

Appendix J: Curriculum developers' interviews transcripts

Interview with Curriculum Developer 1

- Re: *E ntate* [Mr] [name withheld] as you know I am Maisaiah Phakisi from Wits. I am doing my study on factors that could affect teachers implementing learner-centered, activity-based learning in schools. So as a curriculum developer I am sure you can help me, and I thank very much for agreeing to talk to me. Eh ... *ntate* [name withheld] were you involved in the development of the new syllabus?
- CD1: Very much so.
- Re: How so? What exactly did you do?
- CD1: Eh... I was in the ... eh ... in Lesotho we do science in secondary schools and that science has got three disciplines, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. I was heavily involved in the Physics group that was working on the curriculum.
- Re: That was working on the curriculum? So when did you start working with this?
- CD1: We started in 1998.
- Re: 1998? That means that was when the whole thing started changing?
- CD1: Yes, revising the curriculum.
- Re: Who decided that the syllabus needed changing?
- CD1: Eh ... there was a ... in 1990 there was a conference on the clarification of ... no 1995 ... on the ... I think it was 1990 ... on the clarification of goals of basic education in Lesotho, and after that clarification of goals of basic education there was a proposal to revise the curriculum, and it started in primary.
- Re: Who proposed that?
- CD1: Like I said, there was a national conference and it had a number of stakeholders in education, so these were the participants to that national conference.
- Re: Do you have any document that has people who were participating, or any documents that have to do with that conference?
- CD1: There is a document report on that conference. Probably eh ... it might have the names of the participants in that workshop. I cannot remember, but I know there is a report.
- Re: Can I have a copy of that report?
- CD1: My pleasure. When I am in my office. (I could not get it even though I followed up)
- Re: So what were their reasons? Why did they feel they needed to change? What were the compelling reasons?
- CD1: Eh ... One ... in fact the big reason ... was that eh ... there have been certain developments globally that would affect the education that was being provided in our schools, especially this one coming after the 1990 Jomtien conference that was held in Thailand. Probably ... I may be wrong when I say we had this in 1990. It was probably in 1992, but we will check the document. So after the *Education for All* conference in Jomtien, then it was also felt that Lesotho should also look at the education it was providing. That was another motive to that conference.
- Re: So you decided then to revise what you had?
- CD1: Yes, revise what we had
- Re: So what changes would you say were made in the new syllabus that were not necessarily there in the old one?
- CD1: Okay> Eh ... the old syllabus was meant ... tailor-made to fit into the COSC¹ curriculum then. But the revised [syllabus] was meant to take learners to university, as the entry qualification which never worked out ... we stopped somewhere in the middle of secondary education ... the first three years. We couldn't go to the last two. That was another main factor.
- Re: Which means you were originally intending to change from the Form A to C, and you stopped?
- CD1: Yes for now. I think to go ... because, in fact up to now, because I think to go into Junior ... to get into the last two years of secondary education it needed policy decision. I think because that was a qualification, after those two years. That's where we normally have university entry qualification. Now the intention is to localize that. But now we need some accreditation. Currently we are working with the University of Cambridge. Now we have to look for a local accreditation body and we never got one. That is what is keeping us.
- Re: So my interest is actually on the part where you made changes ... that is Form A-C.
- CD1: In fact the changes ... to be precise, the changes here started in primary ... for the first ten years of schooling.

¹ 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).

52 Re: What are these changes? What are teachers expected to do that they were not doing in the old ... or in the past
53 years?

54 CD1: Okay, the expectation was that there should ... there was more emphasis on learners taking (an) active role in
55 their learning, and also ... that the instructional material should be relevant, because previously the materials
56 that were developed were very much foreign. That was another thing.

57 Re: So you are actually saying ... as the syllabus says, you were actually intending the syllabus to be more learner-
58 centered. It recommends a learner-centered approach. But eh ... the syllabus document is not giving a
59 definition or explanation of "learner-centered". So how would you expect teachers to get the meaning of
60 learner-centered ... or where do they get the meaning of learner-centered?

61 CD1: Eh ... in fact, there were a number of in-service training in the learner-centredness ... eh ... of which ... as it
62 was a new thing, there were ... okay ... people got it and our understanding of learner-centered has differed.
63 In fact, even the way we practice it is very much different. Probably one of the factors is the resources we
64 have.

65 Re: If you are saying the idea of learner-centeredness is different, are you saying it is different from curriculum
66 developer to teachers, or from curriculum developer to another?

67 CD1: In fact, our understanding ... curriculum developers, inspectors, examiners, teachers ... we don't really ...
68 our understanding and perspectives are quite different when it comes to learner-centred

69 Re: So do you think ... if you as curriculum developers are not sure or see it differently, is it possible for teachers
70 to understand what is expected, if the curriculum developers and inspectors are all saying different things
71 about learner-centered?

72 CD1: It is actually a mess ...if you look at it that way... if the curriculum developers' understanding is different
73 from inspectors, teachers and examiners. So this is what we normally call strange loops. So the confusion is
74 there

75 Re: The confusion is there? How are you intending to mend or to bring it up ... because my feeling is if there is
76 confusion up there amongst the top people ... the curriculum developers do not understand it ... teachers are
77 interpreting it the way they understand it ... then and at the end of the day we are saying "we are
78 implementing the intended syllabus" but each teacher implements what she understands to be learner-
79 centered, which could be different from what is intended.

80 Cd1: In fact this is always the problem, I think, from the design and the implementation. There are always gaps, and
81 in fact the best we can do is to try close those gaps. Those will need a lot of in-service training.

82 Re: Are you preparing for these in-service training now?

83 CD1: No. We have ... there is no plan for such things. In fact there is currently an idea of revising the curriculum.
84 In fact, as part of the plan this should have long been changed. So currently in-service activities have been
85 suspended pending the approval of the new policy.

86 Re: Okay. Meanwhile, could you say there are documents that teachers have that can help them get along in the
87 ...

88 CD1: In learner-centered?

89 Re: Yes.

90 CD1: Yes, there are such documents, and some have been given to them. Eh ... but I cannot say for sure which
91 documents they are, but I know we have a quite a number from different sources.

92 Re: Different sources?

93 CD1: There is no uniform material given to all teachers on learner-centered.

94 Re: May I have a copy of materials that you have ... that has learner-centered to it? (I could not get them even
95 though I followed up)

96 CD1: I might have to check.

97 Re: So, you said you had in-service training workshops for the existing teachers implementing the syllabus. What
98 about the incoming teachers? Are they given new continuous training or how are they helped?

99 CD1: The expectation is that teacher educators are doing that, because they had been, and are, part of curriculum
100 development. They know the process, so the understanding and expectation is that learner-centered is being
101 delivered from that side.

102 Re: Again, when I look at the recommended textbooks, these Lesotho Junior Secondary Science textbooks, of
103 which you were a co-author, it says that "the course is activity-based and useful for promoting learner-
104 centered". Again I see "activity-based" not being mentioned in the syllabus. Why was that the case maybe?

105 CD1: Yes. As we develop these things ... and sometimes you have the feeling that ... okay, the certain issue must
106 be addressed ... maybe in a pupil textbook or maybe in the syllabus ... maybe during the in-service through
107 workshops. Some of these things get left out in the process of development.

108 Re: But would you say there is a difference between learner-centered and activity-based?

109 CD1: Ja², there is a big difference ... because you can have activities that do not involve learners ... that are
 110 teacher-centered, but they are activities. Learners can do them, but they may not learn anything from those
 111 activities. But you can have learner-centered activities.

112 Re: What can you say is meant by “activity-based” ... when you say “this activity is activity-based”?

113 CD1: That’s where learners do activities ... whether from the teacher or on their own.

114 Re: Okay/ There are times when I can go ... let’s say, for an example, when teaching photosynthesis. I want to
 115 show that light is needed for photosynthesis. Yes. How would you see activity-based in that case? How would
 116 you expect teachers to teach that, for it to be activity-based?

117 CD1: Activity-based or teacher centered activity?

118 Re: Let’s just talk about activity-based.

119 CD1: They can do activities... They can collect plants ... you want me to ... ?

120 Re: No, no. I don’t want you to explain what the experiment entails, but how they would develop the activity to
 121 make it activity-based. Or you can use a physics concept which you feel confident with.

122 CD1: Okay ... normally what they would do would be the teacher to set up the apparatus and ask the learner to do
 123 the activity. Another way ... here to take it probably more teachers’ ideas being imposed on learners. In
 124 another setting, where I consider it (to be a) more learner-centered approach, would be the learners to come
 125 up with apparatus which could demonstrate that themselves. This is how, maybe, I would consider it to be
 126 activity-based but learner centered. The other one is activity-based but teacher-centered. Because they can do
 127 the activities but may not learn anything, but if the idea is probably from them, then there could be something
 128 that is learned in the process. Or they are doing certain things, but if a teacher tells them to do a certain
 129 activity they may not even have good understanding of why they are doing whatever they have been
 130 instructed to do.

131 Re: There are cases where learners do activities ... maybe to verify what they learned in class ... do you agree
 132 with that?

133 CD1: Or what they learned?

134 Re: Would you call that “activity-based”?

135 CD1: Where they confirm? Ja, that is an activity ... it is an activity. It could ... like I have already said, they can ...
 136 the idea of verification can come from learners or it can come from the teacher, so it will be an activity.

137 RE: Okay. Another thing is that the syllabus says that learners should acquire skills and attitudes. Eh ... how
 138 would you expect teachers to teach those?

139 CD1: Teaching about skills and attitudes? Eh ... skills is not bad. It is easy to see when somebody has acquired the
 140 skills. But values and attitudes, it is very difficult. One of them ... you would not even see them until they
 141 leave schools. You will only see values and attitudes when they are adults ... that they managed to acquire
 142 them. So it is actually ... in fact, as it is, even the way we ... even examinations ... when they try to find out
 143 how much ... they always mess up. So those are the things we normally see when people have gone beyond
 144 high school level. But there are some instances where you can readily see.

145 Re: As a curriculum developer, as someone who is taking charge of things, would you consider, maybe, finding
 146 some means of guiding teachers through teaching about skills? Do you really think teachers are teaching
 147 those skills and attitudes?

148 CD1: In fact the biggest problem ... you need to motivate teachers, once you talk about such things. So in fact in
 149 any system, if you have those good things on paper and you don’t have teachers that are motivated, those
 150 changes will just remain on paper. They will never get to the classroom. But if our examination will have
 151 such things our teachers will always look at what is in the examinations.

152 RE: Meaning they teach for the examination?

153 CD1: Yes. They know that if you are emphasizing values and attitudes, and they are not asked in the examination,
 154 they don’t bother. So actually ... when you talk about values and attitudes ... actually it goes to the
 155 motivation of teachers. It’s quite a complex thing.

156 Re: So you think, maybe, I can go to teacher-educators I might get their side of what is meant by “learner-
 157 centered”?

158 CD1: Yes, they can tell you better than me how they are preparing teachers.

159 RE: Meaning you haven’t had time to evaluate what they are giving, so you can bring it closer to what you want
 160 as curriculum developers?

161 CD1: No, we haven’t done anything. But our assumption is that since in the curriculum development panel we have
 162 teacher educators they know what is expected.

² “Ja” is the Afrikaans word for “yes”. In addition to being commonly used in South Africa, the word has spread to surrounding countries.

163 RE: Is there a chance that when you go out to visit teachers that you go along with a teacher-educator, maybe to
164 see? Or are there workshops where you sit ... you as curriculum developers ... and teacher-educators, to see
165 if teachers are implementing the new curriculum?

166 CD1: No, that one we have not done. Yes.

167

168 Interview with Curriculum Developer 2

169

170 Re: Good afternoon, *ntate* (Mister) [name withheld]

171 CD2: *E ea me* (yes)

172 Re: I am Maisaiah Phakisi, from Wits. I am currently doing my study on factors affecting teachers implementing
173 “learner-centered” or “activity-based” or “activity-orientated” learning. (CD2: Hm) So I am happy that you
174 agreed to see me and I know you are busy but you are going to spare your time. I am really grateful for that
175 and, like I said, my experience as a teacher and maybe as a head of department in my school or maybe as
176 member of committees that were running in the district, I could see that teachers really do not do, have some
177 problems with the implementation of the new syllabus.

178 I am looking at what could cause that kind of confusion. For me to be able to find ... I base myself on the
179 things that I looked up in the syllabus, that I think and I feel if they are made clear I would be able to
180 understand and maybe even teachers could understand. I don’t know if my study will be so successful that
181 when you are doing ... you are revising the syllabus ... you might feel like you may look at it.

182 And I would like to know, *ntate*, if you were in any way involved in the development of this new
183 syllabus?

184 CD2: Hm...m for me I came at a late stage. I did not start if from scratch. I came too late ... that my ... my views
185 and approaches in terms of their effectiveness were not ... it was too late.

186 Re: It was too late?

187 CD2: It was too late, yes. So basically I am not saying I had any influence.

188 Re: You did not have any influence, but you worked with the implementation and development. You did not just
189 stand back and watch?

190 CD2: No, the last bits of implementation ... that is dissemination ... that is where I came in. In terms of the design I
191 wasn’t there.

192 Re: You weren’t there? Who would you say decided that the syllabus needed to be changed?

193 CD2: I think it is the government.

194 Re: The government?

195 CD2: In the preparation for the localization of the COSC, whereby they were saying they had to review the Junior
196 Certificate because it was not in line with the COSC ... that is O-level. Can.... when they localized it they
197 had to review the JC to be ... to prepare for the localization.

198 Re: Uhum. Why did they find it necessary to change the syllabus? Okay, I think you have answered that, if you
199 are saying it was in preparation for localization.

200 Re: Yes. Why did they choose learner-centred ... among other approaches?

201 CD2: Learner-centred is the move of the....the new 2000 century throughout the world ... globally ... not only in
202 Lesotho. The evidence is given by examples of different curriculum studies found in different countries. You
203 talk about Botswana ... they are going learner-centred. You talk about Swaziland ... they are going learner-
204 centred. You talk about South Africa ... they are talking about learner-centred. Even Namibia. So Lesotho
205 could not stay behind

206 Re: So they are just following the trend?

207 CD2: Yes, they are only following the trend.

208 Re: Okay. So what changes ... what is different? What is been done that is different from what was done in the
209 past?

210 CD2: In terms of learner-centred approach I do not want to ... I reserve my comments, because my view is that the
211 syllabus move that has been made has not moved actually to learner-centred as it was anticipated. Because in
212 my study ... I will refer to my study ... there is a competition between the syllabus coverage and being
213 learner-centred. The two things compete, and it says to you “are we sure what we produced as a syllabus is
214 actually facilitating (a) learner-centred (approach). So there are stages whereby we need to investigate certain
215 things that I think they are not actually covered.

216 Re: What you are saying is that teachers are mostly teaching for the syllabus / examination?

217 CD2: Uhum. To cover the syllabus.

218 Re: But like you are saying, the new syllabus says that classes should be learner-centred. According to your
219 understanding, what is “learner-centred”?

220 CD2: Okay, I will refer you to Cliff Malcolm and Moyra Keane, *kea kholoa* (I think) ... I am sure *ke* (it is) Keane.
 221 And you can look at what I think myself is the model of learner-centred education. There they quote, one,
 222 they quote about the relationship and caring at the first level. The second level being the pedagogy for right
 223 topic at the right time, you see. And the third one is about allowing the learners to select their own outcomes.
 224 That implies you are not saying they have to go their own way, but they are selecting ... sorry ... they are
 225 selecting a topic to learn in their own way. For instance, if you were talking about forces, some of the
 226 students will prefer to learn about forces using tug-of-war, you see. Some of them will prefer using sliding
 227 down the steep hill themselves using something. Some of them can prefer learning about them in different
 228 ways. Some will prefer to be lectured about a certain topic. So basically there are three levels that I consider
 229 which I say is learner-centred.

230 Re: So as a ... let me call you a curriculum developer ... you have that angle of a learner-centred approach
 231 whereby the learner is involved wholly, learning abilities, the way they learn is put Do you think the
 232 other curriculum developers, NCDC³ officers, and other stakeholders who were involved in the development
 233 of the new syllabus, see it that way?

234 CD2: No.

235 Re: Have you ever been in contact with them? Have you ever discussed this with them? Did they discuss their
 236 views?

237 CD2: They do not want to discuss it with me.

238 Re: But your view is that they do not understand it?

239 CD2: Not my view, my observation is that they do not understand it.

240 Re: What about teachers?

241 CD2: Even teachers ... they do not understand. Even that study that I am talking about (Kholeli and Malcolm) it is
 242 published and you can have access to it and refer to it. What they do is they have a limited understanding of
 243 learner-centred, they think learner-centred is “hands-on” ... that is, when you put practical that is descriptive
 244 in terms of the ... as a recipe type of practical, whereby you say “mix one, add two, then look at the colour,
 245 what is the colour? and then do that”. They believe that is learner-centred ... as long as learners are doing
 246 something.

247 Re: As long as the learner is doing something, whether they are constructing something or not, is not an important
 248 matter?

249 CD2: The level of interaction or engagement ... they don’t care about it. Whether there is critical inquiry within the
 250 process they don’t care.

251 Re: The other thing is that in that syllabus ... curriculum ... they say that the learning should be learner-centred
 252 but there is nowhere where they give the definition of learner-centred.

253 CD2: Correct.

254 Re: Don’t you think that is creating ... giving teachers problems in terms of interpreting the syllabus?

255 CD2: That is what I also said. I have also specified in my study that *e bokolokoto* (it is not clear). You see you say it
 256 is not that only ... you say you are advocating for constructivism and there is another one for primary where
 257 they are saying you are advocating for constructivism and in secondary they are saying we advocate for
 258 learner-centred. They don’t bring (forward) what their understanding of learner-centred (is) or their
 259 understanding of constructivism ... and how do they meet ... how do they expect teachers to do it. And in
 260 that study I have brought them together in terms of I am saying how is one related to the other.

261 Re: Okay. I don’t know if you will be able to answer this one. Do you think that there are documents that teachers
 262 have access to that maybe will give them that definition?

263 CD2: No. They are not there.

264 Re: They are not there?

265 CD2: No.

266 Re: There are no documents that give them guidance ...that guide them on how to implement learner-centred
 267 approaches?

268 CD2: No.

269 Re: Were there workshops held?

270 CD2: Yes, there workshops held. But the issue is the ... the workshop is an ideal situation ... where they are saying
 271 we train you on an ideal situation. But when you go to the real situation, the real world, there are competing
 272 demands in your school, and those competing demands will cause you do something different. How do I do
 273 learner-centred, when I have 40 to 45 minutes to teach and get out of the class. With the class and 40 minutes
 274 ... even if the process of learning has not reached the level that I would like to say “stop”, there is the next
 275 teacher waiting in my door saying “I want to come in. It’s my turn now”. So you see there are competing

³ NCDC is how people in Lesotho refer to the *National Curriculum Development Centre*

276 demands at school level that do not permit the teachers to actually implement whatever we are saying in the
277 workshops. This is evident from my study, whereby the teachers will be discussing thoroughly on what they
278 have taught and how they have taught ... saying “we need to change this”, but when they arrive at school
279 level they change to a certain level, and that level is saying they are not going beyond that level because they
280 are looking at the competing demands also, and the competing demands are you can’t go beyond this level,
281 otherwise you will be rendered ineffective (as a) teacher

282 Re: You mean that even if they could understand what learner-centred is they will be prevented from
283 implementing it by the situation?

284 CD2: Competing demands. They did ... within two years ... that workshop ... only action research ... we were
285 meeting weekly, discussing, reflecting, planning lessons for a few weeks. But learner-centred were
286 implemented to a certain level ... they could not go beyond that. When you go beyond that we will ask you
287 ... you will have to finish ... cover the syllabus ... you have to meet the demands of the exams ... you have
288 to do that ... so they could not go beyond certain level.

289 Re: What about the incoming teachers? Do they get the training that other teachers got?

290 CD2: They do

291 Re: They do?

292 CD2: I don’t know how far, but they still go through what I was taught during my days.

293 Re: Which is what?

294 CD2: Which is theory here and pedagogy here and both of them they are not learner-centred.

295 Re: They still go to class ... they teach facts and go to the lab to verify facts, they are not using activities.

296 CD2: Thank you. You know better than I can say.

297 Re: Okay, *ntate*, I want to preserve your time. I will move on. Again what I realized is that the cover books of the
298 Lesotho Junior Secondary Science book series ... books 1,2 and 3 ... all of them say that the course is
299 activity-based and is useful for promoting learner-centred teaching. But there is nowhere in the syllabus the
300 word “activity-based” comes out.

301 CD2: Yes. I will tell you why.

302 Re: Yes?

303 CD2: It is because they were competing to make money and they were not competing for the right thing. The book
304 was competing, the authors were competing with all other authors, for their books to be bought by all schools
305 and they got that.

306 Re: So that was just an advertisement, which they wrote outside the book?

307 CD2: Thank you.

308 Re: But then, if you read the syllabus, it says a learner-centred approach should be used, but methods should
309 include inquiry through investigation, and from that one would think they are using learner-centred and
310 activity-based synonymously

311 CD2: That is an issue. They use “learner-centred education” synonymously with “learner-centred approach”,
312 synonymously with “learner-centred methods”, so basically it says that if we had a policy this issue would
313 have been clarified within that policy document.

314 Re: So there is no policy?

315 CD2: There is no policy.

316 Re: There is nothing?

317 CD2: There is nothing .

318 Re: There is only the syllabus document?

319 CD2: That’s why I normally become scared to call it the “curriculum” in Lesotho.

320 Re: Because it is the teaching syllabus, so call it a teaching document. But, according to your understanding, is
321 there a difference between “activity-based” and “learner-centred”?

322 CD2: To me ... I am not sure what I can say to explain myself clearly, but what I can think of is one is a bigger set
323 and the other is a sub-set.

324 Re: Which one would you say is a sub-set?

325 CD2: “Activity-based” is a method of being “learner-centred”. While “learner-centred education” is a bigger
326 umbrella of different methods, one of them which could be activity-based. One of them can be another thing.
327 One of them can be research. So they are all falling under a big umbrella of “learner-centred education”.

328 Re: Okay. That’s how you understand it?

329 Okay, there is also this part which says that learners should acquire skills and attitudes, but there is nowhere
330 where it is indicated as to how these teachers should teach those skills. How are teachers expected to teach
331 those skills if there is nothing that says “you should teach this” and I don’t see?

332 CD2: That's what I said to you. We were after making money not making a book that is relevant or (section
333 inaudible) for our kids. And the people who were assessing the book were assessing it on the given (word
334 inaudible – could be “standards”) that were given, and remember the people who give those standards some
335 of them are the authors.

336 Re: They were given ... I mean who were given the standards?

337 CD2: The evaluators of the standards ... and some of the evaluators were the authors, so their books were also
338 competing in this particular situation and we can't (word inaudible) ourselves from the fact that you are my
339 friend. As long as we are under the same ministry we work together. I don't want to see you being beaten by
340 someone from outside. It's a clear fact, until we have a clear margin (directive) “government officials are not
341 authors”, they can only write and publish in journals, not within books that are going to compete with your
342 own organization ... Just like in a competition, my family, if I am for the organization. But here it is different
343 issue. They compete despite the fact that they are working for the same organization.

344 Re: But *ntate* (Mister) ... eh ... at your capacity, when do you think things will get better? When do you think ...
345 ?

346 CD2: I cannot answer that one.

347 Re: *Ache* (Okay) *ntate*. I think I will leave you at this stage. Thank you very much for giving me your time.

348 CD2: 16 minutes and 21 seconds! (checking his watch).

349
350
351

Interview with Curriculum Developer 3

352
353
354 Re: I am Maisaiah Phakisi and I am grateful that you could allow me to talk to you. Eh ... like I said to you, I need
355 to find out or to get your input into this implementation of the new syllabus. I know that you have been
356 involved in the new syllabus, but I want to hear you saying it ... that that you were involved in the
357 development of the new syllabus ... the development or implementation.

358 CD3: Yes, I have been involved.

359 Re: Yes?. What exactly did you do in the development?

360 CD3: At the beginning we studied ... this content ... that could be needed in the syllabus, and thereafter of learning
361 outcomes as well ... and even implementing at classroom level.

362 Re: According to you, who would you say suggested or decided that the syllabus needed to be changed?

363 CD3: Well, I think that the syllabus itself ... first said it (the syllabus itself seemed to indicate change was needed)
364 because there was a lot of repetition from the primary science and to this high school one. And seemingly the
365 high school one did not lay foundations for the high school syllabus,. But then somebody else had to say
366 “yes” to that ... like ... eh ... yes, the Ministry of Education, with the authority it had, had to say “yes” to the
367 suggested changes, and NCDC.

368 Re: So it was NCDC that decided that the syllabus

369 CD3: Ja, after some discussions with panel members, subject ...

370 Re: Made of what? Of which subjects? Only science?

371 CD3: Yes, it was science.

372 Re: So you decided to change the syllabus?

373 CD3: It was ... eh ... the environment. I mean there was no choice.

374 Re: Okay. Why did you choose to make it learner-centred?

375 CD3: Because learner-centred ... as it is ... the way we understood ... moved away from a nature of ... or the
376 approach in the old syllabus, which to a great deal encouraged teachers talking to students rather than
377 teaching them ... and that (referring to a learner-centred approach) so much developed the acquisition of real
378 science concepts, approaches and skills.

379 Re: Okay. So what could you say is new now ... that teachers are doing now that they were not doing in the old
380 time? What could say “these are new things”?

381 CD3: Actually, from my own observation from class visits, there is not that much change. But what pleases me is
382 the change in the teachers ... because most of them in my area use this syllabus ... they use the learning
383 outcomes. I know that they are using it partially because even the learning outcomes (implemented) very little
384 ... I could see do influence even their assessment or even influence the nature of the lesson itself. But at least
385 they know the syllabus, unlike before when they were teaching solely using the book. So, there is that move
386 and interest in the syllabus. There is that move. Ja.

387 Re: They are now using the syllabus? In this new syllabus you have recommend learner-centred, and in that
388 syllabus you are not giving definition ... or there is no definition of learner-centred. Do you think teachers
389 understand?

390 CD3: Yes. I think if they do, they have understood it from workshops, if they have.

391 Re: If they have? You do not know?

392 CD3: Because you walk into class you still find teacher-centred a great deal. Approaches can be mixed, even if it is
393 learner-centred the teacher will have to intervene somewhere ... but it is still now ...

394 Re: Teacher dominated?

395 CD3: Ja ... and they believe that it is learner-centred only when they are doing experiments ... if at all. They really
396 do ... they do not do experiments that much.

397 Re: Okay. According to your understanding, what could you say "learner-centred" is?

398 CD3: He ... eh ... eh ... learner-centred is the approach which starts and centres on where the learner is ... going
399 with the learner and challenging what is there and providing for that to be really explicit.

400 Re: The learner's activity and everything?

401 CD3: Yes. I don't have proper words for expressing that. It's not something that can be defined, because it is a
402 process. I don't know ... maybe some people will manage to do that.

403 Re: But do you think teachers are ... really understand ... if the syllabus says "learning should be learner-
404 centred"?

405 CD3: I think so. Like I have said, whether they talk about this learner-centred in the manner which you would think
406 they probably understand it, if the approach in the classroom is still not that, *ke hore* (it means) ... there is a
407 discrepancy between what they say and what they do ... if at all they do ... they do have an understanding to
408 a certain extent about this.

409 Re: But apart from those workshops, could ... are there some documents that they have that they use that have the
410 definition of learner-centred ... that kind of guides them towards ...?

411 CD3: Well, not that I know ... except if they follow some of the activities in the books, because they start by asking
412 the activities. Start by asking students some questions and so. But I don't think *hona le* (there is) any
413 documents.

414 Re: You did say that there were some workshops. Would you remember what those workshops were consisting
415 of?

416 CD3: Hm ... I don't want to do that, because some of the concepts there I didn't agree with, so ...

417 Re: You wouldn't give me the documents even if ...

418 CD3: I don't think there was a document ... and also from the presenters ...

419 Re: From presenters?

420 CD3: Well, I don't think they really provided documents ... more than words.

421 RE: They are just words?

422 CD3: Uhum.

423 Re: Okay. So again on the cover books of this Lesotho Junior Secondary Science ... I am sorry, I am taking ...
424 there is this thing *ea* (about) "activity-based" on the books ... that the course is activity-based and is useful
425 for promoting learner-centred teaching. But again you don't ... that activity-based is only mentioned on the
426 books, you don't see it on the document. What can you say about that? What are the reasons?

427 CD3: What do you mean by "the document"?

428 Re: I mean on the syllabus document that teachers are using.

429 CD3: Hm.

430 Re: There is nowhere where they talk about activity-based.

431 CD3: You mean the syllabus?

432 Re: It only appears on the books.

433 CD3: Yes ... because originally the belief was (that) through the discussion on the implementation, teachers would
434 understand that anyway.

435 Re: Would understand "activity-based"?

436 CD3: Yes.

437 Re: So you are saying from workshops and discussion ...

438 CD3: ... they would (understand) because when these learning outcomes were interpreted ... eh ... they were made
439 to develop some lessons plans based on that, that all.

440 Re: Based on?

441 CD3: On learning outcomes, the activities which would reflect *eona ntho eno ea li* (that activity-based thing)
442 activity ...

443 Re: So is “activity-based” ...

444 CD3: *Aa tloha* (hey, leave me alone).

445 Re: Would you say “learner-centred” is the same as “activity-based” or would you say they are different?
446 According to your understanding?

447 CD3: *Kei le ka bolela kare na e* (I have already explained my point of view about) learner-centred. *na ke e shebile*
448 *joang* (the way I see it) and *ha ke khloe hore* (and I don’t think) activity on its own can be that much learner-
449 centred. Is just a little, the beginning I think ...

450 Re: Again the syllabus talks of the development of skills and attitudes. How were the curriculum developers
451 intending teachers to teach those skills and attitudes?

452 CD3: *He aa* (Hey, no) they have to teach them I don’t know because there is not that explicit. It is mentioned but
453 ...

454 Re: ... is not made explicit?

455 CD3: Uhum

456 Re: Don’t you think if, maybe, they could be made more clear to teachers, or there could be definitions given to
457 this ... maybe things will be better for teachers? Because some ... like your teachers (teachers in her district)
458 have this continuous ... I mean have continuous contact with you. They have things better. But there are
459 those teachers out there who are left without someone supporting them. Don’t you think they are struggling?

460 CD3: Uhum.... They have to think on their own (laughing)

461 Re: Because, how do (section inaudible) if something is wrong ... if each teacher uses his/her own understanding
462 ... do you think at the end of the day they would be implementing the syllabus that was intended?

463 CD3: If they are conversant with the syllabus, they would ... they still carry out experiments ... they still prepare
464 students for the exam, the same way ... through I don’t want to go much into the exam ... but if they have a
465 good grasp of that ... of the syllabus and what it entails, particularly the eh ...

466 Re: Which means if the syllabus could be made even more clearer and more explicit it would help?

467 CD3: Yes. Actually it is not only the Junior Certificate one ... even the COSC one.

468 Re: It is still giving them problems?

469 CD3: Ha! ... because one would ask “how would they teach those skills which are in (the) high school syllabus?”
470 These skills are so distinct. you know. But we don’t know how they are going to teach them. One will have to
471 think of how they should be taught, which I think is what they are trying to do *hana tjena* (now)

472 Re: But if teachers are left like that ...?

473 CD3: No. Right, they are not. In my area they are not.

474 Re: Yes? In your area ...?

475 CD3: I don’t even say they understand. They have it ... but there is something they are doing.

476 Re: In general, what you say about these teachers ... you could see they need help as you are working with
477 teachers ... anything that you think “they need this so that they can understand” as you are dealing with them
478 on daily basis.

479 CD3: *Matichere hle a hloka ntho tse ngata* (teachers need help on several aspects).

480 Re: Yes? Like what?

481 CD3: They need to develop lessons *tse rutang li* (that teach the skills) ... not talking about the skill and saying read
482 or hypothesise ... (but) teach them how to organize a lesson that will help them hypothesise on (a) daily
483 basis.

484 Re: But do you think the training that they get somehow helps them to be able to manage?

485 CD3: *Na o oa utloa e tla ka ke critique* (It would appear as if I am critical) *feela* (but) they, *ha ba fihla, joalo kaha*
486 *le rona re ne ntse re etsa ntho eno e sa bonahaleng* (when they come to teach they are as unclear as we were
487 when we started teaching).

488 Re: And therefore it gives teachers problems?

489 CD3: It does *hobane joale li skills tseno rona rea li hloka rea li batla* (because we need those skills).

490 Re: We want them and it is important that they have them.

491 CD3: *Hare li battle feela* (Not only do we need them) for ... *ke hore* (that is) for teaching up to the point of
492 examination,, this syllabus *batla e feila ha ba sena li* (teachers will fail to do what the syllabus requires of
493 they don’t have the) skill and already that is happening. And *ke ntho ena matichere a nahanang hore e thata*
494 *ha e thata* (that’s why teachers see the syllabus as difficult) because... because ... *e butsoe* (what they are
495 asked to do is) within their scope of thinking and even the scope of the syllabus.

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Interview with Curriculum Developer 4

Re: 'Me (Mrs) [name withheld] were you in any way involved in the development of this new syllabus?

CD4: Yes, I was involved.

Re: How were you involved?

CD4: Eh ... first of all, we had to revise the old syllabus and then make some changes that we felt would help to relate the science that was used in the past to what we want the learners to learn now.

Re: So, according to you, who would you say decided the syllabus needed changing?

CD4: Well, I don't know. Because we were just told we were just asked ... to come and bring in some inputs on things that we feel should be revised in the syllabus. So really ... it was something that came from NCDC. We didn't even have time to ask.

Re: So you were just invited by NCDC? Okay.

CD4: Yes.

Re: So why did you find it necessary to change it? I mean yourself? You said it was to meet the needs ... or to make it relevant?

CD4: Okay. Eh ... you will realize that ... a lot of what has been happening in science was rote-learning (Re: Uhum) ... so what we wanted to do was a science that students could take from school to home ... that could apply in everyday life ... where they could use apparatus or resources that were readily available ... not necessarily the expensive, complicated ... eh ... eh ... equipment that is required by the science, as we know science. But we wanted to do something that could ... eh ... have some implications or applications in the lives of the children ... that they could take home.

Re: Okay, I think that is a good thing. But why did you decide it needed to be learner-centred ... because on the cover ... I mean in the syllabus it says you want ... you recommend that science should be learner-centred.

CD4: Well, we wanted a learner-centered ... we wanted science that could be relevant. Learners are supposed to own science, so that they can apply and use it. Science has been content driven, so they couldn't apply it in real life. So that even if they could not continue with schooling or science, they could be able to use what they learned in science ... use apparatus *etc.*

Re: What were the changes made in the new syllabus? What were teachers expected to do that was different ... or what practices would you expect teachers to show in "learner-centered"?

CD4: We want teachers to facilitate learning not to transfer knowledge ... so that they can help learners to discover things for themselves, as what you discover you know better and you develop interest on. Help learners understand that science does not belong in the classroom. They should see science everywhere, even the simple cooking of *papa* (porridge) ... there is so much science there.

Re: The syllabus does not give a definition of "learner-centered". How do you think this will affect teachers understanding of the new approach?

CD4: We expect the inspectorate will induct and workshop teachers, so that they can understand. Learner-centered can also be learned from institutions. We work collaboratively with inspectorate.

Re: What do you, as teacher-educators, offer teachers that can help them teach in a learner centered way? How are you helping teachers understand "learner-centered" in response to the needs of the new syllabus?

CD4: Yes ... we have programmes, for example, third year of teacher training we teach learner-centered approach and cooperative learning. The dilemma is we have many teachers whose classes are overpopulated ... 70 learners per teacher ... so it is not easy to apply learner-centered. But they are taught.

Re: Are there documents that teachers have that can help them determine the meaning of "learner-centered approach"?

CD4: No, not to my knowledge. Unless inspectorate is preparing something we don't know (about).

Re: Did you hold workshops for existing teachers?

CD4: Yes.

Re: What was covered in the workshops?

CD4: Interpretations of learning outcomes and what is expected of teachers.

Re: How are new teachers trained?

CD4: No training is given. That is a big problem. Teachers complain of no longer having workshops. Teachers who were trained have to disseminate information to incoming teachers. Inspectorate does not see the impact of the workshops. They are going to outsource. Lesotho College of Education and National University of Lesotho will have to teach teachers.

551 Re: When I look at the Lesotho Junior Secondary Science textbooks, of which you were a co-author, it says that
552 the course is activity-based, but activity-based is not mentioned in the syllabus. Why was that the case,
553 maybe?

554 CD4: I don't know.

555 Re: Could you explain what "activity-based" means?

556 CD4: Have to do activities that will show that they have grasped the concepts. When they do hands-on ...
557 manipulating apparatus ... they learn manipulative skills, so they know ... instead of rote-learning things.

558 Re: Why is (an) activity-based approach recommended?

559 CD4: It gives feedback to the teacher as to how much they understand.

560 Re: The new curriculum also indicates that learners should acquire skills and attitudes. What should teachers do
561 to achieve this?

562 CD4: They could help learners acquire attitudes. For example, in environment where we talk of managing
563 environment, if they have positive attitudes they could see science as something that can be applied in solving
564 the problem of the environment. Teachers (should) let learners do things ... get involved in activities that are
565 interesting and motivating. We don't know if teachers know how to interpret the syllabus, as there is no
566 feedback ... nobody is taking the responsibility of following teachers to find if they are really applying what
567 they learned in institutions.

