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An exploration of alignment of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) with the Annual National Assessment (ANA) :how curriculum and assessment are translated into pedagogy

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An Exploration of Alignment of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) with the Annual National Assessment (ANA): How Curriculum and Assessment are translated into Pedagogy

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Wits School of Education: Research Project Submission

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DECLARATION

I Tokoloho Thato Malele (Student number 0712831r)

am a student registered for Masters in Education in the year 2019

* I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong

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Signature. T. Malele

Date**: 08 October 2019**

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I would like to thank the following people who helped me in the journey of getting this research study together, completed and submitted.

My God. The family I have, both blood and through friendship. Thank you for helping me survive this.

My supervisors Miranda Malele (in her personal capacity) and Dr Mathakga Botha.

Abstract

South Africa is a country that spends the majority of its national budget on its education system. With South African learners underachieving on internationally benchmarked tests for numeracy, literacy and science, it is clear that this spending on education has not translated into improved quality of education (Taylor, 2011). In a bid to diagnose the problems that plague the education system the South African government instated the Annual National Assessments (ANA). These assessments are standardised accountability assessments that are meant to indicate curriculum coverage deficiencies in schools. The ANAs have been met with wide resistance from teacher unions and education districts who cite technical flaws in the assessments. This study explores this claim by investigation the alignment properties between the grade 9 Annual National Assessment (ANA) English FAL test and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The study also seeks to explore how alignment properties translate into pedagogical practices by using a focus group of teachers who talk about how the Annual National Assessment's alignment properties affect their classroom practice.

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Chapter 1: Background and problematisation of the study.

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the development of the problem. It does so by first discussing the background in which both assessment and curriculum are located in the South African context, the problem statement, the rationale of the study and the critical questions that the study has responded to.

This study explores the elements of alignment between curriculum, assessment and pedagogy within the South African context. Alignment is explored by analysing government administered accountability assessments called the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), perception of teachers as regards classroom practice are also explored. The study is conducted in two phases, through document study of the Annual National Assessments and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), the second phase of the study uses results from the document study to inform focus group discussions with grade 9 English teachers.

1.2. Background

1.2.1 Curriculum Reforms in South Africa

In 1994 South Africa made history by electing its first black president and adopting a democratic constitution which geared the country towards the road of redress and reconciliation from a past characterised by racial separation and privileging white South Africans over all other races in every sphere of the economy including education (Taylor, 2009, Nakabugo and Siebörger, 2001).

The post-1994 government inherited a highly segregated and unequal county with huge gaps in wealth distribution and access to resources; the education system was no different (Misila, 2009). The Apartheid government had 11 Departments of Education each assigned to a particular racial group (Taylor, 2009). During apartheid, citizens classified as white received

access to superior education as opposed to those who were classified as non-European (Taylor, 2011). This gap in quality of education, in access to knowledge and resources and in the quality of teacher training echoed on even after the 1994 democratic election (Misila, 2009, Hoadley, Jansen, 2009).

The newly elected government walked a tight rope in developing a curriculum that was "cleansed" "of "racist and sexist elements" (Hoadley, Jansen, 2009, p.312) while also redressing past inequalities to achieve equity and equality for all South Africans (Hoadley, Jansen, 2009). The aim was to develop a curriculum which advocated redress, while also producing learners that would compete in an increasingly globalising job market (Hoadley, Jansen, 2009 p. 312). The government had to take into account the inequalities that characterised the country, creating a single education department that would cater for all schools and a curriculum that would also close the gap between the previously advantaged and previously disadvantaged communities (Misila, 2009; Hoadley, Jansen, 2009).

In its struggle towards a curriculum that meets these expectations democratic South Africa has gone through three major curriculum reforms (Chisholm in Hoadley, Jansen, 2009; Nakabugo & Siebörger, 2001). Curriculum 2005 (C2005), was first implemented in 1998 in the Foundation Phase and later in the General Education and Training phase. This curriculum was widely referred to as Outcomes Based Education (OBE); it fostered integration among disciplines, a pedagogy that centred around learners' needs and learning standards that were thematically grouped (Hoadley, Jansen, 2009, DBE, 2011). Curriculum 2005 was widely criticised for its lack of progression, non-specific outcomes which were too many and its weakening of discipline-specific skills and knowledge (Hoadley, Jansen, 2009; Nakabugo & Siebörger, 2001). A commission was set up to conduct a review of C2005; the result was a second curriculum review, the Reviewed National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) that was implemented in 2002.

According the Department of Education, the RNCS had fewer outcomes and clearer content differentiation for learning areas that were integrated and phase specific outcomes that promised an element of progression between phases (Hoadley, Jansen, 2009; Nakabugo &

Siebörger, 2001). But still, the Revised National Curriculum came under fire when South African learners performed particularly badly in multiple international literacy and numeracy tests, those being the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) and The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). South African learners performed well below African countries that displayed a similar economic landscape (Taylor, 2011). With the damning results ranking South African learners as one of the worst performing countries to participate in these internationally benchmarked assessments, the government; in hopes of improving results, carried out yet another revision of the curriculum (Taylor, 2009).

The revision of the RNCS led to the instating of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), a curriculum that South Africa is currently using at the time when this study was conducted. CAPS use prescriptive guidelines; unlike C2005 and the RNCS, it explicitly outlines content coverage (bi-weekly expectations) and time allocation for each subject content required for the grade (DBE, 2011). By setting out content and giving time guidelines, the government hoped to enable all teachers to access content specifications and in this way give teachers tools to enable learners to access the necessary knowledge to acquire numeracy and literacy skills; that would make them internationally competitive in tests such as the PIRLS, the TIMMS and SACMEQ (Taylor, 2009).

1.2.2 Assessment development in South Africa

The Annual National Assessments (ANAs) were introduced as a tool to help the government monitor content acquisition in schools for gateway skills; namely, literacy and numeracy. In the Senior Phase, the tests monitored acquisition in English Home Language, English First Additional Language and in Mathematics (Taylor, 2009; Nakabugo & Siebörger, 2001). Results from the PIRLS, the TIMMS and SACMEQ saw South African learners repeatedly out performed by countries that faced steeper economic challenges. This prompted the government to introduce the Annual National Assessments as a way of diagnosing challenges faced by schools, teachers, learners and districts (Spaull, 2013; Dhlamini, 2016). Spaull (2013) describes the ANAs as "one of the most important policy developments in the last 10 years." (p.3), stating that the government's attempt at creating a standardised assessment to provide

diagnostic information could potentially assist in remedying challenges faced by South African schools and is an amicable driving principle for the implementation of the ANAs.

The Department of Basic Education put forward 4 primary objectives for implementing the ANAs:

(1) to provide examples of assessment standards and methods;
(2) to provide better-targeted district support;
(3) to provide evaluation of school performance; and
(4) to provide support to school governing bodies, principals, teachers and parents.

(DBE, 2011, p 32)

While the government had best intentions, the ANAs were boycotted by teacher unions, in fact by the third year of their administration, many South African schools refused to participate in writing them (SADTU, 2014; Taylor and Spaull, 2012). Teacher unions claimed that the ANAs were not standardised, were not aligned with the curriculum and the frequency in their administration meant teachers were not given time to improve instruction based on these results (SADTU, 2014; Taylor and Spaull, 2012). Ultimately the Unions claimed that the results from the ANAs were not valid and were an unfair judgement on both teacher and learner efforts (SADTU, 2014; Taylor and Spaull, 2012).

This study explored the link between the design of the ANAs and the expected competencies laid out in the CAPS curriculum, concentrating particularly on the alignment between the two documents (Taylor and Spaull, 2012). One of the reasons motivating the researcher to conduct the study is the fact that South African education system is a novice with standardised testing for accountability. These standardised tests have been met with resistance mainly from teachers and teacher unions and the reasons advances amongst others was the usefulness of the standardised test to improve pedagogical practise and overall learner performance.

Although the ANAs were boycotted and are no longer written in schools, standardised testing for accountability does not seem to have come to an end in South African schools. The JET

education service, a non-profit, government funded organisation, has been working with past ANA results and creating standardised assessments for accountability to administer to private institutions as a way of monitoring and evaluating the overall numeracy and literacy performance of private schools (https://www.jet.org.za; 28/03/2019).

1.3 Statement of the problem

South Africa has gone through a number of attempts at transforming its curriculum while in the same breath pushing for improved learner performance (Hoadley, Jansen, 2009; Nakabugo & Siebörger, 2001). International standardised assessments signalled to the government and education stakeholders at large that there were real gaps in the education system (Dhlamini, 2016). The Department of Basic Education not only revised the curriculum from RNCS to CAPS, they also instated the first South African-designed standardised accountability assessments to be administered to track curriculum coverage before learners write their exit exam (van der Berg, 2015).

With the Annual National Assessments being boycotted by teacher unions, as the unions question the technical make-up of the assessment, the problem statement of this study stems from these debates and tensions. The problem statement is: Technical flaws in the alignment properties of the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and the Curriculum Assessment Statement Policy (CAPS) make it difficult for teachers to base classroom improvement practices from the data received from ANA results.

As previously mentioned, assessment theory is wide, and there are many elements to consider when designing and administrating assessment, this study looked specifically at alignment of standardised assessment for accountability. The study used the ANAs, the first nationwide attempt at standardised assessment for accountability in South Africa, to explore how alignment in such assessments affects pedagogical practice (Spaull, 2015; Dhlamini, 2016).

This study sought to make contributions to existing research that explores Standardised Assessment for Accountability, especially such research that is focused on the South African context of assessment. It explored the alignment properties between the ANAs and the CAPS curriculum and pedagogical practice by exploring teacher perception.

1.4 Rationale

There are two reasons for conducting the study. These reasons are highlighted below:

Firstly, the study sought to explore how alignment theories and studies could be used to strengthen assessment practice in the South African context. The study looked at alignment studies carried out in the United States of America (USA), where standardised assessment for accountability are widely used after the "No Child Left Behind" drive during the Gorge Bush administration (Webb, 2007; Achieve, Inc., 2006). As previously stated, standardised assessment for diagnostic purposes is a fairly new introduction to democratic South Africa's education system. An analysis of alignment contributes to the literature discussions on how the design of standardised assessments for accountability can be strengthened to ensure that the data obtained from these assessments can be used to inform pedagogical practice.

Secondly, the study sought to explore the depth of the tensions that exists around the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and their validity. Teachers and their unions have voiced their disdain against the ANAs, going so far as to boycott administering them (SADTU, 2014). This study explored individual teacher voices and got them to speak specifically about how the ANAs are, or are not, aligned to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and classroom practice. In doing this, the study has added to the literature, discussion and historical comment on the progression of assessment practice within the South African context.

1.5 Critical Questions

The main question for this study was

How do technical properties of alignment within the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and the Curriculum Assessment Statement Policy (CAPS) affect pedagogical practices within the classroom.

The following are sub-questions were explored:

- What criteria and properties could be identified to assess the alignment between Grade 9 English First Additional Language ANA documents and the Grade 9 English First Additional Language CAPS curriculum?
- How did teachers perceive the extent of alignment between the Annual National Assessment to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement using alignment properties proposed by the researcher?
- How did the teachers' perception of Alignment between the Annual National Assessments and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement inform their pedagogical practice?

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

If assessment was an isolated practice, one that is neutral and objective, studying and executing it would be simple and all that would need to be considered would be the technicalities of the process. Education stakeholders would simply decide whether the assessment has the technical ability to be valid, reliable and credible (Gipps, 1999; Linn, Miller, 2005) However, assessment is anything but neutral and objective, assessment is loaded with theories of psychology, sociology and of measurement (Brookhart, 2004; Gipps, 1999; Stough, Emmer, 1998). Because of these tensions, in theory and utility it is no wonder that standardised testing for accountability brings controversy to the practice of assessment. The literature review explored, among other things, what literature says about accountability assessment theory in different contexts and looked at how literature in different contexts applies to the Annual National Assessments within the South African context.

2.2 Assessment for Accountability

Standardised tests for accountability are characterised by centralised design and administration, geared mainly towards holding teachers, schools and districts accountable to the government for learners meeting pre-determined performance standards usually set out in a curriculum (Graue, Johnson,2011; Taylor, 2009; Dhlamini, 2016). Results generated from standardised accountability assessments are often used to bring educational reform to schools and to encourage classroom practice to be "guided by a measure" (Graue, Johnson, 2011: 1830), the measure being the assessment tool given to learners.

Standardised Assessments for accountability have widely been reported as having negative effects on teaching and learning, they have also been synonymous with bringing up negative feelings in both teachers and learners (Smith, 1991; Steinberg, 2008). However, there has been a global move towards this practice as a means of ensuring that schools can account for learners meeting curriculum standards (Graue, Johnson, 2011, Hoadley, Muller, 2015). The ANAs were a move towards such regulation in South African schools (Hoadley, Muller, 2015). Studies seem to be polarised in addressing the possibility of tests such as the ANAs being used

for learning purposes. Studies either assert that no real learning can happen in classrooms that suffer the imposition of standardised tests while other literature attempts to illustrate how improved marks can mean improved learning (Hoadley, Muller, 2015).

Teachers' perceptions of the implication of assessment play a role in the attitude that they carry towards the assessment. Low-stake accountability assessments tend to have teachers being internally motivated, by self, the school or teaching team to reach the standards set by the assessment (Graue, Johnson, 2011). Low-stake assessments carry reduced pressure for teachers because the consequences that result from learners' achievements become a means for teachers' end, results are not used to impose any external actions on the classroom or the school (Graue, Johnson, 2011). High-stake accountability testing, on the other hand, is tied to publication of results outside of the schools' walls, consequences that have to do with government-based monitoring or "sanctions" (pg. 1833). These consequences are often viewed by teachers to be high pressure and influence teachers, learners and school management differently (Graue, Johnson, 2011; Dhlamini, 2016).

The results of high-stake testing for accountability in the classroom has been said to find teachers opting out of teaching concepts that may not be in the test in favour of content that was assessed (Smith,1991; Graue, Johnson, 2011Steinberg,2008; Smith 1991). Teachers tend to teach concepts in isolation as unrelated facts that can be regurgitated during the assessment (Dhlamini. 2016). In a study carried out by Gaud and Johnson (2011) in elementary schools in the USA, the researchers noted that time spent on subjects such as social sciences were given considerably less class time than numeracy and literacy, subjects that were the focus of standardised assessment for accountability. This "narrowing" (Smith, 1991:10) of the curriculum has been a major criticism of these assessments.

High –stake assessment for accountability have also been flagged for narrowing the gate of success offered to learners (Graue and Johnson, 2011). Graue and Johnson (2011) note that the pressure on teachers to produce results pushes them to concentrate on "the middle bubble" (pg. 1844); meaning the bubble of learners who are performing below the standards set by the assessment for accountability, but who (if given support) would most likely eventually meet

the requirement. This works out well for the middle bubble as the assessment for accountability allows teachers to push learning (or at least achievement) (Graue and Johnson, 2011). However, the learners who are well below the achievement bar, below the middle bubble, are ignored or not offered enough support as they would inevitably not succeed. Teachers find investing energy in the middle bubble would make it a more worthwhile and indeed a rewarding outcome (Graue and Johnson, 2011; Smith, 1991). Implications are that assessment for accountability, such as the ANAs, might not necessarily serve every learner. Graue and Johnson (2011) speak of schools that have been able to use assessment for accountability to their advantage; labelling the use as "just right" (2011:1848). Their study says two elements are pivotal to the successful use of assessment for accountability "alignment and capacity building" (1830).

Indeed, South African corporate has embraced the move towards using Standardised Assessments for Accountability as a way of reforming schools (Deacon, 2016). The JET (Joint Education Trust) education service, as a way to account for context, carry out standardised assessments for accountability, pairing them school visits and classroom observations, this was assessment is not simply taken as the only tool to diagnose school performance, other factors, such as classroom practice and general socio-economic context of students taking the JET assessments form part of the whole report (www.jet.org.za; 12 November 2019). Affluent private schools around South Africa have signed up to be placed under monitoring by JET with results shared similarly to the ANAs and schools being ranked against each other for performance (Deacon, 2016). The results of these assessments are used by schools as a way of informing reform. The use of Standardised assessment for accountability seems to be used and viewed in a positive light by some stake holders in the education system.

This study, however, was interested in the term "alignment" as Graue and Johnson (2011) put it. They argue that schools that have been given the ability and capacity to adapt the curriculum to align with assessment expectations are schools that have fared well in accountability assessments (Graue and Johnson, 2011). They speak of alignment not simply from technical alignment, they elude to the need of alignment between "the classroom, with the school and its management team, with the district and standards set and practices accepted there, with the National education system" (pg. 1848 1). Without such alignment, they argue, assessment for

accountability carried out in schools would be disjointed from classroom practice, leaving teachers and learners with negative feelings from pressure exerted by both district and school management. Leading to such ills as narrowing curriculum, cheating etc. This is not so different to Gipps's (1999) assertion that assessment, curriculum and pedagogy are strongly linked, Steinberg (2013) goes on to claim that assessment drives curriculum coverage and pedagogical practice.

2.3 Assessment as a socio-cultural act

As curriculum continues to change, so has been the demand on assessment practices to change. Graude and Johnson (2011) talk about assessment for accountability that allows teachers to account for their actions in the classroom and help track learning and curriculum coverage. There have been many theorists that have disagreed fundamentally with the use of government set assessment to account for learning, citing that assessment is a subjective measure and can often be used (by the government) as a form of control over classrooms and as a way of marginalising certain groups (Shepard,2000;Spaull, 2015, Gipps, 1999). These theorists claim that to use assessment as a means of accountability is to ignore the fact that assessment is an expression of what knowledge is valued in a community or a country. And to ignore that the knowledge that is valued (assessed) is often knowledge that favours the population in power (Gipps, 1999).

South Africa's history makes it easy to decipher who the population in power were and which was marginalised (Taylor, 2012). A little over 40 years of legalised marginalisation of non-white South Africans meant that assessments often favoured the white population. The change towards a democratic South Africa might not have changed that (Spaull and Taylor, 2012; Spaull, 2015). Democratic South Africa has 11 official languages which, as a move to offer home language for all Grade 1 – 3 learners in the education system, has meant that learners in the system have varying choices in their language of teaching and learning (Dhlamini, 2016).

However, assessment practices in South Africa are still largely based on the white minority (Gipps, 1999; Spaull, 2015). And so often what is being assessed, the knowledge that is being

valued might not be readily accessible to the non-white majority of the country (Dhlamini,2016). This is what it means to look at Assessment as a socio-cultural script it is to acknowledge that assessment has the ability to favour a certain group and that bad results in assessments may also be clue to the socio-script/ knowledge valued by the assessment administered (Gipps,1999; Shepard, 2000).

The concept of assessment as a social construct matters to this study of alignment because alignment fundamentally influences the validity of the results of any assessment (Audre and Stephen, 2009; Messick, 1995). Graue and Johnson (2011) define alignment as assessment aligning with classroom practice and Gipps (1999) reiterates that classrooms are meeting boards where learners with different social backgrounds meet. The point being made here is that, while the technical alignment of the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) with the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement can be explored, living in a country that is fighting a long history of segregation makes it impossible to ignore alignment of the standardised assessments for accountability, such as the ANAs, without looking at the socio- economic make-up of the classrooms it assesses.

2.4 Construct validity

As mentioned above validity explores the idea of whether the assessment actually assesses what it says it assesses. Messick (1995) has argued that the concept of validity goes beyond the technical question of testing, it also covers the validity of the actions that are implemented based on test scores. The "value of validity" (Messick. 1995, p.741) lies in the interpretation of the data that arises from test scores because these results drive classroom practice and drive the learners' learning. In high stake tests, these results can be used as the bases of individual learners 'making decisions about their own futures or the system imposing decisions on learners about their future (Gipps, 1999). Ultimately, assessment scores are not simply dead data that gets produced by taking tests, these results have real social consequences to the learners, teachers and districts. The theory of construct validity is that validity of an assessment encompasses both social and technical validity of an assessment document (Messick, 1995).

In the case of assessment for accountability, the consequence of assessment data generated is the judgment made by government and the general public on teachers, districts and learners about their ability to demonstrate acquisition of skills set out in the curriculum (Graue and Johnson, 2011). The data generated from the ANAs has been used to put schools under labels such as "red flagged". These schools are given added pressure from the government by being given additional monitoring by government officials. Also, the ANA results of every school are publicly published with rankings (DBE, 2013). Leaving schools to justify themselves in comparison to other schools (Taylor, 2009). The ultimate consequence of the ANAs has been the use of the results to damn the whole South African public schooling system (Spaull, 2013; Smith, 1991).

2.5. ANA results used to shape DBE intervention programmes.

The ANAs spoke to the first of government's priorities, which was to improve the standards of basic education in South Africa (DBE, 2011). Government was hoping to use results collected from the ANAs to implement "assessment driven reform" (Graue and Johnson, 2011, 1830) a key characteristic of assessment for accountability.

South Africa is fairly new to the concept of standardised testing for accountability (Hoadley and Muller, 2015). Besides the final matric exam written nationally for the purpose of certification and selection into vocational paths, School Based Assessments (SBAs) were the first attempt towards assessment for accountability within the post-Apartheid education system (Taylor, 2004). School Based Assessments, however were not entirely standardised, as schools were given the control to set certain assessments using guidelines given by the government (Taylor, 2004). The point of the SBAs was to be a formative measure of Grade 12 learner competencies.

The ANAs are the first attempt by the South African government to implement standardised accountability testing that runs nationally (Hoadley and Muller, 2015; Spaull 2013). First implemented in 2010 for Grade 3 and 6 learners; in 2011 it was extended to include Grade 9 learners (DBE, 2010), learners wrote the same assessment; one that was centrally designed and

administered by the government which, one could argue, makes it a standardised assessment (Hoadley and Muller, 2015).

The ANAs concentrated on what government titles 'gateway' subjects, namely language (English) and numeracy (Mathematics) because these would allow learners global economic access (DBE, 2011; Hoadley and Muller, 2015). The target was that by the year 2014, 60% of Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9 learners would be performing at "an acceptable level in language and mathematic" (DBE, 2011, p.9). The word acceptable alluded to South African learners' low performance on international tests, having scored the least in a literacy study that spanned 45 countries called the Progress in International Reading literacy study 2006 (Taylor, 2009; Howie and Venter, 2006). The ANAs would be a tool to judge how far these competency goals were reached in schools and identify schools in need of support while celebrating those that produced good results.

Although achievement goals have not been met, government has used ANA results to help shape and execute intervention programmes (DBE, 2014). The Certificate in Primary English Language Teaching (CiPELT) and the Certificate in Senior English Language Teaching (CiSELT) are teacher training programmes with the aim to equip primary school and senior phase teachers with the skills needed to effectively teach reading and writing to learners (DBE, 2014). The Dinaledi and Technology School's Grant is a subsidy programme that identifies schools in need of resources and other infrastructure improvements to ultimately help foster a good teaching and learning environment (DBE, 2014). There have been other intervention programmes aimed at assisting maths teachers in aligning the ANA assessment with the curriculum (for example, the *How I learn* project), English language acquisition workshops have been put in place and financial support to schools that have been flagged through the ANA administration process have received funds to help meet the resource deficiency experienced by them (DBE, 2014).

2.6. Criticisms about the ANAs

ANAs have been met with apprehension from teachers, voiced by the trade unions that represent them (Spaull, 2013; Taylor, 2011). The year 2015 saw teacher unions boycotting the

ANAs demanding that government redesigns the assessment documents and revisit the frequency in which the assessments are carried out (SADTU, 2014). In the year 2014 ANA results have not satisfied the 60% target of acceptable competency as outlined by government with Grade 9 mathematics learners scoring 13%, 14% and 11% in 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively. English Home language learners scoring 43%, 43% and 45% in 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively, and English First Additional language learners scoring 35%, 33% and 34% in 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively (DBE, 2014).

These results could be used to inform pedagogy and help classroom practice except ANA's ability to yield comparative data has been strongly criticised (Spaull, 2015). As a tool to account the ANAs have been administered in schools to check curriculum coverage and to help diagnose classroom competences/deficiencies in delivering the curriculum. The reports following administration track improvements in achievement through the years as a signal of improvement of learner performance and therefore improvement in classroom-based curriculum coverage (DoE, 2011; 2012). However, Spaull (2015) and teachers' unions (SADTU, 2015) have argued against the validity of tracking these increased marks and interpreting them as improved performance. Citing that the nature of questioning styles changes so dramatically through the years that it diminishes the comparative element of the tests.

According to Spaull (2015) ANA assessments are not standardised and have been prone to change in questioning style, in structure and in difficulty. Each year's assessment differs from the previous years' assessment which means the data yielded from each year cannot be compared. A study of 25 primary school maths teachers' perception of ANAs expresses their experiences of the ANAs, in this study teachers communicate experiencing anxiety because of the lack of surety about expected difficulty or question structure and design of the assessment (Olusola and Luneta; 2015).

The first section of the literature review spoke about common criticisms that come with assessment for accountability, including the potential of narrowed curriculum and exclusion of certain learners within the learning space (Graue and Johnson, 2011). A discussion with

primary school maths teachers about the ANAs seemed to echo similar sentiments, although teachers, unions and many academics have expressed the need for an assessment like the ANAs these stakeholders also believe that the implementation and the design of the ANAs were flawed (Olusola and Luneta; 2015). South African teachers hold the perception that the content assessed within the ANA paper was large and the three terms given to prepare learners for the ANAs is not enough time to cover the content needed for success with the assessment (Olusola and Luneta, 2015; Dhlamini, 2016). The result of this perception is the narrowing of curriculum to teach to the test as teachers spend the months leading up to the ANAs preparing learners for success.

Spaull (2015) and Dhlamini (2016) have also cited the linguistic complexities that exist within the ANA questions, the complexities are said to make the assessment particularly difficult for learners. Primary school teachers in the study also hold this view as they feel that the assessment is set at a cognitively high level for learners; making it inaccessible to learners who are particularly weak (Olusola and Luneta, 2015). The study of alignment becomes useful as alignment seeks to explore whether what is being assessed in the ANAs is what is in the curriculum, and whether assessment is pitched at an appropriate level for learners as informed by the curriculum (Webb, 2007; Achieve, Inc., 2006).

Discussions about the failures of the ANAs also speak of the misalignment in language use between the classroom and language used in the ANA tests (Dhlamini,2016). Dhlamini (2016) conducted a study of primary schools in South African townships, where teachers complained that the assessments written in languages such as isiZulu, used incorrect terminology which teachers did not use in classroom instructions (Dhlamini,2016). In Olusola and Luneta (2015) teachers allude to the ANA using terms that students are not familiar with and Spaull (2015) speaks of language complexities that are cited by teachers as making the ANAs particularly difficult for students to succeed. Issues of language are issues of socio-cultural capital (Gipps, 1999).

As explained earlier validity in this study looked at whether the assessment assesses what it says it assesses and, to include Missiks's (1995) definition, if the consequences or action that

comes because of the assessment results is justified. We have already discussed how misalignment in curriculum expectation and expected competencies assessed in the ANAs could invalidate the data, that is, if what is being assessed is larger and/or more cognitively demanding than what is meant to be taught (Webb, 2007). If this is the case, the pressure that underperforming schools receive because of their ANA results might be unjustified, and in fact it may do schools that are already socio-economically disadvantaged more harm than good (Spaull, 2015).

If the assessment is misaligned, the implications are the ailing results might not mean bad curriculum coverage, however, the assessment sets these schools to have low expectations because they never really feel prepared, and this low expectation feeds into a vicious cycle where schools and teachers live up to a self-fulfilling prophecy of low performance (Olusola and Luneta, 2015; Spaull, 2013; Spaull and Taylor, 2012). Since schools' results are public knowledge and often the teachers in the schools are held to account, this brings negative feelings towards these assessments and this may ultimately prove to demotivate teachers (Dhlamini, 2016; Smith, 1991). Especially when no evidence of planning based on results has been evident after the ANAs have been administered (Spaull, 2013; Spaull and Taylor, 2012).

2.7. Conclude this Literature review

The literature review thus far has looked at popular themes that come up when academics, worldwide, discuss issues of standardised accountability assessment. As mentioned before, the Annual National Assessments are an example of assessment for accountability within the South African context. This section explored the purpose and design of the Annual National Assessment while looking at arguments given by literature within South Africa - namely, ANA's property as a standardised assessment for accountability; ANA as a socio-cultural script, and ANA's validity as a standardised assessment for accountability as argued in the above literature review section of this document. The other question explored in the literature review is, how does alignment affect the validity of standardised assessment for accountability? Spaull (2015) and other reviews (Taylor, 2011; Dhlamini, 2016; Spaull and Taylor, 2012). The DBE has attempted to use the ANA results to inform various intervention, what the critiques are pointing out is the extent to which these results are useful to inform interventions, this, they

point out, might be problematic given the comparability of scores across schools and also within one school over the three-year period and ANA implementation in the country.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework that this study uses is that assessment, pedagogy and curriculum are inter-twined (Gipps, 1999; Shepard, 2000). Meaning that whether assessment is used for: selection, learning or accountability, its use affects or be affected by the design of the curriculum and this has direct influence on the type of instruction carried out in the classroom (Gipps, 1999; Shepard,2000). This conceptual framework is premised on Shepard's (2000) notion that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are intertwined and need to be aligned. Assessment of alignment is informed by Webb (2007) and Archie, Inc's (2009) analytical model of assessing alignment between curriculum and standardised assessment for accountability. According to Martone and Sereci (2009), Alignment research uses a number of methodologies, specifically geared towards the type and purpose of assessment. Webb (2009) and Achieve Inc (2007) analytical model is appropriate as it is specifically geared towards standardised assessment for accountability, which is the purpose of the Annual National Assessments (Martone and Sireci, 2009).

3.2 Alignment

According to Webb (2007) alignment can be defined as: *''The degree to which* ***expectations*** *and* ***assessments*** *are* ***in agreement*** *and* ***serve in conjunction*** *with one another to* ***guide the system*** *toward learners learning what they are expected to know and do"* (Webb, 2007, p.4).

In essence alignment is defined as the extent to which assessment assesses the competencies laid out in the curriculum and how both assessment and curriculum inform pedagogical practices in guiding teaching and learning towards these learning expectations.

Both Webb (2007) and Achieve, Inc. (2006) methods are focused on a large number of assessments judging alignment with curriculum across different states (in the United States) (Webb, 2007; Martone and Sireci, 2009). With the move towards the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 the United States took to investigating how best to assess learners and eliminate

technical flaws in assessments so as not to disadvantage the learners being assessed. (Webb, 2007). Part of this move was a marked interest in ensuring alignment between the government curriculum and the assessment documents (Webb, 2007; Achieve, Inc. 2006).

According to Shepard (2000) and Gipps (1999) when studying alignment between assessment and curriculum, instruction (or pedagogy) must be considered. They argue, much like the above definition of curriculum, that what is being assessed must match with the subject matter that is outlined in the curriculum. However, they add that alignment must also "…connect assessment to ongoing instruction." (page number). Essentially arguing that learning is a social process and that to measure alignment we must consider alignment between assessment, curriculum and pedagogy. And so, in this study when talking about alignment wee do so locating the connection between assessment, curriculum and pedagogy.

3.2.1 Webb (2007)

Webb (2007) uses six dimensions to analyse assessment alignment with curriculum, namely: *categorical concurrence, depth of knowledge, range of knowledge, balance of representation, structure of knowledge* and *dispositional consonance*. However, in Webb (2007) he bases his research on the first four of the six listed above; to follow in his direction this study also narrows down the scope and uses two of the categories, namely: *Depth of Knowledge and Categorical Concurrence* (Martone and Sireci, 2009).

Categorical concurrence is the review of whether the standards outlined in the curriculum and the items assessed in the assessment document both "address the same content category" (Webb, 2007, p. 10). This dimension is tied to the idea of validity (Martone and Sireci, 2009; Missik, 1995). It is a general assessment on whether the assessment sets out to test the content that is outlined in the curriculum, that is; does the assessment assess what it says it will (Missik, 1995). Using the reviewers Webb (2007) goes through the assessment and matches the items in the assessment document with the items set in the curriculum document (Webb, 2007; Martone and Sireci, 2009). Alignment is judged based on whether the items being assessed in the standardised assessment are found in the curriculum document.

Depth of Knowledge. This dimension compares the cognitive demand of the assessment items to the cognitive expectations set out by the curriculum (Webb, 2007; Martone and Sireci, 2009). Achieve, Inc. (2006) uses a useful technique of matching verbs used in the curriculum with verbs used in the assessment items (Achieve, Inc., 2006, Webb, 2007). There are four levels of cognitive demand or levels of depth, that Webb (2007) outlines. Level 1 being the shallowest level of depth (cognitive demand) and level 4 being the deepest (Webb, 2007). This study has used the cognitive levels set out in the CAPS curriculum, which sets out 5 levels of cognitive demand, having the first level as the least cognitively demanding and the 5th as the most (DBE, 2011).

Webb's (2007) alignment methodology is characterised by a quantitative judgment of alignment (Webb, 2007; Martone and Sireci, 2009). Where five to eight reviews (experts in the subject field) are trained to identify alignment properties (based on the dimensions mentioned above) and provide "hits" (Webb, 2007, 10) when they identify alignment in a particular dimension (Webb, 2007; Martone and Sireci, 2009). These hits are averaged out according to dimensions and a minimal requirement for the number of hits is set, this is what is used to render an assessment aligned to curriculum standards or not (Webb, 2007; Martone and Sireci, 2009).

3.2.2 Achieve, Inc. (2006)

Achieve, Inc. (2006) uses an alignment methodology that is characterised by a qualitative approach, unlike Webb (2007), Achieve, Inc.'s (2006) approach does not make a numerical judgment on whether or not the assessment documents meet the minimal requirement of alignment. Instead the methodology is based on a number of subject experts looking through different domains of alignment (as set out by Achieve, Inc. (2006)). Rating the assessment items according to these categories, but the marked difference is that these ratings are paired with extensive discussions by the reviewing team. What Achieve, Inc. (2006) presents after the study is a qualitative outline of the discussions by the reviewing team, giving a descriptive interpretation of alignment rather than a quantitative judgment of alignment.

Achieve, Inc. (2006) goes through this process using five categories: *Content Centrality, performance centrality, source of challenge* and, *balance and range*. This research study has largely used Webb's (2007) dimensions instead of Achieve, Inc. (2006) with the exception of two dimensions namely *Centrality of content and source of challenge*.

Centrality of Content speaks to the concept of an assessment "blue print" (Achieve, Inc., 2001, 60). The Achieve, Inc. (2006) process goes through a two-stage review of assessment items. The first stage looks at the assessment "blue print" as given by the government. The blue print outlines the intended direction of the assessment. This blue print is much like what South Africa calls an assessment scope or assessment guideline (DBE, 2012). In the case of the ANAs the blue print used are the ANA guidelines given to teachers in preparation for the ANAs.

Source of challenge speaks to those items that pose a source of challenge to the learners attempting to respond to them. These are assessment items that may be difficult to understand or those that may require prior knowledge where the assessment isn't meant to assess prior knowledge or those that may require a skill that may not be necessarily available to all learners writing the assessment (Achieve, Inc., 2006). Achieve, Inc. (2006) allows reviewers to pick these out and illuminate these items from the assessment.

This conceptual framework uses 5 dimensions, that is, categorical *concurrence*, and *depth of knowledge* ss categorised Webb (2007) and *centrality of content* and *source of challenge as stated by* Achieve Inc., (2006), *and pedagogical practice as mentioned by Shepperd (2000).* The five dimensions are used to assess alignment between the Annual National Assessments Grade 9 English First Additional Language assessment document and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement Grade 9 English First Additional Language curriculum. Webb (2007) and Achieve, Inc (2006) analytical models are based on the American curriculum as their reference to analysing alignment and not all of the dimension identified in their models could be sued. Only two out of the six dimensions are used from Webb's analytical model and only two form Archiev Inc (2006), the dimensions chosen from the two authors for this study

can be easily tabulated using the CAPS document and the Annual National Assessment tests. The context and structure of the CAPS curriculum dictated that the analytical model be adapted and 5 dimensions are used in the conceptual framework.

3.3 Conclusion

The conceptual framework or model used to assess the alignment between CAPS and the ANAs is based on Webb (2007) and Achieve, Inc (2006), as this analytical model is appropriate for assessing the alignment of standardised assessment for accountability. The model uses five dimensions, this is, *categorical concurrence*, *depth of knowledge* categorised Webb (2007) and *centrality of content* and *source of challenge as stated by* Achieve Inc., (2006) The establishment of alignment properties *between assessment and curriculum* is important in informing discussions about *pedagogical practices in classrooms*. This is as stated by Shepperd (2000), this is used as the fifth dimension of the conceptual framework in analysing teacher perception of alignment. This model has been adapted to suite the South African assessment and curriculum policy documents and ease of analysis of these policy documents.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This is a qualitative research study which has taken place in two phases, the first phase being a document study of the Grade 9 English First Additional Language (FAL) Annual National Assessment (ANAs) tests for the year 2012. The document study explored elements of alignment between the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE,2011). And Phase two used results of the document analysis to guide focus group discussions with teachers so as to probe how their perception of alignment shapes their instructional practice especially during the ANA assessment period.

4.2. Research design

4.2.1. Qualitative research

The study used a qualitative approach choosing to give descriptive analysis of the ANA and CAPS documents and the data collected from the focus group (Maxwell, 2005). Using numerical representation (or a quantitative approach) would be limiting seeing that the document study was done by one person and the validity of a single number would be a representation of the subjective judgement of the researcher and not necessarily the alignment properties of the assessment (Maxwell, 2005; Muijs 2011). A qualitative study is one that uses concepts, theories or offers up descriptions of the object or incident being studied (Maxwell, 2005; Astalin, 2013). In this instance the concept being studied is alignment and the descriptions given on alignment properties are displayed in a document study between the Annual National Assessments and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. Further discussions on alignment were collected by using a focus group of four teachers' discussion their perception of alignment of these two documents.

There are different types of qualitative approaches, this particular study uses a case study design in exploring alignment (Astalin, 2013). "Case studies are analysis of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods." (Astalin, 2013, 122). This study has looked at standardised

assessment practices for accountability focusing on the case of the Annual National Assessments as used in the South African context. The exploration of alignment used a document study and a focus group discussion with four English Grade 9 FAL teachers that was centred around the teachers' perception of the documents' alignment and how that translates in the classroom. Also, a descriptive approach allows for further discussion and dispute on the results and opens the study to further probing allowing for other validity methods to be employed by future researchers (Bowen, 2009).

The first phase was geared towards establishing the extent to which the Annual National Assessment are technically aligned to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Using Webb's (2007.) and Achieve, Inc.'s (2006) framework of alignment. To establish the alignment properties, the study used a document analysis. A document analysis is defined as an exploration of archives, policies or any physical document that is explored with the intention of creating meaning (Maxwell, 2005). This study began with a document study for two reasons, the first was to establish an initial frame of alignment from which a discussion with teachers can stem. The second reason was to have the researcher familiarise herself with both documents to ensure effective facilitation of the teacher discussion.

Following the document analysis, the study used a focus group, as modelled in the Achieve, Inc. (2006), where exploration of alignment is based on discussions from specialists. The dimensions spoken about in the conceptual framework were used to guide the focus group discussions see **Appendix B** (Bowen, 2009; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). A focus group is a form of group interview where a group is selected to speak about a specify topic as provided by a facilitator or the researcher (Maxwell, 2005; Muijs 2011). The value of a focus group is that the researcher can solicit information from participants that a direct interview might not have been able to yield, especially when participants speak about a concept that may be abstract (Maxwell, 2005; Muijs 2011). A focus group also yields a lot more data to be documented in a shorter space of time but also because of this vast data focus groups are often used in conjunction with other data collection tools to allow for a narrowing or triangulation of data (Maxwell, 2005; Muijs 2011). Using the focus group as a method a tool made sense for this study as teachers could have an in-depth discussion about issues of alignment within the ANA tests. The document study was a long one that would be time consuming if teachers were

asked to do it individually, however as a focus group the researcher was able to solicited some in-depth insights as the teachers went through the document.

A document study alone has the limitation of giving a subject view of the documents analysed tainting the analysis with potential biases from the researcher (Maxwell, 2005; Muijs 2011). Using a focus groups by giving a semi-structured format to the questioning allowed the researcher to have varying perspectives on the document's researcher (MAXWELL, 2005; MUIJS 2011). Thus the qualitative nature of this approach is that teacher and researcher are brought in close proximity (as with the documents) and the researcher can illicit as much information as required from the focus group participants in order to triangulate information from the teacher with information from the document analysis (Bowen, 2009; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

4.2.2. Sampling

A focus group of four Grade 9 English First Additional Language (FAL) teachers was held with discussions centred around the categories of alignment that were explored in the document analysis. The focus group explored teachers' experiences, feelings and perceptions of alignment issues between the ANA tests and the CAPS curriculum and how these affected their pedagogical practice

The sample used was purposeful because not all the English FAL teachers who take part in this once a month discussion could be used, from the group the research chose only those FAL teachers who taught Grade 9s and had experience with administering and marking the ANAs.

The study used non-probability sampling in selected the four Grade 9 English FAL teachers. Probability sampling implies that subjects were selected at random with the potential population of study having similar probability of being selected (MAXWELL, 2005; MUIJS 2011). This study used purposive non-probability sampling since the participants selected were specifically English teachers who had taught grade 9 students and had interacted with the classroom during the time when the Annual National Assessments were being conducted (MAXWELL, 2005; MUIJS 2011). Teacher 1 teaches at a public school in Soweto, a township

in the south of Johannesburg, Teacher 2 teaches in a public school in the Northern Suburbs of Johannesburg, Teacher 3 teaches at a private school in the western township of Johannesburg and Teacher 4 teaches at a school located in the Southern Suburbs of Johannesburg. The teachers were purposively chosen because of the different locations of the schools they teach in.

4.3. Ethical Consideration

As part of ethical considerations, the names of the four teachers who participated in the focus group was withheld with pseudo names used for convenience of study discussions (Lathem, 2007). The schools in which these teachers teach have not been mentioned and teachers had the option to decline taking part in the focus group or to pull out of the study if they felt uncomfortable (Lathem, 2007).

Documents used are accessible to the public and no real permission needs to be given for their use (Bowen, 2009). These documents were, and still are, accessed on the Department of Basic Education website (https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum) which is a government-based website dedicate to informing the public with education information.

4.4. Research instruments and data collection

4.4.1 Document analysis

The document analysis was used, a qualitative approach where instead of using numerical representation of alignment, the researcher used a more descriptive approach mimicking Achieve, Inc.'s (2006) model of accounting for alignment. The meaning drawn was used to inform focus group discussions with teachers as an attempt to triangulate meaning elicited from the document study (Bowen, 2009).

To review *content centrality*, a table was used where Column A listed the topics set out to be assessed by the Grade 9 English FAL ANA guidelines and Column B gave corresponding

topics set out by the CAPS curriculum. Alignment was judged by assessing if topics set out to be assessed by the guideline were found in the content topics set out in the CAPS Grade 9 English FAL CAPS curriculum. **Appendix A** shows the table used in assessing alignment in the category *content centrality.*

A table was also used to review *Categorical concurrence* (see **Appendix B**), the researcher tabulated questions that appeared in the ANAs in Column A and in Column By the corresponding items that appeared in the CAPS curriculum. The corresponding items are content items outlined by CAPS that learners need to know to respond to the questions set out in column A in the ANAs. In this instance alignment was judged by checking if questions asked in the ANAs could be matched with content set out by the CAPS Grade 9 FAL curriculum. It is important to note that the researcher only looked at term 1,2 and 3's content outline because the ANAs are written in the third term (DBE, 2011; Dhlamini, 2016)

The category *Depth of knowledge* assessed if the expected cognitive difficulty of the ANAs meet the expected cognitive difficulty outlined in the CAPS curriculum. The English FAL Grade 7 - 9 CAPS document outlines what should be used by teachers when setting assessments. The taxonomy is a 5 level one with the least cognitively challenging level being level 1 (DBE, 2011). The CAPS document gives a detailed description of the kind of questions that fall under each level. A 40:30:30 ratio of cognitive difficulty is suggested with 40 % of the assessments being level 1 and 2 questions, 30 % being level 3 questions and 30 % being level 4 & 5 questions. Alignment in this category was judged by assessing the extent to which the ANAs meet the above set out criteria of cognitive challenge. **Appendix C** shows the table used in the analysis of the category *Depth of Knowledge* Column A gives the level descriptors from the CAPS document and column B distributes the questions in the ANA tests according to the level they fall under. A percentage calculation of the % that the ANA questions make up for each level were compared with the 40:30:30 curriculum expectation (DBE, 2011).

4.4.2 Focus group discussions

Semi – structured questionnaires were used for data collection. The findings of the first phase informed the second phase design of the data collection instrument. The second phase gives some insight into how assessment and curriculum interaction is perceived in practice and how it informs pedagogy (Martone and Sireci, 2009; Dhlamini, 2016). The second phase looks specifically at how the ANA tests and their interactions with the CAPS document are perceived by a small group of teachers.

The focus group discussion was recorded and transcribed as advised by (Maxwell, 2005; Muijs 2011). The volume of data to be collected from a focus group is vast making recording an essential part of collecting data. The researcher thus used audio - recording during the focus group process and went about transcribing these recordings (see **Appendix E**).

4.5. Data analysis

Document analysis used dimensions to assess alignment in the ANA documents, these were *content centrality, categorical concurrence and depth of knowledge*. (see appendix for actual analysis) The fourth dimension, that is, source *of challenge* (Achieve, Inc. 2006; Webb, 2007) become relevant during the focus group discussion as this was explored with teachers as it affected their classroom practice.

Analysis of data happened soon after interviews with teachers. Transcripts of the focus were typed out **(Appendix E**). Content analysis was used and themes covered by the general discussion were tabulated according to the different dimensions mentioned in the document study. During the focus group additional themes came up, that were not explored in the conceptual framework, those were also tabulated under appropriate headings. Analysis was based on what the document study yielded for the researcher and how the teacher perceived those same dimensions (Bowen, 2009). Additional themes that came out were also noted as part of data analysis to yield a rich source of information for the study.

The process of triangulation means combining different modes of data collection and entering into a process of trying to make sense of them by assessing how the results speak or relate to each other (Honorene,2016). Triangulation is useful for this study because "…it does not so much integrate results that show more validity; instead, it helps give you a better understanding while you make sense of data and information" (Honorene,2016, 91). Meaning that in this case the study of The Annual National Assessments triangulation would be useful in giving more lenses from which we can view the data collected.

The focus group provided rich discussions on the issue of alignment and this meant that the researcher could go back to her own findings and triangulate the information given by the teachers with the information she had to draw out conclusions about alignment properties of the ANAs (Bowen,2009). The focus group session was recorded and the discussion transcribed and additional emerging theme analysed (**See appendix E**). The moderation schedule used to facilitate discussion was based heavily on the procedures of Alignment analysis used by the researcher.

4.6. Limitations

The limitations of the study stem from the subjective experience of the researcher having herself been a teacher that administered ANA, that there might be an element of bias in the analysis. The bias may further be enabled because of the "none-reactivity" (Bowen, 2009, p.31) of the document; the researcher may simply project her own subjective thoughts (Maxwell, 2005; Muijs 2011). In an attempt to counter the danger of biasness, the researcher chose to describe alignment in the ANAs instead of coming to a numerical judgement of it. Also, she used the teacher perception to triangulate her document analysis.

4.7. Conclusion

This is a qualitative study that has explored properties of alignment in two phases. The first phase was a document analysis where two theorists were used as the base of the analysis, namely Webb (2007) and Achieve, Inc., (2006). Alignment was explored between the Grade 9 English FAL ANA 2012 test and the CAPS curriculum for English grade 7-9 English FAL.

The document study is a descriptive study listing questions from the ANAs and corresponding content outlined from CAPS. A discussion of the findings was based on the tables listed in the Appendixes.

The outputs of the first phase was used as a guideline to facilitate a focus group discussion with four English FAL teachers. As mentioned previously South African teachers have had many grievances about the ANAs and so to avoid questions that shoot in the dark or simply collecting teachers' general complaints the first phase of analysis is used not to render a judgment of alignment but to inform a description on alignment that was later used as a guide in helping structure the focus group for teachers. This way comparison was made between meaning made by the researcher and perception of the teachers on the same issue (Bowen,2009)

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings

Two decades after South Africa obtained its new democratic government, research done by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), among others, were concerned with the inequality of the quality of education in the country. These international benchmark tests showed a South African education system with small improvements in teaching practice and student achievement since its first democratic election (Department of Education [DOE], 2007; Spaull, 2013) even though post-apartheid educational reforms in South Africa have been some of the most ambitious and diverse in the world over the past few decades (Crouch, 2004). However, reviews of policies linked to Educational Reform Development still presents weaknesses at every level of the system this contributing to the crisis in the South African schooling system (Jansen, 2002; Taylor, 2009).

Every nation has its goals which are documented in the form of a curriculum document. "The curriculum document is considered to be the road map for the attainment of the national goals" (Saeed and Rashid, 2014, p. 29 -30). If the curriculum is the road map, then assessment is the check point where students and teachers' direction is assessed. The next section of this study explores whether the Annual National Assessments (ANA) as checking tools have indeed been designed to assess the standards and directions set out in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). To do this end the researcher has undertaken a document study that explored the alignment properties of the ANAs with CAPS. The second phase of the study analysed a focus group discussion with four grade 9 English FAL teachers. The point of the focus group was to triangulate results from the document analysis with teachers' perception of alignment between the CAPS English grade 9 FAL document and the 2012 Annual National Assessment.

The teachers were given the Annual National Assessment First Additional Language grade 9 test 2012, the CAPS grade 9 curricula from term 1 -3 and the taxonomy laid out in the CAPS document that the researcher used to analyse *Depth of knowledge*. Before the beginning of the focus group the teachers were told about the categories of alignment that the facilitator

(researcher) looked at; namely; *Content centrality*, *cognitive concurrence* and lastly *Depth of Knowledge*. The focus group looked through the grade 9 ANA 2012 test and spoke about their understanding of alignment according to the headings and the documents they were given, the same documents that the researcher used to analyse alignment. The focus group discussions were centred around how the dimensions being discussed played out in the teachers' classrooms. In the analysis of the focus group two other themes became prevalent, themes that did not come up during the document analysis. These themes were added to the analysis. They are source *of challenge and alignment to classroom practice*.

Alignment is defined as "the degree to which expectations [standards] and assessments are in agreement and serve in conjunction with one another to guide the system towards students learning what they are expected to know and do". (Webb, 2007, p 4)

5.1 Discussion of Centrality of content

Before ANAs were written teachers were given what was then called the Annual National Assessment guidelines for each subject written (DBE, 2011). These guidelines laid out expected competencies that students would be assessed on as dictated by the Curriculum National Statement (CAPS). To explore centrality of content the researcher looked at the major topics given for assessment by the English First Additional Language grade 9 ANA Guidelines. These were compared with topics covered in term 1, 2 and 3 in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement for Grade 9 English First Additional Language.

Using Webb's (2007) theory of alignment, this category judges' alignment by identifying the expected competencies to be assessed with the topics covered in the curriculum. If the topics covered in the curriculum match those set out by the guideline this indicates alignment (Webb, 2007). If, however, the topic given in the guidelines do not match those set out in the CAPS curriculum this would indicate misalignment between assessment guidelines and Curriculum, which may indicate misalignment in the standardised assessment for accountability (Webb, 2007).

Table 1.1 was used to explore the alignment dimension *centrality of content*. The first column shows assessment topics indicated to be assessed by the Grade 9 English First Additional Language ANA guidelines and the second column shows the topics covered in the English First Additional Language Grade 9 English Curriculum and Assessment Statement and Policy.

Table 1.1

	Column 1: **Annual National Assessment**	**Column 2:** **Curriculum and Assessment Statement**
Learning outcomes/ Topics	"Reading and viewing"	"Reading and viewing"
	"Thinking and reasoning"	Does not appear as curriculum 'package'
	"Writing"	"writing and presenting"
	"Language structure and use"	"Language Structure and convention"
	Does not appear in ANA Outcomes	"Listening and speaking"

When analysing *centrality of content* between the ANA Grade 9 English FAL guidelines and CAPS curriculum outline, there were two noteworthy elements of misalignment: Misalignment in terminology and misalignment in topic descriptors. The discussion on centrality of content will be based on *table 1.1* above (**also see appendix A**).

The definition of alignment is given as the extent in which the standards set out in the Annual National Assessments agree with the expectations set out by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Webb, 2007, p4). The issue in terminology used in the ANA guideline signals misalignment because the terminology used is not found in the CAPS curriculum, but found in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). This means that the standards set out in the ANAs do not agree with expectations set out by the CAPS curriculum because they are not based on the CAPS curriculum. To quote a line in the RNCS: "By means of the Learning Area Statements, the Revised National Curriculum Statement identifies the goals, expectations and outcomes to be achieved through related learning outcomes and assessment

standards." (DBE, 2002, 11-12). Where the CAPS document says: "The curriculum is organised according to the following skills and content." (DBE, 2011, 10).

When the focus group was asked about the guidelines given to them in preparation for the ANAs. Teachers seemed to agree that the guidelines had hindrances in helping them prepare learners for the ANA tests. Teachers claimed that material given was not aligned with their classroom instructions. The extract below documents teacher four questioning the misalignment.

Extract 1

Teacher 4: The district provided us with district plans, resources and everything to teach; but the comprehension given was so out of context. There was a comprehension they had to do, had to be simplified because it was talking about fairies and other things that I now have to explain to my learners who are doing FAL in Thokoza what a fairy is.

Gipps (1999) speaks about assessment being a cultural script that has the ability to exclude certain learners from accessing it. In the extract above the teacher cites the ill-alignment of the guidelines with the context that the students come from. The ANA guidelines were intended to help give learners and teachers direction about what to expect in the ANA assessment, but much like the teachers in Dhlamini's (2015) study and the utterances of the unions (SADTU, 2014), the guidelines given seem to have brought teachers more uncertainty than guidance.

Furthermore, teachers spoke about the complexities in language when learners write the ANAs, claiming that learners struggled with difficult terms that were in the ANAs. These terms brought both teachers and learners frustration as they could not prepare learners for these terms in the assessment (Dhlamini, 2015). Teacher four echoes this in the discussion above.

Teachers have voiced that the ANAs bring anxiety because they (teachers) are not always sure what to expect (Spaull,2015). This misalignment in guidelines given for preparation may give clues to the confusion that teachers felt when preparing students for the ANA testing.

Misalignment in the guidelines may indicate misalignment in the assessment as these guidelines are seen as the starting point in assessment design (Achieve, Inc., 2006). In the instance that the ANAs were set based on the RNCS document and not the CAPS document, alignment is in question (Webb, 2006). This possibility has implications on the validity of results yielded by the assessment.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) is an outcomes based curriculum that was thematically organised using integration and description in setting out content to be covered in the curriculum (Taylor, 2009). Whereas the CAPS curriculum is content based, explicitly prescribing content and timing for teachers in delivering their lessons (Taylor,2009). The difference in curriculum pedagogy becomes important when we consider alignment as being more than just assessment to curriculum, but also consider alignment between assessment and classroom practice (Graue and Johnson, 2011). Teachers using the guidelines that have confused terminology are unlikely to align their instruction and classroom practice to the curriculum (CAPS), this has implications in that they might have challenges preparing learners by teaching to the test to give learners a better chance of success (Smith, 1991).

5.2 Discussion of Categorical concurrence

Categorical concurrence is the review of whether the standards outlined in the curriculum and the items assessed both "address the same content category" (Webb, 2007, p. 10). To review this the researcher looked at the questions asked in the Annual National Assessments and, using the CAPS document, attempted to find what teachers would have had to teach from the curriculum to help learners meet the expectations set in the ANAs. *Table 2*, **appendix B**, shows the tools used to review the categorical concurrence of the 2012 English FAL ANA test. The column labelled "Annual National Assessment" documents presents questions from the ANAs. The column labelled "Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement" documents curriculum

topics set out that would have to be covered to help learners answer the questions from the ANAs (DBE, 2011).

The English First Additional Language Grade 7 - 9 CAPS curriculum is divided into four skills, namely: Reading and viewing; Listening and Speaking; Writing and presenting and Language structure and conventions (DBE, 2011). Under each of these skills the curriculum outlines content meant to be covered: For example, under the skill *"Language structure and conventions"* the content outlined in the CAPS document is *"sentence level work; direct and indirect speech."* (DBE, 2011, p 115). To assess categorical concurrence, the researcher matched questions asked in the Annual National Assessment Grade 9 English First Additional Language test to the skills and content outlined in the Grade 9 First Additional Language CAPS curriculum. For example, question *"20.1) Change the following sentence into indirect speech. Begin the sentence as indicated, 'I want to protect the snakes,' said the ranger*" measures students' competency in *"sentence level work; direct and indirect speech."* As outlined in the CAPS document.

The ANA's are often administered in the third term of the school year. The analysis of categorical concurrence looked at term 1, 2 and 3's skills and content outlined in the CAPS curriculum. Analysis these three terms, the researcher found that content assessed fell under the skills outlined in the curriculum as: "Reading and Viewing", "writing and presenting" and "Langue structure and conventions." "Listening and speaking" was the only content topic that was not assessed from the CAPS curriculum, this is evident in the assessment for categorical concurrence and centrality of content.

According to the CAPS curriculum *Reading and viewing* combines two elements which are "learning and applying strategies for learning and decoding text." And "learning and applying knowledge of text futures." (DBE, 2011, 25). Questions from the ANAs that tested competencies in reading and viewing could also be linked to the content under reading and viewing. Sometimes one question could link to multiple content requirement from the CAPS document. For example: The question *"1. The author wrote the story to show"* (DBE, 2012, 3) falls under *reading and viewing* content covered being *"Skimming and scanning"* (DBE,

2011, 58) *"independent reading"* (p59) and *"making inferences"* (p. 62). An example of questions that required learners to apply knowledge of different texts was "*10. 'The sea is a hungry dog' (line 1) is an example of..."* under the skill Reading and viewing, the specified in the curriculum needed to respond to that question were *"figurative meaning."* (p.97); "internal *structures of a poem, figures of speech, imagery rhyme and rhythm*." (p.98). 25 Marks of the 60 Mark (41%) ANA English FAL grade 9 paper consisted of questions that required students to show competency in the skill Reading and Viewing.

Writing and viewing is defined in the CAPS curriculum as "…a tool that will allow learners to construct and communicate thoughts and ideas." (DBE,2011,35). ANA questions assess proficiency in learners' ability to write and produce a number of different texts. 14 of the 60 marks in the grade 9 English FAL 2012 ANA test assess proficiency in *writing and viewing* making up 23% of the total assessment mark. Examples of such questions from the ANA test are "*28. Most people have a role model in life. It could be your father, your mother, a friend, a teacher or a sport hero. Write a paragraph of 50 to 60 words describing your role model."* (p.16) in the curriculum learners are expected to learn write a how to write an *essay: narrative/descriptive/ reflective essay*.

Looking simply at categorical concurrence, matching questions asked in the grade 9 2012 English FAL ANA test and with expectations set out in the first 3 terms of the Grade 9 English FAL CAPS curriculum one can conclude that alignment exits as questions seem to be based on content specified in the first three terms of the grade 9 English FAL curriculum (Webb, 2001). Dhlamini (2015) talks of teachers complaining that they often have to push forward with covering three terms' work regardless of learner's grasp of the content. Again allowing for those learners who do not understand to be left behind. Spaull (2013) argues that the ANAs do not take into account that learners learn at a different pace and that the assumption cannot be made that if the curriculum sets out two weeks for content mastery it will take all learners two weeks to acquire the knowledge. The wide range of knowledge assessed in the ANAs (namely the three major language skills outlines; Reading and viewing, language structure and conventions and writing and viewing) and the wide range of content assessed under these skills may put pressure on teachers to teach to the test instead of teaching to help learners learn (Spaull, 2013; Smith, 1991).

Teachers in the focus group seem to echo sentiments about the ANAs not taking into account the pacing in the classroom. Teacher Two from the focus group discussion stated:

Extract 2:

They don't learn them by getting taught them explicitly. You learn them from picking up after a long period of time from exposure. That's how the brain learns a language. And the assumption in this is that, okay we will spend nine years in teaching them this stuff and they will know it. But the reality is that, such a variety of home backgrounds, social backgrounds. And those are the differences that lead to the different levels of English.

Teacher two argues that in creating a standardised assessments for accountably curriculum what is not considered is that learning the English language is different for everyone. That Although the curriculum might set out to give the road map, learners may acquire different skills at different times. Teacher Two argues that the context of language learning has not been considered in the setting of the ANAs.

Teacher Three does offer a different point of view:

Extract 3:

*Teacher 3: But wouldn't there be a certain aspect of languages that we can put like that. For instance, he made an example of Afrikaans. How Afrikaans is the *inaudible language but I managed to do well in Afrikaans because I crammed. They gave me the recipe and the vocabulary. 'put an e and the end; put a ge"*

Essentially offering up the view that there might be structures that one can learn of a language and maybe the curriculum dictating these structures maybe a helpful tool to achieving an element of language learning. Although Teacher three does later on admit that learning the structure of the Afrikaans has not translated into her communicating in the language.

Gipps (1999) argues that assessment is the product of a context and can never be viewed as objective. Although questions asked in the ANAs are a categorical match to the expectations

set out in the CAPS curriculum, acquisition of language is essentially contextual (Mohamed, 2018; Coupland and Jaworski, 1997). Language is based on exposure and usage (Mohamed, 2018; Coupland and Jaworski, 1997). The prescriptive nature of the curriculum and the wide range of language skills assessed may induce anxiety in teachers as they may not be able to ensure that every learners makes the grade (Graude and Johnson, 2011). Although the document study shows that expectations set out in the curriculum is reflected in the questions assessed, the ANAs may not be fully aligned with instructional needs of the classroom.

Misalignment of assessment with classroom practice can cause teachers to focus on learners that are most likely to succeed if taught while excluding those learners that are unlikely to meet the grade by the time accountability assessments are administered (Graude and Johnson, 2011). Teacher two expresses explicit concerns about mark brackets and about the frustrations of having a learner's improvement documented but it still not be enough to have the learner pass the assessment.

Extract: 4:

That's so with most things in English it is not fair to give everybody marks and stuff because you didn't do anything for the whole series of your life. The way your entire life is, it's not really only your effort. With language acquisition it's just a whole complex range of factors and so when you giving marks to learners; whether 80%,60%, 40% meanwhile the 40% he might have acquired so much that year. That learner's English may have improved so much that year. And the 80% learner was just coasting, but it looks like the 80% leaner was better, meanwhile the 40% student has made many gains. But we are not recognizing that.

For this reason, South African teacher unions suggest that ANAs be taken after a three-year cycle to give time for pacing and allowing students who might be struggling the time they need to take those strides towards improving. (Spaull, 2013).

5.3 Discussion of Depth of Knowledge

The category titled *Depth of knowledge* compares the cognitive demand of the assessment items to the cognitive expectations set out by the curriculum (Achieve, Inc., 2006). This study uses a taxonomy taken from the CAPS English FAL curriculum (DBE, 2011, p. 121) where levels of cognitive expectations are set out from level 1 to level 5, with level 1 being questions that are least cognitively demanding while level 5 being questions that are identified as being most cognitively demanding (DEB,2011). The requirement of assessments set, in class or by the government, is for a question paper to have a weighting of 40:30:30 meaning 40% of the questions must be at the lowest cognitive level (level 1 and 2), 30% of the questions must be set at a moderately tough cognitive level (level 3), and the final 30 % of the question paper is meant to be set at the highest cognitive level (level 4 and 5) (DBE,2011). This study of depth of knowledge uses the above stated guidelines to assess the alignment of the ANA Grade 9 English FAL 2012 assessment by assessing if the assessment complies with the ratio set in the CAPS assessment (DBE,2011).

Looking first at the cognitive distribution of the 2012 ANA test for English FAL the trend for the lower order questions (level 1 and 2) came up to roughly 40 %. The calculation was derived by going through each section, adding up the mark allocation of the lower order questions and calculating what percent of these questions make up the total (100%) of the ANA test. Alignment was judged according to the specifications given by CAPS document, as mentioned earlier the document states that 40% of the question study must be lower order questions (DBE, 2011). Questions that ask learners to find information from the text e.g. *"6. Who tells the story?",* and language based questions that require student to use linguistic rules practiced in class, e.g. "*Write the following sentence in indirect speech…",* were all assigned as lower order questions.

The ANA test aligns to the CAPS document's expectation of lower level cognitive difficulty because these questions make up roughly 40% of the actual test paper (DBE,2011). According to the literature, *depth of knowledge* is labelled as adequately aligned when the complexities expressed in the assessment are met by the complexities outlined within the curriculum (Martone and Sireci, 2009). Level 1 questions are adequately aligned as they meet the expectations set out by the curriculum.

Level 3 questions are questions that "require a candidate's engagement with information explicitly stated in the text in terms of his/her personal experience." Examples of these questions from the ANA tests are "*1. The author wrote the story to show that …*" and "*4. What does the author mean when he says in line 11, 'There was jubilation all over the village?*". These are also referred to as middle order questions. Using the same method, the researcher added up the marks of such questions and calculated them according to what percentage they make up in the tests. Using that analysis, the total marks made up to 23% of the total marks of the ANA test. "The main criterion is that what is tested should be at or above the same cognitive level as what is expected to be taught based on what is in the standards." (Martone and Siraci, 2009,1339) in this instance the ratio is below the expectation put forward by the CAPS curriculum. According to literature this 7% difference in expectation might not be enough to conclude misalignment (Martone and Siraci,2009, 1339) and the CAPS document also does not explicitly state what the accepted deviance to the set standard is. A note and question in alignment can be set but the study cannot conclude misalignment based on the 7%.

Level 4 and 5 are the highest cognitive levels set in the CAPS curriculum's assessment taxonomy. Level 4 questions are questions that "deal with judgment concerning value and worth" whereas level 5 questions "assess the psychological and aesthetic impact of the next candidate.". Examples of level 4 questions are "2*3. Most snake bites occur on the feet and ankles. What should you do to protect yourself.*" And an example of a level 5 question from the test, "*7. Imagine that you are unhappy. A friend has turned against you and is spreading lies about you. This is affecting your relationship with your other friends. Write a diary entry of 50 to 60 words describing your thoughts and feelings about the situation*." Following the same process stated above, the researcher added up the marks and calculated what percentage of the assessment was made up by level 4 and 5 questions. The percentage added up to roughly, 38% of the assessment. A lot of the level 5 questions were mostly long transactional text and essays.

Teachers commented, in general statements, whether they thought the ANAs were pitched at an appropriate level compared to their classroom interactions with both learners and internally set assessments that followed criteria of the CAPS curriculum. Teachers in the focus group did not communicate feelings that they thought the questions were too hard based on what was

being asked, they communicated that they felt the questions were cognitively demanding because of how the questions were asked.

Extract 5

Teacher 4: I think if the question was more in line to making it within context and to identify the word to make more sense. So the problem with these questions is that they depend on you knowing this context. There's no comprehension. And that's where it falls short. I am even surprised at the. ohm. the word they are using to test the first additional. I'd use home language as far as I am concerned.

Extract five above is of one teacher querying the level of difficulty of the test based on the choice of vocabulary used in asking the questions. Teachers felt that the questions would be cognitively appropriate for learners doing Home Language English. Teachers suggested that the cognitive difficulty comes in three folds, the fact that learners need to decode the foreign context in which the texts have been set, decode the meaning of challenging vocabulary words and finally comprehend the questions asked so a response can be formulated.

Teacher 2 explains why he feels a glossary might help with making the ANA test accessible to learners.

Extract 6

Teacher 2: Ja, all of a sudden you're not challenging them on every front. It is a very specific challenge.

He explains that a glossary might help focus the assessment on the skill being assessed instead of adding to the cognitive demand by having learners engage in multiple tasks (i.e. vocabulary deciphering, while understanding context, while attempting to understand the question.). The teachers seem to agree that the cognitive demand is heightened by learners having to get into the text without a pre-reading activity (as set out in the curriculum).

As teachers go through the assessment, recurring feelings of not knowing what to expect are evident (Spaull, 2013; Dhlamini, 2016). Smith (1991) Speaks about the guilt that teachers feel

when carrying out these standardised tests for accountability, when they realise the classroom preparation might not have been enough to help learners through the assessment. The feeling of guilt is heightened by these publically announced results that bring labels to the school (Smith, 1991; SADTU, 2014). When assessments, unintentionally, use language to exclude learners, Spaull (2012) and Taylor (2012) argue that this set up for failure harbours low expectations for teachers, learners and district officials in those schools.

Looking simply at the document analysis there seems to be a general alignment between the cognitive demands of the assessment and the expectations stated in the CAPS curriculum, with a mere 7% deviation between level 3 and level 4 and 5. A note can be made that the curriculum needs to communicate the accepted amount of deviation that the assessment can go to help teachers feel better prepared. With that being said, teachers communicate that the depth of knowledge between the assessment and the classroom may be misaligned based on the manner in which questions are phrased. The focus group communicated surprise at the terms chosen for the assessment suggesting that the ANAs use a glossary to align cognitive demand to both curriculum and classroom instruction.

5.4. Source of challenge

The dimension *Source of Challenge* explores questions that would pose a challenge to the learners. These are questions that are deemed "unfair" to ask because they might require prior knowledge, might favour certain groups or might be unclear to the learners during the time of testing Webb (2007). These impact alignments because they do not assess what is set out as content but rather relay on learners' prior knowledge and exposure (Webb,2007). These questions do not assess what the assessment sets out to assess. The focus group interaction yielded the need to explore this as a dimension since the document study did not detect questions that posed a source of challenge.

The extracts below give three questions that teachers cited as *Source of Challenge*.

Extract 7

Teacher 3: It says a professor from Botson pulled a prank on a reporter by making up a story about something climbing the empire state building.

Teacher 2: You have to rely solely on the knowledge of the idiomatic expression "to pull a prank".

Teacher 1: Finish and klaar

Extract 8

*"Teacher 2: *to the recorder** Number 1 both C and D could be correct and number 3 unfair question.*

Extract 9:

Teacher 3: I really think this question is…I cannot find an answer to this question If I had to guess I would say uncertain based on inferring that um, maybe guessing that is what is was"

Teacher two in extract 7 flags a questions as being a source of challenge because of its reliance on learners' acquisition of specific vocabulary to be able to answer the question. The teacher explains that learners need prior knowledge, that wasn't necessarily specified by the curriculum, to be able to successfully answer the question (Taylor, 2009). Both teachers argue that you would have had to explicitly teach this to learners. Question 6 was also identified as a source of challenge because of its similar reliance on prior knowledge. Teachers argued that for a student to successfully respond to the question the student would need to understand what the idiomatic expression "to pull a prank" means, all teachers agreed that teaching this particular idiomatic expression in their classroom may come incidentally.

Spaull (2015) and Dhlamini (2015) refers to the complex terminology in the ANAs that make them difficult for certain learners to access. He argues that results from the ANAs cannot necessarily be said to be interpretation of curriculum coverage. The complex terminology used in the assessment may put some learners in the back foot because of their context. Complex

terminology in the maths ANAs has also be discussed, where teachers claim learners cannot access questions because of the language being used (Dhlamini, 2015).

A similar argument can be made with extract 7 below:

Extract 10

Teacher 2: You know those are vocab words, they are just like general vocab words I don't know how you would have taught those.

Teacher 3: Yeah my problem with these words is that I don't really feel…

Teacher 1: I was trying to look for them and…On their way to school. I can't find that

Teacher 3; There is nothing that I am finding here that indicates the answer.

Teacher 2: So maybe the only one could be selfless but this one doesn't connect with the story. Because it is not about them being selfless

In the extract above teachers are trying to decipher the answer to a multiple choice question asking students to infer what one of the characters in the story are feeling. Teachers argue that the words given in the multiple choice option neither fit what they would infer, and that two of the options are challenging. Questions that are a *source of challenge* affect alignment because essentially the questions do not necessarily assess what the curriculum stipulates. This means that the assessment has questions that do not assess expectations set out in the curriculum (Webb,2007) . Teachers suggest a word glossary so that students can respond to the question being asked without being disadvantaged by the exposure they have to certain concepts.

5.5 Alignment to classroom practice

A recurring theme in the focus group was the issue of the blanket expectation of the ANAs set on all schools despite the socio-economic makeup of the learners in the school. The issue of assessment being tightly bound to power through assessing certain cultural capital was the predominant theme of the focus group (Gipps, 1999). Through the focus group alignment moved from simply looking at the technical aspect of the standardised assessment for

accountability to challenging how assessment, as a social construct, can (or cannot) align with the social capital of the classrooms it is being administered in. The themes that follow look at assessment and the alignment challenges that come when social context is considered.

Graue and Johnson (2011) argue that for standardised accountability assessment to be successful there needs to be an alignment between the classroom, the school (and management team) and the district. The focus group discussion brought to question if the Annual National Assessments were in fact aligned with classroom practice and classroom reality.

Extract 11

Teacher 2:

…You learn them from picking up after a long period of time from exposure. That's how the brain learns a language. And the assumption in this is that, okay we will spend nine years in teaching them this stuff and they will know it

Teachers criticised the misalignment of the Annual National Assessments with their classroom practice and classroom pacing. Teacher 2 expresses that a nationally set language assessment assumes that every student in South Africa acquires a language at the same pace. Teacher 3 argues that because language, unlike content, cannot be acquired through a set of rules nor can it be learnt through memorising content and concepts, an assessment like the ANAs cannot truly be aligned with classroom practice. These sentiments are echoed by teacher unions, who argue that an annual assessment cannot give a full picture of the students' learnings (SADTU, 2014; Taylor, 2011). Teachers in other studies have spoken about the difficulty in pacing and in trying to fit all three terms' work in before the assessments are administered (Dhlamini, 2016).

Extract 12

Teacher 3: If you are in an English- or any language-rich environment, you are very likely to acquire like a native level of that language. So the learners who go to English home language are… (incomplete sentence). You might as well say that they are very similar to learners who also have English home backgrounds

Teacher 2: I think it is a decision made by the school, actually. They didn't take into consideration the backgrounds. The school decides …

Teacher 4: I agree with you that it is not a good indication of their level. I would rather say what is importance is to look at the environment of both the school and home that most kids are growing up in. the holistic environment that the child learns a language in. For the minority of kids in this country, they learn English or language from… let's say from birth until 10,12,13. Minority of kids learn that in a very English-rich environment.

Extract 12 further echoes the concerns raised by teacher 3 in extract 11, teacher 3 adds that the acquisition of the English language is influenced by factors outside of the class room that is, it is influenced by the learners' exposure in their home environment (Mohamed, 2018). And often exposure to English is tired to the socio-economic background of the learners that will eventually write the same ANA test as learners that come from affluent households (Ellis, 1997). The teachers argue that this misalignment does not just come from the National office (by means of the ANA) the teachers argue that even the schools can be miss-aligned in detecting the language abilities of the learners. Teacher 2 expresses this misalignment "*I think it is a decision made by the school, actually. They didn't take into consideration the backgrounds".*

If Graue and Johnson's (2011) are to be a measure of alignment between classroom, school and district, teachers in the focus group are saying there seems to be a misalignment between expectations set on classrooms in measuring curriculum coverage because these expectations fail to consider the process of acquisition (Mohammad, 2015) The extract bellows further reiterates the point made by teachers.

Extract 13

Teacher 4: What you are saying is very valid. I think that is the reason why the ANA was invented but teachers boycotted it because before it did not take into consideration the various different factors surroundings and environments they are in to prepare student, they presumed everyone coming in is exactly on the same level.

5.6. Conclusion of focus group discussion

Shepard (2000) states that assessment does not stand in isolation it does in fact stand as the third leg of the teaching and learning process. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment all influence each other and assessment can indeed shape pedagogical classroom practices (classroom instruction) and curriculum coverage (Shepard, 2000; Smith, 1991). This understanding of curriculum enables us to look at assessment as a possible tool aiding in curriculum coverage and in improving instructional practice (Jiang, 2015; Shepard, 2000). The document study carried out looked at three dimensions of possible alignment namely; centrality of content, categorical concurrence and depth of knowledge. The focus group added the dimension source of challenge and explored alignment between the assessment and the instructional practices in the classroom.

The biggest note of misalignment was with the dimension *centrality of content*. The 2012 ANA English FAL guidelines used topic standards and terminology found in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) when the 2012 ANAs were supposedly based on the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS). Terminology like "Learning Outcomes" is used in the RNSC whereas CAPS (curriculum document the ANAs are supposedly based on) speaks of "content topics". The guideline also cites "Thinking and reasoning" as an assessment standard that the ANAs are assessing, however this content topic does not appear in the CAPS document at all. One can question the alignment of centrality of content between CAPS and ANAs 2012 test.

The feeling of uncertainty that South African teachers have communicated in different studies about the vague expectations of the ANAs may stem from this misalignment (Spaull, 2011; Dlamini, 2015). Teachers cited the *Centrality of Content* as the first category of ill alignment. According to some of the teachers in the focus group the guidelines given to teachers to help prepare them for the Annual National Assessment test 2012 were not aligned to classroom practice nor did they consider the contextual make-up of the schools (Webb, 2007). One teacher cited that even using the material as a teaching aid to help students learn towards the test was a difficult task because of the misalignment. If assessment drives classroom practice, much like Shepard's (2000) assertion, it seems teachers are justified in feeling anxiety because

of the uncertainty that comes with the preparation documents that were given to prepare for the ANAs (Dhlamini, 2016). Dhlamini (2015) documents a number of maths teachers expressing the heightened anxiety when contemplating the uncertainty of the ANA assessments. Teaches have said this anxiety has them trying to push through content as quickly as possible without really ensuring that all students understand the work (Smith, 1991; Steinberg,2008).

The ANAs, according to the focus group, present with a few other misalignments with curriculum and with classroom practice. Teachers going through the curriculum did not cite issues with the *categorical concurrence* of the assessment, that is they were able to point out what was expected to be taught from the curriculum that would help students access the question in the ANAs (Webb, 2007). In discussions teachers did not dispute the need for assessment as a way to judge learning, however they did question the ANA 2012 grade 9 English test as a tool to accurately judge learning.

Focus group discussions seem to allude to the fact the ANA grade 9 English FAL 2012 test is challenging to understand for learners, the language used too complex and sometimes the questions asked rely too heavily on prior knowledge. Spaull (2015) refers to teachers' general documented concerns about the complexities in language. These challenges mean that even as teachers teach curriculum content, they may not necessarily teach specific idiomatic expressions tested by the ANA English FAL grade 9 test, that putting their learners at a disadvantage. This means that even when teaching curriculum students are not necessarily prepared for these questions (Dhlamini, 2016). This can be interpreted as an element of misalignment.

Both the document analysis and the focus group discussion seemed to communicate a general alignment within the dimension *categorical concurrence* where questions given to learners in the ANA assessments were matched with the expectations set out within the CAPS document Webb (2007). *Categorical concurrence* looks at the fact that questions asked matched the expected content outlined in the curriculum (Webb, 2007; Missik, 1995). Looking at questions in the ANAs and outlines set out in the CAPS there seemed to be alignment between what is expected to be covered within the first three terms and what is assessed by the ANAs. Teachers

have however, spoken about the broad expectation of the ANAs (Achieve, Inc., 2006; Spaull, 2015).

Fundamentally, teachers in the focus group did not dispute the need for assessment being used as a checking tool to curriculum coverage. They flagged that the ANAs may be too complex in language and the preparation too vague for them to truly be a judge of curriculum coverage. Teachers said that this standardised assessment for accountability might need to set the study considering different context of learners and, to make the assessment a little more focused, consider adding a glossary to overcome complexities that may exists due to language.

The document analysis was inconclusive in detecting misalignment in the dimension *depth of knowledge* documenting a slight deviation of a 7 % between questions in level 3 and level 4 and 5. According to literature this is a generally accepted deviation and does not necessarily mean misalignment (Webb, 2007). The focus group however, seemed to be in agreement that the cognitive demand of the Annual National Assessment is heightened because of the choice of words used in the questioning. Teachers in the focus group thought the difficult terminology made the ANA tests difficult by adding barriers to the comprehension by using language that they felt was possibly inaccessible to learners. The focus group suggested that using a glossary would create a clearer cognitive expectation for students.

In conclusion, the ANAs; as a sample of a standardised assessment for accountability, bring a lot of inconsistencies. Starting with misalignment in terminology in the assessment guidelines and a deviation in assessment difficulty. Teachers' concerns of uncertainty about expectations of the ANAs could stem from these inconsistencies.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Standardised assessment for accountability will not stop, the way it is designed and implemented needs to be revised to take into account some of the issues raised in this study. This will go a long way in getting valuable information with the potential to inform education reforms/intervention and improve the quality of education outcomes. The findings suggest a lot of improvement is still needed given the fact that South Africa is still very much new to the use of standardised assessment for accountability.

To conclude the discussion on alignment properties between the Annual National Assessment and The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, the study is not big enough to conclusively say that there is definite misalignment. However, areas of inconsistency in alignment have been identified as indicated below:

- The English Grade 9 FAL Annual National Assessment tests did present reason to question consistent alignment. The first major inconsistency was one of terminology where guidelines had terminology from the old Revised National Curriculum Statement instead of terminology from the current Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement. The focus group of teachers reiterated this inconsistency and ambiguousness in alignment claiming that guidelines given with resources were not helpful in assisting teachers prepare learners for the ANAs.

- In analysing the grade 9 English FAL ANA test both the document analysis and the focus group found that the competencies assessed in the ANA document were found as content and skills outlined in the CAPS curriculum. The question of pacing did come up in the focus group, that although content is laid out, language is based on acquisition and acquisition based on exposure (Ellis, 1997; Coupland and Jaworski,1997). According to teachers in the focus group the ANA tests do not account for learner centred pacing as the external assessment is given in the third term to assess the outlined content for all three terms regardless of whether certain language skills have been grasped by learners (Spaull, 2013; Spaull, 2015; Dhlamini, 2015).

- The language complexities that exist in the ANAs grade 9 English FAL 2012 test was another prominent concern in the focus group. The teachers in the group felt that the assessment was made cognitively demanding by the use of words in the questions. This, they felt, communicated misalignment between their pedagogical (instructional practices) and the assessment. The suggestion by teachers was to have a glossary where necessary to enable students to access the questions asked so they can display their competencies.

- The inconsistencies in alignment found in this case study of the Annual National Assessments may explain the discomfort communicated by teacher Unions about anxiety the ANAs cause. The existence of these inconsistencies may brings to question the validity of the results from the assessments (Gipps, 1999Spaull,2015).

- Although the ANAs are no longer administered in schools, this do not mean the death of Standardised assessment for accountability. The JET (Joint Education Trust) education service, as a way to account for context, carry out standardised assessments for accountability in a few South African private schools. These assessments are paired with school visits and classroom observations. (www.jet.org.za; 12 November 2019). This may be a better way to tackle the very real contextual considerations that come with assessments.

- If standardised Assessments for Accountability are to make a difference in education, certain considerations about alignment, instruction and classroom practices must be made to insure the validity of the results and consequences handed down to schools.

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Appendix A Table for Content Centrality

Table 1.1: Shows assessment expectations (column A) in the ANAs and Column B shows content lay out in CAPS.

	Column A: **Annual National Assessment**	**Column B:** **Curriculum and Assessment Statement**
Learning outcomes/ Topics	"Reading and viewing"	"Reading and viewing"
	"Thinking and reasoning"	Does not appear as curriculum 'package'
	"Writing"	"writing and presenting"
	"Language structure and use"	"Language Structure and convention"
	Does not appear in ANA Outcomes	"Listening and speaking"

Appendix B Table for Categorical Concurrence

Table 1.2 This table was used for the analysis of categorical concurrence between the Grade 9 English FAL ANA 2012 test and the CAPS document. Column A shows questions from the ANAs and column B gives corresponding topics laid out in the CAPS document related to the assessment question.

Column A: Annual National Assessment	**Column B: Curriculum and Assessment Statement**
Text One: Students are asked to: Read a passage and answer questions based on the passage. All question is multiple choice questions (MCQs). 1) The author wrote the story to show that…. 2) In the morning of the first day of school, Mapula felt a sense of… 3) Which word best describes Mapula and Thandi on their way to school? 4) What does the author mean…?	*Reading and viewing* Reading/viewing for comprehension using written text. Read a literature text like a short story. Reading strategies Reading comprehension Reading text for information Reading process

5) A tear drops on the page…and then another and then another", this was because Mapula was… 6) Who tells the story?	
Text two: 7) Read the example of a diary entry below and then write your own short dairy entry in the space provided below…	*Reading and viewing* Reading strategies Reading/viewing for comprehension using written text. *Writing and presenting* Transactional texts: Diary entry Focus on process writing *Language structures and conventions* Word level work Sentence level work Punctuation and spelling Sentence level Word meaning

Text three: All Questions Are Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) 8) "…sniffs and sniffs…" is an example of? 9) He rolls on the beach all day 10) The sea is as hungry as a dog, is an example of Text four: Written text 11) The author wrote this passage to. 12) Identify topic in paragraph one 13) Write down four main points about April's Fool 14) Choose the correct meaning of the word 15) Circle the word that means… 16) According to the passage how did people come to be called April's fools	*Reading and viewing* Reading and viewing poetry Reading for comprehension Reading Process *Reading and viewing* Reading/viewing for comprehension using written text. Read a literature text like a short story. Reading strategies Reading comprehension Reading text for information Reading process Read a newspaper/magazine article

17) What does the following statement mean?	Reading viewing for comprehension Read/view text for information and comprehension Summarising the text
Text five: Written text 18) Write your summary. 19) Change to indirect speech 20) Change to direct speech 21) Change to past tense 22) Change spelling and grammar 23) What would you do to protect yourself (choose sentence with the correct grammar) 24) Use passive voice (possibly not explicitly stated in curriculum) 25) Use correct conjunction \	Read a newspaper/magazine article Reading viewing for comprehension Read/view text for information and comprehension Summarising the text Language and Language conventions Level work Sentence level: Sentence structure; punctuation; direct and indirect speech Word level: Spelling and spelling patrons; conjunction
Text five: 29) Students must write an Essay about role models	Writing and presenting: Write an essay narrative/descriptive/reflective Long Transactional text

	(closest, write a report following the process approach to writing

Appendix C Depth of Knowledge

Table 1.3 of questions set out in the category depth of knowledge. The Table sets out the different levels set out by the curriculum. The A gives the questions asked in the Grade 9 English FAL 2012 Tests, and column B gives level descriptors lifted directly from the CAPS document.

Cognitive level	**Column A: Assessment Activity**	**Column B: Curriculum Activity requirement**
Literal Level 1	6 Who tells the story? 8 '… snuffs and sniffs … ' (line 12) is an example of … 9 'He rolls on the beach all day' (line 3) refers to … 10 'The sea is a hungry dog' (line 1) is an example of … 14 Choose the best meaning of the phrase, a 'fool′s errand' (paragraph 2), as it is used in the text. 15Circle the letter which gives the meaning of the phase below: A professor from Boston University pulled a prank on a reporter 16 According to the passage, how did the people come to be called 'April Fools'? 17 Why did the French refer to 'April Fools' as 'April Fish'? 24 You encounter a cobra in the veld. What should you do? Total Marks for level 1: 9/60 (15%) -with language and 9/45 (20%) without language	The curriculum states that 40% of the questions must be at level 1 and 2. Level 1 questions deal with information explicitly stated in the text. • Name the things/people/places/elements… • State the facts/ reasons/points/ideas… • Identify the reasons/persons/causes… • List the points/facts/names/names… • Describe the place/person/character… • Relate the incident/episode/experience…

Reorganisation **Level 2**	13 Write down FOUR main points from the passage to show the possible origin of April Fool's Day. 19 Your class will go on a trip to a farm. Use what you have read to advise your classmates on safety tips. What are the THREE main ideas from the article that might be helpful?	Questions that require analysis, synthesis or organisation of information explicitly stated in the text. • Summarise the main points/ideas/pros/cons… • Group the common elements/factors… • States the similarities/differences… • Give an outline of…
Total for level 1+2.	40%	Requirement from curriculum: Level 1 + Level 2 type questions must be 40% of the total question paper.
Inference **Level 3**	1The author wrote the story to show that … 2In the morning of the first day of school, Mapula felt a sense of … 3Which word best describes Mapula and Thandi on their way to school? 4What does the author mean when he says in line 11, 'There was jubilation all over the village'? 5'A tear dropped on the page … and then another and another.' (Lines 26 to 27) This was because Mapula was … 11 The author wrote this passage in order to … 12Identify the topic in paragraph 1. 18 The first of April is just a day to celebrate the joker in all of us.	The curriculum states that 40% of the curriculum needs to have level 3 questions. Questions that require a candidate's engagement with information explicitly stated in the text in terms of his/her personal experience. • Explain the main idea… • Compare the ideas/attitudes/actions. • What is the writer's (or character's) intention/attitude/motivation/reason…? • Explain the cause/effect of…

	Total Marks for level 3 9/60 (15%)– with language included in total. 9/45 (20%) without language.	• What does an action/comment/attitude (etc.) reveal about the narrator/writer/character…? • How does the metaphor/simile/image affect your understanding…? • What do you think, will be the outcome/effect (etc.) of an action/a situation…
Total marks for level 3:	23%	Total requirement for level 3 questions: 40%
Evaluation **Level 4**	23 Most snake bites occur on the feet and ankles. What should you do to protect yourself?	The curriculum states that 20% of assessment must have level 4 and 5 questions. These questions deal with judgements concerning value and worth. These include judgments regarding reality, credibility, facts and opinions, validity, logic and reasoning, and issues such as the desirability and acceptability**.** • Do you think what transpires is credible/realistic/possible…? • Is the writer's argument valid/logical/conclusive…? • Discuss/comment critically on the action/intention/ motive/attitude/suggestion/implication… • Do you agree with the view/statement/observation/interpretation that…?

	Total : (23 %)	• In your view, is the writer/narrator/character justified in suggesting/advocating that… (substantiate your response/Give reasons for your answer.) • Is the character ‘s attitude/behaviour/action justifiable or acceptable to you? Give reason to your answer. • What does a character’s action/ attitude(s)/motives…show about him/her in the context of universal values? • Discuss critically/comment on the value judgements made in the text.
Appreciation **Level 5**	7 Imagine that you are unhappy. A friend has turned against you and is spreading lies about you. This is affecting your relationship with your other friends. Write a diary entry of 50 to 60 words describing your thoughts and feelings about the situation. 28 Most people have a role model in life. It could be your father, mother, a friend, a teacher or a sports hero. Write a	These questions are intended to assess the psychological and aesthetic impact of the next candidate. They focus on emotional responses of the content, identification with the characters or incidents, and reactions to the writer’s use of language (such as word choice and imagery).

	paragraph of about 50 to 60 words describing your role model. 29 A popular magazine has requested people to send through their favourite recipes for publication. A prize of R1000.00 will be awarded to the person who sends in the best receipt. Write out the recipes in about 60 to 80 words. Or Everybody plays games sometime or another in their lives. Explain to your friend in 60 to 80 words how to play your favourite game.	• Discuss your response to the text/incident/situation/conflict/dilemma. • Do you empathise with the character? What action/decision would you have taken if you had been in the same situation. • Discuss/comment on the writer's use language… • Discuss the effectiveness of the writer's style/introduction/conclusion/imagery/metaphors/use of poetic techniques/literary devices…
Total level for 4 + 5	37 %	Total requirement from CAPS:

Appendix D: Consent letters

INFORMATION SHEET TEACHERS

Date:28 February 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Thato Malele and I am a Masters Student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on an Exploration of alignment of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement with The Annual National Assessment: How Curriculum and Assessment are translated into Pedagogy.

My research involves judging the alignment between the Annual National Assessments (ANA) and the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS). This means looking at the Grade 9 English First Additional Language CAPS document and comparing the content coverage with the content assessed in the Grade 9 English First Additional Language ANAs. Part of judging the alignment means talking to grade 9 English First Additional Language Teachers who have worked with the grade 9 FAL ANA document and have taught the CAPS FAL curriculum. I will be asking these teachers how they perceive the alignment between the curriculum and the ANA assessment in their experience.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because as a public school you use the GDE CAPS document and are required to take part in the Annual National Assessments and have done so for the past three years. Your school is also convenience as it falls on route to my way to work so I can meet teachers at their convenience. I was wondering whether you would mind if you could spare an hour and a half of your time to talk to me about your experience of administering ANAs and how using CAPS has factored into your experience.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and recorded data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE

Thato Malele

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Pimville

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1809

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0815570778

Teacher's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to be interviewed

I would like to be part of the focus group for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop participation at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO
I give consent to have an audio recording of the focus group That I will be part of?	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix E Transcripts from focus group

T1 (began 29:52)	But at the same time I am dealing with him having identity issues where beginning of the year I had to tell him that he is not English because…Because to him the language that he speaks means that is what he is. And because he is not English, I am spending a big part of my afternoons and my weekends forcing him to speak Zulu because he doesn't understand why must he speak Zulu now because all this time he has been so comfortable with his English. School is in English that is the whole dilemma. How much of; how much of our identities as Africans is sacrifices for this and the painful part is that as much as you will get far and you will do great and what not, then you always interact with people at some point or other who will treat you differently because you speak so well or you don't speak so well. And all those things are also internal dilemmas just all the time and you are always trying to balance that out. But, that my own issues.
T2	I think. But in summary from what I have heard. I don't think the *inaudible is very cognizant of the social reality of English. The very complex social reality of English usage in this country. And the real. As a language how is it acquired by different people in reality. Not. Because languages are not. They don't learn them by getting taught them explicitly. You learn them from picking up after a long period of time from exposure. That's how the brain learns a language. And the assumption in this is that, okay we will spend nine years in teaching them this stuff and then they will know it. But the reality is that, such a variety of home backgrounds, social backgrounds. And those are the differences that lead to the different levels of English, not
T3	So essentially what he is saying is that you can't learn a heavy *inaudible…set this "N" as a benchmark, they will learn certain skills, certain knowledge of vocabulary at 14 in grade 9. And say for technology we expect them to learn this and this and this. So he is saying we can't learn a language that way. And I agree.
T2	I'm saying that languages are not a. Communicating in a language is not a subject, is not of like explicit things that you can learn technology. I learn about how all the circuits work. I can learn all the tests and knowledge. I don't think that it is a fair way to either assess the teachers or hum the learners.
T3	But then wouldn't there be a certain aspect of languages that we can put like that. For instance, he made an example of Afrikaans. How Afrikaans is the *inaudible language but I managed to do well in Afrikaans because I crammed. They gave me the recipe and the vocabulary. '*put an e and the end; put a ge"*
T2	Sure. The *verkleinwoorde*
T4	So but you haven't learnt the language. You have learnt the structures and the rules
T2	Yes
T4	You have passed Afrikaans. But you haven't learnt Afrikaans. And I think that we…
T3	I have not learnt Afrikaans.
T4	Ja
T2	So they need to…they think that the whole country would think that when people get 30% on their ANAs (*sp); that means that they…you know they suck at that language or they haven't acquired. But even if they got 70 % on their ANAs, people would think that that means that they are good at the language. As we can see, that doesn't mean that you really know the language to communicate. Knowing explicit things like was a verb is and give 10 example of what a verb is; or changing something from past to present tense doesn't mean that you have communicative competence in that language.
T4	The district provided us with district plans, resources and everything to teach; but the comprehension given was so out of context. There was a comprehension they had to do, had to be simplified because it was talking about fairies and other things that I now have to explain to my learners who are doing FAL in Thokoza what a fairy is.
T3	So I therefore question, question e and 2 (* former sentence was inaudible). I think if the question was more in line to making it within context and to identify the word to make more sense. So the problem with these questions is that are depending are you knowing this context; that they are no sense of the use of similar words. There's no comprehension.

	And that's where it falls short. I am even surprised at the.uhm.the word they are using to test the first additional. I'd use home language as far as I am concerned. For grade 8, expression, achievement, stress and depressions; that is home language lingo. Not because they are asking definitions. You have to know what this means in order to understand to the whole question and in order to understand the question. So I don't think…(incomplete sentence)
T3	The thing about…uhm. ANA and CAPS is… (incomplete sentence). Remember before 2008, they had higher grade subjects, higher grade English. And now it's like a merge of both high grade and standard grade. So they're asking… (incomplete sentence) is like *inaudible phrase where your level of questioning goes in deeper from like *inaudible phrase, so that's home language or '*fun, can answer that, can get marks there'.* And then the people that are more home language can also come out of CAPS. I think that is that's why you have your recall questions. Uhm uhm. List…differentiate…and then it goes much deeper into level 5. And you can see different levels of the *inaudible. That's why its structured like this. Not necessarily that this is home language. It is just that is the structure of the question.
T2	I often felt that English itself is just a watered-down, slightly watered-down Home language. It is not a fundamentally different subject. And I think that it should be because understanding that a learner…most of the learners who do FAL, most of them obviously we can't say all, but most of them the reality of how they have acquired English is completely different to the reality of how many learners who do home language have acquired English. They …(incomplete sentence)
T4	I disagree with that. I think that uhm. I think they come from similar backgrounds. They just go to school where they get told you will do home language and you will do FAL.
T2	Absolutely I agree with you. But I equate that school is part of the way they have acquired language. I don't differentiate… (incomplete sentence) I am saying that language learning that they experience; most of the learners that do Home Language a lot of them have been in English Home language from primary school. In their critical period of language learning, before you reach puberty, such a fundamental time… (incomplete sentence). If you are in an English- or any language-rich environment, you are very likely to acquire like a native level of that language. So the learners who go to English home language are… (incomplete sentence). You might as well say that they are very similar to learners who also have English home backgrounds. Cause of that constant exposure during school time. It makes them completely different from the learners who are not in English home language schools.
T4	I disagree again. I think that a language, like he said, is… (incomplete sentence). I don't really teach language, language is acquired. It comes from your society, home and come from similar backgrounds if they are our kids. And they don't acquire the basics of a home language proficiency. You know what I mean. They don't… (incomplete sentence). FAL and home language speakers…(incomplete sentence) I am teaching Home language; but they would benefit better if I were teaching FAL.
T2	Sure, I agree.
T4	Because of where they come from and they're different backgrounds. Some of them do come from Home language English; but that's just a title. But …(incomplete sentence)
T1 or F	I think what Whether is saying is that she is not disagreeing with you that everybody has a different… (incomplete sentence) like proficiency of English. What she is saying is that just because students, even those students who pick don't have Home language … (incomplete sentence) don't have HL standing. Sometimes your teaching the same kids.
F	And also your right, like, we don't have FAL. We don't have that option. So everybody who walks in whether they are FAL or HL and, must do HL.
F	And….is saying that you are better off teaching English like a FAL than you are…(incomplete sentence).
T4	From my perspective, they are doing the language knowing it at that level.
T2	Okay. I think then I'm with you fully.

T3	So, If your child can answer and write this FAL, they are…(incomplete sentence)
T4	I am saying my kids who are HL. And …(incomplete sentence)
T3	My kids in grade 11 HL would struggle with the writing.
T1	Sometimes you find a person who sounds… (incomplete sentence); who has spoken the language before but when it comes to their written language and the analysis of the text; it's not as good. So then even if a person speaks the language at home or around in the community, the skills that they need, the vocabulary that they need is not at the same level*inaudible phrase whether they're 9,7 or 12.
T3	I think it is a decision made by the school, actually. They didn't take into consideration the backgrounds. The school decides …(incomplete sentence)
T2	Because it looks. Look… (incomplete sentence). Maybe the image… (incomplete sentence). Maybe the vision of having HL schools; their parents want their child to attend that school because they think that their English will be better. Because it is going to be an English environment etc. I think I agree with you so I'm going to remove what I said about… (incomplete sentence). I am going to remove it from the subject they do, whether they are… (incomplete sentence). I agree with you that it is not a good indication of their level. I would rather say what is importance is to look at the environment of both the school and home that most kids are growing up in. the holistic environment that the child learns a language in. for the minority of kids in this country, they learn English or language from… (incomplete sentence) let's say from birth until 10,12,13. Minority of kids learn that in a very English-rich environment. Where they are hearing at school or home. That is the minority. Majority have very little input of English at school and even less input at home. That little in rural areas that can be very little. And even her it can be some… (incomplete sentence) I was walking around the school and many of them, I would say 50%, were not speaking English. At my school its zero. I never hear a child speaking English in the hallway. I think… (incomplete sentence) when I hear it I'm like *'yoh sekgowa'* because it's so strange. At your school it may be half-half or maybe even less. Maybe 30% is a bit of English. And only at your Parktown girls and stuff would you start hearing it majority of the time. Very minority of kids in this country go to those schools. The rest… (incomplete sentence). Because of the reality of the environment in which they live in, they need to be doing something fundamentally different; which would be FAL, but FAL is not all that different. The whole way the curriculum is set up it really just a watered-down HL. This would serve the kids who went to you park town etc. but it is not appropriate to the majority.
T1 and T4	We are on question 4
T1	What does the author mean when he says in line 11 : "there was jubilation over the village"
T1	This is another vocab question.
T2	Yes so then…(incomplete sentence)
T1	But with this one, if you have read the text you can interpret it in context.
T2	Ja, you would guess because you know it is not a strike or *inaudible. So you can guess. Although the question itself is it assuming that you can infer … (incomplete sentence), that you can connect the words relation to the *inaudible. If you never knew jubilation, which most learners would struggle with. Jubilant is a very … (incomplete sentence). It is really just a synonym for happy. So but you could guess it by just looking at the options.
T3	I suppose it really is guessing, more than anything else.
T4	They would know what a strike is, or what a wedding is, and they would be left with an anniversary and *inaudible. Anniversary is also another would some may … (incomplete sentence). I think that another…(incomplete sentence)
T1	Couldn't it … (incomplete sentence). Couldn't it be more simplified word other than excitement. I think that excitement and jubilation are on the same level in terms of the synods. Even actually all of them anniversary and excitement are both very complex words. I would expect that a more simplified word be used.

T2	I also want us to think that what did the person who designed this text… (incomplete sentence). What did they want to assess in that question? What was their thinking and then we can also judge whether their thinking was correct.
T4	I think definitely vocab also leads to relying on certain words to know what the context means. uhm…(incomplete sentence)
T1	MH so wording and text skills. *inaudible sentence.
T2	If that sentence it relies on the understanding of jubilation you have to used your wording skills to understand.
T4	Like excitement comes from the word excited, like being a fairly common word. *Inaudible sentences.
T1	It would mean that you need to break it down to find the root word.
T4	Like anniversary would also be word of tax (?*inaudible word).
T2	Yes, excited is a common synonym. Excited. Jubilant. Joyful. Glad not so much. Gay is one I throw in for the not so hahaha. Yes it also means homosexual.
T4	It's funny that it says jubilant and not glad. Who really says glad. Do people say jubilant.
F	With question 5, let's move on. So a "a tear dropped on the page and then another and then another. This was because *inaudible name was overjoyed, unhappy, angry, scared. what do you think you would…(incomplete sentence)
T4	I think this is like the first question yet again.
T3	This one also fits nicely into the title of the story- tears of joy. I think this a good question. A more supportive tax (*inaudible word-unsure).
T4	Even unhappy is word of tax (*inaudible).
T2	I think it is also the understanding of the general context of the story, that she is happy on this day. That she is crying …(incomplete sentence).
T4	And it is also quite a literal question because uhm…she says "I could not stop crying, I was so elated."
T3	This is quite literal.
T4	Elated could be an unfamiliar word too. If you had a glossary that told you what elated meant. I think then it would be a completely literal question. The glossary would show that it means happy, overjoyed.
T3	But there's no glossary. So the world elated is the hindrance.
T4	It is quite a tricky question.
T1	My thing is should there be a glossary …(incomplete sentence)
T3	This whole entire thing is multiple choice.
T4	I would still put a glossary in.
T1	Me too.
T4	But my external moderator told me not to.
T3	I think that that could be debatable. I think it is important to have a glossary at the beginning. But the if you put in a glossary… (incomplete sentence). And it is also multiple choice… (incomplete sentence). But then that is what I was saying that if you put in a glossary; you can now challenge them with regards to the kinds of questions that you ask. To identify synonyms themselves. With a glossary you would have to incorporate high-order levelled thinking questions in order to fit in the *inaudible. The glossary would enable to infer is this a homonym or a homophone and things like that. You would be able to put in more challenging questions that they will be able to handle. This tests their ability to adapt to the work better. Such as, changing the words to nouns, or pronouns etc.
T4	Ja, all of a sudden you're not challenging them on every front. It is a very specific challenge.
T3	And you are able to clearly see how adaptable they are in that skill.
T4	You actually learn… (incomplete sentence). It's like you're assessing a skill. Here you're assessing a human. Its either you know the language or not.
T3	It also stems from their background and how they express it.

T2	That's so with most things in English it is not fair to give everybody marks and stuff because you didn't do anything for the whole series of your life. The way your entire life is, it's not really only your effort. With language acquisition it's just a whole complex range of factors and so when you giving marks to learners; whether 80%,60%, 40% meanwhile the 40% he might have acquired so much that year. That learner's English may have improved so much that year. And then the 80% learner was just coasting, but it looks like the 80% leaner was better, meanwhile the 40% student has made many gains. But we are not recognizing that.
T3	Yes, Because of the way we are assessing.
T2	No, this whole quantification and the way they assess language acquisition in university level is different. Let's say you are French but you chose to do English. They don't assess like the 80%. The simply have a "not able to do whatever language" or "able to do it" or "able to do it well". That's it. And that's not… (incomplete sentence). most people will get the middle because they design the whole course so that if you attend their things you will be able to do it. But a lot of these is not fair. And that why with the teachers, if you are teaching in a school with children who have differing life experiencing, you then look like you didn't do your job. You get treated like… (incomplete sentence). Why is the so much negative view about teachers in this country. They are lazy, they don't do this or this or this. And then you… (incomplete sentence). And then people will go and think that private school or model C school they are so great because they have better teachers.
T4	100% agree.
T3	What you are saying is very valid. I think that is the reason why the ANA was invented but teachers boycotted it because before it did not take into consideration the various different factors surroundings and environments they are in to prepare student, they presumed everyone coming in is exactly on the same level. The problem with that is that assessing people on the same language and assessing by the ANA, whether you are not looking at their skill and language; but their ability to communicate in this language even in their sleep. It makes… (incomplete sentence). It puts a lot of pressure on the teacher in the rural area, for example, to spend more time with their students doing this at no extra fee. Whereas if you can afford to take your child to Durban girls high, even if they only start doing English as a HL in grade, you will most likely able to pay for the extra lessons to allow them to get to that level faster. Whereas in the rural, even with the same FAL or HL, the facilities and support are not there. So you are still assessing the person as if they all have the same starting line with no obstacles in place. From that you come back and say that these teachers are working and those aren't.
T4	And also with the girl in Girls High, everything you hear the whole week when you walk into school is English. Even your friends speak English. There is more…(incomplete sentence).
T2	Cultural knowledge. Cultural exposure that you're getting from… (incomplete sentence). Maybe not this one but the next or the 2014, there is some other comprehensions about April fools'…(incomplete sentence).
T1, T3,T4	Yes. Yes, that's the one. (all agree)
T2	There is a whole cultural background that you need to be exposure to in order to fully grasp that.
T4	I'm semi-impressed by this test because it is semi-accessible. Not accessible in terms of language, but accessible in the sense of "Oh Ampule, okay..".
T2	It is interesting in this text that Ampule and Thenjiwe's are in the same village. Like what? Maybe it is on the boarder of… (incomplete sentence).
T3	For me with ANA what frustrated me was my school I was teaching in; we were red flagged. The district provided us with district plans, resources and everything to teach; but the comprehension given was so out of context. There was a comprehension they had to do, had to be simplified because it was talking about fairies and other things that I now have to explain to my students who are doing FAL in Thokoza what a fairy is.
T4	Ja, even Christmas and Santa clause.

T3	Yes, and still the don't get it. And even in trying to fix the problem it remains unrelated…(incomplete sentence).
T4	Ja, its "*Peni guyfolks"* they more likely know.
T3	*Uyabona uyabazi angithi* (you see, you understand them).
T3	And so even in an attempt to ow rectify the problem when a school is red flagged; it's still not taking into consideration the context there and the creation they are faced with.
T2	On that topic the ANA work given to prepare for the… (incomplete sentence). Such poor… (incomplete sentence). Honestly what do you think of people when you give them that and who… (incomplete sentence). With these lames clip-on questions. No.
T3	I still have them but I can't do anything with them. Every time I look at them I'm like…(incomplete sentence).
T2	And most of the time, they are disconnected., irrelevant .
T4	*Wowza.*
T3	It's different also for the comprehension… (incomplete sentence). It is not the same as their context. It's just not…(incomplete sentence).
F	Do we want to move to question 6?
T1	Question 6, who tells the story.
T3	But I don't like the Mmapula.
T4	But is it Mmapula?
T2	The narrator…(incomplete sentence).
F	So what would you need have to told… (incomplete sentence). So currently we are reviewing the comprehension. There's body language, use of punctuation, font, inferred meaning and intensive reading.
T3	I think its bit of *inaudible reading and post (or first*inaudible) reading. In the reading you then need to evaluate what you have read. If the person who is telling the story.
T1	*Yini leyana ebeuthe (*which is that that you were saying/referring to) identifying features of the of the text?
T3	During (or junior *inaudible).
F	Number 7, text 2: "read the example of the diary entry below and then write your own short story in the space provided. An example of a diary entry…(incomplete sentence).
T3	Sunday the 23rd July. Today at school I had the most embarrassing experience ever. My teacher called me up to read the news at the assembly. I felt like somebody was strangling me. My hands shivered and my voice stammered. But finally I did it. This was the first time I was standing in front of such a big audience but now I felt elated having read the news in front of my principal, teachers, and most of all my friends." Imagine you are unhappy, a friend has turned against you and spreading lies about you. This is affecting your relationship with your friends. Write diary entry of 50-60 to describe your thoughts and feelings to the situation, your entry will be marked according to the following criteria: content, relevance, format, style and register, grammar spelling and punctuation.
T1	I think the diary entry is intimidating. How. What. Stammered. Shivered. Strangled. I think it is intimidating.
T3	But also the overall message this person is writing is victorious. I think that the example they give you should at least sort of related to what you are to supposed to do.
T1	Because I was thinking that if one of my students in Thokoza wrote this, they would the word elated just to…(incomplete sentence).
T4	Because this was the word used…(incomplete sentence).
T2	That scaffolding thing… (incomplete sentence). I'm reading this thinking they want me to move on from this and that is a very natural …(incomplete sentence).
T3	But also, I don't kids read instructs. If I see this example, I might just re-write. But not necessarily re-write but write as a summary. And then I also think that the criteria are not giving enough detail of was will be assessed on. I feel for this you need a proper rubric that is detailed to know these are the things to cover to… (incomplete sentence). To merely state it as is, is not really giving enough details with regards how I am supposed to

	do this in order to do it well. Especially because when we are teaching them we are always telling them and showing them rubrics and this doesn't do that.
T2	So I guess it is assumed that they do know that stuff.
F	And so… (incomplete sentence). I agree with you, the assumption is bad because even when you are marking the transactional text, how many times have you used that rubric to mark, but yet you still need it. So the assumption is the kids have memorized it. And that is a weird assumption. So I called out the rubric, and the rubric says: a specialized knowledge in terms of uhm...format, outstanding would be you have specialized knowledge, discipline writing, learner maintains focus throughout without discretion. text is fully adherent; content and ideas are all detailed supporting the topic. Evidence of planning or drafting is produced presentably.
T4	And does it say plan?
T3	It doesn't say anything. It just says…(incomplete sentence).
F	And then language and style is grammatically accurate and the vocabulary is appropriate for purpose. Style, tone, register very appropriate. Text virtually error-free, following proof reading and correctness.
T3	The rubric is also very important so that student know that they need to plan problem because that wasn't mentioned in the instructions.
T2	Yes. Wow, I can't believe it's saying and here there's no… (incomplete sentence). And also there's no space on it honestly. Where are you going to plan.
T4	But also the rubric is really a water-down version of HL. They asked the exact same detail and you know… (incomplete sentence). It's the first time I've read error-free. And also for FAL, everything they expect from HL has been watered down into FAL. Which is unfair.
F	Okay so what are they expecting that you taught is that… (incomplete sentence). I am going to say writing and presenting.
T3	Would it be a crazy notion to bring back higher grade and standard grade HL and FAL?
T2	The basic thing is whether whatever we call it is irrelevant; but that FAL needs to be completely redesigned. From the foundation.
T1	Everything needs to be re-designed. Like the idea of teaching kids… (incomplete sentence). English teachers…(incomplete sentence).
T2	And with cognizant of the way that English has dominated and oppressed other languages. That means we are all taking account into the designing of the English curriculum. Critical English. the learners are like we're learning English and it does help us for certain things but also has an oppressive role in society. Not being able to speak English… (incomplete sentence). And even being able to English can sometimes marginalize you. So that means that there needs to be… (incomplete sentence). The curriculum is very much apolitical and ahistorical; doesn't take into account the real factors that affect the learning of these subjects.
T3	Basically, the assessment, the planning and writing of all of this stuff needs to be given back to the teacher to do. Instead of having people sitting at the top there, who never ever come into the classes making and setting the assessments. There is complete disconnect with what they give and the reality that teachers are faced with.
T2	You know what I find; was when my school used to do the common papers for our district… (incomplete sentence). We reject that stuff. The common paper for grade 9 for our Gauteng region is always set by the Afrikaans schools. That means that the level of content and… (incomplete sentence). You can clearly see Mrs …. set this schedule. Meanwhile all the kasi schools are getting this stuff… (incomplete sentence). firstly, it is irrelevant and secondly it is clear set for those kids who are that level of the curriculum and is asked in a way so that they can get it. That goes back to the curriculum itself. I don't know how much this has changed if you go back to … (incomplete sentence). It would be interesting to look at the English paper set during the Apartheid era for Afrikaans-medium kids doing English. I think it is pretty much this. I don't think that it is very different.

T4	That's interesting.
T1	I can't find the …(incomplete sentence).
T3	I don't think you would find a structured…(incomplete sentence), like this.
T2	But it would be interesting to whatever they have and seeing if it fundamentally different.
T1	Do you think you can find a work schedule or something similar to a work schedule.
F	I can't find it and I really did look.
F	Okay so for this question, I got to term 2. Term 2 specifically says diary entry, for the correct purpose and all of that. I think I agree with you it doesn't matter how many times I teach this I think that they must have the rubric.
F	And I guess they even focus on process writing.
T3	And *abashing* (they didn't) say anything about planning, drafting, editing and whatever.
T4	So to assume that they will just naturally do that…(incomplete sentence).
F	Let's move onto the next Question. Text 3
T3	"she sees a hungry dog, giant ant *inaudible. He rolls on the beach the whole day. With his clashing feet and shaggy jaws. Hour upon hour he roars. The rumbling and stumbling *inaudible. The giant seadog moans, licking his greasy paws. And when the night wind roars and the moon rocks the stormy cloud. He bows to his feet and sniffs and sniffs. Shaking his *inaudible over the *inaudible. He howls and hollows. *inaudible final sentence."
T4	This was used at a HL school and a former model C school. These are the kids who were exposed to and grew up around the sea. And this poem…(incomplete sentence).
F	So poetry; key features of a poem: internal structure of the poem shows features of speech and imagery; rhyme and rhythm; external structure of the poem; lines words and stanzas; typography; figurative meaning; mood theme and message
T1	Is this term 2, go back to term 1.
F	Term 1 poetry, yes it is this.
T2	The only column that actually changes is this one.
T3	So now how is this different from HL and whatever is required from HL.
T4	That is the point that I am making exactly.
T3	Therefore, a privileged HL school that has been exposed to this tempo… (incomplete sentence). So then my questions is then are there prescribed poems that must be taught in…(incomplete sentence).
T4	No. no.
T3	I think that there should be. Especially if we're going to be doing things like ANAs to track that everyone in the country has the tools.
T2	But jam, the ANA is supposed to be diagnostic and I guess the whole thing is that they assume that all learners have been taught the various things on how to analyse poetry and so they will be able to do this. This is assumed but not fair. If you give this paper to hundreds and thousands of people in the country…I really don't think that this poem is not culturally accessible to many people within this country. There are a lot of assumptions. I don't think it's a bad poem but I can see how it can be limiting.
T3	Many people think that it is a poem about a dog.
T1	Is it not? It is confusing.
T3	No it is about comparing the dog to the sea.
F	Really, I thought it was about the dog.
T3	*Yabona ke* (You see the problem).
T2	That very sociocultural act of having a dog, and taking it to the beach to walk. It is a limited experienced.
T1	My big concern is that it is an extended metaphor that is complex.
T4	I'd like to know what's the HL paper looks like, from the same year.
T2	The whole poem is the sea is the dog and its actually quite complex because if you think about it…(incomplete sentence).

T4	The sea is being compared to a dog, in its actions and the way that it rolls on the beach etc. and every time the sea goes over the rocks, it's like a dog biting on bones. So it is complex. And this is not FAL.
T2	No, and that start… (incomplete sentence). To be able to make that mental image…(incomplete sentence).
T3	You need to be able to imagine the sea and the way in which the sea interacts with the beach.
T2	And you also need to be able to see a dog playing on the beach, which is not a common thing for everyone. And to think that this piece of paper, we could have put something cool that goes out to everybody in the country. I just think that people need to think carefully about the texts they put it. You have an opportunity to put a text out there that is going to speak to a lot of kids. It's such a beautiful opportunity to exposure them to something great.
T4	This is a poem for higher-order level thinking.
T1	I actually sat one day and looked at the English paper 2. The learners wrote the paper from a spiritual perspective and they have never done as well in any paper. And it is because I actually sat and…(incomplete sentence).
F	You thought about them.
T1	And this whole time I had thought that these people can't write. Even basic sentence construction. For the first time I actually read things that made sense.
T4	Ja, because they could relate to things that were relevant to them.
	Also HL from the same paper doesn't have… (incomplete sentence). I feel like poem is like an elevated language. Language at its best. Like we can appreciate the beauty of language through a poem. But the problem is that you are placing a poem in a FAL paper not in a HL?
T2	And then on top of that, the text that you choose is difficult and not appropriate.
F	Let's quickly move on.
T2	So the paper you set was it like a writing paper?
T1	jam
T2	So the topics that you gave them you actually though about them. Good. You must share that I would like to see what you've put in.
T4	The questions are very…(incomplete sentence).
F	Technical
T4	Ja, they don't rely on you understanding the poem. So question 8 says…(incomplete sentence).
T2	The terminology and the figures of speech are just too much.
T3	Except for 9 where it says he rolls on the beach.
T4	Ja, except for 9.
T3	Here in 9 they need to be able to do some higher-order thinking in order to understand…(incomplete sentence).
F	But it's also the naming. You need to be able to understand what a literation is and so on.
T3	You need to be able to understand the tone.
T2	Oh and when I read this. This is; this is an unfair question because he rolls on the beach all day refers to… (incomplete sentence). You could argue that it refers to a dog and the way in which the waves beating on the shore. Because that is the whole purpose of the metaphor. It's both at the same time, right. That's what it does. It compares two things. You could answer either one of these, whereas both could be correct. Or maybe it is because of the title of the poem is "the sea", we could lean on the fact that it is actually talking about the sea.
T3	That's also if you know if that the poem is about the sea and not simply a dog at the sea.
T2	I would argue that it is talking about the sea and the dog at the sea. That's the whole metaphor, to compare two images connected in your mind.
T3	My issue would then be that it is not fair to test poetry in multiple choice.

T2	Or you can test stuff like this, where there is truly one right answer. But a lot of poetry is interpretation; is your background knowledge etc. so how can you test it in a multiple choice. Question 9 must fall.
F	Cool. So we are saying that multiple choice is a problem and that you can't test a poem through multiple choice questions.
T2	Well, you can't test most really good or important questions about a poem through multiple choice. You can technical stuff like the first part. I also hate the way we treat poetry. It's all done so that you are enabled to identify symbols; not so that your express yourself, not to exert power or to describe your background. Its back-to-front. Poets don't think "I am going to show everyone how good I am at… (incomplete sentence)." No they bleed onto the page. It's about the emotions and deeper connections. But when we test it is it's in the form of "what is the metaphor in line 2".
F	Let's to the April fools…(incomplete sentence).
T4	"If you've being on the receiving end, uhm, an April fool's day prank you may wonder how this tradition started. Well, you're not alone. No one knows how this day begun. But the most likely explanation has to do with the calendar. People used to celebrate New Years' day on the first of April, just like today people would have big parties to celebrate. Overtime, the calendar change and so did the date for the start of the new year. In the 1500s the calendar marked New Year's day as the 1st of January. But because there was no internet or other means to spread the word, the news travelled slowly by word of mouth. It took a while for everyone to hear about the change. But even then, some people resisted and continued to celebrate New Years' on the 1st of April. These people were given the nickname "April fools". People following the new calendar played tricks on the April fools by sending them on fool's errands. They had them deliver invitations to big New Years' celebrations that weren't really going to happen. In France, April Fools was called *French word inaudible, which is French for April fish. This began because people thought that fish were easy to catch and fooled into taking the bait and hook. Children would tag paper fish on a person's bag to mark them as an April fish. When the person discovered the tag. Not everyone is convinced that this how April fools actually began. People have been trying figure he exacts date when April fools began. This only lead to more pranks. A professor from Boston university pulled a prank on a reporter by making up a story that a clown could run the empire better than the king. The clown was made king for that day on the 1st of April. Even though we are not sure how this tradition began people still celebrate it by playing tricks on each other. So the next time you trick someone remember that the day may actually be about the people who didn't want to the traditions when the new calendar was adopted. Or maybe, it's just a day to celebrate the joker in all of us"
F	This isn't a test question. This is a pre-reading, pre-understanding. Okay like now we know about Aprils fools let's go home we'll come back. It's a that question. You don't give it to me in a test and then say go forth and prosper.
T3	Ja, You must now also learn how to pronounce that French word.
F	I think I've taught this before. I can't remembering saying what you said [referring to pronunciation of the French word in excerpt].
T1	I personally feel like these comprehensions… (incomplete sentence). I don't like this because its April fools and *inaudible. If you tell me about valentine's day, because it is a celebrated day every year.
T3	Earlier, it was said that cultural access to these things. Pranking and all of that is not something that black kids do. It's not a culture. We don't have a whole dedicated to this.
T1	It could have rather been done on something about Spring day.
T2	Throwing water and all of that, yes.
T1	That is something that they can relate to. So I would have chosen something else, but I like this type of thing where…(incomplete sentence).
T2	Sure, as long as its …(incomplete sentence).

F	And even then, so even if it is… (incomplete sentence). Let's say it was Guy folk's day. Guy Folks day would have been a horrible text to give during a test. Because yes we know *'open peni'*. But then you need to understand that root of when it written. I can't be fighting context. Fighting understanding. And then fighting the questions.	
T2	As a class thing you can do that, because you can engage with it better. It is something that they do, but it does have connections to other things so indeed it would be interesting to learn about that.	
T1	So what's the answer? *inaudible sentences. Remember that with them at the end it may have been about the people who indeed didn't want to change the calendar or even to celebrate the joke with all of us.	
F	okay	
T1	Maybe it's A. to indeed celebrate the joker in all of us.	
T2	I would have said C, but I can see how a learner… (incomplete sentence). I don't think I would have inferred A. I would have said C. I see A as a possible answer, yes.	
T1	Maybe the whole point of it would have to persuade.	
T4	I don't think imp persuaded.	
F	I think it's about the history. So what I said was that this isn't just a comprehension. It is also like a newspaper article or information comprehension. So I said that I'm guessing they want you to know how to read an information comprehension. And purpose and target audience.	
T2	And the overall message. Sort of summarizing everything.	
F	But like what you guys are saying is that if this thing is hard to figure out then I'm not just testing you on purpose and target audience. I am also testing you on worded tax (*inaudible exact word) and and.	
T2	Again, to do well at this question there is a whole hidden array of things and knowledge's and stuff that you needed to have been quite comfortable with if you are going to do well at this.	
T3	Okay, Question 12?	
F	Identify the topic in paragraph 1.	
T2	Did they say the topic sentence or just the …(incomplete sentence)?	
T3	It just says topic.	
T1	I think that one was meant to look at the topic sentence.	
F	Me too.	
T2	What are the options?	
T4	So there's skimming and scanning.	
F	Okay.	
T2	I would say B.	
T3	Ja me too.	
T1	Like you need to scan and *inaudible.	
T3	You also realise that it's not asking… (incomplete sentence). The question itself is not asking you identify the topic sentence.	
T2	It's the main idea of the paragraph.	
T3	Which means that the question requires you to analyse.	
T2	This is a little bit confusing because sometimes you ask learners what is the topic sentence, now you're asking them what is the topic.	
T1	So then the main idea of the paragraph.	
F	Oh okay	
T3	I think because one you say identify the topic, most learners will go and identify the topic sentence.	
T2	And I also find a lot of learners find that the word 'topic' and the word 'title' are interchangeable for them. So they might even just write 'April fools' because that is the title. So that's like the topic. Sometimes you say what are your essay topics, but it is	

	actually titles your giving them. We confuse these kids and expect them to show that they are not confused.	
T1	I really feel like *completely inaudible.	
F	Okay so can we do number 13. Write down four main points about April fools. This is the first time that they need to write. Four main points.	