

Appendix I: Teachers' interviews transcripts

Interview with Teacher 1

- 1 Re: I am doing research investigating the factors that could affect teachers implementing this new syllabus. So I
2 want to know if you taught this syllabus. While you were using the syllabus ... did you teach while we were
3 still using the old syllabus?
4
5 T1: I never used the ... eh ...
6
7 Re: ... the old syllabus? But, according to you, what do you think this new syllabus that you are using ... what
8 does it require you to do?
9 T1: Eh (long pause). We are referring to science syllabus or ... ?
10 Re: Yes, this new science syllabus.
11 T1: The science syllabus? Alright. Eh ja¹..in my opinion the new science syllabus is ... I see it as it is ... eh ... a
12 higher standard than our kids.
13 Re: Hm
14 T1: That is point number one.
15 Re: Hm. How is it at a higher standard? What it is that you think would make it be of a higher standard?
16 T1: Because ... eh ... like the things that we teach these students in this new syllabus are almost the same as the
17 things ... we teaching them at the...
18 Re: COSC²?
19 T1: Yes, the COSC syllabus.
20 RE: Yes, but let's talk about the way it wants you to teach ... this new syllabus wants you to teach. Would you say
21 there are certain ways in which it expects you to teach? What it is it that it actually requires you to do? What is
22 it that they want you to do? Apart from its standard and everything ... what would you say it is that they want
23 you to do when you teach this syllabus?
24 T1: This syllabus ... when we teach it ... eh ... it requires us to do ... what? (asks himself) ... to have ... eh ... a
25 student-centred learning of which, in our case, I see it as it is not possible. Why? Because ... eh ... we ... eh ...
26 have this problem of time.
27 Re: Time?
28 T1: Yes. That if we try to ... to ... to ... approach it in a student-centred learning ... eh ... it consumes a lot of time
29 and, two, we have this problem of ... eh ... the ... the ... the caliber of the students that we have here. As I see
30 them ... they are the students who are not able to make conclusions for themselves. If you try to let them
31 discover things for themselves, you end up not achieving the goal that you wanted to achieve.
32 Re: Okay. Which means it requires you to use a learner-centred / student-centred approach. What else, apart from
33 learner-centred, would you say it needs you to do?
34 T1: Apart from that? What else is there? (he asks himself).
35 Re: That's the only thing that you see?
36 T1: Yes, that's the only thing that I have seen so far.
37 Re: But do you have a copy of the syllabus?
38 T1: Yes, I do have a copy.
39 Re: Did you attend any of the workshops?
40 T1: So far there has never been a workshop.
41 Re: Okay. Do you think the syllabus document that you have, or whatever documents you have, have anything that
42 helps you to teach this in such a learner-centred manner? If you are saying that it is student-centred ... do you
43 have anything that guides you towards using the syllabus?
44 T1: Yes, the syllabus itself. Apart from the materials that it has listed there, that are needed in the lab, it also ...
45 there is a part in the syllabus that has suggestions ... where you may find, sometimes, they are advising you to
46 take a field trip. Sometimes they are advising you to bring a guest speaker from ... eh ... some other sectors that
47 are involved in that particular topic.
48 Re: So all this information is in that document ... that syllabus document?
49 T1: Yes it is there in that ... eh ... syllabus document.
50 Re: So you are saying that the syllabus recommends a learner-centred approach?

¹ "Ja" is the Afrikaans word for "yes". It is commonly used by English-speakers in South Africa, and its usage has spread to surrounding countries.

² COSC is how Lesotho teachers refer to the *Cambridge Overseas School Certificate*, which is an O-level qualification. The examination is written at the end of the Form E year (Year 11 equivalent) and follows a two-year curriculum (FormD and E).

51 T1: Yes.

52 Re: What would you say a “learner-centred approach” is? Or “student-centred”, whatever ... I think it is the same
53 thing. What do you think it means?

54 T1: Eh ... in my opinion, or my understanding? I understand it means you do ... what (he asks himself). The
55 teacher is a... what can I call it? ... is an assister. He assists the students ... but the students are the ones that
56 are learning ... that are discovering things. You, as a teacher, what you do is just to guide them through the
57 expected points.

58 Re: So your work as a teacher is to assist and guide them, not necessarily to ...?

59 T1: ...to tell them? No, you don't tell them.

60 Re: Okay, So do you think you are using ...you said that because of the time and the caliber of the students, you
61 think you are not being able to apply it?

62 T1: Yes.

63 Re: But you would want to use it?

64 T1: I myself ... personally ... I don't like it.

65 Re: You don't like it?

66 T1: Yes.

67 Re: Why?

68 T1: Because ... eh ... like I said, it is time consuming, I prefer to ... tell the kids, what is happening. And then,
69 because these things we are surrounded by ... eh ... many things. It is this ... the walls, the other kids. And
70 these kids, as they are there, all of them, their IQ's are not the same. And the environment that they are from ...
71 it is not the same. So those factors ... all of them ... when you combine them, you find that ... eh ... it is more
72 difficult to use that approach.

73 Re: Okay. So you find that using ... that looking at their IQ's, looking at their background, looking at everything ...
74 it gets difficult for you to do it?

75 T1: Yes.

76 Re: Okay. Another thing ... you will find that the cover books of the Lesotho Junior secondary science, it says that
77 you use activity-based lessons. Have you ever seen that the cover books (covers of the books) are saying that?

78 T1: Which books?

79 Re: The Lesotho Junior Secondary Science ...

80 T1: Okay. The Macmillan one.

81 Re: Yes. Have you ever seen that on the cover they talk of “activity-based”? Have you ever heard of the word
82 “activity-based” from that?

83 T1: I have never seen it.

84 Re: You don't even know what “activity-based” is?

85 T1: As I understand it ... eh ... it's ... eh ... like ... What I know about those books is that inside they have the
86 activities that you can let the students work through. The activities that have been designed to ... assist you as
87 a teacher to achieve a certain goal ... of the syllabus. But very unfortunately ... you will find that sometimes
88 there are not enough materials that you can use to work through eh those activities.

89 Re: So “activity-based”, according to you, is when you just go through those activities?

90 T1: Yes.

91 Re: It doesn't have anything that says maybe “these activities are used for this ... or these activities have this
92 purpose”? I am doing these activities for this purpose?

93 T1: Yes. You You ... activity-based, according to how I understand it, you ... how can I put it? Eh ... we do
94 what? We are trying to ... to ... to ... we are teaching these kids some topics, but we are trying to make this
95 topic relevant to their everyday life ...

96 Re: So those are activities?

97 T1: Yes ... through the activities.

98 Re: Which means the activities are used to verify what they have learned so that they see what they have learned ...
99 or we use those activities to make them understand? Which one would you say are more activity-based? Are
100 you using them to verify what they have already learned? You teach them first then do activities, or you teach
101 from activities? How do you do it?

102 T1: It depends on the kind of topic that we are dealing with at the particular time. Some topics are just too abstract .
103 For example, you talk about a topic ... the structure of an atom. It's an abstract ... eh ... topic of which you
104 could not be able to go into the laboratory with kids to see the atoms and all that stuff. What you do in that
105 particular case, I teach the kids first and then after that I will be bringing the activities. For example, there will
106 be an activity ... we have learned the structure of the atom, so now we try to do ... what? We have an activity

107 where we will be trying to place the ... the ... the ... eh ... trying to draw the structure of an atom and place in
 108 the electrons in that structure, accordingly. That is an abstract topic. But in other cases you find a topic which is
 109 more manipulative, that is not abstract ... as atom structure.

110 Re: ... atomic structure?

111 T1: Yes. For example ... hm. ... I am teaching these kids how to measure the volume of ... sorry the density of an
 112 irregularly shaped object. It is a ... a topic that you can teach through experimental ...

113 Re: ... through activities?

114 T1: Yes. So it depends on the kind of topic.

115 Re: Which means you can either use activities to verify what they have learned or to teach, depending on the type
 116 of topic?

117 T1: Yes.

118 Re: But would you say “learner-centered” and “activity-based” are the same?

119 T1: I would say ... somehow they are the same. Eh ... what I say is the following. We have this ... eh ... activity-
 120 based ... you can still do ... what? (asks himself) ... do activity-based ... but verifying what you have taught ...
 121 but also you can use the activities for the student to discover what you want them to ... to ... to discover.

122 Re: So, if you are saying you can use activities to verify what you have done, and you can use them for students to
 123 discover? You are saying these are two things?

124 T1: No, I am not saying they are two things. I am saying that ... eh ... activity-based ... you can use it in a student-
 125 centered learning. You can also use it in a ... I don’t remember this other approach ... but that one where you
 126 teach the kids and then after that you are expecting them to reproduce the information. (Re: okay, okay) Those
 127 two methods of teaching ... both of them you can use activity-based.

128 Re: But they are not necessarily the same?

129 T1: Yes. They are not the same.

130 Re: Okay. What ... when you were ... okay ... the syllabus also requires you to teach ... requires learners to
 131 develop skills and attitudes. Are you aware of that? Are you aware that you have to teach skills and attitudes?

132 T1: Yes.

133 Re: You are aware of that? Are you teaching that?

134 T1: That is where the student-centered learning is more important than other teaching. Because skills ... eh ... eh ...
 135 in there ... this is where the kids are able to ... to ... they have a role and the information. They are able to
 136 manipulate it ... and ... eh ... by so doing, in the process, they acquire that skill.

137 Re: What kind of skills do you think they acquire from that? Can you name the skill they acquired?

138 T1: They acquired the skill of being able to work together. Two, they acquired the skill of being able to manipulate
 139 the instruments used and ... eh ... what else? (he asks himself). I don’t know.

140 Re: Are you aware that in the syllabus there are some skills that they are saying “this skill has to be taught”. Are
 141 you aware there are certain skills that are listed, even though they may not be all of them, but that there are
 142 some skills in the syllabus?

143 T1: Yes.

144 Re: And are you aware, again, that they expect you to teach attitudes?

145 T1: This attitude thing is the one that I don’t understand.

146 Re: You don’t even understand it? Which means you cannot even say you are teaching it because you don’t really
 147 understand it?

148 T1: Yes, I don’t really understand it.

149 Re: How do you feel about that, the fact that you are teaching and they are expecting you to teach attitudes, but you
 150 are not even sure yourself? How would you comment around that?

151 T1: (Pause) My comment about that?

152 Re: To the curriculum developers, or anybody. How do you feel about the fact that I am supposed to teach attitudes
 153 and I am not even sure if I know what this “attitudes” is?

154 T1: Whew. What a difficult answer. But it is a ... you ... you understand that somehow ... eh ... eh ... as I talk to
 155 you it makes me feel like ... insufficient. But when going to the kids they don’t know anything so you ... you
 156 ... it’s the same.

157 Re: Are you saying you are insufficient, or that the syllabus itself is not giving enough help to you? Is it because
 158 you are really insufficient or is it because maybe the syllabus is not giving you enough to allow you to do that?
 159 And that the curriculum developers are not giving you ... enough, maybe? Because if you are saying you are
 160 insufficient ... where your content knowledge is okay ... I will give you that ... but this is the requirement of
 161 the syllabus?

162 T1: Yes. The attitude one.

163 Re: Yes.

164 T1: Yes. I think the curriculum developers, also. They are not providing us, as teachers, with enough information
165 regarding that. They are not providing us with enough information and in the process that thing you seen eh..
166 for the kids we don't have problem, but when we come to you people who have some information about this
167 ... that is where the problem lies.

168 Re: But, other than that, you feel comfortable teaching?

169 T1: I don't even know that there is that one of attitude.

170 Re: Okay. When you ... did you teach this topic on breathing and respiration? Have you ever taught it?

171 T1: Yes, I did.

172 Re: You did teach it? And can you just think of the activities that you did when you were teaching it?

173 T1: Activities? Yes. ... You see there was this one activity where we were trying to demonstrate how ... when
174 somebody is breathing in and when he is breathing out ... how the ... these things ... the ribs ... intercostals
175 muscles ... and ...what? (asks himself). Yes. How do they react? What muscles contract and which ones do not
176 contract. So this activity of ... we were [one word inaudible] to the kids They breath in and observe what
177 happens to them. Obviously the ribs will be moving in?... out? Yes ... and then from there you can develop ...
178 eh ... that ... eh ...

179 Re: Concept?

180 T1: Yes ... concept.

181 Re: When you are doing this, who decides on the activity? Are you deciding on the activity or the children? Who is
182 deciding on the activities? Who decides which activities should be done?

183 T1: I decide which activities are to be done.

184 Re: Where do you get ideas for the activities you have to develop and all that?

185 T1: Eh ... except the books ... because some of the activities are there in the books ... except for that, we as
186 teachers here sometimes we do ... you can ask your colleague "how did you teach this?" Then he will tell you
187 and then from there you can ... if you like what they did ... you can take it and use it.

188 Re: You actually go out and find things that can ...?

189 T1: Yes.

190 Re: What is the purpose of these activities? When you do these activities what can you say is the purpose of the
191 activities that you are doing?

192 T1: Eh ... the purpose of the activities, as I have said earlier, is that ... hm ... we are trying to ... to do what? (asks
193 himself) ... to ... to ..to bring these things that the kids are learning so that they can see that they are applicable.
194 It's the things that are happening.

195 Re: And how do you ... do you ... accommodate children from different backgrounds?

196 T1: (Pause). Different backgrounds?

197 Re: If you do?

198 T1: I don't get the question properly, but if ... eh ... you are talking about the socio-economic background ... are
199 you talking about that?

200 Re: Not necessarily. Like you said they had different IQ's ... like what you said earlier, they have different IQ's.
201 Some learners are different ... they have different ...

202 T1: Some are from rural, some are from urban?

203 Re: What makes a child what he is. How do you cater for that as you are teaching?

204 T1: Eh ... in the class I teach ... but there are some times when I ... have a chat with a student face-to-face ... For
205 example, when you give the students activities, as they are doing the activities you will be going around and
206 helping them individually. Also, when marking, if you see this one is backward here you will call that particular
207 student and then you sit and you discuss that issue with him.

208 Re: Do you think that you are coping with this new syllabus? Are you comfortable teaching it?

209 T1: Eh ... content-wise I am comfortable with this. But there is this thing that I have stated earlier that ... it is just
210 too big ... It is too big and it is ... eh ... I had Form C when I got here in 2004 ... last year ... no, when I got
211 here in 2005. (In) 2006 I also had Form C. But to tell you the truth I have never finished that syllabus with any
212 year group.

213 Re: Because you feel there is a lot?

214 T1: Yes. It is too big.

215 Re: Okay. What support would you say you need, so that you can understand this better? What kind of support
216 would you expect to be given so that maybe you can cope better?

217 T1: The support ...?

218 Re: If you had a say to the curriculum developers what kind of support ... what kind of help ... would you say you
219 need?

220 T1: Wow. Eh ... one of the things that I have realized is that they make this syllabus to be even more ... big ... is
221 the fact that when these kids arrive here ... as Form As ... they do ... what? (asks himself). They arrive here
222 with less information. So you spent a lot of time trying to set up the ground to take off.

223 Re: To understand the students ...?

224 T1: Yes. So what I could say is that ... eh ... if the ... I don't know the syllabus of ... of ... of primarys, but if
225 somehow these things could be made to be linked so that when we take off here we ... we ... these kids have
226 already acquired some of these things from primary.

227 Re: From the primary? So you think this will help?

228 T1: Yes, I think it would help.

229 Re: It would help ... knowing what they are doing there ...

230 T1: Yes.

231 Re: ... but ... maybe ... you haven't talked to the other teachers? I mean teachers who are teaching Form A? For
232 example, you said you have been teaching only Form C. What do teachers who are teaching Form A feel like?
233 Because they are the ones that are directly linked with the primary.

234 T1: No ... the thing is ... eh ... you have misunderstood me. I have these Form Cs that I have been teaching at 2006.
235 I taught them when they were doing Form B. Yes.

236 Re: Okay. Now you have gone with them to Form C?

237 T1: Yes. So I still do have Form As.

238 Re: So you feel there is not much link between what they do in primary and Form A?

239 T1: Yes.

240 Re: Okay, *ntate*³. Thank you for your time.

241 T1: You are welcome.

Interview with Teacher 2

244 Re: Thank you very much, '*me* (Mrs)⁴, for agreeing to see me and to spend your time talking to me, as part of my
245 research. I am investigating factors which could affect teachers implementing this new curriculum that we are
246 now using in Lesotho, for my study. Eh ... I am sure the information you will give me is going to help me
247 understand the syllabus much much better.

248 Eh ... my first question to you will be whether you taught when the new syllabus ... oh, the old syllabus ...
249 was still in place? Did you teach in that old syllabus?

250

251 T2: Yes, I did.

252 Re: You did?

253 T2: Uhum (affirmative).

254 Re: Would you say ... what changes would you say were made in the new syllabus, that were not there in the old
255 one?

256 T2: Eh ... at the moment, what we are seeing is that it's more a spiral.

257 Re: More spiral? Meaning?

258 T2: Eh the ... the topics ... they are linked in such a way that they correlate.

259 Re: Okay ... the topics in the syllabus?

260 T2: Uhum.

261 Re: Eh ... do you have a copy of the syllabus ... of this new syllabus?

262 T2: Of the new syllabus? I think do.

263 Re: Do you have any other document, apart from this new syllabus, that you are using ... any other document that
264 is maybe helping you understand the syllabus better? Yes ... do you have that?

265 T2: We were given or we were issued the teacher's guide. It tries to ... simplify the new syllabus.

266 Re: Which means on top of the syllabus document you also have the teacher's guide?

267 T2: The teacher's guide.

268 Re: Okay did you attend any of the workshops relating to the new syllabus?

³ This is a title of respect for older males.

⁴ This is a title of respect for older females.

269 T2: Not yet.

270 Re: One of the things that I see from the syllabus is that it says that a learner-centred approach should be used.

271 What do you think is meant by that “learner-centred”?

272 T2: The children should discover concepts on their own.

273 Re: Learners should discover concepts on their own? Only that?

274 T2: With the help of the teacher.

275 Re: Anything that you can say on that ... apart from discovering things for themselves? ... Anything that you can

276 say, maybe, that I need to do, in order to make it learner-centred? I am just trying to understand that.

277 T2: How I understand learner-centred? ... How should it go? ... What can I ...?

278 Re: What can you do in class ... if you are saying you are in a class, what do you do to make that class learner-

279 centred?

280 T2: *Ke* (I) prepare our worksheet and *kea kholoa* (I mean) a well-tabulated worksheet ... then some materials to

281 help them understand better, because if they **do**, (then) they understand better ... and also I monitor the groups.

282 Re: So you think you are using that approach, as it is suggested?

283 T2: We are not using it.

284 Re: You are not using it?

285 T2: We are not using it.

286 Re: What are your reasons for not using it?

287 T2: Eh ... the ratio ... teacher:pupil ratio. We have quite a number of them. Within a short time. Materials ... we

288 don't have enough of the materials, so mostly we use the demonstration.

289 Re: You use demonstrations? Okay, if you look at this cover books (pages) of this Lesotho Junior Secondary

290 Science, they also say that you should use “activity-based”. Have you ever heard of that word ... “activity-

291 based”?

292 T2: Activity ... ?

293 Re: Activity-based?

294 T2: I don't remember that phrase.

295 Re: But activities? You are aware of activities?

296 T2: Yeah. Uhum. Activities.

297 Re: How do you use activities?

298 T2: Hm (long pause). I don't know what to say. But anyway ... we are trying to use some ... not a lot of them

299 *kea kholoa* (I think) on those chapters which need to be ... which are ... a little bit difficult ... in order to

300 understand the concepts.

301 Re: So, you use activities to make learners understand? When do you use activities? Do you use activities at the

302 start or at the end? How do you use those activities?

303 T2: Eh ... mostly I use it when I introduce ... well, after I have introduced the lesson. We introduce the lessons and

304 then get into the activities.

305 Re: Uhum. Then from the activity ... ?

306 T2: From the activity ... then we go into explanations and come up with conclusions and the observations, and what

307 can they deduce from what they have done.

308 Re: Okay. Let's think of when you were teaching. Did you ever teach breathing and respiration ... did you ever

309 teach breathing and respiration?

310 T2: Um ...

311 Re: You are not ... you are not a biology teacher?

312 T2: I didn't touch that.

313 Re: So I am not going to ask you that part. How do you do here? Even when you are teaching JC⁵ ... someone

314 teaches the chemistry part, the other one teaches (the) physics part, and the other one (the) biology part? Is that

315 how you do it?

316 T2: No. ... We are all teaching them the physics, biology, and chemistry in JC. One teacher teaches those three.

317 Re: So how do you pass that topic on breathing and respiration ... because it is there?

318 T2: *Kea kholoa* (I think) eh ... the groups that I am teaching ... I have not gone into that.

⁵ JC is how the teachers in Lesotho refer to the *Junior Certificate* curriculum. This is the three-year curriculum followed in Forms A to C, with a final external examination leading to the award of the *Junior Certificate*.

319 Re: But with your everyday teaching normally, where do you get the activities that you use in your everyday
320 teaching ... when you are teaching? You said there are activities that you use. Where do you get those
321 activities? Are they from your mind? From textbooks? Where do you get the activities? **Leading question**

322 T2: Some of them, I think of them ... yes. Some are stipulated in the books ... so we just follow them.

323 Re: Is there a chance that learners can come up with activities?

324 T2: Yes, they do. They do come up with activities, at times.

325 Re: How often does that happen ... that they come up with activities?

326 T2: *Ua bona* (you see) a lot depends on the chapter you will be teaching.

327 Re: Okay. If you are saying you use activities ... would you say that using of activities ... and ... I don't want to
328 use "activity-based" because you said this phrase is making you a bit uncomfortable. If you are talking about
329 these activities, and "learner-centred" ... would you say "learner-centred" and "doing activities" is the same
330 thing?

331 T2: No.

332 Re: They are not?

333 T2: They are not the same.

334 Re: How are they different?

335 T2: They are different, in that ... at times they don't have to get into the activities to get to the core of the topic. The
336 well prepared worksheet can guide them to get what you are trying to find out from them. That is learner-
337 centred.

338 Re: That is learner-centred ? Okay. If you have to look at this syllabus as a whole, would you say you are coping
339 with it? That is, you are coping with the syllabus? Looking at it, are you saying "I am confident with what I am
340 doing"?

341 T2: No, I am not, really.

342 Re: You are not? If you were to voice something ... or if you were to have a chance to talk to curriculum
343 developers ... what kind of things would you say "this I need to learn so that I can understand the approach"?

344 T2: *Kea kholoa* (I think) we need to be given workshops ... more workshops of how the spiral in the new syllabus
345 is going to help us a lot in the class, so that we can impart knowledge. So we lack that ... how do we do it.

346 Re: The how thing, that is how to do it?

347 T2: Yes, how to do it.

348 Re: You lack that ... if they can be able to give you more on how to do that thing, it would be better? Okay. Again
349 the syllabus talks of learners developing ... teachers and learners developing skills and attitudes.

350 T2: Ja.

351 Re: Are you aware of that?

352 T2: Yes I am.

353 Re: Are you teaching them?

354 T2: Eh ... teaching skills? No we are not (laughing).

355 Re: You are not? So you cannot even give me one skill that you have taught? What are your reasons for not
356 teaching them?

357 T2: The skills? (long pause). There is this one of trying to find out things on their own. That is **not a** CHECK
358 skill isn't it? To get to ... to try to get ... to acquire ... to get the concept on their own? That is a skill isn't it?
359 We don't really (teach skills).

360 Re: Yes, because in the syllabus ... if we look at the syllabus ... there are a number of skills they are actually
361 saying learners should have these skills. Are you aware of that?

362 T2: *Eh* (yes).

363 Re: But you are not really following the syllabus? But do you find it easy to follow the syllabus, when you teach ...
364 because I have heard some people say that teachers tend to use the textbooks more than the syllabus? They just
365 look at what the books have, and they teach.

366 T2: And follow the topics as they are?

367 Re: So do you think you have ... have you always been using the syllabus when you were teaching ... even in the
368 old syllabus?

369 T2: We have been consulting the syllabus and the textbooks ... teaching the syllabus, not the book.

370 Re: So you cannot say it is still that thinking up *ea hore* (that) you used to use only the textbooks ... so you have
371 always been using the syllabus? But you are just ... maybe not ... there is still this thing that you maybe don't
372 teach the skills. ... and believe me you are not the only one. A lot of people say that they are not teaching the
373 skills ... they are not even aware that they have to teach the skills. A lot of people will have issues around that.

374 What could you say about that? Is it because the people are ... maybe not confident? What would you say is ...
 375 maybe ... preventing you from teaching those skills and attitudes? Are you aware that there are not just skills
 376 but also attitudes? Or you haven't even given it a thought?

377 T2: I don't think ... eh ... that it is because we are not aware. We are ... we are aware that we have to teach them.
 378 One, may be the time factor. Two, *kea kholoa* (I think) not being comfortable ... not comfortable to teach the
 379 skills could be one of them.

380 Re: Hence why you are saying you need to be given more direction, more information on how...?

381 T2: Umm ... information on how to do it, yes.

382 Re: I think I will just stop there. Thank you for your time.

383 T2: Thank you '*me* (Mrs). Okay

Interview with Teacher 3

386 Re: Thank you very much, '*me* [name withheld], for agreeing to see me ... for your valuable time. I know people...
 387 teachers are busy people. You know I am Maisaiah Phakisi. I am doing my studies at Wits, and I am
 388 researching the factors that could affect teachers implementing this new syllabus. So I will ask you some
 389 questions of which I think your answers will be very helpful for me to understand this. So my first question to
 390 you will be whether you taught when the old syllabus was used?

391 T3: Yes, I did teach when the old syllabus was still in use.

392 Re: Eh. Looking at that old syllabus, and this new one now, what kind of things could you say are new in the
 393 curriculum ... in the new syllabus? In this new ... the new syllabus?

394 T3: In the new syllabus? When you look at the new syllabus actually there are some concepts or topics which are ...
 395 will require me using material that is readily available ... that is ... you realize that we have ... that we can
 396 improvise a lot unlike in the past when we were forced strictly to go into the lab in order to come ... and to do
 397 our work there.

398 Re: So in one word what would you say this new syllabus requires you to do? What is different from the old one?

399 T3: The new syllabus requires somebody who is diverse in that the requirements of the new syllabus are such that
 400 the teacher has to be able to relate the topics and rearrange them in such a way that that there is going to be a
 401 link to allow him to use this improvisation that I talked about.

402 Re: Ummm. Okay. So do you have a syllabus document with you?

403 T3: Eh ... it is there ... but not here.

404 Re: But you have it? Do you have other documents, maybe, that are helping you understand what the new syllabus
 405 wants?

406 T3: No.

407 Re: You don't?

408 T3: Sometimes we are given ... some report on the examinations that have been written and we try to use them in
 409 conjunction with the syllabus. That is what helps us actually see what is needed in the syllabus.

410 Re: Which means that the syllabus does not give you that much, itself?

411 T3: Ummm. Sometimes you have to rely on information from some other teachers.

412 Re: Did you attend any workshop?

413 T3: So far we have not attended a workshop ... for some.

414 Re: You haven't been given any the workshop that helps you understand the syllabus?

415 T3: No.

416 Re: So this syllabus ... when I look at it ... says that you have to use a learner-centred approach. Are you aware of
 417 that?

418 T3: Yes. That is very true.

419 Re: And to your understanding ... what do you say "learner-centred" is?

420 T3: When you talk of this learner-centred approach, there is a problem and you just introduce the student to the
 421 problem ... and then he is going to try to dig into the problem ... find solutions to what the problem is all about
 422 ...

423 Re: Themselves?

424 T3: Yes.

425 Re: Any other thing that you can say that is ... maybe that I need this and I need that in order to do that? If you are
 426 saying you are in a classroom how would you say "I am making my classroom to be learner-centred"? How do
 427 you put it into practice... this learner-centred thing?

428

429 T3: This learner-centred approach ... normally when you go to class, you are going to ... try to give out probing
430 questions to see if there is anybody who has an idea of the concept at hand ... and that you have to talk about.
431 From there you are going to ... actually you are brain storming them. Then after brain storming you are going
432 to give them questions which are going to guide them also into coming to concept itself.

433 Re: Which means you try to start with what they know?

434 T3: With what they know and then we built up on what they already know.

435 Re: Do you think that you are using that learner-centred approach when you are teaching?

436 T3: Most of the time ... when it comes to class ... with the kind of students that we have ... that is what we have
437 actually adopted, and we see ... that it is working with them.

438 Re: What kind of students do you have ... that you think that method helps them?

439 T3: They are average students. They are average students. So in actual fact ... they rely on us for information, but
440 we try to make them get the information themselves. They are using textbooks but we try to make them aware
441 of what is around them which can be used in trying to understand what we are trying to teach them.

442 Re: Okay. The other thing that I see is that ... in the syllabus there is not “activity-based”, but the textbook covers
443 themselves indicate that lessons should be activity-based. Have you ever seen that?

444 T3: Yes.

445 Re: Yes? And what is your understanding of “activity-based”?

446 T3: Actually, when you look at the textbooks that we are using, each and every concept that we got ... most of the
447 concepts that we are talking about ... there are some activities, which ... if you are going to ... say for a lesson
448 I am going to do certain activities ... these will help you achieve the ... the goal at the end of the day.

449 Re: The goal? And how do you ... in those activities, how ... yes, how ... do you use them? Are they made in such
450 a way ... eh ... how are those activities arranged, if I may ask?

451 T3: You merge them with ... giving instructions ... or you merge them with introducing a topic ... and then once
452 you want to ... take out a certain ... activity that is going to be taken out. So, during the process of teaching
453 there is going to be that time for clarifying a concept, and that when there is need for an activity to be done
454 there and then, and has been discussed, and then you continue with the concept.

455 Re: Meaning that, in this activity-based, activities are used to build the concept or at times just verify the concept?

456 T3: Most of the time they are there to verify the concepts, because you are going to ... when you introduce this you
457 are going to explain what it is all about ... having in mind what they already know. And maybe the activity is
458 based on what they already know and then is going to build up on what has been put forward to them.

459 Re: So would you say “activity-based” and “learner-centred” are one and same thing?

460 T3: Activity-based and learner-centred?

461 Re: Uhmm. (affirmative)

462 T3: Actually they to me they are one and same thing, because when you talk of learner-centredness it means the
463 pupil has to be involved. You are not demonstrating, the pupils themselves are involved in the activity ... in the
464 learning process.

465 Re: And ... do you think the syllabus is really ... maybe the documents that you have are helping you to see the
466 difference between the two, or the similarities? Are they making it clear to you ... that the syllabus ... when
467 you say “use learner-centred” it means I have to do this and I have to do that?

468 T3: Hmm (Laughing uncertainly).

469 Re: ... or you are not sure?

470 T3: Actually, I have not yet compared them up to that extent ... but since I have adopted this one ... which is
471 learner-centred, it means I ... also have the feeling that this is what is going to help me achieve my target.

472 Re: Okay. You never really asked questions of the syllabus?

473 T3: I never questioned that much.

474 Re: Have you ever taught this topic on breathing and respiration?

475 T3: Breathing and respiration?

476 Re: Yes.

477 T3: (Long pause). I am using this at the lower level ...

478 Re: Not JC?

479 T3: I ... actually so far I have only gone up to Form B. I haven't gone to Form Cs.

480 Re: So you haven't really taught this topic, because I would have liked you ... okay ... because if you are a biology
481 teacher ... if you were to teach it, what kind of activities would you do?

482 T3: Breathing and respiration?

483 Re: Uhum (affirmative).

484 T3: When it comes to breathing ... so that they ... actually understand this ... that will be demonstrated by ...
 485 saying when you breath in or out you just see some ... there are some physical changes that you see in an
 486 individual. But when you talk of respiration, that is a chemical reaction which is taking place inside the body
 487 ... inside the cells.

488 Re: So you can't see that? So ...

489 T3: I actually think it is going to be easy for me to see the ... to make them see the difference between the two. Just
 490 like when you are talking about diseases you try to differentiate between the signs and the symptoms.

491 Re: But if you were ... let's say you want learners to see the change in pressure and volume about ... what could
 492 you do ? How would you do that?

493 T3: Pressure and volume?

494 Re: Yes

495 T3: It could be demonstrated using the bottle or bell jar.

496 Re: Bell jar., which makes that lung model?

497 T3: Yes, the lung model.

498 Re: So, you are saying that some of the activities come from the book ... according to you you are saying that some
 499 ... the books already have the activities ... but where else can the other activities come from?

500 T3: Sometimes the activities can be ... within the class ... that is, they can be prepared by the teacher, because ...
 501 let's say there are some activities that are put up in the textbook and you feel that I should also try to extend this
 502 to ... this much. There are some exercises that we know which, when they are done, they are going to be
 503 interesting to the pupils so that they try to relate them to the concept that is being taught. You only ... there are
 504 few exercises that are in the textbook ... just say for interest sake ... then you just add this one to make them a
 505 little like it. Because they are not going to be put down all in the textbooks.

506 Re: Is there a chance that learners can also bring up activities? Do you allow them to bring out activities?

507 T3: Well ... since we are trying to make them part of this learning circle ... we allow them to say "is this
 508 possible?", "is this going to happen in relation to this particular concept?"

509 Re: You are saying that your learners here are average students. How do you cater for learners different
 510 backgrounds, maybe?

511 T3: (Pause). I am trying to say they are average in the sense that, when you look at them, some of them are exposed
 512 to hm ... a wider ... that they are exposed to ...say the internet. Some of them are exposed to the TV and so
 513 many things, such that when you teach you are going to start ... this person remembers something from a
 514 certain angle. So we try to bring them together. If there are some pupils who never have a chance of seeing
 515 certain things. So we try to bring them in slowly into this. As a result we are not going to say we have bright
 516 students or that we have ... because we have a mixture. Mm ... so that there is uniformity amongst the pupils.

517 Re: So according to you, if you are saying that this learner-centred approach thing ... you are comfortable with it
 518 ...you see it helping you. That means you feel you are coping with the new syllabus? Do you think you are
 519 coping with it?

520 T3: Actually, we are coping with the new syllabus, because it involves pupils more, and once they are involved
 521 more they are ... happen to remember even much better and this is going to be displayed in the ... when they
 522 write reports. Basically we ... at the end ... we use the reports so that ...

523 Re: From the examinations council?

524 T3: No ... no. From the activities that are done in the class. Once the activity has been done we have devised a way
 525 of making them report what has happened in such activities ... so that you see those pupils who were actually
 526 involved or those that were just idling.

527 Re: So, if say, for example, you wanted something the curriculum developers could do, what kind of things ... what
 528 kind of help would you say that will make you understand this new syllabus even better. If *hono ka ba le ntho*
 529 (there was a chance for you to voice) "for me to understand this syllabus much, much better I wish this could
 530 happen", what are those things you would ... need ... that would be ... if they were there, they could help you
 531 understand or teach more effectively?

532 T3: I should think that it should be revised regularly. It shouldn't take more than five years to revise this, because
 533 there are certain changes which do occur during the process. There should be an annual review of this ... so that
 534 we report "when I was doing this activity this one was a little bit low ... that is the standard ... was a little bit
 535 low for some people" ... so they can try to change those. Or even if the book is not going to change, but we
 536 give each other some of the things that we do, as a way of piling or increasing the content in the textbooks.

537 Re: Thank you very much, 'me (Mrs.), for your time. I know you are very busy, so we will stop here.

538

Interview with Teacher 4

539

540

541 Re: Yes, 'me (Mrs.). Thank for agreeing to see me. I know you are very busy and that you agreed to talk to me. This
 542 means a lot. Eh ... like I said, I am doing my Masters at the University of the Witwatersrand and I am looking

543 at the factors that could affect the implementation of this new syllabus. So I want you to answer some questions
544 that will help me understand teachers' side of things.

545 So my first question to you will be whether you taught while the old syllabus was in place.

546 T4: Yes I did.

547 Re: You did? Looking at the old syllabus, and this new one, would you say they are different? Would you say there
548 are new things that were not there in that old syllabus?

549 T4: They are different in a way. They are different in that the new syllabus has got more pupil activities than the old
550 one. That is the difference that I would like you to see.

551 Re: Yes, but if you were to give ... in general ... the requirements of the new syllabus, what would you say are the
552 requirements? What would you say it requires you to do?

553 T4: This new syllabus requires that the pupil:teacher ratio has to be reduced. The ratio may be 20 ... not as is the
554 case now. We have one teacher to 40 (students) and it is not easy for a teacher to contact each and every pupil
555 to see their participation (a few words inaudible).

556 Re: Why do you think is important that the ratio should go down?

557 T4: So that ... to ensure full participation of the learners.

558 Re: Okay, what are other requirements other than this one?

559 T4: The other requirements? It needs, especially in the rural areas where I taught, lab equipment. Most schools do
560 not have enough lab equipment, and teachers have to improvise. And some of the things that we use to
561 improvise are not our choice ... and as such ... so it means the school has to have apparatus ... apparatus for
562 use.

563 Re: Other than that you don't remember any other ...?

564 T4: Another thing ... I think another thing that ... which is required... is just to workshop teachers in that ...
565 because in our case ... I don't remember ... I think I went once

566 Re: To a workshop? For a workshop? Do you have a copy of the syllabus?

567 T4: The new ... old one?

568 Re: Of the new syllabus?

569 T4: Yes, I do.

570 Re: And any other document that helps you ...?

571 T4: We have teacher guides. We have the scope (one word inaudible) for that. Otherwise there is nothing else.

572 Re: Nothing else. So how many workshops would you say you have attended?

573 T4: I went once.

574 Re: And there has never been one where you are going to see whether you have done things well? You are just left
575 ...?

576 T4: We are just left alone.

577 Re: Okay. In the syllabus ... when I look at it ... it says that teachers should use a learner-centred approach. Are
578 you aware of that?

579 T4: That is why I am saying if you are using the learner-centred approach you ... you need (to have) few students in
580 the classroom, so that you are able to ... to ... I mean, to assess each and every one who participates ... to
581 ensure full participation. Because we have large classes ... I just stand there and lecture. It is not easy to go in
582 between.

583 Re: Now, you answering this other question ... that, much as you want to use it, you are not finding it easy?

584 T4: Ja. It is not easy, because of the class sizes that we have.

585 Re: Because of the size of class that you have

586 T4: If the class was accommodating. One other thing, I think it's too long. Another thing, the syllabus itself is too
587 long and covering that means you have to give them more information ... and if you ... I mean if you make
588 them do it on their own pace, so that you center the thing, it takes time, hence you end up lecturing.

589 Re: If you say, for example, learners were just that necessary number, that is learners were just 20 or 30 maybe,
590 how would you make it more learner-centred?

591 T4: It would be easier, in that case. Because it would be easier to ... develop worksheets. But as the case is now it is
592 not easy because the worksheets ... they require money and the parents ... they do not pay. So if they were, few
593 maybe we could help.

594 Re: Another thing is that if you look at the cover of this Lesotho Junior Secondary Science ... do you still use that?

595 T4: Yes.

596 Re: It says that learning should be activity-based

597 T4: Mm.

598 Re: Are you aware of that also?

599 T4: Yes I am.

600 Re: According to your understanding, what would you say “activity-based” means?

601 T4: When it’s activity-based it means learners have to do activities. They have to be guided to do the activities

602 themselves. They should learn by doing activities.

603 Re: What is the purpose of those of those activities when they are learning?

604 T4: Hm ... the purpose, I think, is to retain knowledge. Because when you do something the knowledge is retained.

605 Re: Would you say “activity-based” and “learner-centred” are the same thing?

606 T4: (Long pause). They are more-or-less the same. “Activity-based” means “I am doing”, right?

607 Re: Uhum (affirmative).

608 T4: And if I am doing ... it means I am learning myself ... in the activities, I am learning. I would say they are the

609 same thing.

610 Re: The other thing that the syllabus says is that there should be teaching of skills and attitudes. Are you aware of

611 that also?

612 T4: I am aware of that, because what you are saying is right in ... is the mission statement of our syllabus (Re: Mm)

613 ... to ensure ...what? (asks herself) ... good attitude (Re: Mm) and skills and technology thing. Ja.

614 Re: So are you doing that? Are you teaching that?

615 T4: In most cases we don’t even look into that. We just teach the syllabus. As much as we are aware of that, but we

616 just teach the syllabus. Because all you are doing is ... they are going to be asked here and there ... we are

617 focussing on the examinations ...

618 Re: On the content and what the examiners want and not on the attitude or the ...?

619 T4: Not whether the attitudes are changing or whether skills are developing ... okay?

620 Re: Did you teach the topic on breathing and respiration?

621 T4: Yes I did.

622 Re: Do you remember some of the activities that you were teaching there?

623 T4: Of breathing? Yes, I remember, especially on breathing, whereby we use the lung model.

624 Re: A lung model? What did you use it for?

625 T4: For breathing ... whereby you are trying to show the contraction of the diaphragm and the rise of it.

626 Re: So you are using it to impart ...?

627 T4: Just to demonstrate how it happens. When you say the volume increases ... what ...

628 Re: So, most of the time, where do you get these activities that you are doing?

629 T4: The activities? Most of the time they are in the learners’ books, some of them. Some of them we use references

630 books ... other books.

631 Re: The other books ... Is there a chance that learners can bring up their own activities?

632 T4: Yeeesss (drawn out and unsure) ... sometimes they do.

633 Re: Sometimes you do allow them? So, you are saying that you have learners from different backgrounds? Let’s

634 say, for example, you are talking of learners from rural and learners from urban, who have different cultural

635 backgrounds, how do you compare them?

636 T4: I think one thing is ... when you are teaching in the rural areas, you will teach eh ... learners of rural

637 backgrounds and when you are here (urban) it is not common to have those different ... Normally they are

638 separated ... the rurals are in the rurals and here we have ...these are rare cases whereby we have somebody

639 from rural areas ... and it is difficult to identify that this one is from the rural. So I think their performance ... is

640 that one.

641 Re: You don’t believe, then, that these others are advantaged while others are disadvantaged?

642 T4: I don’t think that, because I, for one, I am from the rural areas.

643 Re: Okay. So, all in all, would you say you are coping with this new syllabus? Would you say you are comfortable

644 teaching it?

645 T4: I think I like the new syllabus.

646 Re: Why do you say that?

647 T4: I like it because ... it makes the work easier for the teachers. If you plan accordingly, and do your things, and

648 kids do their things and you will see where they have problems. You are not just telling them ... like that ... So

649 I think I like it.

650 Re: You like it?

651 T4: Yes, I like it. You don’t do much of the talking.

652 Re: It is reducing the work of the teacher? If, say, you were to be able to meet the curriculum developers, what
653 things would you say you need? What kind of support would you say you need from the curriculum developers
654 that would make the teaching of this more effective?

655 T4: If I were to meet them? If I were to meet them I don't know if I will say the curriculum developers as such, but
656 what I have in mind may be basing myself with the problem that I have. I would say the external examinations
657 should not be based only on the examiners point of view. It should also be based on the attitude change and the
658 skills that the kid has after he has gone through the learning. But it is not the case. As much as they say we
659 should change the attitudes ... develop skills ... but when they are being examined I don't see that. So hence
660 why we have forgotten about developing them.

661 Re: So in a way you think the examiners are contributors towards ... ?

662 T4: The examiners, together with the curriculum developers. Because I don't see where the change of attitude is
663 catered for at the end of the day ... at the end of it all.

664 Re: It's a nice suggestion. So, apart from that, you are still okay with the syllabus?

665 T4: I am okay.

666 Re: That is all I wanted from you. Thank you very much for your time.

