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To "Facilitate" or "Mediate"?

A Critical Evaluation of Facilitation in the Life Orientation Area of Curriculum 2005

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual enquiry critically examines the pedagogic processes of facilitation and mediation. The Department of Education proposes that facilitation be used to implement Curriculum 2005 in South African schools. Documents circulated by the Department of Education are examined in order to show that the essential guidelines have not been provided to assist teachers in their new role as facilitators of learning. The process of facilitation is examined in order to establish whether this process does in fact promote authentic learning, specifically in the learning area of Life Orientation. To achieve this, the role of facilitation is located as an integral part of Outcomes-based Education. The components of facilitation: experiential learning, group work and reflection are critically examined to establish their possibilities and constraints in the promotion of learning in formal education. Having established a clear understanding of facilitation, the report explains Vygotsky's notion of mediation as a prerequisite or process to be used in conjunction with facilitation. The two processes are brought together in the concluding chapter, to demonstrate that it is possible to integrate facilitation and mediation into one pedagogy that will realise the outcomes of Outcomes-based Education in South Africa.

KEY WORDS

Outcomes-based Education

Facilitation

Mediation

Vygotsky

Guidance and Lifeskills

Learner

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree Master of Education to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination to any other university.



Jill Katherine Nourse

on the 16 / 11 / 1999.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to my family,

Joy, Bill, David, Maxine and Andrew.

Thank you for the sacrifices that you have made

to enable me to pursue my quest for knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rashad Bagus, for the insight and instruction that he provided during the writing of my research proposal.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The 1994 General Election in South Africa formally marked the change from apartheid to democracy. This political change resulted in the need to change from a primarily authoritarian and teacher-centred approach to education, to one of promoting democracy, focusing on learners' needs and addressing past inequalities (Department of Education, (DoE) 1997a).

Prior to the political change in South Africa, many schools practiced a traditional, more authoritarian approach to teaching (DoE,1997a). According to the report of the Consultative Forum on Curriculum (1996), traditional teaching is examination-driven, text-book and work-sheet bound, focusing on an objectives-based curriculum. This form of instruction is teacher-centred and often results in passive learners relying on the rote learning of information presented by the teacher. In the traditional form of education, learning is the responsibility of the teacher

and not the joint responsibili y of the teacher and learner. The task of the teacher is to complete the prescribed curriculum within a rigid time frame.

In the Policy Framework for Education and Training (ANC, 1995), the curriculum implemented during the apartheid system is described as one that was perpetuated by class, gender and ethnic division. This division denied the development of a common citizenship or national identity in South Africa. Not only did the curriculum cause division but, according to the ANC education policy framework, it failed to support the needs of a changing labour market and to prepare many school leavers for their role as adults within society. In order to redress the past inequalities in education, an educational system was required that would promote learning for all citizens. In keeping with the ANC education policy framework, the Department of Education (1997a) proposed that an outcomes-based education approach would address these needs.

This approach would gradually be implemented in all schools through a new curriculum (Curriculum 2005) commencing with the Foundation Phase, which includes grades 1 - 3. Curriculum 2005 (hereinafter C 2005) was compiled after consultation with those considered to be stakeholders in education. The Department of Education (1997a) describes C 2005 as being

flexible and relevant to the South African context. In the previous content-based syllabi, the focus was on the content to be taught and often neglected the needs of the learner, the community and the business sector (ANC,1995). The aim of C 2005 is to provide learners with knowledge and life skills that will assist them in becoming competent citizens. C 2005 is flexible in that it focuses on learning outcomes rather than on prescribed content. There is no rigid time frame and learners can progress at their own pace. The curriculum does not prescribe the learning content, but is a guide which allows teachers to be innovative and creative in selecting learning programmes that will cater for the needs of their specific group of learners.

The past rigid division of learning content into subjects is gradually being replaced by eight integrated Learning Areas that will be applied from Grade1 to Grade 9. Through integrating the Learning Areas and incorporating both the needs of the learner and the community, learning will be challenging, relevant and meaningful, assisting learners to demonstrate the prescribed outcomes.

"Outcomes-based Education (OBE) means organising for results: basing what we do instructionally on the outcomes we want to achieve ..." (Spady, 1988, p.136). The outcomes that a learner must demonstrate at the end of each learning

programme are prescribed by the Department of Education (1996). These outcomes include seven generic, Essential Outcomes that are applied to all learning areas. Each learning area has its own broad and specific outcomes. These outcomes focus on the knowledge, skills and values that a learner must demonstrate before advancing to the next learning programme (DoE, 1997a).

An OBE approach is learner-centred and therefore, learners should be regarded as unique. In order to accommodate this notion of uniqueness, learners are allowed to work at their own pace. It is suggested by the Department of Education (DoE, 1997a) that learners be continuously assessed and may be reassessed should they need to remedy their inability to demonstrate the prescribed outcomes at the end of a learning programme. Assessment should be diagnostic. The teacher, as a facilitator of learning, should guide and support the learners as they develop in their own unique manner. In order to provide for each learner, the Department of Education (1998) proposes that experiential learning be implemented in the classroom. This method of learning proposes that learners, through examining and exploring, create knowledge according to their potential. Rooth (1999) describes experiential learning as a flexible, learner centred approach in which the learner is actively involved in the learning situation. The teacher or facilitator must ensure that the classroom atmosphere is conducive to learning and that applicable and relevant resources are provided.

In my research report I will argue that authentic learning cannot take place solely through the process of facilitation as recommended by the Department of Education. Knowledge and new concepts must be mediated by a knowledgeable adult to the learner. Mediation is the social interaction that takes place between an adult or more knowledgeable peer and the child. During this interaction, the learner is assisted in understanding a new concept and relating it to previously acquired concepts. Once the concept has gained meaning, the learner internalises it and is then able to apply the concept in solving future problems independently. If one examines the role of the facilitator in OBE, the act of supporting and guiding a learner is in fact a means of mediating learning. This brief background to OBE will be expanded in the chapters that follow.

2. AIM

This is a conceptual research report and as such does not attempt to provide empirical verification for its claims.

The primary aim of this report is to show that mediation as a method of assisting learning should be considered as a prerequisite to, or method to be used in

conjunction with, facilitation when implementing Curriculum 2005. In addition, I will show that the Department of Education has not clearly defined or developed guidelines for the process of facilitation or the role played by the facilitator in the classroom.

In pursuing these aims, I will focus on the learning area of Life Orientation, with particular attention to life skills. The report will attempt to formulate a pedagogic process that incorporates both facilitation and mediation to achieve the prescribed outcomes of Life Orientation.

3. RATIONALE

An educational approach encompasses a curriculum, learners, teachers, resources and an instructional methodology. Each component plays an integral role in the success or failure of the approach. It is, therefore, imperative that each component be defined and clear guidelines be provided as to how the approach should be implemented in the classroom.

The Department of Education is currently developing learning programmes for Curriculum 2005 and the prescribed outcomes that should be demonstrated by

the learner. Although their learning programmes assume a pedagogy of facilitation, in my opinion, the DoE has not yet fully explained the nature of facilitation and the role of the facilitator.

OBE together with new forms of assessment and learner-centred pedagogy, constitute a paradigm shift from a more traditional methodology to a freer, experimental approach to education. If OBE is to realise the envisaged aims, teachers must embrace this new approach with motivation and enthusiasm. To achieve this, teachers must clearly understand the rationale underlying OBE and have clear guidelines for the application of the approach. The success or failure of an approach rests largely on the manner in which the approach is applied.

In the process of facilitation, knowledge is no longer transmitted by the teacher, as learners are presumed to discover and create their own knowledge through experiential learning. Group work is encouraged. Together learners are supposed to share their knowledge and experiences and create new knowledge through peer collaboration. One of my purposes in this project is to subject these assumptions to critical scrutiny. South Africa has its own unique context. In applying OBE into schools a number of problems need to be redressed.

In order to redress the past inequality in education and provide an education for all South African citizens, a process of teacher rationalisation was enforced. The result of rationalisation was that the ratio of learner to teacher was increased. Teachers must clearly understand how to facilitate group work and experiential learning in a large class. If the methods of instruction are not correctly facilitated, discipline is undermined and learners do not learn.

South African schools are relatively unique in that the composition of learners in the class situation is often multicultural and multilingual. Teachers must be assisted and guided, in order that this diversity is used to further the aims of OBE. In a single class there are learners who speak different languages and bring to the class situation a variety of different cultural experiences and values. The teacher must ensure that the needs of learners are catered for in order that they develop to their maximum potential. These diverse cultural experiences should be shared through the facilitation of group work. The positive outcome of this is that learners learn to respect the different cultural views and values and through reflection learn, critically to evaluate their own ideals and norms. The development of respect and acceptance of our differences promotes the ideals of democracy.

With the geographical composition of South Africa, there is a high concentration of schools in urban areas and many isolated schools in rural areas. In an urban area, teachers are able to form support groups and to take advantage of in-service training provided by the Department of Education. These processes enable teachers to discuss and clarify their roles as facilitators. In isolated rural areas, teachers are unable to avail themselves of these services due to time constraints and the distance that would have to be travelled to attend lectures. This group of teachers require written documents that will guide them in their role as facilitators of OBE.

I selected facilitation as the topic for this research due, in part, to my own confusion with regards to the process of facilitation and my role as a facilitator in the learning area of Life Orientation. Difficulties arose for me out of the descriptions of facilitation provided by the Department of Education (1997a). For me the terms 'guide', 'support', 'facilitate learning but do not transmit knowledge' are too vague to describe this important aspect of education. It became evident to me that to achieve the aims and principles of OBE, facilitation as an instructional method required further research. Through research, I would be able to draw my own conclusion as to whether this is indeed a useful construct to intervene meaningfully in the teaching / learning process of Life Orientation. My past teaching experience led me to question the statement

"teachers and trainers will become facilitators rather than transmitters of knowledge" (DoE, 1997a, p.28). If a teacher no longer transmits any knowledge, can authentic learning take place solely using group work and experiential learning?

The Consultative Forum on Curriculum (1996) states that "[t]he teacher, as opposed to being the repository of all knowledge and wisdom must now 'facilitate' and 'mediate' the educational experience" (p.13) (my emphasis). It was from this statement that the core of my research developed. Facilitation and mediation are two different pedagogic processes, but can in my opinion, be used in conjunction to promote authentic learning.

4. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

As already mentioned, facilitation forms an integral part of OBE and therefore, must be understood within this wider context. Discussion thus begins in chapter two, with a detailed account of OBE in relation to C 2005. Since the focus of the research is on Life Orientation, this learning area will be examined in some depth.

In the third chapter, the process of facilitation and the role of the facilitator will be examined. As facilitation was first encountered in adult education,

reference will be made to the writings of Bentley (1994) and Freire (1970; 1973; 1979; Freire and Macedo, 1987) who proposed this process in order to promote adult education and training. Facilitation and the role the facilitator plays in this process will be examined from both a general perspective as applicable to all learning areas and then more specifically to the learning area of Life Orientation.

Vygotsky's notion of mediation will be critically examined in the fourth chapter. This chapter will include Vygotsky's concept of the General Genetic Law of Cultural Development, his mediation through the learner's Zone of Proximal Development and finally his notion of scientific and everyday concepts (Vygotsky, 1929;1978). Mediation, as a method of instruction will then be practically applied to the learning situation in Life Orientation. The writings of Cole (1988), Wertsch (1985; 1986) and Wertsch and Tulviste (1992) will be referred to as they adapted Vyotsky's notion of mediation to formal education.

Having critically interrogated the concepts of facilitation and mediation, I will examine the weaknesses and strengths of both pedagogical processes in the last chapter. An example of a Life Orientation lesson will be included in order to illustrate my proposal that facilitation and mediation can be used in conjunction to assist learning during the implementation of OBE.

CHAPTER 2

OUTCOMES-EASED EDUCATION - A NEW APPROACH FOR SOUTH AFRICA

As previously stated, facilitation is an integral part of Outcomes-based Education (OBE). Facilitation is being touted as the pedagogical process through which OBE is to be implemented in the classroom. It is important to explain OBE in its totality in order to locate facilitation within this broader context.

This chapter will start with a general review of OBE and the envisaged role of Transformational OBE in bringing about major and much needed change in South African schools. The curriculum framework, referred to as Curriculum 2005 and the prescribed essential and specific outcomes will then be discussed. Assessment criteria and the eight Learning Areas in which the curriculum framework will be applied, will be briefly mentioned. As Life Orientation is the learning area that will be used as a test case for the efficacy of facilitation in accomplishing the specific outcomes, this learning area will be discussed in detail in the conclusion of the chapter. Facilitation and the role of the facilitator in an OBE approach will not be included in this chapter as these concepts will be critically examined in chapter 4.

An Outcomes-based Education approach, as the name implies, is an educational approach that takes as its point of departure the prescribed outcomes that should be realised through learning. Spady (1988) describes OBE as ".... a way of designing, developing, delivering and documenting instruction in terms of its intended goals and outcomes" (p.136). Boschee and Baron (1994) describe this approach as being a "student-centred, result-orientated design, premised on the belief that all individuals can learn" (p.1).

There are three forms of OBE: Traditional OBE, Transitional OBE and Transformational OBE (DoE,1997b). These differ in their curriculum design, instructional delivery, learner assessment and the awarding of credentials. Traditional OBE is not strictly an outcomes-based approach. The aim of this approach is academically competent students. The starting point is the current content-dominated curriculum from which the outcomes are derived. The content and structure of the curriculum does not change and the existing curriculum determines what is important for high level performance. The priority of Traditional OBE is the subject matter, which is not interrelated into other subjects or to the demands of real life situations, therefore, the holistic development of the learner is neglected. Structured tasks are formulated by the teacher and learners

demonstrate their competencies after each small section of instruction. In this approach, learning does not take place through facilitation and learners are not afforded the opportunity to work at their own pace (DoE, 1997b).

Transitional OBE falls between Traditional OBE and Transformational OBE. This approach has as its aim, the development of higher order competencies such as critical thinking, effective communication and problem solving skills. It takes as its starting point the definition of significant outcomes. These are the outcomes that should be internalised by the learners during learning and that will enable them to be competent future citizens. As an approach to education, Transitional OBE fails fully to restructure the content-based approach to teaching and learning (DoE, 1997b).

The third approach is Transformational OBE and is the approach recommended by the Department of Education as the most effective method for the implementation of OBE in South Africa. This is described as being a "collaborative, flexible, transdisciplinary outcomes-based, open-system, empowerment-orientated approach to learning" (Consultative Forum on Curriculum, 1996,p.8). The priority of this approach is the future role that learners will play after completing their formal school education. In formulating

the outcomes that should be demonstrated by learners, the needs of the learner as well as the economic, social and political needs of the country are examined and included. The approach is described as an open-system in that the curriculum framework does not dictate to the tea er, but is a flexible guide that is adapted to suit the specific needs of the learners and the community. Learners are "empowered through the internalisation of competencies" (DoE,1997b,p.8) to contribute to the development of the country. As the needs of learners are at the centre of the approach and learning areas are integrated, learners should develop holistically and be able to apply that which is learned in school to everyday situations (DoE,1997b). Formal education in South Africa aims to develop learners holistically, so that they can contribute to the economic and social growth of the country, thereby creating an environment wherein they may flourish. It is envisaged that these aims will be realised through C 2005 and the prescribed outcomes.

In the past, curricula directed teaching and learning. By nature the curricula were prescriptive and inflexible, often not meeting the needs of specific groups of learners (DoE, 1997e). The new curriculum framework, C 2005, is described by the Department of Education (1997e) as being a "philosophical and organisational framework which sets out guidelines for teaching and learning" (p.1). The

curriculum framework will prescribe the norms, principles and standards for curriculum development as well as the required essential outcomes to be demonstrated by the learner. Although the framework does not prescribe the content or methodological approaches that should be implemented in the classroom, official documents compiled by the Department of Education do specify facilitation as a pedagogic methodology as well as suggest content for learning programmes to assist the teacher in implementing C 2005. The teacher uses the curriculum framework as a guide in developing a curriculum that will serve the specific interests and needs of the learners and the community (Consultative Forum on Education, 1995). It is envisaged that the curriculum will be both flexible and relevant to a South African context and should equip all learners with the knowledge, competencies and skills that will assist them in succeeding after school (DoE,1997a). "The curriculum framework should proceed backwards from the outcomes on which everything ultimately focuses" (Consultative Forum on Education, 1996 p.10).

The Department of Education (1997b) describes the process of defining outcomes as "Design down - deliver up" (p.6). The outcomes are designed to cater for the learner, who is at the centre of an OBE approach, and learning should enable learners effectively to demonstrate the prescribed outcomes. The Consultative

Forum on Curriculum (1996) states that "[t]he selection of intended learning outcomes represent what needs to be learned to achieve the education goals" (p.11). The education goals are long range and reflect learning in general, not a specific level to be achieved at school. Education goals are linked to the vision of social transformation on which our education policy is based (Consultative Forum on Curriculum, 1996). The results of learning and teaching i.e. learning outcomes are of two kinds namely essential (or critical) and specific outcomes.

There are seven essential outcomes which are generic, fundamental and represent the intended results of education. These outcomes are working principles, and as such, they should direct teaching, the development of learning programmes and the selection of learning material. An example of an essential outcome is that learners should be able successfully to demonstrate their ability to identify and solve problems by using creative and critical thinking skills. A second essential outcome is that learners should be able to work effectively with others in a group, team, organisation or community (DoE,1997a). As generic outcomes they are applicable to all eight learning areas and represent the ideal which informs the specific outcomes (Consultative Forum on Curriculum, 1995).

Specific outcomes are specific to learning areas. The Consultative Forum on

Curriculum (1996) states that specific outcomes "are informed by the essential outcomes but formulated within the context in which they are demonstrated" (p.12). A specific outcome describes the level of competence which learners should be able to demonstrate in specific contexts and particular areas of learning. These outcomes are informed by the ideal, but driven by the context in which they are demonstrated (Consultative Forum on Curriculum, 1995). The teacher uses the specific outcomes to assess the effectiveness of a learning process, learning programmes and the progress of the learners. Due to this, the outcomes must include details such as differences in complexity, scope and context. Curriculum designers design curricula with the exit outcomes in mind, "the intent being that all students will ultimately be able to demonstrate them" (Spady,1988, p.136). The curriculum framework prescribes the essential and specific outcomes and describes the learning areas in which these outcomes should be realised through effective teaching and learning.

In order to ascertain if authentic learning has taken place, learners must be assessed. Continuous assessment of learners is proposed in all learning areas (DoE, 1997a). The learner's progress is measured against the expected essential and specific outcomes and not against the performance of other learners. This is a move away from the norm-referenced assessment of the past to criterion-

referenced assessment. If learners do not meet the assessment criteria, they may apply to be reassessed at a later stage. The focus on outcomes requires that teachers in the General Education and Training band assess individual learner's progress continually. The Department of Education (1997a) proposes that a comprehensive external assessment be conducted at the end of Grades 9 and 12.

It is suggested that teachers use a variety of assessment strategies in order to compile a comprehensive profile of each learner (DoE, 1997a). Self, peer and group assessment, plus tasks and projects can be used in conjunction with the teacher's assessment, to ascertain if learners are able to demonstrate the required outcomes. It is important that the assessment strategy be appropriate in terms of form, use, level of difficulty and frequency (Consultative Forum on Curriculum, 1996). In order for assessment to be beneficial, the learner must understand what areas are to be assessed and the assessment strategy that is to be used. For example, when assessing a project, learners must be made aware that the project will be assessed on its creativity, informative content and presentation. The project will be assessed by the teacher and a peer. In my experience, assessment by the learner or a peer if completed in conjunction with a discussion focusing on the completed assessment, provides valuable insight into the learner and the development that has taken place. Assessment must

always be followed by constructive feedback that will promote further learning. The aim of assessment is that it should be supportive, diagnostic and formative so that it guides the learner and assists the teacher in the planning of future activities that will meet the needs and interests of the learner. The Department of Education (1998) summarises assessment in OBE as being "learner-paced and learner-centred" (p.29).

The identification and definition of learning areas is an important element of curriculum development and is discussed in some detail by the Department of Education (1998). "In selecting learning areas, certain assumptions are made about the nature of knowledge, the process of learning and the nature and purpose of education. Curriculum developers must be aware of these assumptions and the effect their choices of learning areas may have on learning, teaching and society as a whole. When defining, selecting and ordering learning areas, the larger political, social and economic determinants must be considered. To achieve this, the purpose of knowledge must first be considered, then the content that will be encompassed by these areas" (DoE,1998,p.24). Based on these principles, the areas noted below are approved for the General Education and Training band (DoE,1998) :

Communications, Literacy and Language learning

Numeracy and Mathematics

Human and Social Sciences

Physical and Natural Sciences

Technology

Arts and Culture

Economic and Management Sciences

Life Orientation / Personal and Social Development

The Department of Education (1997a) proposes that these eight learning areas be integrated so that knowledge becomes relevant and applicable to everyday situations. For example, historical and geographical knowledge should be integrated so that learners can comprehend that the location of a country, the cultures of the population and the climate have an effect on what happens historically in the area under discussion. This knowledge can be reinforced in art work or a learning programme pertaining to creative writing. Integrating learning areas not only links knowledge, but learners are able to apply concepts internalised in one learning area to solve problems in other areas. Life Orientation is a learning area that is easily adapted to the notion of integration and will be discussed in detail.

The terms 'Life Orientation' and 'Guidance and Life Skills' will be used interchangeably in this report. I propose that the term 'Life Orientation' is a more suitable term to be used in the Foundation Phase, grades 1 to 3. In this phase the content of the learning area is of a more general nature. Commencing in the Intermediate Phase and including all other grades the term 'Guidance and Life Skills' is more appropriate. Although Guidance and Life Skills are linked in their pedagogic aims and outcomes, they are two separate components. In Guidance, learners are guided by the teacher in making choices that will influence their future, for example, subject and career choice. Incorporated in guidance is counselling. Counselling takes place either between two individuals or a group when a specific problem that needs to be resolved, arises. Life Skills aims to assist learners in internalising, practising and applying the necessary skills that will enable them to play a meaningful role in society. For example, effective communication, problem solving skills and conflict management.

The Department of Education (1997d) describes this learning area as follows: " Life Orientation is fundamental in empowering learners to live meaningful lives in a society that demands rapid transformation" (p.121). The aim of Guidance and Life Skills is the teaching of generic skills in relation to everyday life (World Health Organisation, 1997). Skills for life are generic in that they are general skills

pertaining to everyday life. If internalised, they assist learners to grow and develop in their relationship with themselves and others. By applying these skills, they are able to take control of their lives and deal effectively with change. Skills relating to life enable learners to embrace their role as adults with confidence and progress according to their potential. The meaningful contribution they make to society will then contribute to the growth and development of the country as a whole. A practical example of this is that if all schools were to offer a comprehensive programme in sexuality and HIV/Aids, with time, one should note the decline in the incidence of HIV and Aids as a result of education.

The specific outcomes for Guidance and Life Skills have their roots in Psychology, Social Sciences and Health Education (Rooth,1999). These outcomes are flexible and must be adapted to the specific needs and interests of both the learners and the community. Even though skills for life may differ between cultures, there is a core set of skills that are applicable to all cultures. For example, effective communication and interpersonal relationships (WHO,1997). These core skills are pertinent to personal and interpersonal relationships within the family, community and work place (DoE,1995). The skills learned in life skills need to be internalised by the learners and then applied and practised in real life situations

so that they are consolidated, and can be used by the learners in other situations.

The teacher must know the interests and needs of the learners so that the selection and preparation of learning programmes and resources will be applicable to the learners' level of development, be relevant and meaningful. In a school that has experienced an incidence of violence, relevant life skills programmes and counselling must be a priority in order to assist learners in dealing with the problem. Therefore, one's curriculum needs to be constantly reviewed and possibly changed to meet current learner needs. Guidance and Life Skills programmes become more meaningful if learners participate in their selection and planning.

As a learning area, Guidance and Life Skills programmes must be balanced so that learners develop holistically. Programmes must be carefully planned in order that intellectual, physical, personal, social, spiritual and emotional needs are met. In planning a curriculum framework for a specific grade, the teacher must select prescribed outcomes that will achieve this balance in development. For example, the curriculum for a specific grade should include age appropriate learning programmes in problem solving skills, effective communication, positive self image development, conflict management, health education and environment awareness.

This is only a brief illustration of a portion of a balanced curriculum that will cater for the holistic development of the learner. Learning programmes should be linked so that there is a sequence and continuity in learning life skills. This assists learners in integrating and extending previously learned skills and concepts and promotes learning as a life long and continuous process (Rooth,1999). The Department of Education (1997a) proposes that learning areas be integrated. It is essential that those skills learned in Guidance and Life Skills be applied to and practised in other learning areas. For example, learners may be taught to use mind maps as an aid to consolidate and internalise knowledge. This study method should then be applied to and practised in other learning areas to reinforce the knowledge gained in Life Skills. This integration of learning assists learners in perceiving that knowledge is not isolated and that there is a link between what is learned in school and the world beyond the school gates.

As in an OBE approach, the World Health Organisation (WHO) (1997) proposes that lessons should be both active and experiential. Man learns from his own experiences as well as from observing how others behave and the consequences of their actions. In order to attain the specific outcomes for Life Skills, it is proposed that group work be implemented in the classroom (Rooth, 1999). She proposes that learners should work in small, heterogeneous groups or in pairs.

In my experience, learners learn to co-operate with others and share their ideas in the group, which enhances their perception of themselves and others. Learners begin to realise that their ideas have value as they work within a group. Listening and communication skills are promoted in a group context and the learners develop respect and understanding of the diversity in values, needs and views of their peer group. Brainstorming, role play, games and debates are other ways of assisting learning and internalising skills. The World Health Organisation (1997) suggests that homework be given in this learning area. This reinforces that which has been learned in class and enables learners to reflect on, analyse and practice life skills at home and within the community.

As in other learning areas, there should be a process of ongoing assessment in Life Skills (DoE,1998). Assessment should have both a monitoring and developmental function. There should be feedback from the learners, school personnel, peers and other role-players. This should assist in the compilation of a comprehensive profile of the learner. It is important to use ongoing developmental and summative assessment of the learners' progress and their development in preparation for a role in society. The results of the assessment should be documented so that it can be used for future learner references and curriculum vitae.

The requirements of OBE: the essential and specific outcomes, the curriculum framework, assessment criteria and the learning areas have been discussed in this chapter and this approach to education is summarised in the following quotation "[b]ased on the philosophy that all children can learn, outcomes-based education defines clearly what learners are to learn, measures their progress based on actual achievement, meets their needs through various forms of mediated learning experiences, and gives them enough time and help to meet their potential" (Consultative Forum on Curriculum, 1996 p.7).

CHAPTER 3

FACILITATION - AN INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD FOR ASSISTING LEARNING

"The role of the teacher has changed to that of facilitator" (DoE, 1997a). Has the role indeed changed to that of facilitator? If it has, *should* it have? This chapter will critically examine the process of facilitation and the role of the facilitator in the education of school going learners.

Chapter 3 will commence with an analysis of selected documents circulated to teachers by the Department of Education. In all these documents the teacher is referred to as a facilitator. Through the analysis, I will show that they do not provide an adequate account of facilitation or the role played by the facilitator in implementing C 2005. Recent newspaper articles will illustrate the insecurity that has risen in the teaching profession due to the lack of concise guidelines. The chapter will then endeavour to formulate a comprehensive explanation of facilitation using international writings, with particular reference to the writings of Paulo Freire (1970; 1973; 1979; Freire and Macedo, 1987). Having established an understanding of the process of facilitation, I will examine the essential components that must be present during facilitation in order for there to be

authentic learning. Authentic learning takes place when a concept is understood and becomes meaningful to the learner. The concept is then internalised and integrated into existing concepts. These concepts can then be recalled in order to assist in solving future problems. The crucial aspect of authentic learning is the meaning that is attributed to the concept, as opposed to rote learning when learners memorise and recall information, often without having fully grasped the concept. With time these concepts are lost as they have not been consolidated and integrated into existing concepts. The chapter will conclude with a critical analysis of the process of facilitation in order to determine if it does indeed promote learning in the classroom.

As previously stated, one of the aims of this report is to examine how facilitation and the role of the facilitator are conceptualised by the Department of Education. The method used to implement C 2005 in the classroom is vital to its success. In my opinion, the documents that are easily accessible to teachers do not provide clear guidelines and are often confusing in their explanation of this essential component of OBE. I cite extracts from four key documents to substantiate my opinion.

The most widely circulated document regarding OBE, Curriculum 2005 - Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century states:

- OBE requires teachers and trainers to focus on the outcomes of education

rather than merely teaching information. The teacher will plan all activities around these outcomes. Assessment will be on-going.

- OBE encourages teachers and trainers to translate the learning programmes into something achievable. There will be a shift away from content-based programmes where teachers aim to cover the curriculum in a predetermined amount of time.
- In OBE teachers and trainers are encouraged to find ways of providing conditions of success in the classroom. A positive learning environment is seen as essential to educator and learner-motivation.

Teachers and trainers will become *facilitators* rather than transmitters of knowledge. They will use a variety of methods of instruction to help each learner to learn. Every learner will be assisted to succeed but at his/her own pace..... (DoE, 1997a, p.28) (my emphasis).

This document was compiled as a general introduction to OBE. The title of the chapter reads "Teachers and Trainers are central to the implementation of the OBE approach" (DoE, 1997a, p.28). The teacher's role is recognised as being important, but the document fails to explain the new and unfamiliar term 'facilitation'. In the document it states that a 'variety' of instructional methods will be applied, but does not mention experiential learning and group work which are integral components of the process of facilitation.

In Curriculum 2005 - South African Education for the 21st Century, the role of the facilitator is listed in point form. The single page description of the role of the facilitator has the title "A new way of looking at teachers" (DoE, 1997c). Teachers and the role they play are listed as:

- Facilitators
- Assessing learners to help them improve
- Nurturing and supporting
- Working in a team
- Guiding learning, not transmitting knowledge (DoE, 1997c).

This brief list offers no guidelines as to the new role of the facilitator. This document is used in conjunction with an in-service training programme. It is suggested in the document that it can be used as a reference when applying an OBE approach. In my opinion the description of the teacher does not clarify the role and leaves the reader with unanswered questions. For example, it states that the facilitator should guide the learner, but not transmit knowledge. This statement requires clarification if effective learning is to take place.

Both of these documents provide a general overview of the components of OBE but have neglected the essential area of implementing C 2005 in the classroom. In the Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance (DoE, 1995), a document compiled to assist Guidance teachers, the teacher is once again described as a facilitator of

learning. The facilitator should be 'guided by the learners' needs', be 'open to alternative ideas' and be 'non-judgmental'. A suitable learning-teaching environment should be provided to encourage mutual feedback, and both the parents and community should be involved in education. Once again this is a very vague explanation of the role of a facilitator which does not explain how the core syllabus should be implemented.

The Consultative Forum on Curriculum (1995, 1996) has compiled two informative documents on OBE. These have not been widely circulated amongst the teaching profession. In describing the role of the facilitator, the term 'mediation' is used in conjunction with 'facilitation'.

> [T]he teacher, as opposed to being a repository of all knowledge and wisdom, must now facilitate and mediate the educational experience. The teacher now a facilitator of learning, will create relations between learners and facilitators which engender values based on co-operative learning (Consultative Forum on Curriculum, 1996, p.13).

Neither facilitation nor mediation have been explained in this document and it appears as if the authors presume that the reader has prior knowledge of these two processes of assisting learning. If facilitation is to be effective, facilitators must have a firm philosophical rationale that will guide the application of their

skills. If this is not provided, the teacher will rapidly fall back into the old pattern of teaching (Brookfield, 1986). To implement Curriculum 2005, many South African teachers will be required to change their past teaching methods to incorporate the process of facilitation. To accomplish this, they must clearly understand the change in methodology and the effect this will have on their role as teachers. If a rationale and clear guidelines are not provided, it may result in C 2005 being implemented using the past traditional methods of instruction and the envisaged outcomes of OBE not being realised.

The confusion amongst educators in regard to the change in terminology from 'teacher' to 'facilitator' is expressed in a recent letter published in *The Teacher* (Vol. 4 No 6, June 1999). The writer expresses her concern as to whether she should be referred to as a teacher, educator or facilitator. In replying to this letter, the Curriculum Advisor states that in her opinion, the term 'facilitator' is limiting. She argues that the term refers to only one of the roles a teacher plays in the classroom. The other roles include mediation, assessment, counselling, remediation and enrichment. The need to train and guide teachers in their role as facilitators appears to be causing concern. *The Educator's Voice* (Vol. 3 No 5, May 1999) recently published an article in which this need clearly to define the role of the facilitator is expressed. "Morale amongst educators is at an all time low. Teachers complain of extremely large classes, mixed language groups, mixed

abilities, varied experiences and a huge void in terms of support and training by the Department" (p.3). Although the Department of Education has assured teachers that assistance will be provided through in-service training and the development of teacher support groups, such support has been sporadic to date. This chapter will endeavour to formulate a comprehensive explanation of the process of facilitation as it is internationally perceived.

The concept of facilitation as a methodology is not exclusive to an outcomes-based approach to education. The concept was first conceived and used internationally by the business community, as a method of training employees in business and management skills (Bentley, 1994). Facilitation is a relatively new concept in education, although the activities inherent in the concept have appeared in writings over the past century (Cross, 1996).

Cross (1996) describes facilitation as a process or activity that enables a change to take place due to the climate of learning. According to Bentley (1994), in his writings on adult education, facilitation is a process that assists individuals in recognising that change is possible. Through facilitation, the learner becomes proactive, freeing himself from an externally imposed direction in learning (Brookfield, 1986).

During the apartheid era, many educators used an authoritarian methodology in the classroom. The educator retained total control over the goals, content of learning and the evaluative criteria to be used to assess the learner. The learner was passive, often not using critical thinking skills to analyse information and relied on rote learning in order to meet the assessment criteria (DoE, 1997a). Paulo Freire ((1984) refers to this approach as "[t]he Banking concept of education in which the teacher does not communicate with the pupils, but makes deposits of information, which the students passively receive, memorise and repeat" (p.81). Brookfield (1986) contends that " [t]here is little doubt that didactic pedagogic procedures in which the learners are viewed as receptive repositories eagerly awaiting the deposits of experts, are not likely to result in the development of critically aware commitment as the educators opinions are never challenged or questioned" (p.146).

The implementation of facilitated learning in South African schools aims to move away from the 'banking concept' of education to enable change to take place. OBE is intended not only to assist learning, but to promote social change. It is an approach that promotes the active participation by learners in the creation of knowledge. In my opinion, when critically examining OBE and facilitation within a South African context, one must first consider how this approach will benefit the learner and then how the learner will benefit the country through education.

One cannot ignore the political and economic rationale underlying the adoption of OBE in South Africa.The political rationale is expressed in many of the prescribed outcomes that learners must demonstrate during their formal school education. For example " Learners should show an awareness of the importance of effective learning strategies, responsible citizenship, cultural sensitivity, education and career opportunities and entrepreneurial abilities" (DoE, 1997a, p.16). It is envisaged that OBE will redress the past inequalities in education through the provision of equal education opportunities for all South African citizens. OBE should cater for the needs of all learners through the implementation of experiential learning, where learners create knowledge working according to their own potential and at their own pace. In order for South Africa to prosper economically and for the country to compete internationally, it is essential that the work force is able to think creatively, critically and to solve problems independently. These skills should be promoted in an OBE approach. Due to the political rationale underlying OBE, the writings of Paulo Freire are pertinent, especially as his theories on education advocate facilitation as the pedagogy that will promote learning.

Paulo Freire researched and wrote extensively on the subject of illiteracy amongst South American adults. He proposes that by being literate, one is able to free oneself from oppression (Freire, 1973). Societal and individual liberation are

interdependent and education is the catalyst that will change the structure of society, resulting in social order (Freire, 1970). While South Africa has made the formal move to democracy, the envisaged change from being a society of oppression and inequality to being one with freedom and equality is still in progress. It is envisaged that education, through the implementation of OBE, will assist our society and its citizens to change peacefully and move towards achieving the ultimate aim, of a united, democratic nation. Freire's philosophy is applicable to South Africa not only in a political context, but also through the pedagogy of facilitation, which he advocates for the promotion of literacy amongst adults. For Freire, critical literacy is the most important outcome of education.

Literacy 'empowers' the oppressed (Freire and Macedo,1987). According to Freire, "[l]iteracy is more than decoding the written representation of a sound system, it is an act of knowing, through which an individual is able to look critically at the culture that has shaped him and move towards reflection and positive action upon the world" (Freire, 1979, p.5). For Freire, literacy develops pedagogic skills especially the ability to think critically. Through the ability to read, learners are transformed from the narrow experiences within their specific environment, to experiences of the wider world. Due to the internalisation of these broader experiences, learners are able to reflect on their own world, understand it, and act

in transforming society. Freire's 'emancipatory theory' of literacy emphasises that literacy is a precondition for social and cultural action for freedom. To assist learners in reflecting on their own experiences, there must be active and 'authentic' dialogue between the facilitator and the learner as two equally knowing subjects. During this dialogue, new meanings will emerge for the learner which extends his/her everyday life experiences (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

To facilitate learning, Freire suggests that education should commence with the learners' everyday experiences. Using these as the point of departure during learning, educators then assist learners in critically examining these experiences of which they are often not consciously aware and have in the past accepted as the norm. Through becoming consciously aware of their present situation, learners start to perceive that change is possible. Life experiences provide the 'source' of the learners' knowledge which 'liberates' them, providing the 'tools' for changing the society in which they live (Saddington,1992). Once learners perceive that change is possible, their everyday experiences need to be expanded through the incorporation of new concepts. Through the broadening of life experiences, learners are able to implement change through action. This notion forms the core of Freire's theory of Conscientization or Critical Awareness i.e. becoming aware of oneself as a learner (Freire, 1973). In order to achieve this aim, Freire advocates the implementation of experiential learning or a problem

solving approach to education, which would replace the more traditional banking form of learning.

During the process of experiential learning, educators pose challenging problems or tasks for learners to solve independently. Learners use their past experience in conjunction with relevant resources to explore and solve the problem, thus creating their own knowledge. Reflection is an important component of experiential learning. This process enables the learner to interpret and give meaning to their experiences. Understanding leads to action upon which learners must once again reflect. Reflective thought and action are 'dialectically' related and are integral to experiential learning (Freire, 1979)

This brief description of Freire's work, aims to illustrate how his approach to education and facilitation are closely related. Freire advocates the point of departure in education as the learner's life experiences. Learning should be promoted by exploration and the active communication between the learner and the facilitator. Freire also stresses the importance of learners continually reflecting on that which has been learned in order to progress. If effective learning takes place, learners will be able to perceive their current situation and move away from oppression to social equality.

From the different perspectives discussed in this chapter, one can make certain general conclusions about the process of facilitation. Facilitation is not a pedagogic methodology, but is a process comprised of a number of essential components that together assist learners to discover and explore knowledge independently. This process is not confined to formal school education, but is used at all levels of education and training. The educational method that is used in facilitation is experiential learning, emphasising learning through group collaboration. The other components of facilitation are: the provision of suitable and challenging resources, the establishing of a class atmosphere that is conducive to learning and specific characteristics that should be portrayed by the facilitator. Each component will be explained in order to provide a clearer understand of the process of facilitation and the role played by the facilitator.

Rooth (1999) describes experiential learning as a learning theory or philosophy that maximises learner participation and empowerment. The learner learns through active and direct experience and then reflects on that which has been learned. She proposes that the act of reflection, an integral part of experiential learning, enables the learner to grasp the meaning of the concept, to consolidate information and to internalise learning. As in Freire's literacy theory, this process of facilitated learning starts with the learner's past experience and then builds on these strengths and existing knowledge. By

starting with what the learner knows, thinks and feels and allowing time for these to be shared with the learners' peers, Rooth (1999) advocates that learning is more successful due to the analysis and consolidation past experiences. This act promotes further learning. After this period of reflection and consolidation, the facilitator adds additional information. This knowledge enables past experiences to develop and expand, incorporating the new information. For new information to be internalised and given personal meaning, the learner must be afforded the opportunity to practise these skills and apply the them to real life situations. Once these steps in experiential learning have been accomplished the learner must once again reflect on the learning process that has taken place. Freire and Macedo (1987) proposes that reflection is a precursor to future action. Experiential learning promotes the holistic development of the learner, an ideal proposed by an outcomes-based educational approach (Rooth,1995). Through exploring and experimenting, learners use both cognitive and affective skills in their active involvement in the learning process. The method of facilitating experiential learning is through the use of heterosexual groups in the learning situation (Rooth, 1999).

Group work facilitates the collaborative exploration of experiences (Brookfield, 1986). Rooth (1999) explains that through group work, knowledge is created,

tested, negotiated and reflected upon. The facilitator's role is to set time limits for group discussion, to establish perameters and to ensure that there is an equal power relationship within the group. From my experience when working with groups in the class situation, I have found that in a heterosexual group, the dominant learner with a positive self image and good communication skills tends to dominate the discussion and therefore, appropriate supervision on the part of the facilitator is required. Through intervention, the facilitator must insure that shy, reserved learners are afforded the opportunity of sharing their opinions with the group. As an educator, I have found that it is necessary for the facilitator to first guide learners in the necessary skills required for effective group work. These skills must be practised and reinforced until they are internalised by the learners and only then will the learners reap the full benefit of group work. To work in a group requires participants to listen to and respect the views of others, even though these views may be in opposition to the views held by the members of the group. For the group to achieve the required aims, they need to be able to communicate their ideas effectively and work together to achieve the desired outcomes. Effective listening and communication skills are not spontaneously learned, but need to be practised and reflected upon, until they become skills that are used automatically. The ability to work in a group context has a profound impact on the learners' life after school. Many careers require their employees to discover innovative ideas and resolve problems within the group context. If these

skills have been internalised during the learners' formal school education, they will be able to adjust to the requirements of the work situation.

Group work may be envisaged by many facilitators as an easy way to facilitate learning with the minimum amount of supervision. If effective facilitation is to take place, the facilitator must ensure that no group is neglected, that listening and communication skills are use by each member of the group and that authentic leaning takes place. Rooth (1999) suggests that after the group has completed the specified task, their ideas should be summarised and shared with the class. The task of the facilitator is to restate these ideas and then allow the learners to reflect on that which has been learned during the session. Through reflecting on the proposed ideas, the learners internalise the consolidated views, values and ideas that are personally relevant and meaningful. This description of group work reveals how valuable effective group work can be to the holistic development and growth of the learner. The success of group work is reliant on the facilitator and his ability fully to comprehend his role in promoting this process.

The second component of facilitation is the tablishment of a relaxed learning environment. The role of the facilitator is to create a classroom atmosphere where

learners feel safe from psychological and physical injury. Learners must not feel threatened, so that they are free to explore, question, experiment and make mistakes (Rooth,1995). The acceptance of mistakes and failed attempts result ultimately in success. If you are not free to make mistakes, you will never attempt a task for fear of failure (Bentley,1994). I believe that one of the greatest threats to learners tackling a task in which they might fail is the fear of ridicule from their peers. The facilitator must insure that all learners respect the efforts of their peers and that laughter at and ridicule of one's peers is not permitted in the learning situation. Once again this concept must be continually reinforced by the facilitator, until it becomes a natural practice. Learners must respect one another and feel free to share their opinions and efforts knowing that they will not be humiliated. Once this quality has been internalised, it will hopefully be practised beyond the boundaries of the school and become a natural characteristic of the learner. Not only must the class atmosphere be conducive to experiential learning, but the choice of resources must challenge the learners to explore, question and experiment.

Rooth (1999) emphasises that resources and learning material must be challenging, yet meaningful and relevant, in order to stimulate both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The positive effect of motivation is the desire to learn

and perform (Cross,1996). The levels of motivation can be measured by the degree of understanding and learning demonstrated by the learners. Resources in the learning situation are not confined to those concrete aids which assist learning, but the facilitator himself, acts as a flexible resource. The facilitator has accumulated more experience and knowledge than the learner and can thus be regarded as a valuable resource in the classroom. Brookfield (1986) contends that as the process of learning is the joint responsibility of both the facilitator and the learner, facilitators should regard themselves as flexible resources and not as didactic instructors who have all the answers. This is a change in paradigm for many experienced teachers who have in the past been regarded by the learners as the source of all knowledge, whose authority should not be questioned. To be a flexible resource as part of the learning process, facilitators must be aware of themselves and be able to share their feelings and knowledge with the learners. This act of sharing enhances the facilitation process as learning becomes a shared activity in which everyone has something to teach and learn (Rooth, 1995). In my experience as a facilitator, the fact that one can admit to not being the source of all knowledge, builds a better relationship between oneself and one's learners. They respect one's honesty and respond positively to working together in the search for knowledge, learning thus becomes a joint effort.

In order for the class atmosphere and relevant resources to be of benefit to the learners, it is essential for the facilitator to know each child and treat him/her as a whole person. Learners have a distinct continuum of learning styles and developmental rate (Stone, 1994). Brookfield (1986) substantiates this statement when he contends that facilitators must have knowledge of the various learning styles. Facilitators must vary their teaching style to suit the individual needs of the learners. In this chapter the process of facilitation as an instructional method is examined and clarified, but one must keep in mind that learners are individuals and their needs must be met in order for them to develop holistically and meet the challenges of adult life. OBE recommends facilitation as a process that promotes learning, but it may not suit all learners as an instructional method. Rogers (1969) acknowledges that learners have individual needs and learning styles and therefore, some may benefit from learning passively, i.e. from instruction. I have experienced that the learners with poor organisational skills or who lack the ability to work independently find this freer form of instruction confusing and frustrating. These learners still require the discipline and guidance of the facilitator in order to complete a task.

Rogers (1969) advocates a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship between the facilitator and the learner. Both parties should continually

negotiate the direction and methods of learning. This ensures that the needs of the learner are taken into account and the learning situation becomes more meaningful.

In order to promote learning through the process of facilitation, the facilitator must manifest certain characteristics. The learners must regard the facilitator as someone who is approachable. There must be an active exchange or dialogue between the facilitator and the learners if new meanings are to emerge and therefore, learners must feel free to enter into a discussion with the facilitator (Freire, 1979). For learning to take place, there must be a relationship of mutual trust, empathy and respect between the facilitator and the learners. The facilitator must support and guide the learners in their growth and development towards adulthood (Rooth, 1999).

The role of the facilitator and the method of implementing the process of facilitation are crucial if the envisaged results of facilitation are to be realised. The ultimate goal of effective facilitation is the growth and development of the learners into self directed, empowered adults (Cross, 1996). Facilitation empowers people to take control and responsibility for their efforts and achievements (Bentley, 1994). Through empowerment, people are assisted in believing in themselves and from this base, they are able to explore their potential. Rogers

(1969) describes the result of facilitation as freeing the learners' curiosity. This enables learners to move into new areas of interest, to question and explore and to realise that everything is in a process of change. In South Africa, the envisaged result of facilitated learning is citizens who will promote the ideals of a democratic society. Facilitators must no longer be seen as mere transmitters of knowledge, but as facilitators of meaningful learning (Kruger, 1998). It is envisaged that meaningful learning will take place through experiential learning and group work. Facilitation also takes place through the provision of relevant resources and certain qualities inherent in the facilitator for example, trust, empathy, support and guidance.

The question posed in the introduction of this chapter is: Has the role of the teacher changed to that of facilitator and, if it has, should it have? In concluding this chapter, I will attempt to answer this question by examining the strengths and weaknesses of facilitation. The conclusion is based on my conceptual research in conjunction with my experience as a Guidance and Life Skills facilitator.

In my opinion, facilitation has merits if applied correctly. In the past, the learning situation was often characterised by passive learners seated in quiet, neat classrooms, absorbing facts presented by the teacher. Syllabi did not always cater

for the needs of learners or prepare them for their role as adults after completing their formal school education. Through experiential learning, learners are actively involved and responsible for creating their own knowledge. The classroom becomes a stimulating and exciting environment in which to learn. It is more relaxed as learners move between work stations and communicate with their peers creating knowledge as they solve problems independently. Carefully selected learning programmes cater for the needs of the learners. These programmes are challenging, interesting and relevant. Tasks to be completed commence on a level compatible to the level of the learners' experience, so that learning progresses from the familiar to the unfamiliar and can be related and applied to life situations. If this is accomplished, the skills learned in school will be of benefit to the learners in adult life where knowledge is seldom compartmentalised (Kruger, 1998). The process of facilitation enables learners to succeed according to their own unique potential, working at their own pace. In theory, facilitation through the provision of experiential learning and group work, the provision of resources, a relaxed, motivating class atmosphere and a facilitator who supports and guides learners, is an ideal pedagogy for the implementation of C 2005. In reality within a South African context, it has a number of obstacles that should be overcome in order for it to be effective in promoting learning as it has been envisaged by the Department of Education.

To be nationally implemented into the classroom, teachers are required to change their previously more formal pedagogic methods and embrace this freer form of education. This requires motivation, dedication, creativity and innovation on the part of the facilitator. In the past, prescribed syllabi seldom changed. Teachers accumulated information, prepared lessons, transmitted knowledge and then assessed what the learners had absorbed. Often lessons were used year after year with very little change in their structure or content. Facilitation requires learning programmes that cater for the needs of the learners. These needs change and thus learning programmes need to change and be revised in accordance with these changing needs. To implement facilitation, teachers require intensive training in this new approach. Is this possible if we consider the vast number of teachers that require training in a minimum amount of time? It is imperative that teachers are trained whilst OBE is in its embryonic stage. Not only is the time factor a matter of concern, but the cost to the Government, who has a limit budget and other pressing needs must be considered. If adequate training is not provided, C2005 will be implemented according to each teacher's personal interpretation of the process of facilitation.

A second concern is the large number of learners in each class. Can authentic learning take place through experiential learning and group work when there are as many as fifty learners in a class? The facilitator must maintain discipline if

learning is to take place. Each group must be assisted and supported during the learning session so that learners develop and progress. This more relaxed method of learning encourages movement and learner interaction and the facilitator must not only be able to control the class, but must understand the rationale underlying this process so that learning is constructive and meaningful. Can a facilitator realise the aims of facilitation when confronted with such a large number of learners often in a classroom that is too small to be used effectively for the facilitation of group work?

In order for learners to construct their own knowledge through exploration and experimentation, suitable resources must be provided and learning should also take place beyond the borders of the classroom. Due partially to the past inequality in provision of resources, many schools do not have suitable resources and lack the funds to provide them. The facilitator thus needs to be creative and resourceful in improvising when these necessary resources are not available in order to realise the aims of facilitation. Once again this adds pressure to the facilitator who is trying to implement a new process. Will facilitators resort to ignoring this essential component of facilitation?

My experience as a facilitator has led me to question if facilitation is the ideal process in the senior phases of education. In these phases, learners are required

to move from one learning area to the next. Due to the rigid time constraints enforced by a timetable, learners often have to interrupt a learning process in order to move to the next session. Often closure does not take place before the end of the session and concepts are not internalised. Ideally, the school timetable should be constructed so that a learning programme can be completed in one session. Facilitation works effectively from this aspect in the Foundation Phase where learners remain in one location for an entire day.

In addition to the time constraints is the notion that facilitation is not suitable for all learning areas. Can abstract concepts such as mathematical and scientific concepts be understood and internalised through exploration and experimentation? According to the Department of Education the facilitator will not transmit knowledge (DoE,1997a). Does facilitation enable learners to rise above and develop beyond their everyday experiences or is the transmission of knowledge by a more knowledgeable adult necessary in order for learners to internalise certain concepts? This critical question will be answered in chapter 4 when mediation will be discussed.

Reflection is a vital component of facilitation and the rationale underlying this process must be clearly understood by facilitators. It is a metacognitive process and as such, learners rethink on the cognitive processes that they used to solve a problem. They should question whether their problem solving skills

were adequate, efficient and appropriate or if by using an alternate approach the problem could have been solved more rapidly and effectively. The result of reflection is that it assists learners in improving their ability to solve problems independently. It also enables learners to consolidate the knowledge and skills internalised during learning. To achieve these aims, reflection should be an integral part of each learning programme and learners should be assisted in implementing the process during their first year in formal school. If it becomes part of the learning process it will result in adults who will critically analyse problems in the work situation. One questions whether all facilitators will realise the importance of reflection and ensure that it is implemented during each learning programme.

This is a conceptual report and the questions posed here should be empirically researched in order to formulate a more concise conclusion as to the merits of facilitation in a South African context. A longitudinal research project would also be effective in ascertaining if the aims of OBE are realised through facilitation i.e. are learners better prepared for their role as adults and are they more creative, critical thinkers who are able to solve problems independently and be of benefit to the social and economic development of our country.

In concluding this chapter on facilitation, I emphasise that although facilitation has merits, it is not the only effective instructional method. Rooth (1999) in her writings on facilitation in Life Orientation states that "[f]acilitation is not always suitable for all teaching and the promotion of facilitation is not a way of saying that non-facilitative teaching is bad. It is merely an instrument to help you provide the most opportunities for your students" (p.103).

CHAPTER 4

MEDIATION - A PREFERABLE OR PRE-CONDITION TO FACILITATION

As I have shown in chapter 2, in both official and unofficial documents on the suggested methodology for implementing OBE, the terms 'facilitation' and 'mediation' are often used in conjunction. Having explained the process of facilitation in chapter 3, the second concept, that of mediation, will be discussed in this chapter. Mediation will be examined within the framework of Lev Vygotsky's socio-historical theory of the Development of Higher Mental Processes, as it probably receives its most rigorous treatment as part of Vygotsky's theory. This chapter will include Vygotsky's notion of the development of the child through phylogenesis, ontogenesis and microgenesis. Mediation will then be examined within the concept of the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the value mediation has in enabling the child to internalise abstract, scientific concepts.

Vygotsky studied the nature and development of higher mental processes from a cultural or socio-historical approach (Scriber, 1985). The core of this approach is that culture plays a mediating role in the process of human

mental development. This notion is summarized in the statement that "[t]he structure and development of human psychological processes are determined by humanity's historically developing, culturally mediated, practical activity" (Cole, 1988, p.137). Vygotsky proposed that in order to provide a complete account of the development of higher mental processes, phylogenesis, ontogenesis and microgenesis should be included in one's research. These genetic domains operate as an integrated system and a change in one domain can be explained according to specific principles (Cole, 1988). In his research into the development of higher mental processes, Vygotsky focused on the process and not the product of development (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). In order to examine the process of mediation as a pedagogic method, one must take into account the influence that these genetic domains have on the learner.

The phylogenetic level encompasses the historical development and characteristics of the species. Humans differ from animals in that they have the ability to create and use tools or artefacts to change the conditions of their existence. From the 'dawn of the species', the use of tools has been adapted, modified and mediated to subsequent generations (Cole, 1988). These socially organised activities have directionality and change during the course of history. As humankind develops, so do higher mental processes (Scriber, 1985). According to Vygotsky's socio-historical approach, higher mental processes

have their genesis and stages of development both within the general history of the species and the child's personal history (Cole, 1988).

The history of the child falls within the second level, namely ontogeny (Cole, 1988). Vygotsky identified two levels of development during ontogeny, the natural line and the cultural line. These lines are intertwined to form a single line of 'socio-biological' formation of the child's personality (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). Vygotsky proposed that the cultural line takes primacy over the natural during development.

The natural line of development is the child's physical, biological and neurological growth and development during ontogenesis (Van der Veer, 1996). These natural properties provide the possibilities and constraints for the social construction and development of higher mental processes (Moll, 1994). "Culture, generally speaking, does not produce anything over and above that which is given by nature, but it transforms nature to suit the ends of man" (Vygotsky, 1929, p.418). Children have certain possibilities and constraints which are inherited, but through social mediation they are assisted in realising their potential through the development of higher mental processes. The cultural line is the main driving force of development during ontogenesis. Through the process of social mediation, cultural signs are internalised,

mastered and used by the child (Moll, 1994). Cultural mediation is universal, but the development of specific forms of mediation vary according to the culture. For example, all cultures have the potential to develop a language, but not all cultures develop the same form of social activity e.g. formal schooling, literacy and numeracy (Cole, 1990). Children, therefore, not only differ in their genetic composition, but also in how they use the tools and psychological signs that have been socially mediated by their specific culture. Together the natural and cultural lines determine the unique development of each individual.

It is the unique development of each child that forms Vygotsky's third level, microgenesis. Phylogenesis and ontogenesis influence education, but it is the learner's microgenesis that forms the core of OBE. Through the implementation of OBE it is envisaged that learners will be assisted in realising their maximum potential. Due consideration should, therefore, be given to Vygotsky's three levels of development in formal school education, especially with regards to mediation.

In my opinion, phylogenesis, the general development of humans, effects the selection of educational content or learning programmes that will be mediated to the learners. The teacher is jointly responsible for mediating the use of tools and psychological signs that have been created, modified and mediated by prior

generations. For example, the computer was created by humans as a means of communication. Educators must assist learners in mastering the use of this modern tool. They must not only be able to use this tool effectively, but must also develop higher mental processes that will enable them, as adults, to contribute to ongoing technological advances and mediate these to the next generation. The computer is one of the many tools that have been created due to human's development of higher mental processes and their need to change the 'conditions of their existence' during the course of historical development. Learners, therefore, play a significant role in the phylogenesis of the species.

Ontogenesis and microgenesis influence the selection of an effective pedagogy to be use in the mediation of concepts. Learners vary in their genetic possibilities and constraints as well as the cultural experiences and psychological tools that have been socially mediated by their culture. Due to this, the uniqueness of learners must be considered in order that mediation, as a pedagogy, will enable authentic learning to take place. Learners must attribute personal meaning to the concept so that it can be internalised, resulting in the development of higher mental processes. Teachers must adapt their style of mediation to suit the learner's specific Zone of Proximal Development so that each learner will benefit from the learning experience.

Vygotsky introduced the social mediation of knowledge into the classroom through his notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This is defined as:

> The distance between the individual's actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

The ZPD is the starting point for Vygotsky in his association between the social and the psychological as it introduces the social mediation of knowledge into the context of teaching and learning and the development of higher mental processes. Children must progress through their ZPD from assisted to unassisted self regulation (Moll, 1994).

Vygotsky developed the notion of the ZPD as a theoretical construct, partially as a critique, but also as an alternative to the static individual intelligence test. He regarded the intelligence test as measuring only the individuals mental function that had already matured and 'fossilised'. Vygotsky proposed that it was more realistic to study the formation of behavioural processes by analysing the subject engaging in activities, thereby making hidden processes visible.

The ZPD integrated the social activity into Vygotsky's theory while retaining the significance of tool and sign mediation in understanding human development and learning (Moll,1994).

According to Vygotsky's theory, children have two levels of development, an actual level and a potential level. The actual level of development is the child's mental function which has been attained as a result of a specific, already accomplished course of development. If the child receives guidance from an adult or more capable peer, he/she can go beyond the bounderies of his/ her own potential. Children's ZPD indicate their future potential for development i.e. those processes which are in the course of becoming established, maturing and developing. What children can do today with adult assistance, they will be able to do tomorrow independently (Simon, 1963). For development to take place, the teacher must set the level of instruction according to the learners' potential level of development and not their actual level of development. By being aware of learners' ZPD, one can change the 'intermental' and therefore, the 'intramental' functioning of learners (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). For Vygotsky, teaching should proceed ahead of development and elicit those functions that are in the process of maturing and that lie within the child's ZPD (Wertsch, 1986). In the context of OBE, it is the responsibility of the teacher to first ascertain the learners' actual level of development and the cultural experiences that have been

internalised through social mediation. This information is used as a guide in the selection and preparation of learning programmes to be implemented in the classroom. These programmes must challenge the learners and include new concepts so that individual learners develop to their maximum potential through authentic learning. The learners' cultural experience effects the selection of relevant learning programmes. If a learning programme caters for the needs of the learner and the community, new concepts will become more meaningful and learners should then be able to relate that which is learned in formal education to their everyday experiences. OBE is a learner centred approach and therefore, the manner in which concepts are mediated should suit the individual requirements of the learner. Before examining the methodology of mediation within the child's ZPD, I will first briefly describe the concepts of higher mental processes and psychological tools.

Verbal thought, logical memory and selective attention are classified as higher mental processes which are unique to humans. These processes are culturally mediated by psychological tools and are thus social by nature and have social origins (Van der Veer, 1996). Psychological tools are sign systems, for example, language, mnemonic techniques, counting, writing, maps and diagrams (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). These sign systems and symbols have a genesis, a history and change over time (Kozulin, 1990) and enable the individual to

reason on an abstract level away from the concrete object (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). During mediation, an intervening tool or instrument mediates between the stimulus and the response (Van der Veer, 1996). It is the task of the teacher to select effective and appropriate psychological tools to assist learners in the internalisation of abstract concepts resulting in the development of higher mental processes.

Learners often require assistance in order to attribute meaning, consolidate and internalise new information in formal education. The assistance or mediation of new concepts results in learners developing higher mental processes that will be used for future, independent problem solving. Vygotsky identified three forms of mediational means i.e. material tools, psychological signs and the behaviour of another human being (Kozulin, 1990). In the first instance, the material tool will mediate a human action that is directed at nature. The tool enables a human action to change the object. For example, the computer transposes a mental thought into the written word. The computer, a tool, acts as a mediator in enabling the hidden to become visible to others. The second mediational means, a psychological sign acts as a mediator, when it changes man's natural impulses into higher mental processes (Kozulin, 1990). In this instance, the written text, a psychological sign, will mediate new information to the learner. The third form of mediation, human mediation, occurs between an individual and a more

knowledgeable other and is described by Vygotsky in his General Genetic Law of Cultural Development,

> Any function in the child's development appears twice or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between two people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category (Vygotsky, 1978, p.163).

Concepts move from being socially regulated (interpsychological) to being self regulated (intrapsychological) when they are internalised by the individual. Until the concept is internalised, performance must be assisted or mediated by a more knowledgeable person (Gallimore and Thorpe, 1990). Mediational means are the product of socio-cultural evolution and are appropriated by a group or individual as they carry out mental functions (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). Mediation occurs initially through concrete cultural relationships between children and those with whom they have contact (Moll,1994). Learning, according to Simon (1963), has a prehistory in that it starts long before formal school education. Others distinguish objects or events within the child's environment, using a historically laid down language system. Through mediation, children's perception of their environment changes. During social interaction, children

adopt the sign system as their own practice, this enables them to apply the sign system in the regulation and direction of their own thinking. Mediation allows for the interpsychological to become intrapsychological within the individuals Zone of Proximal Development (Moll,1994).

I believe that in the formal school situation, psychological tools or sign systems as mediational means, enable the learner to move from concrete, sensory experiences to being able to manipulate concepts on an abstract level and therefore, solve problems independently. For example, during the initial learning of mathematics in the Foundation Phase, learners make use of material tools such as blocks to assist them in solving a mathematical problem. These material tools mediate learning. Once learners have internalised the mathematical concept, they are then able to manipulate the concept on an abstract level without the assistance of a concrete aid or material tool. An intervening instrument or tool, the block, mediates between the stimulus or mathematical problem and the response i.e. the answer to the problem. As higher mental processes develop and learners are exposed to a wider scope of experiences, they become less reliant on sensory, material tools in order to learn. This does not imply that they no longer require concepts to be mediated in order to learn. They now require psychological tools such as oral language and

written text to act as mediational means that will assist them in the development of higher mental processes.

Brookfield (1986) and Rooth (1999) in their writings on facilitation, both regard the teacher as a flexible resource. As such, teachers make themselves available as mediators of knowledge to the learner. The knowledge and experience that teachers internalise, is drawn upon in order to assist learning. Through the social interaction between the learner and the teacher, concepts are mediated on an interpsychological plane. Once the learner has grasped the concept it is internalised. The concept is now meaningful and can be assimilated into existing concepts. The learner is able to manipulate these concepts on an intrapsychological plane as an abstract, higher mental process. The concept is first socially regulated as an interpsychological category and is then self-regulated as an intrapsychological category (Gallimore and Thorpe, 1990).

In order to further clarify the concept of mediation in formal school education, I will briefly examine this process within the learning area of Guidance and Life Skills.

Many of the proposed outcomes in this learning area require the internalisation of skills that are abstract and are not spontaneously assimilated through everyday

experiences. All of the outcomes prescribed in this learning area are cross-curricula as they mediate both skills that will enable learners to cope with the demands of an ever changing environment or concepts that will enable further learning to take place. One example is critical thinking. This skill is is of an abstract nature and as a higher mental process needs to be mediated to the learner. To think critically requires both cognition and metacognition. The steps required to critically analyse information should be mediated in sequence to the learner. The internalisation and application of this skill commences on a social plane. The teacher interacts with the learner explaining, discussing, analysing and reflecting on the process of critical thought. Over a period of time, through this social interaction, the concept is practised, reflected on and reinforced until it has been given personal meaning. Once this occurs, the concept is internalised as a higher mental process. The skill can now be manipulated on an abstract level and applied in independent problem solving during different life situations. A second example is that of effective communication. As a life skill, learners must internalise, through mediation, the essential components of being an effective communicator i.e. to listen to others, to respect different cultural values and to express their own ideas with confidence. The teacher is not the only person who mediates knowledge in the classroom, it can also be mediated by a more knowledgeable peer or an expert in the field.

During peer collaboration, learners share and discuss concepts arriving at a meaningful conclusion. Through this action, existing concepts are reinforced and consolidated and new concepts and skills are internalised. In my opinion, peer collaboration plays a vital role in the classroom. Often a more competent peer is more adept in mediating a concept to a fellow learner when this concept has not been internalised through the social process of teacher-learner mediation. The posing of a research problem is another example of peer mediation. Together peers research a project, during this research, psychological signs mediate new concepts to the learners. They consolidate the information and then present their findings to the class. They can be regarded as more competent peers in this instance and mediate new knowledge to their peers. As previously mentioned, the means of mediating new concepts is not a static, set process, but is active, should be varied and should suit the requirements and level of the learners.

In an OBE approach, every learner is unique and should succeed in attaining the proposed outcomes working at his own pace (DoE, 1997a). This notion is compatible with Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development. As previously stated, each learner has an actual and a potential level of development. Integral to the learner's ZPD, is his natural and cultural line of

development. What makes the learner unique is firstly, how he develops naturally i.e. his innate limitations and possibilities. He is also unique due to his particular cultural environment, as it is within this environment that cultural signs and psychological tools are mediated to the learner by those with whom he has contact. One must acknowledge that the home is also a ZPD in that it is an educational setting. One of the major functions of the home is to mediate knowledge, skills, values and norms that will ensure the survival of it's dependants (Greenberg, 1990). In order for learners' ZPD to be meaningfully incorporated in education, the teacher must know each learner's strengths and weaknesses.

The Department of Education (1997a) stipulates that learners must be assessed on an ongoing bases in order to ascertain if they are able to demonstrate the predicted outcomes of the learning programme. It is the stage of development that is important and not the age of the child (Sutton, 1980). Both OBE and Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD require the teacher to know the potential of each learner. This is achieved through the continual assessment of skills that the learner can demonstrate independently. It is the task of the teacher to involve learners in relevant, functional activities that will stretch their capabilities. The teacher must support the learner by mediating his transactions with the world (Moll,1990). Vygotsky did not elaborate and expand his notion of mediation as an

holistic methodology. His concept of mediation was later developed by Feuerstein in his theory of the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE).

During MLE, an adult intentionally draws the learners' attention to an object so that they consciously experience the object and not just passively register its presence. This mediating action radically changes the conditions of the interaction as the mediator selects, changes and interprets objects and processes for the learners (Kozulin and Pressiesen, 1995). Through adult intervention in the learning situation, the principles of problem solving are transmitted to the learners. Due to this, meaning is attributed to the concept, it is internalised and learners are then able to transfer these principles to other situations and tasks. Learners must comprehend that the goal of learning is not only the successful solving of problems, but the development of cognitive thought processes which will assist in life long learning. Thus "[i]ntentionality, transcendence and meaning constitute the basic, necessary parameters of any MLE interaction" (Kozulin and Pressiesen, 1995, p.70). In his application of mediation in formal school education, Vygotsky made the distinction between everyday or spontaneous concepts and scientific concepts.

Zeuli (1986) describes Vygotsky's notion of everyday concepts as being knowledge that a child constructs on his own or through social mediation in

the context of everyday experiences. The construction of this knowledge occurs without specific, premeditated or systematic instruction. Everyday concepts are tied to specific objects and conditions and the words they represent are grounded in the concrete. "The word for an object is part of the object" (Moll, 1990, p.193). The words that are learned in an everyday context, cannot be detached or manipulated in the child's mind separately from the image of the object it represents. The child is often unconscious of the object as "[a]ttention is always centred on the object to which the concept refers, never on the act itself" (Zeuli, 1986, p.8). In contrast to everyday concepts, Vygotsky identified those concepts that are mediated to the child within the context of formal schooling. Vygotsky refers to these concepts as scientific concepts.

Scientific concepts are 'schooled' and systematic concepts. The word is decoded and voluntary manipulated in the mind as an abstract concept independent of its direct image. The child's attention moves away from a 'sign-object' relationship characteristic of everyday concepts that are context bound, to a 'sign-sign' relationship found in scientific concepts. Schooling detaches the word from its 'designata' and attaches it to a generalisation (Gallimore and Thorpe, 1990). The structure of school learning provides the kind of cultural experience in which higher mental processes are formed (Panofsky et al, 1990). The relationship between a scientific concept and an object is mediated from the

start by some other concept and therefore, scientific concepts begin with analytical procedures and not concrete experiences. "Schooled or scientific concepts arise through the social and historical development of formal education and its social institutions" (Moll, 1990, p.193).

Scientific concepts become part of a system of interrelated concepts (Wertsch, 1986). For Vygotsky this was important as he felt that a concept could only become subject to consciousness if it is part of a system. The child is consciously aware of the scientific concept and uses it voluntarily. Through the mediation of scientific concepts, the child is able to make generalisations and solve problems on an abstract level.

Scientific and spontaneous concepts have different histories, but cannot be separated. Ideally, scientific concepts through the process of mediation will acquire concrete meaning for the child and spontaneous concepts will in time become rational and accessible to the child's conscious and volitional verbal strategies. Both concepts will then be used in similar ways (Panofsky et al, 1990). This bringing together of spontaneous and scientific concepts allows the synthesis of opposites (Gallimore and Thorpe, 1990). Everyday concepts become more systematic, autonomous and tool like. Only through effective mediation in school will there be a dialectic relationship between scientific and everyday concepts

which makes it possible to use these concepts in practical thinking due to the attribution of personal meaning. If authentic learning is to take place, teachers must be responsible for the internalisation of new concepts. One questions whether this can be achieved solely through the process of facilitation, where learners construct their own knowledge working from a base of their own personal experience, or is it essential for teachers to first mediate these new concepts to the learners? I will endeavour to answer this question in the concluding chapter of this report.

In conclusion, I believe that Vygotsky's notion of mediation can play a meaningful role in successfully realising the objectives of OBE. Learners each have their own ontogenesis, an individual history and bring to the classroom context a multitude of different and varied experiences. These experiences have been socially mediated through cultural relationships. Everyday concepts are shared and others learn from them, but there are concepts that cannot be learned in the course of one's daily experience or through peer collaboration during group work. These scientific concepts need to be mediated to the learner i.e. the teacher or adult must come between the stimulus and the response in order to explain and demonstrate these abstract concepts, so that the learner can give them personal meaning, internalise the concepts and use them to solve future problems independently. Learning is a lifelong experience and

all South African citizens are entitled to be educated in accordance with their potential, working at their own pace (DoE, 1997a). In order to achieve this, I propose that a balance must be found between mediation and facilitation so that all South Africans may fulfil their role as worthy citizens. I contend that to achieve this, mediation as a pre-requisite or used in conjunction with the process of facilitation should be considered when applying an OBE approach.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this concluding chapter, the possibilities and constraints of facilitation and mediation will be examined in order to formulate an answer to the research question 'to mediate or facilitate?'. A suggested lesson structure for Guidance and Life Skills will be included to motivate my proposal that mediation should be a prerequisite to or used in conjunction with facilitation in order to achieve authentic learning during the implementation of OBE.

Having investigated facilitation in chapter 3, I maintain that if this pedagogy, with certain accommodations and additions, were to be implemented according to its design in South African schools, it should assist all learners to develop holistically during their formal school years. The positive aspects of this approach will be examined briefly to substantiate this statement.

Experiential learning, a component of facilitation, enables learners to become actively involved in the exploration and construction of

knowledge. Through their exploration of resources and the environment, knowledge is created in accordance with the learners' individual potential and therefore, all learners should achieve some measure of success during the learning process. Success contributes to the development of a positive self image, which should motivate future learning. Challenging, relevant tasks set during experiential learning will cater for the needs of learners and concepts internalised should become more meaningful as learners apply them, both to everyday situations and in other academic endeavours.

The second component of facilitation is group work. Ideally through group collaboration, skills are practised and reinforced, communication and co-operation between peers is promoted and learners develop respect for the different views and values held by the group, as they work together collectively to solve problems. Learning through the process of facilitation should be both exciting and challenging for the facilitator and the learners.

Through effective facilitation, learners should internalise and practice many life skills that will enable them to fulfil their role as adults after the completion of their formal school education. An example of these life skills are independent problem solving skills, effective communication,

participation in group activities and innovative and creative thinking skills. Many of these skills were not practised during the previous more formal style of education and left learners ill prepared for the challenges of adult life.

In theory, facilitation should be an ideal method for the implementation of OBE in South Africa. In reality, there are a number of practical constraints which may inhibit the holistic application of this process. The large number of learners in a class, the size of the classroom and the lack of resources, create the material constraints for successful facilitation. In addition to these constraints, is the rigid timetable followed in most schools. Not only must the facilitator improvise in order to overcome the physical conditions that are not conducive to facilitation, but the process is often interrupted as learners must move to the next learning area before having completed the learning process. In order for facilitation to be successfully implemented, facilitators must fully comprehend the implications of the process and embrace this new methodology with enthusiasm. As previously discussed in chapter 3, it appears that due to inadequate training of South African facilitators, this approach is often regarded negatively and not implemented in its entirety.

When critically examining facilitation, one must keep in mind that this process was originally designed to be used in the education and training of adults (Bentley; 1994, Freire, 1970;1973;1979; Freire and Macedo, 1987). Facilitation can in this instance be implemented according to its intended design. Most adults have consolidated a wide variety of concepts and experiences during their formal school education. These concepts and experiences are recalled and applied during group discussions, in order to find solutions to problems posed by the facilitator. In this instance, the role of the facilitator is to support and guide group work without imparting knowledge or influencing group decisions. In the context of formal school education, learners are limited in the variety of concepts and experiences that they have internalised and facilitators are required to assist learners in expanding their knowledge. Can the processes of facilitation be implemented in schools according to its original design, or does it require certain accommodations and additions in order to be successful as a method for implementing C2005?

As I have argued, the crucial weakness in the process of facilitation is that it does not incorporate the transmission of knowledge by an adult to the learners. During experiential learning, learners interact directly with

the stimuli or environment. A small minority of learners will attribute meaning to a new concept and solve problems independently without the intervention of a more knowledgeable other. In an average South African class, learners vary in their life experiences and level of potential, therefore, in most instances, learners require new concepts to be explained and given meaning before they are able to apply this knowledge in solving problems independently.

For example, in the learning area of Design Technology, one of the learning programmes require learners to design and construct a bridge according to prescribed specifications. Certain learners, through trial and error or past experience will be able to complete the required task successfully without the intervention of an adult. For most learners, it is essential first to mediate the basic components of a structure. Learners are then able to apply this knowledge, together with critical and creative thinking skills in the design and construction of a bridge in accordance with their individual potential. This practical example of the necessity for intervention in the learning process introduces the second instructional method, mediation. This notion was discussed in depth in chapter 4 as an essential part of Vygotsky's theory on the development of higher mental processes.

Vygotsky did not develop mediation as a comprehensive method for teaching. This could be regarded as a constraint in this report as it is difficult to compare the process of mediation with the more holistic method of facilitation in that it is not an entire teaching-learning process. Vygotsky elaborated only on the notion that in order for scientific concepts to be internalised in formal education, a more knowledgeable other must intervene between the concept and the learner. This intervention must continue until the learners have attributed personal meaning to the concept and can use it to solve problems without the assistance of an adult. Vygotsky also stressed the necessity of mediation in assisting learners to transcend from their actual level of development and achieve their optimal potential. The ultimate aim of education is to develop the child into a competent learner. Competent learners are able to apply that which has been internalised during formal education into other situations. To achieve this, learners must develop strategies for independent thinking and problem solving which arise out the attribution of personal meaning to concepts. From this summary of mediation one can visualise how the process of adult intervention in the learning situation can strengthen the weak link in facilitation and thereby make authentic learning possible in an OBE approach.

As stated in the title of this report, I suggest that mediation in some instances should be a prerequisite to facilitation. The questions that arise out of this suggestion are: Is it necessary for there to be mediation in order for learning to take place and in what instances should it be a prerequisite to facilitation? I will endeavour briefly to answer these questions in order to substantiate my proposal. In learning areas such as science, accountancy and mathematics, learners are required to attribute meaning to, internalise and apply prescribed theories, principles and formulae. These abstract concepts are classified by Vygotsky as scientific concepts and are internalised during formal education. One questions whether it is feasible to conceive that these abstract concepts can be discovered or formulated by all learners during the process of experiential learning? Vygotsky proposed that scientific concepts are logical, systematic and decontextualised and therefore, require the mediation by a more knowledgeable other in order for them to become meaningful to the learner. If meaning is not attributed to a concept it cannot be applied in the independent solving of future problems. In other learning areas that require social understanding and interpersonal skills mediation can be used during a lesson and need not be a prerequisite to facilitation.

In a recent Lifeskills workshop for high school teachers (February, 1998), the Gauteng Department of Education recommended that all Lifeskills lessons should follow a suggested format. It is this format that will be used to illustrate how the processes of facilitation and mediation can be used in conjunction during learning.

A lesson should open with a short, applicable exercise called an 'icebreaker'. This exercise aims to create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Learners relax, interact, communicate and have fun during this initial stage. A relaxed atmosphere in the class is a necessity in that many of the topics discussed in this learning area are of a sensitive and personal nature. It is the role of the facilitator to support and control this initial learner interaction and the mediation of concepts is not required.

The second stage of the lesson allows the learners to reflect on their past experiences and relate these experiences to the context of the lesson. This stage is aptly referred to as 'connecting to self'. A task is completed that will promote critical, personal reflection which is a component of facilitation. Through reflection, learners perceive the subject matter as having relevance to their own lives. For example during a lesson on HIV/ AIDS, learners may be asked to complete a questionnaire that will assess

their personal level of knowledge regarding this topic. The importance of reflection is highlighted in the writings of Freire, discussed in depth earlier in the report. Freire advocates that learners should critically reflect on their past experiences and that this act will enable them to consolidated their position and move actively forward into the future. As reflection involves learner participation, the facilitator merely acts as a guide and not a mediator of knowledge.

During the third stage, learners divide into groups or work in pairs. They collectively work on a task, debate a topic or find the solution to a problem posed by the facilitator. This stage is referred to as 'connecting with others'. The aim of group collaboration is to practice and internalise essential life skills. These skills include amongst others effective communication, co-operative problem solving in the context of a group, respect of cultural differences and conflict management. The adoption of these skills will effect the transition and adaptation of learners to the adult world after the completion of their formal education. Depending on the grade of the learners, many of the skills practised during group work will previously have been mediated by the teacher. As has been explained, peer mediation does take place during group work as learners

share ideas, knowledge and values. Therefore, during this phase of the lesson one encounters both facilitation and mediation.

These first three stages of a Guidance and Life Skills learning programme comply with the process of facilitation through the implementation of experiential learning, reflection and group work. The role of the facilitator is to guide group discussions ensuring that all learners are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in the discussion. Facilitators must ensure that the class atmosphere is non-threatening and conducive to learning, set limits and keep time. Up to this stage, mediation may take place between more knowledgeable peers, but seldom between an adult and the learners.

The aim of the fourth stage of the lesson is the incorporation of new information into the learners' past experience. It is during this stage that the role of the facilitator changes to that of a mediator. Learners cannot develop and progress without building on and extending those past experiences that have already been internalised. Many of the skills that learners should internalise during Guidance and Life Skills do not develop spontaneously as a result of everyday experiences. For example, the skills required to work effectively in a group in order to arrive at a commun d and satisfactory conclusion need first to be mediated to the

learners. These skills are then practised and refined until they become automatic processes that learners are able to apply with ease in different situations, both within and beyond the borders of formal education. Different forms of mediation may be incorporated during this stage. The teacher, an expert in the field drawn from the community or a more knowledgeable peer may mediate new information on an interpsychological level. During learner research, a psychological sign in the form of written text or an audio-visual tape may act as the mediator of knowledge. Thus mediation may take on different forms during a lesson which increases the level of interest when imparting new concepts. After the mediation of new knowledge, learners reflect on that which has been internalised. Lasting learning cannot take place without reflection and is an integral part of both the processes of facilitation and mediation. During this period of reflection, learners interpret and consolidate the new information, linking it to those concepts that have previously been internalised. What was mediated on an interpsychological plane now becomes meaningful and is internalised by learners on an intrapsychological plane. Bentley (1994) describes the process of reflection as the mind 'drifting' over what has happened thereby extracting and 'digesting' that part of the experience that is personally meaningful.

As a means of closure, the learning programme ends with the learners' assessment of the lesson. This critical evaluation of the lesson benefits not only the learners, but also the facilitator as it highlights the weaknesses and strengths of what has been presented. There should be reciprocal feedback between all the participants in the lesson, which should result in the development and growth of both the facilitator and the learners.

This description of a Guidance and Life Skills lesson reinforces my notion that mediation and facilitation complement each other, whether they are used in conjunction or when mediation is a prerequisite to facilitation. Mediation enables learners to grasp and attribute meaning to new concepts whilst facilitation enables concepts to be applied through creative, independent problem solving as learners work according to their individual potential and at their own pace.

After this in depth study of the processes of instruction one asks the question: Why was this component of Outcomes-based Education selected and subjected to critical examination? OBE is gradually being implemented into South African schools and its success depends to a large extent on the manner in which it is implemented by teachers. To be

a success as a new approach to education, the envisaged outcomes of OBE must be realised through effective instruction.

The months expended critically reflecting on mediation and facilitation resulted in the conclusion that these two processes are not as far removed from each other as initially perceived. Both methods have common traits expressed from different perspectives. Mediation distinguishes material tools and psychological signs as mediational means, whereas facilitation proposes the use of interesting and relevant resources to assist learners in their exploration and discovery of knowledge. In both instances, learning is enhanced through the careful selection and use of challenging resources such as reference books, computers and concrete aids. Both processes recognise that learners are unique in that they bring to the class context a wide variety of culturally mediated experiences and different levels of potential. OBE is a learner-centred approach and focuses on the needs of the learner. Vygotsky expressed the same notion in his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learners are assisted through mediation in moving from their actual level to their potential level of development. Feuerstein expressed this fusion of experiential learning and mediation in the statement that "[t]he ultimate goal of mediated learning is to make the

child sensitive to learning through direct exposure to stimuli and to develop in the child cognitive prerequisites for such direct learning" (Kozulin and Presseisen, 1995, p.69).

Mediation and facilitation differ in their reference to the transmission of new knowledge and the role played by the teacher. Vygotsky proposed that concepts should initially be mediated to the learner by a more knowledgeable other, after the attribution of meaning, these concepts are internalised, consolidated and later recalled during independent problem solving. The role of the teacher is to assist learners through the mediation of abstract, scientific concepts during formal education. Facilitation proposes that the role of the teacher is to guide and support learners during the learning experience, but should not transmit knowledge as learners must discover this through their exploration of stimuli. OBE recognises the teacher as a flexible resource in the classroom who must be available to the learners in their quest for knowledge. Can teachers as flexible resources then not be regarded as mediators of knowledge?

Both facilitation and mediation aim to assist learners in realising their maximum potential so that one day they will be able to contribute to the social and economic upliftment of their community and country. The

solution to the question 'to mediate or facilitate?' is that teachers should adapt and implement their teaching style to the learners' needs and requirements and the specific nature of the lesson. Therefore, provision must be made for the incorporation of both mediation and facilitation in the implementation of OBE in South Africa.

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