

**An investigation into the critique that selected
independent schools have about the National
Curriculum Statement (NCS)**

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**RESEARCH REPORT
SUBMITTED AS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF A
MASTERS DEGREE IN EDUCATION**

2008

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ABSTRACT

This research report investigates the critique that selected independent schools have about the new curriculum in South Africa, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The NCS was introduced in response to the implementation of a political democratic dispensation in South Africa, in an attempt to marry the philosophy of democracy to education. The NCS is fundamentally different to the apartheid curriculum in that it is based on democratic values that are derived from the South African Constitution. The independent school sector has been vocal in its critique of the NCS. This study thus investigates this critique in an attempt to uncover the reasons that underlie it.

Methodologically, this research project is located in the qualitative paradigm. The research participants comprised teachers and heads of curriculum from three schools in the independent sector, as well as managers from the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). The IEB is the assessment body to which the independent school sector belongs. The independent school sector that this study focused on is upper middle class high-fee paying schools, which are located in the ex whites-only suburbs in South Africa. To gather data from the research participants, I used questionnaires and interviews. The combination of structured and unstructured interviews allowed me to systematically probe the research participants' understandings and views on the NCS. The themes that emerged from the findings are: (1) the old curriculum is used as a benchmark for the NCS; (2) democratic values teaching in the NCS is regarded as optional and (3) educators continue to hold on to their identities in alignment with the past curriculum. One of the key factors that is used to judge the worth of an independent school is the academic results that the school achieves. This has prompted the independent school sector to continue with the same pedagogical practices that they used in the past curriculum, since they have provided the sought-after academic results. In this regard, very little democratic values teaching is taking place in the schools, as intended by the implementation of the NCS. The IEB, as the assessment body, continues to focus on assessment practices that are largely reminiscent of the past curriculum where the main focus was on summative forms of assessment (form of assessment that is used to record a judgement of the

performance or competence of a learner), rather than on formative forms of assessment (form of assessment that gives feedback to the learners so that they can improve their performance). This research project concludes with possible suggestions for each group of research participants that could assist them to implement the NCS as it was intended; that is, as a democratic values-based transformational curriculum. Recommendations for future research are also made.

KEY WORDS: **Curriculum transformation**
 Values education
 Educator identity
 Curriculum critique
 Educator autonomy

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Ranganayigi Naidoo, the best mother in the world, and to the memory of my father, Harry Naidoo, who continues to guide me every day of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the help and support I received from different people while I was working on this research project. In particular I would like to mention:

Doctor Juliet Perumal, my supervisor. Thank you for the advice and guidance that you gave me as I struggled to find my way through this process. Your friendship, encouragement, patience and critical input helped me to develop as a person and a researcher.

Doctor Lorraine Marneweck, a trusted friend. Your help and support has been inspirational. Your understanding of the South African educational scenario in general, and the independent school sector in particular, has been invaluable to me in this research project.

My colleagues and friends at Sacred Heart College. Your interest and support have helped to sustain me over the period that I took to complete this research project.

A special thanks to the IEB managers, heads of curriculum, and teachers, for your generosity with your time.

My enduring gratitude to my mother for her unending belief in me, my brother Revan, and my sisters Sivan and Bashee for their complete love and support.

Thank you to my husband Nersan; you have been such a pillar of support to me in this work that it literally could not have been done without you.

Finally and most importantly, thank you to my beautiful sons, Viashin and Dheshanth, whose wisdom, grace and love never fail to amaze and inspire me.

DISCLAIMER

I, Thiruvani Govender declare that this research report:

An investigation into the critique that selected independent schools have about the National Curriculum Statement (NCS),

is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

This research report has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

THIRUVANI GOVENDER

14 FEBRUARY 2008

ACRONYMS

CNE:	Christian National Education
HOC:	Head/s of Curriculum
HSRC:	Human Sciences Research Council
IEB:	Independent Examinations Board
MEd:	Masters in Education
NCS:	National Curriculum Statement
OBE:	Outcomes-Based Education
RNCS:	Revised National Curriculum Statement

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PREAMBLE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the critique levelled by the independent school sector¹ about the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), a new curriculum in South Africa, which was introduced in 2006.

RATIONALE

The current landscape of independent schooling is characterised by two types of schools: smaller, predominantly black, low-to-average-fee schools, and larger, predominantly white, high-fee schools (Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Survey of Independent Schools in Post-Apartheid South Africa: 2002). The HSRC classifies low-to-average-fee schools as annual fees costing up to R6000, while high-fee schools charge annual fees of R6000 and more. Since joining the independent school sector in 1998, I was one of a very small group of ‘non-white’ teachers teaching in the mainly white high-fee elite schools. The schools that I came into contact with serviced mainly the upper-middle class economic sectors of society, located in ex whites-only suburbs.

While independent schools are still obliged to subscribe to the national curriculum, they have a separate assessment body to the state sector. This assessment body is called the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) that oversees all curriculum and assessment issues. Evident at the time that I joined this sector, was that the majority of the ‘non-white’ teachers employed in these schools taught the indigenous languages and not the subjects that are traditionally considered to be ‘high stakes’ (like Mathematics, Science, etc.). The schools were dominated by Eurocentric traditions and were led by white managers in spite of an increasing number of black children being registered as learners. Even though my position was unique in that I was a senior Mathematics teacher, I sensed that my colleagues doubted my ability to teach Mathematics competently. In staff

¹ The independent school sector in this study refers to a group of upper-middle class independent schools that are located in ex whites-only suburbs, as well as its examining authority, the Independent Examinations Board (IEB).

meetings, for instance, my opinions were politely listened to, but then ignored and the discussion continued as if I had not ventured an opinion.

At my first matriculation marking session for the IEB, the chief examiner of the marking group constantly checked up on me until, after the second day, she could ‘see’ that I knew what I was doing. This was even though I had clearly indicated on the application form that I had submitted to be a marker that I had nine years of marking experience, albeit with the state sector. I felt that I had to prove myself before I could be trusted to mark the papers competently. At the same time, there were a few ‘first-time’ markers from other schools, but they were all white and did not have to undergo the same level of scrutiny that I experienced.

The school in which I teach has a history of progressive education; the school was vocal about the injustices of apartheid and was one of the first ‘white’ schools to open its doors to black learners. Black learners have formed the majority of the school’s learner population since the late 1980s, but the large majority of the teachers remain white. I had the distinct sense that I needed to prove myself to be an accepted member of this teaching community. When attending joint meetings of all the independent schools, I got the impression that there was a feeling of ‘superiority’ that the teachers had about how ‘we’ do things compared to how ‘they’ (schools under the direct control of the National Department of Education) do things. This impression was created by the ways in which colleagues spoke and the terminology that they used (for example, “dropping standards”, “we have no choice in the matter”, “they (black learners) need it, so we have to suffer as well,” and so on). At the ‘User Group’ meetings (a national meeting of all independent school subject teachers), there were often disparaging comments about the adjustments that teachers had to make in order to cope with teaching the new curriculum. In my view, this kind of rhetoric was meant to maintain clear dichotomies between the independent and the state schooling sectors. Teachers in these elite independent schools wanted to retain their autonomy and seemed to resent what they perceived to be the prescriptive nature of the demands of the new curriculum. Academically, the independent schools do have an impressive record and coping with the content and pedagogy of the NCS was not

considered to be a big challenge. In my view, what was new for the independent schools was the expectation that their implementation of the new curriculum should include engagement with the socio-political transformative agenda of the NCS and the need for explicit democratic values-based teaching. My interest was piqued - I needed to explore where these criticisms stemmed from, and the extent to which they were or were not justified. This is what I investigate in this research.

Clearly, my experiences as a black teacher in an independent school frame the lens through which I present and analyse my data. Throughout this research report I have tried to be as objective as possible; but it should be noted that my professional involvement in the context under investigation makes me less than an observer.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- (1) What was the motivation for the introduction of the New Curriculum Statement in South Africa?
- (2) What critique is being levelled about the NCS by the independent school sector?
- (3) What are the main underlying reasons for the critique that is levelled about the NCS by the independent school sector?
- (4) How do the following issues inform the critique:
 - the transformative agenda of the NCS?
 - the values-based teaching of the NCS?
 - teacher autonomy?
 - teacher identity?

RELEVANCE OF STUDY

The findings from this research could be useful to:

(1) Teachers, principals and curriculum specialists from the independent school sector. They are likely to be interested in the findings of this research, which could possibly challenge them to question their own taken-for-granted assumptions about curriculum change.

(2) Curriculum commentators; since the literature on the NCS curriculum is lacking sufficient comment about the experiences and views of independent school educators in general; a small but powerful group.

(3) Educators from the state sector who also have opinions on the NCS and the impact it has on their teaching and learning.

PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

This study will focus on the independent schools that are located in ex whites-only suburbs, which serves an elite, though now more diverse, population group. These schools are classified as the high-fee schools in the independent sector (HSRC Survey of Independent Schools, 2002). The IEB, as the schools examining authority, will also form part of the focus. The independent school sector comprises of many examining bodies, one of which is the IEB. For instance, other independent schools subscribe to the Waldorf and Montessori examinations, and the International Baccalaureate. The NCS is divided into four different phases; the Foundation phase (grades 1-3), the Intermediate phase (grades 4-6), the Senior phase (grades 7-9) and the Further Education and Training phase (grades 10-12). This study will focus on the Further Education and Training phase.

RESEARCH OUTLINE

This research report is presented in four chapters:

Chapter 1 - THE POLITICS OF CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

A review of the literature in the broad areas of curriculum change, democratic values-based curriculum and teacher identity is presented in this chapter. Specifically, the historical context of and the background to the NCS are outlined. The NCS documents and supporting documents are detailed to demonstrate their socio-political values base. The manner in which teachers either resist or comply with identity and autonomy changes is also probed.

Chapter 2 - METHODOLOGY

The qualitative nature of the research design and the research methods are explained in this chapter. The processes and techniques employed in the collection and analysis of the data are described. I theorise about the research tools and describe the processes and practices that I employed in relation to each; namely questionnaires and interviews. Ethical issues are also considered.

Chapter 3 - ANALYSING THE CRITIQUE OF THE NCS BY THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SECTOR

In this chapter I present the insights and findings that emerged from the data collection and analytical processes. The research data are categorised into several themes that emerged during the data and content analysis processes. The themes are: The scope of the content, Assessment, The past curriculum as a benchmark for the NCS, Curriculum knowledge versus curriculum ideology, Teaching to the examination, Values are subject-specific, Values as an optional add-on, A retrospective identity, and Autonomy and power. The views of each group of research participants, namely IEB managers, heads of curriculum and teachers, are presented separately in each category.

Chapter 4 - THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW CURRICULUM: DILEMMAS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter draws together the conclusions of the preceding chapters and derives from them suggestions for IEB managers, heads of curriculum and teachers in their implementation of the NCS. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 1

THE POLITICS OF CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

In this chapter, I review the literature relevant to this particular research. I start by setting the historical context of this research by indicating the role that independent schools have played in South Africa and by detailing the background to the implementation of the NCS in all South African schools. I then present a discussion on the socio-political underpinnings of the NCS. In so doing, I argue for the importance of the democratic values-based foundation of the NCS in the South African democratic political dispensation. The chapter ends with a consideration of the role of the teacher within a democratic curriculum by probing the manner in which teachers comply or resist the identity changes that are required to successfully implement the NCS.

1.1. THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1.1.1 A brief history of independent schools

In order to address the issues around the critique that the independent school sector levelled at the NCS, I begin by presenting a brief review of the type of independent schools that are my focus in this research. Independent schools can generally be characterised as primarily Christian religious schools; historically their focus was directed towards the education of white settlers and throughout time they have maintained a high degree of autonomy. These religious schools for whites concurrently established separate schools for blacks stemming from a missionary ideology aimed at spreading Christianity among indigenous people. The Bantu Education system (1953) legalised the entrenchment of apartheid education that advocated separate schooling and separate curricula for each race. As a response to this, in opposition to Bantu Education, most of the independent religious schools closed their institutions for blacks on religious grounds (Christie, 1988). There was also a fiscal reason for closure, as the state subsidy had been withdrawn from these schools. Those independent schools for black learners that remained open struggled to continue to offer a good quality education, as the

removal of the state subsidy meant that their human and physical resources had to be down-scaled. The white religious schools, however, retained the resources that enabled them to offer a privileged education, largely as they continued to be partially subsidised by the state. Although the religious schools ‘opposed’ apartheid in principle, there was little they could do about the enforced legislation of separate schooling. The white religious schools took on a privileged status, as they were perceived to offer a better education than their black counterparts, and as they continued to be highly resourced due to the subsidies that they continued to receive both from the state and from the church. (Jansen and Christie (1999) show that there is not necessarily a correlation between highly resourced schools and a quality education).

The white religious schools, although obliged to follow the state curriculum, could deviate from it in terms of their curricula offerings and assessments, since a large part of their curriculum was based on religious theology. Their privileged status afforded them a large degree of autonomy from the state, and they began to play “a leading role in [the] education system” (McGurk, 1990: 20) because of the perceived high quality of education that they were able to offer. The academic standards at these schools were comparable to international standards and many white learners used these schools as stepping stones to access education in other countries. These schools were increasingly seen as a part of the elite establishment since they were only affordable to the economically well off. Very few black teachers and learners were employed or admitted to these schools. The rationale for the former was that “the politics of excellence that most private [independent] schools have touted relate to standards, mainly academic, but also sporting and ‘cultural’”. Also there has been a need to charge very high fees to maintain those ‘standards’” (McGurk, 1990: 26). Historically, the old religious schools opposed apartheid but this did not translate into the schools being open to all races, as the reality of the high fees and entry requirements (‘to maintain standards’) prevented equal access to all learners and teachers. This history has resulted in the teacher body in most independent schools still remaining largely white although there has been an increase in the number of black learners.

Currently, some independent schools in this study are affiliated to a separate assessment body (the IEB), so while they are required to follow the national curriculum of the state, they still enjoy a large degree of autonomy with regard to their teaching and assessment practices. The IEB claims that its mission is “to make a significant, on-going contribution to human resource development through the design, delivery and promotion of a wide range of high quality, affordable assessment products and services to all [independent school] sectors” (IEB website: About Us). The IEB also facilitates teacher training and development in curriculum and assessment matters.

1.1.2 Background to the implementation of the NCS

Curriculum reforms have to be understood generally, but specifically in post-1994 South Africa, as “primarily a political response to apartheid schooling” (Jansen, 1998: 24). Apartheid education has been noted as racist, Eurocentric, sexist, authoritarian, prescriptive, unchanging, context-blind and discriminatory (Jansen, 1999). The curriculum at the time of apartheid was guided by the philosophy of ‘Christian National Education (CNE)’, which was beset by educational inequality and institutionalised apartheid cultural and ideological forms, central to which were white supremacy and the justification of racial separation. Education was also politicised. For instance, Article 15 of the CNE policy of 1948 states:

We believe that the calling and task of White South Africa with regard to the native is to Christianise him and help him on culturally, and that this calling and task has already found its nearer focusing in the principles of trusteeship, no equality and segregation. We believe besides that any system of teaching and education of natives must be based on the same principle. In accordance with these principles we believe that the teaching and education of the native must be grounded in the life and worldview of the Whites most especially those of the Boer nation as senior White trustee of the native ...

The education system was an obvious means of control to protect white power and privilege. At the same time, education for black South Africans was intended to restrict

the development of the learner by distorting school knowledge to ensure control over the intellect of the learners and teachers, and spreading state propaganda (Kallaway, 1988).

Critical to the success of the apartheid curriculum was passivity among the teachers, who were at the forefront of the implementation and who did not challenge it - at least not adequately. This is not meant to undermine the power that the 'hidden' or subversive' curriculum had on the ability of education to challenge the status quo, but the success of the apartheid curriculum supersedes the inroads that the 'hidden' curriculum had made on the dominant ideology of apartheid at the time. Christie (1986: 12 in Jansen, 1990) defines the 'hidden' curriculum as "the unofficial school knowledge, values, and norms transmitted outside of the formal curriculum that also act as powerful determinants of state ideology". The hidden curriculum attests to the power that teachers do have: they could perpetuate the ideology that is dictated by the curriculum or they could provide ways and means to challenge it. Giroux (2000: 37) maintains that "educating for critical citizenship and civic courage, in part, means redefining the role of academics [teachers] as engaged public intellectuals . . . who can come together to explore the crucial role that culture plays in revising and strengthening the fabric of public life". During apartheid, teachers who 'succeeded' in challenging the imperatives of the state via the 'hidden' curriculum were enacting the role of 'public intellectuals'. The policy of racial discrimination that was entrenched in the curriculum at the time and its concomitant disregard for human dignity enhanced the validity and value of the 'hidden' curriculum.

The magnitude of the apartheid-era disparities in educational provision necessitated that, with the official ending of apartheid in 1994, an educational system that matched the values and ideology of an emerging democracy needed to be created. This necessitated the introduction of an education system based on the foundations of democracy, non-racism, non-sexism and justice. Curriculum developers and policy-makers "approached this task with high aspirations for all levels of education, [but] the challenge they faced would have been daunting under any circumstances [and] made more so by the continuing legacy of apartheid" (Fiske and Ladd, 2004: 60). As Kelly (2004) notes, curriculum, in response to the needs of a society, shifts from teaching for the knowledge

society that has the aims of meeting the needs of market fundamentalism and cultural transmission, to teaching beyond the knowledge society that has the aims of social and economic empowerment in a social democracy. Schools are “venues of hope [and] sites of resistance and democratic possibility” (Kincheloe, 1999: 71). The intention/s of introducing a new curriculum in South Africa was on the one hand to rid the educational system of any trace of racial and discriminatory material, but on the other hand, to “meet the imperatives of social and economic development and globalisation” (National Curriculum Statement - Overview, 2002: 2). Very few political systems in the world matched the enormity of the levels of disempowerment and disenfranchisement of many South Africans by a political dispensation and the congruent achievement by education; hence the need to address the curriculum was perceived as being urgent in the new government’s agenda for change.

1.1.3 The introduction of a new curriculum

Bruner (1999: 156) contends: “how a culture or society manages its system of education is a major embodiment of a culture’s way of life, not just a preparation for it”. There is little to debate about the crucial role that education plays in society, and Bruner’s (1999) view is strongly suggestive of education being regarded as a subset of culture. On the one hand, education is a manifestation of a particular culture, but on the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, education has the capacity to impact on that culture and to reconstruct it. This was the hope and aim behind the introduction of a new curriculum in South Africa; the democratic political dispensation required a curriculum that would facilitate the transformation from apartheid education to an educational system that mirrored the ideals of a democracy.

In January 1998, “an explosion of curriculum actively thundered across South Africa” (Jansen, 1998: 25), arguably before the constraints around the implementation and the proficiency of the content knowledge of many of the teachers, themselves the product of Bantu Education, were thought through. Initially, the national curriculum initiative was to purge the apartheid syllabus of its offensive discriminatory material. This was insufficient

to meet the expectations of the political dispensation, and a series of White Papers in education emerged that spelt out the need for a restructuring of the entire apartheid curriculum. In 1996, the idea of an outcomes-based approach (an approach that regards the ‘what’ of the learning process as more important than the ‘how’) was mooted, but this was thought to be a premature move because teachers had to cope with a curriculum that was unfamiliar to their experiences. However, with the end of apartheid, there was an urgent need to marry the philosophical underpinnings of democracy to a congruent curriculum. The birth and implementation of Curriculum 2005, a curriculum that was developed within an outcomes-based framework for the first nine years of schooling, was done in haste in an attempt to create parallel structures in South Africa that would mirror the democratic political ideals of the time. As Sieborger (undated: 3) correctly points out: “Naïve optimism prevailed, driven by very sincere attempts to sweep out the old and usher in the new as speedily and completely as possible”. The result of this was that Curriculum 2005 was beset by problems, ranging from “a skewed curriculum structure and design” (Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005, Appendix 5, 2000: 5) to inadequate resourcing of schools and unmanageable time frames for implementation.

These problems were acknowledged at the highest political level, culminating in the then Minister of Education commissioning a national review of Curriculum 2005. Among other things, the Review Committee proposed a revised Curriculum 2005 (called the Revised National Curriculum Statement - the RNCS) that was intended to reduce the complexity of Curriculum 2005. In this regard, the review focused on the structure of the curriculum and qualifications, and subject offerings. At the same time, plans were put in place for the training of teachers to cope with the demands of the revised curriculum. The implementation of the RNCS occurred by phase starting with grades 1 to 3, followed by grades 4 to 6, and ending with grades 7, 8 and 9. In 2006, the review of the final phase (grades 10-12) took place, with the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in grade 10. It is this particular NCS curriculum that is the focus of this research.

1.1.4 The design of the National Curriculum Statement

The system of Christian National Education resulted in a fragmented educational system that was characterised by, among other things, subjects that hardly related to one another; curricula that were unresponsive to the needs of the learners and South Africa, and limited mobility across pathways and institutions after the compulsory phase of schooling, which ends at Grade 9 (Department of Education, 2002). In contrast, the NCS offers three different pathways that learners can access after the compulsory phase of schooling, namely at the end of Grade 9. The General pathway is offered by all schools and incorporates grades 10 to 12; the General Vocational pathway is offered by colleges that prepare learners for work that involves vocational skills; and the Trade, Occupational and Professional pathway is offered mainly by industry-based providers, which learners can access via learnerships (that is, learners can enter the workplace and learn the skills 'on the job'). This research focuses on the first pathway, as all of the independent schools focused on in this research are traditional academic-stream institutions.

Careers and curriculum offerings in the NCS are organised into occupational categories, which are intended to broaden access to a range of career options for learners. This was done in an effort to rid the NCS of the past subject offerings, which were largely irrelevant to learners' further education and success in the world of work. The subjects in the NCS are arranged into Learning Fields, which serves as a home for cognate subjects, which integrate knowledge, skills and values. The boundaries between subjects are blurred as subjects are viewed as dynamic and responsive to new knowledge. Subjects are defined by Learning Outcomes, which are statements of intended results of learning and teaching. Assessment Standards are also supplied which function as criteria that collectively provide evidence of what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a particular grade (Department of Education, 2002). These Assessment Standards embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the Learning Outcomes. Critical and Developmental Outcomes focus on values such as critical and creative thinking, collaboration, responsibility, knowledge organisation, communication, environmental awareness and an holistic approach to problem solving. A later section

will show how these Critical and Developmental Outcomes help to develop a common citizenship that is essential for a democracy.

1.1.5 The socio-political underpinnings of the NCS

The NCS is based on principles that are aligned to the socio-political transformation of education. The Department of Education (2002) lists these principles as:

- (1) social transformation;
- (2) outcomes-based education (OBE);
- (3) high knowledge and high skills;
- (4) integration and applied competence;
- (5) progression;
- (6) articulation and portability;
- (7) human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice;
- (8) valuing indigenous knowledge systems; and
- (9) credibility, quality and efficiency.

The nine principles seek to promote human rights, social justice and environmental justice. At the same time, the principles have a dual purpose. On the one hand they are intended to empower learners to meet the requirements of the economy, and on the other hand they are meant to empower learners for effective citizenship and individual enrichment. In this regard, the pedagogical practices of the NCS curriculum are based on Bernstein's (1996) Competence and Performance models of education. The Competence model is geared towards the advancement of the 'self'. That is, cognisance is taken of the fact that individuals need to advance their own potential through education. There is a large degree of autonomy on the part of the participants (teachers and learners) in this model. In contrast, the Performance model is geared towards serving the needs of the economy. There is a strong element of control in this model and syllabi are often prescribed with the purpose of serving political or economic needs.

A curriculum is best understood if it is regarded as being produced by “agents situated within a specific social-historical context and endowed with resources and capacities of various kinds” (Thompson, 1990: 146). In this way, the interpretations that one brings to understanding a curriculum can be framed within that context and understood as such. It removes the misconception that a curriculum can be understood in an ‘objective’ manner. The non-neutrality of the curriculum is pertinent in the South African context where the NCS document has to a large extent been received with misgivings and apprehension on the one hand and with joy and hope on the other. The history of apartheid has resulted in the views and opinions of the majority of South Africans largely being expressed along racial lines. The independent schools in this study have a mainly white teacher body. The Human Sciences Research Council’s (HSRC) Survey of Independent Schools in Post-Apartheid South Africa (2004) classification of schools indicated that the schools that participated in my research would fit into the category of high-fee schools. The black learner body of these high-fee schools comprises 34,8% of the total, while the white learner body comprises 65,2% of the total. The white teacher population in these schools comprises 86,5% of the total teacher population, while the black teacher population comprises 13,5%. The NCS curriculum is perceived in many of these schools as being the product of the ‘black government’. In a similar way, many blacks regarded the past apartheid curriculum as the product of the white nationalist government. The apartheid curriculum was viewed with suspicion since it was seen as a tool to keep blacks in subjugated positions. However, because of the subordinate positions that blacks occupied in society, there was either “respectful resignation” (Thompson, 1990: 158) from those who saw education as a means to improve their lives, or “rejection” (ibid) from those who could not marry their personal values with the intentions of apartheid education.

Both the curricula of apartheid and democracy must be perceived and interpreted within their own particular social and historical contexts. The social and historical contexts result in different values being accorded to the curricula that stemmed from these different dispensations. That is, if there is cohesion between one’s beliefs and the values that are upheld by the social and political structures, then high value would be accorded to the curriculum. This holds just as true for people who in the past subscribed to

apartheid ideology as for those who subscribe to democracy. This is not meant to imply that there is a blind adherence to the NCS from those who espouse socio-political transformation. The NCS curriculum is not only about political transformation; it is also about the teaching of knowledge and skills that are important for the advancement of the economy and the self. On the other hand, low value is accorded to a curriculum when there is little or no cohesion between one's beliefs and values and the political structure. During apartheid, the social structure was "systematically asymmetrical" (Thompson, 1990: 151) and this meant that there were "dominant" (ibid) forces, which to a large extent determined the ways in which the curriculum was structured and also the ways in which it was perceived and interpreted. That is, if there was opposition to the curriculum, then it was rationalised to be out of ignorance and a lack of education. There was no credence given to the notion that there might be legitimate grounds for opposition, because the dominant frames of reference were supported by the political paradigm of apartheid. Conversely, the paradigm of democracy in South Africa has displaced the old positions of power and thus the "valorisation" of the curriculum is "subjected to complex processes of valuation, evaluation and conflict" (Thompson, 1990: 154). That is, the value or regard that one has of the curriculum is subject to interplay between power, control and rationality. In this sense, even though the political dispensation has changed, it has not necessarily been reflected in the social structuring of society. The old "fields of interaction" (Thompson, 1990: 151) have been re-formed almost to the extent that the 'intellectual' and 'social' capital has merely changed hands from whites to blacks rather than changing its essence.

With the introduction of the NCS, teachers "simply found themselves in a new curriculum world" (Harley and Wedekind, 2004: 199). For independent school teachers, this meant a change in more than just the content of the curriculum. It meant, in most cases, a change in the ideology of their conception of education. In terms of pedagogy, "there is significant documentary evidence of continuity between past practices and the [NCS] in some former white 'own affairs' departments" (ibid: 209). This statement would be equally valid for independent schools, since the norm is to continue with long established practices.

The literature around the struggle of teachers in mainly historically disadvantaged state schools to implement the new curriculum is abundant (see Jansen, 1997, 2002, Soudien, 2004, Parker and Adler, Chisholm, 2002, Jansen and Christie, 1999), but there is very little evidence, or studies to show that teachers and other educators in the independent school sector have their own struggles with which they have to contend. The literature mentioned above shows that among the struggles that teachers in state schools face are:

- (1) The lack of resources that the majority of these schools experience. In this regard, learners are inadequately supplied with textbooks and most of these schools do not have libraries that learners can access. Also, learner-centred-ness - an integral part of OBE - is difficult to realise, as the class sizes continue to be very large, making it difficult to teach.
- (2) Many teachers in state schools are not adequately qualified to cope with the demands of the NCS, which requires a high degree of teacher innovativeness and expertise.

However, Harley and Wedekind (2004) argue that, in spite of the struggles teachers in state schools face, available evidence suggests that these teachers support the NCS as a political project. That is, the majority of teachers in the historically disadvantaged schools support the idea that the NCS has a democratic post-apartheid agenda. This research report aims to explore the struggles that educators in the independent schools have with regard to implementing the NCS, and to interrogate the extent to which these struggles are connected to a lack of support for the NCS as a political project. The independent school sector that forms the focus of this study comprise the high-fee schools and are thus highly resourced in terms of teacher expertise, infrastructure and educational resources. In other words, they do not experience the same struggle to transform as do their colleagues in more disadvantaged schools.

I presented the discussion on the historical overview of curriculum discourses in South Africa to show a comparison between apartheid ideological preoccupations and the transition to a democratic curriculum as articulated in the NCS. This theoretical

comparison between the curricula was intended to help me ascertain the participants' views and ideological shifts, if any, between the apartheid curriculum and the NCS.

1.2. THE VALUES-BASED FOUNDATION OF THE NCS

This section demonstrates how democratic values are articulated in the NCS. The values of the NCS are embedded in the values of the South African Constitution. In this sense, the intention is that South Africa's political transformation from apartheid to democracy will be supported by education. The ways in which this can be achieved are explored in the following discussion.

1.2.1 The articulation of values in education

The aims of the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, are to:

- (1) Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.
- (2) Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person.
- (3) Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law.
- (4) Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

The ten fundamental values of the Constitution include Democracy, Social Justice and Equity, Non-Racism and Non-Sexism, Ubuntu (Human Dignity), An Open Society, Accountability, Respect, The Rule of Law, and Reconciliation. These values reflect the transformational agenda of the Constitution and are used to inform all government policies, including the NCS.

To this end, the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001) identifies sixteen strategies for familiarising learners with the values of the Constitution. These strategies were devised to give expression to the values of the

Constitution in education. At the same time, the strategies are meant to enable schools to help in the process of realising the aims of the Constitution. The premise was that values cannot be legislated without a concomitant dialogue and discussion. Schools are the sites at which these dialogues and discussions are meant to occur. Examples of some of the sixteen strategies that are relevant to this study are:

Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in school. Communication and participation are the two bastions of the democratic process. The classroom is the space in which learners can express themselves without feeling threatened. This strategy can be aligned to the notion of freedom of speech and expression.

Infusing the classroom with a culture of human rights. The emphasis of human rights in the classroom is aimed at ensuring that the curriculum will address issues of racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.

Promoting anti-racism in schools. Schools are expected to work on integration even though schools are still segregated.

The introduction of religious education into schools. Exposing learners to different religions seeks to endorse the values of diversity, tolerance, respect and compassion. This is in contrast to CNE education, which was based on Christianity and Afrikaner nationalism to the exclusion of all else.

Nurturing the new patriotism, or affirming our common citizenship. Schools are obliged to promote a shared sense of pride in commonly held values in an effort to create a national identity.

Role modelling: Promoting commitment as well as competence among educators. Educators are expected to model the behaviour that they expect from learners. At the same time, educators must ensure that they are appropriately qualified to teach.

While it is necessary for teachers to have the theoretical knowledge of the democratic values of the NCS, it is more important that the way they teach these values is done in a way that makes the medium the message. Kelly (2004: 85) notes: “what is central [to a transformative curriculum] is not what our curriculum offers but how it is offered”. This is in alignment with the principle of a learner-centred education such as OBE (outcomes-based education). In this sense, the knowledge and the skills offered by the subjects in the

NCS has to be seen in alignment with the values that underpin each of them. The NCS subject documents outline the content, assessment and skills that are to be taught in each of the subjects. At the same time, however, the NCS subject documents play a role in creating an awareness of the values of the Constitution and the ways in which these values help in creating and promoting a democratic society.

The Social Science subjects were introduced into the NCS curriculum because of their role in values formation. For example, History is intended to develop in learners “a commitment to addressing social injustice, abuse of human rights and a deteriorating environment” (Department of Education: History, 2001: 7). Geography, another of the Social Science subjects, is meant to “prepare learners to become informed, critical and responsible citizens who can make sound judgements and take appropriate action that will contribute to equitable and sustainable development of human society and the physical environment” (Department of Education: Geography, 2002: 9). Life Orientation, a compulsory subject in school, is arguably the subject that encompasses values formation as its primary focus. The subject document states the purpose of Life Orientation thus:

Life Orientation equips learners to engage on personal, psychological, neuro-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, socio-economic and constitutional levels, to respond positively to the demands of the world, to assume responsibilities, and to make the most of life’s opportunities. It enables learners to know how to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to respect the rights of others, and to value diversity, health and well-being. Life Orientation promotes knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that prepare learners to respond effectively to the challenges that confront them as well as the challenges that they will have to deal with as adults, and to play a meaningful role in society and the economy (Department of Education: Life Orientation, 2002: 4).

However, the teaching of values underpins all subjects, not just the Social Sciences; even those subjects that are traditionally regarded as having very little social focus. For

instance, the Accounting subject document (Department Of Education: Accounting, 2003: 9) states:

By engaging in Accounting, learners will be able to acquire skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that can contribute directly or indirectly to the improvement of standard of living, human development and productivity, and create opportunities for all.

Physical Science aims at correcting some of the historical limitations of the Christian National Education (CNE) curriculum:

Physical Science contributes towards the holistic development of learners by developing insights and respect for different scientific perspectives and a sensitivity to cultural beliefs, prejudices and practices in society (Department of Education: Physical Sciences, 2003: 9).

The Mathematics subject document states:

Being mathematically literate enables persons to contribute to and participate with confidence in society. Access to Mathematics is, therefore a human right in itself (Department of Education: Mathematics, 2003: 5).

Mathematical knowledge and skills are also meant to enable learners to:

Contribute responsibly to the reconstruction and development of society by using mathematical tools to expose inequality and assess environmental problems and risks (ibid: 6).

All the subject documents in the NCS have a similar theme, that is, they all show the relationship between social justice, human rights and inclusivity in terms of their content, skills, knowledge and assessments. In this regard, the NCS strives to redress imbalances that were brought about by the apartheid education system in South Africa. It is precisely this characteristic that makes the NCS document a unique curriculum, in that it overtly links all of the traditional curriculum offerings (content, skills, assessment) to a

transformational values-based agenda. In chapter 3, I shall demonstrate the extent to which teachers and heads of curriculum in independent schools were able (or willing) to engage with the NCS in the spirit of a transformative democracy.

1.2.2 Educators' responses to values education

There is very little ambiguity about the role that values play in the NCS curriculum; in 2001 Professor Kader Asmal (then Minister of Education), was explicit when he said: "This NCS curriculum is written by South Africans for South Africans who hold dear the principles and practices of democracy [and] we need the full cooperation of ...parents, teachers and learners and the community at large" (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2001: 1). The assumption was that teachers, as the main arbiters of the curriculum, would be at the 'chalk face' of the implementation of the curriculum and the expectation was that they would embrace the values and principles of democracy that underpinned the NCS.

Teachers in state schools displayed their own forms of resistance, especially around the implementation of the curriculum. For example, it has been noted that the NCS is: "a complex curriculum policy [with] inadequate coordination and management, insufficient capacity in terms of personnel and finance, inadequate teacher development and limited curriculum development" (Harley and Wedekind, 2004: 200). As with their colleagues in the state schools, independent school educators did not approach teaching the NCS in a vacuum and were strongly influenced by the historical development of the curriculum and its concomitant criticisms, which stemmed from the launch of Curriculum 2005 in 1998 to the implementation of the NCS curriculum in 2006. English is by and large the first language of the majority of the teachers in independent schools so the language complexity of the subject documents is not hugely problematic for them to interpret. Yet, teachers in these schools remain highly critical of the NCS and in this sense, they mimicked their colleagues in other (mainly white) schools since it was "found that teachers in ex DET schools [mainly black] were more positive than those from other ex-Departments (the ex Transvaal Education Department in this case) [mainly white][about

outcomes based education (the methodology of the NCS)]” (Harley and Wedekind, 2004: 207).

Morrow (2001: 212) contends that the resistance shown by teachers in the ex whites-only state schools towards the values-base of the NCS is difficult to empathise with in an era of democracy, since “if we are opposed to Apartheid Education then we must be in favour of OBE [outcomes based education]”. The NCS has become synonymous with socio-political transformation. Thus, the forms of resistance from the independent school sector are likely to be couched in language that points to their feelings of disempowerment around having no choice about what is an inherent part of teaching the NCS curriculum: addressing the principles, via its values teaching, of “access, redress, equity, credibility, quality and efficiency” (National Curriculum Statement, 2002: 4). The shift to a curriculum that unambiguously advocates democracy is a difficult one for teachers from the independent school sector since, while “Afrikaner education went about developing its nascent nation, in reaction to its experiences with British imperialism, through the enculturation of the state elite, English education [the majority of which were upper middle class independent schools] was content to enculturate the economic and internationally mobile elite” (McGurk, 1990: 51). These independent schools stayed on the periphery of the social and political realities of South Africa and saw themselves as establishing “hegemonic control over the [education] system, in which any other choice is seen most often as second best [and] there is little doubt that [independent] schools are considered by people generally as the ‘elite’ establishment” (McGurk, 1990: 20). Importantly, the NCS embraces a ‘critical pedagogy’ which “functions in a dual sense to address the issue of what kinds of knowledge can be put in place that enable rather than subvert the formation of a democratic society [and] rejects a discourse of value neutrality” (Giroux, 1992: 7).

For a new curriculum to be successfully implemented there has to be an investment and a belief in the values and principles that underpin the curriculum. For nation building to happen, one vehicle of which is the curriculum, there has to be the development of a national culture; a common sense that South Africans have similar aspirations and ideals,

while still acknowledging that there are differences between us. The essence of establishing such a culture would be the “process of an alienation-free communication that allows for the free development of the lives of people in the re-construction of their social worlds ...” (McGurk, 1990: 102). Moving from an age of suppression, the process of integration is a complicated one that “requires fundamental changes in ...personal attitudes and behaviour patterns. It requires major changes of deep-seated attitudes and behaviour patterns among learners and teachers of minority and majority groups” (Naidoo in Soudien, 2004: 95). Thus, the issue of values is key to critically understanding the NCS and its role in socio-political transformation. An engagement with the democratic values base of the NCS is essential in facilitating the changes in ‘deep-seated attitudes’ that has to occur in the move from an apartheid education to a democratic education.

Teachers in independent schools have traditionally had a high degree of autonomy around the selection of the content of their subjects and the methodologies that they employ to teach those subjects. If there has been any teaching of values, it usually happens around the religious ethos of the school and in the ways that the school organises its co-curricular activities. The majority of upper and middle class independent schools have a religious affiliation and this guides and underpins the curriculum. At the same time, it can be argued that independent schools have been the domain of the elite in society and have thus been sheltered from the realities of apartheid. The insistence of the NCS to be a democratic values-based curriculum is based on the national policy to “shift the values and practices of apartheid education into a democratic, rights-based approach to social and economic development” (Christie, 2001: 269). Ex-Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, began a values in education initiative because he felt that “values cannot simply be asserted; it will require an enormous effort to ensure that the values are internalised by all our people. That is what we fought for. That is what our people deserve.” (Department of Education, 2000: 4, Foreword by Asmal). The ‘internalisation’ of values is a complex issue. The degree to which values are ‘taught’ depends to a large extent on how much sense the values make to the teachers and how the official values articulate with personal values. At the same time, Chisholm (2002: 8) states categorically, “I make no apology for

values being in the curriculum. No self-respecting educationist, or teacher, or parent, can claim that the role of education, whether in the family, church or state is value-free”. Central to this research is an analysis of the types of resistance to the NCS that educators in independent schools articulate. In particular, I will try to reveal the extent to which these educators are able to embrace the democratic values base of the NCS in their teaching.

1.2.3 Developing a learner’s potential

In order to prepare learners for a democratic society, the education system must develop the full potential of learners, making them critical, active and full participants in that society. Arko-Cobbah (2005: 1) states: “It is generally believed that the development of an authentic democracy depends, largely, upon the education of competent citizens”. A part of this education focuses on the knowledge, skills and dispositions that a learner requires for living in a democratic society. Enslin (2003: 73), in Arko-Cobbah (2005:4) contends that “the transition and the radical break with the [apartheid] past that it is supposed to represent mean that South Africans do not yet have a settled conception of citizenship to draw on”. To address the issue of developing a common citizenship, the NCS is driven and underpinned by seven Critical and Developmental Outcomes for learners. The outcomes provide the framework for the democratic values base of the NCS. The Critical and Developmental Outcomes are meant to enable learners and teachers to engage with the “language of possibility” (Reynolds and Block, 1994: 219) to show the social and political possibilities that are available to all in a democratic dispensation. They focus on the development of the individual and reflect the fact that education is as much a personal journey of discovery as it is a social enterprise. The Department of Education (2002) defines the Critical and Developmental Outcomes in a list that requires learners to be able to:

- (1) Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by identifying and solving problems and making decisions, using critical and creative thinking;

- (2) Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community;
- (3) Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- (4) Collect, analyse, and organise and evaluate information critically;
- (5) Communicate effectively, using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;
- (6) Use science and technology effectively and show responsibility critically towards the environment and health of others; and
- (7) Recognise that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

Teachers and heads of curriculum have to ensure that the Critical Outcomes form an integral part of the school's curriculum offerings. It can be argued that, in a democracy, the curriculum should be the locus for the promotion of democratic personality, self-development, character and political participation. These need to be developed in learners so that they can be competent citizens of a democracy. The manner in which this is envisaged in South Africa is through the serious attention that teachers should give the Critical Outcomes in their teaching. However, Gould (1990: 285) warns us that "... the prevalence of some such traits [like tolerance, responsibility and respect] may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for democratic institutions". The individual has to experience those traits as having, and adding, value to his/her life. In other words, if these traits were not emphasised in the curriculum, then the way of life of an individual would be impoverished, as full participation in the life of the culture would demand that these traits be a precondition for participation. The point would be that these traits must be evident in the daily interaction/s that a person experiences; in this case the interactions in the classroom between teachers and learners. The conscious articulation of these traits is crucial to the promotion and sustenance of a democratic culture. Schools should be places of what Lave and Wenger (1999) call 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation', which offers learners 'situated learning' that mimics the expectations of a democracy. Thus, learners are enculturated into democracy by being active participants in the practice of democracy in schools, and in so doing claiming ownership of the culture, which means that they will have a vested interest in either its promotion, or its adaptation. Teachers have to

understand the traits in order to promote them in the learners. It is these ideals that make the values based nature of the NCS crucial to its successful implementation.

The Critical Outcomes play a pivotal role in education in a democracy since they are a central part of the aims of education in particular, and of achieving a democratic society in general. As has been witnessed in South Africa, democracy does not guarantee the formation of a society that subscribes to democratic principles. If the NCS curriculum is to succeed in one of its fundamental aims, which is to educate for democracy in a culturally diverse society, then a conscious and sustained effort must be made by educators to ensure that the Critical Outcomes are an integral part of the curriculum offerings. Independent school teachers are finding their tasks as teachers challenging as they realise that “teaching is more than a job [in South Africa]; it is a political commitment to the future of this country” (Robinson, 1999: 195, in Parker and Deacon).

Gould (1990: 289-293) enumerates the following traits as vital to the development of a democratic personality:

- (i) Developing and nurturing human agency (initiative): this trait emphasises the quality of activity as against passivity.
- (ii) Disposition to reciprocity: this is a relational character trait. It involves an ability to understand the perspective of the other as equivalent to one's own and a readiness to act with respect to oneself and others.
- (iii) Commitment and responsibility: commitment is the willingness to continue within the framework of agreed-upon rules. Responsibility to abide by the decisions in which one has participated and to act in accordance with such decisions is a precondition for the viability of any democratic institution.

In this section I aim to demonstrate, by using the first four Critical and Developmental Outcomes (Department of Education, 2002), how they can be used to develop the democratic traits outlined by Gould (1990), and Gutmann's (1987) notion of 'critical deliberation' that are necessary in an education for a democracy. An integral part of the

NCS, through values-based teaching, is to enable learners to “take their rightful place as informed and active citizens in their new knowledge societies” (Adler et al, 2002: 150).

For example, Critical Outcome 1, ‘using critical and creative thinking’, falls within the ambit of developing and nurturing human ‘agency’ (Gould, 1990), which is the ability to initiate and carry out one’s activities on one’s own; a crucial skill demanded by democracy. Attached to agency is initiative (Gould, 1990), which is the ability to “take action without being prompted by others”. The aspect of agency is democratic agency and not the agency of the individual at the expense of the collective. The democratic personality calls for “equal agency for the purposes of participatory decision making about common purposes” (Gould, 1990: 289). The question is really whether independent school teachers identify a ‘common purpose’ with the state around the aims of the NCS curriculum and the extent to which they are prepared to corroborate this. Do they see themselves as ‘pawns’ in a system over which they have no control? On the other hand, what kind of ‘agency’ do the teachers have if they have very little choice about what has to be an integral part of the curriculum – the ‘teaching’ of critical values? These questions will be considered later on in Chapter 3.

Critical Outcome 2: ‘working effectively with others’ assumes and includes respect for others. This is a character trait that Gould (1990) identifies as basic to a democratic personality, ‘disposition to reciprocity’. In essence, this trait assumes expression in situations of social interaction where there is “a receptivity to others’ views” (Gould, 1990:291). In a demographically diverse educational context, the capacity to understand, debate and dialogue in an environment of oppositional viewpoints respectfully is an important trait of a democratic personality.

Another trait of a democratic personality, according to Gould (1990) is ‘commitment and responsibility’. Commitment is what one needs to be able to continue working within the framework of a democracy, according to its rules, while responsibility ensures that one abides by the decisions taken. This trait links with Critical Outcome 3: ‘organise and manage one’s activities responsibly and effectively’. Democracy will not survive unless

there is a conscious effort made to commit to its principles and to take responsibility when there is a disparity between intent and action. Much of South Africa's educational history shows that what was on offer before democracy was "a differentiated education thereby ensuring that whites maintained their supremacy, while the mass of Africans were confined to a humbler position" (Burchell, 1976, in Jansen, 1990). Ironically, in Jansen's (1990) study of the history of the curriculum, he found that "while significant curricular changes have occurred in South African education since colonial penetration, such reforms have been accompanied by a large degree of ideological continuity". This means that the previously white and the previously black schools continue to operate on the basis of similar ideologies that they held in the past. Instead of racial divisions, there now seem to be class divisions.

Due to the religious affiliation that independent schools have (and had), their ideologies around nation building have been strongly influenced by the concept of a 'Fatherland' (McGurk, 1990). This promoted a rigid group social and cultural psychology, which advocates a strong work ethic for extrinsic rewards (like recognition for achievements). In this sense, there is very little responsibility taken for one's actions, so commitment to actions become meaningless to a large extent. For independent school teachers to advance Critical Outcome 3 ('organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively') in learners means that there has to be a shift in the ideology of 'Fatherland' that prevails. This is not an easy thing to achieve. However, it is a necessary shift to make if the place of education in a democratic South Africa is to "permit families and other subcommunities to shape, but not totally to determine their children's future choices [which means that] the force of right reason is an essential purpose of education in any society" (Guttman, 1987: 43-46).

Critical Outcome 4: 'collect, organise and evaluate information critically' presupposes the art of 'deliberation', which, in a democracy, is the discourse that people engage in to decide what laws and policies to pursue (Bregman, 2000: 1). The assumption is that participants should have equal voices in decisions. This points to the importance of self-determination and a critical consciousness. It is also about using one's discretion, keeping

in mind the notion of justice. Gutmann (1987: 44) calls this “critical deliberation”, which is meant to set boundaries for political and parental authority over education, while yielding “some educational authority to professional educators”. Even though the NCS curriculum is meant to convey democratic ideals, it must not be mistaken for a blind adherence to its principles. For learners to be cognisant of the fact that no education or political system is free of social conditioning, they must be critical of the information that they ‘collect, organise and evaluate’. The NCS, because it is an outcomes-based curriculum, leaves room for interpretation and choice of the content. Jansen (1998) notes, “selecting curriculum content implies choice, and this is where the politics of curriculum reform coincides with the broader politics of transition. Who makes these choices ...? It is crucial ...not to renege on a commitment to making strategic curriculum choices which would form the basis for the critical outcomes which underpin a new curriculum”.

In this section, I have attempted to show how the Critical Outcomes are directly related to the formation of a democratic personality, by using the first four Critical Outcomes as examples. My intention was to demonstrate that the NCS is more than a content-driven curriculum. In my view, the substance of the NCS is the values that underpin it. A reluctance to engage with these values at some level would mean that the curriculum cannot be taught in a way that stays true to its principles, arguably the most important of which is the function of education to foster competent citizens for a democracy. “The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development but also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values very different from those that underpinned apartheid education” (Department of Education, 2002: 3). To this end, the NCS details the kind of learner that it envisages:

The kind of learner that is envisaged is one who will be imbued with the values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice as promoted in the Constitution. The learner emerging from the Further Education and Training band must also demonstrate achievement of the Critical and Developmental Outcomes listed earlier in the document. Subjects [in the NCS] collectively promote the achievement of the Critical and Developmental Outcomes (Department of Education, 2003: 5).

Drawing on the discussion of values-based education, I intended to explore the participants' views regarding their understanding of the values and the status that they attributed to democratic, transformative ideals of the NCS. Chapter 3 will illustrate the extent to which educators in independent schools underpin their teaching practices with transformational values in order to develop critically informed, democratic citizens.

1.3. EDUCATORS' IDENTITY, AUTONOMY AND POWER WITHIN THE NCS

Educators have had to re-think their identities and their notions of autonomy with regard to teaching the NCS. The NCS has overtly socio-political transformational ideals and hence represents a complete ideological shift from the apartheid curriculum. In this section, I indicate the difficulties facing educators as they implement the NCS in their classrooms; these difficulties are expressed as resistance to change.

The NCS specifies the educator that is envisaged as follows:

All teachers and other educators are key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General) visualizes teachers who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring (Department of Education, 2002: 5).

Teachers are accountable to the Norms and Standards for Educators, which detail the Education Department's expectations in terms of the knowledge, skills and values that a teacher must be equipped with to qualify as competent. The Norms and Standards for Educators, disseminated by government in 2000, specifies seven roles that educators are expected to fulfil, and in which they have to demonstrate competence; namely, a learning mediator, an interpreter and designer of learning programmes, a leader, administrator and manager, a scholar, researcher and life-long learner, an assessor and a subject specialist. At the same time, an educator is also expected to play a community, citizenship and pastoral role; to practice and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude toward

developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others; to uphold the Constitution and promote democratic values and practice in schools and society; to demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner; and to develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organisations, based on a critical understanding of community and environmental issues. However, Shalem and Slonimsky (1999 in Parker and Deacon, 2002: 9) assert that these values and competencies will “only make sense from within the moral and political values and the pedagogical preferences embedded in the educational perspective held by the competent educator”. Thus the teacher who teaches according to the NCS not only uses values in his/her teaching, but also conforms to a particular democratic and transformational identity.

1.3.1 Teachers’ identity

The successful implementation of a curriculum largely depends on teachers’ willingness to take up the new curriculum as completely and competently as possible. Teachers face enormous stresses and difficulties when they have to change from a curriculum that they are familiar with, to an unfamiliar and much more challenging curriculum. Typically, curriculum implementation efforts do focus on the teacher and are presented in the form of in-service education, curriculum guides and instructional support materials such as new textbooks (Carson, undated: 4). For example, when China underwent a curriculum change in 2001, these types of interventions were introduced to schools. However, Carson (*ibid*) argues that while these interventions were welcomed in Chinese schools, they did not adequately address the complexity and far-reaching effects that the change had on teachers. Carson (undated: 4) states that curriculum change “does not only involve what the teacher does, but who they are and what it means to be a teacher, in other words teachers’ identities are fully involved and implicated in curriculum implementation”. From his study in China, Carson found that the new curriculum enters a space that is already well populated by the understandings and identities formed in relation to the old curriculum. For the teachers in China, coming to terms with a new curriculum required not only new ways of teaching, but also unlearning the old and familiar ways. Teaching

methods are very much part of a teacher's identity, of what it means for that person to be a teacher. Teachers' capacity to implement a new curriculum is influenced to a large extent by the identities that were formed within the confines of an older and possibly more traditional curriculum.

This notion of a past teacher identity being brought into a new curriculum dispensation is similar to what Bernstein (1996: 42) calls the "elitist retrospective identity". This type of identity is based on the past and has a strong tradition and validation attached to it. Teachers with an elitist retrospective identity see themselves as "guardians of traditional knowledge [and] their resistance to change ... is based principally on long-established concepts of what knowledge is of most worth" (Holmes and McLean, 1989: 5). This promotes a reluctance to change from the old ways of doing things in the classroom, both in terms of preparation and in terms of delivery. The study from China, outlined above, shows that the reluctance to change from old ways of doing things is not a unique phenomenon experienced in South Africa at this time of curriculum change.

Bernstein (1996: 42) argues that to adjust to a new curriculum, teachers are required to shift to "prospective identities" which are those identities that are associated with collaboration and are future orientated. In relation to the South African context, Muller (1998 in Parker and Deacon) argues that OBE marks a "shift from a visible to an invisible pedagogy and entails a new though problematic invisibility of the pedagogue". This shows that the NCS curriculum has challenged teachers' roles and identities in unseen and previously not experienced ways. To an extent, teachers' roles were more defined than in the past as the NCS calls for a more competent yet less instructive teacher; Muller's problematic invisibility. While teachers have a high degree of control over the selection and pacing of the content of the curriculum, the pedagogic process is expected to be learner-centred rather than teacher-centred – a role that was not part of the previous curriculum design.

The context of independent schools is such that teachers have to 'produce' good results from the learners. This means a high level of teacher involvement in the learning process,

ranging from supplementing an already extensive curriculum with additional work, to offering learners extra lessons if they do not feel that they have understood the work well enough. This context has fed into teachers' sense of ownership over the curriculum, but the reality for most of these teachers is that they are also bound by the expectations that the school itself creates, namely, excellent academic results, and this limits the extent to which teachers can claim their ownership. Teachers' roles in the NCS are even more complex in that at the same time as all of this, they have to promote learner-centredness.

Independent schools have to enrol a certain number of learners if they are to operate successfully. To do this, they have to show a strong record of excellent academic (and sporting) results. This puts teachers under enormous pressure to 'perform'. This is reminiscent of education under apartheid, where teachers were considered to be state functionaries, a role that worked against the counter-image of teacher as liberator (Jansen, 2002: 121). The NCS focuses on the teacher's role as facilitator and this is in conflict with the competitive environment of the independent school context, which necessitates the full engagement of the teacher in the process of learning. These conflicting demands have left a lot of confusion and disgruntlement in their wake in independent schools where the teachers often experience the NCS and its innovations as externally imposed and irrelevant to their immediate problems. One consequence of these 'new' identities and roles is that teachers have very different understandings of what is possible with the new curriculum (Jansen, 2002: 128). In general, black teachers have found the NCS curriculum liberating in its principles and thus worth the adjustment that it entails, while "attempts to engage with a policy system that is not aligned with their personal and professional identities" (Mattson and Harley, 2001 in Jansen 2001: 244) has been the experience of white (and independent) school teachers.

Since the majority of teachers at the high-fee paying independent schools are white (a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC: 2002) Survey on Independent Schools in Post-Apartheid South Africa showed this to be 86,5% of teachers), it follows that their life histories and experiences are significantly different from the experiences of black teachers. This is not intended as a racial classification per se, but a reality that was

experienced by all who lived and worked under apartheid. Teachers' experiences and life histories were constructed by the social reality of apartheid, which in education meant the institutionalisation of ideological forms, of education inequalities and of societal racism (Jansen, 1990). In order that independent school teachers' contexts and voices are understood, importance must be placed on their histories as a part of the elite in an era of inequality. This 'autobiographical' account of teachers' lives is one way in which one can come to understand the process/es by and through which they have come to know themselves in relation to the world and, as a part of that, their responses to a changing social and educational milieu. The conflict and doubt within which independent school teachers operate in regard to curricular reform has left them frustrated. Their highly critical response to the 'innovations' in the curriculum should be understood within this context. In addition, Jansen (1998) contends that "this policy is being driven in the first instance by political imperatives which have little to do with the realities of classroom life". The 'realities of classroom life' in independent schools, which for teachers is the pressure to produce excellent academic results, leaves little room for anything other than a focus on the content and skills of the curriculum. To a large extent, independent school teachers are still authorities of the content that they teach, although this has become more limited, but the NCS curriculum demands that "[the] teacher, as opposed to being the repository of all knowledge and wisdom, must now facilitate and mediate the educational experience [and] will create relations between learners and facilitator which engender values based on cooperative learning" (Department of Education, 2002: 12-13). To prepare their learners for the NCS curriculum, the final examination of which all schools are obliged to write, teachers have to make this shift to become facilitators. This is meant to be achieved through the framework of continuous assessment, where formative (form of assessment that gives feedback to the learner so that they can improve their performance) and summative (form of assessment that is used to record a judgement of the performance or competence of a learner) are used with equal validity. Needless to say, this demand on teachers impacts hugely on the social realities of the classroom and on the role of the teacher, especially teachers in independent schools, where academic excellence is their main defining characteristic.

Jansen (2001) refers to the ‘disappearing’ teacher to explain how teachers and their pedagogies have been displaced. How do the independent school teachers voice their protests against this scenario? It would seem that one way to do this is through contesting the validity and quality of the NCS curriculum. Ironically, “values education [fits] well within a middle-class, two parent, economically comfortable household in which noble pursuits ...could be comfortably accommodated” (Jansen, 2004: 793). Arguably, this is the profile of many families that attend upper middle-class independent schools, although ‘middle-class’ in the quotation is a bit of a misnomer. The crux is that when values education is married to a particular political dispensation, it does involve an ideological change that might be too much of a challenge or too different for some schools that have ideological continuity; especially in the case of independent schools that have an ideological continuity with the past curriculum.

Teachers’ ideological continuity with the past also extends into the ways in which their identities are impacted on by the subjects that they teach. Attached to the status of subjects are the ways in which teachers are perceived and the ways in which they perceive themselves. According to Bernstein (1996), subjects are grouped in two broad categories: subjects that belong to the collection code (they have strong boundaries around their subject matter) and subjects that belong to the integrated code (they have less defined boundaries and hence allow for more cross-curricular interaction). Subjects that belong to the collection code, for example Mathematics, are characterised by a rigid order, limited scope and a high degree of coherence, while subjects that belong to the integrated code, for example Life Orientation, are characterised by a fluidity of content, broad scope and an openness to adaptation. The collection code subjects command a higher status because of the degree of expertise that one would have to have to gain access to it. That is, one would find it difficult to teach Mathematics unless one is familiar with the content. On the other hand, the integrated code occupies a lower status because of its cross-curricular nature. That is, it has sections that are common to other subjects or, at the very least, it is easy to draw from other subjects to engage with it. Subjects that fall into the integrated code are often ‘given’ to any teacher to teach when there are not enough ‘specialists’ to do it. The collection code subjects, however, are a

high priority on the planning agenda when issues of staffing are dealt with. It is usually a 'given' that teachers of these subjects have to be adequately qualified to teach them since they are considered to be the 'high stakes subjects' of the school community, especially by the parent body. This is influenced by the expectations of higher education institutions, who call these subjects "designated subjects" (Minimum Admission Requirements, 2005: 5) and regard them as 'gateway' subjects into higher education institutions. Parents, learners and teachers thus naturally hold these subjects in high esteem. The integrated code subjects are generally regarded as the 'other' subjects to study to provide for a holistic and balanced education. These subjects are considered to be interchangeable since they are perceived as offering very similar skills.

Just as the subjects themselves are accorded various statuses, based on the code to which they belong, so too are the teachers who teach these different subjects. In addition, this version of reality also impacts on how the teachers perceive themselves. Teachers who teach the same subject have "shared beliefs and norms [which can be called] a subject subculture" (Grossman and Stodolsky, 1999: 236). Mathematics teachers, for instance, are given a high status at school and this influences how these teachers see themselves. They have a lot of control, not only over their subject, but also on the structuring of the timetables for the school day, for the scheduling of examinations, and on decisions made generally around the use of time in school. Mathematics teachers have a shared set of beliefs and norms that allows them to accept their 'privileged' statuses at school. Their identities are linked to Bernstein's (1996) concept of "elitist retrospective identity".

Teachers in the integrated code also 'frame', and allow their identities to be framed by the peculiarities of their subject with regard to its 'cultures, beliefs and norms'. The identities that are associated with the integrated code fall into what Bernstein (1996) calls 'prospective identities'. Thus, a subject such as Life Orientation falls into this code, because it teaches skills and content that are not endemic to it but which have commonalities with other subjects. For instance, a skill like making informed decisions is also relevant to the subject Human and Social Sciences, and content like personal development is also embedded in Arts and Culture. These subjects are not accorded the

same status as those that conform to the collection code but they ironically allow more autonomy to the teacher in the sense that teachers have more freedom to decide what and how to teach. Teachers' identities are thus linked to the status that their subject is accorded by the school community and by society.

1.3.2 Teachers' roles

The major project around teacher adaptation to the NCS curriculum was "to radically transform the pedagogic identities of existing teachers [so that they are] capable of implementing transformation ideals" (Parker and Adler, 2005: 59). Apart from the shifts in ideology that transforming their pedagogic identities entails, it also changes the role that independent school teachers have traditionally played. According to McGurk (1990: 21), "private schools in South Africa served the function of enculturating the economic elite [towards] the strengthening of the individual in a traditional educational practice which aims to perpetuate the nature of the elite in its cultural and psychological type". Importantly, McGurk (1990) notes that the function of independent schools is to educate and perpetuate elitism that separates the learner from changing social influences. This suggests that teachers need to balance the expectations of the school against the expectations of the curriculum. As was mentioned earlier, the roles that a teacher is expected to play in the NCS, as outlined by the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), are: a learning mediator, an interpreter and designer of learning programmes, a leader, administrator and manager, a scholar, researcher and life-long learner, an assessor and a subject specialist. To some degree, fulfilling these new roles must add value to teachers' own lives. However, can teachers invest energy and effort in something that does not appeal to who they really are? Can teachers play roles that are in conflict with their value systems? These crucial questions will be addressed in later chapters.

Teaching at an independent school can be an alienating experience if it results in a loss or diminishing of a sense of self. Pinar et al (1995) offers us the concept of 'currere', which is in essence an attempt to centralise the individual's experiences of the various aspects of life as paramount. The emphasis is to "work from within" [the individual] instead of

being worked ‘on’ from the outside. In this way, in as much as society impacts on the teacher, there is minimal risk that society will subsume the individual. South Africa will only stand to benefit if it values the intrinsic development of the teacher, since a sense of control over one’s life is crucial to the quality of the contribution that one makes to society. The reality is that teachers in independent schools can no longer isolate themselves from officialdom.

The NCS curriculum is intended to meet the various demands of a social democracy in terms of meeting the economic and political goals of a growing society. At the same time, it also has to assert the valued position of the individual in that society. If this is done, then it is evident that the NCS curriculum is attempting to balance “individual freedom with social determinism” (Fatnowna and Pickett, 2002: 76). Teachers, especially in independent schools, have to redefine their values in relation to their changed role in a democracy and how this links to their role as independent school teachers. Pinar et al (1995) propose that an autobiographical account of one’s experiences be used to develop one’s potential, in attempting to redefine one’s role, but admit that this can be risky as it involves a large degree of self-disclosure. However, with an autobiographical inquiry, there is scope for the “process of reflection” and the “reconstruction of experience” (Pinar et al, 1995), which is likely to lead to new ways of thinking that will enable independent school teachers to embrace the NCS curriculum and to satisfy the expectations of their schools. At the same time, it may be helpful to enable teachers to move from ‘retrospective’ (past-orientated) to ‘prospective’ (future-orientated) identities by allowing them, via the autobiographical inquiry, to “redeem a lost sense of historical consciousness” (Slattery, 1998: 63) – for them to know where they are going, it is important for them to know where they come from. Having insight into their own identities opens up the meaning of the new roles that teachers are expected to fulfil. The extent to which teachers in the sample of independent schools in this study were able to do this, is probed in chapter 3.

1.3.3 Educators' resistance

Broadly defined, resistance is a fearful response to change (Marshak, 1996 and Valencia & Killion, 1988 in Janas, 1998). The introduction of the NCS resulted in organisational and interpersonal changes within and between schools. Educators have been forced to engage with new and unfamiliar terminology to become *au fait* with the NCS. While the content in many of the subjects has stayed the same, the teaching methodologies and the methods of assessment of the content have changed. These structural changes forced educators to 'remove' themselves from the mantle of the curriculum expert and to re-acquaint themselves with the NCS as a curriculum learner. It is thus natural for resistance to show itself, but as Karp (1984 in Janas, 1998) notes, resistance is "difficult to recognise because it can take several forms". In independent schools, educators find it difficult to openly show resistance to teaching a new curriculum as it may be interpreted as a lack of ability to engage competently with the NCS rather than a legitimate - or even illegitimate - show of resistance.

In the process of curriculum change, which in the case of the independent school educator means learning a new approach to teaching and unlearning the past approach at the same time, resistance seems to be a natural consequence of change. However, resistance to the NCS should not be conflated with rejection of the NCS. Teaching the NCS, with its focus on values and the increased role of the educator, means that educators will experience a loss of certainties and the familiarity of the roles that they played in the past curriculum. Thus, the forms of resistance that educators display towards the NCS may in reality be resistance to the disruption that teaching the NCS has had on their practices and identities that were constructed in the past curriculum.

Educators' resistance to the NCS may also be linked to the perception that the change was an externally imposed reform that served political needs. Day (1999) in Korthagen (2001: 3) notes that "externally imposed reform will not necessarily result in teachers implementing the necessary changes [that are expected in the implementation of a new curriculum] as a multitude of research projects in different countries have shown". The

main issue with curriculum change, according to Korthagen (2001: 4), in his studies on teachers' reaction to curriculum change, is the "problem of dealing with the natural emotional reactions of human beings to the threat of losing certainty, predictability or stability". He argues that this dimension of teachers' reaction to curriculum change has been neglected in the focus on the technical aspects of the change; for instance, the focus has been on educators' coping with the content and assessments of a new curriculum. Chapter 3 probes the curriculum resistance expressed by teachers in independent schools to analyse the precise form(s) that it takes.

1.3.4 Educators' autonomy and power differentials

One of the ways in which teachers can begin to 'reconstruct' their experiences is to reconceive their notions of autonomy. The traditional view of autonomy, which hinges on individualism and which would produce a superbly reflective, analytic, critical individual (Bridges, 1997), lacks a social context of cooperative behaviour. Smith, Bridges and Aspin (1997) argue that individual autonomy can only be realised through interaction with others. Through this interaction, Smith (1997: 134) argues, people (teachers) "help each other understand the ways in which power is taken away from us and exercised over us". The question then has to be: What does it mean to be an autonomous teacher in the South African independent school context, where teachers have to deal with the teaching of democratic values in a new curriculum and the teaching of the 'elite' in society? It seems that there has to be more dialogue and engagement with teachers from state and independent schools to share experiences. This could help with the process of reflection and perhaps emphasise the need for collaboration in attempting to meet the needs of the NCS curriculum and the needs of their schools. What is crucial, however, is that their autonomy has to be seen as "democratic agency [which is] not the agency of an isolated individual considered outside of any social context, but rather the exercise of this power in free association with the agency of others" (Gould, 1996: 289).

Teachers are at the forefront of the implementation of the curriculum; in this sense they play crucial roles in education and ensuring that the NCS is implemented in ways that

stay true to its intentions. In as much as social, political and economic needs and the intrinsic development of the learner are meant to be addressed by the NCS curriculum, this will only be successfully achieved if the needs and interests of teachers are equally addressed. Acknowledging that “it is teachers who in the end will change the world of the school by understanding it” (Stenhouse, 1975: 208), it is the contention of this research that the critique of the NCS curriculum by independent school teachers are incorrectly articulated as (1) teachers feeling that they are excluded from the process of curriculum development and thus have little choice in the roles that they have to play in effecting social transformation through values teaching, and (2) the loss of teachers’ autonomy and the contradictions between their traditional identities and the new identity required in the process of implementing the new curriculum. Later I investigate whether the truth in fact lies closer to the “loss of privilege” (Jansen, 2004: 802) that educators have experienced in the implementation of the NCS with regard to the loss of autonomy that they experience.

An added aspect of the “loss of privilege” that teachers may be experiencing is the power differentials that have arisen between those who have first-hand knowledge of the NCS, like the managers in the IEB, and the educators, who while they are at the chalk face of the implementation of the NCS, are not necessarily so well informed. The managers at the IEB have the vantage point of liaising directly with the National Education Department and therefore have access to information regarding the NCS that needs to be disseminated to teachers. In this regard, the IEB managers have the power of knowledge of the NCS and this may leave teachers feeling at a disadvantage as “overall high-power people seem to anchor too heavily on their own vantage point and this impairs their ability to consider what others see, think and feel” (Sandberg, 2007: 2). There will always be power differentials between groups based on experience and knowledge. It would be unrealistic to eliminate power differentials from interpersonal relations; the best one can do is to minimise power differentials in order to aid communication.

The relevance of the discussion on educators’ identity, autonomy and power intended to sensitise me to how the NCS has redefined the roles, responsibilities and status of

educators in the independent school sector. This was done to ascertain whether educators' subscribe to a retrospective or prospective identity.

1.4. CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter I traced the history, philosophy and principles that underpin the NCS in an attempt to illustrate the profound differences that exist between the apartheid curriculum and a new ideological transformational curriculum. I showed the extent to which the values base of the NCS is crucial to its success as a curriculum that meets both the political and economic imperatives of a new democracy. The fact that the democratic values base of the NCS underpins all of the new subjects is one of the most remarkable differences when compared to the apartheid curriculum. This values base of the NCS is derived from the South African Constitution, which makes it mandatory for all educators to engage in values teaching so that the education system is congruent with the democratic political dispensation. I also indicated the difficulties facing educators as they implement the NCS in their classrooms; these difficulties are expressed as responses to change. All of these arguments are used in later chapters to probe the nature of independent school teachers' critique regarding the NCS. Before doing this, the next chapter provides details on the research methods used to show how the data were collected and analysed.

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the question: what are the underlying reasons for the critique that independent school teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers have about the National Curriculum Statement (NCS)? In this chapter, I present a discussion of qualitative research and the methodology that I have employed in conducting my research, including both gathering and analysing my data.

I theorise the research tools that I employed and describe the processes that I employed in relation to questionnaires and interviews. The interviews included structured and unstructured in-depth interviews as well as elite interviews. I also consider ethical issues including anonymity and confidentiality.

2.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Silverman (2001: 1) suggests that the research method that you use “should depend on what you are trying to find out”. In investigating the critique of the NCS (National Curriculum Statement) by independent school teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers, I was interested in exploring their educational settings to see the impact these had on their philosophies about education, and the attached attitudes and beliefs to which teaching in an independent school give rise. Qualitative research methodologies assume that realities are socially constructed by individuals and society (Smit, 2001: 56).

Teachers’ social realities in independent schools are constructed by their own schooling, their educational training, but mainly by their ‘cultures’ at the independent schools.

Cultures at school may mean the beliefs and values that teachers have about their teaching situation at the school. It can be argued that social realities are always in flux, so ‘measuring’ them would not necessarily be an accurate exercise. The aim of a qualitative study, however, is not to be precise, but rather to “be open to whatever emerges without predetermined constraints on outcomes” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996: 444). People’s

perceptions are what they consider to be real and this is what directs their actions, thoughts and feelings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 315) - and these perceptions get absorbed into a social context. “Qualitative research is first concerned with *understanding* social phenomena from participants’ perspectives” (ibid).

There are concerns about what is reliable in qualitative research, but reliability cannot always be measured with facts and figures and sometimes “(reality and the truth) are not always tidy” (Gillham, 2000: 10). Investigating how people feel about issues is always complex and their feelings therefore need exploring. A qualitative study, with its focus on analysing people’s individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 315) allows for the exploration of their perceptions. This qualitative study has made use of questionnaires and interviews to collect data that are rich in detail of what the interviewees think and feel about the NCS specifically.

2.3. RESEARCH ETHICS

Confidentiality and informed consent to participate

Participants were assured of confidentiality both verbally and by the Guarantee of Confidentiality (see Appendix 2; Part B below), which was presented to participants and signed by myself. If I expected participants to be honest, it was imperative that they were assured that they did not risk exposure of their views and opinions. To this end, I have used pseudonyms and have omitted any vital statistics from the final report.

Anderson (1998) and Cohen and Manion (1994) are of the view that one of the most important principles for ethical acceptability is that of informed consent. In addition, Fontana and Frey (1994) offer the principles of right to privacy (protecting the identity of the subject) and protection from harm (physical, emotional, or any other kind). In this regard, I have ensured that participants knew the purpose of my research and I guaranteed their anonymity (see Appendix 2; Part A) . I think that it was important to speak to prospective participants as well as having them sign the consent form to reassure them

that the protection of their anonymity would be of prime concern. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 334) call this informed consent a “dialogue”.

2.4. SOLICITING PARTICIPANTS

Purposive sampling, in contrast to probabilistic sampling, is “selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth” (Patton, 2002 in McMillan & Schumacher). Purposive sampling is undertaken when a few cases studied in-depth yield many results about the topic. This is dependent on (1) an appropriate site selection, (2) comprehensive sampling and (3) maximum variation sampling. For an appropriate site selection, I chose schools that are ‘known’ in the independent school sector to be vocal about their critique of the NCS. I was in a position to identify these schools because I have been involved in the independent school sector for the past ten years and have been extensively involved in most of the group activities during that time. I have also worked closely with the staff at the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). For comprehensive and maximum variation sampling, I interviewed the following: two managers from the IEB; the heads of curriculum of three schools and a selection of seven teachers from these three schools. I selected teachers who offer a range of subjects and who have taught at an independent school for different periods of time. I interviewed the two managers from the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) to get a sense of the feedback that they have received on the NCS from teachers. See table 1 for biographical details of the participants.

Table 1 below shows the biographical details of the research participants:

School 1	Name	Gender	Age	Race	Post Held	Subject/s taught	Number of years at an independent school/sector	Personal description of school
	Nelly	Female	39	White	Teacher	Physical Science	11	This school is a very wealthy all boys school that has a strong English tradition
	Anne	Female	37	White	Head of Subject	Physical Science	6,5	
	Diana	Female	39	White	Head of Curriculum	English	12	
School 2	Sue	Female	37	White	Learning Area Coordinator	History, Life Orientation	8	This school is a co-ed school located in a very wealthy socio-economic area
	Jenna	Female	54	White	Teacher	Geography	12	
	Carrie	Female	34	White	Head of Department	Business Economics	5	
	Joe	Male	37	White	Head of Curriculum (also Deputy Head)	English, Life Orientation	14	
School 3	Lee	Male	40	White	Teacher/ Housemaster	English	6	This school is an old all boys school that has a history of enforcing discipline
	Rose	Female	43	White	Teacher	Mathematics	10	
	Audrey	Female	52	White	Head of Curriculum (also Deputy Head)	Geography	15	
IEB	Name	Gender	Age	Race	Position held	Subjects supported	Number of years at IEB	
	Mary	Female	51	White	Senior manager (IEB)	All	2,5	
	Mark	Male	63	White	Manager (IEB)	Physical Science	7	

The research participants that I selected offered me the information that I required with regard to the critical questions that I needed to explore: What critique is being levelled about the NCS by the independent school sector? What are the main underlying reasons for the critique? How does the transformative agenda and values-based teaching of the NCS, teacher autonomy and teacher identity inform the critique?

I sent a letter of request (see Appendix 1a) to the principals of schools and the IEB (see Appendix 1b) explaining the research that I would be conducting. I asked the principals to speak to teachers about my request. The teachers were then sent a questionnaire (see Appendix 3) to fill in, after having signed the consent form (see Appendix 2). I e-mailed Appendices 1a, 1b, 2 and 3 to schools and the IEB so that people could familiarise themselves with them before I conducted the interviews. I elaborate on the research instruments and processes below.

2.5. RESEARCH METHODS

2.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires as described by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001: 267) are useful in that they “move away from seeing the human subjects as simply manipulable, and data as somehow external to individuals and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations”. The importance of using a questionnaire is that questions can be asked that service the critical questions relevant to the research.

Questionnaires can be advantageous in that the responses can be gathered in a standardised way. In this way the researcher can extract information from the questionnaire that is largely objective, although the questionnaire should aim not to lose the subjective element. In this regard, the questionnaire should allow for personal and individual responses from the participants. The questionnaire should also ensure that questions around sensitive issues such as race, religion and gender are asked in a way that shows they are relevant to the research. Questionnaires may, however, be limiting in that participants may answer superficially, and since questionnaires are usually administered

to research participants outside of an interview, the answers may not be comprehensive enough for sufficient information to be gleaned from it.

I began my data collection by using questionnaires, as they “are good ways of collecting certain types of information quickly” (Bell, 1987: 58). For instance, among the information that I collected using the questionnaires, are the biographical details of research participants and the subjects that they teach. The purpose of my research was to attempt to establish the reasons that underlie the critique that independent school teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers have about the NCS. A part of this was to look at the culture that prevails at independent schools, and the sample participants that I selected include teachers who have taught at independent schools for a long time as well as those who have recently joined. To make this selection, I sent out a structured questionnaire that asked for, among other things, basic details about the number of years that they have been teaching and the number of years they have taught at an independent school (see example of the questionnaire - Appendix 3). More importantly, I asked questions about the principles and values of the NCS that related directly to my research questions. I also asked about teacher attitudes and beliefs associated with the NCS. This was done in an attempt to begin to foreground the issues that I later raised in the interviews. An interesting phenomenon arose in that most of the research participants used the NCS documents to obtain the ‘right’ answers to the two questions that asked about the principles and values of the NCS. The questions were: (1) Can you name some of the principles that underlie the curriculum? and (2) What are the most important values that are advocated by the NCS? Some of the responses indicated that they had been taken verbatim from the NCS document/s, or had been copied from each other. For instance, all the research participants from one school answered exactly the same to the question: Can you name some of the principles that underlie the curriculum? An example of two participants from the same school follows:

Sue: Outcomes-based education; Focus on content and skills; Values-based education; Progressive curriculum

Jenna: Outcomes-based education; Progression; Values-based; Content and skills

This may be because participants are not familiar with the philosophical underpinnings of the document or it could suggest that research participants wanted to give the right answers, so consulted the NCS documents and/or each other.

2.5.2 Piloting, modifying and distributing the questionnaire

Step1 - Piloting the questionnaire

I was aware that issues of ambiguity, imprecision and assumption may have made the questions in the questionnaire unclear and to this end, I piloted the questionnaire to teachers at my own independent school. I asked the pilot group the following questions as a checklist suggested by Bell (1987: 65) to ensure that the questionnaire went out with minimum problems:

- (1) How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?
- (2) Were the instructions clear?
- (3) Were any of the questions unclear or ambiguous? If so, specify which ones and why?
- (4) Did you object to answering any of the questions?
- (5) In your opinion, has any major issue been omitted?
- (6) Was the layout of the questionnaire clear and attractive?
- (7) Any other comments?

Step 2 - Modification of questions

Their responses and feedback resulted in the following changes:

ORIGINAL QUESTION	MODIFIED QUESTION	REASON FOR MODIFICATION OF QUESTION
What is your race?	What is your race? (This research focuses on teachers within independent schools. One of the issues probed concerns the historical trajectory of teachers' responses to curriculum development. As such, one's race	<i>This question needed a motivation as teachers did not see the relevance of being asked this question.</i>

	and the time one has spent teaching in an independent school are important indicators in one's own professional history).	
Do you consciously make the teaching of values a part of your teaching?	Do you consciously make the teaching of values a part of your teaching?	<i>No change</i>
If you answered yes to the above, briefly state why you do this.	Briefly motivate your answer to the above question.	<i>Teachers felt that a 'no' answer also needed a reason as it would reveal the importance that research participants placed on values teaching.</i>
What teacher attitudes do you think are associated with a successful teacher of the NCS?	List 3 teacher attitudes that you think are associated with the successful teaching of the NCS.	<i>According to the pilot group of teachers, this question had to be rephrased as they felt that the original question could elicit answers such as "I don't know" as the question seemed too 'big' to answer. The rephrased one makes it seems like a selection is needed and made it easier to answer.</i>
What beliefs would a teacher aspire to if he/she embraces the NCS?	Developers of the NCS suggest that the following teacher beliefs, among others, are necessary to successfully implement the new curriculum in South African high schools. -belief in rigorous planning -belief in democracy -belief in principles of continuous assessment. -belief in a culture of human rights. -belief in the rights of the child. -belief in giving recognition to different knowledge systems. In your opinion, list what you feel	<i>This question was also difficult to answer, as it was not focused enough. The pilot group felt that the question was "too open" and that participants might not be sure how to answer it and would therefore not answer it at all. Hence the attempt to provide some options. This also leaves space for any other beliefs that the research participants might want to add on.</i>

	are the three most important beliefs from the list above.	
	What beliefs would you add?	

Step 3 - Distributing the questionnaire

Fontana and Frey (2000: 667) contend: “e-mail surveys . . . yielded better-quality data in terms of item completion and more detailed responses to open-ended questions”. I had sent out the questionnaire to the teachers by e- mail to solicit as many participants as I could before conducting the interviews. I then used the responses to the questionnaires to establish which participants to interview. I chose research participants that offered a broad range of experiences across ages, number of years in the independent school sector and the subjects that they taught. The research participants that I eventually chose were the ones that I thought would offer me the richest feedback for my research.

2.5.3 Interviews

Interviews were my primary data collection strategy. The nature of the questions in the interview (see Appendix 4) was such that it intended to elicit teachers’ responses about their feelings, values and beliefs concerning the NCS. Since the NCS advocates democratic principles and values, it could have been awkward for respondents to give answers that they considered to be politically incorrect. Fontana and Frey (2000: 645) suggest, “interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings”.

Interviewing is not a neutral tool; it requires interpretation and brings to the fore the qualitative contention that reality is a ‘social construction’. Clearly, as an interviewer, I had to be cognisant of the fact that “the nature of the social dynamic of the interview can shape the nature of the knowledge generated” (ibid: 647). I expected participants to be honest in their responses, and I attempted to facilitate this by not being judgmental about their responses. The added challenge I had to take into account was my gender (female), race (Indian) and age (41), which could influence the ways in which the interviewees

responded. Since the large majority of interviewees were white, I felt that it was important that I model the interviews as conversations between trusted parties, rather than on formally structured interviews. This was successful to some extent, but less so when the more contentious issue of race was raised. However, while qualitative interviews do build on the socially accepted practice of conversation, they differ from conversations in two fundamental ways (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). First, the qualitative interview is primarily a research tool, an intentional instrument designed to learn about, in this case, research participants' views on, and attitude towards, the NCS. Secondly, qualitative interviews are guided by the researcher, who "intentionally introduces a limited number of questions and requests the interviewee to explore these questions in depth" (ibid: 2). This required a move beyond casual conversation and necessitated that the interview focus on a narrow range of topics so that more depth and detail could be obtained.

Interview schedules were developed and then piloted at the school I teach at, using the same pilot group that I used for the piloting of the questionnaires. The questions were then amended in accordance with the pilot group's recommendations. For instance, to help participants frame their answers, the following definitions were added on to the question *How do you compare the old curriculum to the new?*

Here are two different definitions of what a curriculum is:

Definition 1

A curriculum is a document that shows teachers what they have to teach. It also helps teachers make decisions about when they should teach certain things and provides ideas about teaching methods and how to assess.

Definition 2

A curriculum is an ideological document that aims to change society through the manner in which teachers teach in their classrooms.

Different interview schedules were drawn up for teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB managers (see Appendices 4A, 4B and 4C). In my research, I conducted three types of interviews, namely structured interviews, unstructured interviews and elite interviews. I conducted the structured interviews with teachers, while the elite interviews were

conducted with the heads of curriculum and the IEB managers. The unstructured interviews were conducted in cases where elaboration and clarification were needed to participants' responses. These interviews were advantageous to my study in that they afforded me the opportunity to collect large amounts of information over a short space of time. I conducted in-depth interviews with the participants to gather relevant information. Before each interview began, I reminded the research participants about the consent forms they had read and signed concerning their participation in this research (see Appendix 2). A tape recorder was used to record the interviews, with the participants' permission, and the knowledge that it could be switched off at any time. Each of the twelve structured and elite interviews lasted for approximately an hour, and the research participants engaged in the interview voluntarily. The unstructured interviews were conducted on a needs basis where some of the responses given by the research participants needed clarification.

Structured interviews

Fontana and Frey (2000) maintain that in structured interviewing the interviewer asks the same series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories. This was important to my data collection as I felt that asking people about the NCS might result in lengthy debates about various issues, which would have side-tracked addressing the actual issues that I wished to pursue and considered necessary for this research. I wanted to establish what participants' opinions and feelings were about the questions that I had posed (see Appendices 4A, 4B and 4C). I did not want to enter into a discussion, as it could have risked my attempt to be neutral about research participants' responses. Since I am in the field of teaching, I did not want my views to influence the responses that I had received. This would have resulted in responses that would not have serviced my research and, because I was looking for the critique around the NCS, I did not want a "socially desirable" (Fontana and Frey, 2000: 650) response that would not be a true reflection of participants' views and opinions. The structured interviews gave me an opportunity to review the responses as a whole. This worked very well in the sense that I could ask follow up questions in the unstructured questions on issues that could service the critical questions of this study (see example in *Unstructured interviews*).

Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews have no predetermined questions and are informal and conversational in nature. Direct questions are asked if the researcher identifies gaps in the data collected. As such, unstructured interviews provide the researcher with great latitude in asking broad questions in whatever order seems appropriate (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 458).

Following on from the responses from the structured interviews, I occasionally probed some of the responses a bit deeper to obtain clarity, especially in situations where I felt that I had been given the ‘right’ response instead of an honest response. This allowed participants time to explain and explore their views on the NCS. An example of this follows in the interview with Diana:

Question (Q): As a curriculum manager in your school, how have you encouraged teachers to teach values in their classroom?

Diana (D): I suppose we are very lucky, being a very Catholic Marist School, because this has formed the basis of our education - to bring the Marist values in and in fact the Marist values are quite similar in some ways to what I suppose values are mentioned in the NCS.

Q: Have you actually made that explicit to your teachers? Have you tried to align the Marist values with the NCS values, tried to see which are indicated and which are not?

D: I think at Head of Subject level where we have actually had a look at Critical and Developmental Outcomes and we have had a look at our Life Orientation programme and obviously Religious Education is quite a focus here. I mean we have spoken about where the overlap is; perhaps areas that need to be looked at specifically. It really comes easily in an environment such as ours.

Q: Have you actually monitored the teaching of values?

D: No, I don't think I have. I think that comes through quite strongly in our programme as a whole, but I haven't made it a focus of mine this year.

The unstructured interviews were conducted with some, not all, of the research participants where issues that they had raised were not adequately dealt with. The

unstructured nature of the interviews gave participants the latitude to answer with more thought and depth.

Elite interviews

“Elite interviews are a special application of interviewing that focuses on persons considered to be influential, prominent, and well informed in an organisation or a community” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 352). In the elite interviews, I interviewed the heads of curriculum to establish what they did to align their school’s pedagogical practices to the NCS. Heads of curriculum are responsible for the successful implementation of a curriculum at their schools as they look at strategies that the school may have to employ to adapt and adjust to changes. Conducting these elite interviews helped me to understand the policies that independent schools subscribe to around curriculum issues, and the degree to which they feel the necessity to follow national norms. As part of the elite interviews, I also interviewed two managers from the IEB. The IEB is the assessment body that independent schools are accountable to. The IEB is also responsible for ensuring that independent schools subscribe to the NCS requirements set out by the National Department of Education. In this regard it was important to my research that I investigated the views of the IEB to ascertain the extent to which it is encouraging the independent schools to adhere to the NCS. At the same time it was enlightening to find out what the IEB managers felt about the NCS on a personal level. This would influence the ways in which they dealt with promoting the NCS as a valid curriculum.

2.6. RESEARCHER REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This section is a reflection on my role as a researcher. Being in the management of a well-known and established independent school, I found it very easy to access the permission of the principals to conduct research at the independent schools that have formed a part of my research. However, I found that, when interviewing the head of curriculum in one particular school, I had to ‘establish’ myself before I could begin the interview. This meant that I had to overtly mention my credentials and my position as a

deputy principal at my school. Although I had sent a letter to the principals requesting permission to conduct research (see Appendix 1), in which I had stated that I was a deputy principal, this had not been passed on to any of the three heads of curriculum. Initially, they were a bit reluctant to engage with me on their opinions on the NCS as they were not sure about my ‘expertise’ in curriculum matters. I had to spend a considerable amount of time engaging in social discourse (around the NCS) to establish that I knew what I was talking about. I feel that this personal account is important and relevant, as it establishes a context to understand how the independent schools in which I conducted my research operate when it comes to the notion of ‘superiority’. I felt that my age and race might have impacted on the curriculum heads’ initial impression of me. In my role as deputy principal, I am also in charge of the curriculum at my school. The curriculum heads’ initial reluctance to engage with me may be due to some or all of these factors.

Teachers at the schools, on the other hand, were very receptive and open to being interviewed. This could also be due to the fact that I had already interviewed the heads of curriculum and had ‘established’ myself as somebody with knowledge about the NCS. Table 1 summarises the biographical details of the teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB managers that I interviewed. It is immediately obvious from Table 1 that all the interviewees are white. This was neither a choice on my part nor a coincidence; rather it is a reflection of the racial demographics at the type of independent schools in which I conducted my research. I found that questions that were remotely related to racial issues (see appendix 4A, question 13) were answered with wariness and an attitude of surprise that there could be any issues around race with regard to implementing the NCS. Later in this research report, when the actual comments of interviewees are quoted, the reader may consider the extent to which these responses were influenced by the fact that I am a black person. At the same time I may have unintentionally created boundaries between what can be said and what cannot be said by virtue of the fact that I am black. During the transcription of the interviews, an early theme emerged that seemed to suggest that the responses were, to a large extent, an avoidance of the underpinning issues of transparency and race. For instance, Anne: “Certainly I have always taught non-racism”. Anne seemed to suggest that engaging with issues of racism was a normal part of her teaching. Nelly:

“The thing is [racism] doesn’t come up much at our school”. Again, Nelly gave the impression that she was dismissing the issue of racism and she waited for me to go on to another issue. There was a determined attempt, though possibly unconscious, by the interviewees to stick to the technical aspects of the implementation of the NCS. This forced me to combine the structured interview with an unstructured interview so that I could probe sensitive issues deeper where I saw a need.

At the end of each interview, I reflected on the interview by writing down my thoughts and views. I feel that this process helped with issues around authenticity, as my analysis was guided by the immediate thoughts and feelings as well as by looking at the transcripts. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2006: 350), reflex records, “written immediately after leaving the site, synthesize the main interactions and scenes observed and, more importantly, assess the quality of the data, and suggest questions and tentative interpretations”. More importantly, I wanted to be critical of the process so that I could minimise the bias that could occur when doing my analysis. My role of researcher was that of a colleague.

2.6.1 Analytical tools

Following on the qualitative nature of my research, I used ‘content analysis’ as the basis of my analysis for the interviews since the “content of communication serves as a basis of inference” (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 55). Cohen and Manion (1997) list some of the purposes of ‘content analysis’ as:

- to describe trends in communication content;
- to relate known characteristics of sources to messages they produce;
- to audit communication content against standards;
- to relate known attributes of the audience to messages produced for them and
- to describe patterns of communication.

In other words, the list above serves as a systematic and replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories using explicit rules of coding. This technique enabled me to work through large volumes of data with relative

ease in a systematic fashion. I found that content analysis was, as suggested by Stemler (2002), a powerful data reduction technique.

Given that I posed the same questions to each group of research participants, I could make use of thematic clustering or theme identification. “Themes can be described as ‘umbrella’ constructs which are usually identified by the researcher before, after, and during the data collection” (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005: 211). My data were sorted out into the following main themes:

- (1) Reasons for the critique of the NCS
- (2) The transformative agenda of the NCS
- (3) The values-based teaching of the NCS
- (4) Teacher autonomy and teacher identity.

The specific technique that I have found most useful in sorting out the data according to the above themes is ‘pawing’ (ibid: 213). Pawing is the technique whereby key phrases in the transcripts that relate to the themes are underlined (in different colour pens).

In order to make sense of the data, I coded the data. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) state that coding is used to understand material by putting names to events, incidents, behaviours, attitudes, and so on. I used Descriptive codes (attributing a theme category to a segment of the text), Interpretative codes (reasons and explanations behind the text), and Pattern codes (connecting different sections of the text to create a more meaningful whole). To ensure that I had not left out any important issues, I made use of Marginal remarks, which are remarks that I wrote while I was coding the text. This was done in the instances where an issue was not allocated to a code.

2.6.2 Validity and reliability

Critics of the qualitative paradigm contend that this type of research results in subjective and impressionistic accounts that lack precise quantifiable measures. However, qualitative research has its own verification procedures that are different to the criteria

used in quantitative research. A qualitative study reveals what people think, feel and do as opposed to *how many* people think and do something. There are ways in which one can assess the validity of data. Maxwell (1992) argues that the validity of an account is inherent, not in the procedures used to validate it, but in the relationship it has to those things of which it is intended to be an account. To this end, he lists five categories that he developed for issues of validity, namely descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalisability, and evaluative validity. Descriptive validity and interpretive validity were relevant for my research.

Descriptive validity

According to Wolcott (1990), descriptive validity relates to the factual accuracy of the account being made. That is, for research to be considered descriptively valid, the accuracy of the account's application needs to be guaranteed. In my attempt to ensure the descriptive validity of this research, I recorded the interviews verbatim with a tape recorder. These tapes were transcribed in the exact words of the research participants.

Interpretive validity

This form of validity is concerned with the qualitative researcher's concern with the describing of actual events, and the degree to which that event is analysed. Interpretive validity was crucial to this research as I sought to understand the perspectives of teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB managers on the NCS, and how these perceptions impacted on their attitudes to its implementation. Maxwell (1992: 289) insists that "interpretive accounts are grounded in the language of the people studied and rely as much as possible on their own words and concepts". By coding the data, I attempted to use the actual words of the responses in my analysis.

2.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the methodological premises for this study on the investigation into the critique that the independent school sector has about the NCS. I began by theorising about qualitative research methods in order to illustrate their appropriateness

for this study. After describing the research participants, I detailed the specific qualitative data collecting methods employed in this research. For example, the manner in which questions were developed, piloted, modified and finalised is detailed; and the specific form that my qualitative interviews took is analysed between structured, unstructured and elite. In order to foreground my role as researcher, I reflected on my role in the research. I illustrate that the reflex journal I kept and the manner in which I analysed my data, namely content analysis, took this particular role into account in an attempt to minimise any biases that could arise. The chapter ends with details of how I accounted for methodological validity and reliability. I used qualitative research methods in interviews and questionnaires to develop the research categories that are analysed in the next chapter. The data collection tools that I used provided data that were as valid and reliable as possible. The analysis begins in the next chapter where the critique of the NCS is examined.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSING THE CRITIQUE OF THE NCS BY THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SECTOR

This chapter analyses the data of the study that investigated the critique that the independent school sector has about the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), a new curriculum in South Africa. In particular, it presents the views of the participants, namely the IEB (Independent Examination Board) managers, heads of curriculum and teachers on the following questions that the study posed:

- (1) What critique does the independent school sector have about the NCS?
- (2) What are the main underlying reasons for the critique?
- (3) How do the following issues inform the critique:
 - (a) the transformative agenda of the NCS?
 - (b) the values-based teaching of the NCS?
 - (c) teacher autonomy and teacher identity?

As explained in the previous chapter, this study was conducted with a group of teachers and the heads of curriculum from three different, but culturally similar, independent schools, as well as with two managers who are assessment specialists from the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). The ensemble of data sources provided rich but markedly different perspectives on the questions posed in the study. The data from each group of research participants will be analysed separately to illustrate this and to explain the different perspectives. A synthesis will follow, wherein the conclusions from the study as a whole will be drawn. The primary data collection method was interviews and, unless otherwise stated, that would be the source of my data.

3.1. CRITIQUE OF THE NCS AND ITS UNDERLYING REASONS

The main issues that were raised by the research participants with regard to the critique of the NCS can be grouped under:

- (1) The scope of the content; and
- (2) Assessment

3.1.1 The scope of the content

In the NCS, the academic knowledge that defines a subject lays emphasis on skills, values and attitudes. The content of a subject recognises that there are many contributions to knowledge other than only Western contributions. A subject in the NCS is broadly defined by Learning Outcomes, which are statements of the intended results of learning and teaching. Learning Outcomes should lead to the achievement of the Critical and Developmental Outcomes, which drive and underpin the values of the NCS.

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

There is agreement from the managers at the IEB that teachers are using the past syllabus as a guide to decide whether or not the NCS adequately meets the needs of their schools and their learners. The comments of the IEB managers also support the view that the teachers at independent schools are insecure about the NCS because of the pressure on them to produce good results at their schools. The first final external examination of the new curriculum (NCS) will be written in 2008. Until then, the teachers at the independent school sector have to rely on the NCS documents as a guide to the content and the assessments that are required. At the same time, teachers and heads of curriculum look to the IEB for guidance, as the IEB is the assessment body that oversees assessments in all the schools in the independent school sector.

The IEB managers claim that they have supported teachers in the transition from the old curriculum to the NCS. Mary clarifies: “we tried to support the teachers [as] assessment specialists. [Looking at the NCS], we looked at: What does it actually mean? What is different [compared to the old curriculum]? What were you doing [in the old curriculum]? What are you doing [in the NCS]?” Mary finds that teachers are insecure about the NCS because they have not familiarised themselves with it. Mary remarks that “there are teachers who couldn’t be bothered to read the [NCS] documents and are

following what they have been told by their friends and head of department”. Mark feels that teachers’ lack of first-hand knowledge of the NCS has led them to be reliant on the old curriculum. Furthermore, Mark claims this reliance is the reason that teachers feel that the NCS is overloaded with content. He explains: “There is a section of work we used to do in matric [grade 12] Physical Science called Chemical Equilibrium. This was a section that was done prior to a section called Acids and Bases. Now [in the new curriculum] Acids and Bases are done in grade 11, but this [teacher] is used to doing Equilibrium before Acids and Bases. Acids and Bases are introduced in grade 10. There was a different approach to Acids and Bases in grade 12 and in grade 10. What does this [teacher] do? He does the new grade 12 work and then he introduces Acids and Bases, and then he says the syllabus is too long”. The teacher that Mark is referring to has continued to follow the syllabus according to the old curriculum. This has resulted in the teacher repeating some of the work in a later grade, which has in turn, led to the perception that the NCS is overloaded with content.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

The heads of curriculum are in charge of the curriculum development and the academic planning of a school. Diana, as a head of curriculum, comments: “I suppose in some areas [the content] may just be used to cover the minimum, without expanding and going further”. Diana says that her teachers are “obviously using the NCS in terms of content to plan their schemes of work, their focus for the term and the year”. She adds that the NCS “is used as a foundation for planning, for structure, for guidance but I do think on top of that [that] individual teachers and schools will bring in approaches over and above [the basic requirements]”. She finds this relevant in a school that has the resources to encourage teachers and learners to be extended beyond the basic curriculum offerings. Diana’s initial comment that the NCS was used to cover the minimum content was a comparison that she drew between the past IEB syllabus, which was called the JMB (Joint Matriculation Board) syllabus and the NCS. She felt confident that individual teachers would extend the learners. However, she does not take into account the fact that teachers’ insecurities about the amount of content to cover has made the teaching of the content a burdensome task for them. In a question that sought to find out whether

teachers were willing to make the changes required of them with regard to the content of the NCS, Diana responds: “I think that it has been rewarding though, the more they [teachers] committed to it, the more they were involved in engaging with all those documents and the theory behind it”. But in reality it seems that the teachers were using the past syllabus to decide whether or not the NCS was meeting their needs; but this comparison was based solely on curriculum subject content. Where they found a discrepancy in the content between the past syllabus and the NCS, they either ignored some of the content in the NCS or they supplemented that content with content from the past syllabus. For instance, teachers had the following to say: Nelly: “The most important thing is to go through and see where our textbook [based on the NCS] has fallen short, where we need to add in content”. Anne, referring to the NCS documents, adds: “Where they say voluntary, we just leave that out”. The ‘voluntary’ sections are the ones that Anne may need to use to supplement the content in her subject to make it a cohesive whole. There are sections that are marked as voluntary since they will not be examined as a separate section, but they nonetheless provide a conceptual framework.

Joe, as a head of curriculum (HOC), finds that the “size of the content puts people under so much pressure that it’s just a question of getting through . . . it’s just a question of getting done”. Audrey (HOC) adds: “I am quite certain that if we find this [the content] is actually irrelevant and this doesn’t actually work for us; this isn’t what we need to be doing, we can get feedback from them [the IEB]. How far they will be able to influence National [Department of Education] or not I don’t know [to change some of the content in the NCS]”. Joe and Audrey agree that the content is too much to cover. The scope of the content is judged as being too little or too much or just not right in comparison to the old curriculum. Audrey sums this up: “I think that there is quite a dilemma between there being so much to get through and we feel that pressurising. [All that we do is] teach, teach and teach. We never had that before in the previous curriculum”.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

The comments teachers made with regard to the scope of the content embedded in the NCS ranged from a sense that it was not comprehensive enough, to it being overloaded

with content. For example, in her interview, Nelly, a teacher, commented: “They kind of leave out large chunks [of content]”, which made it difficult for her to teach subsequent sections in a cohesive and logical manner. Conversely, Sue was of the opinion that “they have tried to cram far too much in and you have almost had to become a bit selective about what you are going to teach”. Anne elaborates: “But they don’t give you enough detail as to exactly how much depth one needs to go into on each topic, so we try to cover it to a similar depth to how it would have been covered in the past”. Anne uses the content in the previous curriculum as a guide to judge whether the NCS content is adequate. The range of the differences in the opinions regarding the content of the NCS reflects that teachers are caught between the past curriculum and the NCS. They are using the past curriculum as a basis for comparison. This is a practical thing to do, as the past curriculum is part of their frame of reference as teachers. Teachers’ frames of reference were possibly formed by: (1) the past IEB curriculum; (2) the years of experience with the past curriculum; (3) the many past IEB examination papers, which gave them an insight into the detail of the curriculum; (4) the textbooks that they had selected over the years and (5) their experiences in the classroom. This frame of reference is used to compare the NCS to the past curriculum. This seems incongruous, as the only part of the NCS that teachers are familiar with are the official policy documents. The rest is uncertain, and the uncertainty manifests as a concern as to whether they are adequately covering the content to equip their learners for an external assessment. Jenna states: “I am very aware of the content because I feel as an educator [that] I have the responsibility to prepare the learners that I have for the national exam”.

In order to address their uncertainty, some teachers teach more content than they are required to do. For example, Rose emphasised that she and her colleagues always “add on [to the NCS document], we don’t leave out, never”. Nelly’s comments seem to capture the sense of uncertainty that teachers have when she remarks: “You then are feeling a bit insecure because you don’t know the fact that [some content] has been left out ... you think either the curriculum is daft or you are daft”. The need to overcompensate on the content in an attempt to counter teachers’ feelings of uncertainty has led to the NCS being perceived as burdensome:

Sue: “There is just too much work and it’s just not possible [to complete it]

Lee: “I rely quite heavily on my Head of Department for input and direction”

Anne: “Time is difficult . . . with the seniors it is cram, cram, cram, because you are just under so much pressure”.

Synthesis - the scope of the content

The IEB managers, heads of curriculum and teachers had divergent views on the scope of the content. Some teachers felt that the content was too much, while others felt that it was not comprehensive enough. The heads of curriculum also had divergent views on the scope of the content. One of the heads of curriculum had the view that her teachers were coping well with the NCS, which implied that she thought the scope of the content was adequate. This was not the view of the teachers at her school, however. The IEB managers expressed the view that teachers were not sufficiently familiar with the NCS, therefore teachers’ views on the scope of the curriculum were uninformed. The IEB managers were of the opinion that teachers would be in a position to make an informed decision on the scope of the content of the NCS once they had familiarised themselves with it and once they had experience with teaching and examining it over time.

The sense of insecurity and uncertainty that teachers demonstrated in their interviews about the NCS is fed by the fact that the past curriculum is used as a basis of comparison, notwithstanding the fact that the NCS was an innovation that was “primarily a political response to apartheid schooling” (Jansen, 1998: 21). The NCS was designed to meet the needs of an emerging democracy, and was purged of any racial and discriminatory material. More pertinently, the NCS, because it is an outcomes-based curriculum, leaves room for interpretation and choice of content. A crucial aspect of the choices that teachers have in selecting the content in their subjects is that they must ensure that the politics of curriculum reform coincide with the broader politics of democratic transition (Jansen, 1998). The choices cannot be made without considering that the NCS was designed to address the principles of “access, redress, equity, credibility, quality and efficiency” (National Curriculum Statement, 2002: 4).

The teachers that I interviewed have found it difficult to make the adjustment to the NCS, as a shift in thinking and ideology is intrinsic to it; and these shifts manifest themselves in curriculum content. By and large, the teachers and heads of curriculum interviewed saw themselves as “guardians of traditional knowledge [and] their resistance to change ... is based principally on long established concepts of what knowledge is of most worth” (Holmes and McLean, 1989:5). With regard to the content of the NCS, teachers were uncertain as to how much or how little they were expected to cover. The NCS documents, in line with an outcomes-based approach to education, are clear about the way in which a subject is meant to be covered in terms of its content: “A subject in an outcomes-based curriculum, is broadly defined by Learning Outcomes and not only by its body of content. Learning Outcomes are defined in broad terms and are flexible, making allowances for local inputs” (National Curriculum Statement, 2002: 11). However, teachers and heads of curriculum continuously rely solely on the past curriculum as a basis on which to judge the sufficiency of the NCS and hence found it either ‘too much’ or ‘too little’. The insecurity and uncertainty that teachers and heads of curriculum have displayed in relation to the content of the NCS could be interpreted as, in the words of the IEB manager: “a certain amount of arrogance. It’s arrogance about we know what we are doing.” The teachers that I interviewed not only used the past curriculum as a benchmark; they were also silent about the curriculum content that was not directly related to the basics of their subject; for example, they were unable to consider values in relation to content. This will be discussed in more detail in the section on values-based teaching.

3.1.2 Assessment

The assessment in the NCS is governed by Assessment Standards, which are “criteria that collectively provide evidence of what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade. They embody the required knowledge, skills and values to [be] achieved. Assessment Standards collectively show how conceptual progression occurs from grade to grade” (National Curriculum Statement, 2002: 11).

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

In general, the independent school sector has conflated assessment in the NCS with examinations. Assessment in the NCS focuses on Continuous Assessment as an assessment strategy; examinations are not the only form of assessment. Mary comments: “The issue about teaching to examination exists. Teachers find some security in the assessment process that they can teach towards”. She explains why this may be a problem: “If the assessment is encouraging lower level skills of recall or simply extracting information from a given context then you have got a problem with teaching to the test”. On the other hand, she says that teaching to the test is not necessarily a bad thing: “With the assessment you are teaching towards, [if] you are emphasising the correct skills and knowledge and in favouring the development of thinking skills and critical thinking, of analysis ... the learners must have a positive spin-off”. However, Mary regards the issue of teachers’ reliance on the past syllabus as serious. She remarks: “When we talk about the spirit of the NCS we are talking about a distinct shift in emphasis. You are still talking about the same knowledge and skills [as the old syllabus], but you are looking at it from a different grasp. That is the essence of the challenge [of the NCS as a new curriculum]”. She foresees a potential problem: “At the end of the day, the [assessment] stick drives [the curriculum] because the matriculation examination will be set in a particular way and if you haven’t made the change, there will be a problem”. Mary admits that it is natural for teachers to resist change since they “don’t want to go and re-do stuff they have already done [with regard to assessment]”, but at the same time she says: “If you are a thinking person, I find it difficult to understand that you don’t want to make the move [to change]”.

Mark from the IEB finds that teachers in the independent sector do not engage with the different kinds of assessment in the NCS because they do not understand the essence of the NCS: “I don’t believe our teachers engage - issues like giving children the opportunity to learn, rather than teaching them everything - that is the real problem of our assessment”. He also has strong views about the pressure that independent school teachers are under to produce good results:

[The assessment] is all set up so children don't have to think for themselves, because frankly, we are too scared to let them think, because if we let them think they might not do well at our promotion [results]. The peoples' [parents', other independent schools] attitude to us depends on those teachers doing well. We are measured in terms of the results of the children. That is a major, major problem and it's not going away. We have got all these tables they present in the Sunday Times [a national newspaper], so I think it's a major stumbling block. So we have teachers who teach to the test. They are not going to let kids learn and now you come to the assessment, they test the content.

Mark is aware that teachers are driven to assess content rather than skills so that the results that they produce are found to be adequate by the 'people' who are stakeholders in the independent schools; namely the powerful parent body. He states that the testing of skills instead of the content risks compromising the good results that independent schools are expected, by parents for instance, to produce. The independent school matriculation results are published in the national newspapers, as are the state results. Mark feels that the IEB is "measured in terms of the results". There is an expectation by independent school parents that the results of independent schools should be better than the state school results since the former offers a private education. This places the teachers in the independent schools under more pressure to produce good results.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

The main concern around assessment from the heads of curriculum was the need to ensure that learners were adequately prepared for the final external examinations. Audrey, an HOC in an all boys school, explains: "We have got to do well next year; so if we are going to meet the expectations [of the final examination] and also allow the boys to do well enough, we have got to ensure that we comply as much as we can". There was some acknowledgement that the requirements of the assessment in the NCS were considered to be a big change. Audrey comments: "I think perhaps the greatest adjustment has been the amount of assessment that's been done, the variety of assessments; there are a lot more investigations and project work that would not have been [in the old curriculum]. As heads of curriculum, Audrey, Diana and Joe were responsible for ensuring that learners would be adequately prepared for the external

examination. However, the heads of curriculum seem to be unaware of the degree of uncertainty that teachers were feeling about the NCS and the extent to which teachers were relying on the past curriculum to help them to cope with the expectations of the NCS around assessment. Diana, Audrey and Joe have the same perception; that teachers at their schools are familiar with the NCS documents around assessment. Diana feels that the NCS documents have “guided [the teachers] in terms of assessment”. However, contrary to the NCS documents’ specifications, examinations continue to dominate the assessments at the schools.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

Linked to the sense of uncertainty around the content, and how this impacts on teachers’ abilities to ensure that their learners are adequately prepared for the external examinations, is the uncertainty around assessment. Sue remarks: “We have never done the Assessors’ Course here, we are going to do it next year in April, and so we are fumbling in the dark a little bit ... we are actually working the wrong way around”. Sue is concerned that the teachers at her school are teaching the content of the NCS without having a clear idea about the assessment that should be driving the process of selecting the appropriate content. The Assessors’ Course is a course offered by the IEB as a training mechanism to help teachers to understand the assessment techniques that are part of the NCS. While it is very helpful to have done the course in order to understand how the NCS assessment works, teachers also have to engage with the NCS documents to gain an understanding of the ways in which assessment is meant to be done; they also have to practise these techniques in a meaningful manner. Jenna voices similar views to Sue when she states: “I am trying and I am grappling with [assessment] and I believe ... once I have done the Assessors’ Course it will make a huge difference”.

Carrie feels that she is “fumbling in the dark [with regard to assessment] to be honest ... I feel like I haven’t been prepared adequately, I need enough information to make sure I have done my job properly”. From the notes I made in my reflex journal, Carrie had said that she has familiarised herself with the NCS documents around assessment. However, as the Subject Head of Business Studies, Accounting, and Economic and Management

Sciences (these subjects fall under one Subject Field in the NCS), she is very insecure about her knowledge of Accounting and Economic and Management Sciences, as she has been teaching Business Studies only. In addition, the assessments for each of these subjects are different. She finds that she is “constantly having to re-educate [herself about] what’s going on”. She feels more comfortable to resort to what she knows: “You have got a worksheet that works for you and you like it and you adjust it now and then and you stick in a more current article but ultimately keep the same”. Carrie’s insecurity and uncertainty has made her rely on her past worksheets from the old curriculum as a tool of assessment in the NCS.

Nelly, in addition to feeling uncertain about the assessment required in the NCS, also feels frustrated: “Assessing learners differently I found more difficult because you don’t know what you are doing. Invariably you mess it up the first time ... and the thing is I am not very skilled at comprehension questions. Some of the questions are far too difficult and others are far too easy and so it’s a bit frustrating”. Nelly articulates the main cause of her frustration: “The frustration of the new system is that you are teaching something brand new for the first time and you don’t know how to unpack it”. Nelly went on to explain that her difficulty with the assessment in the NCS was due mainly to the fact that, compared to the past curriculum, the NCS did not offer Physical Science on the standard grade. Nelly explains: “A lot of my frustration is not having standard grade ... I think it’s going to make [the curriculum] less accessible ... I can’t see how the exams are going to give us a differentiation ... I think it is tremendously unfair on the children who have different abilities”. The past curriculum offered Physical Science on both the higher and standard grades. Different curricula were prescribed for the two grades, with a lot of overlaps. However, the two subjects were treated as separate in terms of their assessments. Nelly is struggling to adapt to the change of Physical Science being offered as one subject even though the assessment in the NCS argues that it caters for differentiation. Mark, the IEB manager (an assessment specialist), confirms: “We have to set 60% [of the examination] for the old standard grade pupil, but we also have to make provision for a scale where the average child can cope. On the other hand, we must have this high knowledge, high skills element to show that the good kid is really being

challenged”. Nelly sees the change as problematic since she is comparing it to the structure of the past curriculum.

The uncertainty around assessment has led Rose and her colleagues to focus more on content: “We do our assessments by using the bare essentials, for us it’s all about the content ... although we put a lot of effort and time and energy into our [examination] papers. My paper has been torn up and thrown in the dustbin 7 to 8 times because our papers must be perfect”. Rose and her colleagues do not make use of the NCS documents to help them with the assessment that is required by the NCS, since they feel that their Subject Head has enough knowledge to instruct them about the requirements. This has left Rose uncertain about what to do when it comes to setting her examination paper. At the same time, assessment for Rose remains an examination, as it was in the previous curriculum. She claimed that “we literally go to his [Subject Head] classroom, knock on the door and ask him what we have to do. He, in short, will tell us exactly, this is the assessment, you link this etcetera, etcetera”. She expressed her uncertainty about her knowledge around assessment: “You have to be careful when you set questions. I enjoy the challenge but we always fall back on what we know”. Rose is also caught between the past curriculum and the new; between her traditional methods of assessment, namely examinations, and the new broader assessment procedures. Her feeling of uncertainty about the NCS causes her to “fall back on what we know”. She uses the past assessment as her safety net as she is not confident about the new ways of assessing. Rose’s reliance on her Subject Head also raises the issue of teacher autonomy. I will discuss the issue of teacher autonomy in more detail later on in the chapter.

Synthesis - assessment

All the research participants equated assessment with examinations. Even though they know the NCS assessment procedures focus on formative as well as summative assessment, this is largely ignored in practice. It is evident that examinations play a big role in the independent school sector, since the results that learners produce are used as an indication of the schools’ worth. This places teachers under enormous pressure to meet the required expectations around results. In turn, the heads of curriculum have to manage

the process of assessment and are critically aware of the importance of this process, yet largely unaware of the uncertainty that teachers face when it comes to assessment. The IEB managers are aware of the value placed on assessment by teachers because of the associated judgements that it gives rise to from the stakeholders in the school. However, they feel that if teachers were to become *au fait* with the NCS in terms of the shift in emphasis in assessment that it calls for, they would find that it is manageable.

The NCS adheres to a ‘critical pedagogy’, which demands “the need to explore how pedagogy functions as a cultural practice to *produce* rather than to merely *transmit* knowledge within the asymmetrical relations of power that structure teacher-student relations” (Giroux, 1999: 98). This is central to the assessment practices of the NCS. Learners are supposed to be assessed on what they know rather than on what they do not know and not only through examinations. This was an attempt by the curriculum developers to ensure that, unlike the past curriculum, learners would not have to “resort to rote learning and the regurgitation of factual information” (Department of Education, 2002: 2).

The context of independent schools is such that teachers have to ensure that their learners attain good results; if this is not the case, then the teacher is considered to be less able than his/her peers. Independent schools have to attract a clientele that will ‘buy into’ what the school has to offer; ultimately, academic excellence. This places teachers in independent schools under enormous pressure to produce the results that would count as excellent. The insecurity and uncertainty that teachers have displayed in their inability to make choices around content and assessment must be seen in alignment with the role that they are forced to play in an independent school, which is reminiscent of education under apartheid, where teachers were considered to be state functionaries, a role that worked against the counter-image of teacher as liberator (Jansen, 2002:12). The teachers in the independent schools in which I conducted my research see themselves as functionaries of their schools in the sense that they have little choice over the curriculum content; but more pertinently, they have little control over the role that assessment plays in their schools. Teachers are extremely insecure about the extent to which their learners will be

prepared for the National Examination that will be set by the IEB. Both the IEB managers interviewed concurred with the impression that teachers were driven by, and taught, to the National Examination. This is understandable, as the results of the National Examination are used as a benchmark to judge the excellence of a school. Teachers at independent schools have the onerous task of ensuring that the results that are achieved in their subject meet the expectations of the stakeholders in the school, namely the management of the school, the parents of the learners, the IEB and the tertiary institutions. To achieve this, teachers have ignored the fundamental shift from summative assessment to formative assessment that the NCS calls for.

3.2. THE TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA AND VALUES-BASED TEACHING OF THE NCS

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act No 108 of 1996) sets the agenda for curriculum transformation and development for a post-apartheid South Africa. The Constitution expresses the nation's social values and its expectations of the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic South Africa. The NCS seeks to embody these values in the knowledge and skills it develops. This is to ensure that a national South African identity is built on non-discriminatory values, which are different from those that underpinned apartheid education. The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001) identify the fundamental values of the Constitution as: (1) Democracy; (2) Social Justice and Equity; (3) Non-Racism and Non-Sexism; (4) Ubuntu (Human Dignity); (5) An Open Society; (6) Accountability; (7) Respect; (8) The Rule of Law; and (9) Reconciliation. These values find expression in the NCS documents and include, among others: (1) social transformation; (2) outcomes-based education; (3) human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice; (4) valuing indigenous knowledge systems; (5) high knowledge and high skills, etc.

The issues that emerged from the data that I collected for this study with regard to the transformative agenda and values-based teaching of the NCS can be grouped as follows:

- (1) The past curriculum as a benchmark for the NCS
 - a. Changing what we do
 - b. Conceptions of a values-based curriculum
- (2) Curriculum knowledge versus curriculum ideology
 - a. Values-based teaching and teaching to the examination
 - b. Values are subject-specific
 - c. Values as an optional add-on

3.2.1 The past curriculum as a benchmark for the NCS

The discussion in the following section shows that teachers and heads of curriculum are struggling to engage with the NCS. This struggle manifests itself in tensions around how they used to engage with the past curriculum as well as struggles to shift their understandings of what a curriculum offers. In the section, ‘Changing what we do’ I discuss how research participants struggle to change their practices from the old curriculum, while in the section on ‘Conceptions of a values-based curriculum’ I discuss the various ways in which the NCS, as a democratic values-based curriculum, is perceived.

a) Changing what we do

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

Mary from the IEB comments that teachers are resisting the NCS generally, and its values teaching specifically, because it means that teachers have had to make many changes. Mary acknowledges that it is natural for teachers to resist change, but feels that the NCS was particularly difficult for independent school teachers to adjust to because: “[the] NCS was thrown in on a political ticket. The [developers of the NCS] threw everything out that you ever learnt because it was all wrong. [They say], here is the new mission and vision [of education] and ways of doing things. Now you don’t do that to professionals. I would be the first one to slam the door and say: how dare you come and

tell me I don't know what I am doing, and how dare you suddenly say this new stuff is better than what I have been doing?" Mary feels that there was nothing wrong with the way in which independent schools were doing things with regard to teaching and assessment. She feels resentful that it had to be made explicit that values have to be included in the assessment since she feels that this has always been the case in the IEB: "With the assessment [teachers] are teaching towards the correct skills and knowledge. [The IEB] favours the development of thinking skills and critical thinking - of analysis". Mary struggles to see how the thinking and critical skills that she has always made a part of her assessment practice are no longer sufficient to meet the requirements of a values-based NCS.

Mark is clear about the function that the IEB serves: "The IEB is not responsible for what goes on in schools. The IEB is responsible for the assessment at the end of Grade 12 [the final year of high school]. Now what the IEB is trying to do is prepare teachers for the assessment in Grade 12". This is the function that the IEB has always served in the independent school sector, as they are primarily an assessment body. However, with the introduction of the NCS, independent schools have looked to the IEB for guidance around all issues related to the NCS, other than just assessment. It is evident that Mark is reluctant to assume any more responsibility than he had as an assessment specialist in the old curriculum. However, if the assessment at the end of Grade 12 is being written for the first time on the NCS in 2008, then Mark may have to reconsider the function that the IEB has always served in schools. A part of the change in function will have to be around the philosophical underpinnings of the NCS. If the assessment of the NCS is intended to be inclusive of values, then a part of the function that the IEB must serve is to skill teachers and heads of curriculum on how to assess appropriately. The IEB has offered the Assessors' Course that schools may take, at a considerable cost, to familiarise academic staff with the requirements of the assessment in the NCS. However, Mark, as one of the assessment specialists, is still caught up in the past practices of the IEB as just an assessment body. His reluctance to acknowledge that his role needs to change to offer more assistance to teachers and heads of curriculum reflects that he is struggling to accept the change in what needs to be the function of the IEB in a time of curriculum change.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

In response to the question, *As a curriculum manager in your school, how have you encouraged teachers to teach values in their lessons?* (see Appendix 4B), Joe states: “I can’t say that I have made [values-teaching] a focus in managing the change [to the NCS]. My main focus at the moment is simply to get the mechanics right and I think that things like values and the other good things that are embedded in the NCS will come later once people have got used to the [NCS] system. People don’t like change. Everybody gets all up in arms about these things. I say let’s look at the mechanics then the luxuries and the depth and the nice-to-haves will come later on”. Joe is intent on making the change to the NCS as comfortable as possible for the teachers. His focus on content and ‘the mechanics’ of the curriculum means that, at his school, there is no expectation that values teaching according to the NCS takes place. Joe feels that this will happen, but he thinks that it is prudent that he focuses on what teachers are familiar with doing, that is, to focus on their subject content. In other words, Joe views values as something that is not an integral part of his teaching, but as something that can be omitted. In the questionnaire that Joe filled in prior to the interview, his answer to the question *What are the most important values that are advocated by the NCS?* was: “The focus on skills relevant to life beyond school”. Joe was referring to the skills needed to secure a job and not the skills that learners required to cope with the social and cultural changes that they face in their daily lives. In this sense, the curriculum that is offered at Joe’s school with regard to the NCS has been followed in much the same way as the past curriculum was followed, where the focus was on content and assessment only, with the aim of securing the best positions for learners in higher education and the workplace. One of the purposes of the NCS is to “facilitate the transition of learners from education institutions to the workplace” (Department of Education, 2002: 2), but this is not intended to happen at the expense of providing learners with the “skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country” (ibid). Joe sees no problem with being selective about the NCS offerings: “As an independent school, we can take what is good and what works and what is expected and then we can change it to suit us”. This has meant, in Joe’s case, to continue to manage the new curriculum in the

same way that he had been managing the past curriculum. Joe regards the values in the NCS as ‘luxuries’ and ‘nice-to-haves’; in other words, Joe separates knowledge from values. He sees knowledge as value-free.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

I asked the questions: *Give a brief description of how you incorporate the teaching of values into your teaching* and *What changes did you have to make in your teaching to ensure that values were incorporated in your subject?* (see Appendix 4A)

Anne has found it difficult to integrate values into her teaching. She claims that this is because of the way in which Physical Science was taught in the past curriculum: “In Science we virtually didn’t even look at values and beliefs [in the past curriculum]. The only ‘value’ that was taught was that Science is a fact. This curriculum [NCS] encourages and embraces alternative views. Certainly I have always taught [in the old curriculum] non-racism and non-sexism, but this wasn’t part of what I was expected to do”. Anne is of the opinion that “attitudes and values are the biggest development [in the NCS]. As they refine and fine tune the curriculum, I really hope that they don’t get to the point where the things that they cut out are the values and attitudes”. From the questionnaire that Anne was asked to complete, she answered; *Don’t know* to the question *What are the most important values that are advocated by the NCS?* Anne claims to be embracing the values base of the NCS, even though she was unable to name any of the values mentioned in the NCS. Anne claims that she had been incorporating ‘non-racism’ and ‘non-sexism’ into her lessons in the past curriculum, even though the practice in Physical Science in the past curriculum ‘highlighted the fact that you [the learners] sit in your little [desks] and take these facts as I give them to you. Don’t you dare question’. Anne seems to be struggling to put into practice her stated belief that values teaching is an important part of the new curriculum. Anne’s experience of teaching Physical Science has largely been according to the past curriculum where values, as she claims, “were outright ignored for all intents and purposes”. Anne seems to be struggling to make the shift from teaching according to the past curriculum to teaching the NCS with regard to values teaching.

Rose feels that she has not changed the way that she regards values teaching ever since she started teaching. In response to the question: *Are there any other values that you teach in the NCS that are significantly different to the ones you used to teach in the old curriculum?* Rose states: “nothing that’s different from 15 years ago”. The introduction of the NCS has not caused a shift in Rose’s thinking about anything other than the content and assessment of her subject, Mathematics. Rose relies on her Subject Head to tell her what to do with regard to the NCS. She regards herself as fortunate that she did not have to engage with the NCS documents herself: “We [the Mathematics teachers] are fortunate that we don’t have to make use of the [NCS] documents”. By not engaging with the NCS documents, Rose has displayed little understanding about the values base of the NCS, and thus understands values teaching only in relation to the past curriculum.

Some teachers have claimed that they have always included values as a part of their teaching. Jenna says: “For me [values teaching] is not something new. I think that I have always seen that as my responsibility of being an educator”. Jenna finds little difference between the values of the past curriculum and the NCS: “Most of the [values] of the new curriculum we have taught in the eighties. A lot of the issues are the same in terms of pressures on oil and pressures on resources. [The problems] are much more intense now. So instead of just an academic subject [Geography], it’s now the real issues”. Jenna feels that her values teaching in the NCS is around environmental issues. In this sense, she sees no real difference between the values of the past curriculum and the NCS. Environmental issues are an important part of the South African Constitution in general and of a transformative education in particular, but the focus has changed since the 1980s. The focus on the environment in the NCS is linked to values underpinned by human rights and social responsibilities, as South Africa has a history of socially unjust conservation laws. Unless Jenna has made the move to infuse the environmental issues with an ethical slant, she would not be doing anything significantly different to what she had been doing in the 1980s. When I probed Jenna’s teaching of environmental issues, she stated: “I think all of those [real issues] easily fit into the subject [Geography]. The new Grade 10 and Grade 11 syllabi are wide open to all those things”. Jenna’s answer is framed in

terms of the content of the syllabus rather than its values base. Carrie also expressed that she was doing more of the same in terms of values teaching. In response to the question: *To what extent have you incorporated the teaching of values in your teaching?* Carrie replies: “Quite a bit, but we did it before [in the past curriculum] anyway”.

b) Conceptions of a values-based curriculum

Research participants’ understanding of a values-based curriculum was based on the ways in which they viewed values in the past curriculum. To this end, they showed little understanding that the values of the NCS has a politically transformative agenda.

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

Mary is of the belief that the content has not changed much from the past curriculum to the NCS. She comments: “Look, knowledge is knowledge. If you take Maths as an example; solving an equation is solving an equation. So that kind of basic knowledge is there [from the past curriculum to the NCS]”. Mary notes that the NCS does reflect a certain change from the past curriculum. She explains the change thus:

The way the curriculum [the NCS] is written has changed. It was written from the perspective of the learner. It’s not written from the perspective of the teacher, so it’s not written as the old syllabus that stated you must teach this, this and this. It’s written from the perspective that says the learner must be able to demonstrate and understand this, this and this.

Mary’s understanding of the values base of the NCS seems to be around the notion of it being a learner-centred pedagogy. This is one of the values of the NCS, and it is a significant shift from the past curriculum, which was profoundly teacher-centred. Mary is vocal around the values implicit in a learner-centred curriculum, but silent with respect to the broader values of the NCS, namely, the democratic transformative values.

In response to the question: *What are the most important values advocated by the NCS?* in the questionnaire, Mary stated: *Relevant teaching and learning* and *child-focused*. A

question that sought to find out what importance Mary placed on a values-based curriculum was asked: *To what extent do you ensure that values, skills and attitudes are incorporated as a part of the examinations that the IEB sets?* (see appendix 4C). Mary answers: “In the examining panel, the internal moderator is your wise counsel of the subject and in essence, that kind of thing [incorporation of values, skills and attitudes] would be looked after by the internal moderator. Sometimes it slips through the net; sometimes it isn’t there”. Mary goes on to say that when the examination does not include a focus on values; it is “picked up” by somebody such as the external moderator or a teacher. This omission is then discussed at the annual subject conference in the year after the examination has been written. Mary’s responses seem to indicate that little importance is placed on values teaching.

Mark from the IEB claims: “We have got to somehow assess so that teachers teach the spirit of the NCS”. Mark explains what he thinks the spirit of the NCS is:

...we [the assessment specialists from the IEB] are asking people [learners] to think for themselves; we are asking them to problem-solve; we are asking for the Critical Outcomes skills; we are asking for things we never asked for before [in the past curriculum]. [In the past curriculum] we asked for content and we drilled and practiced content.

Mark seemed to have some sense of the differences between the old curriculum and the NCS with regard to the inclusion of values into the assessment in the NCS. However, Mark found it difficult to answer a question that directly related to how he included values into his assessment practices as an IEB assessment specialist. I asked: *To what extent do you ensure that values, skills and attitudes are incorporated as a part of the examinations that the IEB sets?* Mark responds: “Well, I haven’t gone back to those [values], but the attitudes and values come through particularly in our Learning Outcome Three [LO3]. We certainly have grids and in those grids we have three pages. We look at how many marks we are assessing on LO3 and we try to link them up ... and through this method we are seeing if we are doing the right thing”. Mark then deviates from this explanation to give a lengthy explanation of the shortcomings of the Physical Science

NCS document in terms of its Learning Outcomes. As described in Chapter 1, a Learning Outcome is a statement of an intended result of learning and teaching and describes knowledge, skills and values that learners should acquire (Department of Education, 2002: 11). Mark feels that the Learning Outcomes are not specific enough to identify exactly where the “values part” is accommodated.

It seems that Mark did not know exactly where values were located in the Physical Science document, although he states that the values may be in LO3, which states “the learner is able to identify and critically evaluate scientific knowledge claims and the impact of this knowledge on the quality of socio-economic, environmental and human development” (National Curriculum Statement: Physical Sciences, 2003: 50). In the questionnaire that Mark filled in, he listed *thinking skills relative to real world [context] (LO3)* and *Science practical skills (LO1)* as a response to the question: *What are the most important values that are advocated by the NCS?* From my reflex journal, I noted that Mark had been reading from the NCS documents throughout the interview. He was determined to get his responses ‘correct’ and he wanted to ensure that he was getting the answers from the right place in the document. For instance, I asked Mark what he thought the advantages of teaching the NCS were. Mark responds: “The application of Science knowledge and the skills of Science knowledge and the multiple levels ... we have got that high order ... what’s the word? [Mark glances at the NCS document] ... high knowledge, high skills curriculum”. This may explain why Mark listed the statements of two Learning Outcomes as his most important ‘values’; it was something that he could access from the NCS document. Mark’s reliance on reading from the NCS document throughout the interview suggests that he has a very limited knowledge of the place of values teaching in the NCS.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

The following questions were posed to the heads of curriculum: *As a curriculum manager in your school, how have you encouraged teachers to incorporate values from the NCS in their lessons?*

Diana responds:

I suppose we are very lucky, being a very Catholic Marist school because the Marist values have formed the basis of our education. In fact, the Marist values are quite similar in some ways to what I suppose are the values that are mentioned in the NCS. These [Marist] values come through quite strongly in our [school] programme as a whole. I haven't made the [NCS] values a focus of mine this year.

The Marist values are: Love of Work; Simplicity; Presence; In the Way of Mary (Mother of Jesus) and Family Spirit. Diana sees no need to focus on the values of the NCS as she regards the Marist values of the school as being in alignment with the values of the NCS. While the Marist values of the school can be used to promote a school community that has a shared religious vision and purpose, it does not have a transformative purpose in terms of establishing the foundation for a society based on democratic values, social justice and political redress.

Audrey expresses similar views to Diana:

[Our school] is values-driven being a Christian school. We focus specifically on divinity, so that's very value-driven. There's a sort of underlying [Christian] ethos that sort of travels through the school, which we encourage teachers to sort of support in all situations. I think that it's always been there.

Both Diana and Audrey have made no shift to include the values enshrined in the NCS into their curricula. They feel that the Catholic and Christian values of their respective schools are sufficient to make a claim that the curriculum offerings have a values base that could be compatible with the values of the NCS. This is what they have always done in terms of a values-based education, that is, to promote the religious values of their schools. The introduction of the NCS has effected no significant change in their thinking about values teaching in relation to a multi-cultural diverse democracy.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

To elicit teachers' responses about the values base of the NCS, the following question was asked: *To what extent have you incorporated the teaching of values into your teaching?* (see Appendix 4A).

Lee claims that although he is into "old fashioned morality for children", he does not make a conscious effort to include values teaching into his subject, which is English. Lee comments: "I'll take a comprehension passage, not necessarily for the values it teaches, as much as for what I think I can get out of it in terms of old-fashioned English skills". At the same time, however, Lee feels:

...children must be taught respect for others and I think that pervades my teaching ... whether or not the NCS has helped me achieve that, I don't think any more than before [since] I think perhaps if I hadn't had an awareness of values and morality then maybe it [the NCS] would have been of more use to me, but I already have those pretty ingrained in me.

Lee feels that his own sense of morality is sufficient to equip him to teach the values of the NCS. At the same time, he admits that the NCS may have made him "more aware of the emphasis on values then [he] was in the previous [curriculum]". I asked Lee a follow-up question: *How different do you think the NCS is compared to the old curriculum, in terms of values teaching?* Lee replies:

Gosh, tough question. I have to think [about] that. I think [the values] in the old curriculum was obviously more Christian-based and I'm not attacking that because I'm Christian. The new ones are more broad-based concepts of values. Does that make sense?

I prompt Lee: *More societal-based?* Lee responds:

Yes, I think it is more societal-based. I don't think...it's not entrenched in a religion. It's perhaps more political?

Lee's responses in the interview indicated that he had a very vague idea of what values teaching was meant to be in the NCS. He did not see this as an issue since he felt that he 'already had an awareness of values and morality'. The implication was that he would not benefit much more from using the NCS documents with regard to values teaching.

Rose claims that, because she teaches in a Christian school, she is always teaching values: "There isn't one lesson that I just teach Maths. We have a holistic approach; it's a Christian school and everything you do is based on values anyway". When asked whether she has to think carefully about the values that she teaches, she replies: "Honestly, I don't think about it; it just happens". Rose could not specify what values she teaches. When prompted for a specific answer, Rose answered: "that's not only values as such, but morals in general; where you will need it in real life". Rose relates an incident, which provides an example of her school's approach to teaching morals:

I had an incident or two with boys being dishonest when working together closely. Immediately at our school, they are put on a disciplinary hearing. So that's how strict things are here. So if we just have a suspicion that they are working together too closely [and dishonesty is suspected], then something drastic is done about it and it won't happen again.

Rose has conflated values teaching with a process of dealing with discipline issues. In the questionnaire that Rose completed before the interview was conducted, she had no answer to the question: *What are the most important values that are advocated by the NCS?* Furthermore, Rose answered *No* to the question: *Do you consciously make the teaching of values a part of your teaching?* It seems that Rose has a different idea of values teaching to that advocated by the NCS. She believes that she is teaching values, and she probably is, but not all the values that she claims she is teaching are in alignment with the values advocated by the NCS. Some of the values that Rose mentions teaching are respect and honesty. These are in alignment with the values of the NCS but Rose's focus on respect and honesty does not extend to the transformative overtones in the context of a democracy that is concerned with respect of diversity.

Synthesis - The past curriculum as a benchmark for the NCS

The research data revealed that participants were silent about the values base of the NCS, unless they were asked questions that specifically probed their views and feelings around the notion of values teaching. The first part of the interview schedule posed questions around research participants' views on content, assessment, advantages and disadvantages of the NCS. The questions invited responses that could have included any aspect of the research participants' views on the NCS. The silence around the values base of the NCS in the responses to these questions was probed by asking questions that directly related to the research participants' views on the values base of the NCS.

The data that emerged from the teaching of values in the NCS have revealed that while teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers were aware that the NCS has a democratic values base, generally they concentrated on teaching values such as respect and honesty. What seemed to be lacking was an understanding of the importance of the political transformative and redress agenda of the values base of the NCS. All the research participants gave the impression that since they had been involved in values teaching in the past curriculum, there was little or no need to change the ways in which they were doing this with the introduction of the NCS. There was a perception that the values teaching that they were already doing in the past curriculum was sufficient to meet the needs of their schools and by implication, a broader democratic society. After the introduction of the NCS, teachers' past pedagogical practices still continued with regard to values teaching. The process of change is complicated in any situation, but more so when that change involves a re-think of deep-seated political attitudes and behaviour patterns.

The NCS calls for the transformation of the education and training system so as to promote equity, redress, economic competitiveness and quality learning. While acknowledging that "the curriculum is and will be differently interpreted and enacted in diverse contexts" the NCS will only be successful if it gets the "full cooperation of all who work in education" (Department of Education, 2001: 1). This cooperation means that a shift is required in the perception of teachers around the meaning of values teaching in

the NCS. Independent schools need to be the sites of democratic possibility in a time of political change in South Africa.

Bruner (1999: 156) contends: “How a culture or society manages its system of education is a major embodiment of a culture’s way of life, not just a preparation for it”. While education is a manifestation of a particular culture, education also has the capacity to impact on a culture and to reconstruct it. The role that independent schools play in the educational arena is crucial to reconstructing the culture of apartheid to a culture of democracy in South Africa. Teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers have displayed a poor understanding of the values base of the NCS. The implication of this is that the capacity of the independent schools to contribute to the reconstruction of the culture of apartheid will be compromised.

The difficulty with trying to establish the importance of values teaching with the research participants was that they saw themselves as already doing values teaching. Values such as respect and honesty were often mentioned. These are values that the NCS espouses, but the context of these values has to be linked to establishing a culture of human rights. Rose, a teacher, brought up the value of respect and honesty in the context of a disciplinary hearing. The learners were ‘taught’ to be respectful and honest because, in Rose’s words, “something drastic [a disciplinary hearing] is done about it [the violation of respect and honesty] and it won’t happen again”. The learners in this case were trained to conform to the expectation of the school, but are likely to have learnt very little substantively about respect and its impact beyond the classroom. The way that ‘respect’ is defined in this school seems to be within an authoritarian paradigm. Authoritarianism is hardly likely to lead to good democratic citizenship.

Other teachers and heads of curriculum felt that their schools followed the ethos of Christianity and this exempted them from doing any other values teaching for which the NCS called. The values that Christianity adheres to, as is the case with most religions, have universal application in that they offer a highly organised and very effective moral code upon which value systems are based. However, what the religious values may not be

able to achieve is to “shift the values and practices of apartheid education into a democratic, rights-based approach to social and economic development” (Christie, 2001: 269). This is what the values of the NCS are meant to achieve in its transformative aims. Religious values do not have the same transformative function as that intended by the NCS. In fact, the religious values of a school, if that is the only vehicle through which values are taught, may be counter-productive to achieving one of the strategies identified in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001), namely, to familiarise learners with the values of the Constitution. This strategy is listed as: “Learning about the rich diversity of cultures, beliefs and world views within which the unity of South Africa is manifested” (Department of Education, 2002: 7). The research schools’ reliance on using the religious values of Christianity in lieu of values teaching required by the NCS must come with the caveat that it must enable learners to examine, critically and creatively, the moral codes embedded in Christianity and other religions if it claims to be doing values teaching that is in alignment with the values of the NCS.

The discussion on values-based teaching showed that teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB managers interviewed were not engaged in values teaching or the promotion of values according to the spirit of the NCS. This is not to say that values teaching is not taking place at the schools in the research; what is different is that the teaching of values in the past curriculum is conflated with teaching the values of the NCS. There was no acknowledgement from research participants that the NCS has a political, social and economic transformative and redress agenda with regard to its values base, and hence is substantively different to the values in the past curriculum. The NCS calls for new patterns of behaviour from teachers and managers with regard to the inclusion of values in education. The Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), a supporting document to the NCS, specifies that one of the roles that teachers have to play in the new curriculum is to uphold the Constitution and promote democratic values and practice in schools and society. What needs to be acknowledged is that “values cannot simply be asserted; it will require an enormous effort to ensure that the values are internalised by all our people” (Department of Education, 2000: 4, foreword by Asmal).

3.2.2 Curriculum knowledge versus curriculum ideology

The discussion in this section shows that teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers do not regard the NCS as primarily an ideological document that is underpinned by democratic values; rather the NCS is perceived as a curriculum document that shows teachers what to teach. That is, the focus on the NCS documents has been on its knowledge base only. This became evident via three main issues: (a) research participants continued with their past practices of focusing on the external examination as a guide to the pedagogical practices in their classrooms, rather than on the principles of the NCS; (b) The values that are an integral part of the NCS are relegated to certain subjects rather than informing the general pedagogical practices of the school. These subjects are regarded as being 'open' to values teaching. The subjects that are excluded from engaging in values teaching are the 'number subjects' such as Mathematics and Accounting; and (c) Teachers and heads of curriculum considered the values component of the NCS as optional. They expressed the view that values can only be engaged with once they have familiarised themselves with the technical aspects of the NCS. In this regard, the values teaching in the NCS is managed as an optional extra by the independent schools that participated in my research.

a) Values-based teaching and teaching to the examination

Research participants continued with their past practices of focusing their pedagogical practices solely on the examination, rather than on the principles of the NCS.

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

I asked the questions: *To what extent are teachers from the IEB using the NCS documents to guide their teaching?* and *To what extent are teachers using the NCS documents to guide their assessments?* Mary's responses to both questions are very similar. To the first question, Mary answers: "I think the fact that the matric examination is set on the NCS pretty much means that [teachers] have little option but to govern their teaching

according to the requirements of the curriculum. I think that is the basis of their teaching”. To the second question, Mary answers: “At Grades 10 to 12, because of the pressure of the [matriculation] exam and how the curriculum is interpreted by the IEB in terms of the assessment [teachers] would pretty much be concerned about what the assessment is, so obviously they prepare the learners appropriately”. Mary’s responses to these questions indicate that teachers are focused on the content and assessment of the NCS documents in an effort to prepare learners for the final examination at the end of Grade 12 [the final year of high school]. The other more formative forms of the NCS assessment are not given equal status to the summative part of the assessment.

In her answer to the question: *How has the IEB ensured that teachers are adhering to the NCS documents?* Mary admits that the IEB uses the examination to ensure that teachers are compliant with the NCS. Mary answers:

We set the examinations on the [NCS] curriculum; that is what we are obliged to do and we will set it according to the content prescribed in the curriculum. The teachers have to follow the curriculum. From a cynical point of view, we hold the trump card in a sense because of the assessment and there is nothing sinister or nasty in that. It’s just a reality.

Mary says that the examination is set according to the content prescribed in the curriculum. There is no mention of the inclusion of a values-based slant that the examinations should incorporate. Mary’s expectation is that teachers will have to follow the NCS, but her responses indicate that she expects teachers to adhere to the content only. She claims that the IEB holds the trump card with regard to getting teachers to conform to the NCS. In this sense, the IEB dictates the ways in which the NCS will be taught at schools. In another response Mary states that the assessment that is set by the IEB does not always follow the exact requirements of the NCS with regard to the inclusion of values:

There is no formal [process of] looking for knowledge and looking for values [in the examination papers]. I wouldn’t say there is anything specific [that we do]. It’s the same as when the internal moderator does not look specifically for one or other content areas.

We try to appoint an experienced expert of the subject as the external moderator wherever possible. [In that way] we try to ensure that [the assessment] doesn't become mechanical and it has a spirit and an educational feel to it.

Mary's statement shows that the IEB does not specify what needs to go into the examinations as a directive to the examiners. Mary demonstrates awareness that the assessment needs to show the spirit of the NCS, but there is little clarity about how she facilitates this as an assessment specialist. The process of setting an examination is such that the examiner, after having set the examination, sends it to an internal moderator. Thereafter it is viewed by an external examiner who has to ensure that the examination complies with the requirements specified by the IEB. In its role as an assessment body that oversees all the assessment in the independent schools, the IEB is autonomous with regard to assessment, but is obliged to follow the requirements of the NCS in terms of ensuring that the assessment "embod[ies] the knowledge, skills and values" (Department of Education, 2002) of the particular subject. The assessment specialists in the IEB have to make their requirements of the examinations explicit to the examiners at the outset, that is, before the examination papers are set. From Mary's remarks it seems that ensuring that the assessments comply with the 'spirit' of the NCS is an afterthought rather than an initial criterion that is given to the examiner.

Mark admits that teachers "are going to teach to the test and [in this sense] they are not going to let learners learn [about anything other than the content]. When [teachers] assess, they test the content; they don't see the necessity for the practical outcome, which is the skills [and values]. The Science departments in schools fail when it comes to peoples' attitudes and values and abilities to think creatively [in their assessments]". Mark is clear about what the IEB should do, in its role as an assessment body: "We have got to somehow assess so that teachers teach to the spirit of the NCS". Mark explains his understanding of the spirit of the NCS: "We are asking people to think for themselves". In other words, Mark understands one of the values of the NCS; that of critical thinking. At the same time, however, he admits that the only way that the IEB is going to ensure that teachers change the way that they teach is by letting the assessment dictate teachers'

teaching choices: “I think that the only time we are going to get a difference [in the teaching] is in Grade 12 [when the external examination is written]. I think the difference is going to be demanded by the exam. If the IEB gets the exams right, teachers will change and if they don’t, teachers won’t change”.

Between Mary’s and Mark’s comments, it seems that whether or not the assessments from the IEB are incorporative of values, teachers are obliged to teach to the final external examination. In order to do this, they will have to adhere very closely to the criteria for assessment that the IEB requires. Herein may lay the dilemma: the IEB managers that I interviewed offered different perspectives on how the examinations will stay true to the ‘spirit’ of the NCS. In this sense, there is awareness and an acknowledgement that the assessment of the NCS must be incorporative of democratic values. However, if the managers from the IEB are not explicit about how values will be incorporated in the examinations, and whether indeed the examinations will incorporate values, the teaching at schools may renege on values teaching.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

I asked the question: *To what extent is your staff using the NCS documents to guide their teaching?* Audrey responds: “Completely I think at this stage, because next year’s [Grade 12] exams are such an unknown quantity we are following the NCS very carefully. The more experience we have with the exam, the more confident we will become in perhaps diverging a little bit [from the prescribed content]”. Joe concurs with Audrey that teachers at his school also feel obliged to adhere closely to the NCS documents because of the ‘unknown’ final examinations, but Joe offers the insight: “I am worried that we are going to be moving away from some of those things and just dealing with pure content and skills rather than values and attitudes.” Joe is concerned that teachers’ focus on the examination will detract from the focus on the values and attitudes that are part of the subject offering. Joe seems to assume that the final examination will not be incorporative of values and attitudes. Joe is unclear about exactly what the emphasis on values and attitudes entail, and as a head of curriculum at his school, he does not seem to think that this is a problem. He remarks: “In a few years, we will be a bit more comfortable with

[the NCS] and [then] we will go back to some of those values and ideas they have of education”. His attitude towards the values component of the NCS seems to be very casual, implying that he does not consider it to be an issue that requires his immediate attention. Joe also voiced his feelings about what he thought the IEB’s role should be in familiarising the schools with the expectations of the NCS with regard to examinations: “I expect the IEB to tell me these things. I think the IEB have been remiss in their responsibility about the whole thing”.

Diana, in response to the question: *List a few adjustments that you and your teachers have had to make in implementing the NCS*, mentioned having to change the content in each of the subjects. In addition, Diana states: “Certainly the different forms of assessment and our reporting on assessments has changed and perhaps most importantly, we have to make sure that all the different assessment standards are being covered because of the [final] exams”. There is no mention of any other changes that teachers at the school had to make. The focus on the examination has brought the focus on content to the forefront and diluted the focus on democratic values. The focus on content may be a necessary thing to do if the requirements of the final examination are unclear. Audrey adds: “[In our assessments], there is a lot of cognitive evaluation and we ask ourselves, are we actually reaching the right cognitive levels? Are the kinds of questions that we are setting demanding enough? Where does one start with the seventh cognitive level? Is that something only expected of a matriculant [Grade 12 learner]?” Audrey explains her preoccupation with the technical details of the examination: “You don’t want to take the risks that you have excluded something that might be critical at the end of next year, so it’s just about finding that balance”. Both Audrey and Diana, as heads of curriculum, seem to be anxious about ensuring that their schools will be ready for the final examinations. In this regard, they are focusing exclusively on the content and assessment in the NCS documents. The lack of direction from the IEB with regard to the criteria for the final assessment has been ‘understood’, by all the heads of curriculum, to mean that the focus on the values and attitudes of the NCS can be deferred.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

Jenna explains what she regards as her responsibility: “I feel as an educator I have the responsibility to prepare the learners that I have for the national exam”. Anne is so intent in getting her learners ready for the external examination that she finds the documents unnecessarily long: “I don’t like all the preamble stuff. Some of it is dribble that you have seen and read somewhere before. [By having to go through all of this], you miss out on some important pieces of information [that is needed for assessment]”. The ‘dribble’ that Anne is referring to is the rationale for the introduction of a new curriculum in South Africa. It is the section that foregrounds the necessity for the democratic values base of the NCS. In this regard, it is essential reading for all stakeholders in education so that they understand the context within which the NCS was born. Anne admits that she enjoys teaching Physical Science, but finds that “time is difficult”. Anne also states she did not have to change the way that she prepared her lessons as part of her adaptation to the NCS. She continued teaching in a way that would prepare her learners for an external examination. Anne says: “As [I] prepare every single section. [I] need to be sure that it is referenced back to the [NCS] document [so that] I cover what the documents are asking”. At the same time, she admits that she “leaves out” some parts. Anne explains that she uses the “old context” as a guide to decide what she should leave out. This implies that she does not include the values component of the NCS as a part of her teaching if the past context is used as a guide.

Carrie has included values in her teaching but she is not sure whether this will “disadvantage [her] learners quite drastically” in terms of preparing them for the final examinations as there is “no way that [she] could know [what the IEB was planning]”. Carrie feels that “it’s the teachers [who] will take the fall at the end of the day” if they do not prepare their learners adequately for the final examination. In this sense, Carrie remarks that “it is fabulous that you hear the talk about the way that you should teach, and that is obviously important, but we also need to know [what to do] in terms of content [for the examination]”. Carrie’s reference to the ‘way that you teach’ alludes to the values base of the NCS, which is intended to underpin the teaching and learning. Carrie hopes that the values teaching that she had been engaged in was not “window

dressings”. Carrie is not sure what to expect in the final examination. This situation has forced her to abandon her values teaching in favour of ensuring that her learners are prepared for the final examination. Carrie comments: “No-one knows if they are teaching [adequately for the examination] . . . you think, I hope I taught all that stuff . . . nobody can give you the answer”. Carrie’s expectation is that there should be some guidance around the requirements of the examination. She feels that this has compromised her foray into values teaching.

b) Values are subject-specific

The data showed that the values that are an integral part of the NCS are relegated to certain subjects, rather than informing the general pedagogical practices of the school.

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

Mark explains why he thinks teachers are not engaged in values teaching in their subjects:

I think in South Africa we are way behind [in our education system]. We have got to make the space for children to learn; it means you have to give them space to take responsibility, which means you have to step back and give them power in the classroom. Our teachers don’t want to give them [learners] the power. For a teacher to be able to do what I am talking about they have got to know their subject; they have got to understand the issues involved.

Mark is alluding to the difficulty that teachers experience in changing the way that they teach with regard to values teaching. He implies that teachers will feel threatened when they allow issues to be challenged in class. Mark’s reference to ‘the issues involved’ is the inclusion of values in a subject, because this amounts to giving learners’ ‘power’. Mark feels that teachers will only be able to engage in values teaching if they understand the relationship between their subject and the values-base of the NCS.

Mark is also of the opinion that in some subjects, teachers do not feel the need to include values in their teaching:

I don't know how much of change there has been in Maths [in terms of values-teaching]. I think Maths is traditionally a problem. Maths teachers have that arrogance. They know how it's done. Nobody needs to tell them.

Mark has experienced problems when he has tried to 'convert' Mathematics teachers to the ideology behind the NCS. He puts it down to their 'arrogance'. Mathematics has traditionally been accorded a high status at schools, as it is a highly specialised subject in terms of its concepts and its terminology. Mathematics has been regarded as an insular subject since it claims to have little inter-relationships with other subjects. Mark's comments about Mathematics being a problem with regard to values teaching points to a perception that Mathematics teachers' identify with the insular nature of their subjects. That is, it is difficult for Mathematics teachers to include anything other than the content of their subjects into their teaching, as its insular nature does not seem to allow for integration.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

I asked Diana the question: *As a curriculum manager in your school, how have you encouraged teachers to include values in their teaching?* Diana responds: "We had a look at the Critical and Developmental Outcomes and then we looked at our Life Orientation programme. We have spoken about where the overlap is [between the Outcomes and Life Orientation]; perhaps there are areas we need to look at specifically, but if there is an overlap ..." Diana's response indicates that, at her school, the Critical and Developmental Outcomes are regarded as being a part of the Life Orientation programme only. Life Orientation is a subject that serves to emphasise the life skills that a learner needs. Diana feels that this is where values teaching should happen at her school. The Critical and Developmental Outcomes are a list of outcomes that are derived from the South African Constitution. The Learning and Assessment Outcomes in each subject was designed down from the Critical and Developmental Outcomes. This implies that each subject is

permeated with the values of the NCS. The democratic values base of the NCS was not an afterthought; rather, it was used as the basis on which to structure the learning and assessment in each subject. If Diana, as head of curriculum, focuses on Life Orientation as the primary subject within which values teaching takes place, this means that the teachers of the other subjects may feel exempted from values teaching. I asked Diana a follow-up question: *Do you ask teachers for a term plan or year plan for their subject? If you do, what categories of planning do you ask for?* Diana's answer indicated that she focused on the assessment that teachers are planning in each section of the work. There was nothing in her answer that indicated that she needed an outline of the values that teachers promoted via their teaching. Diana went on to say that "we are going to formalise [values as part of the teaching plan] a bit more next year; we are even going to include reporting to [values]". The first cohort of learners who had to do the NCS will be in their final year of schooling in the year that Diana is planning to make reporting to the values base of the NCS mandatory. It remains to be seen if this happens.

Audrey responds to the same question: *As a curriculum manager in your school, how have you encouraged teachers to include values in their teaching?* Audrey's response also indicates that she links values teaching to specific subjects:

I think that [values teaching] lends itself more easily to some subjects than others. I think the Maths department, to be honest, finds it fairly difficult to teach values because it doesn't sort of fit into the mechanics of Maths teaching. But certainly in subjects where there's a great deal of discussion ... things like Drama and Art and English and other languages. History, for example ... values come in all the time ... Geography as well ... Biology, and to a large degree in Science; I think it's just actually in Maths that we find not much values-teaching is done. We find that Life Orientation is very values-centred.

Audrey's response points to her uncertainty around the issue of the inclusion of values in a subject. From my reflex journal, I noted that Audrey was very confident about her school's value-system, which is based on Christianity, but became more hesitant in her responses when I asked her to relate the teaching of values in the NCS to the subject teaching in the school. Audrey also linked a subject's suitability to values teaching to the

‘discussion’ that the subject is able to generate. In this regard, Audrey could not link values teaching to Mathematics because of the ‘mechanics’ of Mathematics teaching, and the assumed lack of discussion that it generates.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

Sue’s comment on the question *To what extent have you incorporated the teaching of values into your teaching?* was:

All the time. I think it is the subject, humanities. It’s just so much easier [to incorporate values-teaching]. I often stop and say, what would the values be of those people? What is the link to our values today? The humanity subjects are about people, so it’s easier to link [to values] than it would be in a subject where you are teaching numbers.

Sue also feels that the reason that learners should do a humanities subject is to make up for the values that she thinks the learners lack:

In History for example, when we do apartheid legislation, you have to look at the examples [of the enforcement of apartheid laws] and look at the impact that it has on today [the present]. I always ask them which law was the most damaging and why? The values, they just come up and you can identify the values you would like learners to have. That’s why they do a humanities subject because for some of them those values [around discrimination] are lacking.

Sue indicates, by her response, that her teaching of values is linked to specific topics in History. She may be incorporating values into her teaching in general, but the examples that Sue provided showed that she made connections between the topic she was teaching and the resulting values. Sue’s earlier comment about finding it easy to incorporate values into her teaching rests on her belief that her subject, History, is not about ‘teaching numbers’; the assumption being that values can only be taught in certain subjects. In another question, I asked Sue: *What values do you incorporate into your teaching?* Sue replies: “Well, democracy obviously, since I am teaching History. If you are teaching Socialism or Communism, it is important that [learners] know and understand where we

come from so that they can understand other ideologies. Then non-racism, again because it is History [that I teach]”. It seems that Sue is using the concepts of democracy and non-racism in the context of History, rather than as values that are inherent in the NCS. The fact that the History curriculum deals with the concepts of democracy and non-racism is indicative of the nature of the subject; these concepts are usually taught as part of the conceptual framework of History. Engaging in discussion around these concepts may be a part of values teaching, but it does not mean that Sue is adhering to the democratic values base of the NCS. I posed a series of questions to Sue that enquired about the changes that she had to make with regard to teaching in her adaptation to the NCS. One of the questions was: *Did you have to think very carefully about the values in your teaching?* Sue answers: “No, I don’t think so. I think it’s subject-related. The subject [History] always lends itself to values. I have always been aware of the values that link very closely to History”. Sue has an awareness that she is engaging in some sort of values teaching by having been exposed to the values-base of the NCS, rather than seeing that values teaching in History is an integral part of values teaching in the NCS.

Jenna considers the incorporation of values into her teaching as “something that’s not new”. She says that incorporating values into her teaching has been easy for her as “[her] subject (Geography) really lends itself to [values-teaching] because it is current and topical”. In addition, Jenna asserts: “The new [NCS] syllabus is wide open to all those things [values] and so values “fits easily into the subject”. Rose claims: “I don’t have to think about [values teaching]. It just happens”. I ask Rose for an example of when the values teaching happens. Rose replies: “I think the values come more and more naturally now because of the way [one is expected] to assess in group work. But for me, it’s no different from 15 years ago”. Rose is of the opinion that the values of the NCS are the same as the values that she has always included in her Mathematics teaching. At the same time, Rose admits that as much as she is committed to teaching values, it is difficult, because “if you are a Maths teacher, you do Maths morning, noon and night. You do Maths all the time”. Rose, as a Mathematics teacher, feels that even though she does not have the time to focus specifically on values in her teaching, she can claim to be including values in her teaching as “it just happens”.

Some teachers felt that their subjects do not lend themselves to values teaching as much as other subjects do. Carrie comments: “When it comes to the nature of my subject [Accounting], it doesn’t allow you to speak in general terms [in terms of values]. I think it is easier to [incorporate values] in History”. Anne adds: “In Science, we virtually didn’t even look at values and beliefs. [However], if you take a subject like History, there is much more of a social undercurrent”. Anne implies that it is easier to teach values in History than it is in Physical Science because of the ‘social undercurrent’ in History. Subject-specific values teaching is important, but not enough to reflect the values base of the NCS in terms of its social and political transformative ideals.

c. Values as an optional add-on

Teachers and heads of curriculum considered the values component of the NCS as optional. They expressed the view that values can only be engaged with once they have familiarised themselves with the technical aspects of the NCS.

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

Mary found that, because they are struggling to cope with the changes demanded by having to engage in a new curriculum, teachers have focused on what they consider to be the most immediate changes:

[Teachers] don’t take to change easily. [The curriculum] is forcing me to do a whole lot of work. There are new demands in the curriculum; teachers already have a lot to do already and some of them don’t want to be challenged [by values teaching]. So they began to focus on the things that teachers should be concerned about [such as]: Have I got the resources? Have I got the training? Have my learners got the abilities? These questions became the real questions.

Mary’s comments point to the contention that teachers have found the change to the NCS difficult to manage, especially with regard to values teaching, so they focus on the other changes that they have had to adjust to, such as content, assessment, resources and

training. This implies, from Mary's account, that values teaching had to be sidelined in favour of the other adaptations. In this sense, values in the NCS are regarded as optional and to be picked up at a later stage, if at all. Mary's focus on the NCS shows an emphasis on the principle of a learner-centred education to the exclusion of all else on which the NCS is based. Mary states:

This Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) was tacked onto everything that was thrown out and for me, I don't care what you call it. If you are talking about teaching and learning for the benefit of the child; whether you call it OBE or some new fangled religion, I don't care. The principle is that the child is the most important thing. That we should not ignore.

Mark attempts to explain why he considered values to be optional:

I don't think you get convinced [about the NCS] by all those people trying to speak the jargon, and that jargon got in the way. We got ourselves tripped up on the jargon. Although I was already convinced of the value of [the NCS], I confused the issue [of a values-based curriculum] with the jargon.

The jargon that Mark is referring to is the change in terminology that teachers had to get used to in the early days of the curriculum change. The curriculum was laden with terminology that was difficult to get accustomed to; for instance, the following terminology was widely used: Critical Cross-Field Outcomes, Specific Outcomes, Range Statements, Assessment Criteria, Performance Indicators, Phase Organisers and Programme Organisers. The NCS was a revised curriculum that streamlined the 'jargon' to make it more user-friendly and accessible. However, for Mark, the change came too late and he states: "When the [original] National Curriculum Statements came out, it was a wonderful ideological document, but nobody could use it [because of the jargon]". Mark went on to say that this has caused him to fall back on focusing on the content and skills of the NCS, instead of the ways in which the curriculum was designed to include values.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

Joe explains how he has managed his teachers in the change to teaching the NCS:

In a few years, we will be a bit more comfortable with [the NCS] and [then] we will go back to some of those values and ideas they have of education. I hope that in a few years we will go full circle and then say, let me try and do something a bit different ... the values will come later once people have got used to the system.

Joe wants to be supportive of his teachers as they adapt to a new curriculum. He finds that the easiest way to help teachers with the adaptation is to allow them to continue with their past practices of focusing on knowledge and assessment but within the NCS paradigm. Joe feels that once this has been achieved, they can “go back to some of those values”.

Diana was silent about the issue of values teaching. I asked the question: *As a curriculum leader in your school, discuss some of the changes that you and your teachers have had to make around planning and teaching in implementing the new curriculum.* Diana responds:

In terms of methodology in the classroom, that has changed, and teachers have to look at different ways of facilitating. Certainly the different forms of assessment. Our reporting on assessments has changed and most importantly I suppose [the change] is in formal assessments. Perhaps with exams, and making sure that all the different assessment standards are being covered. Certainly even with our marking guidelines and making sure that the assessment standards are covered. I think that for me are the most important changes. Oh, also there is really more emphasis in terms of the different methodologies.

Diana’s silence on the inclusion of values seems to imply that the changes she had to facilitate in the adaptation to the NCS had nothing to do with values and were focused on the more traditional curriculum inclusions of content, teaching methodology and assessment. In this regard, she considers teachers’ knowledge about teaching methodology and assessment as sufficient to cope with the NCS. From the notes about

Diana in my reflex journal, I wrote that my perception of her was that she is an exceptionally well-organised person. This implies that she would not place her teachers in a situation where they might fall short of meeting the expectations of the school or of the IEB. From this impression of Diana, her silence about values in her response suggests that she considers values teaching to be an optional part of the NCS, and therefore not something that she needs to consider in helping teachers to adapt to the changes that the NCS has brought.

Audrey is concerned that, by focusing on the values of the NCS, she may be disadvantaging her learners:

We are very, very aware of how critical getting the curriculum correct for us is actually. [We have to ask ourselves]; will it be relevant for them [learners] when they go to university? What are we actually trying to teach here? Is this what they need to have or is it just something that is an add-on? A nice to have when in actual fact I could be spending more time developing a far more critically needed skill.

Audrey is questioning the relevance of the NCS documents in terms of everything other than the ‘critically needed skills’ for university. In this, Audrey dismisses values teaching as one of the non-essential aspects of the NCS. That is, Audrey regards values teaching in the NCS as optional.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

I asked Anne: *What do you like about using the NCS to guide your teaching?* She replies:

I like the fact that the content is set out in a table. I like that the document is clear on what is voluntary content and what is core content. I don’t like all the preamble stuff. It is difficult to [go through] the preamble stuff. Some of it is dribble that you have seen and read somewhere before. It’s all about their [curriculum innovators] motivation for why they want to do things ... you need to read 12 pages and I don’t feel like I learn much new in those 12 pages.

I follow up Anne's response with another question: *Would it be fair to say that you don't see the relevance of the preamble to the curriculum?* Anne responds:

Can't they put it in an appendix rather than a preamble? [They should say]: if you want to know what motivates us to do this, you are welcome to read the appendix, but this is what we would like you to teach; please can you focus on these four things?

Anne's responses indicate that she does not want to have to engage with the preamble of the NCS documents. All she wants to do is to be given clear instructions about what to teach. The twelve pages of the preamble in each of the NCS documents contains the following: (1) Background and Introduction, which provides the motivation behind the NCS as well as its key features; and (2) The Constitution, Values, Nation-Building and the Curriculum, which shows the link between values of the Constitution and the values of the NCS; (3) The Kind of Learner that is Envisaged; (4) The Kind of Teacher that is Envisaged; (5) Structure of the National Curriculum Statement and (6) Principles of the National Curriculum Statement. The preamble provides the rationale for the inclusion of values in the NCS generally and in the subjects specifically. Anne's reluctance to engage with the preamble in her subject document and her reference to it as 'dribble' is indicative of a dismissive attitude towards the values base of the NCS. She is more interested in following the crux of the curriculum and to find out 'what' to do, rather than on understanding 'why' she should do it.

Sue feels that she is being 'pushed' to teach values: "They are trying to focus us more on values; they are trying to almost push us in that direction". Sue's response could be taken to mean that she does not regard it as an essential part of her teaching as she needs to be 'pushed in that direction'.

Synthesis

Values-based teaching and teaching to the examination

The fact that teachers are teaching to an examination is not surprising, as learners' final achievement of results has been one of the markers used for judging the worth of a school. It is a reality that exists in all educational institutions, and perhaps more so in independent schools, where, as it is considered to be private schooling, the expectations of the school communities are high. In regard to the issue of 'teaching to an examination', two key related issues emerged that are pertinent to the introduction of the NCS. Firstly, the leadership that teachers have expected from the IEB around the requirements for an examination on the NCS has not happened as it was expected. Secondly, teachers and heads of curriculum expressed the sentiment that, because the final examination seemed to be such an unknown quantity, they would have to teach all the content that is prescribed in the NCS documents. Both these issues have resulted in a compromise and marginalisation of the values aspect of the NCS.

The perceived lack of leadership from the IEB has led to teachers falling back on what they know about the ways in which to prepare learners for an examination. This has meant that teachers have relied on the content and assessment requirements of the NCS to the exclusion of the democratic values teaching that is a crucial part of the ideology of the NCS. The NCS is more than just a curriculum document that specifies what teachers should know and do; it is also an ideological document that aims to change society through the manner in which teachers teach. If teachers continue to teach in the old way where the emphasis was only on the content of the curriculum, then one of the fundamental aims of the NCS, which is to underpin the NCS with values, will be lost. The NCS was an overhaul of the entire past curriculum; and with regard to examinations, the NCS attempts to ensure that teachers no longer rely on "teaching methods that do not engage learners in active learning [because] many of them are preoccupied with the race to complete the syllabus in preparation for the examinations" (Department of Education, 2002: 2). Gould (1990) outlines the character traits such as 'disposition to reciprocity', 'commitment and responsibility', 'nurturing human agency and initiative' as central to a

democratic education. Aligning these traits with the Critical Outcomes as outlined in the NCS is crucial for a holistic education.

The NCS requires a change in the teaching philosophy of teachers in the independent schools if it is to be a transformative curriculum. As Kelly (2004: 85) notes: “what is central [to a transformative curriculum] is not what our curriculum offers but how it is offered”. Mark from the IEB recognised this when he said “we are asking people [learners] to think for themselves”. Mark’s understanding of this aspect of the NCS should be conveyed to teachers, as the NCS advocates an outcomes-based approach to education, which encourages a learner-centred and activity-based approach to education. In other words, outcomes-based education considers the process of learning as important as the content of learning. The aim of establishing a learner-centred approach to education was, among other things, to renegotiate the value of respect in the classroom. Generally, in the past curriculum, the value of ‘respect’ was defined in different ways by teachers and learners. For teachers, respect was defined within an authoritarian paradigm, while for learners it was defined within a libertarian paradigm. A learner-centred approach to education is intended to establish mutual respect between teachers and learners in the classroom by renegotiating the tension between the two paradigms. The notion of mutual respect is considered to be a prerequisite for the establishment of a human rights culture, which will ensure that the curriculum is able to deal more directly with questions of racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, whether these be direct or indirect (Department of Education, 2001).

Values are subject-specific

The data point to a general trend with regard to values teaching in independent schools: an assumption from research participants that values teaching is reserved for subjects that ‘lend themselves to it’. This assumption has led teachers and heads of curriculum to the belief, and concomitant practice, that values teaching does not have to be engaged with by all teachers. Furthermore, subjects like Mathematics, Accounting and Physical Science are thought to be ‘different’ to other subjects, in the sense that teachers claim that they do not have the time to include a values component in their teaching and that their

subjects do not naturally lend themselves to values-teaching. These subjects are viewed as the 'number subjects'. Values teaching is expected to take place in subjects such as Life Orientation and History. However, the subject document on Mathematics (Department of Education, 2002: 5) outlines the role that mathematics could play in transformation; I indicate two of them: "Mathematical knowledge, skills and values will enable the learner to contribute to the reconstruction and development of society by using Mathematical tools to expose inequality and assess environmental problems and risks" and "participate equitably and meaningfully (with an awareness of rights) in political, social, environmental and economic activities by being Mathematically literate". These values that rest specifically in the mathematics domain are rejected when mathematics teachers marginalise values teaching.

Mathematics, as one of the subjects that has a 'limited scope' according to Bernstein's classification of subjects, has been defined in a different way in terms of its role in the NCS and the purpose that it serves to learners. The Department of Education's Mathematics subject document (2002: 4) outlines the purpose of a learner doing Mathematics: "Being mathematically literate enables persons to contribute to and participate with confidence in society. Access to Mathematics is, therefore, a human right in itself". While it has to be acknowledged that teachers are still in the implementation phase of the NCS and therefore need time to adapt to the changes that the NCS calls for, it may be prudent for teachers to begin to teach to the requirements of the NCS with regard to its values base, since it is the crux of the curriculum. The content in each of the subjects in the NCS has not changed significantly from what teachers were accustomed to doing in the past curriculum. Mary, an IEB manager, notes: "Knowledge is knowledge in the case of Maths; solving an equation is solving an equation. So that kind of basic knowledge is there [has not changed]". This is the case with most of the subjects in the NCS documents. The changes that were made with regard to the content have been mainly around the depth to which certain topics had been taught. In some subjects, topics have been added on, and in others, topics have been removed. Previously, teachers expressed uncertainty with regard to the scope of the content of their subjects, but this

does not imply that teachers at independent schools lack the expertise to teach the content competently.

Subject documents, like Accounting, Geography and Physical Science have similar versions to the mathematics documents in terms of their values base in contributing to a transformative society. Bernstein (1996) defines collection code subjects as subjects that have strong boundaries around their subject matter. These subjects are characterised by a rigid order, limited scope and a high degree of coherence.

The document in Physical Science states: “The Physical Sciences play an increasingly important role in the lives of all South Africans due to its influence on scientific and technological development, which underpins our country’s economic growth and the social well-being of our community [and Physical Science also contributes to] developing insights and respect for different scientific perspectives and a sensitivity to cultural beliefs, prejudices and practices in society, which includes the mobilizing of African indigenous scientific knowledge and practices, particularly as these relate to solving social and environmental challenges in Africa” (Department of Education, 2002: Physical Sciences: 9). In a similar fashion, “Geography prepares learners to become responsible and competent decision-makers and agents, living and working in a complex world. It encourages them to challenge and address social and environmental injustices. Learners will be guided to develop attitudes and values that will encourage them to take appropriate action, where possible, to address social and environmental problems and injustices (Department of Education, 2002: Geography: 10). The Accounting document (Department of Education, 2002: Accounting: 10) states that “this subject encompasses accounting knowledge, skills and values focusing on the financial, managerial and auditing fields. These knowledge, skills and values must address and underpin the constitutional goals of South Africa (e.g. legitimacy, accountability, accessibility, transparency and ethical behaviour)”. The values base of the ‘number subjects’ is clearly articulated in the documents, and those crucial values will be omitted from the curriculum if their respective teachers do not make a serious attempt to build them into their lessons and assessment strategies.

Value -teaching in the NCS is an integral part of its transformative aims. That is, it was not intended to be a part of selected subjects, but to form part of a philosophy of transformation that would seek to do two main things across the curriculum: (1) facilitate the transition of learners to the workplace and (2) equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a democracy (Department of Education, 2001).

The data have shown that teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB managers are engaged in the teaching of values, but they do this selectively with values such as learner-centredness and critical thinking, and in relation to a limited number of subjects. This selection of values does not speak to the spirit of Ubuntu , one of the fundamental principles of the NCS, which is based on the spirit of the collective rather than the individual.

Values as an optional add-on

In some instances, the responses from research participants specifically indicated that values teaching in the NCS was considered to be optional, but in others this was inferred from the issues that they brought up. For example, some questions in the interview were designed to probe the importance that participants placed on certain issues of the curriculum, by asking the question in a general way that did not require any specific answer. An example of such a question was posed to the heads of curriculum: *As an instructional leader in your school, you obviously participate in curriculum meetings with your teachers. Some of these meetings must discuss the changes that need to be made when planning and teaching since the introduction of the NCS. Think of three or four adjustments that your teachers have had to make in implementing the curriculum, and three or four adjustments that you had to make.* None of the heads of curriculum, in response to this question, brought up the issue of values in their responses. An example of this is Diana's response quoted in the previous section, under *Heads of Curriculum*. In this instance I had to infer that Diana considered values to be optional by her silence around the issue. Joe was asked the question: *As a curriculum manager in your school,*

what do you think are the advantages of using the NCS as a monitoring tool? Joe's reply included values as an advantage but he went on to say that values were not something that they could engage with at present since there were other aspects of the NCS that they had to adjust to. Generally, research participants were either silent about the issue around values or, if it was mentioned, it was as an afterthought. Teachers, particularly, had very little to say around values teaching. Thus, I argue that values teaching was also an afterthought in the schools and classrooms.

Conclusion

It is understandable, and not unique, that teachers have a lot to deal with in adjusting to a new curriculum and consequently there will be aspects of the curriculum that are glossed over. However, if values teaching is put aside until the adjustment to other aspects of the curriculum has been successfully achieved, this may well prove counter-productive to the aims of the NCS.

The knowledge base of the NCS has to be understood from an ideological perspective. The NCS is primarily an ideological document that uses the curriculum as a tool in the process of transformation from apartheid to democracy. Importantly, the NCS embraces a 'critical pedagogy'. Giroux (1992: 7) maintains that a critical pedagogy "functions in a dual sense to address the issue of what kinds of knowledge can be put in place that enable rather than subvert the formation of a democratic society [and] rejects a discourse of value neutrality". It is imperative that all stakeholders in education support this process. Democratic values teaching cannot be seen as a separate entity in the NCS, to be dealt with once teachers have adapted to the rest of the NCS. In fact, the content and assessment in the NCS was designed down from the critical and developmental outcomes of the NCS, which are imbued with values.

3.3. TEACHER IDENTITY

The NCS regards teachers as key contributors to educational transformation in South Africa. In this regard, teachers have to assume roles that will enable the nurturing of a

new identity in learners that is concomitant with a democracy. To facilitate the role change that is required by teachers means that teachers have to assume different identities to the one that they had in the past curriculum.

The issues that emerged under 'Teacher Identity' were: (1) the perception of teachers in an independent school; (2) the different roles that teachers and heads of curriculum have to play in a new curriculum, and (3) the struggle that teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers have with changing their past practices to adapt to the NCS. For the purposes of this study, and in an attempt to relate the section on identity to the overarching themes that have emerged from the two sections on the critique and values, I will focus the section on identity on the struggle that teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers have with changing their past practices. That is, the struggle of teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB managers to redefine their identities from a retrospective identity to a prospective identity. Bernstein (1996) defines retrospective identities as identities that are based on the past and have strong traditions attached to it, and prospective identities are associated with collaboration and are future oriented.

A retrospective identity

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

Mary comments on the possible reasons that teachers are struggling to adapt to the NCS:

Fundamentally at the root of it all is change. People do not take to change easily, particularly if that change means [a] re-think [about] the way you do things. [Teachers] are forced to redo a whole lot of work; they don't want to go and redo stuff they have already done.

Mary offers a comment on her own struggle:

I think there are [the] issues of people telling us what to do and we have been doing this [curriculum work] for many, many years.

Mary's comments about teachers' and her own struggles in adapting to the NCS points to the difficulty that each have in shifting from their old practices. There is a sense that this struggle is intensified because the past curriculum was well established and proved to be highly successful in terms of learners attaining good results in the independent schooling sector.

Mark, in relating an incident where a teacher challenged him about the documents that the IEB had released on the NCS, tries to understand the teacher's reaction:

I think that gentleman [was angry] because he used to teach in a certain way; that was the way he was used to; those are the worksheets he's got. I think teachers have [been teaching] in a certain way for thirty years; they are used to that way. [When] you are used to doing [the curriculum] a certain way, you fall back on what you know and what you've got; that's what the big issue [with the teacher] is [about].

Mark also gives an example of his own struggle to change from what he was accustomed to doing:

I didn't realise what I was doing at first [in assessing]. I was reluctant to see ... I used to set papers. I have been setting papers since 1984, and I thought [in the new curriculum] that I was setting thinking questions, but then I realised that all I was doing was giving [learners] Physichem [Physical Science past examination papers] and they were all practising the old exam papers. [All learners were doing] was learning parrot fashion the answers to questions. So there was no difference [in my assessment practices]. To get people to realise that there is something different [in the NCS], we have to do it differently.

Mark sees the change to the NCS as a challenge, but he acknowledges at the same time that if teachers are expected to change their practices from what they used to do, the IEB has to change its practices as well. To emphasise the role that the IEB can play in getting teachers to change their assessment practices, Mark comments:

We [the IEB] have to engage with what is required [by the NCS]. We have to set the papers with what is required, and slowly teachers will get into that.

Mark implies that by changing the practices of the past, teachers can be helped to look at the NCS from a different perspective. That is, they can begin to move away from using their past practices as a benchmark for their practices in the NCS. Mark's and Mary's experiences have shown that, as IEB managers, they have struggled to get teachers to move from their past practices with regard to teaching and assessment. Teachers are 'obsessed' with the past curriculum and thus continue to construct their identities retrospectively. This has obviously made change more difficult for teachers as they struggle to assume the new identities that are demanded by the NCS.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

Joe explains how he has tried to manage teachers struggle to change to the NCS:

People don't like change. I'm sure that you know as a teacher, everybody gets all up in arms about the [the new curriculum]. We have got to take baby steps. [That's why] I say let's look at the mechanics then the luxuries and the depth and the nice-to haves will come later on.

At Joe's school, the consequence of teachers' struggle to change to the NCS has been a focus on the mechanics of the NCS. The 'luxuries' and 'nice-to haves' that Joe mentions refers to the values teaching of the NCS. Joe, however, voices his concern about the possible result that focusing on the mechanics only may bring:

I am worried that we are going to be moving away from values and attitudes and those kinds of things, and just dealing with pure content and skills.

However, Joe as head of curriculum, feels that he needs to help teachers by taking 'baby steps' in changing to the NCS. This has meant that, even though he is concerned about 'moving away from values', this is what he will have to do in order to make the transition to the NCS easy for teachers. Joe's motivation for this decision was that, by focusing on

the content and skills of the NCS first, the change to the NCS would not be difficult for teachers as it will be quite similar to the old curriculum. The real change according to Joe is getting used to a curriculum that has an ideological basis. Joe remarks:

In a few years, we will be a bit more comfortable with it [the NCS]. We will realise that it's not the big monster that we think it is. We will get more comfortable with it and go back to some of those values and ideas they have of education.

Joe's remark indicates that the change to the NCS involves an adjustment to its values base. That is, the change is from a curriculum that had a completely different ideological basis, to the NCS. Teachers are struggling to change to the NCS, not because of the content and assessment, but because from an ideological basis, the NCS is a complete overhaul of the past curriculum. Most teachers' difficulty with this is that they do not see the relevance of a curriculum having an overt ideological basis, the values of which have to be articulated in the pedagogical practices of the school, when there are so many other changes to contend with. Anne, a teacher, commented on what she would like to be told with regard to teaching the NCS: "This is what we would like you to teach. Please can you focus on these four things"? This approach to the NCS curriculum is reminiscent of the approach to the old curriculum in terms of its prescriptive nature. Joe seems to be struggling to engage with the NCS as an ideological curriculum. He wants to take 'baby steps' that will facilitate the change in identity that teachers need to make in order to engage the NCS as a tool of transformation. This would necessitate a move from retrospective to prospective identities.

Audrey comments on the pace and quantity of the old curriculum:

I think we were a lot more leisurely [paced] about the way in which we went about what we were doing and I actually think that maybe we have to get our minds around the fact that less is more ultimately.

The NCS has been streamlined to make learning more relevant. The past curriculum had subjects that emphasised knowledge at the expense of skills, values and attitudes. In this

sense, the past curriculum was content heavy. Some teachers did teach at a ‘leisurely’ pace since large chunks of content could be given to learners, especially at senior high school level, without teachers having to spend too much time teaching that content.

Audrey gives her opinion on the reason that teachers may be feeling some tension in teaching the NCS:

I think it’s the fact that teachers were very comfortable in their comfort zones before [the NCS] and it’s always difficult to step out of that. I think there is a bit of tension in that [change].

It is normal for teachers to experience change as uncomfortable, especially if they were doing the same thing for a long time. The change, however, is likely to continue to be uncomfortable if teachers do not shift their thinking to embrace a new transformational educational philosophy.

Audrey has experienced some resistance from teachers:

Some [teachers] have been resistant because they have been doing this [teaching] for the last forty years. They tell me consistently and continuously that there are more ways of skinning a cat and we don’t have to do it this way [according to the NCS]. We have had to work quite hard with some of the staff to get them to engage.

Some teachers do not see the merit of the NCS in terms of its ideological basis. They feel that if the content has not changed drastically from the past curriculum, there is no need to change the way that they have been teaching ‘for the last forty years’. Audrey’s comment reflects the reluctance shown by teachers’ to change old ways of teaching, notwithstanding the fact that the old ways of teaching do not serve the needs of the country at a time of transformation. Teachers seem to be willing to teach; they just seem intent on doing it in the ways that they are used to.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

Generally, the IEB managers and heads of curriculum have encapsulated the views and feelings of teachers around the struggle to re-look at their roles and identities in teaching the NCS. In addition, teachers have voiced feelings such as “frustration”, “I feel like a novice [after all these years]”, “insecure”, “uneasy” and “uncertain”. All of these feelings would be considered to be a normal way of reacting to change in any situation, but what makes the difference in this instance is that the feelings have arisen out of a comparative perspective to teaching the past curriculum. For instance, Sue comments: “[The NCS] is very different to what [the curriculum] was before. As teachers, we don’t like that. We don’t like not being able to do all the things we used to do previously”. Aside from the usual feelings that a change invokes, the reluctance of teachers to change to the NCS is based on a reliance on the past as a benchmark to measure the worth of the NCS. It seems that the NCS has not met the standards that teachers are accustomed to. Sue shares her views:

Administration is far greater than it ever was before. You have to be so organised. You have to check if the rubrics are adequate; do you have enough of them? Are the assessments right? Are there baseline assessments? These are the things we never had to worry about previously [in the past curriculum].

There seems to be little interrogation about the reasons for the change. Teachers seem stuck in the past, and this has added to their burden of adapting to a new curriculum.

Teachers continued to fall back on their past practices, even in instances where a positive comment was made on the NCS. Rose remarks: “I enjoy the challenge [of teaching a new section in Mathematics], but we always fall back on what we know [to be best]”. Rose is a Mathematics teacher and she has been teaching a section, Statistics, which had traditionally been a part of the Additional Mathematics syllabus. Statistics have now been put into the Mathematics syllabus as it would benefit more learners. The skills that Statistics offers have everyday applicability. For instance, information is often relayed via statistical tables and graphs. Changes had been made to the way that Statistics had been offered in Additional Mathematics to make it accessible to all learners. However,

Rose and her colleagues have continued to teach the section as it had been taught in Additional Mathematics, that is, in an abstract way. This approach defeats the purpose of Statistics being included in the Mathematics syllabus. By continuing to teach the section in an abstract way, Rose is limiting its accessibility to all learners.

The teachers in this study construct their identities by yearning for what defined a teacher in an independent school in the past. For example, Sue shows how teachers in these schools are expected to express their own opinions: “we don’t like that [being expected to change from what we used to do]”. Teachers have a strong professional identity that locates itself in the past and is evident in statements like: “things we used to do previously”; “things we never had to worry about previously”. While Rose finds enjoyment in grappling with the NCS: “I enjoy the challenge”, she generally relies on what she did in the past: “We always fall back on what we know”. Thus her identity is also constructed retrospectively.

Synthesis - a retrospective identity

A large part of teachers’ struggle to adapt to the NCS revolves around their attachment to the previous curriculum. It may be argued that this situation is not unique, in the sense that teachers’ connection to the previous curriculum will of course impact on the ways in which they regard any new curriculum. However, what is at stake in the new curriculum (NCS) is not simply a change in the content of a few subjects or assessment methods; what is at stake is a complete ideological shift from the past curriculum that serves to undo the disparities that it created. Teachers are struggling to re-form their identities from the old curriculum to the NCS. What has emerged from this study around teachers’ adaptation to the NCS is that teachers and heads of curriculum have engaged with the NCS in ways that are reminiscent of their past pedagogical practices, rather than as a transformational curriculum. I would suggest that their identities remained unchanged and as such, it makes it very difficult for them to engage with transformation.

The majority of research participants subscribe to what Bernstein (1996) calls the “elitist retrospective identity”. This identity is based on the past and has a strong tradition

attached to it. There was reluctance from research participants to change old ways of doing things. For an easier transition to the NCS, research participants may do well to consider a shift to what Bernstein (1996) refers to as “prospective identities” (Bernstein, 1996). Prospective identities are associated with collaboration and are future-oriented. This is not going to be an easy thing to achieve, but it is essential if teachers are to feel secure about their capabilities to implement transformational ideals. This is at the heart of the issue of the adaptation to the NCS; teachers have expressed insecurity and uncertainty about the new curriculum, but all the research participants interviewed are highly competent and skilled educators in their respective subject fields. It seems safe to surmise, from the analysis of the data, that the insecurity and uncertainty that research participants have expressed about the NCS is actually about their ability to implement transformation ideals competently. In their roles as educators who are also responsible for the promotion and implementation of democratic ideals, teachers have to remove themselves from the mantle of the ‘expert’. These teachers have not done that, resulting in a reliance on the past curriculum, where their positions as experts remain firmly established. Research participants’ constant reference to the past curriculum was an attempt to hold on to their positions as ‘experts’ and their familiar retrospective identities. It would seem that one possible reason to explain research participants’ attachment to the past curriculum and using it as a basis of comparison to the NCS is an attempt to hold on to “old power bases [and to] mount rear-guard actions in defense of their longstanding privileges” (Soudien, 1997: 2). This could point to an attempt by research participants to hold on to the power that they had in the old curriculum because of the lack of power that they feel they have with the NCS.

There is an ideological continuity from teachers and heads of curriculum with past practices into their engagement with the NCS. Thus engagement with the ideology of the NCS seems untenable until the move from retrospective identities to prospective identities is achieved by teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers.

3.4. AUTONOMY AND POWER

Teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers have, to a large extent, continued with their past teaching and pedagogical practices. This has been as a direct result of their feelings of uncertainty about the NCS. Linked to the feelings of uncertainty that having to engage with the NCS brings, are the issues around autonomy. A factor that has impacted on teachers' autonomy is the way in which they are perceived by parents of independent school learners.

IEB managers (Mark; Mary)

The IEB teachers, heads of curriculum and managers have struggled to retain their autonomy in various ways. The IEB managers have expressed the view that they are obliged to follow the directives of the state with regard to the implementation of the NCS. The IEB is an independent examining authority but the assessments that the IEB put in place for independent schools have to follow the norms of the NCS. For instance, Mark comments: "If I think of the Grade 9 CTAs [Continuous Tasks for Assessment] and teachers' reactions to it...those CTAs are lengthy...they have a Part A and a Part B to it. They take away the autonomy of the school at Grade 9 level. That's the way teachers feel about it". The Grade 9 CTA is an external examination that learners have to write. Part A of the CTA is sent out to schools halfway through the school year. Teachers have to focus on the tasks that have been set in the CTA to prepare learners for Part B, which is a summative examination that is written at the end of the school year. The engagement with the CTAs impacts on the teaching programme in the other subjects in Grade 9; while there are some overlaps between the prescribed grade 9 syllabus and the CTAs, the overlaps are not sufficient to allow teachers the option of doing either the grade 9 syllabus or the CTA. This has caused a problem with completing the Grade 9 syllabus. Teachers feel that they have no say in the matter and they are forced to teach Grade 9 in ways that they would rather not. This has impacted on teachers' autonomy. Previously, the first external examination at a school level was written at the end of Grade 12. This allowed teachers the freedom to choose the content and skills at the junior level of schooling (Grades 7 to 9) that suited their particular teaching styles. With the introduction

of the CTAs, teachers and heads of curriculum feel that their autonomy has been compromised.

Heads of curriculum (Diana; Audrey; Joe)

Joe, a head of curriculum, remarks on teachers' reaction to the introduction of the NCS: "I put [teachers' reaction to the NCS] down to the way it was introduced. There was not a lot of consultation with teachers. We said to them, 'you are professionals and this is the way it is. This is what you are going to do'. [We asked teachers], 'what's the best way we can do this?'" Joe is referring to the negative reaction that he got from teachers when he had to introduce the NCS into his school. He feels that teachers had not been consulted from the outset. He claims that he has tried to get teachers to make decisions around the implementation of the NCS in an attempt to regain some of the autonomy that they have lost. Joe says: "In an independent school, you can ditch some of the silly paper work. We can take what is good and what works and what is expected and as time goes on, we can change it to suit us". Joe has tried to help teachers to regain the autonomy that he feels they have lost by adapting the requirements of the NCS to the needs of the school.

Teachers (Sue; Nelly; Anne; Carrie; Lee; Rose; Jenna)

Carrie offers her comments on the impact that teaching the NCS had on her perceptions of autonomy, "The challenge of doing the job [teaching] properly is to do it above and beyond what is expected of you. It's about managing people so that you are successful as a team. It's not just about me anymore. It's about growing the subject". From my reflex journal, I noted that Carrie had concerns about managing a department that incorporated a subject that she had no experience in. She had initially been very prescriptive about what she expected from the teachers with regard to teaching and assessing in the NCS but she realised that this approach had not worked well. She then had to re-think her approach to working as a team, rather than on being instructive.

Lee finds that he relies a lot on his subject head for direction about what he should teach: "I think a lot of our direction takes place from departmental meetings which we have once a week. I think I rely quite heavily on my subject head for input". Rose is also very

reliant on her subject head: “We literally go to his classroom, knock on his door and ask him what we have to do”. Rose struggles to use her own judgment: “When you open the textbook ... we are always told that the textbook is not good enough ... I feel a bit insecure ... but [the subject head] keeps us together”. Lee and Rose both rely on their subject heads as a means to help them cope with the changes that the NCS has brought. On the other hand, Nelly is trying very hard not to rely on anyone: “I try to make sure that I still have a very clear sense of what I have to do so that I don’t have to rely on anybody”. Sue feels similarly to Nelly: “As teachers, we always feel we need to be in control of the situation”. Sue and Nelly seem intent on retaining their autonomy, which is profoundly independent.

Factors that impact on teachers’ autonomy

Two factors that have impacted on teachers’ autonomy are: (1) parental perceptions of teachers and (2) the IEB’s perceptions of teachers. Teachers in my study have expressed the view that parents in general show little respect for teachers. This has impacted on the autonomy that teachers have over the curriculum as they feel under pressure to attain the results for their learners that are expected by parents. This has led teachers to teach to the examination at the expense of the other offerings of the curriculum. The IEB has also shown a disregard for the struggle that teachers have with coping with the NCS. This disregard has manifested as a power differential between teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB, that has left teachers with little autonomy to teach as they would like to.

Parental perceptions

Jenna gives her view on the way she is perceived by parents: “I worked in some poorer socio-economic areas, and there was definitely more respect for the educators but in the more affluent areas, we are not well regarded”. Anne adds a similar view: “Definitely in this school, some [parents] don’t think that you know what you are doing in the classroom and they could do much better”. Lee says: “A lot of them [parents] see us as not worth a hell of a lot. There was more respect when I first started teaching than there is now. That may be because I have moved to an [independent] school”. Rose also feels that her move to an independent school has impacted on the way she is viewed by parents: “I

would appreciate it if they [parents] had more respect for teachers, but I think this is [mainly the case] because I am in an independent school”. Teachers add their view about parental perceptions: Sue says: “Parents are very disrespectful of teachers”. Anne says: “At our school [teachers] are viewed as paid help for their children”.

Teachers have expressed the view that there are two major reasons why they are disrespected by parents. The first is that parents of independent school learners are affluent and this places them in a better financial position than most teachers. Teachers are thus accorded respect based on their financial status, compared to parents. Secondly, most of the parents of independent school learners are professional and as such, have good educational backgrounds. Teachers are viewed as their equals in education, but not as professionals who are specialists in the educational fields. Parents thus feel entitled, and qualified, to interfere in the teaching methodologies of the school. Teachers have commented on the differences in parental perceptions between parents in an independent school, and parents in other schools. Some teachers also felt that parents were very busy with their own lives and left teachers to see to their children’s needs. This left teachers with the feeling that they were the ‘paid help’.

IEB perceptions of teachers

The IEB managers were often disparaging about teachers and their abilities with regard to the NCS. The ways in which the IEB managers referred to teachers and heads of curriculum pointed to power differentials between the IEB managers, heads of curriculum and teachers. In almost every response that Mark, an IEB manager, gave, he used the term “they” instead of “we”. The “they” were teachers and heads of curriculum, whom he holds responsible for not engaging with the NCS competently. For instance, Mark’s response to the question *To what extent is the IEB ensuring that teachers are competent with the NCS?* was: “I don’t believe that they actually know what is in the document”. When I probe why Mark thinks that teachers are not using the NCS documents, he replies: “I think it’s a certain amount of arrogance. I think that there is an attitude [from them]”. Mark is making it clear that the IEB’s reaction to the NCS is very different to teachers’ reactions and does not want the two to be conflated. However, teachers look to

the IEB for guidance in the implementation of the NCS. Carrie comments: “I find it a bit annoying when [I] try to get hold of the IEB [for help], and they can’t help me”. Carrie feels that the IEB has been unavailable for help and it has expected teachers to engage with the NCS on their own. Joe, as a head of curriculum, feels that “the IEB has been remiss in its responsibility to help schools with the NCS”.

The IEB managers, on the other hand, feel that they have done a lot to help teachers and heads of curriculum with the NCS. Mary comments: “We have tried to support the teachers ... but some of them don’t want a challenge ... it puts [teachers] in a place that might make them uncomfortable and inadequate”. Mary becomes disparaging about teachers in a later response when she tries to account for teachers’ resistance to the NCS: “If [teachers] are thinking people, they would not find it difficult to understand the NCS and the reasons that it was implemented”. Mary, like Mark, has isolated the IEB from teachers and does not regard it as the IEB’s responsibility to develop teachers’ competence in the implementation of the NCS.

Synthesis - autonomy and power

Teachers’ struggle to retain their autonomy with the implementation of the NCS has been as a result of a need to hold on to the teaching and pedagogical practices that have defined their success as teachers in an independent school. The issue of teachers at an independent school being under pressure to attain good results from their learners has been discussed at length. A large part of this pressure is caused by the negative perception and lack of respect that parents of independent school learners have about teachers. In their struggle to retain the same sense of autonomy that teachers had in the past curriculum around their teaching and pedagogical practices, and which satisfied the expectations of the schools and the parents, teachers have to establish a sense of ownership of the NCS. If teachers demonstrate a lack of knowledge or acceptance of the NCS or indicate that they have concerns about the results of learners, given that they are engaged in a new curriculum, their positions as ‘experts’ in their subjects will be in question. Given the negative perceptions that parents already have about teachers in independent schools, teachers are reluctant to take any risks with the NCS with regard to

their teaching and assessment practices, lest they come across as incompetent. To satisfy the expectations that teachers have of themselves and the expectations that the schools have of teachers, and to undo the negative perception that parents have of them, teachers have to retain their autonomy as ‘experts’ in their subjects. Teachers feel that one way in which they can achieve this is to continue to teach and assess in the ways that have produced good results for their learners in the past.

The power differential that exists between the IEB, and the teachers and heads of curriculum, has impacted on the degree of autonomy that school-based professionals have around the NCS. Since the IEB is the examining authority of independent schools, teachers and heads of curriculum are obliged to follow the lead of the IEB regarding the NCS. The IEB has not been forthcoming with assistance as expected by teachers and heads of curriculum. The IEB has differentiated between themselves, and teachers and heads of curriculum, by using the terms “they” and “them” to refer to teachers and heads of curriculum. Teachers and heads of curriculum feel that they lost their autonomy since they have become reliant on the IEB for guidance in the implementation of the NCS.

The discussion on educator autonomy has shown that teachers are struggling to reconceive their notions of autonomy. The autonomy that teachers had in the past curriculum was based on individualism. However, teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers have found that this has not been tenable as it lacks a social context of cooperative behaviour that engagement with the NCS demands. Bridges and Aspin (1997) argue that individual autonomy can only be realised through interaction with others. Through this interaction, Smith (1997: 134) argues, people “help each other understand the ways in which power is taken away from us and exercised over us”. The research data have shown that linked to autonomy are issues around the parental perceptions of teachers in an independent school. The negative perceptions of parents have impacted on the ways in which teachers feel they have control over the NCS. Evidence has shown that teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers exercise their sense of control over the NCS by continuing to use the old curriculum as a benchmark for what counts as worthwhile in terms of their teaching and pedagogical practices. The

perhaps unintended consequence of this has been an undermining of the ideological transformative basis of the NCS.

3.5. CONCLUSION

In the first part of this chapter, the issues of the scope of the content and assessment that were raised as issues of critique of the NCS, reflect other concerns that independent school teachers and heads of curriculum express. The concerns revolve around feeling uncertain about the new curriculum and their associated reliance on the past curriculum. These concerns have prevented teachers and heads of curriculum from engaging fully with the NCS as a new curriculum solely on its own merits. The managers from the IEB have displayed little empathy with the difficulties experienced by teachers, judging from the sweeping statements that they have made. The IEB's role as a support structure for teachers and heads of curriculum with regard to the issues of content and assessment has not been very evident. The IEB, being the assessment body that oversees the needs of independent schools, needs to share some of the insights that they have with the teachers and heads of curriculum that are at the chalk face of the NCS.

Teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers were silent about the values base of the NCS. Where reference was made to the values base, it was in the context of it being a luxury that the NCS offered, but something that the research participants could not afford to focus on at present. They felt that their focus needed to be on the examinations and teaching the content of their subjects. If research participants claimed that they were engaged in values teaching, it was clear that this was done in their subjects and only in those subjects that 'lent themselves' to values teaching. My contention is that teachers are not engaging in values teaching because they do not understand the importance of the ideological basis of the NCS and its role in the transformation of South Africa. It would seem that teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB managers are engaged with the NCS solely for its knowledge base, to the exclusion of its democratic values base. By being selective about the curriculum offering of the NCS, research participants are regarding the values part of the NCS as an optional curriculum. That is, they are engaging with the

NCS very selectively. Teachers and heads of curriculum will have to reconsider their pedagogical practices in an effort at the least, to be socially supportive of the process of transformation to a democracy. If this does not happen, there will be an ideological price to pay, arguably to the detriment of democracy.

The ways in which teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers have coped with the change in identity and autonomy as a result of the NCS was to hold on to the area in the past curriculum in which they had established themselves as experts. The changes that they made to accommodate the NCS were superficial in the sense that they effected knowledge and methodological changes, but no democratic, transformational ideological changes. The poor parental perceptions of teachers in independent schools have impacted on teachers' sense of autonomy over the ways in which they could possibly engage with the NCS. The IEB managers' perceptions of teachers have also impacted on teachers' autonomy as they feel that the IEB should provide more guidance on the NCS than they currently do. However, the IEB managers have remained aloof from teachers and heads of curriculum.

Evidently, educational players in the independent school sector need to move from 'retrospective identities' to 'prospective identities' so that the NCS can be engaged in ways that are democratically transformative. Furthermore, teachers must regard their autonomy within a social context. Both these arguments are intended to provide an inroad for independent school teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers to embrace the NCS in its true form, that is, as a transformative tool that has a sound ideological as well as a sound pedagogical basis.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW CURRICULUM DILEMMAS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has investigated the critique that the independent school sector has about the new curriculum in South Africa, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The major focus has been on the extent to which the independent school sector has incorporated values into its implementation of the NCS, since values teaching is at the crux of the NCS. This study sought to address the following:

- (1) What was the motivation for the introduction of the new curriculum, the NCS, in South Africa?
- (2) What critique is being levelled about the NCS by the independent school sector?
- (3) What are the main underlying reasons for the critique that is levelled against the NCS by the independent school sector?
- (4) How do the following issues inform the critique:
 - the transformative agenda of the NCS?
 - the values-based teaching of the NCS?
 - teacher autonomy?
 - teacher identity?

(1) What was the motivation for the introduction of the new curriculum, the NCS, in South Africa?

The NCS was a curriculum that was designed to meet both political and economic imperatives at a time of intense political change in South Africa. The NCS was intended to offer an alternative to the curriculum upon which apartheid was based, both in its structure, its content and its intentions. Mainly, though, the NCS was designed to facilitate the ideological shift that was crucial to a democracy in terms of its values, such as non-racism, non-sexism and human rights. A democratic, transformative values-in-education initiative began, as part of the curriculum reconstruction, to ensure that the NCS is a curriculum that can equip learners with the skills and values necessary to embrace and participate in a democratic society. However, at the same time, there was an

acknowledgement that “values simply cannot be asserted; it will require an enormous effort to ensure that values are internalised by all our people” (Department of Education, 2000: 4, Foreword by Asmal). In other words, it is not enough to pay lip service to values teaching; it must rather be an integral part of curriculum delivery.

Jansen (1990) contends that a curriculum is only as good as its context. This is really at the heart and success of a curriculum reconstruction. The context within which a curriculum is implemented will determine how successful that curriculum is in meeting its intentions. The emphasis on values in the NCS was to ensure that the curriculum was not only serving instrumental needs, such as the needs of the economy, but also that the curriculum would nurture the full development of a learner. A part of this development was to equip learners with the skills, knowledge and values that would enable her/him to participate fully and meaningfully in a democratic dispensation.

Schools were the context within which the aims of the NCS were to be realised. In order to create a suitable context for the NCS, independent school teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB, as well as state schools, had to be entrusted with the task of ensuring that the NCS is implemented in line with its transformative agenda. This study has shown that the NCS is not being implemented in ways that speak to the motivation of the NCS. In other words, the ways in which the NCS has been implemented in independent schools has been no different to the ways in which the past curriculum was implemented. The focus of the implementation of the NCS has been on its content and assessment requirements to the exclusion of its ideological base. This undermines the reasons that the curriculum designers had about the need to implement the NCS in South Africa, that is, in alignment with political, social and economic change.

(2) What critique is being levelled about the NCS by the independent school sector? What are the main underlying reasons for the critique that is levelled against the NCS by the independent school sector?

The section on the critique that the independent school sector levelled about the NCS was done jointly with examining the reasons for the critique as they formed a cohesive whole.

The critique that the independent school sector levelled about the NCS revolved around three main issues: the scope of the content of the NCS; the lack of clarity in the assessment requirements of the NCS, and the loss of subject integrity because of the integration of skills across subjects.

The main issue that was raised under the content was dissatisfaction with the scope and depth of the content. Some teachers were of the opinion that the content was excessive; while others felt that the content was insufficient to meet their subject requirements. The contradictory views expressed are an indication of the lack of understanding that teachers and heads of curriculum to a large extent, and IEB managers to a lesser extent, have about the way in which the content was intended to be covered in the NCS. The focus on subjects, in as much as it relates to teaching of certain basic skills of the subject, also relates to the role of the subject in values formation. History and Geography, for instance, are intended to help learners develop a “commitment to addressing social injustice, abuse of human rights and a deteriorating environment” (Department of Education, 2001: 7). Mathematics also plays a role in socio-political transformation; “mathematical knowledge, skills and values will enable the learner to contribute to the reconstruction and development of society by using mathematical tools to expose inequality and assess environmental problems and risks” (ibid: 5). The content of the NCS was regarded by the independent school teachers purely in terms of the skills that it had to offer. In this regard, the content was found to be ‘too much’ or ‘too little’ because it was looked at in an instrumental way in terms of the scope of content to be covered.

The issues that teachers and heads of curriculum raised about assessment in the NCS also raised other concerns. The stakes in independent schools are very high when it comes to learners’ results. Parental expectations are such that they view their children’s results as a reflection of the worth of the school. Results affect enrolment figures, thus independent schools rely on having a certain number of learners at school for its sustainability as an institution. The ways in which the school is perceived by parents therefore speak directly to the schools’ sustainability. If teachers are not able to produce the expected results for their children, parents take umbrage with the school, which in turn holds the teachers

accountable. The focus on assessment, for teachers, is very high stakes. With the implementation of the NCS, assessment was intended to provide learners with opportunities to learn more effectively. This means that the assessment must involve various strategies to give learners of different abilities opportunities for success. This is called Continuous Assessment and is meant to be done throughout the year. At the end of an academic year, learners are still expected to write a summative examination, but this examination is not the only assessment measure used, as the formative assessments throughout the year are also counted. Teachers have expressed the view that they do not feel that their learners will be adequately prepared for the summative examination if they focus on providing opportunities for different ways of assessing learners. The anxiety that teachers and heads of curriculum have around assessment must be seen in conjunction with the anxiety created by the expectations that the parents and the schools have of them with regard to learners' results.

The main issue that arose from the critique that teachers and heads of curriculum had about the integration of content in the subjects was that they felt that their subject integrity was compromised. In this regard, teachers felt that the boundaries around their subjects had been blurred, and this resulted in uncertainty over what the exact requirements were about what they should be teaching.

Teachers and heads of curriculum were in agreement that the NCS has caused a lot of uncertainty among teachers. Teachers were uncertain about the content and assessment of the NCS, for two reasons: Firstly, they felt that the NCS documents were not explicit enough about the content that they should teach to prepare their learners adequately for assessments; secondly, they perceived the IEB to be unsupportive of them around content and assessment issues. The feeling was that the IEB needed to be more forthcoming with guidance to teachers and heads of curriculum since the IEB was the assessment body that serviced independent schools.

It was clear that the basis for the uncertainty that teachers, heads of curriculum and the IEB managers felt about the NCS was the constant comparisons that they drew between

the past curriculum and the NCS. The general feeling among teachers and heads of curriculum was that the past curriculum was thorough in so far as the content and the assessment were concerned; in this regard they could not understand the need for a complete overhaul of the past curriculum. There was little, if any, acknowledgement that the NCS was a curriculum that represented an ideological shift from the past curriculum. The silence around the democratic values base of the NCS attests to the fact that teachers and heads of curriculum did not acknowledge the values base of the NCS. The IEB managers, on the other hand, were quite vocal about the fact that they were cognisant of the fact that the NCS has an ideological basis, of which they were supportive.

(3) How do the following issues inform the critique of the NCS in terms of:

- the transformative agenda of the NCS?*
- the values-based teaching of the NCS?*

The resistance that research participants demonstrated towards the values base of the NCS centres around two major issues: firstly, the tendency of research participants to cling to the past curriculum as a benchmark for the NCS. Secondly, and related to the first issue, is the lack of acknowledgment that research participants have displayed about the fact that the NCS is a curriculum that has an ideological as well as a pedagogical basis.

The past curriculum as a benchmark for the NCS

Research participants indicted that they are involved in values teaching and were aware that no curriculum can claim to be value-free. The issue that is at stake in the NCS is that the values that need to be promoted are those of a democracy. Research participants have continued to include values as an important part of their pedagogical practices, but this had not been done in the context of a transformative democracy. A comment that attests to this is, “I’ve always been teaching values; I’ve been doing it for the last fifteen years”. Some values are universal and they can be included as part of one’s pedagogical practices over time, but the shift in South Africa has been to focus on values that speak to the development of an individual in a democracy. Including values in one’s teaching that

does not have a transformative foundation does not service the needs of an educational system that seeks to embody the values of the South African Constitution in its practices.

Research participants' reliance on the past curriculum as a benchmark for the NCS may not be a resistance to values teaching per se; it may be a reluctance to change past practices that proved to be highly successful for the independent school sector in securing the best places for learners in higher education institutions and thus in the workplace. The aims of education in independent schools do not seem to have changed significantly from the past, that is, to serve the instrumental needs of the economy. In this regard, research participants have displayed a lack of ownership of the process of ensuring that along with advancing the economy, education has to play a more meaningful role in effecting the ideological shift from the old curriculum to the NCS in advancing democratic ideals.

Curriculum knowledge versus curriculum ideology

Research participants were overwhelmingly silent about the values base of the NCS. However, values teaching was taking place in the independent schools, but this was not linked to the socio-political aims of the NCS. Values such as respect, honesty, religious values and environmental values were included as part of the curriculum in the independent schools. The dilemma that I was in was to understand the reason for the silence around the values of the NCS. Was it because the independent sector was resistant to change? Was it resistant to an educational system that was the result of a new political dispensation in South Africa? Did the independent sector still consider themselves to be the elite in education and thus under no obligation to follow the directives from the national government's department of education? Did the independent sector see itself on the periphery of society and therefore relinquished its responsibility to play a role in advancing democratic ideals? These questions remain unanswered. The only conclusion that I could draw was that there was no acknowledgment that the NCS is primarily an ideological document; rather, it was viewed as a flawed technical curriculum statement.

The data have shown that there are some reasons why research participants dismissed the values base of the NCS. Firstly, research participants wanted to get on with the job of

teaching. To this end, they could not see that values teaching had to become an endemic part of their pedagogical practice. Values teaching was relegated to certain subjects that 'lent themselves' to it. Secondly, research participants saw their jobs in independent schools as attaining excellent results for their learners. To this end, they focused their teaching almost exclusively on preparing learners for the final examination. Thirdly, values in education were regarded as optional; that is, if they had the time to include values as a part of their teaching, they would have. All these reasons point to the skewed understanding that the research participants had of the NCS as a values-based curriculum. They showed no acknowledgement that it was an ideological instrument. However, the IEB managers did have a good theoretical understanding of the ideological basis of the NCS and they claimed to be fully supportive of it, but they could provide little evidence to show how they embraced the democratic ideological basis of the NCS in practice.

There was no indication, indeed this would be difficult to extract, that shows that research participants' resistance to values teaching had anything to do with resistance to the values themselves. That is, there was no overt indication from research participants that their resistance to values teaching could be extrapolated to a resistance to the values of a democratic dispensation. However, the dismissive attitude towards values teaching indicated that there was an abdication of responsibility, though subtle, of the role that educators are meant to play in education in entrenching South Africa as a democratic country. Some research participants did indicate that they would 'come back' to including values as a part of their pedagogical practices once they have familiarised themselves with the technical aspects of the NCS. This is an indictment against the motivation behind the NCS; it is not just a technical curriculum, it is a transformational curriculum. Its educational objectives are two-fold. One objective is to serve the individual, contributing to personal development, a means of freeing her/his potential. The other objective is that education is an instrument of social transformation, a means for helping to bring a new society into being (Department of Education, 2002). The independent school sector, as stakeholders in the educational landscape, cannot do one, albeit exceedingly well, at the expense of the other.

(4) How do the issues of identity and autonomy inform the critique?

Identity

The research has shown that teachers, heads of curriculum and IEB managers subscribe to what Bernstein (1996) calls an “elite retrospective identity”. In alignment with the recurrent theme of a reliance on the past, teachers’ identities are still linked to the identities that they had subscribed to in the past curriculum, one of which is as repositories of knowledge. In this regard, teachers struggled to move to the NCS as it meant that they had to relinquish the mantle of the ‘expert’ that they held in the past.

Teachers and heads of curriculum are under pressure from the parent bodies of independent schools to produce the results that they always had in the past. Teachers thus continued with their past pedagogical practices and showed little, if any, ideological shift from the past. In other words, in terms of identity, teachers had ideological continuity with the past. There was a sense that the past curriculum had a lot to offer and most research participants could not understand the need for such a drastic shift in the NCS in terms of the content and the assessment. To this end, many of the teachers and heads of curriculum continued to teach a lot of the traditional content.

It was difficult to discern whether heads of curriculum and teachers’ opinions of the past curriculum, compared to the NCS, was as a result of little cohesion between their beliefs and values in the NCS, and how it was in the past. Thompson (1990) coins the phrase “valorization” of a curriculum. He contends that people will place high value on a curriculum only if there is cohesion between one’s beliefs and the values that are upheld by the social and political structures. I tried to establish whether this was the case with the independent school sector; that their resistance to the values base of the NCS was as a result of a lack of cohesion between their personal values and the values promoted by the NCS. I could not establish the extent to which this was the case as it is still too early on in the implementation of the NCS to make definite conclusions about whether the marginalisation of values teaching is in fact resistance to the actual democratic values of the NCS.

Autonomy and power

Research participants felt that they had little autonomy over their teaching as they had to rely on others for help and guidance, given that the NCS called for a new approach in its pedagogical practices. In addition, teachers felt that the pressure of being in an independent school prevented them from being autonomous with regard to the selection of the content that they had to teach in order to attain the results that parents expected of their children. This may, in part, explain teachers', heads of curriculum and the IEB's reluctance to engage with values teaching in the NCS. The focus on results at the expense of everything else that the NCS has to offer is an indication of the lack of autonomy that the participants felt in relation to the parents. At the same time, teachers felt unsupported by the IEB, who have kept themselves aloof from teachers' struggles, although the IEB managers claim that they have provided support to schools. Power differentials existed between the IEB managers, heads of curriculum, and teachers, which was evidenced by references such as 'them' and 'us'.

4.1. SUGGESTIONS FROM THE RESEARCH

IEB managers

The IEB, being the assessment body of independent schools, needs to be explicit about its understanding of the ideological basis of the NCS. Accordingly, they need to relate the ideological basis of the NCS to the ways in which this would impact on the assessment of which they are in charge. This seems to be the major cause of the uncertainty among teachers and heads of curriculum. The IEB needs to take a leadership role in allaying teachers concerns about the assessment of the NCS by making their assessment practices explicit at the outset so that teachers are not playing a waiting game that is filled with uncertainty.

To help teachers and heads of curriculum make the philosophical leap from the 'what' to the 'how' of the curriculum, it is essential that the IEB takes the lead by being transparent about the requirements for the final school-leaving examination that will be written in 2008, in terms of the inclusion of values. Examinations will always dictate what teachers

teach. There is an urgency that the examinations are also a benchmark of how teachers teach. That is, ‘how’ teachers teach must be as important as ‘what’ teachers teach. More importantly, why teachers teach what they do, impacts on the values that they teach.

Heads of curriculum

Teachers can incorporate the Critical and Developmental Outcomes into the pedagogical practices in their classrooms via their subjects. Heads of curriculum need to provide the guidance about pedagogy that transcends mere teaching methods. The structure and dynamics of the classrooms can be used to foster and develop character traits that are essential for a learner to be able to participate fully in a democracy. The Critical and Developmental Outcomes aim to develop traits such as tolerance, responsibility, respect, agency, disposition to reciprocity and commitment. If these traits are not emphasised in the curriculum, the way of life of an individual would be impoverished, as full participation in the life of a culture would demand that these traits be a precondition for participation. This is how teachers and heads of curriculum can incorporate values in their classrooms. Heads of curriculum have to provide the leadership with regard to the teaching of values. One way to do this is to expect teachers to include values in their term and year plans. Also, the progress reports that are issued to learners have to include a report on the values that were included in the curriculum. For instance, Critical Outcome 3, “organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively” can be assessed as ‘behaviour’ and ‘work ethic’. These are easy to assess and, if seen through the lens of Critical Outcome 3, can be regarded as the practical implementation of values teaching.

Teachers

Teachers have to shift their thinking to embrace the NCS in terms of its values base. The heads of curriculum and the IEB managers have to recognise that teachers need support as they move towards promoting values that are important “not only for the sake of personal development but also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values different from those that underpinned apartheid education” (Department of Education, 2001: 8).

The challenge that teachers in the independent schools in this research need to contend with is how to cope with the changes that they have to effect with regard to the democratic values base of the NCS. Every teacher needs to take responsibility for values teaching if the NCS is to be implemented in a way that stays true to its aims. Values teaching cannot be seen to belong to certain subjects such as Life Orientation and History only. Teachers of the 'collection code' subjects such as Mathematics and Accounting need to be integrally involved in values teaching to ensure that the transformative aims of the NCS are achieved. Also, and perhaps more importantly, teachers need to challenge the norms and conventions around their subjects having 'rigid boundaries', which prohibits the inclusion of anything else into their teaching. In this way, teachers can claim ownership of the process of transformation in South Africa via their roles in education.

Teachers and heads of curriculum need to use the collaborative structures that the IEB have put in place, such as the cluster group concept, which groups schools in the same area together. This is aimed at encouraging teamwork and cooperative teaching. In this way, teachers and heads of curriculum can move from the individual notion of autonomy to a more social autonomy, which is favoured by the NCS through its value of Ubuntu.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study aimed to establish the critique that the independent school sector had about the new curriculum in South Africa, the NCS. Importantly, the study endeavoured to find out the reasons for the critique. In this regard, it investigated the extent to which the following issues informed the critique: the transformation agenda of the NCS; the values-base of the NCS; autonomy and identity. However, as with all research, it has raised other important questions that need interrogation.

I would recommend the following as areas for future research, based on these additional questions that I raised in the course of doing this research:

(1) The research sample needs to be expanded to be more racially diverse. My research sample consisted of white interviewees only. While this was unintentional, it was representative of racial demographics of the independent schools in my sample. However, by including interviewees of other racial groups, I feel that it may have broadened the perspectives that were offered and thus enriched the data.

(2) The Life Orientation teachers should have been a part of the sample group as this is usually where values education happens in schools. While the contention of this study has been that values teaching should be an integral part of the pedagogical practices of the school, I should not have discounted the reality that the Life Orientation programme in schools is where the focus of values teaching currently lies. By not interviewing more Life Orientation teachers (I interviewed two), I may have a skewed perception of the actual values teaching that takes place in the schools in my sample.

(3) A comparative analysis between the public and the independent sectors of education with regard to their views on the NCS would be an interesting study to undertake in so far as looking at the different dynamics around values education that prevail between these two sectors.

(4) One of the methodological tools that I could have used, in addition to interviews, is classroom observations. Often, the actual teaching that occurs in school cannot be understood in totality by just conducting interviews. Values teaching is also an inadvertent part of teaching and it would have been revealing to see what values get ‘taught’ implicitly and what values get taught explicitly.

(5) This study would have been more conclusive around values teaching in the independent sector had it been done at a later stage of the implementation. The NCS was only implemented in 2006 and thus the study was done at a time when the independent school sector is still coming to grips with the technicalities of the curriculum. Thus, definite conclusions around the independent sectors perceptions of values teaching and the transformative agenda of the NCS could not be made with conviction.

(6) The issue of teachers' racial identities and the impact this has on them as professionals is a crucial area for further study.

4.3. CONCLUSION

The investigation into the critique that the independent school sector has about the NCS has raised two major issues. The first issue is that the independent sector is struggling to move from the past curriculum in the selection of content, teaching methodologies and assessment practices. The past curriculum is constantly used as a benchmark for the NCS. This raises a second issue: the NCS is primarily an ideological curriculum that is meant to transform society from apartheid to democracy. The independent school sector's reliance on the past curriculum has prevented the recognition of the foundation on which the NCS was built; that is, its democratic values base. This has translated into a marginalisation of democratic values teaching by the independent school sector. However, this marginalisation is not to be conflated with a resistance to the values of the NCS per se. Rather, it is a resistance to change and the associated dilemmas that it has caused to the identities and autonomy of teachers and heads of curriculum.

The past curriculum was valorised by the independent sector, but this was not necessarily because the values and beliefs of apartheid were in cohesion with the values and beliefs of the educators, but rather because the past curriculum allowed the independent school sector to hold the position of experts in the educational arena. The NCS has displaced their position as experts because of the complete shift in both its pedagogical and ideological base and the fact that all educators are new to its demands and complexities.

The resistance that the independent school sector has shown towards the loss of its position as experts has manifested as resistance to the democratic values teaching required by the NCS. For the future of democracy in this country, it is imperative that the independent school sector takes its role as one of the major stakeholders in the social and political transformation process of South Africa. A start would be to incorporate the

democratic values of the NCS, which has been derived from the South African Constitution, into its pedagogical and ideological practices.

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APPENDIX 1: Letter of Request

PO BOX 62477
MARSHALLTOWN
2107

1 October 2007

Attention: Headmaster/Headmistress

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Thiru Govender. I am employed at Sacred Heart College and hold the post of Deputy Principal. I am currently completing my Master's Degree in Education at the University of the Witwatersrand on a part time basis.

My research report aims to investigate the critique that Independent School teachers have about the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Part of this investigation would be to look at the reasons that underlie the critique. My proposed research will be based on questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus-group interviews, which I will arrange at times that would not impact on the teaching time of the teachers.

I would like to request permission to conduct such research at your school.

The research would be conducted on site in the latter half of 2007.

Should you have any further queries or questions, please contact me on 082 567 1016 or my supervisor Dr Juliet Perumal on 083 428 6355.

Please give this request due consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Thiru Govender
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL: HIGH SCHOOL
Contact Number: 082 567 1016

APPENDIX 2: Consent and Confidentiality

Part A: Letter of Consent

(to be signed by all research participants)

I have consented to participate as a research subject in Thiru Govender's MEd research. I understand that the data collected and analysed as a result of the research will form part of the main body of her Master's Research Report to be submitted to the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I also understand that her study will be used for educational purposes. I understand that I will be guaranteed anonymity during the actual research process as well as the final research report. Pseudonyms will be used to guarantee anonymity.

By signing this letter, I consent to the following – [Tick the relevant blocks]:

- ☐ The researcher observing school relationships
- ☐ The researcher taking field notes
- ☐ The researcher facilitating group discussions
- ☐ Taking part in interviews
- ☐ Completing questionnaires
- ☐ Engaging in focus group interviews
- ☐ Engaging in ad hoc discussions with the researcher.
- ☐ Interviews being audio-taped

I expect to be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

.....
Signed: Research Participant

.....
Date:

Part B: Guarantee of Confidentiality

I, Thiru Govender, hereby guarantee anonymity and confidentiality to

..... in his/her participation in my MEd research.

This confidentiality will be guaranteed during and after the research process as well as in the final research report.

.....
Researcher: Thiru Govender

.....
Date:

APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire

Confidentiality

You should understand that your exchange in this questionnaire is confidential and this information will only be used for the purpose of this research on condition of anonymity. To protect your confidentiality, no identifying information about you will be recorded in the research findings. Research records will only be used for the purposes of this study and for writing up of my MEd research report.

You are participating in this research on a voluntary basis - remember that you do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with.

If you have any questions about this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact:

- o Thiru Govender on 082 567 1016
- o Dr. Juliet Perumal, School of Education, University of Witwatersrand, on 011 717 3080

Gender	
Age	
Number of years at an independent school	
What is your race? (This research focuses on teachers within independent schools. One of the issues probed concerns the historical trajectory of teachers' responses to curriculum development. As such, one's race and the time one has spent teaching in an independent school are important indicators in one's own professional history).	
What post do you hold at your school/organisation? (Teacher, Head of Curriculum, Assessment Specialist)	
What grades do you teach?	
What subjects do you teach?	

Are you using the NCS documents to guide your teaching?	
Can you name some of the principles that underlie the NCS?	
What are the most important values that are advocated by the NCS?	
Do you consciously make the teaching of values a part of your teaching?	
Briefly motivate your answer to the above question.	
List 3 teacher attitudes that you think are associated with the successful teaching of the NCS?	
Developers of the NCS suggest that the following teacher beliefs, among others, are necessary to successfully implement the new curriculum in South African high schools. -belief in rigorous planning -belief in democracy -belief in principles of continuous assessment. -belief in a culture of human rights. -belief in the rights of the child. -belief in giving recognition to different knowledge systems. In your opinion, list what you feel are the three most important beliefs from the list above. What beliefs would you add on?	

APPENDIX 4: A

Interview Schedule

Structured Interviews

(For Unstructured Interviews and Focus Group Interviews, I will frame the initial questions based on the responses from this interview)

Confidentiality

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You are participating in this research on a voluntary basis – remember that you can refuse to answer a particular question at any time or withdraw from the research process at any time.

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Teachers

(1)

To what extent are you using the NCS documents to guide your teaching?

Examples: I use the NCS to:

Guide the content I teach by ...

Inform my assessment strategies through ...

Make decisions about levels of questions by...

Remind me about values education through ...

(2)

To what extent are you using the NCS documents to guide your assessments?

(3)

What do you like about using the NCS to guide your teaching?

(4)

What don't you like about using the NCS to guide your teaching?

(5)

To what extent have you incorporated the teaching of values into your teaching?

(6)

If you have incorporated the teaching of values into your lessons, give a brief description of how you manage this?

(7)

Teachers in other schools told me that they had to make many changes in their teaching to implement the NCS. These changes are listed in the table below. Please show whether or not you had to make similar changes by putting a cross under either 'yes' or 'no'. Use the last column to indicate how you felt about making the changes you selected.

	CHANGES	NO, I DID NOT MAKE THIS CHANGE	YES, I DID MAKE THIS CHANGE	CHANGING THIS MADE ME FEEL
A	I had to change the content I taught in my subject(s)			
B	I had to change the manner in which I assessed my learners			
C	I had to change the learning activities I used in my classroom			
D	I had to change the way I prepared my lessons			
E	I had to think very carefully about the values I was teaching			
F				

In F, you may fill in any other changes you had to make.

(9)

How do you compare the old curriculum to the new in terms of the values and beliefs that you have identified earlier?

(11)

Think back to when you first qualified as a teacher and took up your first teaching post.

Now answer the following questions:

(a) What did it mean to you to be a teacher?

(b) What did you look forward to as a teacher?

(c) What were you worried about in terms of being a teacher?

(d) How were teachers viewed by the parents?

(e) How were you treated by your learners?

Several years have now passed and you have gained confidence and experience. Just as you have changed and developed so too has the curriculum that you now follow. Think about how you feel now and respond to these questions.

(a) What does it mean for you to be a teacher in 2007?

(b) What do you look forward to as a teacher now?

(c) What worries you in terms of being a teacher in 2007?

(d) How are teachers viewed by the parents today?

(e) How are you treated by your learners?

(12)

Has the introduction of the NCS impacted on the teacher culture (staff relationships, teacher-learner relationships) at this school? If so, say how.

(13)

The values below lists the values embedded in the NCS. Please indicate which ones you incorporate into your teaching and give an example from a lesson.

	VALUES	I TEACH THIS VALUE IN MY SUBJECT	HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW I TEACH THIS VALUE
A	Democracy		
B	Non-Racism		
C	Non-Sexism		

APPENDIX 4: B

Interview Schedule

Structured Interviews

(For Unstructured Interviews and Focus Group Interviews, I will frame the initial questions based on the responses from this interview)

Confidentiality

You should understand that anything that you exchange in this questionnaire is confidential and this information will only be used for the purposes of this research. To protect your confidentiality, no personal identifying information about you will be recorded in the research findings. Research records will only be used for the purposes of this study and for the writing up of my MEd research report.

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- Dr. Juliet Perumal, School of Education, University of Witwatersrand on 011 717 3080.

Principals/Heads of Curriculum

(1)

Listed below are some of the ways that teachers can use the NCS document to guide their teaching. Think of how the teachers in your school use the NCS documents. Please tick and discuss the uses to which your teachers put the NCS document.

TEACHERS CAN USE THE NCS DOCUMENTS TO	TICK THE USES EMPLOYED BY TEACHERS IN YOUR SCHOOL
Get ideas about the content of their lessons	
Plan the skills used in their lessons	
Plan learning activities for their learners	
Develop assessment criteria	
Remind them of the values and attitudes they should be instilling in the learners	
Add on . . .	

(2)

To what extent is your staff using the NCS documents to guide their assessments?

(3)

As an instructional leader/curriculum manager in your school, what do you think are the advantages of using the NCS as a teaching and/or monitoring tool?

(4)

As an instructional leader/curriculum manager in your school, what do you think are the disadvantages of using the NCS as a teaching and/or monitoring tool?

(5)

As an instructional leader/curriculum manager in your school, how have you encouraged teachers to teach values in their lessons?

(6)

If so, how has the teaching of values been monitored?

(7)

As an instructional leader /curriculum manager in your school, you obviously participate in curriculum meetings with teachers. Some of these meetings must discuss the changes that need to be made in planning and teaching since the introduction of the NCS. Please list three or four adjustments that your teachers have made to implement the new curriculum.

(8)

As an instructional leader /curriculum manager in your school, you are obviously deeply involved in supporting teachers and in monitoring their practice. Monitoring and support approaches have changed since the implementation of the NCS. Please list three or four adjustments that you have had to make to how you monitor and support teachers in your school.

(9)

How did making these changes impact on your staff?

(10)

How do you compare the old curriculum to the new?

Here are two definitions of what a curriculum is to help you frame your answers.

Definition 1

A curriculum is a document that shows teachers what they have to teach; it also helps teachers make decisions about when they should teach certain things and provides ideas about teaching lessons and how to assess.

Definition 2

A curriculum is an ideological document that aims to change society through the manner in which teachers teach in their classroom.

(11)

What changes (if any), did you observe in the culture among teachers at your school (that is, staff relationships, teacher-learner relationships)?

(12)

What is the mission/vision of your school?

(13)

To what extent do you think that the values that your school promotes are similar to the values promoted by the NCS? Briefly explain your answer.

APPENDIX 4: C

Structured Interviews

(For Unstructured Interviews and Focus Group Interviews, I will frame the initial questions based on the responses from this interview)

Confidentiality

You should understand that anything that you exchange in this questionnaire is confidential and this information will only be used for the purposes of this research. To protect your confidentiality, no personal identifying information about you will be recorded in the research findings. Research records will only be used for the purposes of this study and for the writing up of my MEd research report.

You are participating in this research on a voluntary basis – remember that you can refuse to answer a particular question at any time or withdraw from the research process at any time.

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- Dr. Juliet Perumal, School of Education, University of Witwatersrand on 011 717 3080.

Independent Examination Board (IEB)-Assessment Specialist

(1)

To what extent are teachers at the IEB using the NCS documents to guide their teaching?

(2)

To what extent are they using the NCS documents to guide their assessments?

(3)

As an instructional leader-curriculum manager-design and development manager, what do you think are the advantages of using the NCS as a monitoring and/or a teaching tool?

(4)

As an instructional leader-curriculum manager-design and development manager, what do you think are the disadvantages of using the NCS as a monitoring and/or a teaching tool?

(5)

How has the IEB ensured that teachers are adhering to the NCS documents?

(6)

If so, how has this been monitored?

(7)

How have you ensured that when assessments are set by the IEB, they incorporate values, skills and attitudes?

(8)

To what extent is the IEB obliged to adhere to the official NCS documents?

(9)

How do you compare the old curriculum to the new? To help you frame your answer, I will give you two definitions of a curriculum document.

Definition 1

A curriculum is a document that shows teachers what they have to teach; it also helps teachers make decisions about when they should teach certain things and provides ideas about teaching lessons and how to assess.

Definition 2

A curriculum is an ideological document that aims to change society through the manner in which teachers teach in their classroom.

(10)

What kinds of compliments or complaints has the IEB received on the NCS from teachers at IEB schools?
