amongst the final year pre-service teachers, following the final practicum (Data set 7) and one focus group interview took place with eight lecturers, three district officials, and one teacher (Data set 8). The focus group interviews were approximately two hours long. These were all transcribed by an external consultant, Data set 8 (mixed group) was video recorded, and the transcript included detailed descriptions of the participants' body language, facial expressions, and voice tone following the "transcription method" recommended by O'Halloran (2008: 444). The transcriptions were compared to the audio and video recordings.

The contributions of the different speakers were attributed using the data set number and individual number (e.g., DS7 S1). Where names or campuses were accidentally mentioned, these data were anonymised or changed to the tag assigned to the participant (e.g. DS6 NT1 or DS7 S2). The transcribed versions of the discussion were sent to the participants for correction and accuracy checking. Because these were long interviews and many side-issues were raised, particularly in the case of the mixed focus group interview, it was important to pay particular attention to the recording and to select only the "units of significance" (Bhattacherjee, 2012) for analysis.

4.6 Limitations

A limitation of research methodology is that the findings cannot be directly applied to all education faculties or schools, as the study is deeply contextualised. However, the aim was not to generalise but to discover knowledge that could be applied, or adapted, to other contexts that might concern or have similar decisions to make. The analysis is expected to have predictive power. Thus, if similar practices are followed, for example, in teacher education, similar outcomes might be expected. A concern is that not all participants invited to participate were able to fully participate in this process. For example, only one principal participated in the research. It would have been useful to discover more about how principals understood assessment policy and practice, and how they managed assessment practices at the school. The ideal would have been to interview all the subject advisors who supported the novice teachers in their district. Although their managers granted the subject advisors permission for them to participate in the study, not all completed the questionnaire and no subject advisors were able to attend the focus group interview. District officials who were coordinators at the

WCED head office participated in the mixed focus group on their behalf. The research instruments and methods used are well-supported by the literature and notwithstanding the concerns expressed above, there were rich sources of meaningful data, all of which were triangulated, and strong conceptual and theoretical frameworks guided the study. Although some interview question required a yes/no (e.g., 5. Do you think you were well-prepared in your training to implement CAPS Home Language's processes and management of assessment as stated in Section 4?), the intention was to ask a follow-up question depending on their answer. More open-ended question should have been presented. However, it was not necessary. The students elaborated willingly. In the next section, the steps put in place to enhance the trustworthiness of the data are explained.

4.7 Trustworthiness

Validating frameworks are important for understanding the ways in which policy, teacher education, or management can contribute to learners' home language literacy and knowledge acquisition as well as for advancing the scientific study of education. While reliability and validity are crucial factors for good quantitative research, credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability are crucial factors for good qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Credibility in this study is addressed by two issues: Firstly, the techniques and methods used to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the findings, and, secondly, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the study. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others. Strategies for enhancing confirmability in this study include: a declaration of the researcher's positionality, the careful documentation of all procedures for checking (and rechecking) the data throughout the study, an active search for and description of "negative instances" (Denzin, 2012), member checks (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), and a data audit (Miles & Huberman, 1994) that examines the data collection and analysis procedures and makes judgements about the potential for bias or distortion. Thus, it was also from this educational journey that colleagues and students agreed to participate in the study.

Peer review processes that are embedded into the research process, such as piloting of the instruments and making changes following feedback, including more than one researcher coding the data, and publishing sections of the study are all best practices for confirmability (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). Dependability requires the researcher to account for the context (sites) within which research occurs (see site selection criteria in Section 4.3.1 above) and the research participants (see sampling criteria in Section 4.3.3 above). Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. In this study, transferability was enhanced by

describing the research context and clarifying the assumptions that were central to the research.

4.7.1 Triangulation

Triangulation, which refers to methods for collecting and/or handling data within a single study, is crucial for the credibility of qualitative research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Triangulation was initially used to corroborate study findings, but it also serves the equally crucial second objective of ensuring data completeness (Denzin, 2012). Denzin (2012) proposes three types of triangulation: space (i.e. the inclusion of different sites in the study to ensure site consistency of the data), time (i.e. observations and interviews at different times to validate the congruence of the research object across time), and the use of different persons as sources of data (to ensure different perspectives). In this study, a variety of spaces or sites within the Western Cape were selected: the district office, the two campuses over which the education faculty is distributed in a higher education institution, and diverse schools in the Western Cape district. Policy and other documents were studied at the start of the thesis and provided a larger national framework of policies related to school-based assessment practices and teacher education requirements. Other data was collected at different times over a two-year period: questionnaires were distributed following the policy analyses, while interviews were conducted towards the end of the two-year period. The four focus group meetings with the final year pre-service teachers were conducted after they had experienced a practicum.

4.8 The ethical framework

According to qualitative educational research, learning is the consequence of meaningful action in an environment that is accessible, and the learning environment is understood as a complex system involving all relationships between the developing learner and the outside world (Walford, 2001). Ethical considerations in education qualitative research require a sensitivity ensuring no harm to participants in any way (Cohen, Gottshall, Graziano, Malmstrom, Sharpe, Whitney, 2011). In keeping with this larger ethical framework, research procedures that respected participants' and institutions' rights, confidentiality, privacy, and dignity were used in the conduct of this study. All participants gave their informed consent. The study obtained ethical clearance from the participating university and, subsequently, permission to conduct the research was given by the education faculty, the Western Cape Department of Education, individual schools, and the participants. Please see Appendix 1 for the ethics clearance documents. Permission for the use of curriculum documents was obtained by the education faculty.

Before any data collection was conducted, consent letters were distributed to students, teachers, principals, lecturers, regional directors, and subject advisors to invite them to take

part in the study. The consent forms stipulated that information would not be made available to any other person and all recorded interviews would be destroyed after the study had been concluded. The consent letters contained the ethical clearance reference number, gave background to the study, described the procedure that followed, and stated that participation was voluntary. The consent form also indicated to whom concerns could be directed. The contact details of the Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee, the supervisors, and the researcher were made available to all participants.

After the interviews, the transcribed interviews were sent back to interviewees for their final approval of the data to be used. No participants made any changes or offered additional comments. Permission to use the audio and video recordings of interviews was obtained from the participants for the thesis study and publications arising from it. Furthermore, the confidentiality of all participants and institutions was protected. To this end, all audio recordings and video data were anonymised and will be destroyed after the thesis has been examined. All information identifying specific individuals and their institutions was removed at the stage of cleaning transcriptions and storage of data.

4.8.1 Positionality of the researcher

The researcher has experienced many roles: teacher, head of department, principal, subject advisor, and lecturer. As a novice teacher, the researcher was mentored by colleagues and district officials. As a teacher, the researcher engaged in professional development in the field, including assessor training. As a result, the researcher developed an interest in assessment and a passion for ensuring fairness towards learners both in summative assessment tasks and in formative assessment tasks. Baseline and formative assessment took up much of her time as a teacher. As the head of the language department at a school, the researcher became more aware of issues in validity and reliability in assessment, and she attempted to ensure that fairness, validity, and reliability underpinned assessment in the intermediate phase. Other schools became aware of the assessment activities in her department, which were made available to others. In time, textbooks were written in which the whole process of teaching, baseline, formative, and summative assessment were used. The researcher also acted as a principal for two years where she supported novice teachers with regard to assessment. After being appointed as a Languages (Home and First Additional Language in English and Afrikaans) intermediate phase subject advisor for nine years, the researcher's perspective of the reality of assessment practices in primary schools changed. She devoted much of her time to supporting novice teachers, for up to three years after their appointment, until they became confident to work independently on assessment requirements. This experience made her aware of the difficulties novice teachers experience in the field of assessment.

Experience, knowledge, and a sound understanding of assessment were needed to support schools towards enhancing their assessment practices. After retirement from the Department of Education, the researcher lectured for three years at one of the campuses. She was responsible for English Literature, English Methodology, Education, Professional Studies, and Teaching Practice where she also experienced a lack of assessment training within the English department. Thus, in her educational journey and over her career, the researcher experienced many of the same roles, responsibilities, and issues with regard to assessment that were experienced by participants in the study.

4.9 The way forward

This chapter explains the research design and the data collection and data analysis methods as well as issues in trustworthiness and ethics. In the chapters that follow, the analysed data sets are analysed and discussed, and the findings are presented to address the research sub-questions. Chapter Five, the next chapter, addresses the research question: How do assessment policies enable or constrain novice teachers for assessment practices in EHL?

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: NATIONAL ASSESSMENT POLICIES

"Schools occupy an awkward position at the intersection between what people hope society will become and what they think it really is, between political ideal and economic realities" (Labaree, 1997: 41).

5.1 Introduction to Chapter Five

This chapter addresses the first research sub-question How do assessment policies enable or constrain novice teachers for assessment practices in EHL? The chapter starts with an overview of the regulatory frameworks that guide curricular and assessment practices in schools (Section 5.2), and, afterwards, the overarching policy documents are discussed with particular attention to their roles in regulating assessment in schools (Sections 5.3 to 5.6). The focus of the chapter is, however, on the CAPS Grades 4 to 6: English Home Language (2011a), which is referred to throughout the thesis (Section 5.7). This is certainly the most important policy document as it is specifically intended to guide curricular and assessment practices in EHL. The Amendments to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (2020) are briefly discussed in Section 5.8. In the final section, the findings across the regulatory framework documents are synthesised to address the research question: How do assessment policies enable or constrain novice teachers for assessment practices in EHL?

5.2 Regulatory frameworks guiding assessment practice in schools

A first step in the research study was to build an understanding of the policies guiding assessment practice in schools. The document of interest, for this study is the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 4 to 6: English Home Language (2011a) the emphasis on Chapter 4 regarding assessment as discusses in Section 4.3.2.

5.3 National Curriculum Statement (1997; 2002; 2012; 2022)

The first Statement of the National Curriculum for Grades R to 9 was published in terms of Government Notice 1445 (October, 1997) and was introduced into schools in 1998. After two years of implementation, the policy was revised by a ministerial review committee, resulting in the revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2002). The revised NCS (2002b) is a framework policy document guiding education from Grades R to 9 in the South African school system. (There is a second document for Grades 10 to 12). The revised NCS is founded on a wide variety of values and principles including: "nation-building, non-racism, democracy,

ubuntu[2], social justice, a healthy environment, human rights, inclusivity, outcomes-based education, a high level of skills and knowledge for all, clarity and accessibility, progression and integration" (NCS, 2002b: 10-12).

Chisholm, who led the review process that resulted in the revised NCS (2002b), reflected on the two main ideological differences that are reflected in the NCS: "one that understood curriculum as policy, and the other curriculum as knowledge" (Chisholm, 2005: 194). As Hoadley put it, "the knower tribe are essentially concerned with whose knowledge, and the knowledge tribe with what knowledge" (2015: 742). The document that emerged from the struggle was "fundamentally a statement that reflects the struggles of opposing groups to have their interests, values, histories, and politics dominate the school curriculum" (2005: 195). As the then minister of education, Professor Kadar Asmal, reflected in the introduction to the revised NCS:

> The development of a national curriculum is a major challenge for any nation. At its broadest level, our education system and its curriculum express our idea of ourselves as a society and our vision as to how we see the new form of society being realised through our children and learners. Through its selection of what is to be in the curriculum, it represents our priorities and assumptions of what constitutes a 'good education' at its deepest level (NCS, 2002b: 1).

The revised NCS introduced new tools for curriculum and assessment, namely: "Specific Outcomes, Range Statements, Assessment Criteria, Performance Indicators, Notional Time and Flexi-Time, Continuous Assessment, Recording and Reporting, Phase Organisers, Programme Organisers, Expected Levels of Performance, and Learning Programmes" (2002b: 5). Such renaming was intended "to signify new approaches and habits of thinking consistent with democracy" (Chisholm, 2005: 196). Accordingly, "teacher" became "educator", "student" became "learner", "subject" became "learning area", "syllabus" became "learning programme", and "textbooks" became "learning support materials". Morrow (2004) pointed out that these terms are concepts and not tools to enable teachers to plan curricula or assessment tasks. Furthermore, the new terminology was not South African: it was the language of the assessment-driven reforms taking place in the USA, Australia, and New Zealand (Chisholm, 2005). Although the review committee recommended the removal of these terms, as they were exclusionary rather than inclusive, the new assessment-driven terminology was maintained in the revised NCS (2002b).

[2] The term is a Nguni word (i.e. used in the languages that are spoken in South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe). The term has various meanings, but at the heart of each definition is the connectedness that exists or should exist between people. It is sometimes translated as 'I am because we are' or 'humanity towards others'.

Chisholm explains that the different participants shaped “the curriculum in complex and invisible ways”, and the results of which were “profound tensions, contradictions, and paradoxes” that were “deeply historical in that they are the products of such interactions at different and particular times and places” (2005: 195). These “tensions, contradictions, and paradoxes” are evident in the Languages Learning Area Statement:

> In a multilingual country like South Africa it is important that learners reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages, and that they are able to communicate in other languages. The Languages Learning Area Statement follows an additive or incremental approach to multilingualism: All learners learn their home language and at least one additional official language. Learners become competent in their additional language, while their home language is maintained and developed. The Languages Learning Area Statement covers all official languages: Home languages, First additional languages, Second additional languages. Learners’ home languages should be used for learning and teaching whenever possible… When learners have to make a transition from their home language to an additional language for learning and teaching, careful planning is necessary (NCS, 2002b: 20).

The revised NCS is aspirational in that the resources for all learners to learn in their home language was not available (Jansen & Christie, 1999), the necessary support for the learners who needed to move to another language of learning and teaching was not available (Bergbauer, Van Staden & Bosker, 2016), or learners could not enrol for EHL as their home language as it was not offered (Prinsloo & Heugh, 2013). Blignaut points out that “the glib promises made by policymakers are hard to detect in practice” (2007: 7). The key debate, according to Morrow (2004), was not so much about respecting the constitutional obligations to recognise all South African languages as about the symbolic dimensions of the language curriculum. The revised NCS proposes the following outcomes for home language education:

1. Listening: The learner is able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations;
2. Speaking: The learner is able to communicate confidently and effectively in a spoken language in a wide range of situations;
3. Reading and Viewing: The learner is able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts; and
4. Writing: The learner is able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes (2002b: 20-21).

Learning outcomes across the NCS are generic as much of the subject-specific content in the curriculum was removed. The teacher was expected to "facilitate learning through the selection of the appropriate knowledge, including the learners' own experience, to enable each learner to reach the competency that was expressed as an outcome" (Hoadly, 2015: 737). In constructing the home language curriculum, debates focused on the languages to be included (all of South Africa's eleven official languages) and the selection of what was to be taught. Language surfaced as both a policy and a knowledge issue, as in many of the learning areas.

With regard to assessment, which was to prove one of the main challenges of the NCS, the policy proposes the following:

> Each Learning Area Statement includes a detailed section on assessment. Within an outcomes-based framework the most suitable assessment methods that accommodate divergent contextual factors are used. Assessment should provide indications of learner achievement in the most effective and efficient manner, and ensure that learners integrate and apply knowledge and skills. Assessment should also help students to make judgments about their own performance, set goals for progress and provoke further learning (NCS, 2002b: 18)

In 2009, a second review of the revised NCS was undertaken, amongst its findings was that:

> Assessment has been the area where most criticism has been aimed at the national curriculum since C2005[3]. The panel questioned what the problems were with the assessment policies, whether there was sufficient clarity and appropriate use of assessment policies and guidelines, and what stakeholders, particularly teachers, thought should be done to address the problems (South African Department of Education, 2009d: 6).

The second revision of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12 (NCS, 2012b) retained its strong roots in OBE. It continued to stipulate the content, methodologies, and assessments to be implemented in each grade and each subject (2012b: 2). Throughout, however, these highly prescriptive arrangements remained a contested issue. Since the second revised NCS (2012b), its constituent policies have grown in importance, in particular the NPA (2015a) and the CAPS for each subject offered in the South African school system.

[3] Curriculum 2005, abbreviated as C2005 is often used when referring to the Revised National Curriculum Statement.

Currently, an abbreviated version of the National Curriculum Statements Grades R to 12 is available online (NCS, 2022) which makes a general statement on the principles informing educational provision. Its purpose is to "ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives [thus] the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives" (NCS, 2022: 2-3).

Its intention is to equip "learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country" (NCS, 2022: 4).

The document's function is to express the underpinning curricular principles, and then list the policy documents that comprise the totality of the NCS that govern specific areas of educational provision, and carry the mandate of social transformation.

Of interest to the present study is the way in which the main issues in the debates around the NCS and the subsequent revisions of the NCS played out in relation to language assessment. The different versions of the NCS set the expectations of what was taught and assessed. The document's intention "to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives" (NCS, 2012b: 4) and the absence of knowledge in the outcomes and assessment criteria were points of controversy. This is evident in the sections on home languages. In his study of language policy, Schiffman points out that "language is usually treated as a kind of "black box", that is, its internal workings… is either ignored or dealt with only mechanistically" (2012b: xi). The NCS rendered subject knowledge invisible, which is described by Hoardley as its "major design flaw" (2015: 738). This "design flaw" would have a "knock-on" effect on all the documents aligned with the NCS. The knowledge debate was evident in assessment, in particular the distinction between everyday knowledge and school knowledge, how (and whether) learners' everyday knowledge should be assessed, and how subject knowledge should be assessed. These thorny issues were left to subsequent policies, like the NCS, to address as discussed in the sections below.

5.4 Regulations Pertaining the National Curriculum Statement (2015b)

The NCS Regulations were promulgated in 2012, and revised in 2014, and revised twice in 2015. By the time the NCS Regulations were first published in 2012, the CAPS (2011a) for all school subjects had been published and were in use. The CAPS documents loom large in the NCS Regulations, and the reader is referred to the documents throughout its different sections. The NCS Regulations stipulate the requirements and duration for each phase and grade in the R to 12 educational system. It specifies promotion and progression requirements as well as

general requirements for each of the learning areas. The language and tone of the document is very different from that of the NCS. The NCS was written in everyday English as it was intended to be read by a wide variety of readers. It does not include a glossary of terms.

The NCS Regulations, on the other hand, are written in a technical, legal style, which is common in the specification of regulations (Schiffman, 2012). It also has a glossary of terms that define the assessment-driven language initiated in the NCS (2002b), but which was not explained. A number of terms associated with assessment are defined in the NCS Regulations, the first is "external assessment":

> **"External assessment** means any assessment activity, instrument or programme where the design, development and implementation has been initiated, directed and coordinated by Provincial Education Departments and the Department of Basic Education either collectively or individually" (2015b: 5).

This is an interesting use of the term "external" assessment, which usually refers to assessment by an external and independent body and not the government departments responsible for educational provision. Earlier critiques of the NCS noted that government moves towards external assessment have been marked by foot-dragging and unaccountable delays (Mseleku, 2002). Muller (2004) called for greater transparency and accountability through external assessment, claiming perceptively that "the systemic data that we do have to date depicts a system that is inefficient and in extremely poor health" (2004: 236). He argued that "without crucial information about exactly who is learning and who is not, or what they are learning and what not… planners are consequently left without the data they need to plan for rational targeted intervention" (Muller, 2004: 236-7).

The terms "internal assessment" and "school-based assessment" also appear in the glossary but are stated (rather than defined) with reference to legislation.

> **"Internal assessment** means an assessment, contemplated in section 1 of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance" (Act No. 58 of 2000) (2015e: 6).

The definition provided by the 2000 Act defines "internal assessment" as follows:

> **"Internal assessment** means any assessment conducted by the provider, the outcomes of which count towards the achievement of a qualification" (South African Department of Education, 2000b: 4).

The difference between external and internal assessment is that external assessment is set by the Provincial Education Departments and the Department of Basic Education, while internal assessment is set by the "provider", presumably a school.
"School-based assessment" is included as a separate entry in the glossary:

> **"School-based assessment** means assessment as defined in the policy document, National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12", Government Gazette No. 34600 of 12 September 2011b.

The government notice, stating the approval of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12 as National Education Policy does not contain definitions, but refers readers to the NPA (2011b), which defines school-based assessment in its glossary of terms as follows:

> **"School-based assessment (SBA)** means all formal assessment, including examinations, conducted by the school throughout the year on a continuous basis" (NPA, 2011b).

While external and internal assessment refer to the assessment provider, or who controls the assessment practices, school-based assessment, in the NPA's 2011 definition, seems to describe an assessment type, rather than the place of assessment or the provider. School-based assessment seems to be a form of "continuous assessment". In his seminal study on continuous assessment, Nitko (1995) points out that continuous assessment can be used both formatively and summatively. The terms "formative" and "summative" assessment are not terms used or defined in the NCS Regulations. Nitko explains that continuous assessment for formative purposes "provides the teacher with information to guide a student's learning from day to day" (1995: 326), while continuous assessment for summative purposes "provides teachers, students, parents and school officials with information they may use to draw conclusions about how well a student has attained the learning targets of the official curriculum" (1995: 326). The NPA (2011b) definition of "school-based assessment" seems more aligned to continuous assessment for summative purposes.

The NCS Regulations define two types of assessment tasks, namely, "formal" and "informal":

> **"Formal Assessment Task** (assessment of learning) means a systematic way of assessment used by teachers to determine how well learners are progressing in a grade and in a particular subject" (2015b: 6).

> **"Informal Assessment Task** means the ongoing assessment of learners for developmental purposes leading towards a formal assessment task" (2015b: 6).

As defined in the NCS Regulations, these are not "tasks" (which might be understood as exemplars of assessment techniques or practices) but seem to be types of assessment.
The "formal assessment task" seems to be aligned with what is usually understood as summative assessment. The "informal assessment task" seems to align with one aspect of formative assessment, which is preparing learners for summative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2009). The literature suggests other purposes of formative assessment, in particular the provision of feedback on learning (Ausubel, 1968; Bloom, 1984).

Navarette et al. point out that with regard to assessment "'formal" and "informal" are not technical psychometric terms. Therefore, there are no uniformly accepted definitions (Navarrette, Wilde, Nelson, Martinez & Hargett, 1990: 5). In their study, Navarette et al. use "the term 'informal' to indicate techniques that can easily be incorporated into classroom routines and learning activities" (1990: 5). As Navarette et al. imply, the term "informal assessment" is not common in the literature. When it is used with reference to language assessment, it is in response to the overuse of "standardized tests that rely heavily on multiple-choice items reflecting the language, culture, and/or learning style of the middle class majority" (1990: 4), or in response to summative norm-referenced testing (Spinelli, 2008). Spinelli argues for "authentic, informal methods of assessing students' literacy skills for formative purposes" (2008: 5). The arguments advanced are for the use of alternative, supplemental forms of assessment that are better able to support learning, such as "techniques that can easily be incorporated into classroom routines and learning activities, and are identified as unstructured (e.g. writing samples, homework, journals, games, debates) or structured (e.g. checklists, close tests, rating scales, questionnaires, structured interviews)" (1990: 6).

Nitko proposes "scoring procedures such as holistic or analytic procedures, general impression markings, or error patterns" (1995: 328), and Navarette et al. (1990) offers detailed guidelines for "student portfolios" which could contain examples of learners' formative assessment tasks. Spinelli argues that "techniques are needed to provide the continuous, ongoing measurement of student growth needed for formative evaluation and for planning instructional strategies"; such informal, authentic procedures should be "practical and useful in assessing literacy skills development and instruction needs in students of all ages, abilities and cultures" (Spinelli, 2008: 5). It is worth pointing out how carefully these authors define and use the uncommon term "informal assessment". With regard to language education the following are stated as requirements:

> Two (2) official languages, provided that one of the two official languages is offered on the Home Language level, and the other official language on at least First Additional Language level, and provided further that one of the two languages offered is the language of learning and teaching or the language of literacy in the case of Deaf Learners (South Africa, Department of Basic Education, 2015b: 11).

The NCS Regulations define what is intended by the descriptor "Home Language level":

> **Home Language level** - means the language proficiency level that reflects the mastery of interpersonal communication skills required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum. This level also provides learners with a literary, aesthetic and imaginative ability that will provide them with the ability to create, imagine, and empower their understandings of the world they live in (2015a: 6).

The NCS Regulations create the legal framework for carrying out the requirements of the NCS. The reality of the unavailability of home language education for all is ignored, and issues arising from this are not addressed. All schools are, nevertheless, expected to meet required "performance targets" and all schools must "comply with all subject requirements as stipulated in Sections 2 and 3 of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements" (2015a: 12). With regard to the assessment of home language at the intermediate level:

> School-Based Assessment (SBA) is a compulsory component of the promotion marks. The SBA component done during the year must be 75%, and the final examination component 25% of the promotion mark (2015a: 17).

A final examination is introduced in the intermediate phase, but there are no guidelines in the NCS Regulations, or other policy documents, on the preparation of learners for this "high stakes" assessment; they are simply instructed as follows:

> Learners will be assessed internally according to the requirements specified in the policy document National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12 and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements of the required subjects as contemplated in paragraph 12.

Learners are expected to achieve an "Adequate Achievement (Level 4) (50%-59%) in one official language at Home Language level" (2015a: 17).

5.5 National Policy Pertaining to Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) (2012; 2013; 2014; 2015)

The National Policy Pertaining to Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) was first published in 2012, and amended in 2013, and amended twice in 2014 and twice in 2015. It follows on from the NCS Regulations (2015) to state general requirements for Grades R to 9 as well as concessions, to list the approved subjects, to specify time allocations for programmes, and to stipulate the rules and regulations around the promotion of learners at each level (2015a: 3). The NPPPPR introduces new terms, such as:

> Evidence of learner performance - means the learner's work that is used to compile his or her internal assessment mark (NPPPPR, 2015: viii).

It also restates many of the definitions in the NCS Regulations (2012a), such as "school-based assessment" (NPPPPR, 2015b: xii). The progression requirements for Grades 4 to 6 are as follows:

> (1) Progression from grade to grade through this phase within the appropriate age cohort should be the accepted norm, unless the learner displays a lack of competence to cope with the following grade's work.
> (2) The following are guidelines for determining a learner's progression from Grade 4 to 6 in the Intermediate Phase:
> (a) Adequate Achievement (Level 4) (50%-59%) in one official language at Home Language level as contemplated in paragraph 12(1) (2015b: 16).

In practice, many learners are promoted, despite the stated requirements, due to unavailability of classroom space (Bayat, Louw & Rena, 2014). Details such as "a learner may only be retained once in the Intermediate Phase in order to prevent the learner being retained in this phase for longer than four years" seem to be more related to logistical issues (such as classroom space) than the best interests of the learners (Blignaut, 2007). Statements such as "learners should receive the necessary support in order to progress to the next grade" (2015b: 16-17) are meaningless in the light of general under-resourcing (Blignaut, 2007).

5.6 National Protocol of Assessment: Grade R-12 (2011; 2012)

The National Protocol for Assessment Grades R to 12 (NPA) was first published in 2011 and amended in 2012. The NPA regulates the assessment for Grades R to 12, including assessment practice, requirements for the end-of-year examination, recording and reporting learner performance, requirements for teachers' files, management of school assessment records, management of learners' profiles, and the assessment of learners with special needs. Before the sections of the NPA were studied in detail, the attributes of an ideal guiding policy on assessment were theorised for the purposes of determining the extent to which the NPA might align with or deviate from the "ideal".

5.6.1 An ideal policy for guiding practice

A logical approach to policymaking involves linking policy principles to policy guidelines and requirements (Althaus et al., 2007). Users of the policy documents would expect that the underpinning principles of an assessment policy would be based on educational knowledge and research (Broadfoot & Black, 2004). One would also be expected that an assessment policy would link principles to the different purposes of assessment, and it would provide strategies and guidelines toward implementation (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2022).

According to the developed translation device, based on LTC's Semantic gravity, an ideal policy document would initially show weaker levels of gravity: it might introduce the policy with a general statement on current thinking and research on assessment (SG 8), it would state the underpinning principles of the policy (derived from current thinking and research) (SG 7), and it would explain the purpose of the assessment approaches or practices that it is promoting (SG 6). Thus, there would be some explanation for, and justification of, the principles and practices drawing on educational theory and research, particularly empirical research done in the local context. It would be expected that semantic gravity would be strengthened over the course of the policy document, for example, the policy might recommend assessment strategies (SG 5), offer general guidelines for assessment (SG 4), as well as more specific guidelines for assessment planning (SG 3), and some guiding exemplars for practice (SG 2). Logistical requirements, e.g. for reporting and recording, would be included as well (SG 1).

Such an ideal assessment policy document would be founded on research evidence and might even include a list of references and other documents consulted by the policymakers. Basing assessment principles and assessment practices on educational theory and research evidence would logically connect the different sections of the policy and ensure that the requirements stipulated by the policy, which also might include sanctions for disregarding the policy, would be coherent. The logical connections would enable the policy to provide clear guidelines for teachers to follow, which might include practical and contextualised examples. Finally, the

policy might include templates that need to be followed (or adapted), particular texts, or other resources that are recommended. Figure 5.1 represents an ideal semantic gravity profile for an assessment policy.

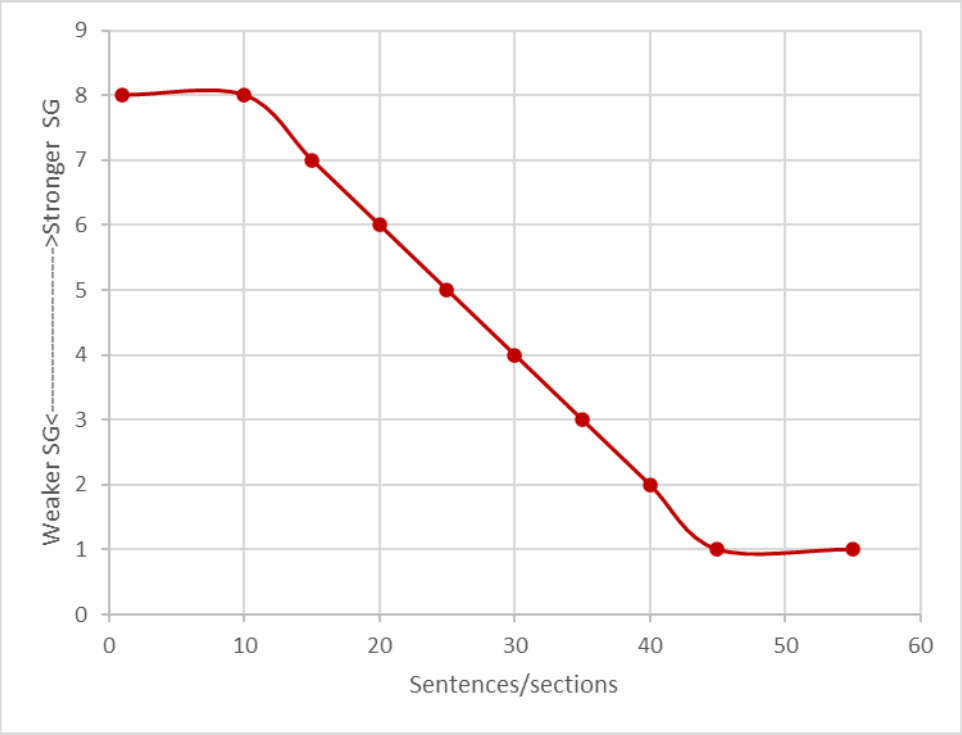


Figure 5.1: An ideal semantic gravity profile for assessment policy

The “down escalator” shown in Figure 5.1 is not a recommended semantic profile for teaching or learning policy but would be a useful semantic gravity profile for an assessment policy. The logical links between the assessment policy principles, assessment requirements, assessment guidance and logistics in such a policy document would be clear and easy to follow, or to trace back to the roots of the theory and research on which it is based.

In the next section, the NPA is studied with a view to determine its semantic gravity profile and the ways in which logical connections are made across the policy text.

5.6.2 National Protocol for Assessment

This section will cover background to the NPA as an assessment policy, the findings of the NPA’s and critique thereof.

The NPA is the first policy document to define the term “assessment”; the previous documents assumed a common understanding. In the apartheid era, assessment policy for learners other than those in the exit Grade 12 was not specified (Muller, 2004). References to the NPA is

made and critique is offered to highlight problematic areas. In practice, for the vast majority of learners, assessment was norm-referenced, summative, and aggregative by default (Chisholm, 2005). Much of South African policymaking with regard to assessment has been an attempt to shift from this "authoritarian" approach to assessment to one that is formative, standards-based, and continuous. Despite the stated intention to include alternative means of assessment, in the post-apartheid period, the Department of Education produced policies that resulted in a highly authoritarian stance towards assessment. The NPA, for example, prescribes exactly what assessment should consist of in each learning area and in each subject. Thus, despite its intention to seek alternative approaches to assessment, South African assessment policy has "favoured a measurement-focused approach in the classroom, which has hindered a shift towards an assessment for learning approach" (Kanjee & Sayed, 2013: 442).

The NPA assessment is defined as: "a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions about the progress of learners" (2012a: 3). The NPA does not use the standard terms "formative" and "summative" or "continuous" assessment but uses the terms and definitions in the NCS Regulations and the NPPPPR. The NPA includes a glossary of terms, most of which are identical to those used in the NCS Regulations document. For example, "informal assessment task" in the NPA glossary is identical to that in the NCS Regulations glossary:

> **"Informal Assessment Task** (assessment for learning) – means the building towards formal assessment" (NPA, 2012a: x).

In the text, however, the NPA expands on the above definition:

> Informal (assessment for learning) or daily assessment is the monitoring and enhancing of learners' progress. This is done through teacher observation and teacher-learner interactions, which may be initiated by either teachers or learners. Informal or daily assessment may be as simple as stopping during the lesson to observe learners or to discuss with the learners how learning is progressing. It should be used to provide feedback to the learners and teachers, close the gaps in learners' knowledge and skills and improve teaching. Informal assessment builds towards formal assessment .. (2012a: 3–4).

The description above suggests that informal assessment (with the exception of "daily assessment") is synonymous with most standard definitions of formative assessment as it provides feedback to both teachers and to learners towards enhanced practice and

understanding (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Angelo & Cross, 2012). The in-text expansion on "informal assessment" is different from that provided by the glossary. Firstly, what was described as an "informal assessment task" (i.e. an assessment method or technique) in the glossary is now assumed to be a generic type of assessment, namely, "informal assessment". Techniques such as observation and discussion are proposed, and the purpose of informal assessment is stated as the provision of feedback for both learning and teaching and for "closing the gaps in learners' knowledge and skills".

The latter is an unrealistic expectation as gaps in learners' knowledge are best addressed through appropriate pedagogies (Wiliam & Thompson, 2007; Black & Wiliam, 2009). In the last sentence, the NPA seems to contradict the NCS Regulation definition, or at least shift its focus, through the addition of "and teachers should not only focus on the formal assessment". "Daily assessment" is now included as a synonym for informal assessment, along with "assessment for learning". There is also slippage and conflation across the terms formal, classroom-based, school-based, and informal assessment – the NPA only provides definitions of formal and informal assessment in the glossary, but these definitions are not consistently applied in the document. The incoherence of explanations of the assessment confuses the reader and the logical links in the ideal semantic profile is interrupted. The imprecise and non-standard use of assessment terms has had many repercussions on how assessment is understood in the school system as will be discussed in Section 5.7.

In order to develop the semantic gravity profile of the NPA, Chapters One to Nine were carefully read and coded (see Chapter Four, Section 4). Chapter One of the NPA explains the purpose of the document (2012a: 1–2), Chapter Two introduces the policy for assessing Grades R to 12 of the NCS (2012a: 3–5), Chapter Three discusses formal assessment (2012a: 6–11), and Chapter Four discusses the Final End-Of-Year Examination (2012a: 12–14). Chapters Five to Eight address the logistical requirements of recording and reporting learner performance (2012a: 15-21), the "maintenance of teachers' files" (2012a: 22), the "management of school assessment records" (2012a: 23-27), and the "management of school learner profiles" (2012a: 28-29). Chapter Nine addresses the "assessment of learners with special needs" (2012a: 30-31). Chapter Ten, titled Repeal Of Policy and Transitional Arrangements was not analysed as it does not address issues in assessment (although it is worth pointing out that so many changes to educational policy were made during the period that the NPA found it necessary to include a section on how to repeal itself).

Table 5.1 shows how the NPA document was coded. The numbers in the left-hand column refer to the sentence number and the position of the data point on the X-axis, which represents the sentences from one to 202, from Chapter One to Chapter Nine. The X-axis, thus,

represents the 202 sentences that were coded. The second column shows the verbatim sentence that was coded. The three columns on the right side of the table show the different coding levels: the first level is the descriptive code, the second is the emerging theme, and the last column represents the theoretical code, which is the code ascribed to the semantic gravity level of assessment theory (SG 8), principles (SG 7), purposes (SG 6), strategies (SG 5), guidelines (SG 4), planning (SG 3), implementation (SG 2), and logistical requirements (SG 1). The semantic gravity codes represent the data points along the Y-axis. These codes were explained in Table 3.3.

Table 5.1: Example of coding Chapter 2 (Assessment of the NCS Grades R to 12)

No.	Sentence	Descriptive code	Theme	SG code
19	"Assessment is a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions about the progress of learners."	Assessment is…	Definition	7
20	"The National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 is the formal curriculum in South African schools."	Formal curriculum	Regulation/no linkage	1
21	"Classroom assessment should provide an indication of learner achievement in the most effective and efficient manner by ensuring that adequate evidence of achievement is collected using various forms of assessment."	Effective and efficient	Principle	7
22	"The intention of this document is to regulate how evidence of learner performance is recorded and reported."	To regulate…	Purpose	6
23	"Classroom assessment should be both informal and formal."	…both formal and informal	Requirement	1
24	"In both cases it is important that learners know what knowledge and skills are being assessed and feedback should be provided to learners after assessment to enhance the learning experience."	Learner know…	Guide	4

(NPA, 2012a: 3)

The section of coding in Table 5.1 can be seen in sentences 19 to 24 on the graph (Figure 5.2). The high-level definition (that implies an assessment principle) is named and followed by a drop to a logistical rule or regulation. This pattern, statement of an assessment principle followed by a regulation, is repeated across the document as the semantic gravity profile clearly shows.

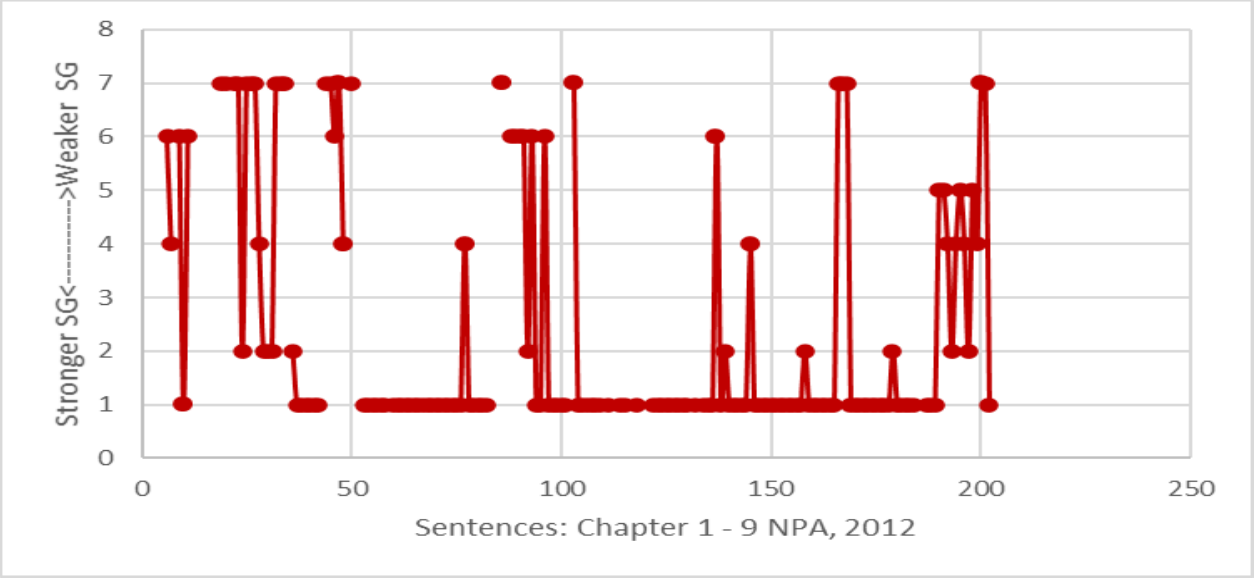


Figure 5.2: The semantic gravity profile of the NPA (2012)

The semantic gravity range spans from assessment principles (SG 7), most of which are implied in the definitions of terms such as "it is important that learners know what knowledge and skills are being assessed" (NPA, 2011: 3), to the logistical arrangements for assessment (SG 1) – such as "An Example of a record sheet" (NPA, 2011: 34) with the majority of data points flat-lining at SG 1. The profile is discontinuous in some sections. The discontinuities represent sections that are self-contradictory or illogical, or unrelated to assessment, or statements that does not follow from the statements that lead to it. For example, "(3) SBA allow for learners to be assessed on a regular basis during the school year and also allow for the assessment of skills that cannot be assessed in a written format, e.g. test or examination" (NPA, 2011:6). This statement is confusing as it cannot be assessed. The next statement, "(4) The purpose of an end-of-year examination is to provide reliable, valid and fair measures of the achievements of learners in the subjects offered from Grade 4 onwards "(NPA, 2011: 6)" raises the question whether only the end-of-year examinations need to contain the principles of assessment- what about assessment tasks that do not require writing?

The NPA is heavy on the rules and regulations of assessment but does not offer much in the way of statements of purpose (SG 6), strategies (SG 5), guidelines (SG 4), or examples (SG 2). Assessment planning was missing from the document. Consequently, there are no data points at SG 3. As in the NCS (2012a) and the NPPPR (2015b), assessment planning has been taken over by the Department of Basic Education, as is evident in the templates that teachers are required to adhere to. The overall impression is one of top-down control over practice, which is visually represented by the sharp vertical downward movement. These downward movements show that high level assessment principles should be "systematic" (2012a: iii). Alignment with the National Qualifications Framework (2012a: x) and inclusivity

(2012a: 30) are stated. However, these are not explained or justified, but the statements are followed by long lists of instructions and requirements to the level of specifying what teachers need in their files. There is no “causal theory” (Fullan, 2015) in the NPA, because there are no linkages to tell the story of why the policy is necessary and how it could guide and assist those involved in its implementation.

The intention of the NPA is primarily to regulate how “evidence of learner performance” is recorded and reported (2012a: 3) and the long flatlines in Figure 5.2 represent the logistical sections that emphasise that the document is a protocol for governing and controlling assessment. While earlier documents had referred to “guidelines”, the NPA uses the language of “requirements" for assessment practices (2012a: 12), “examinations" (2012a: 14), and “teachers’ files” (2012a: 22). Not only is the number of assessment tasks prescribed but also the weighting of the various “forms of assessment” to be used (Muller, 2004: 231-232). The tension is fuelled by the NPA’s adherence to the NCS’s commitment to “formative assessment” on the one hand, but the increasing shift towards examinations and “external” national assessments on the other. These are the key barriers to “reforming learning, teaching and assessment” (Kanjee & Sayed, 2013: 442).

The shifts towards summative assessment are seen in the formal assessment requirements. These consist of three elements: Firstly, School-Based Assessment, secondly, Practical Assessment Tasks and/or Oral assessments in language subjects, and, thirdly, a “final end-of-year examination” (2012a: 6). Practical and oral assessments are not, however, part of school-based assessment but comprise 25% of the final “end-of-year examination” (2012a: 6). “School-based assessment” in the intermediate phases comprises 75% of the learners’ final mark (2012a: 6-7). Chapter Four of the NPA, titled Final End-Of-Year Examination (2012a: 12-14), addresses all matters pertaining to the end-of-year examinations. No section of the document is devoted to “informal assessment” or “classroom assessment”. Chapter Three of the NPA is titled Formal Assessment in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 and addresses formal assessment requirements (2012a: 6 – 12). The term “school-based assessment” appears in this section of the document and is described, together with practical assessment tasks, as follows:

> School-Based Assessment and Practical Assessment Tasks allow for learners to be assessed on a regular basis during the school year and also allow for the assessment of skills that cannot be assessed in a written format, e.g. test or examination. School-Based Assessment and Practical Assessment Tasks include a variety of assessment methods as contemplated in Chapter 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (2012a: 6).

School-based assessment is, thus, confirmed as a form of continuous summative assessment as the marks achieved for school-based assessment tasks count towards learners' final assessment record. The NPA states that "School-Based Assessment is a compulsory component for progression and promotion in all the different school phases" (2012a: 6). The NPA sought to find a middle way through school-based assessment to combine elements of formative-type assessment with examination. The burden of school-based assessment and its highly prescriptive nature has been an ongoing concern (Raman & Yamat, 2014).

The demands imposed by testing for accountability, according to a number of theorists and academics, are detrimental to learning because they encourage teaching to the test, distort the curriculum, and reduce students' intrinsic incentive to learn (Reynek, Meyer & Nel, 2010). Proponents of testing argue that the negative effects can be minimised, and that high-stakes testing usually leads to enhanced performance, especially where curriculum, assessment, and professional development are appropriately aligned (Schoenfeld, 2002) – which "depends on the tests being reliable and valid" (Muller, 2004: 234). Kanjee and Sayed argue that there has been a privileging of formal testing over formative assessment, "thereby promoting a discourse of reporting and recording as opposed to a discourse of using assessment for improving learning and teaching" (Kanjee & Sayed, 2013: 465). Across all school types and qualification levels, teachers still struggle to meet the demands of the assessment policy, and in particular to use assessment effectively for improving learning in the classroom (Khoza, 2015). The development of an "effective assessment policy for improving learning and teaching has been one of the major challenges the schooling sector faces in post-apartheid South Africa" (Kanjee & Sayed, 2013: 465).

5.7 CAPS: EHL Grades 4 to 6

There are CAPS for each subject in the NCS. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: English Home Language Grades 4-6 (2011a), (hereafter CAPS, 2011a), is the central document guiding teachers' assessment practice in EHL at the intermediate phase. Chapter Four of the document focuses on assessment (CAPS, 2011a: 88-104), and this section was the focus of the policy study. The section explains informal or daily assessment, formal assessment, the Programme of Assessment, the recording and reporting of assessment, and the moderation of assessment (CAPS, 2011a: 88-105).

LTC's semantic gravity was used for analysis purposes. Each sentence was coded descriptively, emerging themes were identified, and each sentence was coded theoretically, following Saldaňa's (2013) coding recommendations. Applying different levels of coding avoided a force-fit between the CAPS text and the translation device. The first level of coding was done without the translation device, which provided an overview of the content of the

document and highlighted assessment-relevant concepts, such as “assessment is a continuous planned process” (CAPS 2011a: 88). Emerging themes also were identified before the second level of analysis that applied the translation device to theoretically code each sentence. The left column lists the sentence numbers, and the right column lists the semantic gravity codes, which became the X-axis and Y-axis of the semantic gravity profile (Figures 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5).

Table 5.2: Example of coding the introduction to assessment (CAPS, 2011a: 88)

No.	Sentence	Descriptive code	Theme	SG code
1	“Assessment is a continuous planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners.”	Planned process…	Definition/principle	7
2	“It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating evidence; recording the findings and using information to understand and thereby assist the learner’s development in order to improve the process of learning and teaching.”	Four steps…	Links/missing links	5
3	“Assessment should be both informal (Assessment for Learning) and formal (Assessment of Learning).”	Assessment for and of…	Non-standard definitions	-
4	“In both cases regular feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience.”	Regular feedback…	Explanation/theory	8
5	“Assessment in Languages is ongoing and supports the growth and development of learners.”	Ongoing		7
6	“It is an integral part of teaching and learning as it provides feedback for teaching and learning.”	Integral part of…	Principle	7

5.7.1 Introduction to assessment

The introduction to Chapter Four of the CAPS document defines assessment, repeating many of the definitions in the NCS Regulations and in the NPA, but also expands on the definitions, as in the “four steps” of assessment (see Table 5.2, No. 2). The definition implies that the purpose of assessment is the measurement of learners’ “performance”. This is confirmed by the second sentence that elaborates on the “four steps” necessary for assessment, namely: generating and collecting evidence, evaluating evidence, recording the evidence and using the evidence. It might be expected that, having introduced the concept of assessment “evidence”,

there would be a statement on the principles pertaining to assessment “evidence”, such as validity, reliability, and fairness – principles repeatedly expressed in the literature on language assessment (e.g. Abedi, 2004; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

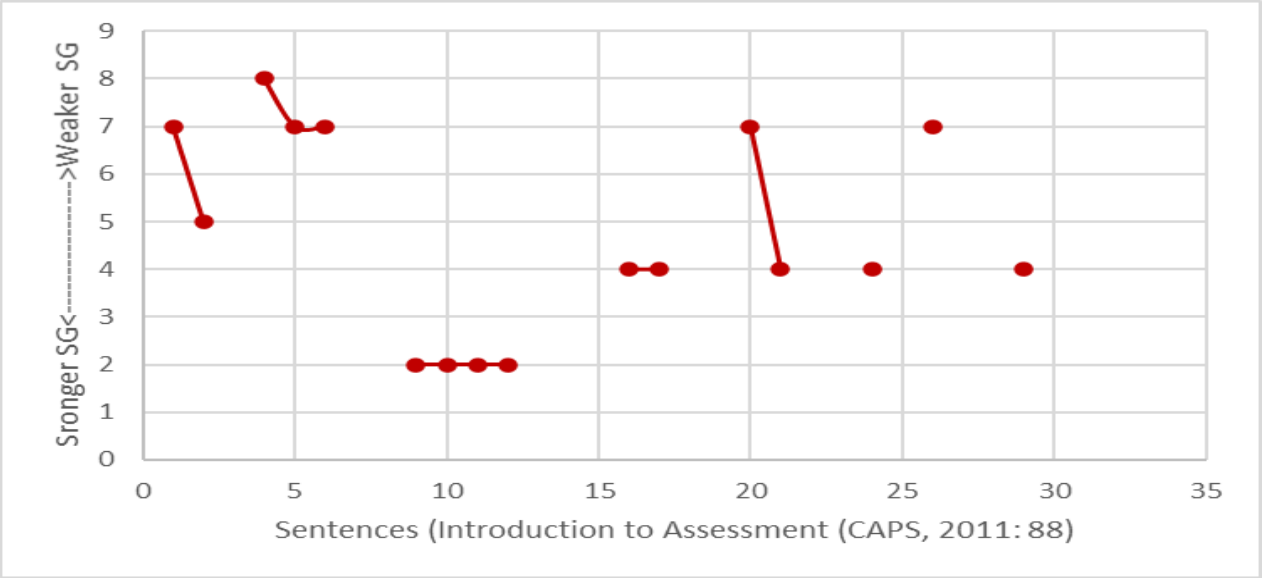


Figure 5.3: The discontinuous profile of CAPS on “informal” assessment

The semantic gravity profile, Figure 5.3, of the introduction shows a promising start and a logical connection from assessment principle to assessment strategy. But a confusing sentence combining formal and informal assessment follows (which is indicated by the break in the profile). The document seems to draw on assessment theory to explain that “regular feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience” (2011a: 88). Two related principles are then expressed: Firstly, assessment is ongoing, and, secondly, assessment is integral to teaching and learning. Two confusing sentences follow that seem to confuse integrated assessment with the assessment of separate language skills. Over the next four sentences, an extended example of an integrated assessment task is presented. The next sentences are confusing and contradictory, but, nevertheless, followed by guidelines for practice and then followed in turn by more confusing and contradictory sentences. Sentences 20 and 21 are logically connected – the principle of learning as a process is followed by the guideline that teachers should, therefore, assess learning at various parts of the process. More confusion follows with regard to integrated assessment, meaning either the integration of “informal assessment” with teaching or the assessment of separate language skills vs integrated language skills.

Several terms are used without definition, such as “integrated assessment” which is not defined in the introduction or the glossary. It is also unclear whether “integrated assessment” refers to a type of assessment task or the integration of language skills within a language task (or

something completely different). Skills cannot be assessed separately, for example to be able to write, a learner needs to be able to read. The extract below contradicts itself:

> When giving a formal assessment task, there will be a focus on a particular skill, for example, Listening and Speaking or Reading or Writing. However, because language learning is an integrated process, more than one skill will be used (CAPS, 2011a: 88).

The literature on the assessment of comprehension does not concur with the advice offered above. The literature suggests an initial focus on particular language skills and sub-skills (Ramaprasad, 1983), while summative tasks should integrate language skills (Senom et al., 2013), although formative tasks should become more integrative in preparation for summative assessment (García & Cain, 2014). A summative assessment activity typically calls for the application of reading methods to comprehend the material at the micro and macro levels in addition to the integration of reading and writing abilities (Black, 2006).

This brings us to the next difficulty in the introduction, which is the considerable amount of illogical and contradictory statements that it contains. While almost every statement in the introduction lacks clarity and precision, there are some that are illogical. For example, the introduction states that:

> [The assessment of language] should be incorporated in teaching and learning instead of being dealt with as a separate entity (CAPS, 2011a: 88).

Most assessment activities (such as a test, informal quiz, oral presentation, etc.) are “separate entities” as explained in the CAPS document. If assessment is not a “separate entity”, why does the CAPS document have a separate section on assessment? This contradicts the opening sentence that assessment is “planned” as a separate activity. Assessment activities (whether formal or informal) are, as the glossary defines them, separate and particular activities:

> **Assessment activity is an activity** used to assess learners consisting of a number of sub-activities or parts (CAPS, 2011a: 110).

If assessment tasks are not “separate entities”, all teaching and learning activities will have to include some form of assessment, which is not clearly explained. It seems that the sentence is trying to express the idea that formative assessment (or “informal” assessment) can occur at a number of stages in the learning process. The instruction that assessment should not be a “separate entity” is inaccurate and confusing.

The end of the introduction includes three understandable, but random, remarks: Firstly, teachers are reminded to assess oral as well as written skills, secondly, inclusive assessment practices are suggested, and, thirdly, teachers are instructed to only assess what they actually have taught. These remarks are interspersed with contradictions and a final non-sequitur ends the introduction.

The semantic gravity wave of the introduction clearly shows how much of the document comprises illogical or contradictory statements or the extent to which statements are unclear and imprecise. It also shows the random placement of statements on the purposes and principles of language assessment and the lack of explication of these underpinning concepts. The discontinuous semantic gravity profile provides a graphic representation of a confused and unclear introduction to language assessment in the intermediate phase.

5.7.2 “Informal or daily assessment”

The section on “informal or daily assessment” is particularly confusing. The terms “informal” and “daily” assessment are uncommon in the literature (see Section 5.4), but when used are always clearly defined as a sub-type of formative assessment (e.g. Spinelli, 2008; Navarette et al., 1990). The word "informal assessment" is often seen as undesirable due to its propensity to lead to misjudgements, while terms like "formative assessment" or "classroom-based assessment" are more frequently used in the literature (Waggett, Johnston & Jones, 2017). Various techniques and procedures are needed for the formative assessment of reading comprehension (Xu & Brown, 2017), and teachers must pay close attention to students' usage of specific reading sub-skills and reading strategies (Shanahan & Lonigan, 2010). The CAPS proposal that teachers use "many of [their] learning activities to measure learners' performance informally" is not supported by any facts or fundamental ideas.

It is worrying that the term “daily assessment” is used interchangeably with “informal assessment”. “Daily assessment” is undefined with no evidence to support its use. “Daily assessment” places an untenable burden on teachers; moreover, overassessment has been shown to negatively impact teaching quality (Wigfield, Gladstone & Turci, 2016). The CAPS document is vague on the implementation of daily assessment, stating that: “The results of the informal daily assessment tasks are not formally recorded unless the teacher wishes to do so” (CAPS, 2011a: 89). Similar confusing directives have been pointed out by other scholars in their critiques of the CAPS documents across a range of subjects (e.g. Maddock & Maroun, 2018). The CAPS does not use the term “formative assessment” and seems unaware of the rich literature on formative assessments, in particular its role in improving teaching and its alignment with summative assessment (e.g. Black & Wiliam, 2009). The section on “informal or daily assessment” is short and comprises 17 sentences which were coded as in Table 5.2.

The result was another discontinuous semantic gravity profile (Figure 5.4) which is explained below.

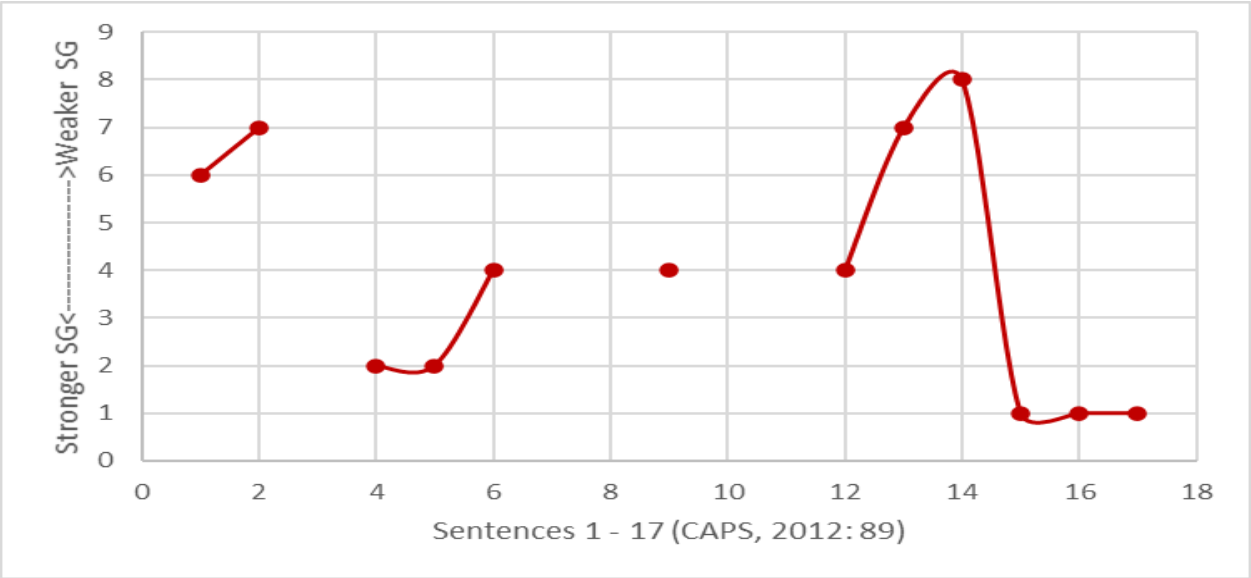


Figure 5.4: The discontinuous profile of CAPS on "informal" assessment

The first sentence explains the purpose of "informal or daily assessment", which is "continuously collecting information on a learner's achievement that can be used to improve their learning" (CAPS, 2011a: 89). A definition of "informal assessment" follows, which is "a daily monitoring of learners' progress" (CAPS, 2011a: 89). While formative assessment is well supported in the literature, there are warnings about overassessment (Schildkamp, van der Kleij, Heitink, Kippers & Veldkamp, 2020). Thus, daily assessment is unlikely to be productive. Guidelines for daily assessment include: "observations, discussions, practical demonstrations, learner–teacher conferences, informal classroom interactions, etc." (CAPS, 2011a: 89). Examples of informal assessment are provided: "Informal assessment may be as simple as stopping during the lesson to observe learners or to discuss with learners how learning is progressing", or it might involve "observation, written exercises, oral activities and presentations, written tests, reading aloud and other forms of assessment" (CAPS, 2011a: 89). Self-assessment and peer-assessment also are proposed as "informal assessment" tasks that allow "learners to learn from and reflect on their own performance" (2011a: 89). Included in the section on informal assessment is baseline assessment:

> It is suggested that you use the first two-weeks of the term to do a baseline assessment of learners. You should use the activities given in the first two-weeks of the teaching plans to do this assessment. This will enable you to establish the kind of attention your learners will need as you proceed (CAPS, 2011a: 89).

The CAPS document does not seem to be aware of the many forms of baseline and diagnostic assessments that can tell language teachers about learners' reading levels (e.g. Allington,1983; Parker, Zaslofsky, Burns, Kanive, Hodgson, Scholin & Klingbeil, 2015) or general language proficiency (e.g. Boals, Kenyon, Blair, Cranley, Wilmes, & Wright, 2015). Such tests would not be described as "informal" as most are standardised, and students' results are usually recorded in order to evaluate students' future progress against the baseline data. The final section on Informal or Daily Assessment provides confusing and contradictory advice on keeping records related to informal assessment tasks.

> The results of the informal daily assessment tasks are not formally recorded unless the teacher wishes to do so. Teachers may however wish to keep their own informal records of how individual learners are progressing in the different aspects of the subject to assist with planning and ensuring that individual learners develop the required skills and understanding. The results of daily assessment tasks are not taken into account for promotion and certification purposes (CAPS, 2011a: 89).

No clear guidelines are provided on what type of assessment teachers should 'record' (e.g. baseline or diagnostic assessments), and whether marks should be allocated accordingly.

5.7.3 Formal Assessment

The CAPS document does not distinguish clearly between summative and continuous assessment. The terms "formal assessment" and "school-based assessment" seem to be equivalent to summative assessment. The section on formal assessment shows more connections between the subsections than the section on informal assessment, but the sharp upswings and downswings indicate that a logical progression is missing (Figure 5.5). An assessment principle is rapidly translated into an example of assessment practice, or a practice requirement, without sufficient explanation (SG 8), clear statements of purpose (SG 6), strategies (SG 5), guidelines (SG 4), or preparation for planning (SG 3). What is completely missing in this section is theory (evident by the lack of data points at SG 8) and support for the planning of assessment activities (lack of data points at SG 3). The reason for the former is that, like "informal" assessment, "formal" assessment is not theorised and is not evidence-based. With regard to guidance for planning, this was clearly not deemed to be necessary as the assessment plan for each day of the entire academic year, down to finest details, needs to be followed (see below on the Programme of Assessment). The findings confirm prior research that judged the CAPS document to be overly prescriptive (Govender & Hugo, 2018; Weideman et al., 2017).

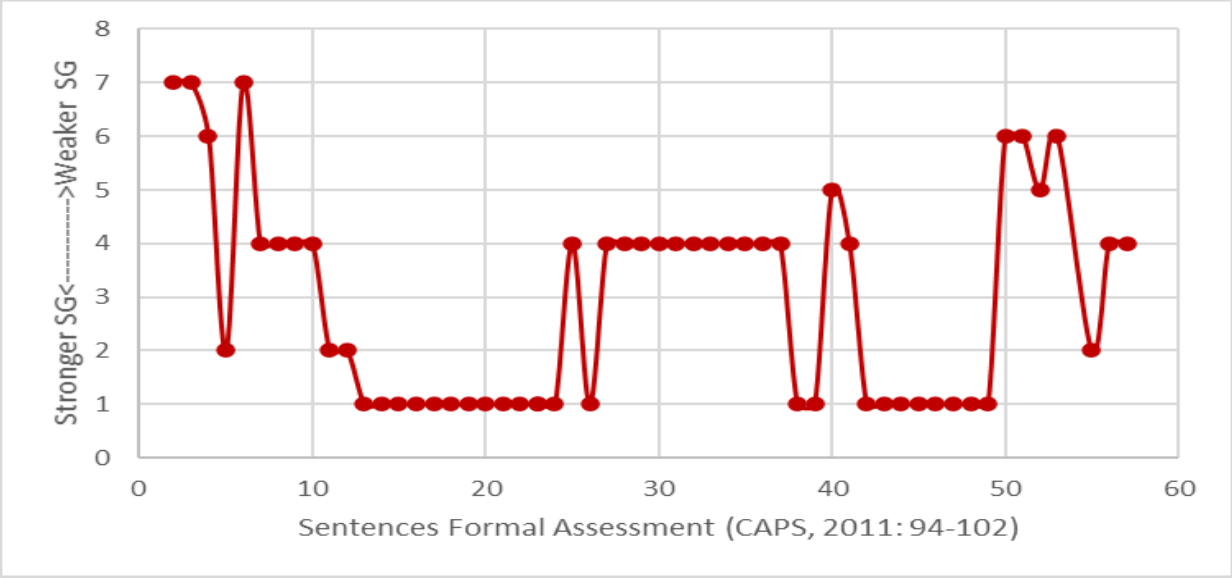


Figure 5.5: Semantic gravity profile of "formal" assessment in CAPS

The section starts with a somewhat tautologous definition of formal assessment as "all assessment tasks that make up a formal programme of assessment for the year" (CAPS, 2011a: 89). The next sentence has another shot at defining formal assessment as follows: "formal assessment tasks are marked and formally recorded by the teacher for progression purposes" (2011a: 89). Furthermore, formal assessment tasks "are subject to moderation for the purpose of quality assurance" (2011a: 89). The purpose of formal assessment is the systematic evaluation of "how well learners are progressing" (2011a: 89), which was previously cited as the purpose of "informal assessment" (2011a: 89) and contradicts the earlier definition with regard to "progression purposes". Examples are provided then, which are similar to those offered as examples of informal assessment. The example below is particularly confusing:

> Assessment of written work will focus primarily on the learner's ability to convey meaning, as well as how correctly they have written, for example, correct language structures and use, spelling and punctuation (CAPS, 2011a: 88).

Is the primary focus on the learner's meaning-making or are both meaning-making and correctness of equal importance? Logically there cannot be two primary foci. Thus, the sentence is illogical. The following is an attempt to explain the difference between understanding and memorisation:

> It is important to assess what learners understand and not what they can just memorise, so assess skills in context as much as possible, e.g. learners may spell all their words correctly during a test on Friday, but are they able to use those same words correctly spelt when writing/recording their personal news or a story? (CAPS, 2011a: 88).

The first part of the above distinguishes between understanding and memorisation, although it rather strangely seems to value both. The example provided claims that it is important that a word is accurately spelled in a test “on Friday” and in a story (at some later stage). Consistent correct spelling does not indicate that the word is understood (Griffith, Juel & Gough, 2017). The sentence is illogical and seems to give the impression that a spelling test might occur every Friday – which could indicate overassessment. The “test on Friday” is also a very clear example of assessment as a “separate entity”.

Rubrics

Language skills are commonly assessed using rubrics (Beyreli & Ari, 2009). Rubrics need to be carefully designed to assess written or oral work, and rubrics usually focus on the learner’s ability to convey meaning and creativity (Beaglehole, 2014). However, rubrics also can be used to assess how correctly the learners have written, for example, correct language structures and use, spelling, and punctuation (Outeiral, 2014). Rubrics are valuable for self-assessment purposes, such as bringing to light the requirements of a language assessment task (Vasileiadou & Karadimitriou, 2021). The CAPS document offers no structure or level descriptors for rubrics to assess intermediate language learners. Only two references are made to rubrics:

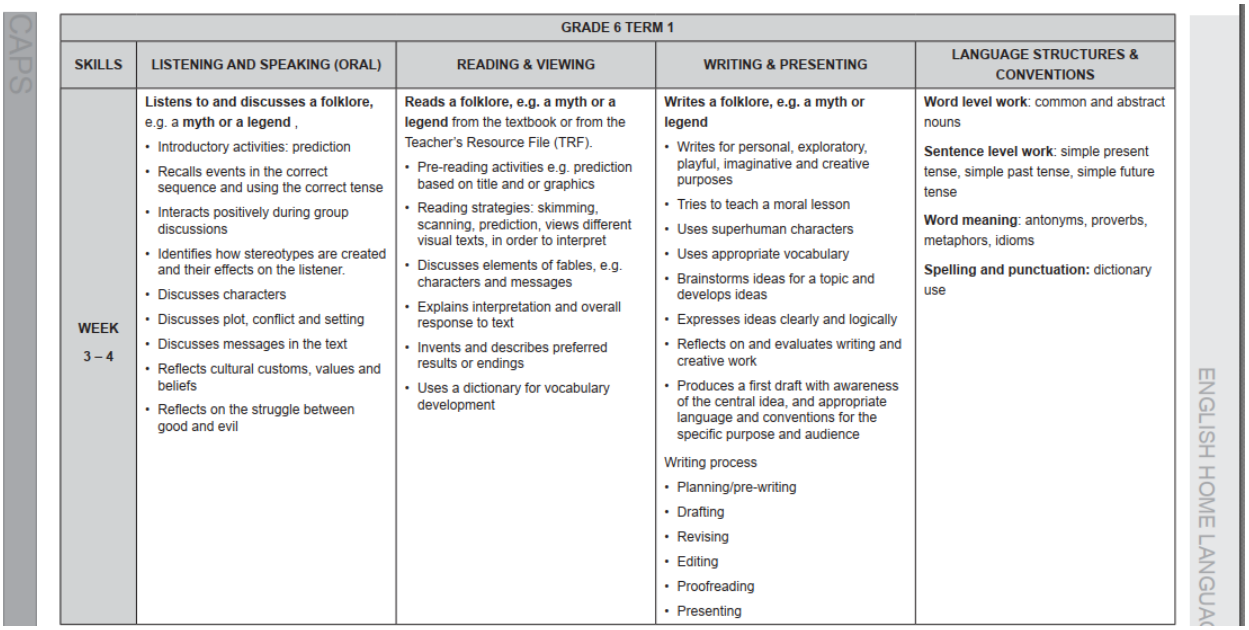
> Assessment rubrics should address the different language skills in the task (CAPS, 2011a: 93).
>
> A rubric is more suitable than a memorandum for a creative writing piece (CAPS, 2011a: 95).

These two quotations do not explain what a rubric is, how it could be designed, and how it is used in assessment. No guidelines are provided on how to design rubrics for speaking, reading, creative writing, or transactional texts.

Plan of Assessment

The Plan of Assessment is the main mechanism for formal assessment practice, and it is in this section that the accumulated effect of the lack of a principled approach to assessment is most keenly felt. The intention is “to spread formal assessment tasks in all subjects in a school throughout a term” (CAPS, 2011a: 93).

Figure 5.6 is an extract from the Teaching Plan for Grade 6, which shows the language skills and formal language requirements for each week of the academic year. In most cases, the genre is specified as well, e.g. the genre “folklore” in the extract below.



GRADE 6 TERM 1				
SKILLS	**LISTENING AND SPEAKING (ORAL)**	**READING & VIEWING**	**WRITING & PRESENTING**	**LANGUAGE STRUCTURES & CONVENTIONS**
WEEK 3 – 4	**Listens to and discusses a folklore,** e.g. a **myth or a legend** , • Introductory activities: prediction • Recalls events in the correct sequence and using the correct tense • Interacts positively during group discussions • Identifies how stereotypes are created and their effects on the listener. • Discusses characters • Discusses plot, conflict and setting • Discusses messages in the text • Reflects cultural customs, values and beliefs • Reflects on the struggle between good and evil	**Reads a folklore, e.g. a myth or a legend** from the textbook or from the Teacher's Resource File (TRF). • Pre-reading activities e.g. prediction based on title and or graphics • Reading strategies: skimming, scanning, prediction, views different visual texts, in order to interpret • Discusses elements of fables, e.g. characters and messages • Explains interpretation and overall response to text • Invents and describes preferred results or endings • Uses a dictionary for vocabulary development	**Writes a folklore, e.g. a myth or legend** • Writes for personal, exploratory, playful, imaginative and creative purposes • Tries to teach a moral lesson • Uses superhuman characters • Uses appropriate vocabulary • Brainstorms ideas for a topic and develops ideas • Expresses ideas clearly and logically • Reflects on and evaluates writing and creative work • Produces a first draft with awareness of the central idea, and appropriate language and conventions for the specific purpose and audience Writing process • Planning/pre-writing • Drafting • Revising • Editing • Proofreading • Presenting	**Word level work**: common and abstract nouns **Sentence level work**: simple present tense, simple past tense, simple future tense **Word meaning**: antonyms, proverbs, metaphors, idioms **Spelling and punctuation:** dictionary use

Figure 5.6: Extract from Grade 6 Teaching Plan (CAPS, 2011a: 73)

The Programme of Assessment is equally prescriptive. Figure 5.7 shows examples of the assessment tasks required for the intermediate phase. Rubrics are not provided, but the mark allocation to each aspect of the test is stipulated.

The Programme of Assessment comprises a series of logistical requirements, including how many assessments are required, when the assessments should be conducted, and how many marks are allocated. Teachers are required to "ensure that these aspects have been informally assessed and feedback given to the learner before they are formally assessed" (2011a: 90). The large number of assessments is a challenge for both educators and learners. As Govender and Hugo point out, "this shortcoming reduces parts of CAPS to what is perceived as a set of onerous, prescriptive, administrative requirements, rather than a way to assist with improving literacy levels" (2018: 29). The Programme of Assessment, which all teachers have to follow, is justified as follows:

> Programme of Assessment (POA) is to ensure validity, reliability, fairness and sufficiency of assessment by giving explicit guidance on the types of activities and the percentage allocated to each language skill within a task. It also addresses the focus of assessment, i.e., the way tasks should be addressed (CAPS, 2011a: 90).

The Programme of Assessment table

TERM 1					
Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6	
Task 1	**%**	**Task 1**	**%**	**Task 1**	**%**
Narrative / descriptive text		Narrative / descriptive text		Narrative / descriptive text	
Listens to and speaks about family / friends / pets / favourite sport / current issues	25	Listens to and speaks about family / friends / pets / favourite sport / current issues-	20	Listens to and speaks about family / friends / pets / favourite sport / current issues	20
Language Structures and Conventions in context	15	Language Structures and Conventions in context	15	Language Structures and Conventions in context	15
Reads aloud	20	Reads aloud	20	Reads aloud	15
Reflects on stories/text read independently	15	Reflects on stories/text read independently	15	Reflects on stories/text read independently	20
Writes a-paragraph about family / friends / pets / favourite sport / current issues	25	Writes about family / friends/ pets / favourite sport / current issues	30	Writes about family / friends/ pets / favourite sport / current issues	30
Total	**100**	**Total**	**100**	**Total**	**100**
Task 2	**%**	**Task 2**	**%**	**Task 2**	**%**
Literature (poetry)		Literature (poetry)		Literature (poetry)	
Listens to and speaks about poetry	20	Listens to and speaks about poetry	20	Listens to and speaks about poetry	20
Comprehension test	30	Comprehension test (poem)	30	Comprehension test (poem)	30
Language Structures and Conventions in context	20	Language Structures and Conventions in context	20	Language Structures and Conventions in context	20
Writes a poem	30	Writes a poem	30	Writes a poem	30
Total	**100**	**Total**	**100**	**Total**	**100**

Figure 5.7: Extract from the Programme of Assessment (CAPS, 2011a: 94)

Summative assessment in CAPS comprises continuous assessment (referred to as "school-based assessment") and two examinations, one in Term 2 and one in Term 4. A range of assignments and tests that use a variety of text types are required throughout the academic year. As a guide for teachers, the following examples are offered as possible "transactional texts" (CAPS, 2011a: 101):

> Formal & informal letters to the press / Formal letters of application, request, complaint, sympathy, invitation, thanks, congratulations, & business letters / Friendly letters / Magazine articles & columns / Memoranda / Minutes & agendas, Newspaper articles & columns / Obituaries/ Reports (formal & informal) / Reviews / Written formal & informal speeches / Curriculum Vitae / Editorials / Brochures / Written interviews / Dialogues (CAPS, 2011a: 101).

The above list is inappropriate for intermediate phase learners and would not meet the principles of validity or fairness in a summative assessment.

Cognitive levels

A concern raised by teachers was the "lack of guidance on the use of cognitive levels" (CAPS Amendments, 2019: 4). What is meant by "cognitive levels" is not defined or referenced in the glossary of terms but seems to be adapted from Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Krathwohl, 2002). The "Cognitive Levels" tables are not cross referenced in the CAPS, CAPS

Amendments, or NPA documents, which means that the reader repeatedly needs to search for definitions and details to make sense of statements in the CAPS documents. Not much has changed from CAPS (2011a: 91-92) to CAPS Amendments (2020), except to the split of the percentage of level 1 and 2 Cognitive levels (2020: 18-19). It was added that “assessment tasks should include low, middle and high order questions” (CAPS Amendment, 2020: 9), but in the referred table it is called Literal level 1, Re-organisation level 2, Inference level 3, Evaluation level 4, and Appreciation level 5. This is confusing with regard to the low, middle, and high levels. Random sentences, such as “a variety of types of questions such as multiple choice, cloze, comparison and direct questions should be used”, are stated without indicating the cognitive levels involved or what is addressed.

Guidelines, such as those that appear in the above-quoted passage, are distributed across the document, but the “Cognitive Levels” table (CAPS, 2011a: 91–92) has a particular focus on exemplary reading comprehension questions. This table is a missed opportunity in the CAPS document. Firstly, it offers examples of different types of questions in the order of increasing difficulty and complexity: “literal” questions, “reorganizational” questions, questions that require “inference”, “evaluative” questions, and “appreciative” questions (CAPS, 2011a: 91–92). While there are advantages to distinguishing between different question types, the research literature advises teachers to explain and demonstrate reading comprehension techniques until students are able to apply these techniques on their own (Gill, 2008). Instead of posing more challenging questions, the National Reading Panel's (2000) recommendation for enhancing reading comprehension is to increase explicit education in comprehension skills. CAPS (2011a) does not provide teachers with instructions on how to support students in developing the reading skills necessary to respond to the suggested questions or on how to evaluate these skills. The suggested questions in the “Cognitive Levels” table are generic (i.e. questions that readers at a range of levels would use), and no attempt is made to adapt them for learners at the intermediate phase. A question such as “what does a character’s actions/attitude(s)/ motives... show about him/her in the context of universal values” (CAPS, 2011a: 92) is clearly not appropriate for the intermediate level.

Reading comprehension

Minimal attention is given to the teaching of comprehension, or its assessment, in the CAPS (2011a) document. This is despite the importance of reading comprehension in the Teaching Plans, in which teachers are instructed to set comprehension exercises “every second week” (CAPS, 2011a: 14), and in the Programme of Assessment, which requires comprehension tests for “formal” assessment, for both examinations and continuous assessment towards the learners’ final marks (CAPS, 2011a: 93-101). Reading comprehension appears in two forms in the examinations: firstly, as comprehension tests covering a “range of texts…including visual

or graphic texts" (CAPS, 2011a: 101) and, secondly, in the two-hour "Integrated Paper" (CAPS, 2011a:98) consisting of "reading comprehension, language in context, writing – essays and transactional texts" (CAPS, 2011a: 101). The CAPS document proposes only two reading strategies in the glossary, neither of which is mentioned in the text itself.

> **Rereading** – rereading is a reading strategy that gives the reader another chance to make sense out of a challenging text.
> **Restating** – restating is a reading strategy where the reader will retell, shorten, or summarise the meaning of a passage or chapter, either orally or in written form. (CAPS, 2011a: 110)

Rereading doesn't assist with comprehension (Clarke, Hyde & Drennan, 2013). Although restating is a fundamental technique (Gill, 2008), there are others (such as cause-and-effect and problem-and-solution) that are more suitable for meaning-making at the intermediate level (Meyer & Ray, 2011). The advice offered to teachers is not helpful as it includes making sure that learners "pause occasionally to check [their] comprehension and to let the ideas sink in" (CAPS, 2011a: 10) which mystifies the reading process. Teachers are told to instruct learners, who do not understand what they are reading, as follows: "Reread a section if you do not understand at all. Read confusing sections aloud, at a slower pace, or both" (CAPS, 2011a: 10). Several researchers have found that the advice offered in the CAPS with regard to reading is inappropriate and inadequate (e.g. Rule & Land, 2017). The lack of a principled approach to reading comprehension poses a significant barrier to learners' literacy development (De Lange et al., 2020). The CAPS (2011a) provides minimal guidance or examples, and yet considerable emphasis is placed on prescriptive Teaching Plans and on the Plan of Assessment.

5.7.4 Moderation of Assessment

The section entitled Moderation of Assessment instructs moderators to ensure that teachers assess "learners' ability to analyse and synthesise information given in a text" (CAPS, 2011a: 103) and do not ask questions about general knowledge related to the text.
The instructions to moderators are clear and logical, in contrast to most other sections of the document. The extract below provides an example of an instruction to moderators:

> …the moderator will give good comment, among other things, on the levels of questioning in comprehension testing; the frequency of extended writing; the quality of assessment instruments and the developmental opportunities afforded and the teacher's engagement with learner workbooks and evidence of learner performance (CAPS, 2011a: 103).

5.7.5 Reflections on CAPS

Many South African language researchers feel that the CAPS is a key determinant of negative education outcomes (Govender & Hugo, 2018; Magagula, 2016; Weideman, Du Plessis & Steyn, 2017). Weideman et al. indicate the number of inconsistencies, misalignments, and contradictions in the CAPS documents, such as the "misalignment of purpose and assessment" (2017: 6). Magagaula points out that there are "many difficulties with these policies and guides, and as a result successful implementation of the policy is unlikely" (Magagula, 2016: 1).

The cover slogan of the CAPS is "structured, clear, practical: helping teachers to unpack the power of the NCS". The results of this policy study, however, suggest that considerable improvement is needed for the CAPS Home Language Intermediate Phase document to attain a logical structure, clear and principled definitions, and useful and practical guidelines for the teaching and assessment of reading comprehension.

5.8 General Education and Training CAPS Amendments

Due to the many concerns raised about the CAPS documents across all subject areas and levels, a review of the CAPS documents was initiated in 2019:

> However, the curriculum review process is lengthy and includes strict policy processes. In order to provide interim relief to teachers whilst supporting effective curriculum implementation, the DBE developed an abridged version of Section 4 of the CAPS, focusing mainly on the reduction of formal assessment tasks across most subjects. Due to the urgency of the teachers' requests, the DBE aims to provide provisional relief whilst allowing the rigorous process of reviewing the CAPS to take place (2020: 3).

The General Education and Training CAPS Amendments (hereafter GET CAPS Amendments, 2020) focuses on assessment to provide the most urgently required interim changes. The GET CAPS Amendments (2020) includes a subsection on assessment in Home Language and First Additional Language. It explains types of assessment and informal and formal assessment task requirements and the programme of assessment (GET CAPS Amendments, 2020: 6-13).

The concerns raised by teachers, subject specialists, parents, and others on the challenges in the implementation of the CAPS are summarised in the GET CAPS Amendments.

- "Curriculum/assessment overload and poor curriculum coverage;
- Poor quality of formal assessment tasks;
- Lack of guidance on the use of cognitive levels;

- Omissions on the forms of assessment and weighting of assessment with regards to time and marks;
- The need to create more time for teaching and formative assessment;
- The number of tasks based on the need to make valid and reliable judgements about learning outcomes;
- Shift from disconnected "tagged on" assessments to credible assessment tasks;
- The nature of the subject and grade used to determine the required number of assessment tasks; and
- To reduce dominance by any single type or mode, e.g. tests, projects, assignments, case studies, simulations, etc." (GET CAPS Amendments, 2020: 3).

It is stated in the GET CAPS Amendments that the Department of Education "has agreed to undertake a holistic review of the CAPS" (South Africa, Department Basic Education, 2019:3). One would hope that the gaps that emerged in the list above would be addressed to "enhance the effectiveness of the curriculum" (2020: 3). Despite the concerns about "assessment overload", there was no reduction in the number of assessment tasks in Creative Arts, Languages, Life Orientation, and Social Sciences (GET CAPS Amendments, 2020: 4). The formal Programme of Assessment for Grades 4 to 6 currently comprises 13 formal assessment tasks, 12 of which comprise 75% of the learner's promotion mark and one end-of-the-year examination that makes up the final 25%. The June examination is part of the "school-based assessment" component (2020: 12).

The GET CAPS Amendments reminds readers that:

> Assessment should be both informal (Formative or Assessment for Learning) and formal (Assessment of Learning). In both cases regular feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience (2020: 7).

Informal assessment is not defined in the glossary of terms in the CAPS (2012b), nor is it defined in the GET CAPS Amendments (2020). However, under the general section on "Assessment: Grades 4-6 Home Language and First Additional Language" (2020: 6-26), under the subheading "Types of Assessment" (2020: 7), five types of assessment are described in a tabular form (see Table 5.3). Still in the section on Language (2020: 5 - 8), there is a statement that "the following types of assessment are very useful in mathematics". As a result, teachers are encouraged to use them to serve the purposes associated with each (2020: 6). There seems to have been no attempt to adapt the table for language education. Nevertheless, the table is useful, because it is the first time in all the policy documents that the standard terms of baseline, formative, summative, diagnostic, and systemic assessment are used and clearly defined.

Table 5.3: Types, description and uses of assessment (in mathematics) (2020: 6 – 7)

Types of assessment	Description and uses
Baseline Assessment	"Baseline assessment is assessment usually used at the beginning of a phase, grade or learning experience to establish what learners already know. It assists educators with the planning of learning programmes and learning activities."
Formative Assessment	"Formative assessment is developmental and is used to inform teachers and learners about their progress. Thus it improves teaching and learning by giving teachers direction and enables them to adapt to learners' needs. Formative assessment or 'assessment for learning' involves both teacher and learner in a process of continual reflection and self-assessment. Formative assessment is interactive in that the teacher uses thought provoking questions to stimulate learner thinking and discussion."
Summative Assessment	"Summative assessment gives an overall picture of learners' progress at a given time, for example, at the end of a term. It usually results in judgements about learner performance and can involve high stakes for learners."
Diagnostic Assessment	"Diagnostic assessment is similar to formative assessment, but its application will always lead to some form of intervention or remedial action or programme. It shows either learners' strengths and weaknesses or inappropriate teaching methodology. When it is used to find out about the nature and cause of medical barriers to learning it should be administered by specialists and is followed by expert guidance, support and intervention strategies."
Systemic Assessment	"Systemic assessment is an external way of monitoring the education system by comparing learners' performance to national indicators of learner achievement. It involves monitoring of learner attainment at regular intervals, using nationally or provincially defined measuring instruments. This form of evaluation compares and aggregates information about learner achievements so that it can be used to assist in curriculum development and evaluation of teaching and learning. For the General Education and Training Band systemic evaluation usually targets Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9 Languages and Mathematics."

The sections on "Assessment in Languages" (2020: 8-10), "Informal or Daily Assessment or Assessment for Learning or Formative Assessment" (2020: 10-11), and "Formal Assessment Task" (2020: 11-13) are similar to those sections in the CAPS document (see Section 5.7). The prescriptive nature of the assessment requirements (Figure 5.9) and the mark distribution for the required formal assessment tasks (Figure 5.10) remain unchanged in the GET CAPS Amendments. There is no relief here for teachers overburdened with "daily assessment".

Table 2: Nature of formal assessment

Tasks	Nature of the tasks	Form of Assessment	Marking Tool
Oral	• Oral task comprises **Reading Aloud** and **Listening and Speaking.** • Total of 4 oral tasks per annum. • 1 oral task per Term. • Term 1 Reading Aloud comprises (un) prepared reading. • Terms 2 and 4 oral tasks are used as Paper 1 for the Mid-year and the Year-end examinations and comprise: o (Un)Prepared reading / (Un)Prepared speech / Listening Comprehension / Conversation / Presentation / Role Play / Interview / Dialogue • Term 3 oral task is an oral presentation on the project.	Reading Speaking	Rubric Grid Memorandum
Reading Comprehension	• Total of 3 Reading Comprehension per annum. • Term 1 Reading Comprehension task comprises the following: o Literary / non-literary text o Visual text • Reading Comprehension in Term 2 and 4 is Paper 2 for the Mid-year and Year-end examination and comprises: o Question 1: Literary / Non Literary text o Question 2: Visual text o Question 3: Summary o Question 4: Language Structures and Conventions in context	Test	Memorandum Rubric
Language Structures and Conventions	• 1 Language Structures and Conventions in context in Term 1	Test	Memorandum

Figure 5.8: Example of Formal Assessment Requirements (CAPS Amendments, 2020: 15)

Table 4: Marks and Percentage Breakdown per task in Grades 4-6 for Home Language

			Marks per Grade			
			GRADE 4- 5		Grade 6	
Term	Task		Mark	%	Mark	%
1	1	Oral	20	7.6%	20	7%
	2	Transactional Writing	10	3.6%	10	4.4%
	3	Essay Writing	20	3.6%	20	4.4%
	4	Reading Comprehension	25	10%	30	9.5%
	5	Language Structures and Conventions	15	7%	20	6.5%
2	6	Oral Paper 1	20	7.7%	20	7%
	7	Writing Paper 3	30	7.2%	30	8.8%
	8	Comprehension & Language: Paper 2	40	17%	50	16%
3	9	Oral	20	7.7%	20	7%
	10	Project	40	3.6%	50	4.4%
TOTAL SBA			240	75%	270	75%
4	11	Oral Paper 1	20	8%	20	7%
	12	Writing Paper 3	30	7%	30	8%
	13	Comprehension & Language: Paper 2	40	10%	50	10%
TOTAL EXAM MARK			90	25%	100	25%

Figure 5.9: Mark allocations for formal assessment (CAPS Amendments, 2020: 17)

5.9 Concluding reflections: To what extent do assessment policies guide or fail to guide assessment practices in EHL?

Although the graphs are far from the ideal semantic gravity, there are benefits to the documents such as the content of assessment program per grade and term. Also the weighting of marks are provided as a good guideline where the emphasis in teaching should be. The lesson plans and informal assessment align with the assessment tasks. However, contradictions and tensions were noted in the first and all subsequent versions of the NCS. These tensions, for example, between policy and knowledge – or between whose knowledge and what knowledge, as Hoadley (2015) put it – between learners' experience and disciplinary knowledge, and between aspiration and reality, have continued to have repercussions on the whole cluster of policies that reside within the NCS framework. These tensions are evident in the assessment requirements in the conflations and confusions with regard to the differences between the purposes of assessment, the underpinning principles of assessment (both generically and with regard to the specific purposes of language assessment), and types and methods of assessment.

The many inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the use of assessment terminology have been noted. Chisholm (2005) points out that changing terminology to disrupt its associations with

the past was understandable, but the new terminology needs to be defined carefully. The use of non-standard terms such as “informal assessment” should be justified and clearly defined. The non-standard term “informal assessment” (which later became the even more problematic term “daily assessment”) seems unnecessary when the more commonly used term “formative assessment” is available (e.g. Dolin et al., 2018: 55).

Also available are a range of assessment activities that are specific to language assessment, which the CAPS document seems unaware of. Table 5.4 provides a summary of terms used across the documents, as well as whether the terms are defined in a separate glossary (X), defined within the text (+), or used without definition (#).

Table 5.4: Summary of terms used

Terms used	NCS	Regulations	NPA	NPPPPR	CAPS	CAPS/A
Formal assessment		X	X	#	+	#
Informal assessment		X	X		+	#
Classroom-based assessment			+			
School-based assessment		X	X	X		
Daily assessment			#		#	
Internal assessment			X	X		
External assessment		X	X	X		
Continuous assessment	#				X	X
Assessment criteria	+					
Assessment standard	+					
Formative assessment						X
Summative assessment						X

X – defined in the glossary
+ – Used in the text with an in-text definition
 # – Used in the text without a definition

Using globally accepted terminology could support teachers’ understanding of and interaction with the CAPS (2011a), the GET CAPS Amendments (2020) and the NPA (2012a). The lack of references implies that the CAPS and the cluster of NCS documents are not grounded on evidence, which impacts their trustworthiness. The lack of cross referencing between the

CAPS (2011), the GET CAPS Amendments (2020), and the NPA (2012a) is problematic as students are expected to use these documents together.

The imprecise terminology extends beyond the assessment terms and is evident in the language requirements more generally. This imprecise use of language, such as using "language skills" and "language aspects" interchangeably, referring to "language knowledge", "language structures", and/or "language in context" (CAPS, 2011a: 104) as used in the Programme of Assessment (CAPS, 2011a: 99-103) instead of more precise or standard terms (such as genre, text, sentence, or word) has been pointed out in several critiques of the CAPS documents across a range of disciplines (Govender & Hugo, 2018; Khoza, 2015; Weideman et al., 2017). The text is full of contradictory statements such as:

> Assessment of written work will focus primarily on the learner's ability to convey meaning and creativity, as well as how correctly they have written, for example, correct language structures and use, spelling and punctuation (CAPS, 2011a: 88).

It has been noted that the primary factor contributing to policy failure is the absence of a rational transition from principles to practice (Fullan, 2007). The NCS documents do not explicitly state the principles that underpin the requirements for assessment, although many are implied in the instructions given to teachers, for example, "regular feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience" (CAPS, 2011a: 88), "language learning is a process" (CAPS, 2011a: 88), "the work on which assessment is conducted must have been covered during the term" (CAPS, 2011a: 89), and "the assessment items must be pitched at different cognitive levels to ensure validity" (CAPS, sentence 31). None of these implicit principles, however, are clarified, supported by research, or connected to the numerous requirements for practice. Teachers might struggle to comprehend why certain demands are made of them. The lack of explicit principles to guide the teaching and assessment of reading comprehension has a knock-on effect across the CAPS document, which results in increasingly confusing advice to teachers on assessment practice.

Because explicit assessment principles do not guide practice, claims about assessment can become contradictory. Illogical and contradictory statements, such as whether a formal assessment should focus on a single "particular skill" or on "more than one" language skill, are evident as it is understood that language skills are interrelated. This could have a frustrating effect on the users. This could add to the burden of assessment when the impression is created that all teaching and learning is reduced to assessment.

While other studies have criticised the CAPS documents and highlighted how unclear its teacher-focused instructions are (Govender & Hugo, 2018; Weideman et al., 2017), this study adds to the body of knowledge by empirically illuminating where the CAPS documents' logic breaks down. It has been demonstrated that the absence of a principled approach has cumulative effects, and guidance given to teachers is likely to be haphazard in the absence of defined principles developed from research and theory to guide the teaching and assessment of reading comprehension.

Over the course of the text, the CAPS (2011a) delivers progressively erratic guidance and practice recommendations which lead to an assessment plan that is largely inadequate for the intermediate level. The study's use of the semantic gravity translation device enabled it to map the CAPS document's fundamental structure and, as a result, to suggest improvements that could be made to it or other reading comprehension-related policy guides.

In the next chapter, the focus is on the extent to which teacher education prepares novice teachers for the realities of assessment practice in the Western Cape school system.

CHAPTER SIX
REFLECTION: THE MISSING ASSESSMENT CONCEPT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

In many professions, professional training programs now emphasise the development of the ability to reflect both *in* action (while doing something) and *on* action (after you have done it) (Schön, 1983).

6.1 Introduction to Chapter Six

Chapter Six addresses the second research sub-question: To what extent does teacher education prepare pre-service teachers in the EHL for competent assessment practice? In the next section, Section 6.2, the policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ, 2015a) is described for the purpose of understanding policy provision for teacher education in terms of ontology and epistemology. The study will show what the reader needs to know and why certain aspects are taught. This is followed by Section 6.3 on assessment in the teacher education curriculum, focussing on the subjects EHL, First Additional Language Methodology (which all Home and First Additional Language students take as their English Methodology subject), and Education and Professional Studies at the intermediate phase. Section 6.4 analyses lecturers' questionnaire responses and Section 6.5 analyses lecturers' inputs and responses in the focus group interview. Finally, Section 6.6 synthesises the findings across the different data sources and concludes the chapter by addressing the extent to which teacher education prepares EHL pre-service teachers for competent assessment practice.

6.2 Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ)

The Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE, 2000c) was the first post-apartheid policy on teacher education. It used an outcomes-based approach to specify the competences that an educator should demonstrate. The emphasis of the NSE policy was on teachers' performance in the schooling system and was intended to contribute to the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS): "training educators who have the knowledge, skills and values to make learning in schools more relevant to the economic and social needs of South Africa" (Parker, 2002: 40).

The NSE defined seven roles that an educator should be able to perform as well as the knowledge, skills, and values that would underpin successful performance in the roles. The seven roles are: (1) learning mediator, (2) interpreter and designer of learning programmes, (3) leader, administrator, and manager, (4) scholar, researcher, and lifelong learner, (5) assessor, (6) community, citizenship, and pastoral role, and (7) a learning area, subject,

discipline, or phase specialist role (NSE, 2000c).

Amongst the seven roles for educators are key criteria for the development and recognition of teacher qualifications and learning programmes. For example, the NSE introduced the concepts of “integrated” and “applied competence” as the primary means of assessing teaching practice.

Following several ministerial reviews, the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000c) was replaced by the policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ, 2007). MRTEQ underwent various amendments between 2007 and 2015, and the current version, MRTEQ (2015c), describes the specific requirements for teacher education programmes, including guidelines regarding the teaching practicum, termed “work-integrated learning (WIL)”, in order to align with the Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (MRTEQ, 2015c: 10).

The seven roles of the teacher are retained in MRTEQ (2015c) and represent the persistence of outcomes-based education, despite MRTEQ’s attempt to introduce a knowledge-based approach to teacher education. MRTEQ tends to conflate knowledge and learning but implies that the different forms of learning (listed in the right column in Table 6.1) are underpinned by different kinds of knowledge (represented in the left column of Table 6.1). In other words, different “types of learning [are] associated with the acquisition, integration, and application of knowledge for teaching purposes” (MRTEQ, 2015c: 10).

Table 6.1: Knowledge and learning in teacher education

	Forms of knowledge	**Forms of learning**
1	“Disciplinary or subject matter knowledge.”	Disciplinary learning
2	“General pedagogical knowledge’ and ‘specialised pedagogical content knowledge.”	Pedagogical learning
3	Practical “tacit” knowledge	Practical learning
4	Knowledge of “two languages”, “academic literacies”, “knowledge of ICTs”.	Fundamental learning
5	Contextual knowledge “of the prevailing policy, political and organisational contexts.”	Situational learning.

(MRTEQ, 2015c: 11-12)

According to Rusznyak, MRTEQ (2015c) "explicitly rejects the technicist approach that characterised much of the teacher training offered during apartheid" (2015: 9). The description of the different kinds of knowledge and learning required for teaching seems to owe much to Shulman's (1987) work on the knowledge base of expert teaching, in particular his identification of seven knowledge areas that underpinned teaching practice:

1. "Content knowledge;
2. General pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation that appear to transcend subject matter;
3. Curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programmes that serve as "tools of the trade" for teachers;
4. Pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding;
5. Knowledge of learners and their characteristics;
6. Knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom and the governance and financing of school districts to the character of communities and cultures; and
7. Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds" (Shulman, 1987: 8).

Shulman is careful to point out that:

> …much, if not most, of the proposed knowledge base remains to be discovered, invented, and refined. As more is learned about teaching, we will come to recognize new categories of performance and understanding that are characteristic of good teachers, and will have to reconsider and redefine other domains (1987: 12).

The means of acquiring complex teaching knowledge is through "formal educational scholarship", "educational materials and structure" and "the wisdom of practice" (1987: 10-11). Connections are built across the knowledge bases through "the Processes of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action" (1987: 12). Shulman underscores the complexity of teaching knowledge and expresses his "wonder at how the extensive knowledge of teaching can be learned at all during the brief period allotted to teacher preparation" (1987: 7).

MRTEQ's (2015c) knowledge areas (e.g. items 4 and 7 on Table 6.1) tend to be more contextualised than Shulman's (1987), which is to be expected in a local policy document. The

first two knowledge areas (items 1 and 2 on Table 6.1) represent disciplinary forms of knowledge, while item 3 represents knowledge acquired in practice.
According to Rusznyak, practical knowledge "is characterised by a strong semantic gravity … because it finds meaning in the contexts of practice" (2015: 13). The first knowledge area, item 1, is equivalent to Shulman's (1987) "content knowledge" which has a weaker semantic gravity, while item 2 seems equivalent to Shulman's (1987) "pedagogical content knowledge" which sees a stronger form of the semantic gravity, as it is less abstract and more applied, although still relatively context-independent.

Novelli and Sayed point out that while MRTEQ "emphasises the development of a mix of knowledge and skills appropriate for student teachers studying towards particular teacher education qualifications… it is remarkably silent on curriculum content" (2016: 32). A case in point is the brief description of the language curriculum:

> Home Language Teaching: This refers to the mother-tongue or language of choice. The cognitive level of the first language should be such that it may be used as a language of learning and teaching. Although listening and speaking skills are important, the emphasis is on developing high-level reading and writing skills (MRTEQ, 2015c: 64).

As many language researchers have repeatedly pointed out (e.g. Prinsloo & Heugh, 2013), in South Africa, English is used as a language of learning and teaching for most students from Grade 4 onwards, even though most learners and most teachers are not home language speakers of English. MRTEQ does not acknowledge that, as most teachers are not EHL speakers, "it is necessary to build academic language proficiency across school subjects along the lines of multilingual content and language integrated learning" (Van der Walt, 2021: 218). A result of the failure to address the fact that most "home language" teaching and learning is usually additional language teaching and learning, MRTEQ constrains teacher education for multilingual contexts.

The lack of specification about curriculum content is understandable in a policy intended to cover many areas, but it leaves blind spots with regard to curricular guidelines, coordination, and the connections to be made across different knowledge types. MRTEQ claims to have brought "the importance of inter-connections between different types of knowledge and practices into the foreground" (2015c: 11), as implied in the following quotation:

> Practical learning must be appropriately structured and fully integrated into overall learning programmes, while including structured supervision, mentoring and

> assessment. Time spent in the actual workplace is very important and should provide an authentic context within which student teachers can experience and demonstrate the integration of the competences they developed during the learning programme as a whole. It is also important for students to be exposed to concrete experience of the varied and contrasting contexts of schooling in South Africa (MRTEQ, 2015c: 20).

However, as Rusznyak points out, "the five types of teacher learning are listed by the policy as distinct and separate entities" (2015: 9). The implication of this omission is that teacher education curricula could be "policy-compliant but still offer unnecessarily fragmented and incoherent learning programmes to prospective teachers if each type of knowledge is developed within stand-alone modules without an overall organising framework" (Rusznyak, 2015: 9-10). While MRTEQ acknowledges the interrelationships across the knowledge areas, it is what Rusznyak (2015) calls the "overall organising framework" that is key to developing a successful teaching education curriculum. Such an overarching framework also should guide appropriate connections and linkages across the separate knowledge areas listed in MRTEQ.

It is generally accepted that teacher education requires various forms of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge to equip educators for teaching (e.g. Schön, 1987; Shulman, 1987). Teacher education consist of two pillars, theory and practice, and are in a critical interrelationship towards each other. Rusznyak (2015) points to fragmentation and incoherence because of neglecting this relationship. Billet (2001) proposes a way of conceptualising the interrelationship between theory and practice through consideration of "affordances" and "engagements" (Billet, 2001: 65). Affordances comprise the invitational qualities of the experience (i.e. the degree to which students are supported in their learning) in both academic and practical settings. Engagement refers to how students engage with and learn through what they are afforded: how they take up learning opportunities. Enabling "affordances" and "engagements" requires the deliberate structuring for articulation points between "theory and practice across the teacher education curriculum", prior to practical teaching experience, during teaching experience, and after teaching experience (Billet, 2014: 3). These articulation points might include the identification of areas in which there are commonalities and differences between theory and practice, the creation of links to what is taught in the teacher education programme, the emphasis of the "agentic and selective qualities of learning through practice" (i.e. personal epistemologies), and the generation of "critical perspectives on work and learning processes" (Billet, 2009: 829).

A key concept in the integration of theory and practice is Schön's (1987) concepts of reflection on and reflection in practice, as well as Mezirow's (1991) dimensions of reflection, including: Firstly, content reflection (reflecting on what we perceive, think, feel, and act), secondly,

process reflection (reflecting on how we perform the functions of perceiving), and, finally, "premise reflection [which] involves becoming aware of why we perceive, think, feel or act as we do" (1991: 108). In Mezirow's (1998) later work "premise reflection" is referred to as the "critical reflection of assumptions", or simply "critical reflection". Critical reflection is a form of learning that has the potential to affect teachers' established frames of reference. Mezirow argues that critical reflection is "principled thinking; ideally, it is impartial, consistent and non-arbitrary" (1991: 186).

It is well-known that pedagogical practice is enhanced through reflective practice (Billet 2001; Schön 1987; Mesirow 1991), and the failure of MRTEQ to foreground this concept has resulted in a failure to connect theory and practice, as explained in the sections that follow.

6.2.1 Assessment in MRTEQ

Because of the importance of assessment in the school system, it might be expected that there would also be a strong focus on assessment training in MRTEQ (2015c). Assessment is not singled out as a specialised field, yet in the context of South African schools, assessment is foregrounded. In the Appendix 3, titled "Basic Competences of a Beginner Teacher", MRTEQ states that "newly qualified teachers must be able to assess learners in reliable and varied ways, as well as being able to use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning" (2015c: 56). The single paragraph quoted below is the only guidance provided to teacher educators on assessment:

> The educator will understand that assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and know how to integrate it into this process. The educator will have an understanding of the purposes, methods and effects of assessment and be able to provide helpful feedback to learners. The educator will design and manage both formative and summative assessments in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of the learning and meet the requirements of accrediting bodies. The educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment results. The educator will understand how to interpret and use assessment results to feed into processes for the improvement of learning programmes (MRTEQ, 2015c: 61).

This brief statement was analysed using the same methodology as used to analyse policy documents in Chapter Five using semantic gravity indicators, SG 8 - 1.

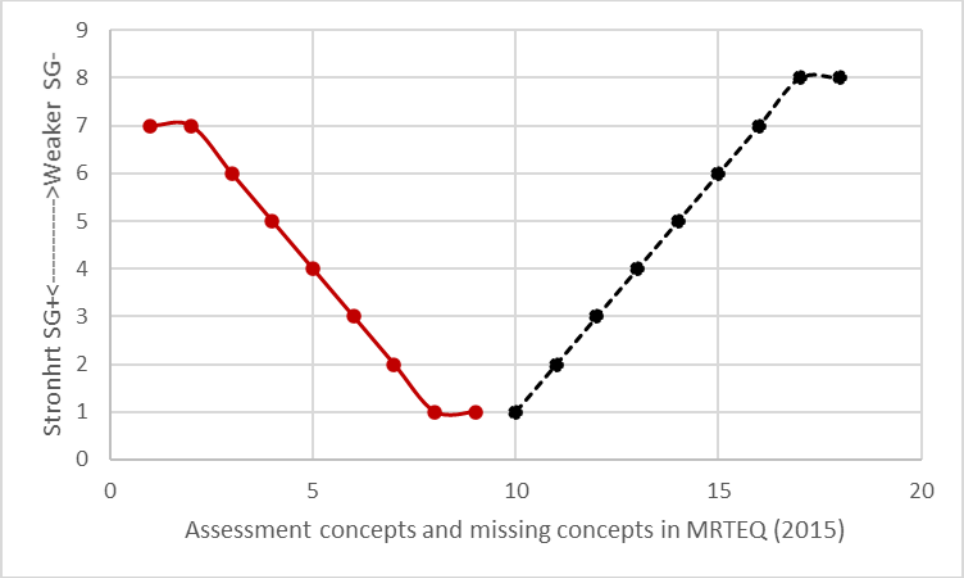


Figure 6.1: Assessment concepts and missing concepts in MRTEQ (2015c)

The brief section on assessment (quoted in full above) is represented by the "downward escalator" (the red line) in Figure 6.1. The shift towards a knowledge-based approach to teacher education can be seen in the brief description of a knowledge base for assessment, such as "understanding of the purposes (SG 8), methods and effects of assessment" (SG 7), "designing and managing formative and summative assessments" (SG 4), and the keeping of "detailed and diagnostic records of assessment results" (SG 2) – all for the overall purpose of improving learning. It is worth pointing out that MRTEQ uses the terms "formative and summative assessment" in preference to the NCS's "formal and informal" assessment. The use of the term "know how" is striking and could be a reference to Ryle's (2009) well-known distinction between "know that" (propositional knowledge) and "know how" (practical knowledge). However, despite MRTEQ's description of the forms of knowledge needed by teachers, there is no attempt in the short description to propose ways in which the assessment knowledge forms might be connected.

The black dashed line in Figure 6.1 represents what might have been, or the missing reflective concepts, such as content reflection as a form of "debriefing" after practice, process reflection as going more deeply into strategies and guidelines for practice, and critical reflection as the more decontextualised and theorised form of reflection. If reflection, as shown in the work of Schön (1987), Shulman (1987), Mezirow (1991), and Billet (2001) was drawn on, the resultant semantic gravity profile might have had more of a wave-like structure, demonstrating how reflection on and in practice could connect theory and practice in a teacher education curriculum. However, although policies, like MRTEQ, offer minimum requirements, they do not prohibit universities from doing more than expected to equip their students for practise.

The concept of semantic gravity is a useful way to show the relationship between different forms of knowledge, as well as to explain the relationships between the different forms of knowledge identified in MRTEQ. Because of its potential to identify relationships between theory and practice through stronger and weaker linkages to contexts, semantic gravity is useful for showing the interrelationships between different knowledge forms. Even in the most practical of activities, the semantic gravity could be reduced to provide more abstract guiding principles. For example, students could be provided with solid conceptual knowledge on assessment to design a practical assessment task or to reflect on classroom experience, even one that does not demonstrate good practice. In other words, pre-service teachers should experience a semantic gravity range. In post-practical reflective learning, concepts and practice – or weaker and stronger semantic gravity – need to be closely related. Students will be able to transform real experiences into pertinent and integrated knowledge, for instance, by reflecting on practice and improving on their own strategies.

With regard to classroom practice, procedural knowledge is insufficient, and they need to understand the concepts and principles that guide the procedures. Although content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (in this case knowledge of content assessment), and practical knowledge are distinct forms of knowledge, they are connected, for example, in critiquing practical assessment procedures by means of the conceptual knowledge provided in the higher education context. The need to develop both practical assessment skills and assessment concepts to attain "integrative knowledge" is likely to be a constantly moving target for students who will shift between theory and practice.

6.3 Assessment in the Teacher Education Curriculum

MRTEQ is a national policy from which each university created its own curriculum. MRTEQ allows for institutional flexibility and discretion in the allocation of credits within learning programmes and encourages teacher educators to become "engaged in curriculum design, policy implementation and research" (2015c: 10). MRTEQ "requires all teacher education programmes to address the critical challenges facing education in South Africa today" (2015c: 10). As with all higher education programmes, the provider institution needs to request permission from the Higher Education Quality Committee to offer the B Ed programme. The Education Faculty has to show in its application that it complies with the broad aims of MRTEQ, in particular the "Basic Competences of a Beginner Teacher", in order to show that pre-service teachers are adequately prepared for practice.

A number of B Ed (Intermediate Phase) curriculum documents were studied (see Section 4.3.2.2), but in the interests of readability and confidentiality, they are simply referred to as the Teacher Education Curriculum (TEC, 2016).

In compliance with MRTEQ, the TEC (2016) states the aims and content for each subject for the B Ed intermediate phase degree under the following headings:

- Purpose statement of the subject;
- Concise description of the subject content;
- Competencies to be addressed in the subject; and
- Roles of a teacher in school (TEC, 2016).

These four headings lay out the content to be covered for the subjects that are the focus of this section, namely, EHL and First Additional Language Methodology (all Home and First Additional Language students take this as their English Methodology subject – as required by MRTEQ, every student should take Home Language Methodology and First Additional Language Methodology). In this institution, all students take Home Language Methodology in Afrikaans and First Additional Language Methodology in English. Education and Professional Studies are also compulsory subjects. These subjects were chosen as they were the most likely to address assessment training for EHL i(Intermediate Phase) in the B Ed programme. Teaching Practice is a compulsory subject from first to fourth year and covers a set of practical teaching activities. The TEC (2016) sections titled Purpose Statement of the Subject, Competencies to be addressed in the subject, and Role of a Teacher in School offered broad guidelines and did not specify curricular content.

The area of interest was the “Concise description of the Subject Content” in which it was expected that the subjects would include assessment knowledge and assessment practice and would offer descriptions of theoretical assessment knowledge and practical assessment knowledge. As “practical learning must be appropriately structured and fully integrated into overall learning programmes” (MRTEQ, 2015c: 20), all the subjects are required to include the competences needed for the B Ed (Intermediate Phase), including preparing teachers for the roles of an assessor. Table 6.2 shows the subjects and what they addressed with regard to assessment. There was no mention or evidence that the subjects EHL and English First Additional Language Methodology included assessment training in the official TEC (2016) documents over the four-year training programme. They were, therefore, not included in Table 6.2. The remaining subjects were Education, Professional Studies, and Teaching Practice. Table 6.2 shows that there is very little detail regarding what training in assessment is provided. There is no mention of assessment in Education and Professional Studies in the first year. Thus, it appears that students are not prepared for English intermediate phase assessment observation at school during Teaching Practice 1.

During the second year, Education 2 and Professional Studies 2 offers “basic assessment”. The TEC (2016) does not clarify what is offered or what is meant by “basic assessment”. Professional Studies 3 covers assessment strategies, but the TEC (2016) does not refer to the type of strategies to be applied. During their final year of Intermediate Phase training in Professional Studies 4, “whole school assessment” is covered. Professional Studies 2 covered basic assessment, Professional Studies 3 covered assessment strategies, and Professional Studies 4 covered whole school assessment.

Although an academic subject, Teaching Practice 1 to 4 is not offered by academic staff and relies on experienced teachers to guide the B Ed Intermediate Phase students in accordance with their own context-specific assessment practices. Teaching Practice 3 requires students to present lessons with the emphasis on assessment, such as designing appropriate assessment instruments and rubrics. Intermediate Phase students do not appear to be prepared for designing assessment instruments and rubrics. During Teaching Practice 4, whole school assessment does not include the assessment of intermediate phase learners. However, Intermediate Phase pre-service teachers are expected to design assessment instruments.

Table 6.2: “Concise description of the Subject Content” (TEC, 2016)

Training programme	Subjects including assessment knowledge	Subjects including assessment practice
First year	None	Teaching Practice 1: Guidance and assessment by experienced teachers and lecturers.
Second year	Education and Professional Studies 2: Basic assessment	Teaching Practice 2: Guidance and assessment by experienced teachers and lecturers.
Third year	Education Professional Studies 3: Assessment strategies	Teaching Practice 3: Guidance and assessment by experienced teachers and lecturers; Presenting lessons with the emphasis on assessment, designing appropriate assessment instruments and rubrics.
Fourth year	Education and Professional Studies 4: Whole school assessment; HE Assessment for diversity	Teaching Practice 4: Guidance and assessment by experienced teachers and lecturers; Presenting lessons with the emphasis on assessment, designing appropriate assessment instruments and rubrics.

There is no evidence of the “regulating” or “monitoring” of the required basic assessment knowledge application during Teaching Practice 2 as required by MRTEQ (2015c: 9). The

assessment training offered by the higher education institution does not appear to support work-integrated learning as MRTEQ intended. For example, it does not offer any theory of assessment, or assessment specific to the EHL subject and literacy development, such as the assessment of language structures (e.g. English phonology and phonetics), skills (e.g. listening, speaking, reading, and writing), or literature appreciation. Students will, therefore, not be prepared for assessment practice in, for example, language structures. In initial teacher education, the students also need to develop their own English language competence (Van der Walt, 2021), as well as the requisite subject knowledge, skills, and methodology, including assessment methodology, in English to enable them to facilitate English language learning in the classroom, to facilitate formative assessment, and to set appropriate summative assessment tasks.

The vision of the B Ed (Intermediate Phase) curriculum document studied is that "professional practice connects teaching with student learning and requires teachers to be able to construct learning contexts and to point to evidence of that learning" (TEC, 2016: 4). The overarching vision is "to prepare teachers for a changing world" (TEC, 2016: 5). From these quotations, it is clear that a strong focus on the practical implementation of theory is intended. The purpose of the training programme is "to link this knowledge with the relevant skills, attitudes, and activities in practice" (TEC, 2016: 5). From the vision and purpose, clear criteria are established for students to achieve, as follows:

> Knowledge of learners and their development in diverse social contexts, the practical understanding of teaching and learning, the development of knowledge and skills to organise teaching, learning and assessment effectively in a diverse range of South African schools; Knowledge of classroom practices which will enhance the teaching and assessment of the curriculum (TEC, 2016: 9).

Practice is clearly a focus and assessment should be addressed under the main elements of the B Ed programme to comply with the "general requirements for the knowledge mix in any Bachelor of Education Degree" (MRTEQ, 2015c: 19). A period of between 20 and 32 weeks "in formally supervised and assessed school-based practices over the four-year duration of the degree" is included (TEC, 2016: 12). The competences listed for the B Ed (Intermediate Phase) are translated into specific graduate attributes. It is stated that these attributes are "meant to serve as a description of what it means to be a competent educator" (TEC, 2016: 10). However, it also states that "it is not meant to be a checklist against which one assesses whether a person is competent or not" (TEC, 2016: 10).

6.4 Questionnaire findings and discussion: Higher education lecturers (Data Set 2)

The focus of the questionnaire was on the lecturers' understanding of assessment" was rewritten as follows: "The focus of the questionnaire was on the lecturers' understanding of the eight levels of semantic gravity: (8) theories of assessment, (7) principles of assessment, (6) purposes of assessment, (5) assessment strategies, (4) assessment guidelines, (3) assessment planning, (2) assessment implementation, and (1) logistical issues in assessment. Two lecturers completed the questionnaire on students' readiness for assessment practices. The lecturers responsible for the subjects Education, Professional Studies, etc. are referred to as (DS2 L1 and DS2 L2. The focus of the questionnaire was on the lecturers' understanding of assessment.

6.4.1 Assessment from a disciplinary, rather than a practice, perspective

The questionnaire asked the lecturers to explain their understanding of assessment principles. Neither lecturer provided a clear statement of the general principles of assessment or of the specific principles that guide their own teaching of assessment. One lecturer provided a comprehensive list of key words associated with assessment principles, including: "reliable", "varied", "flexible", "relevant", "authentic", "standardised", "fair"", "valid", "trustworthy", "practical", "manageable" and "constructive alignment" (DS2 L1). The other lecturer provided similar terms, but had a tendency to conflate assessment principles (e.g. "fair", "bias-free") with other concepts related to assessment (e.g. "varied forms", "continuous", "procedures") (DS2 L2). This lecturer's keywords included: "multi-dimensional assessment", "varied forms of assessment", "assessment procedures", "transparent", "appropriate", "relevant", "fair", "bias-free", "continuous process", "manageable", "time-efficient", "results regularly documented" to describe the principles of assessment. Although the lecturers were able to provide lists of terms associated with the principles of assessment, they did not express their own understanding of guiding assessment principles as a foundation for practice.

Both lecturers agreed that it was important to teach students the purpose of assessment. The lecturers' disciplinary backgrounds influenced how they understood the purpose of assessment. For example, the EHL lecturer drew on concepts such as: "relevance", "constructive alignment", "formative and summative", and "reinforcement" (DS2 L1). These are terms associated with a process approach to language learning (e.g. Grenfell, 1992). The Education and Professional Studies lecturer used different descriptors, such as "assessment to determine learner support", "analysis of assessment results", "alternative forms of assessments", "SIAS document" (Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support), "observation as an assessment tool", and "assessment strategies". These are terms that are more aligned to a more competence-based approach to assessment (e.g. Herppich et al., 2018). The two lecturers differed in their approaches to the purpose of assessment, and the

difference was determined by their disciplinary contexts. They did not offer generic purposes, such as the main purpose of formative assessment is to assist learning, while the main purpose of summative assessment is to provide information about learning (e.g. Wiliam & Thompson, 2007; Harlen & James, 1997).

Both lecturers agreed that competent assessment practice was important and that preparing students for the realities of assessment in practice was necessary. For example, one of the lecturers stated that:

> [Assessment] is very important, as it is the conclusion and application of every teaching and learning moment. Students need to align all assessment tasks with the objectives and every teaching and learning moment. This constructive alignment is difficult to plan but forms the golden thread in teaching that brings everything together (DS2 L1).

In the above extract, the lecturer explains that students need to include assessment tasks at key moments in the teaching and learning process. Her use of the terms indicates a constructivist understanding of the nature of learning and the importance of alignment to enable meaning-making. For this lecturer, assessment was integral to teaching and learning; it is both “conclusion and application” and the “golden thread” that “brings everything together”.

Both lecturers taught assessment in their subjects and understood the role of assessment as a part of pedagogy. However, they taught assessment as a concept within an academic subject and not as an element of practice. Although the lecturers included concepts of assessment, the application of the concepts was not always evident.

With regard to the question of “are home language pre-service teachers proficiently prepared to implement the CAPS home language’s processes and management of assessment as stated in Section 4 and using the NPA”, the EHL lecturer explained that:

> It is not part of my curriculum. I teach the content subjects, and do not focus on the classroom itself. This is addressed in methodology and professional studies (DS2 L1).

The Education and Professional Studies lecturer explained that assessment was an important “high-level concept” in the subject, but the CAPS and the NPA were not part of the curriculum content. Thus, while both lecturers understood assessment to be part of teaching and learning, assessment practices did not feature strongly in their curriculum.

One of the lecturers provided an example of how students gained experience in assessment in her subject. Students were given an example of a learner's writing, which they discussed in groups and collectively marked. When designing a lesson plan, students had to include an assessment task, a marking memorandum, and assessment criteria appropriate to the task and the level. The assessment section of the lesson plan was evaluated as part of the students' overall mark for lesson planning. Because of time constraints in the curriculum, one of the lecturers explained that her students were enrolled in an online course from another country to support them with additional examples of assessment practices. While this is a useful intervention, it would be necessary to address the differences between the international and South African contexts.

Lecturers became more aware of the practical issues in assessment during the university's community engagement service-learning project (a ten-week compulsory programme for third-year EHL students). In the course of the project, the pre-service teachers identified considerable gaps in their own English proficiency and requested additional support. Following the service-learning project, a lecturer felt that primary schools or education department officials should be informed that:

> …examples of assessments or tests students are exposed to at schools during practice teaching tend to be very formal (DS2 L1).

While the service-learning project raised awareness of assessment as a practice, and had implications for practice, the lecturers did not address how these experiences impacted students' training in assessment.

6.4.2 Discussion: The gap between assessment in the discipline and assessment in practice

From the lecturers' responses to the questionnaire, it was clear that they viewed assessment from their disciplinary perspectives. It was also clear that they did not feel that the more practical elements of assessment training were their responsibilities: rather it was the responsibility of the mentors appointed during the teaching practicum. The mentor teachers were expected to have role modelled to the students' assessment practices in their disciplinary- or subject contexts. Their primary focus as academics was to ensure that students understood assessment, rather than giving them ample opportunities to practice assessment. Lecturers' understanding of assessment was located within their home disciplines, rather than as a generic concept. The weakness of educational policy in South Africa, and MRTEQ in particular, is that assessment "is often placed within the domain of general pedagogical knowledge" (Reed, 2014), rather than being determined by the discipline or subject requirements. The

lecturers were addressing the policy weakness from the perspective of their pedagogical content knowledge of assessment. How they taught in the disciplinary context, based on the questionnaire data, is shown in Table 6.3. The areas of stronger semantic gravity are shaded in the table.

Table 6.3: Comparison of lecturers' understandings of assessment

Semantic gravity	Assessment descriptor	Disciplinary/subject context	
		English Home Language (DS2 L1)	*Professional Studies (DS2 L2)*
8	Theory	'Constructive alignment'	'high level concept...'
7	Principles	'Authentic'	'Procedural'
6	Purposes	'Reinforcement'	'assessment to determine…'
5	Strategies	'align with objectives…'	-
4	Guidelines	Part of 'lesson planning'	-
3	Planning	-	-
2	Implementation	Teaching Practice and 'example of a learner's writing'	Teaching Practice
1	Logistics	-	-

The lecturers were focused on concepts of assessment in their disciplines, which is represented by the unshaded area of the table and weaker levels of semantic gravity (SG 8 – SG 6). They only briefly addressed the stronger levels of semantic gravity (e.g. SG 2), such as bringing an authentic text into the higher education classroom, and in the service-learning project. As policies seem to be vague and of little use, lecturers tend to show their relative autonomy as academics by focusing on their disciplines and largely ignoring the policy's minimum requirements as the directives. Both lecturers were aware of the importance of assessment practice, and there were indications, for example in the service-learning project, that theory and practice could be brought into a closer and more productive relationship. Neither lecturer mentioned the role that reflection, and critical reflection in particular, might play in bringing the worlds of assessment theory or assessment in a disciplinary context into relation with assessment in practice. Achieving a balance between theory and practice in teacher education training programmes is essential to ensure that pre-service teachers become confident and effective assessors in the primary school environment (Delandshere & Jones, 1999). It does not appear that these two lecturers were able to achieve this balance.

6.5 Focus group findings and discussion: Higher education lecturers (Data set 8)

Four lecturers participated in the focus group: two EHL lecturers (DS8 L1 and DS8 L2), a Foundation Phase Language lecturer (DS8 L3), and an Education and Professional Studies lecturer (DS8 L4). The lecturers were part of a larger focus group that brought teachers in schools, managers, and lecturers together. The focus in this section is the four lecturers' inputs and responses to assessment as a classroom practice.

6.5.1 Lecturers on assessment in practice

All four lecturers agreed that the ability to set formative and summative assessment tasks was a core function of teaching, and they all included assessment in their subjects (DS8 L1). With regard to learning about assessment during the practicum, lecturers were concerned that students were not always exposed to good assessment practices at schools. For example, many teachers did not set their own assessment tasks (they inherited them from other teachers' files), they often had incorrect marking memoranda, or used inappropriate rubrics. Students undertaking teaching practice were critical of schools that "adapted the marks" when too many learners failed an assessment; students claimed that this practice did not "make sense" (DS8 L1). To make matters worse, many teachers struggled with backlogs of assessment requirements, which is why they resorted to using previous assessment tasks. They also had very little time to support students undertaking teaching practice at schools. Another shortfall was that mentor teachers tended to be overloaded with many school responsibilities and were not always available to mentor students on their practicum, leaving the pre-service teachers to cope on their own. As a result of these less-than-desirable practices in many schools, students did not acquire appropriate practical assessment knowledge (DS8 L3).

Students' experiences of assessment when they were learners also were not helpful as most students had either not experienced good assessment practice or experienced assessment practices that were out-of-date (DS8 L4). Nevertheless, students tended to default to their own experiences as learners, rather than draw on the assessment theory and principles that they had learned in the teacher education programme.

From a logistical point of view, the period of teaching practice tended to fall outside of formal assessment and examinations at schools. This resulted in students missing out on "the process of assessment" in the school environment (DS8 L2). These timetable constraints forced students to make use of a variety of resources to provide learners with assessment tasks which was often unfair towards the learners.

For the above reasons, assessment became a burden and a growing area of concern. The pre-service teachers acquired a solid foundation in disciplinary assessment knowledge and skills, but the practice of assessment left them with feelings of being overwhelmed by the challenges of, and the sheer amount of, assessment tasks required. As one lecturer put it, assessment policy was so problematic that lecturers tended "to ignore the topic of assessment like the proverbial elephant in the room" (DS8 L4).

Lecturers' issues with assessment policy surfaced in the focus group interview, in particular the overassessment of learners which created an untenable burden for teachers. A lecturer claimed that the CAPS was too prescriptive, did not have a clear vision, and did not provide teachers with the opportunity to be creative to adapt to diverse contexts (DS8 L4). The lecturers agreed that the many policy requirements tended to make teachers dependent on highly procedural approaches to teaching. One lecturer felt that large-scale national and international assessment practices were "too high stakes activities in a primary school where learners are over-assessed… which limits teaching and learning' (DS8 L1). While the lecturers were reasonably familiar with the key policy documents, one lecturer admitted to not being familiar with MRTEQ. Lecturers felt that issues such as the "cognitive levels" as presented by the NPA and the CAPS were confusing to students, and students were not able to apply these cognitive levels during their teaching practice.

> CAPS has so many things... that needs to be… done… and then there's assessment… students, and novice teachers get lost in all the expectations… (DS8 L4).

The student, DS8 L4, shows frustration and was not able to see relevance of applying cognitive levels in their teaching.

6.5.2 Discussion: Linking theory and practice in teacher education

In the focus group discussion, the lecturers distanced themselves from practice and continued to assert their roles as academics teaching disciplinary knowledge. While they supported the idea that pre-service teachers be exposed to assessment practice, they felt that this should be done under the guidance of an expert mentor, and that introducing students to poor assessment practice was not desirable. They agreed that theory and practice needed to be better connected. The lecturers' views are supported by Rusznyak, who explains that the "principles governing practice that have been codified and shared between practitioners can more efficiently and systematically be learnt in formal university-based coursework… and through carefully constructed opportunities to learn from the analysis of exemplary practice" (2015: 13). Rusznyak further explains that while it is possible to acquire pedagogical content knowledge through teaching practice, it can only "be acquired by student teachers through

reflections on their classroom experiences" (2015: 13), although this is a less reliable way of obtaining systematised knowledge. Reflection and reflective practice, which have been cornerstones for competent teaching practice, were significantly absent from the lecturers' inputs and responses.

Macnaught's (2021) study on reflective writing in teacher education explains how semantic gravity can be used to design a range of pedagogic tools for explicitly building knowledge in preparation for practice. The study identified "framing, modelling, self-evaluating and guided preparing" as key strategies for "engaging students in classroom activities to identify and create connections between specific theoretical constructs and specific experiences" (2021: 33). Macnaught's diagram (Figure 6.2) shows how cumulative learning links theory and practice in a "full wave":

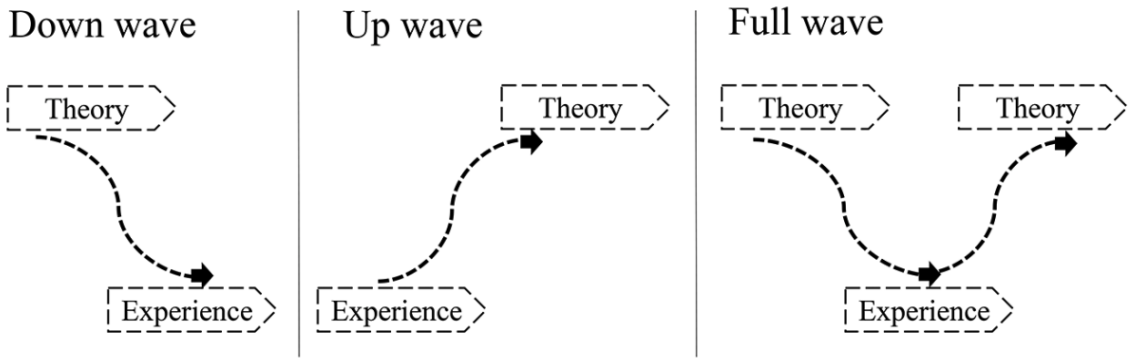


Figure 6.2: The semantic gravity profile of reflecting on practice
(Macnaught, 2021: 27)

If academic lecturers do not become more connected with classroom practice, and the policies that are intended to guide it, cumulative learning through different forms of reflection on practice, in particular through the theorisation of practice, is unlikely to occur. Without support for cumulative learning by the stronger or weaker forms of semantic gravity, pre-service teachers are unlikely to be adequately prepared for practice.

6.6 Conclusion: Does teacher education prepare pre-service teachers for assessment practice?

The research question addressed in this chapter was: To what extent does teacher education prepare pre-service teachers in the EHL for competent assessment practice? A summary of key findings that emerged on how teacher education understands its role in the preparation of EHL pre-service teachers towards competent assessment practices follows.

The analysis showed a lack of specificity with regard to assessment knowledge and practice within different subject areas in MRTEQ (2015c) as well as in the TEC (2016). Nevertheless, MRTEQ, the TEC, and the lecturers surveyed and interviewed identified different knowledge forms (in particular theoretical and practical knowledge) that also were applicable to assessment knowledge and assessment practice in subject areas. What was absent was a means to connect the different knowledge forms in teacher education – thus, a widening gap between theory and practice in teacher education became evident. There were factors external to MRTEQ and the TEC that exacerbated the gap between theory and practice. Firstly, there was the challenge of policies, such as the NPA and the CAPS, that are confusing and that overemphasise assessment, which creates an environment in which teachers are overburdened with assessment requirements, many of which are unnecessary and inappropriate. Secondly, there was the challenge of pre-service teachers undertaking teaching practice in environments where practices were not exemplary and where mentorship was not available. The fact that assessment was largely absent from MRTEQ and the formal subject outlines in the TEC meant that it was the lecturers' choice to teach, or not to teach, assessment as a concept or as a practice. Finally, MRTEQ, the TEC, and the lecturers failed to identify reflection as an important concept in teacher education. The missing concept of reflection and related concepts of reflective practice were missed opportunities to enable the linking of theory and practice in teacher education in general and in teaching assessment in particular.

6.6.1 Alignment/non-alignment between the school assessment policies and higher education policy provision and practice

With reference to school policies guiding assessment (Chapter Five), it is clear that there is a lack of alignment between the school assessment policy (e.g. NPA and CAPS) and MRTEQ, the TEC, and lecturers' focus on disciplinary knowledge. This misalignment is understandable for many reasons. Teachers are strongly allied to their disciplines and it is this disciplinary knowledge which they want pre-service teachers to acquire. Because the school policies are confusing, as pointed out in Chapter Five, and do not have research evidence for the practices they require, academics feel justified in ignoring them. Finally, MRTEQ provides universities with the autonomy to decide on their own curricula (although there are approval processes that have to be followed). The result is that teacher education at this university largely ignores assessment practice.

However, it is precisely when the guiding principles are weak, but nevertheless extremely demanding, that lecturers should become involved, for example, through research and the provision of research evidence to schools, provincial departments, and subject advisors – but also through discussions with students on the policies and practices that they have seen in actual classrooms. At the least, they need to engage pre-service educators with the difficulties

in the policies, point out the contradictions, and negotiate ways in which they could use the policies in combination with the knowledge acquired in their pre-service teacher education programme.

6.6.2 Reflection: A missing concept in teacher education policy, curriculum, and practice

The findings show the distinctiveness of the different forms of knowledge that underpin teacher education, in particular pedagogical content knowledge (which is at the heart of educational knowledge) and practical knowledge (which is usually acquired through a teaching practicum). MRTEQ and the TEC, as well as the lecturers, understand that connections between these different types of knowledge need to be made. Rusznyak points out that "preparing students with decontextualised knowledge that offers generalised insights over diverse contexts is fundamentally incompatible with equipping student teachers with localised knowledge and skills to teach in specific contexts" (Ruszyak, 2015: 22). This is because pedagogical content knowledge, or in this case what could be termed "assessment content knowledge" is abstract and less context dependent. It is characterised by weaker semantic gravity: by assessment theory within the discipline or subject domain, guiding principles, purposes, and strategies. In contrast, practical knowledge is "deeply embedded in contextual particularities (and therefore has a strong[er] semantic gravity)" (Rusznyak, 2015: 23). It includes guidelines for assessment practice, assessment planning, the implementation of assessment tasks, and, in the South African school context, a plethora of logistical requirements. While these two knowledge types are fundamentally different, Macnaught shows that through "framing, modelling, self-evaluating and guided preparing" (2021: 27), it is possible to connect the two basic forms of knowledge that are foundational to pre-service teachers' development of professional teaching practice.

Without facilitating focussed connections and linkages with regards to the principles and purpose of assessment between theoretical knowledge of assessment and practical experience and knowledge of assessment, through appropriate forms of reflective practice, pre-service teachers will not be prepared for appropriate assessment practice in EHL. In the next chapter, novice teachers' practical experiences in the assessment of EHL sixth grade learners within a school context are analysed.

CHAPTER SEVEN
NOVICE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

[Students] should be trained to do as well in the non-academic world as they do [in academia] (Frumkin, 1990).

7.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the research sub-question: How do novice teachers experience the assessment of English Home Language sixth grade learners? Data from questionnaires and interviews with final-year EHL students and novice teachers are analysed and discussed. In Section 7.2, the findings from the final-year EHL students are analysed and discussed. In Section 7.3, the findings from the final-year student focus group interviews are analysed and discussed. In the next two sections, Section 7.4 and Section 7.5, the novice teacher questionnaires and interview data are analysed and discussed. In the final section, Section 7.6, the data analysis is synthesised to establish cross-cutting themes, and the chapter is concluded with initial recommendations with regard to the improvement of teacher education provision.

7.2 Questionnaire findings: Final-year pre-service EHL teachers (Data Set 1)

The list of questions for the final-year students' questionnaire is provided in Chapter Four, Section 4.4.2. The full questionnaire is included in Appendix 3. In subsection 7.2.1, the questionnaire findings are presented and, in subsection 7.2.2, the findings are discussed and theorised.

7.2.1. Questionnaire findings: do students understand assessment in theory and in practice?

The students were asked to identify keywords that described the principles of assessment. Most respondents were not able to identify appropriate keywords such as "validity" or "fairness". Only two students identified terms that described assessment principles (DS1 S4 and DS1 S5). Some students identified terms generally associated with assessment, such as "rubrics" (DS1 S52), or terms associated with curricula, such as "outcomes" (DS1 S6), or random terms, such as "research" (DS1 S3). These inaccurate responses suggest that most respondents lacked an understanding of the principles on which assessment practice should be based.

The students were asked to explain the purpose of assessment. Their answers varied and included the following responses: "to create rubrics, to test grammar and literature" (DS1 S3) and "to assess all four skills speaking, listening, writing, reading" (DS1 S9). One respondent

felt that the purpose of assessment was to determine whether the learners were at the correct level (DS1 S6). Another student understood that the purpose of assessment was to improve learning as well as teaching (DS1 S7). One student identified multiple purposes of assessment by explaining that it could be used to promote learning, provide evidence of how learners performed according to defined standards throughout a period of learning, and show achievement at the end of the learning period (DS1 S1). The same student referred to an assessor, rather imaginatively, as a "conductor of outcomes". From their responses, it seemed that some of the students (e.g., DS1 S1 and DS1 S7) had understood the general purposes of assessment, but the majority of students were unable to identify or explain assessment principles or purposes in the context of language education.

The pre-service teachers were asked about how they saw their roles as assessors. One student responded that the assessor's role was "very serious" (DS1 S2). Another student saw herself as "a mediator between information and learners" (DS1 S3). Another student thought that she needed to "lead by example" (DS1 S10). One student's response was simply that "it's required of me" (DS1 S6). A respondent reflected that although the role of an assessor was very important, she was not fully prepared for that role (DS1 S11).

Responses were elicited with regards to participants' views on the planning and implementation of assessment during training as prescribed in policy documents, such as Section 4 of the CAPS and the NPA. These questions were included as it was important to determine whether students were familiar with these policy documents which dictate assessment practice in schools. In response to a question on the general guidelines given for setting assessment tasks, most students replied that they were referred to the CAPS by teachers and lecturers, implying that the policy documents were not addressed in higher education, and they were not expected to use these documents as part of their higher education studies (e.g. in designing an assessment task), even though they were advised to use them in practice. One of the respondents stated that the subjects Curriculum Studies and Practice Teaching had provided "strategies but not guidelines". Another student claimed that they learned about the guidelines from a guest speaker (DS1 S2), but another student claimed that very little practical guidance was given (DS1 S6). One student felt that they would learn about the policy requirements and guidelines from their seniors once they started teaching (DS1 S4).

With regard to guidelines for assessment, students mentioned Bloom's taxonomy (DS1 S8) and found an example of rubrics online as guidelines (DS1 S7). It should be pointed out that there are no examples of assessment rubrics in the CAPS or NPA documents. Only one student claimed to have designed an assessment task as part of an assignment (DS1 S9).

A general question was posed to the final-year students asking if they thought they were sufficiently prepared to implement assessment practices. Most students thought that they were fully prepared. Four additional questions were put to students to verify their opinions and to determine their theoretical and practical assessment knowledge. Students' understanding, ability to use policy documents, and their ability to implement assessment in practice through the use of rubrics and comprehension tests were investigated. Students were required to rate a number of statements with regard to their preparedness to implement the guidelines in the CAPS EHL document on the processes and management of assessment. They rated the statements on a Likert scale and their responses are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Implementing assessment processes as prescribed by the CAPS

Items from 18 students	SG Descriptors	SG	%	Nr of students
We were evaluated on the aims and principles of assessment in practical tasks.	Principles	7	100%	18
We developed baseline, self, and peer assessment tasks.	Planning	3	89%	17
We understood the accuracy of recording and reporting as it was offered as class activities.	Logistics	1	78%	16
We used the CAPS Program of Assessment for designing and planning assessment activities.	Planning	3	56%	10
We set suitable examination papers and memoranda.	Planning	3	56%	10
We were familiar with moderation and followed the moderation process in the English class.	Logistics	1	56%	10

Table 7.1 shows that all 18 students (100%) agreed that they were evaluated on the aims and principles of assessment in practical tasks. Most students (89%- 17 students) believed they had developed baseline, self-, and peer assessment tasks. Many students (78%- 16 students) indicated that they understood the accuracy of recording and reporting as it was offered as class activities. However, only slightly more than half of the students (56%- 10 students) answered that they used the CAPS Programme of Assessment for designing and planning assessment activities. Approximately half of the students (56% - 10 students) had set suitable examination papers and memoranda. Fifty-six percent of students were familiar with the moderation processes. Table 7.1 shows the students' perception of their strengths was mainly at the more context-independent level of principles (SG 7), while they identified more gaps in training in the more practical aspects of assessment, such as planning (SG 3) and assessment administration (SG 1).

Students' preparedness to engage in assessment processes, as stated in the NPA, was elicited through a series of statements that they rated on a Likert scale. The findings are summarised in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Implementing the National Protocol for Assessment (NPA)

Items of 18 students	SG Descriptors	SG	%	Nr of students
We prepared informal and formal assessment activities and reflected on it.	Planning	3	89%	17
We compiled a Teacher's file as an assignment.	Logistics	1	78%	16
We used the relevant policies, aims and principles of assessment during class discussions.	Principles	7	67%	12
We applied the weighting of School Based Assessment and End-of-Year examinations in an assignment.	Planning	3	67%	12
We completed schedules and report cards as expected during our training.	Logistics	1	67%	12
We completed a Learner Profile.	Logistics	1	67%	12
We used assessment coding and descriptions for recording and reporting.	Logistics	1	56%	10

The above statements refer to requirements for the assessment process within schools. Only 67% believed that assessment principles had been addressed in their teacher education programme, which contradicts the earlier claim that 100% of the students had been evaluated on assessment principles. Most students (89%) indicated that they had prepared informal and formal assessment activities according to the NPA and that they (78%) had compiled a Teacher's file. Only 67% of the students had worked with the School-Based Assessment and End-of-Year examinations weightings, completed schedules and report cards, and compiled a Learner Profile as required (all of which are CAPS requirements). Approximately half (56%) of students indicated that they used assessment coding and descriptions for recording and reporting. Students' responses indicate that students had some awareness of the policy documents, but the fact that so few reported on having discussed the policies indicates that they could not implement it effectively (or critically). For example, a student claimed that the purpose of assessment was to "attain a standard and keep a status quo" (DS1 S11), which shows her confusion.

Designing rubrics for assessment is a key practice in schools and an important part of assessment planning. The final-year students were asked to rate a number of statements on a Likert scale with regard to their competence in the design and implementation of rubrics. Their responses are summarised in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Students' responses to designing rubrics

Statements of 18 students	SG Descriptors	SG	%	Nr of students
The purpose of a rubric is to give guidance for allocating marks.	Purpose	6	100%	18
A rubric aligns with the assignment.	Principle	7	89%	17
Use a format with columns and rows.	Logistics	1	78%	16
Use criteria based on CAPS.	Logistics	1	78%	16
Create descriptors according to grade level.	Planning	3	78%	16
Marks match descriptors.	Implementation	2	78%	16
Include self, peer, and teacher assessment.	Strategy	5	67%	121
Use the rubric during informal assessment to practice sub-skills.	Implementation	2	67%	12
Test the rubric before using it for formal assessment.	Implementation	2	56%	10

All the students indicated that they understood the purpose of a rubric and most students knew that a rubric should be aligned with the assignment requirement or outcomes (89%). Most students (78%) indicated that they knew how to use the format of "columns and rows" to create a rubric, use and apply criteria from CAPS, and create descriptors according to grade level and to match descriptors. However, fewer students (67%) indicated that they would include self- or peer assessment strategies, use a rubric during informal assessment to practice sub-skills, or test a rubric before using it. The practice of testing a rubric before using it for formal assessment was unfamiliar to almost half of all students (56%). While most students rated their knowledge of rubrics quite highly, the practical implementation and use of rubrics appeared to be a challenge as students were less familiar with the use of rubrics as part of teaching.

Students were required to rate their understanding or familiarity with setting comprehension tests. The statements for rating are based on the CAPS requirements for EHL implementation

in schools. As seen in Table 7.4, most students indicated that they were confident that they could set comprehension tests as required.

Table 7.4: Designing (planning) comprehension tests

Statements of 18 students	SG Descriptors	SG	%	Nr of students
Choose a passage that has familiar vocabulary, content and context.	Planning	3	100%	18
Provide a memorandum with examples of answers for moderation.	Planning	3	100%	18
Set literal and reorganisation questions up to 40% of total marks with fixed answers.	Planning	3	78%	17
Set inference questions up to 40% of total marks with many possible answers.	Planning	3	78%	17
Set evaluation and appreciation questions up to 20% of total marks with possible answers.	Planning	3	78%	17
Choose the length of the text according to CAPS guidelines.	Logistics	1	67%	12

All students indicated they were able to choose a passage that had familiar vocabulary, content, and context. However, fewer students (67%) felt confident in selecting texts of a length that was appropriate for each intermediate grade, as set out in the CAPS document. All students indicated that they were familiar with providing a memorandum for moderation with sample answers. The use and weighting of literal, re-organisation, inference, evaluation, and appreciation question types were familiar to many students (78%).

Finally, questions were posed to students to gain an understanding of their experience in primary school assessment during the practicum. Firstly, the students were asked to give an example of one of their experiences in implementing the assessment requirements for the intermediate phase. Their responses included tasks such as assessing learners' oral presentations and marking tests (DS1 S2; DS1 S5; DS1 S8 and DS1 S9), as well as supporting a teacher in setting a comprehension test (DS1 S6). Some students could not recall examples of their practical experiences of assessment or did not have any experiences of assessment. Secondly, a question was posed requiring students to indicate the difficulties that they experienced with assessment. Students struggled with the assessment of oral skills (DS1 S9), adapting assessments for inclusivity (e.g. using the CAPS cognitive levels), and designing their own rubrics (DS1 S4). The latter contradicts their prior claim to being confident in developing

assessment rubrics. Students felt that they needed to know how more about how to set assignments, how to use standard symbols when marking essays (DS1 S1; DS1 S2 and DS1 S5), as well as how to set a range of alternative tasks for learners with diverse needs (DS1 S4 and DS1 9). One of the final-year students claimed that she had not "personally assessed learners on a formal level" and suggested that:

> [Assessment] should play a role within the English curriculum course outline for pre-service teachers (DS1 S11).

One of the students commented that she was prepared for whatever came her way in teaching (DS1 S3) while another student felt that she would have to "rely on CAPS to keep on the right path" (DS1 S6).

Students' responses to the final questions clearly show that, although they have had some understanding of assessment theory and have some familiarity with the relevant policies, the design of rubrics, and comprehension tests, they struggled to apply assessment theoretical knowledge to their practice. The contradictions across the questionnaire response also indicated that there is likely to be confusion about assessment theory and its application to assessment practice.

7.2.2 Discussion: How prepared are final-year pre-service teachers for assessment practice?

The analysis of the questionnaire's responses indicates that the pre-service teachers have not been fully (as in all sections) prepared for assessment practice in the intermediate phase schools. Of particular concern is that most students were unable to identify or explain assessment principles or purposes – the one area in which they should have been reasonably knowledgeable as this is what they are likely to have studied in the higher education context. The students' at the particular university responses reflect that they perceived that they were not sufficiently exposed to assessment theory and did not feel confident about applying assessment theory to assessment practice in EHL in the school context. Although the students claimed to be familiar with the purposes and different types of assessment, they were less confident in planning or designing assessment tasks, marking assessment tasks (especially essays), and adapting assessment tasks for learners with different learning needs or learning barriers. The students felt that they could implement assessment processes as required, because they could follow the CAPS and NPA instructions, even if they had gaps in their theoretical and practical assessment knowledge.

While students had some awareness of assessment requirements, such as in the CAPS or the NPA and the legal status of these documents, they reported that they were not given the

opportunity to discuss or critique these documents or to develop guidelines for practice. This could have been because these documents are controversial and education faculties tend to avoid them. Students do, however, need to engage with the policy documents that will determine their practice and they need to discuss ways of ensuring that best practices in assessment are maintained, such as when and how to use formative and summative assessment to ensure learners' language development in the absence of sensible advice from the CAPS.

7.3 Focus group interviews findings: Final-year EHL students (Data set 6)

The same group of final-year EHL students who responded to the questionnaires (Section 7.2), were interviewed in four focus groups. The focus group questions were similar to the questions asked in the questionnaire but provided an opportunity for the students to elaborate on their questionnaire responses.

7.3.1 Findings: Frustration, cynicism and disillusionment about assessment practice

Analysis of the focus group interview data showed that the final-year students found it difficult to define the principles of assessment – either generically or in the context of home language education. One student recalled that assessment needed to be fair (DS7 S2). Another stated that a marking process should be in place for all subjects (DS7 S3) and another that teachers should be consistent in marking as an assessment principle (DS7 S7). These remarks expressed the students' limited understanding of assessment principles. Most students agreed that assessment principles were addressed in their training, but they could not recall these assessment principles or appreciate their value. One of the students explained that the reason why they struggled to respond adequately to the interviewer's questions was because they had not engaged sufficiently with assessment principles (DS7 S10). They felt that they had not been taught enough about assessment theory to apply it:

> I can't remember a single thing. Because we never implemented it (DS7 S3).

Some students were caught off guard by the question regarding assessment principles and reacted with strong opinions. One was not able to answer questions on assessment principles, but expressed her opinion on assessment:

> When I think about assessment, I think about just pushing kids through the system. So, it's a systematic thing and if the kid, if the child isn't doing too well and they get 30% or say, close to 40% … they'll do intervention in order to get that child to move because the classrooms are too big and it's really … it's very sad because then kids aren't really developing because they've been pushed through a system and it's not really

assessing them per se. It's more like just getting them through the system so that they can go work or do something after school (DS7 S17).

The student quoted above takes an extremely cynical view of assessment. The statement on assessment in the paragraph above was plotted on a graph (Figure 7.1) to reveal the semantic gravity profile. The six sentences of the extract are represented on the X-axis. The semantic gravity levels are shown on the Y-axis. The solid red line plots the statements taken at face value. At face value, much of what the student says does not make sense, such as "pushing kids through the system" is not the purpose of assessment or allowing the learners to pass the grade because the classroom is overcrowded – a meaningless intervention or strategy. But as her opinion contains irony, the dotted line plots the implied meaning.

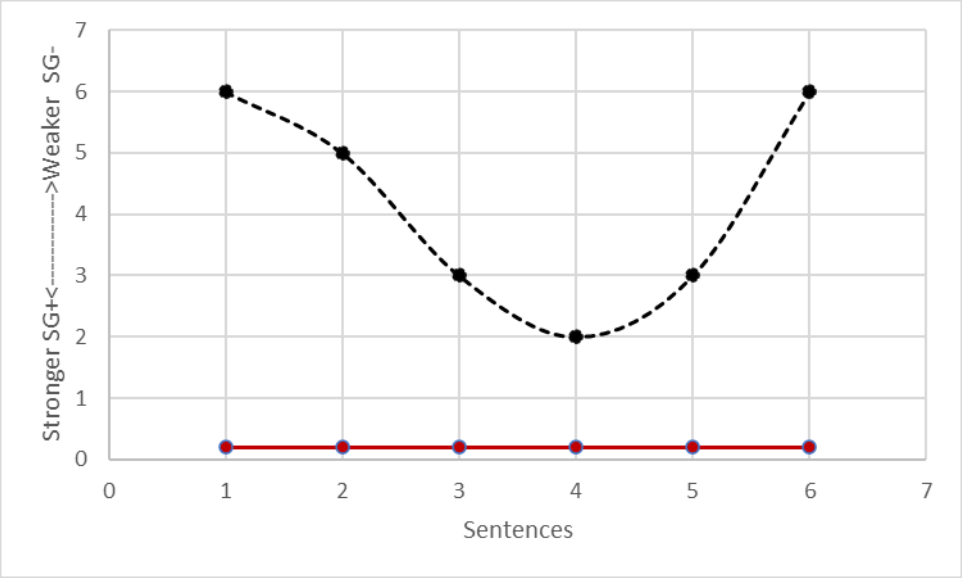


Figure 7.1: Semantic gravity profile of interview extract DS7 S17

The student starts with an expression of a cynical view of assessment as "pushing kids through the system". She describes the situation as one in which weaker students are passed without addressing their needs in a meaningful way. This results in the student questioning the value of assessment. As this statement does not accurately state the purpose of assessment, it is located at the position of error (0) on the y-axis. As the statement is ironic, the student implies that the true purpose of assessment might be opposite to what was stated, thus, the dashed line represents that assessment has a purpose (SG 6 on the y-axis). The second statement claims that interventions are required when learners are experiencing difficulties. This statement correctly identifies that an intervention strategy might be necessary and, thus, is placed at the level of strategic planning (SG 5) on the dotted line.

The next statement suggests a meaningful assessment task designed (SG 3) and implemented (SG 2). The final sentences could be interpreted that additional tasks are planned (SG 3) to support the student's development, and the purpose of assessment is achieved (SG 6). The student uses a mixture of irony and factual statements in expressing her opinion. She has been saddened by the reality of the assessment practices that she has seen. Her ironic tone strongly criticises these practices as counter to the principles of assessment. While she may not have been able to articulate the principles of assessment, she understands that assessment is not intended to "[push learners] through a system", as the dashed line shows.

A student who was similarly unable to answer the direct question on the principles of assessment also explained her opinions. In this case, in explaining her opinions on assessment, she questioned the teacher training that she received:

> I also think that that speaks about where the value is in assessments. If you're sitting with exit level student teachers and they say that they are principles, what are we really standing on when it comes to assessment? I think that shows that we've lost value. So, even if this is something that we should be holding on to, we should be broadening our perspective on it. It says that through the process we've lost the value of what assessment should mean (DS7 S18).

The student's opinion was similarly plotted to show their semantic gravity profile (Figure 7.2). The red line is her stated opinion. She asks the rhetorical (and cynical) question "where is the value in assessment?" Taken at face value, these initial questions were plotted as errors (0) as there should be value in assessment. She then states that assessment has value, which was plotted as a principle of assessment (SG 7). In her final statement, she again claims that assessment has lost its value, which is plotted as an error (0). As the questions are rhetorical, the implication is that assessment should have purpose and value. Thus, the implied meaning of her statements was plotted as the high dotted line at the level of principles (SG 7), implying that assessment has value. Underpinning the rhetorical and cynical questions and comments, the student implies that assessment is important.

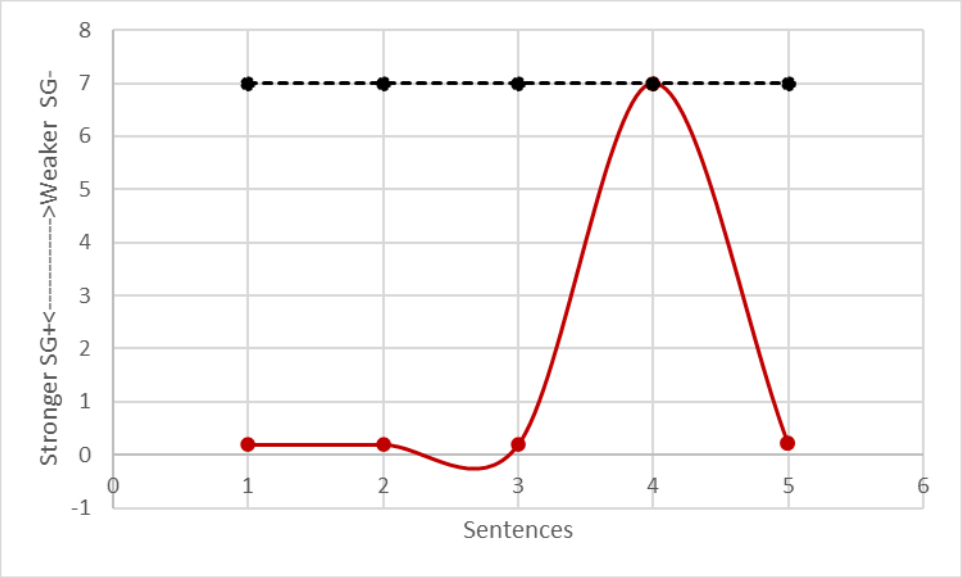


Figure 7.2: Semantic gravity profile DS7 S18 on the principles of assessment

Figures 7.1 and 7.2 show similar levels of disillusionment with regard to the purpose and related value of assessment. While students' inability to explicitly state the principles of assessment is a concern, what is of greater concern is the students' levels of cynicism which emanates from their observation of or involvement in poor assessment practices. New teachers should not be entering their profession with such a lack of faith in the educational system. While some of the students interviewed ascribed their lack of knowledge of assessment principles to insufficient teaching training, the problem is more systemic than what is taught or not taught in the higher education classroom.

One of the students felt that they lacked knowledge of assessment principles because these principles were not applied in practice (DS7 S4). The claims made by the students suggest that when curricular space and teaching time is devoted to the topic of assessment principles, it would be more likely to be understood by the students (DS7 S7). When accepted assessment principles were seen to be implemented in practice, these would also be more likely to be understood (DS7 S6). The students (DS7 S17 and DS7 S18) whose comments were shown as semantic gravity profiles could thus be seen as expressing their concerns that the real purpose of assessment, which is to promote learning and development, has been lost in the current practice of overassessment as they do not take into account the contexts of assessment practice.

When asked specifically about the purposes of assessment, students struggled to formulate their responses. A student claimed that the purpose is for a child to reach his/her own goals (DS7 S4), although it is unlikely that young children would have clearly articulated goals. Some

students had a superficial understanding of the purposes of assessment as being for the teachers to evaluate themselves, preserve integrity, show that guidelines were followed, and have sufficient evidence of learners' work to satisfy superiors (DS7 S18). In other words, assessment was a necessary paper trail that teachers had to follow.

In the interview extract below, a student explains her understanding of the purpose of assessment as well as her frustration that the current assessment policy does not allow innovative assessment methods in support of the purpose of assessment:

> I feel the aim of assessment is to see where your learners are and where they need help. So, it's just to see what the ability is and to – how you can improve it from there and I feel that's the main objective of assessment. And also, to standardise and to see where your students in general, in your class are at. You can use different types of technology for assessment but CAPS doesn't allow you to make use of technology like there're a lot of Apps that allow you to do assessments quickly. So, you can like do like one class that I did, they allow you to like use – you can share a child's portfolio on the App with the parent and whatever and they can also do assessments on the App as well (DS7 S10).

In Figure 7.3, the semantic gravity profile of the student's statements above are plotted, making it possible to follow her argument and frustration more carefully.

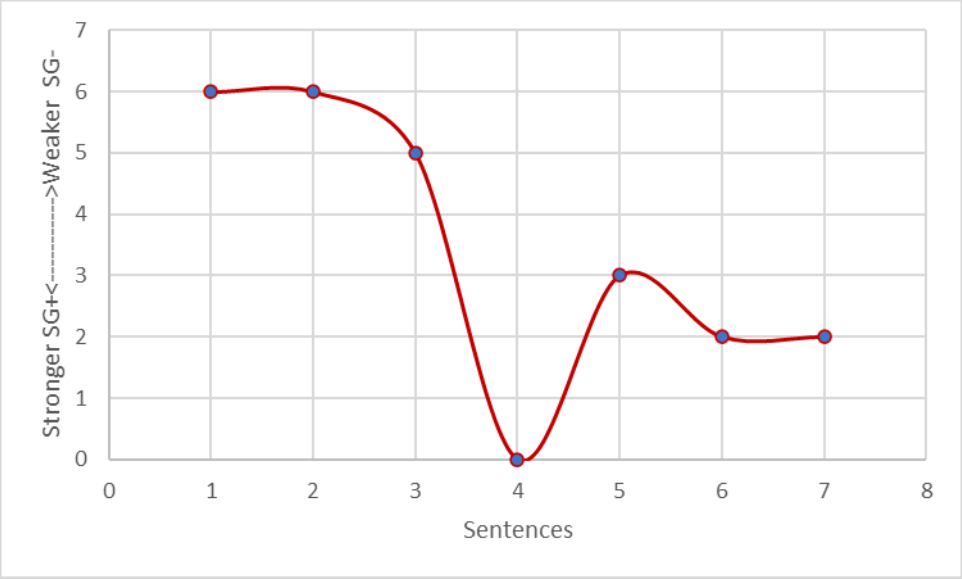


Figure 7.3: Semantic gravity profile of a student's statement on the principles of assessment (DS7 S10)

The student begins by explaining her understanding of the purpose of assessment, which she believes “is to see where your learners are” in order to “improve it from there”. These statements of assessment purpose were located at level SG 6. For this student, the main purpose of assessment was to support learning. She also explained that a second purpose of assessment as “to standardise and to see where your students are in general”. Thus, she identified an additional purpose of assessment as the measurement of learners against a general standard. The student then discusses an assessment strategy, namely, technologies that support assessment for learning. Her statements on the types or methods of assessment were located at SG 5 at the strategic planning level. The student did not explicitly link purpose and method but implies that achieving the purpose of promoting learning might, for some learners, include innovative technologies. In sentence four, she expresses her frustration on the prohibition of innovative assessment in the CAPS document. As not allowing innovative assessment practice is not desirable, this statement is located at SG 0. She goes on to provide an example of an application and her implementation of a practice to support assessment for learning. The semantic gravity profile of the extract of the student’s interview shows the downward trend in which purposes are related to strategies and strategies are related to implementation (with the exception of the irrational policy prohibition). The student understands the purposes of assessment and knows what she needs to meet the purpose of promoting learning through an innovative assessment practice. While she seems to have implemented this innovation, it is unfortunately prohibited by policy.

The question “How do you see your role as an assessor?” was not fully addressed by all the focus groups. One student felt “incompetent” (DS7 S17), while another remarked that “more time should be focussed on teaching assessment” (DS7 S18). These comments were made after they struggled to answer previous questions, and they were disillusioned by the realisation that they appeared to have gaps in their training.

Although knowledge of the CAPS and the NPA are required by teachers in classroom practice, these documents do not present exemplary assessment practices and place unnecessary burdens on teachers (Govender & Hugo, 2018). The students were not familiar with the NPA and claimed that no reference was made to it during their training. Regarding the use of the CAPS, students indicated that the policy documents were handed out to them for self-study (DS7 S2), but that they did not know where it fitted in (DS7 S1). A student made the following comment:

> It’s interesting because at university level, depending on the lecturer, you might not be as CAPS driven or CAPS focussed but the minute you enter into the school environment, CAPS becomes the end all and be all (DS7 S18).

This is a telling statement and points to the need for opportunities to critically engage with the CAPS in the higher education context. Some students did not know about Section 4 on Assessment in the CAPS document. A student recalled that Section 4 was “scrolled past to get to the parts to prepare lesson plans” (DS7 S3). One student felt that lecturers did not help students to deal with the CAPS document (DS7 S5). The practicum was the only place where they had exposure to the CAPS and its assessment requirements. Two students felt that the CAPS was unclear (DS7 S7 and DS7 S10). Another student felt that the CAPS only stated what had to be done but did not explain why it should be done or provide guidelines on how it should be done (DS7 S7). Only one student felt that informal and formal assessments in the CAPS were sufficiently described and felt that informal assessment was manageable (DS7 S8).

The following extract provides a typical response to the CAPS; the student perfectly captures the frustration of working with a document that is unprincipled, irrational, and far removed from best practice:

> I then apply that because you have the aims and you have the principles – but CAPS is not a very clear document. And you will set a goal and say okay I need to see if my learner is at least at 50% or if he is passing the subject. What happens afterwards? You try – but CAPS doesn’t make time for you to try and do something for the kid. And try to see if the aim of the assessment has improved in the next one – and CAPS doesn’t build on the next assessment. They just go on … and it doesn’t actually make … like you can use different types of assessment (DS7 S10).

The student’s frustration is made visible in the continuous downward shifts into error (SG 0) in the semantic profile of the extract above (Figure 7.4).

The semantic profile highlights the difference between what the group interviewed final-year student is trying to achieve, represented by the high points of principled (SG 7) and purposeful assessment (SG 6), and the illogicality of the CAPS document represented by the low points on the profile (SG 0). The student recognises the purpose of assessment (SG 7) but criticises the CAPS as illogical (SG 0). Because the CAPS prescribes what teachers have to do, her attempted interventions are blocked. She tries to set goals for a subject, but if the learner is not able to reach the goal, the CAPS does not allow time to support the learner and, instead, she is pushed onward to the next attempt.

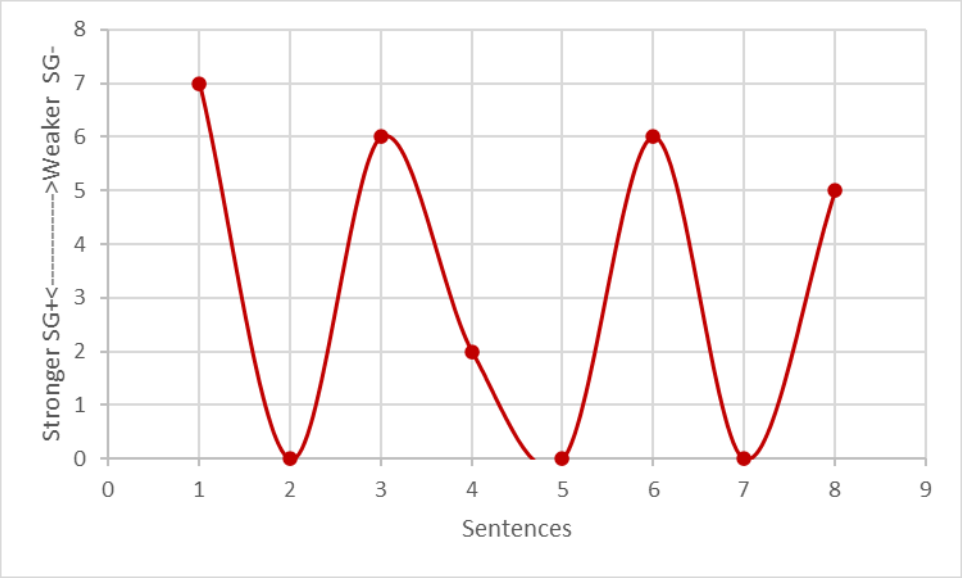


Figure 7.4: Semantic gravity profile of Interviewed Final Year Student 10 statement on the principles of assessment (Interview Extract from Data set 7)

Students understood that teachers should be able to set rubrics and comprehension tests according to the needs and levels of learners (DS7 S15). However, most students felt they were not fully equipped to set their own rubrics and needed examples to guide them (DS7 S5 and DS7 S15).

In the focus group interviews, the students elaborated on their exposure to assessment practices. A final year student remarked that assessment principles were covered, but because they did not implement it, they did not know what it was for (DS7 S15). They recalled their assessment experiences as being “very intense and very stressful”. They lacked assessment experience in the school environment, because student teachers on their practicum were normally not allowed to conduct summative assessments. Students were, however, exposed to formative (which the CAPS refers to as “informal”) assessment tasks such as general classwork and marking. Only one student was of the opinion that neither the CAPS nor the NPA was essential for the training of primary school teachers (DS7 S18). Teachers did not share how they set questions at the different cognitive levels, following the CAPS requirements. An undergraduate teacher, still needing to complete her degree, explained her experience in her first term of teaching:

> I had to send my papers probably ten times over to the HOD just to make sure that it was right because I guess it was at a mediocre level … the cognitive levels weren’t right. So, the HOD helped me to set it [the comprehension test] up properly and the rubrics also (DS7 S16).

7.3.2 Discussion: The consequences of neglecting practice in teacher education

Data set 6 showcased the final-year pre-service teachers' experiences in preparation for entering the teaching profession. The data set also showed the students' perceptions on their need to be better prepared for assessment as they perceived it as an area of practice they did not understand well yet. In the questionnaire data, and in the tables of responses, it seemed as if the students were relatively confident about their preparation for assessment practice. However, much of their confidence was contradicted when it was more deeply probed in the focus group interviews. For example, in the questionnaire data, students claimed to understand rubrics, however, when probed in the interview, this was not the case. During the focus group interviews, the group members supported one another to think critically.

Many of the concerns in the questionnaire data and interview data were similar. Students need more in-depth knowledge of assessment theory, principles and how to apply the principles, purposes, and strategies. A solid grounding in this more theoretically-oriented knowledge is the responsibility of the higher education institution, and it is a key factor in the preparation of pre-service teachers for thoughtful and reflective practice (Charteris & Smardon, 2019). According to the students, neither the CAPS nor the NPA were referred to in a meaningful way in their undergraduate programme. Considering that these documents will direct their practice in schools, these documents should be included and critiqued in students' preparation for the assessment of learners. The students were not supplied with clear guidelines on how to set up assessment tasks or to work constructively and critically with the content, cognitive weightings, and other more technical aspects of the CAPS.

7.4 Questionnaire findings: Novice teachers (Data set 3)

Novice teachers, who qualified as teachers from the university site of this research study and had been employed as home language teachers for at least one year, were invited to participate in a survey on Google Forms. Unfortunately, only one novice teacher responded to the questionnaire. On inquiry, the other novice teachers explained that they were too busy to complete the questionnaire. The novice teacher's views on her preparation for assessment during her undergraduate years are presented and discussed briefly below.

7.4.1 Findings: the challenging realities of practice

The novice teacher chose the keywords "effective", "support" and "reflection" to describe the principles underpinning assessment. She seemed to have chosen the CAPS' version of principles, such as "effective" instead of "valid". The concepts that she associated with the purpose of assessment were "objectives", "understanding", "improvement'", "support", "challenge", and "indicating weaknesses". The novice teacher understood the purpose of

assessment as one of improving, supporting, and challenging learners and saw the role of an assessor as “[checking] what the learners had learned and what they had to be taught”.

In response to the question of “what general guidelines were you given to help you set assessment tasks for intermediate phase home language?”, the teacher provided insights into the position of a novice practitioner feeling confident and competent in some areas, but not yet fully competent and lacking confidence in other areas. For example, she explained that she was prepared to implement the CAPS guidelines on assessment administration. As a student, she had been evaluated on the aims and principles of assessment in practical tasks and was able to use the CAPS Programme of Assessment with guidance from her lecturers. She also indicated that she was well prepared for informal and formal assessment activities as they had reflected on assessment practices during lectures. The cognitive weighting of School-Based Assessment and End-of-Year examinations and a Teachers’ file were covered in her course work. However, she was not able to set practical activities for baseline, self-, and peer-assessment tasks or set suitable examination papers and memoranda. She was not familiar with the moderation process. She was also unable to apply all the requirements stipulated by the relevant policies and principles of assessment. The teacher found that she was unsure of how to complete schedules and report cards and to use assessment coding and descriptions for recording and reporting. These aspects were not covered during her undergraduate course.

She had her own copy of the CAPS but had not used it to design rubrics. This was not surprising as the CAPS only mentions “rubric” three times in a rather superficial manner. She was not trained in setting rubrics for learners at different levels or for a range of different assessment tasks. She had received some training on setting a comprehension test. As a teacher in practice, she explained her assessment experience:

> The assessment schedule is too busy and stacked to give attention to each assessment. Everything is rushed. Assessment is all about reflection from the learners. Intermediate phase is where some learners know much more than expected, while other learners are technically still in the foundation phase, mentally. How does one assess both these cases with one assessment? (DS3 NT1).

The burden of assessment has been well-documented in the literature (e.g. Govender & Hugo, 2018). The novice teacher experienced this as something “busy and stacked” and “rushed”. While being engulfed in all the busy work of assessment, she was unable to pay attention to the considerable variation in learners’ levels and abilities in the EHL class.

7.4.2 Discussion: questioning the depth of teacher education

Despite some training on assessment in the B Ed programme, including the CAPS Programme of Assessment, the novice teacher experienced challenges in practice. In most questionnaire responses, there tended to be broad ideas and generalisations, and this could be the case in the novice teacher's responses. Given this situation, her data suggests that the depth of training offered to prepare pre-service teachers for the reality of overcrowded classrooms, the diversity of the learners, and the burden of assessment should be questioned.

7.5 Individual interviews: Novice teachers (Data set 7)

Novice teachers who had completed the B Ed degree at the university site of the study were interviewed individually. All the interviewed teachers had been employed in a public school as an EHL teacher for a minimum of one year and a maximum of two years prior to the interview. The interview questions focussed on the novice teachers' assessment practices, on their reflections on their training and, in particular, the extent to which their university education had prepared them for assessment practice. The novice teachers' inputs on their training were particularly meaningful, as they had experienced extended periods of teaching practice as home language teachers.

7.5.1 Findings: The realities of the classroom

During the interviews, the novice teachers were thoughtful and shared their difficulties with regard to their experiences of assessment. They felt that there was little interest in applying assessment principles in the school context, because there was no or minimal mention of assessment principles in the official assessment policy documents (CAPS or NPA). One teacher had tried to use Blooms' taxonomy to "align the marks with CAPS cognitive levels" but was unsure of what she was supposed to do (DS6 NT2). Another teacher said that she knew that fairness and reliability were assessment principles but did not know how to apply these principles in assessment tasks (DS6 NT3). A teacher explained that she did not have to set any assessments (as they were all set by a senior teacher) and was unsure of how to plan or evaluate a task based on the principles of assessment (DS6 NT5). Another teacher explained that her knowledge of assessment was restricted to the CAPS requirements and to Bloom's Taxonomy (DS6 NT2). One of the interviewees had thought about the process of teaching and assessing essay writing but did not consider assessment principles (DS6 NT1). She was not expected to create her own assessment tasks and merely had to prepare learners for assessments. One of the interviewees questioned whether the principle of reliability could guide assessment, as teachers were subjective in marking (DS6 NT3).

In the school context, little was said about formative (known in the CAPS as "informal") assessment and most conversations were directed to summative (known in the CAPS as

"formal") assessment. Summative assessment was referred to as the Programme of Assessments in the prospectus and school annual calendar. With reference to the amount of time assessment takes, all the novice teachers agreed that assessment "takes a load of time..." (DS6 NT3). One teacher mentioned formative assessment with regard to classroom exercises (DS6 NT5), while another teacher expressed her irritation at the sheer amount of formative assessment required and referred to it as "those stupid little assessments, like the silly comprehension test and the reading" (DS6 NT1).

Most interviewees made similar statements about their lack of preparation for the realities of the classroom and the heavy demands of assessment practice, and in particular the overwhelming amount of assessments and the strictly regimented assessment schedule. A novice teacher claimed that she only realised the importance of practical assessment knowledge when "standing in front of a class" (DS6 NT1). Most of the novice teachers claimed that they had not been prepared for transfer from higher education to their first job at a school. On the contrary, the shift from higher education to school practice was something of a shock:

> I didn't have any induction, so there was no beginning phase, like easing you into it and everything. So you just hit the floor running – nobody actually tells you what's happening, no mentor. It was difficult, especially orals (DS6 NT5).

Several novice teachers described a similar lack of orientation or induction to assessment practice at school. One teacher felt that she was "very new still with that and I feel that at this moment – at this stage, I'm receiving assessments and I'm only giving them to the learners" (DS6 NT2). Two teachers felt that the most important challenge was awarding marks for reading and speaking, because it could be very subjective (DS6 NT1 and DS6 NT3). One of the teachers found her role as an assessor to be "quite difficult", because she did not want her learners to be in a disadvantaged position (DS6 NT 5). This teacher found she was not prepared for the technical expectations of the school. She had to redo her assessment task six times. One of interviewees regarded her role as an assessor:

> …just to assess that what you have taught, it should be taught well enough so that the learners can implement it (DS6 NT1).

The novice teachers shared their strategies for coping with the many assessment demands. Their main coping strategy was to rely on school policies (which DS6 NT4 claimed to have "studied") and examples in textbooks to guide their practice. One teacher said that colleagues had shown her how to find rubrics on the internet and adapt them for her assessment tasks (DS6 NT2). Not all novice teachers had a strong support system once they entered different

schools. One teacher relied on websites or used examples from textbooks or assessment tasks from previous years (DS6 NT1). One of the teachers claimed that using other teachers' assessment tasks was not always appropriate:

> I didn't have the blueprint or an idea of what this school wants to see in assessments – assessments that teachers used before. If they didn't have an assessment for me which they set up, I had to set up an assessment from scratch... that makes it difficult (DS6 NT3).

The participants were asked to comment on their training as assessors. Some teachers felt that they did not acquire a thorough understanding of assessment principles, because assessment theory and principles were not studied at university. Others felt that they were provided with "a lot of theory" on assessment at university (DS6 NT4) but insufficient experience with setting up assessment tasks, which "happened only once or twice on campus" (DS6 NT5). One teacher explained that what they were taught at university was completely different to what they experienced in the classroom (DS6 NT6). Even during their practice teaching sessions, as students they were not allowed or expected to set assessments:

> …we really didn't get the chance to do assessments during practicals [practice teaching] …they [teachers] didn't allow you to do their assessments for them. …we didn't really get the chance to experience that [assessment] (DS6 NT2).

One teacher's experience was that the school "tried to settle me in slowly" and expected her only to mark according to a memorandum given to her. Another's experience was that she was setting tasks for which she was not fully prepared (DS6 NT2).

One of the teachers recalled that an American visiting lecturer had been given the responsibility of teaching assessment in their final year but did not focus on assessment and did not have any insight into the national curriculum and context. None of the novice teachers were able to fully describe their role as an assessor. One claimed that there had been no reference to the CAPS or the NPA assessment requirements and implementation guidelines in the B Ed programme (DS6 NT2). Although these documents were found to be inadequate, they guide practice as they are prescribed by DBE for teachers. Once the student has qualified, these documents are central to their practice.

A number of teachers claimed that they had not been taught about the use of rubrics for designing assessment tasks and, as a result, were not confident in implementing assessment tasks (DS6 NT1; DS6 NT3; DS6 NT4, and DS6 NT5). One teacher felt that she was well prepared for setting assessments, because in the other subjects that she took, namely, Mathematics, Biology, and Technology, thorough training was done in setting assessments, and she was able to draw on this knowledge (DS6 NT2). However, assessment training was not done in their major subject, namely, EHL. One teacher concluded that they had not been trained for the assessor role (DS6 NT4). One of the teachers described her training as "unrealistic" (DS6 NT5).

7.5.2 Discussion: a problematic start to professional life

Starting a career is challenging and there are inevitably differences between what is learned in the higher education context and what is expected in the school context (Walton, 2017). The shift from pre-service teacher to novice teacher can be "a reality shock" and novice teachers often perceive their teacher training as theoretical or academic but unrelated to the realities of the classroom, such as assessment procedures (Maddock & Mouran, 2018). Novice teachers often feel their institutions mainly focus on theory and expect them to apply the theory in practice on their own (Harrup, 2015). There are many misconceptions about managing formative assessment in preparation for summative assessment (Davison & Leung, 2009).

However, what emerges from the novice teacher interviews is the sense of the large divide between the world of higher education and that of practice – and their lack of preparation for assessment practice in particular. The following extract gives a sense of the challenges confronting novice teachers in their first positions as EHL teachers:

> Well, during the first week, they threw it upon me that I am the English Subject Planner. So, I have to plan everything – all the assessments, all the work that has to be done during the course of the term for Grade 5. So yes, that was definitely hectic because I felt very, very overwhelmed. I didn't know where to start. To add to this marking and awarding marks were challenging and difficult – it was really shocking. Because no-one really prepares you for the things that children write. I didn't know where to start. Obviously, I went to the CAPS Document first, but it's not always very clear on exactly what you should do… so it was very overwhelming… maybe I didn't read enough in the CAPS document... that you basically just go with the flow (DS6 NT1).

The words and images used above by the novice teacher to describe her situation, for example "threw it upon me", "hectic", "very, very overwhelmed", "challenging and difficult", and "shocking", convey her sense of hopelessness and confusion with regard to the heavy

demands placed on her. She seems to go through the range of emotions often associated with traumatic events (Holmes, Grey & Young, 2005). She expresses disbelief ("they threw it on me…"), uncertainty ("So, I have to plan everything…"), fear (feeling "overwhelmed" and "shocking"), anxiety (the repetition of "I didn't know where to start..."), and self-doubt ("maybe I didn't read enough…"). She turns to the CAPS for support but, unsurprisingly, finds that "it's not always very clear on exactly what you should do". The sense of despair and hopelessness is captured in the ups and downs of the semantic gravity profile of her response (Figure 7.5).

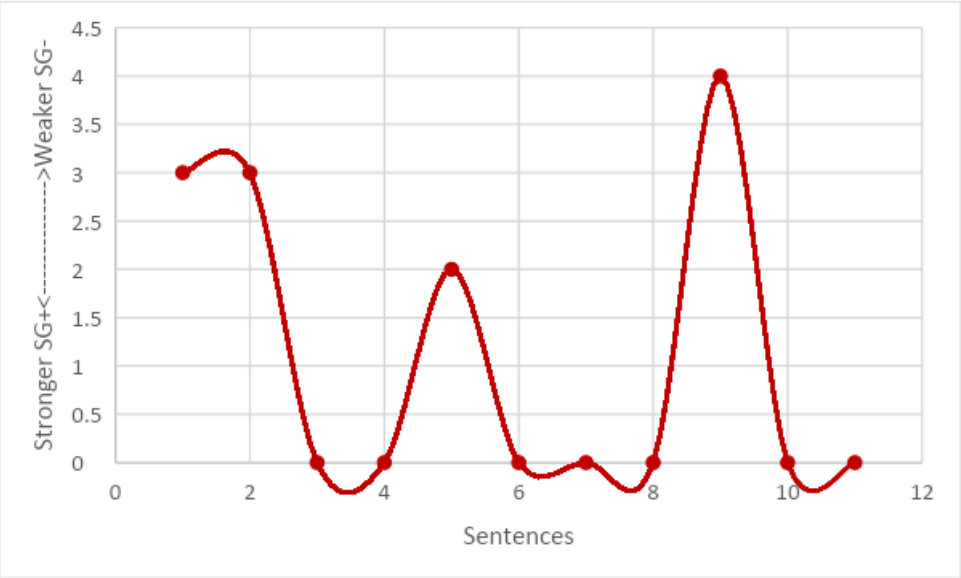


Figure 7.5: Semantic gravity profile of DS6 NT 1's response

The semantic gravity profile shows the teacher's attempts to access knowledge of planning (SG 3), but she is plunged into a state of not knowing what to do with regard to planning or designing assessment tasks (SG 0, the area of error). She tries to cope with the implementation issues, such as marking (SG 3), but is again plunged into a state of having insufficient knowledge (SG 0). She searches in the CAPS for guidelines (SG 4) and instead finds confusion (SG 0) as explained in Table 3.3.

Many novice teachers are not confident about school-based assessment (Senom et al., 2013). Such difficulties are often caused by insufficient opportunities to link course work and practice (Walton, 2017) and discussed in Section 2.6.2. Both theory and practice are needed for competence in the classroom. Assessment theory is a necessary underpinning of assessment practice. The difficulty that underlies the teachers' experience is not that higher education, and its theoretical orientation, and the classroom, and its practical orientation, were different, but that the two were not connected. This could be seen in the statements of novice teachers who understood basic assessment principles, such as reliability, but were unable to apply this to a

language assessment task. There were a number of novice teachers who felt incapable of evaluating assessment tasks by drawing on concepts such as content validity and fairness towards learners. It is a concern that the teachers did not fully understand concepts in assessment, as this could result in setting assessment tasks that do not develop learners' language skills. All the novice teachers felt that they were not equipped for assessment practices, in contrast to the confidence expressed by the final-year students.

7.6 Conclusion: The missing assessment curriculum

This study has adopted the term "missing curriculum" ("missing the practice curriculum" as Frumkin indicated in 1990) to point at the missing curricular component, namely, assessment knowledge, in teacher education. The main findings of the qualitative questionnaires and focus group discussion is that while final year students initially perceived themselves to be well-prepared, they subsequently found that there were gaps between knowledge gained at the university and the practice of assessment, including the burden of assessment in an assessment-driven educational system. A few common trends across the final-year student and novice teacher data point to assessment as a missing curriculum in higher education provision.

7.6.1 Gaps in the students' knowledge and skills of assessment, (referred to as the "missing" curriculum)

One needs to bear in mind that not all B Ed students will go to public schools that follow the CAPS and related document guidelines, but the majority would. The question whether it is the role of the training institution to teach to the current government curriculum or should is the focus of a higher education institution on 'theory' is not perhaps the main role. However, in the sections below, the specific aspects that were seen to be "missing" in the teacher education curriculum, regarding assessment of EHL, are outlined to improve teacher education in the current South African context.

7.6.1.1 The theory/practice divide

The first indicator of the missing curriculum is that of the theory/practice divide, which emerged in the final-year student data, and was strongly present in the novice teacher data. The theory and practice divide was evident in the difficulties experienced in the classroom environment. This resulted in three areas of weaknesses: firstly, the inability to apply assessment principles to assessment tasks, secondly, not fully understanding the different purposes of different types of assessment, and, thirdly, not being able to adequately perform the role of an assessor. The students' and novice teachers' responses provided many examples of the difficulties that arose in performing assessor roles when the principles and purposes of assessment were not clearly understood for implementation in the particular disciplinary context, namely EHL, in the school

context, or the realities of assessment practice in far from ideal situations. The participants' confusion and lack of awareness was of particular concern in the light of the high load of assessment requirements, particularly when and how to use formative assessment appropriately.

7.6.1.2 Insufficient preparation for assessment practice

The final-year students' responses to the questionnaires were largely positive towards the training they received. However, during the focus group interviews their opinions changed. The novice teachers, having had a year or two of teaching experience, were generally not positive about their university programme as it had not prepared them for the requirements of practice. At the least, their university education should have prepared them with a strong grounding in assessment theory, both generally and in the context of EHL in particular. This would form the knowledge base for assessment practice. The students' and novice teachers' responses showed that they were not sufficiently exposed to assessment in EHL at intermediate school level. This meant that the participants could not apply assessment theory to practice. One of the students made the useful suggestion that assessment should be part of the English curriculum course outline for pre-service teachers (DS1 S11). It is telling that the participant who had received assessment training, and, thus, some form of assessment knowledge, in other subjects felt more confident about assessment than in EHL.

Without the assessment knowledge base, the novice teachers were not prepared for what awaited them at schools. The school expected them to have the necessary knowledge of assessment. In some schools, the new teachers were provided with an induction and a mentor, but in other cases they were left to cope on their own. When the lecturer required the student to design an assessment task (usually as part of a larger project), it was relatively "decontextualised" and lacked the necessary grounding and contextualisation to ensure that the task was an "authentic" one (bin Abdul Aziz & Yusoff, 2016). The novice teachers felt that their training was ineffective as there was little alignment between what they had been trained to do and what they were expected to do. Assessment training was not part of their major subject, EHL, and it was not modelled on how assessment could be done in a class environment. Many of the novice teachers expressed their feelings of frustration or struggling to cope.

The final-year students showed some awareness of assessment requirements and their legal status but were not prepared to engage with these documents. Some lecturers were unaware of the national assessment policies or did not particularly value these documents. Students were, consequently, not prepared for the reality of assessment practices in schools as they lacked the training and critical insight into the policy documents. This left them confused and

vulnerable when they were required to implement the policy documents in practice. Students were not sufficiently exposed to, or guided in, the design of rubrics for essays and the cognitive weighting of comprehension tests. Both final-year students and novice teachers acknowledged that they were not fully prepared for the role of an assessor. An opportunity to role-model assessment practices in the EHL subject by lecturers during training was missed.

7.6.1.3 Unsupportive policy documents

The policy documents, and the CAPS (2011a) in particular, exacerbate the situation. The CAPS document (2011a) is not a guide to good assessment practice in EHL along with the constant changes in the statutory documents. On the contrary, the policy documents overburdens teachers with assessment tasks and does not offer a principled guide to practice. The fact that it is largely ignored by higher education is understandable but not helpful. Lecturers on teacher education programmes need to prepare their students, not only for the realities of the classroom (including many learners who are not first language English speakers who enrol for EHL), but for policy regulations that are confusing and extremely demanding. It is for these reasons that students and novice teachers reported the misalignment between what they were trained to do and what schools expect. The NPA (2015a) and the CAPS (2011a) official curriculum documents are important in teaching practice. However, these documents have been widely criticised as not following best practices (De Lange et al., 2020; Govender & Hugo, 2018; Reed, 2014; Weideman et al., 2017). Lecturers, therefore, need to become familiar with the NPA (2015a) and the CAPS (2011a) (including the revised generic statement and the forthcoming specific amendments to EHL). Lecturers' involvement with these documents should point to the flaws but also constructively assist the students who will have to engage with these documents as part of their teaching practice. One should also consider the lack of leadership in a school that expects a novice teacher to design a complete assessment plan when novice teachers are appointed.

7.6.1.4 Reclaiming the value of assessment

The final-year students felt that they had not sufficiently engaged with assessment principles to be able to describe the assessment principles underpinning practice. Students suggested that when assessment principles were explicit in the undergraduate curriculum programme and when teaching time was devoted to the topic of assessment principles, students would take it more seriously. When assessment principles were demonstrated in practical exercises, students were more likely to understand and value these principles. Ironic and cynical statements ("…to keep the status quo…" and "…prepared for everything…") were made, and again showed that they did not believe that assessment principles guided assessment practices in schools. The students were aware of unprincipled assessment practices in some schools, such as passing learners regardless of their performance or failing learners who

required additional support, which resulted in cynicism and disillusionment amongst the students questioning the value of assessment. From the reflection on competent assessment practices from the data sets, it became clear that the novice teachers experienced difficulty with assessment. A student critiqued the training as failing to prepare students for practice and in particular the burden of assessment.

7.7 Implications for improved assessment practices

Assessment is one of the most complex practices that teachers undertake (Kavaklı & Arslan, 2019). Thus, it was not surprising that many of the interviewees did not feel adequately trained to apply their limited assessment skills. Without a theoretical understanding of assessment in language education, and solid underpinning of assessment principles, students undertaking a practicum and novice teachers will remain dependent on the exemplars and instructions given to them. Understanding the purposes of assessment will help students and novice teachers to determine the broad type of assessment tasks to use for specific purposes in language development. Developing strategic assessment knowledge will provide students and teachers with a repertoire of assessment approaches and assessment tasks for a variety of assessment purposes and learner needs. While final-year students and novice teachers had a common sense understanding of the purpose of assessment, using terms such as “understanding”, “improvement”, “support” and “challenge learners”, they did not have disciplinary knowledge of the purpose of assessment in assessing language skills to promote learning and gathering evidence on learners’ language development. Developing students’ theoretical and applied knowledge of assessment within the disciplinary field of home language education is fundamental to their success as teachers. This is clearly an area to be addressed by higher education.

To a certain extent, and as part of the B Ed degree, students need to be trained in the role of an assessor (Reed, 2014). Most of the interviewed students and novice teachers did not feel competent in this role. Part of the role of an assessor is to understand and address policy requirements. If higher education does not take some responsibility in this regard, it is likely that teachers will adopt a “compliance” approach to policy or rely on websites, textbooks, and assessment tasks from previous years, as several interviewees explained. This does not mean that higher education should train students to develop CAPS-compliant assessment tasks, rubrics, cognitive weightings, and so on. Higher education could support students to understand and critique the CAPS requirements. Because the CAPS requirements are particularly onerous, as well as confusing, it is important that lecturers assist pre-service teachers to address the requirements in critical, constructive, and principled ways. Higher Education also needs to take responsibility for guiding students in the plan and design of assessment tasks.

The actual implementation of formative and summative assessment tasks, as well as the technical aspects of assessment administration, is the domain of the school, including the mentors and supervisors of students on a practicum, or novice teachers in employment. With regard to the former, the higher education institution needs to be involved in the assessment of the practicum or at least take into account the feedback provided by the school.

Many schools are not engaging in good assessment practice (Maddock & Mouran, 2018). Thus, the student in a practicum will be exposed to undesirable practices. A solid grounding in assessment theory, principles, purposes, and strategies, as well as constructive ways of engaging with the CAPS and the ability to plan and design principled assessment tasks, can help to counter the negative influence that a school culture might have on a novice teacher. Table 7.5 provides a summary of assessment knowledge, the competences these different knowledge forms underpin, and the institutions responsible.

Table 7.5: Summary of Assessment Knowledge and Practice

Semantic gravity levels	**Descriptors**	**Knowledge**	**Competences underpinned by the different knowledge areas**	**Responsibility**
8	Theory	Conceptual	Conceptualise/critically reflect	Higher Education
7	Principles		Principled practice	Higher Education
6	Purposes	Applied	Meaningful practice	Higher Education
5	Strategies		Appropriate practice	Higher Education
4	Guidelines	Regulative	Address policy requirements	Higher Education
3	Planning		Planning/designing assessments	Higher Education
2	Implementation	Operational	Formative/summative assessing	School
1	Logistics		Assessment administration	School

Higher education should be deeply involved with building conceptual (theory on assessment) and applied assessment knowledge (application of theory in practicum) as derived from the data and discussed by Österling and Christiansen (2018) in Section 2.4. Firstly, students need

opportunities in the higher education environment to discuss assessment theory and principles. The theory and principles of assessment are relatively context-independent forms of knowledge that are the strength of the higher education system and, in professional education, are valued as they are the knowledge bases that underpin and guide practice (Rusznyak, 2015). These are the knowledge forms that students need when they encounter unfamiliar problems or, in the case of the CAPS, confusing areas of work. In such cases, they will draw on the principled knowledge provided in their higher education studies. Secondly, higher education also needs to address forms of regulative knowledge, such as the (confusing) guidelines provided by the CAPS and the planning and design of assessment tasks that are appropriate to the contexts and the learners that students are likely to encounter in a practicum or in employment. Thirdly, before their placement in a school for teaching practice, students need to be warned about possible undesirable practices as a way to minimise the potential tension between what pre-service teachers might be taught as good practice by their lecturers and what they experience as the norm in the schools to which they were exposed (Brown, 2005).

From the data provided by the students and the novice teachers, a curriculum framework for assessment in teacher education emerges. Such a curriculum framework could usefully take the form of a continuous semantic gravity wave that addresses assessment theory, principles, purposes, strategies, policy guidelines, planning, design, and, after the practicum, implementation and logistics. Figure 1 represents an “ideal” semantic profile for a module or section on assessment as part of the B Ed (Home Language Education) programme.

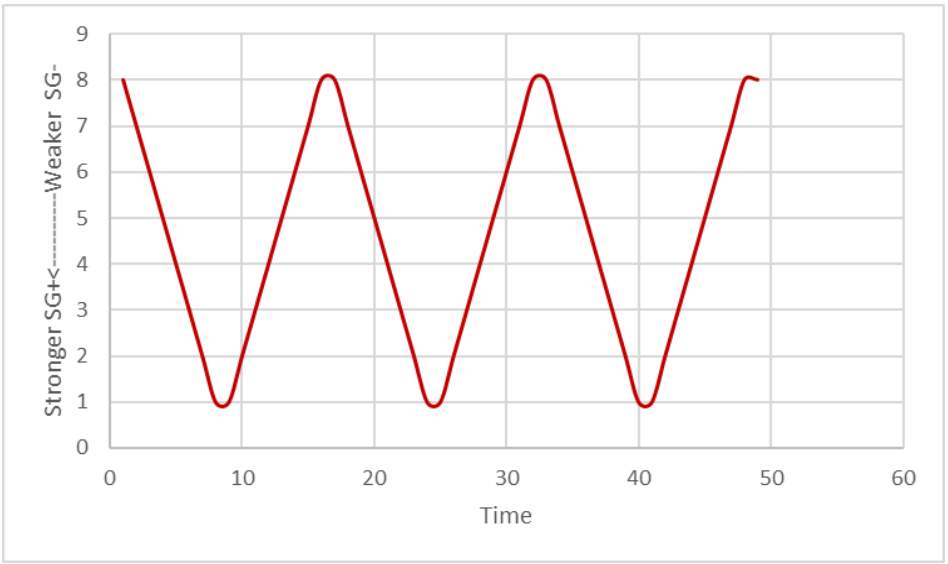


Figure 7.6: A proposed semantic gravity profile for the missing assessment curriculum

Universities should prepare teachers holistically, meaning in theory and practice. Students need to understand the different forms of assessment knowledge but also understand and

experience the linkages across these forms. They should be able to apply assessment principles to assessment tasks, and they should be able to use assessment theory to design assessment tasks. Students enter pre-service teacher education in the understanding that they will be prepared for teaching practice. Many look forward to their practicum with confidence and enthusiasm. Higher education needs to build students' confidence and enthusiasm but ensure that they have appropriate strategies and methods to enter the complex and varied schools in which they will practice. When one compares the time and importance assessment takes in the school environment, teacher training should prepare students accordingly. While it could be that over-assessment is practised in schools, this practice needs to be debated and discussed in teacher education.

In the next chapter, the voices of lecturers, school principals, and Western Cape Education Department officials are studied with a view to further addressing the missing assessment curriculum.

CHAPTER EIGHT
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS

It takes a village to raise a child (African proverb).

8.1 Introduction to Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight addresses the fourth research sub-question: How are pre-service and novice assessors' EHL assessment practices managed in the intermediate phase school environment? The data on which this chapter is based include questionnaire data from a school principal (Section 8.2) and from district subject advisors (Section 8.3), as well as data obtained from a multi-stakeholder focus group interview (Section 8.4). The focus of all the data collected was on participants' perceptions and understandings of practices in the assessment of EHL in primary schools, and how novice teachers could be supported in assessment practice. In Section 8.5, the data obtained from the different sources is synthesised and in Section 8.6 concluding reflections are offered.

8.2 Questionnaire findings and discussion: Primary school principal (Data set 4)

Questionnaires on assessment theory and practice, including supporting novice teachers in assessment practice, were sent to primary school principals in the Western Cape region. The questionnaire included both open-ended and closed-ended questions (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2). Only one school principal responded and submitted a completed questionnaire in which she shared her views on managing and supporting assessment practice at her school. The primary school principal's responses are described in subsection 8.2.1 and discussed in subsection 8.2.2.

8.2.1 Findings: Competent assessors required

The principal's focus was on competent practice in assessment, and, in the case of the novice teachers, she expressed concerns about their attainment of competence in the planning, design, implementation, and marking of assessment tasks. The principal stated that general guidelines on setting assessment tasks were given to novice teachers to help them set appropriate assessment tasks. The principal received feedback on novice teachers from the relevant head of department and indicated that, according to the feedback she received, novice teachers were able to apply the aims and principles of assessment in formal and informal tasks. However, in her own experience, this was not generally the case. The principal described a discussion with a novice teacher on designing an assessment task that was expected to take into account the weighting of cognitive levels in the assessment task. The principle summarised what the novice teacher told her as follows:

> You give learners a lot of work to learn and the paper must consist of the amount of work learnt by the learners. For example, if they had to learn 50 pages, the paper can't only count out of a total of 15 (DS4 P1).

The principal was concerned with the novice teacher's response, because it seemed to equate cognitive levels with the number of pages that learners had to learn. The principal also stated that the reports from mentor teachers showed that many home language novice teachers were not able to align the cognitive weighting explained in the CAPS (2011a) document with an assessment task, and the novice teachers were not able to assess learners' comprehension skills. Incorrect cognitive level alignment and inaccurate marking indicated areas of weakness in the novice teachers, which the principle ascribed to gaps in their training.

8.2.2 Discussion: understanding assessment vs following assessment policy

In responding to the questionnaire, the principal identified "knowledge" and "skills" as keywords to describe the principles of assessment at her school. Knowledge and skills are usually understood as the endpoint of a learning process, rather than principles of assessment (Téllez & Mosqueda, 2015). This suggests that the principal's own assessment knowledge might be on somewhat shaky ground. It is the responsibility of school leaders to lead assessment planning and practice and to have the necessary assessment knowledge to challenge any assessment beliefs or practices that could undermine the larger aims of assessment (Collins, 2017). Assessment implementation is strongly influenced by the school's assessment culture which tends to develop as a result of the school principal's management practices (Abrams et al., 2016). In this case, the principal seems focussed on ensuring that novice teachers' practices are aligned with the CAPS (2011a) requirements. While the weighting of cognitive levels and accurate marking are important components of competent practice, it is equally important to ensure that the novice teachers understand these requirements beyond compliance with CAPS (2011a). Teachers' assessment practices will ultimately reflect on the school principal, and it is consequently important for the principal to address any difficulties or undesirable practices amongst teachers. In order to achieve this, principals need to understand assessment more broadly, beyond policy requirements.

8.3 Questionnaires' findings and discussion: English subject advisors for intermediate phase (Data set 5)

Sixteen subject advisors, who are the officials responsible for supporting teachers in implementing the national curriculum, were invited to respond to a questionnaire (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.2). Five subject advisors from three educational districts within the Western Cape participated in the survey. In subsection 8.3.1, the findings of the questionnaire data are presented, and in subsection 8.3.2, the data findings are analysed and discussed.

8.3.1 Findings: Subject advisors' failure to link theory and practice

Most of the advisors used standard key words, such as "reliability", "validity", "fairness", and "authenticity" to describe the principles of assessment. In response to the question, "When you present workshops to teachers on the purpose of assessment, what are the concepts you use?" advisors tended to conflate assessment types with the purposes of assessment by making mention of "formative versus summative assessment", "formative and continuous assessment", "assessment types", "cognitive levels", "recording", "feedback" and "school-based assessment (SBA)".

The advisors were satisfied that novice teachers were able to identify different assessment types that would be relevant for assessing the different language skills as required for different grades on the "Programme of Assessment" (CAPS, 2011a). The subject advisors valued the novice teachers' ability to select suitable texts for learners' different levels and the appropriate allocation of marks in assessment practices. On the question: "What aspect/s of assessment do you regard as important for a language teacher in their role as an assessor?" The advisors had different opinions. Thus, they did not all have the same understanding of what knowledge and skills were necessary. The responses of four subject advisors, from the Western Cape province in South Africa, who provided detailed responses are described below.

One of the subject advisors emphasised the "basics": "...the feedback after assessment", "to ensure that the basics are cemented", and "...to ensure that the progression of language ability is adhered to" (DS5 SA1). Another subject advisor was more concerned that the correct procedures were followed. She emphasised: "Procedure, from specifying types of activities as required for the different aspects", "Grade appropriate texts", "Mark allocation correct for different levels of questions", "language to be tested using any context, text for reference, knowledge of drawing up specific level descriptors, criteria for rubrics" (DS5 SA2). The third subject advisor was more interested in the novice teachers' deeper understanding of assessment than being able to mindlessly apply the CAPS requirements. In fact, she critiqued the Programme of Assessment as placing an excessive burden on teachers. Her comments relate to assessment theory and assessment principles: "Understanding what you are assessing", "that the assessment must be relevant to the child", "the total assessments of PoA is too much", and "understand that learners are different and learn and understand differently" (DS5 SA3). The fourth subject advisor offered principled statements (such as ensuring fairness of assessment, i.e. that classwork should prepare learners for summative assessment) and that language skills rather than "content" or general knowledge should be assessed. But she also included some random and logistical requirements. She stated that: "Classwork prepares learners for summative assessment", "learners must complete assessment unassisted if no

concessions or accommodations have been approved", "skills are assessed and not content", and "instructions to learners must be clear" (DS5 SA4).

A semantic profile was created based on the responses of the advisors using the statements about assessment made by each of the four subject advisors (Figure 8.1). The semantic gravity profiles of the subject advisors' statements on the roles as assessors are represented by four series on the graph. The subject advisor who felt that the practical "basics" were important is represented by Series 1 (the dashed line). She is solidly at the level of implementation (SG 2) and proper planning to ensure that there is language development in learners (DS5 SA1). The second subject advisor (DS5 SA2), who was concerned with the logics and procedures (SG 1), is represented by Series 2 (the red line). Her focus on logistics is evident in the low flatline of the graph. The third subject advisor felt that assessors should understand assessment (SG 8) and should be principled in designing assessment tasks (SG 7). Her input is represented in Series 3 (the grey line) (DS5 SA3). The high level of her input is evident in the high flatline in Figure 8.1 The last subject advisor, represented by Series 4 (solid black line) (DS5 SA4), veered between assessment principles (SG 7) and assessment administration (SG 1).

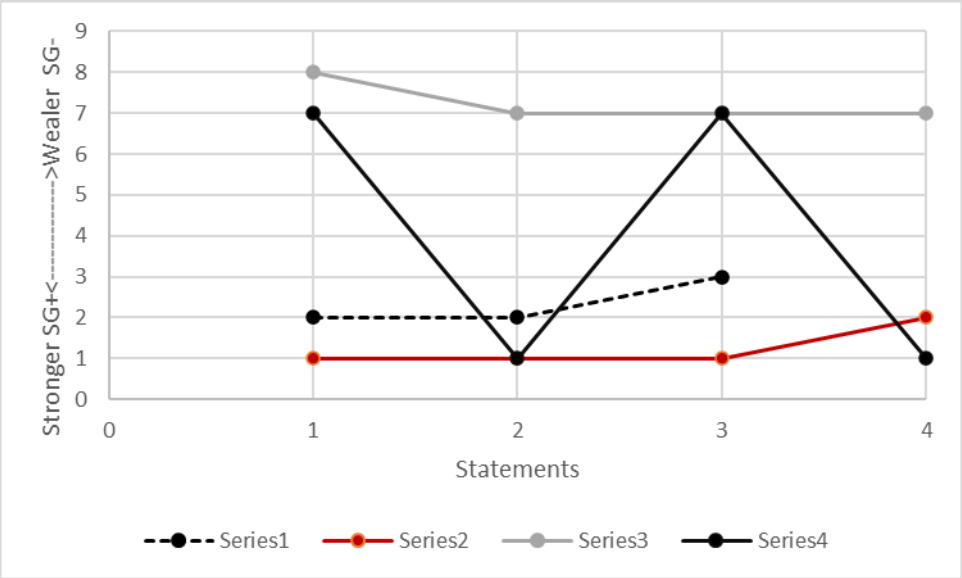


Figure 8.1: Semantic gravity profiles of subject advisors on the role of an assessor

The subject advisors addressed both conceptual issues with weaker semantic gravity (e.g. assessment principles) and practical issues (e.g. implementation and administration) with stronger semantic gravity. However, they did not address issues around the purpose of assessment, assessment strategies, guidelines, and planning (apart from one brief reference to the latter). The subject advisors did not seem able to "connect the dots" or articulate the

important relationship and logical connections between assessment theory and assessment practice.

On the question of whether home language novice teachers in their district were generally adequately prepared to implement processes and manage assessment as stated in the policy documents, the majority of advisors replied negatively. To support novice teachers, advisors provided general guidelines in the form of a novice teachers' manual, with guidelines on how to set assessment tasks with regard to the layout (like name of school, type of assessment, time, examiner, marks, and instructions), the weighting of cognitive levels, the use of Bloom's and Barrette's taxonomy to be used (DS5 SA1), level descriptors on rubrics that had to be specific to avoid subjectivity, accurate memoranda, and the moderation processes (DS5 SA2).

The advisors observed that most novice teachers formed part of a team at school and were influenced by the school's assessment practices. The subject advisors reported that it seemed as if novice teachers were somewhat prepared in the processes and management of the NPA (DS5 SA1) and executing the Programme of Assessment (DS5 SA2) during undergraduate training. This differed from the student and novice teacher responses. They based these opinions on their discussions with novice teachers on the relevant policies, aims, and principles of assessment during curriculum training and their teachers' files as required. However, the majority of the advisors indicated that novice teachers could not set competent formative and summative assessment activities.

8.3.2 Discussion: Regulating assessment practices

The subject advisors had a range of different understandings of assessment practice. Most, however, agreed that the novice teachers were not well prepared for the many practical and logistical requirements in schools. The subject advisors stated that novice teachers "struggled to set up assessment tasks" (DS5 SA4) and asked subject advisors to provide examples (DS5 SA2). This raised the issue, noted in the research literature (e.g. Winterbottom et al., 2008) that schools tend to shape their own assessment cultures which influences novice teachers' assessment practices.

When regulating assessment practices, subject advisors are expected to implement assessment policies from a theoretical base. Managers and support officials, like the subject advisors, should guide and develop novice teachers in effective assessment practices (Collins, 2017). They can only do this effectively if they have a good understanding of assessment theory and practice – beyond the policy documents. The subject advisors forwarded examples of assessments and provided suggestions to improve the assessments set by novice teachers. They observed that novice teachers implemented suggestions successfully with support and

were willing to attend workshops to improve their assessment knowledge and skills (DS5 SA4). The data from the subject advisors show that novice teachers broadly understand what is expected of them as assessors of learning, but that there are gaps in their knowledge with regard to the planning, design, implementation, and marking of assessment tasks.

8.4 Focus group interviews' findings and discussion: Stakeholders (Data set 8)

Assessment is foregrounded in the South African educational context and includes multiple stakeholders: teacher educators, school managers, teachers, and district managers. A multi-stakeholder focus group interview was held with eight stakeholders, including a primary school head of department, a mentor teacher, four higher education lecturers, and two education officials from the Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) head office. This focus group interview involved the different role players and was a productive session with very little prompting by the researcher. The stakeholder focus participants are described in more detail as follows: the two provincial coordination officials (DS8 CO1 and DS8 CO2) from the WCED who supported subject advisors, the four university lecturers from the university's Faculty of Education, which included two EHL lecturers (DS8 L1 and DS8 L2), a Professional Studies and Education lecturer (DS8 L3), and a foundation phase Language lecturer (DS8 L4), and a Head of Department (DS8 T1) who is also an English mentor teacher from a primary school in the intermediate phase, who supported students during practice teaching and novice teachers in their first year of employment. The findings from the focus group are presented in subsection 8.4.1. The findings are analysed and discussed in subsection 8.4.2.

8.4.1 Findings: Over-assessed and over-stressed

The findings are presented in two clusters. The first cluster comprises findings on how the stakeholders found consensus on the problem to be addressed (Section 8.4.1.1), and the second cluster focuses on how the stakeholders brainstormed of a way forward towards improving teacher education and teacher support (Section 8.4.1.2).

8.4.1.1 Finding consensus: bridging the theory/practice divide

The WCED coordinators stated that reports from the nine education districts in the Western Cape showed that novice teachers often wanted to resign in their first year of teaching, because they struggled to cope with assessment. As one of the coordinators put it, for many novice teachers: "[Assessment tasks] are overwhelming [and] make no sense" (DS8 CO1). His colleague agreed, saying that many novice teachers had told him that: "[They] don't have the background on how to go about [assessing learners]" (DS8 CO2).

The stakeholder group members agreed that most novice teachers were not well-prepared for assessment practice, but they all had different opinions on the reasons for this and exactly what the challenges were.

For one of the lecturers, the B Ed degree prepared students with the basics for practice, but the issue had to do with misconceptions about assessment that student teachers had acquired during their own schooling (DS8 L4). By way of an example, the lecturer explained that, although students were "trained in the different higher order skills", once they began to practice teaching, "the higher order thinking skills were not evident in their practices" (DS8 L3). This view was supported by a lecturer who felt that students did not value the assessment knowledge or skills that they had learned in the B Ed programme, as they did not understand assessment as a component of a teaching and learning process and only understood assessment as the final product. This was their experience in their own school years (DS8 L4). A third lecturer agreed that students were "missing out on the process of assessment", in particular formative assessment, as they tended to focus on summative assessment (DS8 L2). The consensus amongst the lecturers was thus that their higher education studies had prepared them with the basic knowledge for assessment practice, but that, for a number of reasons, students did not have a good understanding of assessment as a part of pedagogy.

An education official, seemingly quoting from CAPS (2011a), endorsed the lecturers' views:

> Teachers [should] realise that assessment is part of the teaching process and not something that's a different entity (DS8 CO1).

The second education coordinator clarified his colleague's statement and restated what he felt were the lecturers' viewpoints:

> [Most] teachers didn't understand the process of assessment – assessment for learning, assessment of learning – how to set a fair, reliable and quality assessment paper with different cognitive weightings (DS8 CO 2).

The Head of Department explained that moving from assessment theory to assessment practice (in all its various forms) was "a growing process" (DS8 T1). She agreed with the lecturers that it was essential for novice teachers to enter the education field with basic assessment knowledge. While much of this knowledge would be theoretical and learned at university, some of it should have been practical and acquired during practice teaching as well. The head of department explained that, apart from not having the knowledge of how to assess, novice teachers lacked the experience. As an example, the novice teachers would "learn

Barrett's cognitive levels but struggled to differentiate between a level two and level three question" (DS8 T1).

A lecturer explained that, according to students' reports, many did not have the opportunity during practice teaching to develop assessment tasks (DS8 L4). Another lecturer reported that novice teachers had used "old assessments" obtained from various sources such as teachers' files at the school or used the assessments given in the textbook (DS8 L3). Lecturers felt that pre-service teachers were not exposed to good practices during practice teaching at many schools. They noted that schools struggled with backlogs and recycled previous assessment tasks as a way of coping with the pressure (DS8 L1). Students observed that many teachers did not set their own assessment tasks, that they had incorrect or inaccurate marking memoranda, used inappropriate rubrics, and did not reflect on learners' outcomes. The lecturers concluded that many teachers were, therefore, not role models in assessment practices. Another shortfall they noted was that mentor teachers were overloaded with other school responsibilities and were not always available when needed.

One of the coordinators explained that assessment item banks were available to teachers online and that item banks contained different questions at different levels that teachers could "copy and paste" or adapt to create an appropriate assessment task (DS8 CO1). The departmental head felt that novice teachers should not set summative assessment papers as these were "high stakes" assessments, and they should rather seek assistance from their assigned mentors or departmental heads (DS8 T1). A lecturer suggested a best practice in which novice teachers "only had to comment on assessment papers during internal moderation by giving hints". When they showed insight, they could "start setting papers" (DS8 L3).

One of the EHL lecturers pointed out that students and novice teachers questioned schools that "adapt marks" when too many learners fail an assessment, and that this practice did not "make sense" (DS8 L1). For the above reasons, assessment became a burden to novice teachers who did not have a solid foundation or background on which to base their assessment practices. If they had a strong understanding of assessment theory as well as experience of the implementation of assessment tasks under expert guidance, this would reduce the sense of feeling overwhelmed.

A lecturer pointed out that assessment has been a problem in the post-apartheid era because of the many changes that education has undergone. In her opinion, the topic of assessment was ignored like the proverbial "elephant in the room" (DS8 L4). Both lecturers and departmental officials agreed that there was an "overemphasis on assessment" (DS8 CO1). At the national level, summative and large-scale assessments were "too high stake" activities

for a primary school where learners are over-assessed already and which further limits teaching and learning (DS8 L1).

The two main policy documents for the WCED and schools are the CAPS documents (2011a) for each phase and subject and the NPA (2015a) for all grades and subjects. In discussing the EHL CAPS document (2011a) for the intermediate phase, the focus was on Section 4 which deals with the content and the requirements for assessment. One of the coordinators claimed that "…CAPS is not very well written …" (DS8 CO2) and prior research on CAPS also has pointed this out (e.g. Weideman et al., 2017). The head of department explained that:

> CAPS can only give a few guidelines but CAPS will never be able to support teachers in setting, for example, examination papers as one-size fits all as it is prescriptive – a considerable number of guidelines, such as activities for each day of the school year. CAPS disregards the social-economic environment and teacher competence (DS8 T1).

A lecturer supported the head of department's input from a different perspective: "CAPS has so many things that needs to be done and then there's assessment. Students and novice teachers get lost in all the expectations" (DS8 L4).

There was general consensus that the CAPS was "too prescriptive" (DS8 T1), "lacked a clear vision" and did "not provide teachers with the opportunity to be creative to adapt to diverse contexts" (DS8 L4). The many requirements tended to make teachers highly dependent on prior assessment tasks, examples from textbooks, and so on.

An education official pointed out the irony that although CAPS and the NPA are highly prescriptive and have many requirements, they do not offer recommendations or resources for good assessment practice:

> [CAPS and NPA] give guidelines in terms of assessment but it doesn't give the teacher the practical part or give the policy on what to assess and how to assess and what must be in place in your class (DS8 CO1).

Because of the overwhelming assessment expectations, the South African Department of Basic Education has amended Section 4 on assessment in the CAPS document. The Amended CAPS document (which is a generic document and not specific to EHL) provides an improved, albeit brief, explanation of "assessment for learning and assessment of learning" but did not change the number of assessment tasks required for EHL (DS8 CO1). An official

pointed out: “When it comes to the actual assessment, it’s [CAPS Section 4] still not adequate” (DS8 CO2).

The CAPS Section 4 Amendments, thus, did not change much in EHL. Definitions of assessment types were included with no further support structures (e.g. examples of rubrics or templates for setting comprehension tests). In response to the inadequacy of the CAPS, the WCED “add[ed] [supportive] attachments to the minutes to assist with the summative or formal assessment tasks that need to be done” (DS8 CO2).

The WCED officials, thus, demonstrated how one might engage with the CAPS (2011a) document. In the light of the inadequate policy documents and the burden and misconception of assessment, the group agreed that collaboration between universities, schools, and the district could benefit all parties. The group also established that there was not yet sufficient communication between schools, the district, and universities.

8.4.1.2 Finding a way forward: improving teacher education, improving teacher support

The multi-stakeholder focus group broadly agreed that novice teachers were not sufficiently prepared for assessment practice. They identified the following reasons: novice teachers did not understand assessment as a process (e.g. how formative assessment can build particular language skills and prepare learners for larger and integrated assessment tasks); novice teachers had insufficient opportunities to practice assessment in their practical training (preferably under the supervision of a highly competent mentor teacher); novice teachers, both in the practicum and in employment, were exposed to undesirable assessment practices (such as passing struggling learners because there was insufficient support to enable them to achieve the required standard); and the CAPS (2011a) document was confusing and overemphasised assessment which created an untenable assessment burden and overwhelmed novice teachers.

The focus group agreed that there needed to be better communication between higher education institutions, the Department of Basic Education, and the WCED. One of the EHL lecturers explained that it was a “battle to stay on top of the latest documentation” which often did not reach lecturers at universities (DS8 L1). As a result, students were not prepared for the latest developments in education. The lecturer wished to keep “up to date” with courses at the Cape Teaching and Learning Institute, but they did not have access to those training programmes which were intended for teachers. She also felt that universities were not training teachers for the WCED and for public schools as students find employment in a variety of educational spheres, both nationally and internationally.

It was suggested that the universities and schools share their assessment knowledge to write an assessment manual for the B Ed programme as well as for teachers in practice. The Education Department officials undertook to share relevant information directly to lecturers and to invite them to development meetings. One of the coordinators offered to arrange for a group of educational specialists to host an open panel discussion for fourth-year students at an appropriate time after their practice teaching. Students would have the opportunity to ask questions on what they found in the various schools during practice teaching. Students would then be better able to link what they had been taught at university with what they had experienced in the different schools. Such interactions would support their understanding of how the different school contexts influenced teaching and assessment. A lecturer suggested an annual "reunion conference" in which novice teachers reflected on their studies and provided feedback to lecturers (DS8 L4). A collaborative forum for closer relationships with universities, education departments, schools, and other stakeholders had been established in some subjects/learning areas and it was suggested that a languages forum similarly be established (DS8 CO2). All lecturers were invited to attend the Curriculum Studies Forum where all the subject advisors from all districts gather to discuss mutual experiences and find solutions (DS8 CO1).

There was general agreement that the teacher education curriculum for EHL should be revised. One of the EHL lecturers pointed out that there is an overemphasis on English Literature, which has 15 credits (150 hours) awarded to it, compared to the five credits (50 hours) awarded to all the other elements of teaching and assessing English. She explained:

> The English as subject's prescribed curriculum content does not prepare students for their career as a teacher and then much of what they've done is actually not functionally relevant to their teaching career (DS8 L1).

Professional Studies and Education Lecturer 4 supported the fact that students were trained to think conceptually and to understand assessment theory. Students were not given enough exposure to assessment practices during practice training, as the school assessment cycle did not align with practice teaching in the four-year curriculum. The EHL lecturer felt that there was "a misconception between what students are trained in and what the schools expect from novice teachers" (DS8 L1). Both EHL lecturers (DS8 L1 and DS8 L2) indicated that the university would appreciate it if schools expressed their needs which universities could address in their limited time, especially in improving assessment. It was felt that collaboration should not happen independently of the other 24 teacher training facilities nationally, excluding private institutions, as students apply for posts across provinces (DS8 L1). The national requirements for the B Ed primary school teacher training included local variations: "… because different

provinces [and universities] have got different viewpoints of how the assessment should be done" (DS8 L4).

A broader perspective was needed as the WCED could not function in isolation with regards to curriculum and training. This lack of clarity on the content of assessment due to different viewpoints could be a reason why no assessment course had been implemented although MRTEQ (2015c) identified "assessor" as one of the roles of a teacher.

Another challenge to be addressed is the teaching practicum. A lecturer pointed out that the B Ed required 32 weeks of practice teaching over the four-year programme. Students usually visited schools at the start of a term, and they did not experience assessment practices (recording, reporting, feedback, and analysing of results) as these tended to happen towards the end of a term. It was suggested that students rather go for an eight-week block of practice teaching, instead of three to four weeks, to cover the assessment period at a school with good assessment practices (DS8 L3). A coordination official suggested a mini internship in which students go to a school from Monday to Thursday and debrief on a Friday at the university (DS9 CO2). Open discussions could take place and lecturers could give feedback to teachers on their students' experiences. A lecturer was of the opinion that students also needed to develop themselves and take responsibility for their own learning (DS8 L2). Another lecturer added that "real" assessment training "…actually starts when she starts teaching" (DS8 L4). A coordination official shared that the in-service institute, the Cape Teaching and Learning Institute in Kuilsriver, provided training and each course included assessment design, moderation, reflection, and feedback (DS8 CO1).

Challenges were identified when students were placed with inexperienced teachers or at schools where good practices were not evident. Lecturers felt that collaboration between schools and universities with regard to placement were insufficient and inefficient. Mentors for pre-service and novice teachers were essential and key to successful transition from higher education to school practice. All the participants agreed that mentor teachers were essential for the development of students and novice teachers. Students were being taught theoretical foundations which needed to be integrated into practice during the practicum (DS8 L4). The majority of students indicated that their assessment experiences were limited to marking "to keep students busy" (DS8 L3). Few students had the opportunity to reflect on assessment, were guided on how to compile an assessment assignment, and given feedback.

Currently the Western Cape education system lacks capacity in how to develop assessments (DS8 L3). Lecturers felt that, over the last few years, the type of learner and student teacher had changed in their approach to learning. Students are more interested in the product than

the process of teaching and learning (DS8 L3), and students need a more positive and learning attitude towards assessment (DS8 L2). This changes the approach to mentorship as novice teachers would lack the process skills they are expected to transfer to learners. Coordination Official 2 pointed out that senior teachers should take novice teachers by the hand in the process.

It was evident that some schools take mentoring of student teachers very seriously, but others did not support students in teaching practice and, thus, training provision was often “unequal” (DS8 L4). Students often complained that teachers do not mentor them by showing them how they plan, prepare a lesson, or assess (DS8 L3). The mentor teacher acknowledged this tendency. A possible reason was that mentors are not quite sure of how to plan or set papers, because they use the textbook for planning and reuse previous assessment papers (DS8 L3). This lecturer was of the opinion that when there are strong internal moderation processes in a school, the mentor teacher for the students could show the student and guide universities on the implementation of assessment principles. Some teachers were reluctant to share their assessment practice for fear of critique or judgement by the student who might challenge them or expose their lack of assessment knowledge (DS8 L2). Teachers who are willing to mentor a student during practice teaching are usually confident in their own abilities, knowledge, and skills (DS8 L2).

The head of department and experienced teacher agreed:

> It takes a specific type of person to be a mentor teacher...a real mentor teacher who knows what this novice teacher needs or what this student needs. Somebody who can anticipate problems.... some sort of “sifting”, a selection process so that you only get the best people to mentor (DS8 T1).

A coordination official felt that:

> If one really wants to take a novice teacher by the hand, a dedicated appointed mentor teacher is needed to take the teacher from day one at the start of the first year of teaching to the last day of teaching of that year to go through all the cycles of teaching and learning to ensure they understand the whole process (DS8 CO2).

A model was suggested in which third-year and fourth-year students shadow an experienced teacher in assessment as an assignment on what has been learned. A coordination official indicated that retired teachers, with evidence of good assessment practices, could be appointed as a part of a Professional Learning Communities (DS8 CO1). A coordinator warned

that: "… few students and teachers are open to being mentored and the best ideas and strategies are not used due to a lot of external factors in our schools" (DS8 CO1).

It was also established that mentor teachers had to be selected and trained through accredited courses. Other options are shadowing and reporting, establishing Professional Learning Communities, and the Department of Basic Education's Spring Tech Project to develop assessment training materials for primary school graduates. There were proposals for developing an accredited mentorship course to get all the mentor teachers trained as part of their Continuing Professional Development points (DS8 L3). A suggestion was made that the 24 universities that provided teacher education collaborate with the Department of Basic Education to formulate such a course, because there were schools and teachers from different provinces involved (DS8 L4). If all the universities offered the same mentorship programme, the assessment practice would be regulated (DS8 L3). An EHL lecturer supported the idea that "mentorships schools" should be identified. These schools would be responsible for students' teacher practice over a four year period, and they would work in collaboration with each other (DS8 L2). The head of department agreed that such a course would have a positive impact on mentoring as a whole and assessment in particular, especially if open discussions were included (DS8 CO1). An EHL lecturer referred to the Spring Tech Project, under the leadership of the University of Johannesburg, that focuses currently on the development of assessment throughout the country for primary school graduates (DS8 L1).

Lastly, was the matter of providing resources for novice teachers. The head of department admitted that she, and even more so students, liked to work from an example and said a manual in hard copy was a very good idea as the internet is not always available and reliable or the internet resources do not reflect the South African context (DS8 T1). In order to start the process of collaboration, a lecturer suggested that the education department should provide a guide of best practices for collaboration around developing assessment examples for different school contexts and learning styles (DS8 L3). She also suggested YouTube clips on the departmental website on the process of planning and designing assessment tasks to support the manual. One of the coordinators pointed out that the education department has created a website space where anybody could upload curriculum snippets under the guidance and authorisation of the senior curriculum planners (DS8 CO1). The head of department suggested a 24 hour helpline, staffed by curriculum experts and psychologists, to assist novice teachers who encounter difficulties. An EHL lecturer proposed an "ex-student WhatsApp group" that would enable lecturers to stay in touch with the final-year students in their first year of teaching (DS8 L1).

8.4.2 Discussion: Towards integrated assessment knowledge

The ability to set assessment tasks is a core function of teaching (Reed, 2014). While the role of assessor is core to school education, a number of challenges were raised by the multi-stakeholder group – in particular, the theory and practice gap in assessment and the concomitant need for all concerned (teacher educators, departmental officials, school managers, teachers, and students) to develop a deep understanding of assessment knowledge on which to base assessment practice. The current practice in which higher education takes care of the theory and schools take care of the practice was not working as discussed in Section 2.4 (Gainsberg, 2012). There had to be stronger linkages between theory and practice, and everyone had to be competent in assessment theory and assessment practice (Österling & Christiansen, 2018) as discussed in 2.4. There were a range of additional issues, including the need for students and novice teachers to be exposed to good assessment practice and to be guided by well-trained mentor teachers. Novice teachers need to be taken through the whole process of assessment by including the various types and strategies – an approach that is supported by the assessment literature (e.g. Allsopp et al., 2006).

All stakeholders agreed that the CAPS document and amendments were far from ideal and created a barrier to good practice in assessment. These documents could not be ignored, however, and all stakeholders needed to engage with them – and until such time as there was policy change, ways needed to be found to address the requirements in constructive ways. The over-concern with policy compliance, as opposed to policy engagement and critique, has been described as the “politicisation of assessment” (Johnson, 2011) which could be an issue at play in the focus group as discussed in Section 2.4.1.

While lecturers, managers, district officials, students, and teachers all have different understandings of assessment, it is important that a systematic knowledge base for assessment in EHL is developed. Without a solid basis in assessment theory, assessment principles, the purposes of assessment (in particular understanding of the difference between assessment for learning and assessment of learning), and assessment strategies, it is unlikely that students will achieve competent assessment practice. It is also important that assessment guidelines, assessment planning, implementation, and the logistics of assessment management are also understood and valued by all stakeholders. Deep and integrated assessment knowledge could prevent previous assessment experiences from being recycled. Providing examples or guides are not the answer, but assessment knowledge should be acquired though focused theoretical and practical training. Lacking assessment knowledge, teachers are neither confident to try new methods of assessment tasks nor flexible in choosing different options for assessment (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013).

Many researchers have pointed to the need to shorten the “distance” between teacher education and school practice (e.g., Orafi et al., 2017). The multi-stakeholder focus group showed that collaborative efforts are necessary to link schools and universities to strengthen links between teacher preparation programmes and classroom realities. By sharing their challenges, the participants developed a better understanding of each other and worked constructively towards solutions to improve the training of teachers. The focus group generated many possibilities that could be followed up in the future.

8.5 Synthesis of the data: The failure to link assessment theory and practice

The data obtained from the principal’s and subject advisors’ questionnaire data and the multi-stakeholder focus group interview data show similar trends. A common trend running through all the data sources is a lack of knowledge of both theory and practice, in particular connecting assessment theory, principles, purposes, and strategies with assessment practice in the form of guidelines, planning, implementation, and management. When there is discontinuity between conceptual assessment knowledge and practical assessment knowledge, competent assessment practice becomes unattainable as discussed in Section 2.4.

This gap arises due to multiple factors, including the rapid changes in the education system, inadequate communication between higher education and policy changes, and the disproportionate emphasis on policy requirements in schools. For example, the many changes in the education system impact teacher training, but higher education is not always informed of the changes and, because of the processes around curriculum accreditation, cannot respond quickly enough to the changing assessment landscape. Teacher educators, thus, tend to ignore practice as it is prescribed by policy and aspiring teachers may graduate without the necessary practical assessment skills.

The failure to link assessment theory and practice could also be partly explained by the different areas of “jurisdiction” – higher education claimed assessment theory as their particular area of concern and considered themselves to be experts in this area. Schools and district officials, on the other hand, see themselves as the custodians of assessment practice and focus on these policy changes and policy requirements. These factors collectively hinder the integration of assessment theory and practice both in teacher education programs and the broader education system, impending the development of competent assessment practices.

This is a misunderstanding that seems to have resulted from the conflation of assessment practice within the CAPS (2011a) requirements without the comprehensive understanding of assessment as a tool for effective teaching and learning. Thus, the CAPS guidelines seemed to be regarded as “practice”, but this is not the case. Assessment practice exists beyond the

CAPS. In fact, most of the research participants found the CAPS to be confusing and burdensome – the opposite of good practice. Good assessment practice does not overemphasise assessment, and good assessment practice does not adapt marks to pass a required number of students.

These cross-cutting findings can be theorised regarding their semantic gravity profiles (Figure 8.2) where the x-axis is representing the expectations of assessment in the English Home Language. Teacher educators are represented in series 1, the red line, which shows their assumed area of responsibility as assessment theory, including assessment principles and purposes. The school principal, head of department, mentor teacher, subject advisors, and district officials are represented by the black line: the implementation and the logistical requirements of assessment in schools. There was an exception, as one of the subject advisors focused on assessment theory and principles. However, the trend amongst the school and district participants was a low semantic gravity profile. Although this group frequently referred to the policy guideline (SG 4), the CAPS is located at SG 0, the area of error on the graph.

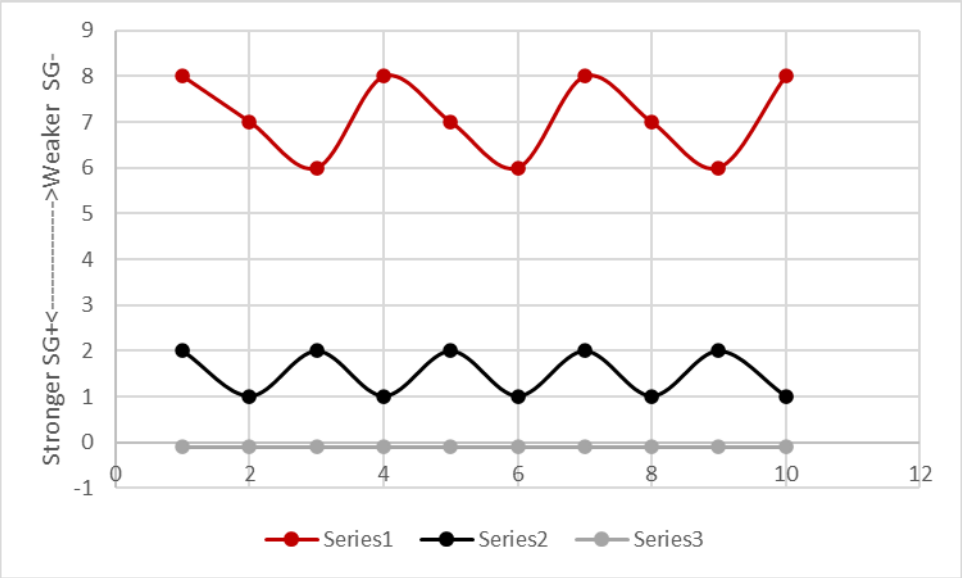


Figure 8.2: Semantic gravity profiles of the theory-practice gap

While the CAPS could (and should) contribute to connecting the gap between theory and practice, it tends to exacerbate the distance between theory and practice. This is due to its lack of alignment with generally accepted, theoretically- and research-informed principles, and practices of assessment. The CAPS forces teachers and their managers into an assessment regime that is confusing, time-consuming, and an untenable burden on novice teachers in

particular. This has happened because of the absence of assessment principles in the policy documents, with few examples and unrealistic assumptions but a proliferation of requirements. This could lead to all the stakeholders, but particularly the novice teachers, losing confidence in their own abilities to plan, design, implement, and mark assessment tasks.

Schools' interpretation of the CAPS policy is strongly impacted by their context, which could comprise classroom overcrowding, absence of teacher support, varying degrees of parental involvement, availability of moderation mechanisms (internal and external), collective assessment planning (or lack thereof), resources or lack of resources for implementation, and school communication practices (Sethusha, 2012). In challenging contexts, no one can be expected to implement a policy that makes unrealistic assumptions. The multi-stakeholder group acknowledged the weakness in the CAPS (2011a) and the theory-practice gap that arose from multiple causes. Methods of addressing the gap began to emerge from the interactions of the participants.

8.6 Conclusion: it takes a village to assess a learner

By actively addressing the underlying reasons for the theory-practice gap, all the stakeholders in the educational process: policy makers, teacher educators, school managers, national and district officials, and schools have a role to equip teachers, in their different areas of expertise and specialisation, with the necessary assessment knowledge and skills for effective teaching and learning.

The data showed weak areas in the theoretical understanding of assessment across all stakeholder groups, including teacher education. There is, thus, a need for all stakeholders involved in EHL education (teacher educators, school leaders, such as heads of department and mentor teachers, as well as the EHL district subject advisors) to enhance their understanding of assessment theory, principles, purposes, and strategies in EHL. The multi-stakeholder group offered many suggestions on how this might be practically accomplished – as well as the need to be aware of the sensitivities involved in undergoing training in what might be considered an area in which one is already an expert. While the focus group suggestions are helpful, it would also be useful to consider the literature on "Masterclass" training for enhancing expertise in educational contexts (e.g. de Vries, Schouwenaars, Derks, and Folker, 2018). In the broad field of teacher education, the literature has focused on retraining teachers for e-learning or learning in digital environments (e.g. Napal Fraile, Peñalva-Vélez, and Mendióroz Lacambra, 2018), while much of the general literature on the retraining of experts are in rapidly developing engineering fields (e.g. Benis, Amador Nelke, and Winokur, 2021) and in medicine, where the retraining of experts is commonplace (e.g.

Mylopoulos, Kulasegaram, and Woods, 2018). There is much to be learned about the retraining of experts from this literature.

The need for all stakeholders to become involved in assessment practice and to build their practical knowledge of assessment was clear. There was a need to separate the idea of good assessment practice from the CAPS (2011a) requirements. Part of the separation process would involve critically engaging with the CAPS and interrogating issues, such as the use of assessment for accountability purposes versus the use of assessment for the purpose of developing the child. All stakeholders needed to reclaim assessment practice. The stakeholder focus group suggested many ways in which this could be done, such as through better communication between schools and university education faculties, which might include extensive “debriefing” and “self-reflection” of pre-service teachers returning from teaching practice, the involvement of mentor teachers in preparation and debriefing, as well as opportunities for schools and the district officials to share new developments with universities (Sterling & Christiansen, 2018; Österling & Christiansen, 2022). The focus group established that there was not yet sufficient communication between schools and universities.

Collaboration is important for linking theory and practice in the preparation of pre-service teachers to become competent practitioners. Collaboration poses challenges of its own, such as communication between higher education institutions, the national Department of Basic Education, the educational district managers, and the individual schools – entities that do not always agree on practice. Thus, collaborative efforts are necessary to link schools and universities, both to strengthen links between teacher education and classroom realities and to ensure that all stakeholders try to achieve deep and systematic knowledge about assessment theory and assessment practice. Such a “whole village” reciprocal approach to assessment training and other means of developing theoretical and practical assessment knowledge will enable all stakeholders to make connections between assessment theory and practice within a safe and supportive environment (Eyers, 2014).

Education policies in general, and assessment policies in particular, reflect and shape beliefs about schools, teachers, children, and learning (Good et al., 2017). Teachers are more likely to follow recommended practices if they understand that these are not arbitrary but are principled and based on evidence (Orafi et al., 2017). The school education system places a significant focus on assessment, largely as a result of the NPA (2015a) in general, and the CAPS EHL document (2011a) in particular. Learners at the intermediate level are at a crucial stage of their literacy development (Oxenham, 2017). For this reason, it is important that English language assessment policy at this level is evidence-based, logical, and functional (Kvernbekk, 2016).

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"We find that the problem is not really about theory versus practice, or relevance versus rigour, but about profound epistemological differences"
(Wolfenden, Sercombe & Tucker, 2019: 555).

9.1 Introduction to Chapter Nine

This chapter concludes this study on the preparation of novice teachers for assessment practices in South African primary schools. Section 9.2 provides a brief overview of the study, including the research aims and objectives of the study, and summarises how the research sub-questions on assessment policies, teacher education, novice teachers' experiences, and assessment management and support were addressed. In Section 9.3, the findings related to the research sub-questions are summarised. Section 9.4 describes the contribution to knowledge made by the study and Section 9.5 describes the study's contribution to practice. Recommendations for assessment policy making and review, for teacher education, for assessment practice, and for the management and support of assessment practice are made in Section 9.6. Section 9.7 proposes a programme for further research on assessment, and Section 9.8 concludes the chapter with final reflections on the preparation of novice teachers for assessment practice in EHL at the intermediate phase.

9.2 Preparing novice teachers for assessment practice in EHL

The focus of this study was to develop an understanding of "What enables or constrains novice teachers' assessment practice in the field of English as a home language? in the intermediate phase of schooling. The main research aim was to improve assessment practice in EHL in the intermediate phase of schooling to ultimately benefit learners' English language development. The study showed that assessment is foregrounded in South African as the OBE approach as rejected. The study also showed that novice teachers in particular struggle to fulfil their role as assessors. The study analysed and evaluated policies on the assessment of EHL in the intermediate phase and found the assessment policies to be inadequate. The study proposed improvements towards an effective and inclusive EHL assessment policy. The study determined the nature of assessment training for EHL pre-service teachers in the intermediate phase at a Western Cape higher education institution and the extent to which teacher education prepared future teachers for assessment practice. This included an analysis of the training provided and the experiences of assessment practices of pre-service and novice teachers' of EHL in primary schools to build a knowledge base on intermediate phase EHL assessment practices.

The study identified a gap between teacher education provision and the demands of teaching practice. This “missing curriculum” in teacher education was identified as a failure to balance theoretical knowledge of assessment with practical knowledge of assessment and, more specifically, to include more elements of practical assessment knowledge in the teacher education curriculum. The study highlighted the experience of pre-service teachers in their teaching practicum as well as the experiences of novice teachers. These findings point to the inadequate preparation of teachers for assessment practice. Furthermore, the study found that the management of EHL assessment within intermediate phase school environments was ineffective in supporting novice teachers. Inclusive ways of managing the burden of assessment were proposed to support pre-service and novice teachers. The content of policies, the management of assessment, and the experiences of pre-service and novice teachers exacerbated the missing curriculum in higher education assessment training. A brief summary of how the specific research questions were answered follows.

The first research question on how assessment policies guide, or fail to guide, novice teachers for assessment practices in EHL was addressed by analysing and evaluating the different official policy documents of the Department of Basic Education (South Africa, Basic Education, 2011) on the assessment of EHL in the intermediate phase by using the semantic gravity translation tool from LCT (Table 3.3).

The second research question on the extent to which teacher education prepares pre-service teachers in the EHL for competent assessment practice required determining the extent and nature of assessment training for EHL in the intermediate phase at a Western Cape higher education institution.

In response to the third research question on the experiences of novice teachers of assessment of EHL sixth grade learners, the researcher analysed interview and questionnaire data on the experiences of pre-service and novice teachers’ of EHL in primary schools in the Western Cape.

Finally, the question on how novice teachers of EHL assessment practices were supported in the intermediate phase school environment was addressed by studying the management of assessment practices in EHL in primary schools.

9.3 Addressing the research sub-questions

In this subsection, the findings of the research study are briefly summarised under the categories of assessment policy, teacher education provision, final year students’ and novice

teachers' experiences of assessment practice in schools, and management support for assessment practice in schools.

9.3.1 The failure of assessment policy

Chapter Five addressed the research sub-question of how assessment policies guide, or fail to guide, novice teachers for assessment practices in EHL. The researcher drew on the semantic gravity translation device (Table 3.3) to interrogate the policy documents that govern assessment practice. Although guidance is provided to teachers in the policy documents, the lack of an evidence or research base for the policy, the imprecise and confusing terminology, and the considerable burden of assessment that is placed on teachers are not commensurate with good assessment practice. Thus, the policies failed to guide novice teachers in good assessment practice. In particular, the CAPS (2011) was found to be inadequate to the extent of promoting poor assessment practices at the intermediate level EHL. The Plan of Assessment (CAPS, 2011) made considerable demands on teachers and was largely inappropriate for the intermediate level. In response to the research question, the assessment policies failed to guide novice teachers in effective and inclusive assessment practices in EHL.

9.3.2 Gaps in teacher education

In Chapter Six the semantic gravity translation device (Table 3.3) is used to address the research sub-question on the extent to which teacher education prepared pre-service teachers for competent assessment practice in the EHL subject. The MRTEQ and TEC documents, the teacher educators' responses to the qualitative questionnaires, and focus group interviews were analysed. Teacher education does cover aspects of assessment in the curriculum in preparation for the classroom. However, the analysis showed the lack of specificity regarding theoretical and practical assessment knowledge within MRTEQ, as well as the missed opportunities to relate assessment theory and practice through reflection. The TEC identified different knowledge forms but similarly failed to connect assessment theory and assessment practice. The TEC paid scant attention to assessment practice and to teaching practice in general. Reflection was not regarded as a key integrative concept in neither MRTEQ nor the TEC. The lack of reflection widened the gap between theory and practice in teacher education. The study found that teacher education did not prepare pre-service teachers adequately for competent assessment practices in EHL. Reflection was identified as a missing concept in teacher education.

9.3.3 Experiencing EHL assessment practices

The third research question on how novice teachers experienced EHL assessment practices at the intermediate schooling level is addressed in Chapter Seven. Final-year students' and novice teachers' responses to the qualitative questionnaires and to focus group and individual

interviews were analysed by drawing on the semantic gravity translation device (Table 3.3). Teacher education covered assessment on a theoretical basis over the four year programme and teacher were exposed to informal assessment at school. The analysis confirmed the missing curriculum, namely, theoretical and practical assessment knowledge in teacher education. Three specific aspects were seen to be "missing" in the teacher education curriculum, with regard to the assessment of EHL. Firstly, a theory/practice divide was evident in the failure to apply assessment principles to assessment tasks. The missing curriculum was evident in the partial understandings of the different purposes of different types of assessment and the failure to adequately address the role of the assessor in the higher education curriculum.

Secondly, there was insufficient preparation, in the form of practical knowledge, for assessment practice in EHL at intermediate school level. The novice teachers felt that there was little alignment between what they had been trained to do and what they were expected to do. Practical assessment training was not part of their major subject, EHL, and it was not modelled on how assessment could be done in a class environment.

Thirdly, some lecturers were unaware of the national assessment policies and did not include or critique these documents in their lectures or planning. Students were, therefore, not prepared for the reality of assessment practices in schools as they lacked the knowledge and critical insight to engage with the policy documents. Policy documents such as the CAPS (2011) did not provide adequate guidance on assessment practices in EHL. On the contrary, these documents over-burdened teachers with assessment tasks and did not offer guidelines to practice based on the principles of assessment. By ignoring these documents, lecturers did not equip their students to engage with confusing and demanding policies. The missing curriculum, comprising a failure to link assessment theory and practice, a lack of practical assessment knowledge, and failure to address and critique policy documents (often combined with poor assessment practices in some schools) caused final-year students to feel that they were not able to fulfil their role as assessors. The missing curriculum is evident in pre-service teachers' and novice teachers' reports on the misalignment between what they were trained to do and what schools expected from them.

9.3.4 Supporting assessment practice

In Chapter Eight, the last research sub-question on how novice teachers' EHL assessment practices were managed in the intermediate phase school environment is addressed by analysing several data sets including open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and individual interviews. Assessment was identified as a "high-stakes" practice that impacted learners, teachers, and the wider school community. Good assessment practice required all

stakeholders to understand the principles that guide assessment practices and to keep up-to-date on the development and implementation of new policies as well as the results and analysis of large-scale tests (such as PIRLS) and other assessment matters. Although schools have programmes to introduce novice teachers to the school assessment environment, the data analysis showed that there were weak areas in theoretical and practical assessment knowledge as well as in the understanding of assessment across all stakeholder groups. The implication is that all stakeholders, including lecturers in teacher education, need to enhance their understanding of assessment theory, principles, purposes, and strategies in EHL at the intermediate phase.

9.4 Contribution to knowledge: reclaiming practical knowledge in teacher education

The review of the literature revealed gaps with regard to assessment knowledge. Assessment was largely considered to be a practice, thus, the underpinning knowledge base for the practice was neglected. This thesis contributes to assessment knowledge by drawing on, and extending, the theoretical framework of semantic gravity (Maton, 2014). This is explained in detail below. It is important to note that the study considers both theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge as forms of knowledge, even though these forms of knowledge are contextual. Practical assessment knowledge is, thus, distinguished from assessment practice.

The study's contribution to assessment knowledge is as follows: Firstly, forms of assessment knowledge were identified and classified; secondly, relationships between the different forms of assessment knowledge were proposed; and, thirdly, configurations of the forms of assessment knowledge that effectively and inclusively underpin assessment policies, curricula, practices, and support for practices were proposed.

9.4.1 Identifying and classifying assessment knowledge

The study identified context-independent and context-dependent forms of assessment knowledge. Assessment knowledge was found to be distributed over a wide variety of knowledge types, ranging from conceptual knowledge to applied knowledge and to knowledge forms that were developed through practice, namely, regulative knowledge (or the knowledge to understand and critique assessment policies, protocols, and policy directives) and operational knowledge (or the knowledge of assessment planning and implementation). The knowledge types could be further disaggregated into knowledge of assessment theory and principles, knowledge of assessment purposes and strategies, knowledge of assessment guidelines and planning, and knowledge of assessment implementation and reporting. Table 9.1, which derives from the translation device for the study (Table 3.3), is a schematic representation of the contribution made by the study to the identification and classification of assessment knowledge.

Table 9.1: Identification and classification of assessment knowledge

Semantic gravity	Range	Assessment knowledge	Levels	Knowledge descriptors
Less context dependent		Conceptual	8	Knowledge of assessment theory
			7	Knowledge of assessment principles
		Applied	6	Knowledge of assessment purposes
			5	Knowledge of assessment strategies
More context dependent		Regulative	4	Knowledge of assessment guidelines
			3	Knowledge of assessment planning
		Operational	2	Knowledge of assessment implementation
			1	Knowledge of assessment reporting

The full range of assessment knowledge is needed to underpin assessment practice in the form of assessment policy making, teacher education in assessment, assessment practice in schools, and the management of assessment. When there are gaps in assessment knowledge, practices are likely to be ineffective or incoherent. Conceptual and applied knowledge can be formally learned and assessed in the higher education classroom, provided that the teacher educators have learned and acquired all forms of assessment knowledge. Regulative and operational assessment knowledge is best acquired through guided practice and through critical reflection on practice. As pre-service teacher indicated at the end of their teacher education program, their acquisition of the integration of conceptual and practical assessment knowledge was as expected. The aspiring teachers would have to rely on offering guidance (such as mentor teachers, heads of department, principals, and district specialists) to learn or acquire the full range of assessment knowledge.

9.4.2 Relationships between the different forms of assessment knowledge

The thesis built on the understanding that LCT's Semantics can plot the range of between context-independent and context-dependent forms of knowledge (Figure 9.1) in order to illustrate the relationship between the forms of assessment knowledge.

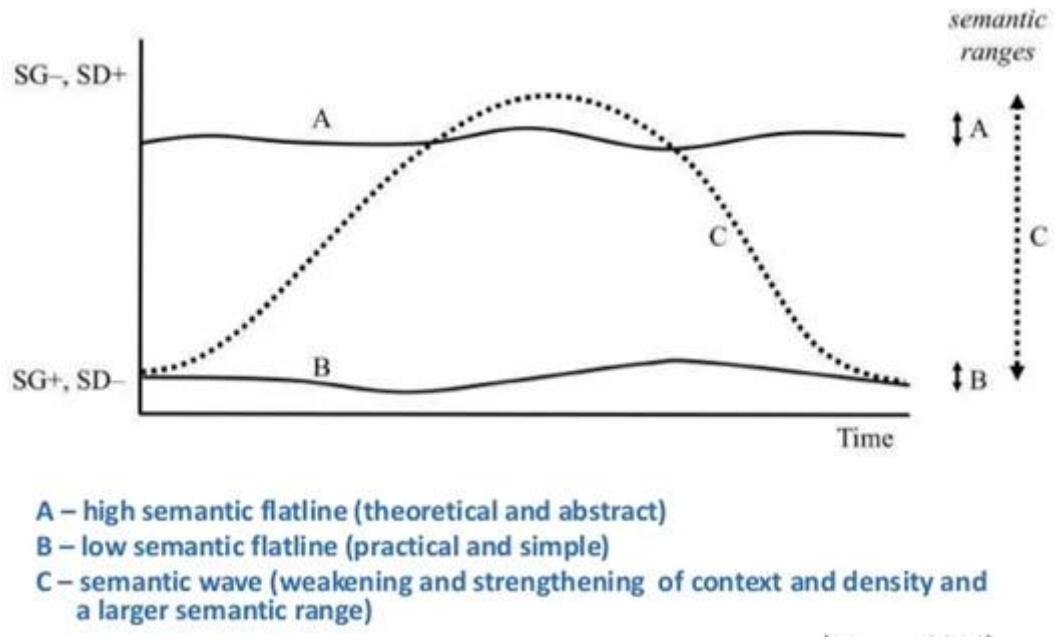


Figure 9.1: Semantic profiles (Maton, 2014)

Figure 9.1 is a semantic wave showing typical semantic profiles. The relationship between semantic density and semantic gravity is one in which when semantic density is strengthened, semantic gravity is weakened, and, conversely, when semantic gravity is strengthened, semantic density is weakened. This thesis focuses on semantic gravity as the key knowledge type in assessment and shows the relationships between the knowledge forms that arise from the stronger and weaker forms of semantic gravity. When assessment policies, curricula, and research participants' descriptions of their practice were analysed, a variety of semantic gravity profiles were produced to represent the extent to which assessment knowledge underpinned (or was absent in) assessment practice, which includes policymaking, teacher education, school based assessment practice, and assessment management.

Discontinuous semantic gravity waves (which were common in South African policy documents on assessment) revealed there was confusion about, or ignorance of, assessment knowledge. With regard to curriculum documents and interviews, high flatline profiles showed that the interviewee or the curriculum document had focussed on decontextualised assessment knowledge (e.g. assessment theory), while low flatline profiles show that contextual assessment knowledge (e.g. the logistics of keeping records) was the main concern. There were very few "ideal" semantic gravity waves that included the full range of assessment knowledge forms. The full range of assessment knowledge is necessary in order to ensure, for example, that the implementation of classroom-based assessment practices are not randomly chosen but derive from assessment theory and principles. Thus, the implementation of

assessment in EHL, as a form of pedagogical practice, should draw on the full range of the semantic gravity wave.

Applying the semantic gravity wave could address the missing concept of reflection in teacher education policies and in higher education curricula. Since 1983 until now we have been facing similar challenges which will be extremely important in the future. One needs to compare practice with theory to improve practice. Therefore, reflective practice, in the absence of assessment knowledge, can be critiqued as being what Maton (2014) terms “knowledge blind”. The opposite is knowledge awareness that refers to the ability to reflect on reality ontologically and epistemically. However, reflective practice is not knowledge-blind when it is used to connect different forms of assessment knowledge or to underpin different kinds of assessment practice. Reflection on practical knowledge that draws on assessment theory, or planning an assessment task that derives from assessment principles and concepts, is a way of bringing the different knowledge forms into ongoing productive assessment practices (Figure 9.2). While there are many levels of reflection, the particularly important level of reflection in assessment practice is critical reflection against theory.

In Figure 9.2, the relationship between the different forms of assessment knowledge is shown as an ideal semantic gravity wave that includes the full range of assessment knowledge. The downward curve represents all eight assessment knowledge types: theory, principles, purposes, strategies, guidelines (or practical knowledge concepts), planning, implementation, and the logistical follow up, such as reporting and recording. The upward curve of the wave represents different forms of reflection, including content reflection (or debriefing after a practice event), process reflection, and critical reflection. It is these different forms of reflection that connect the decontextual (largely conceptual) and contextual (largely practical) knowledge forms.

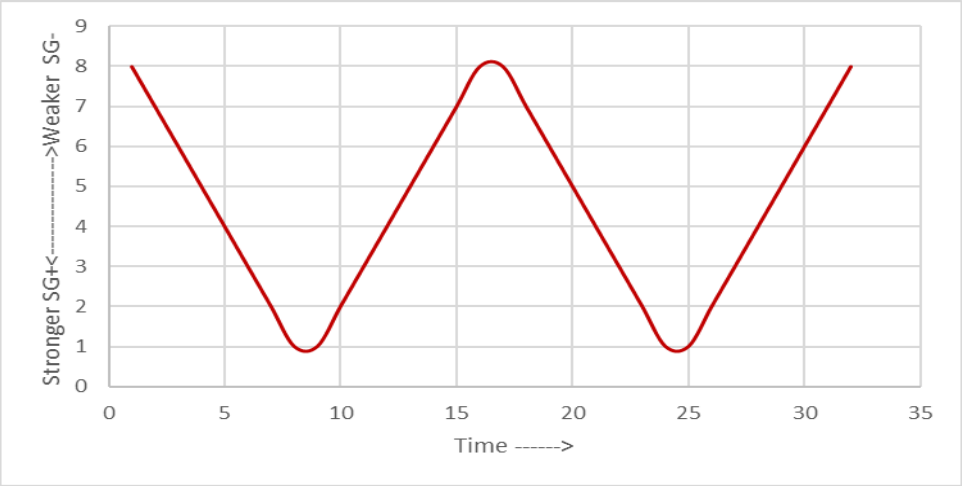


Figure 9.2: Reflection links the knowledge forms

9.4.3 Configurations of assessment knowledge forms

The study proposed ways in which the semantic gravity profiles of assessment knowledge could be configured. For example, policy documents could use a "downward escalator" to show the logical connections between assessment theory and principles and more practice-oriented assessment strategies, guidelines, and requirements. When a policy document provides exemplar or rich descriptions of practice, a semantic gravity wave could be productive to describe theoretically-informed and principled assessment practice. Assessment knowledge in the teacher education curriculum might be similarly structured across sections or might shift between more conceptual and contextual forms of assessment knowledge, while ensuring that the full knowledge range is expressed in the configuration across sections. In implementing assessment, teachers would draw on the full range of assessment knowledge to ensure that the assessment tasks promote cumulative learning. In the management of assessment, the knowledge profiles and configurations would vary, depending on the required practices and needs of practitioners.

9.5 Contribution to assessment practice

The thesis makes a research-based and theoretically-informed contribution to assessment practice in EHL education at the intermediate level. Assessment knowledge underpins assessment practice. Assessment can, thus, be understood as a knowledge practice. Assessment practice has several forms, including assessment policymaking, curriculum development in EHL assessment, EHL classroom assessment practice, and EHL assessment management. The contribution that the thesis makes to these different assessment practices is discussed below.

9.5.1 Contribution to policy making

The study has shown that assessment policy, although focused on the more practical elements of assessment guidelines, planning, implementation, and the logistics of reporting and keeping records needs to be underpinned by the more conceptual forms of assessment knowledge. It is also important that policy making is informed by contextual knowledge, much of which is available in the form of research undertaken in local schools. Including such research studies in assessment policy would strengthen its credibility. In other words, assessment policy should not be random or aspirational; it should be grounded in deep and rich contextual assessment knowledge (practice) and be guided by strong conceptual assessment knowledge (theory) as this study aimed to achieve. This would ensure that there are logical links between theory and practice, that policy provisions and requirements would be clear and logical and make teachers and managers more likely to accept and follow the policy guidelines.

9.5.2 Contribution to teacher education

From the lecturers' responses, their primary focus was theoretical assessment knowledge, rather than practical assessment knowledge. University-based teacher educators have relative autonomy as academics, and can focus on their discipline and their own research, while largely ignoring policy directives. As discussed in Section 2.4, "teacher education to engage more critically with its practices" (Österling & Christiansen 2018:7). The contribution that the study makes to teacher education is the identification of the missing curriculum in both theoretical and practical assessment knowledge. The study proposes ways in which the missing curriculum might be appropriately addressed within teacher education in the EHL subject, and the study proposes content reflection, process reflection, and critical reflection as the means by which theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge could be brought into a productive relationship for the purpose of supporting pre-service teachers and, ultimately, benefitting learners Final year students and novice teachers reflected on their training in assessment and struggle to articulate their understanding of assessment and its principles. They expressed some frustration, and some even questioned the adequacy of teacher education training. On the other hand, teacher education programs, having autonomy in their curriculum, also showed their frustration due to changing policies and ungrounded assessment requirements. Thus, teacher education, with the guidance of the education departments, should be mindful of the classroom expectations and align the most essential assessment knowledge and practice to adequately prepare aspiring teachers.

9.6 Recommendations for assessment practice

The research findings have many implications for assessment practice: for policymaking and policy review, for teacher education, for assessment practice in classrooms, and for the management of assessment. These implications are expressed as recommendations in the sections that follow. The recommendations are specific to the intermediate phases of EHL education.

9.6.1 Recommendations for assessment policymaking and review

At the time of writing this thesis, the South African Department of Basic Education is undertaking a long-overdue evaluation of its policies and, in particular the CAPS (2011) documents are undergoing review across all subject areas. The recommendations might have implications for policymaking or policy review more generally but are intended for the EHL intermediate phase assessment policy. Following the analysis of the South African assessment policy documents, the following recommendations are offered:

i. Assessment policy documents should clearly explain the assessment theory and assessment principles on which the policy is founded;

ii. The policy document should state the purposes of assessment, and the policy document should be fit for its purposes;
iii. The policy documents should advise on assessment strategies, which should be derived from assessment, theory, principles, and the particular assessment purposes being addressed by the policy;
iv. Guidelines for assessment practice should similarly derive from assessment theory and principles, and the purposes identified. As they are more oriented towards practice, guidelines should take into account the contextual and local knowledge. The guidelines should avoid being prescriptive, but should offer guidelines for best practices in the range of contexts found in South African schools;
v. Assessment policy should include guidelines for assessment planning. As above, these planning guidelines should not be prescriptive but based on best practices in local contexts;
vi. Guidelines on implementation in policy documents should not be prescriptive, but could be offered in the form of exemplar, and be taken from published practitioner research in local contexts. Where prescriptions are necessary, for example the implementation of an end of semester or end of year examination, this should be justified with reference to the research literature in the specific subject;
vii. The use of globally accepted assessment terminology (e.g. formative assessment rather than “daily assessment”) would enhance the credibility of assessment policy. Where local current terms are preferred, a rationale should be provided and there should be evidence from assessment theory or assessment research to substantiate their preferred use;
viii. The policy should ensure that the logistical requirement of reporting and recording does not become onerous and prevent teachers from focusing on the facilitation of learning;
ix. The use of precise terminology, a logical progression from principles to practice is the main cause of policy failure (Fullan, 2007) and a list of references in the NCS documents could improve its trustworthiness; and
x. Alignment and cross referencing between policy documents, such as the CAPS (2011) and NPA (2012), is recommended as practitioners are expected to use these documents together.

9.6.2 Recommendations for teacher education

These recommendations are intended for the EHL intermediate phase subject in the teacher education programme for the purpose of improving the preparedness of pre-service teachers enrolled for the EHL subject. The recommendations are based on an analysis of the findings of the study.

i. Teacher educators in EHL should achieve “assessment literacy” (Xu & Brown, 2016), which is defined in this study as having both conceptual and contextual assessment knowledge with reference to EHL (i.e., theoretical knowledge on the assessment of EHL and contextual knowledge of EHL in local contexts);
ii. The teacher education curriculum for EHL subject should include assessment as either a separate section or integrated into EHL pedagogy;
iii. The full range of assessment knowledge should be included in the EHL curriculum. This would require university lecturers to engage not only with theoretical knowledge of assessment but also with practical knowledge of assessment. The latter would require teachers to include a scholarly approach to assessment policy (e.g. CAPS, 2011a) as well as with the recent research on assessment practices in schools (e.g. the PIRLS report);
iv. An effective pedagogy for teaching assessment to pre-service EHL teachers should be based on an ideal semantic gravity wave (Figure 9.2). Assessment theory, principles, purposes, and strategies would be the mainstay of the pedagogy which would also include a study of the policy guidelines, planning requirements, implementation exemplars, and logistical requirements for reporting and recording;
v. The missing concepts of content reflection, process reflection, and critical reflection (Figure 9.2) should similarly be included in the curriculum, particularly when students return from a teaching practicum;
vi. Students undertaking a teaching practicum should be exposed to appropriate assessment practice (i.e. planning and implementing formative assessment tasks) and should be included in the planning and implementing of summative assessment tasks when possible;
vii. Students in the EHL subject should undergo assessment in both conceptual and contextual forms of assessment knowledge which should be part of teacher accreditation and certification;
viii. Collaboration between higher education institutions, the national Department of Basic Education, educational district managers, on a national level, to address the missing curriculum as discussed in Section 9.6.1. It is recommended to facilitate and strengthen the linkages between conceptual and contextual forms of assessment knowledge in the preparation of pre-service teachers to become competent practitioners; and

The recommendations above will enable the teacher education programmes to address the matter of the missing curriculum. The gap created by the missing curriculum will be filled with conceptually and contextually appropriate assessment knowledge to enable and guide EHL assessment practice. Additional implications for the teacher education curriculum more generally include the following:

i. The inclusion of assessment as ”an academic subject in its own right” (Paran, 2010) within the teacher education curriculum should be considered; and
ii. The embedding of assessment across all subjects in the teacher education programme in order to engage students in complex and deep learning about assessment should be considered.

With regard to the implementation of assessment practices (formative and summative assessment, as well as assessment planning) the follow recommendations emerged from the analysis of the pre-service teacher and novice teacher data:

i. Opportunities should be created with support structures in the higher education classroom and in the teaching practice to acquire and apply the full range of assessment principles and knowledge forms;
ii. Pre-service teachers need guidance from their lecturers on assessment policy, classroom management and assessment requirements; and
iii. Novice teachers need assessment mentors.

9.6.3 Recommendations for the management of assessment

The management of assessment is crucial to ensure that teachers, and novice teachers in particular, are supported in their assessment practice, and that they are not overburdened with unnecessary assessment tasks. All stakeholders (teacher educators, school mentors, heads of departments, principles, and subject advisors) have a role to play in the management of assessment. The recommendations arising from the analysis of the research findings are offered as follows.

i. In order to fulfil their various functions, officials, mentors and managers require a similar understanding and expectations in both conceptual and contextual assessment knowledge;
ii. Continuous professional education training is needed to ensure that all stakeholders support the ongoing policy changes on conceptual and contextual assessment knowledge base;
iii. Such training needs to be sensitive to those the different level of pre-service or novice teachers, particularly if they are in positions where their knowledge of assessment is presumed to be in place; and
iv. The involvement of all stakeholders in meetings, discussions, or formal seminars with higher education providers and schools is essential for understanding the assessment needs of EHL practitioners.

9.7 A programme for further research

The study revealed practical knowledge to be a neglected area in education and that further research on the nature of practical knowledge in assessment and other aspects of education is needed. While considerable work has been done on the nature and value of theoretical knowledge in the practice of assessment, far less is known about the forms of practical knowledge that enable practice or that emerge from practice. Perhaps because theorists and researchers are in the business of forming ideas and theories, they often treat disciplinary knowledge as being more important, and they do not particularly value the complexities and affordances of practical knowledge.

The tools provided by semantic gravity laid the groundwork for an understanding of practical assessment knowledge and its relationship to theoretical assessment knowledge, and it was illustrated that a deep understanding of both conceptual and contextual assessment knowledge is necessary to prepare novice teachers for assessment practice. As the focus of the study was the preparation of pre-service teachers and novice teachers for assessment practice, a programme for further research might be to investigate the ways in which practical knowledge in assessment is acquired by investigating the assessment knowledge acquired by more experienced and exemplary teachers. The value of such work is that, in order to practice assessment in ways that support learners' language development in English in a socially just manner, it is essential that the structures that we put in place and the agents – such as policy makers, academics, and managers – are cognisant of the nature of theoretical and practical knowledge and their relationship to assessment practice. What is missing from the work in the knowledge space is a refined conceptualisation of the nature of practical knowledge. Assessment policy, teacher education curricula, classroom practice, and assessment management should be underpinned by a principled account of practical knowledge as well as theoretical knowledge. Without a strong understanding of practice-based or contextual knowledge, there is a danger that teaching knowledge itself will be undermined.

Researching practical knowledge in assessment, as well as in education more broadly, is important to bring teacher education and teaching practice into a more balanced relationship. More educational research that values context and has a deep appreciation for the complexities of practice is needed.

9.8 Final reflections on the preparation of novice teachers for assessment practice

It was assumed that students enter pre-service teacher education in the understanding that they will be prepared for teaching practice. Many students looked forward to their practicum with confidence and enthusiasm. However, pre-service and novice teachers' experiences in their first years of teaching confirmed the challenges regarding assessment. The purpose of

the study was to determine if EHL students were sufficiently prepared for the practice in assessment using semantic gravity as the perspective. In addressing the guiding research question, “What enables or constrains novice teachers’ assessment practice in the field of English as a home language?”, the study found that there was more that constrained than enabled novice teachers’ preparation for assessment practice. For example, assessment policies failed to guide pre-service and novice teachers in effective and inclusive assessment practices, teacher education did not prepare aspiring teachers for the realities of the multilingual EHL classroom, lack of assessment principles in policy or the requirements of assessment. Managers often were not aware of the lack of assessment knowledge by novice teachers and did not provide novice teachers with the support required for assessment practices that would promote learners’ English language development.

To remedy these challenges in teacher education and management of assessment, collaboration across sectors and levels are required. This is no easy task. According to Biggs (2003), it is essential that all elements of policy making, teacher education and the primary school education systems, including the different curricula and its intended results, the instructional strategies employed, and the assessment tasks, is aligned to enable teaching, learning, and assessment to be effective and inclusive. What the study has done is to provide a theoretically consistent analysis of the challenges and to sketch recommendations towards addressing the challenges.

Higher education needs to build students’ confidence and enthusiasm by ensuring that they have the appropriate theoretical and practical knowledge for assessment practice as they enter the complex and varied schools in which they will practice. When one considers the time and importance given to assessment in the school environment, teacher training should prepare students accordingly. The thesis opened with the well-known quotation from one of the “gurus” of assessment: “Assessment is probably the most important thing we can do to help our students learn” (Brown, 2005). By systematically identifying the challenges and uncovering the gaps in theoretical and practical assessment knowledge, this thesis has made a constructive contribution to this significant aspect of teacher education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Western Cape Government
Education

Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za
tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20180905–6027
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Maryna De Lange
41 Van Riebeeck Street
Saldanha
7395

Dear Ms Maryna De Lange

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: PREPARING ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE TEACHERS FOR ASSESSMENT PRACTICE IN THE WESTERN CAPE: FINDING THE 'MISSING' CURRICULUM

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **24 January 2019 till 28 September 2019**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 06 September 2018

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

This certificate is issued by the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC) at Cape Peninsula University of Technology to the applicant/s whose details appear below.

1. **Applicant and project details (Applicant to complete this section of the certificate and submit with application as a Word document)**

Name(s) of applicant(s):	**Maryna de Lange**	
Project/study Title:	Preparing Intermediate Phase English Home Language teachers in the Western Cape for assessment practice: finding the 'missing' curriculum.	
Is this a staff research project, i.e. not for degree purposes?	No	
If for degree purposes the degree is indicated:	D Ed	
If for degree purposes, the proposal has been approved by the FRC	Yes	
Funding sources:	NRF	

2. **Remarks by Education Faculty Ethics Committee:**

This doctoral research project is granted ethical approval valid until 15 August 2020.		
Approved: Yes	**Referred back:**	**Approved subject to adaptations:**
Chairperson Name: Chiwimbiso M Kwenda **Chairperson Signature:** 		**Date:** 16 August 2018
Approval Certificate/Reference: EFEC 5-8/2018		

APPENDIX 2: MRTEQ 2001

Community, citizenship and pastoral role

The educator will practise and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others. The educator will uphold the constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society. Within the school, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators.

Furthermore, the educator will develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organisations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues. One critical dimension of this role is HIV/AIDS education.

Assessor

The educator will understand that assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and know how to integrate it into this process. The educator will have an understanding of the purposes, methods and effects of assessment and be able to provide helpful feedback to learners, The educator will design and manage both formative and summative assessment in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of the learning and meet the requirements of accrediting bodies. The educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment. The educator will understand how to interpret and use assessment results to feed into processes for the improvement of learning programmed.

Revised MRTEQ 2015

The educator will achieve ongoing personal, academic, occupational and professional growth, through pursuing reflective study and research in their chosen field, in broader professional and educational matters and in other related fields.

- *Assessor*

The educator will understand that assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and know how to integrate it into this process. The educator will have an understanding of the purposes, methods and effects of assessment and be able to provide helpful feedback to learners. The educator will design and manage both formative and summative assessments in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of the learning and meet the requirements of accrediting bodies. The educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment results. The educator will understand how to interpret and use assessment results to feed into processes for the improvement of learning programmes.

6.1 Basic Competence of a Beginner Teacher

Appendix C: Basic Competences of a Beginner Teacher

The following are the minimum set of competences required of newly qualified teachers:

1. Newly qualified teachers must have sound subject knowledge.

2. Newly qualified teachers must know how to teach their subject(s) and how to select, determine the sequence and pace of content in accordance with both subject and learner needs.

3. Newly qualified teachers must know who their learners are and how they learn; they must understand their individual needs and tailor their teaching accordingly.

4. Newly qualified teachers must know how to communicate effectively in general, as well as in relation to their subject(s), in order to mediate learning.

5. Newly qualified teachers must have highly developed literacy, numeracy and Information Technology (IT) skills.

6. Newly qualified teachers must be knowledgeable about the school curriculum and be able to unpack its specialised content, as well as being able to use available resources appropriately, so as to plan and design suitable learning programmes.

7. Newly qualified teachers must understand diversity in the South African context in order to teach in a manner that includes all learners. They must also be able to identify learning or social problems and work in partnership with professional service providers to address these.

8. Newly qualified teachers must be able to manage classrooms effectively across diverse contexts in order to ensure a conducive learning environment.

9. Newly qualified teachers must be able to assess learners in reliable and varied ways, as well as being able to use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning.

10. Newly qualified teachers must have a positive work ethic, display appropriate values and conduct themselves in a manner that befits, enhances and develops the teaching profession.

11. Newly qualified teachers must be able to reflect critically on their own practice, in theoretically informed ways and in conjunction with their professional community of colleagues in order to constantly improve and adapt to evolving circumstances.

APPENDIX 3: FULL QUESTIONNAIRE OF FINAL YEAR STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 4.4.2: The questions were intended to elicit participants' understanding of assessment practices. The topics covered included:

1. The purposes of assessment;
2. The principles of assessment;
3. General guidelines for assessment tasks in the EHL subject intermediate phase;
4. Processes and management of assessment for CAPS EHL (CAPS, 2011: 93);
5. Processes and management of the National Protocol for Assessment (NPA) (South Africa, 2011);
6. The design of rubrics for EHL assessment;
7. Setting of comprehension tests for EHL, with reference to CAPS (2012);
8. Difficulties experienced in assessment practices of intermediate phase EHL;
9. Books/readings on assessment practices found useful for the B Ed programme and/or as teachers/managers;
10. The importance of assessment for EHL in the intermediate phase;
11. Examples of participants' experiences in the implementation EHL assessment in the intermediate phase; and
12. Sharing of any additional information on EHL assessment.

Appendix 1: D8: **Data set 8: Focus group interviews with Pre-service teachers**

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Interview schedule: 10-15 minutes
26 October 2018: 09:00-10:00 CPUT Wellington campus

1. **Background and context**: Introduce yourself (name, institution)

   Key questions:

2. **Share your own practices on assessment**
   a. Give an example of how you prepare a rubric for a Home Language formal assessment task?
   b. Give an example of how you prepare a comprehension test for a Home Language formal assessment task?

3. **How did you learn about/find out about assessment?**
    a. Please explain your understanding of the purpose of assessment
    b. What do you regard as the principles for Home Language assessment?

4. **Are you familiar with assessment policy documents: CAPS and NPA?**
    a. Do you use CAPS for assessment practices? Please explain how?
    b. Do you use the NPA for assessment practices? Please explain how?

5. **Do you have any recommendations regarding your training in assessment?** Are there any other aspects of assessment that you would like to share?

Keep in mind: If they fully explain, skip questions below.

Data set 8: Focus group interview

Consent form: Pre-service teachers

I, _____ (name of student) give Ms Maryna de Lange permission to interview me for the purpose of improving teacher education and for scholarly research purposes.

I understand that the researcher intends to share her research findings in the form of publications and conference presentations. I also understand that: Whether or not to give this permission is a personal decision, and it is entirely voluntary. There will be no rewards for giving this permission, as there will of course be no penalty for refusing it. I have the right to withdraw my permission at any stage and my data will then be excluded from the study.

The researcher will use material generated through written and multimedia means for the purpose of this study only and not for any other purpose. My identity and that of my institution will be protected. My signature below indicates my permission to be interviewed for scholarly research purposes.

Signed at CPUT Wellington on 26 October 2016: _____ (Signature)

Interview PROTOCOL with NOVICE TEACHERS

1. Please introduce yourself
    - Your name and surname (Optional)
    - Where you are currently teaching
    - Name of your training institution
    - Indicate your specialisation study field
    - How many months have you been teaching?

2. How do you see your 'role as an assessor'?

3. Can you tell me about your first experiences in assessing your learners?

    Prompts

    - *Were expected to do set up your own assessment tasks*
    - *Do you think you were competent to set quality tasks?*
    - *Could you as Home Language teacher design your own rubrics for intermediate phase Home Language?*
    - *Could you as a Home Language teacher set your own comprehension test for Home Language according to CAPS Section 4?*

4. Please give an example of one of your experiences in implementing the assessment requirements for the intermediate phase.

5. Do you think you were well-prepared in your training to implement CAPS Home Language's processes and management of assessment as stated in Section 4?

6. Have you encountered any difficulties/challenges regarding the assessment of intermediate phase Home Language? How did you address it?

7. Please share any other information or recommendation on language assessment that you would like to bring to our attention.

8. The data you provided will be analysed. Would you like to have feedback on the outcome of the research?

9.Thank you for your time and willingness to be part of the project.

Permission for data to be used...

Interview PROTOCOL with NOVICE TEACHERS

1. Please introduce yourself
    - Your name and surname (Optional)
    - Where you are currently teaching
    - Name of your training institution
    - Indicate your specialisation study field
    - How many months have you been teaching?

2. Can you tell me about your first experiences in assessing your learners?

    Prompts

    - *Were expected to do set up your own assessment tasks*
    - *Do you think you were competent to set quality tasks?*
    - *Could you as a Home Language teacher design your own rubrics for intermediate phase Home Language?*
    - *Could you as a Home Language teacher set your own comprehension test for Home Language according to CAPS Section 4?*

3. Have you encountered any difficulties/challenges regarding in the assessment of Intermediate phase Home Language? How did you address it?

4. Please give an example of one of your experiences in implementing the assessment requirements for the intermediate phase.

5. Are there any principles of assessment that you use to guide your practice?

6. Do you think you were well-prepared in your training to implement CAPS Home Language's processes and management of assessment as stated in Section 4?

7. How do you see your 'role as an assessor'?

8. Please share any other information or recommendation on language assessment that you would like to bring to our attention.

9. The data you provided will be analysed. Would you like to have feedback on the outcome of the research?

10. Thank you for your time and willingness to be part of the project.

Permission for data to be used...

Interviews schedule:

12 March 2019: Novice teacher 1 in Paarl at 17:00
19 March 2019: Novice teacher 2 in Brackenfell at 09:30
19 March 2019: Novice teacher 3 in Monta Vista at 11:30
29 March 2019: Novice teacher 4 in Kuilsrivier at 11:00
29 March 2019: Novice teacher 5 in Wellington at 14:00