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Mdunana, Nomsa

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CHALLENGES FACED BY GRADE 12 BUSINESS STUDIES EDUCATORS IN THE PROCESS OF COMPILING SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS FOR LEARNERS IN 2009

MASTERS IN EDUCATION RESEARCH REPORT

SUBMITTED BY NOMSA MDUNANA

STUDENT NO: 9804585X

CHALLENGES FACED BY GRADE 12 BUSINESS STUDIES EDUCATORS IN THE PROCESS OF COMPILING SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS FOR LEARNERS IN 2009

A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

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SUPERVISOR: CAROLA STEINBERG

Nomsa Mdunana 9804585X

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own work. It is submitted in partial requirement for the degree of Master of Education in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted to any other university and there was no assistance from any other person outside the university.

Nomsa Mdunana

----------Date: ----------

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Finally to my employer, the **Gauteng Department of education** for sponsoring my studies. With their generous financial support, I have been able to complete this project.

DEDICATION

For Kgothatso Mdunana

and

Lumkile Mdunana

ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative enquiry into the experiences of grade 12 Business Studies educators in the process of compiling school-based assessment portfolios for learners in 2009. It answers the question: "*What are the primary challenges in the process of compiling School Based Assessment (SBA) portfolios for FET Business Studies*?

The literature review covers the strengths and limitations of portfolio-based assessment as a strategy for combining formative and summative assessment purposes, the complexities of curriculum change and implementation, and bureaucratic and professional forms of accountability. In order to understand what is involved in the portfolio assessment implementation processes, I analyzed six assessment policy documents, two circulars and two Chief Moderators' reports. I also interviewed four teachers and four principals, two each from more and less advantaged schools in Johannesburg.

Findings from the document analysis illustrate the incomplete and at times contradictory nature of the assessment policies and circulars, while the interviews highlighted a lack of communication and mutual adaption between stake holders in the compilation of SBA portfolios. The key recommendation is that the concept of mutual adaptation may be useful to overcoming the challenges encountered in SBA portfolio compilation.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The investigation into portfolio assessment was prompted by my experience as a Senior Education Specialist in Business Studies during the period from 2008 to 2009. As an District official for the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), part of my job entails guiding and providing support to educators when compiling school based assessment for learners in the Further Education & Training Band (FET) (grades 10-12). I assist educators by ensuring that learner portfolio assessments are compiled according to the required standards as stated in the assessment policies of the Department of Education (DoE). Guidance and support is continuous, starting at the beginning of the year with cluster and subject meetings until submission. Schools are expected to submit 10% of the learners' School Based Assessment (SBA) portfolios with a maximum of seven (7) at the end of the year for provincial moderation. In the cluster meetings I co-ordinate the moderation of portfolio assessment and in subject meetings I assist educators with problematic areas in subject content and assist with administering and recording assessment of learners in general.

During my interactions with educators in the first year of portfolio assessment in 2008, the problem I identified was that some educators struggled in compiling portfolio assessment. I noticed that some educators' portfolio assessments were not up to standard, although they had fulfilled all the necessary requirements of school based assessment. At the same time I also found that the majority of educators struggled as they did not use the rubrics correctly according to the required standards. When I checked in order to give appropriate support, I realized that these educators came from both advantaged and disadvantaged schools.

The realization was further strengthened during informal conversation I had with some educators when they submitted their learner school based assessment (SBA) portfolios for provincial moderation. I was managing the collection of school based assessment (SBA) portfolios for grade 12 Business Studies in October 2008 when some educators expressed that they found the process to be a waste of time and energy for both educators and the learners, whereas others thought it was the best assessment practice that the DoE had ever had. They commented that what was needed was to re-structure the process by giving educators

authority over it. These differences in opinion prompted me to learn more about their experiences.

The Chief Moderator is employed by the Department of Education to quality assure the moderation of school based assessment portfolios by ensuring that standards are met by schools in order to award the 25% Continuous Assessment (CASS) mark to learners. After provincial moderation workshops, reports are sent out at the beginning of the following year to the Gauteng Department of Education and then to Districts. In January 2009, reading the challenges outlined in the moderation report, it triggered my interactions with educators during the year and during submission for provincial moderation. As the person in charge of business studies at my district, I embarked on this study so that I can find out the problematic areas in order to provide the necessary support.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The critical research question in the study is formulated as follows:

What are the primary challenges in the process of compiling School Based Assessment (SBA) portfolio for FET Business Studies?

The empirical sub questions are:

1. What do South African Education Policies and Acts say about the requirements of SBA portfolio tasks for grade 12 Business Studies?
2. What are the opinions and perceptions of grade 12 Business Studies educators regarding learners' SBA portfolios?
3. How do the departmental feedback reports evaluate the quality of educators' work in compiling the grade 12 Business Studies SBA portfolios?

1.3. THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Most developed countries have been exploring the use of portfolios for assessment purposes for the past 15 years. Some of the reasons for this move are that educators use portfolios for learners' progression and for determining grades for reporting learner achievement (Linn et al, 2005). It is also believed that the move to use portfolio work for assessment purposes is long overdue simply because other institutions of learning have 'adopted portfolios as an approach to assessment by the entire school' (Linn et al; 2005:279). In South Africa, SBA portfolios are used to assess a 25% component of the final examination mark in the last year of school. Linn et al (2005) argue that the role of portfolio assessment is not only for learner progression and achievement. According to the Subjects Assessment Guidelines (RSA, 2008) and the SBA Guidelines (RSA, 2009), assessment forms part of progression and achievement. The SBA Portfolios for grade 12 forms a 25% component of the final assessment.

Linn et al (2005) believe that portfolio assessment has 'potential strength' because it can be integrated with instruction (teaching) to make it appealing to educators (p281). Research conducted in South Africa illustrates the complicated nature of new assessment practices (Nakabugo & Sieboger (2001). The demands of high quality assessment practices can cause huge misunderstandings (Vandeyar et al, 2003). These research studies focus on Outcomes Based Education curriculum and assessment practices in general. Recent research by Nel et al (2010) holds similar findings that educators see SBA portfolios as preparing learners to progress (summative purposes) and that insufficient educator training is the cause of these misconceptions.

1.4. **THE AIM OF THE STUDY**

In view of the above, the main aim of this study is not to focus on assessment as a whole, but rather to focus on the aspect of assessment called School Based Assessment (SBA). In each subject, SBA is comprised of seven tasks, three of which are common and prescribed for all schools in South Africa per province. The seven tasks make up 25% of the assessment for certification of the National Senior Certificate. The other 75% of marks is made up from a final FET exam at the end of the grade 12 academic year. This study hopes to assist in

identifying some of the confusing elements of the curriculum component of assessment in particular SBA portfolios for Grade 12 Business Studies.

1.5. **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings from this research could be useful to help me to improve in my job, so that I am better able to:

- Provide an improved support structure to business studies' educators in understanding school based assessment portfolios for grade 12 learners.
- Make suggestions towards improving the process of the school based assessment portfolios for grade 12 learners.
- Contribute to the growing research on education policy and its implementation, i.e. on the gap between the intended and the enacted curriculum in South Africa.

1.6. **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This research is limited by the following constraints which ultimately may influence the knowledge gained:

- The research subjects are from the same province; namely Gauteng, thus resulting in further limitations to the generalization of the findings.
- It is a small scale study, any findings from this study could be taken further at a later stage or elaborated upon by further research.
- The time delay for interviews due to an overseas trip by one of the subjects could have reduced the opportunity to derive more data.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum change and implementation is the epi- centre of this research. Research has shown that a change in the curriculum has an impact in the implementation process because it requires a lot of restructuring and replacement. Changes include adjusting personal habits, learning space, existing curricula and a shift from current programmes (Ornstein & Hunpkins; 1993). The change and the implementation in some instances can be experienced with resistance. The literature to be reviewed has five main categories relating to the problem statement in areas of:

- Portfolio assessment
- General assessment changes: Formative vs. summative/ Learning culture vs. exam culture
- Bureaucratic and professional accountability demands on teachers
- Curriculum implementation and change

The above-mentioned categories are important because they give clarity about the restructuring and replacement of the form of assessment under investigation, namely, SBA portfolios tasks as a component of curriculum. The section on portfolio assessment aims to give an overall understanding of where SBA tasks originate as a form of assessment in South Africa. Scrutinising the roles and purposes of portfolio assessment provides a better understanding of the roles and purpose of SBA tasks in South Africa. The general assessment changes locate SBA tasks in the historical development of assessment from a behaviourist to a constructivist perspective. Bureaucratic and professional accountability describe the demands imposed on educators as professionals. Curriculum change and implementation explores the requirements and challenges accompanying innovations in the curriculum.

2.1. **Portfolio assessment**

Assessment as a component of curriculum has changed over time all over the world including South Africa. The introduction of portfolio assessment in the curricula world wide was an attempt to move away from the behavioristists' ideology of rote learning and memorization to the constructivists' perspective of knowledge construction. School Based Assessment (SBA) as it is commonly called in South Africa, is an aspect of assessment introduced to serve the same purpose. The different interpretations, understandings, roles and purposes of portfolio assessment by theorists will be discussed in order to give an overall picture of the origin and how they have been locally adapted.

2.1.1. **WHAT IS A PORTFOLIO?**

Batzle (1992) defines a portfolio as "a collection of student process samples, teacher observations, parents' comments and information gathered through assessment and evaluation strategies" (p22). She distinguishes between three types of portfolios, namely:

- The working portfolio - the learner chooses samples that shows his/her growth, parents give comments and the teacher adds samples and other records,
- The showcase portfolio - it is normally used by Artists to showcase their best work, the learner takes ownership of the work in order to be successful in exhibitions, and
- The record-keeping or Teacher Portfolio - it is used by teachers whose learners use showcase portfolio; the teacher keeps a record of assessment and evaluation samples (Batzle 1992:25).

Barton et al (1997) defined a portfolio as ''much more than a compilation of students' work stuffed into a manila folder, but a piece of evidence created and organized in a compelling manner to demonstrate proficiency or progress toward a purpose'' (p4). Barton et al (1997) only described one type of a portfolio namely:

- A student portfolio: it is an organized and purposeful collection of documents, artefacts, records of achievements and reflections, moreover, using these documents to inform learning and instruction'. (p12).

Maree et al (2003) define "portfolio as a purposeful collection of students' work that exhibits the students' efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting content, the criteria for selection, the criteria for

judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection'(p127). Linn et al (2005) simply define portfolio "as a purposeful collection of pieces of student work portraying the student' accomplishment" (p280). According to them there are two types of portfolios: 'Showcase portfolio (contains examples of learners' best work) and Documentation portfolio (contains a range of learners' accomplishments, that is, the learners' typical work' (Linn et al, 2005:284).

The definitions of a portfolio by Batzle (1992) and Barton (1997) describe the academic portfolio which learners use during the process of learning and teaching. The description by Maree et al (2003) involves learning, particularly on the part of the learner who seems to have authority over his or her learning. The fact that the description of academic portfolio says learners select content and criteria, make the description not good enough because the description do not match that of portfolio assessment in the National Curriculum Statements. There is a content prescribed and criteria set in the policy documents (see on 2.4). The description by Linn et al (2005) generalizes the learning process by students. From the three descriptions, I will take forward and use the description by Barton (1997) and certain components of Batzle (1992). The reason being they represent portfolio assessment as a two way process, that's satisfying both learning and instruction moreover, created and organized to demonstrate progress towards a purpose (Barton; 1997).

The types of portfolio cited by Batzle (1992) and Linn et al (2005) describe different portfolios serving different purposes. For example, a showcase portfolio is not academic but artistic in its nature. Therefore it is not appropriate in this study. The record-keeping or teacher portfolio as described by Batzle (1992) and the student portfolio as described by Barton (1997) refers to an academic portfolio, the one used by learners and the other by the educator in the learning and teaching process.

I will use Barton's (1997) description of student portfolio and the record-keeping or teacher portfolio as described by Batzle (1992) the reason being they best suit the description of the portfolio under investigation, that is, SBA portfolio. According to the policies still to be discussed, SBA portfolio should comprise a learner portfolio and a teacher's portfolio, which in my opinion best suit Barton and Batzle' description of portfolios. In the policy section, under the SBA (RSA, 2009) a detailed list of what should be in the learner and teacher portfolio is provided.

2.1.2. **CHARACTERISTICS OF PORTFOLIOS**

Batzle (1992) describes portfolio assessment as:

- the most positive and dynamic form of assessment in education today;
- celebrating what the learner can do and documenting the progress of a learner;
- involving both the learner and the educator in the ongoing development of the portfolio with the learner taking ownership of his/her work and his/her contribution is highly valued (p28).

Barton et al (1997) echo the same view by describing the portfolio assessment as:

- Authentic, because of multiple pieces of evidence inside the portfolio
- Encouraging a shift in ownership of learning onto learners
- A learner's unique creation (p12).

The above-mentioned characteristics suggest that portfolios are viewed as an attractive assessment option by these two theorists. Batzle finds them desirable because both the educator and the learner are actively involved while Barton (1997) emphasizes that the learner takes a lead in collecting the pieces or evidence. After going through these characteristics, one will understand why the Department of Education thought that School Based Assessment Portfolio would be attractive assessment option for the country. (See policy section for more clarity.)

2.1.3. **ADVANTAGES OF PORTFOLIOS**

Batzle (1992) describes the advantages of a portfolio of evidence as:

- a wonderful visual presentation of the learners' capabilities, strengths, weaknesses, accomplishment and progress (assessors'perspective);
- providing awareness of the steps the learner has taken, and a sense of where the learner is going (educators' perspective).

Barton et al (1997) see the advantages:

- Enabling the educator to view learner's work in a context (p2) (assessors' perspective).
- Learners know exactly what is expected of them before compiling the portfolio (p7). (This is more of a precondition than an advantage.)

Linn et al (2005) see the following as the advantages of portfolio:

- because portfolios consist of products of classroom instruction, they can be easily integrated with instruction (educators' perspective);
- they provide students with opportunity to show what they can do (assessors' perspective);
- a portfolio can encourage students to become reflective learners and to develop skills in evaluating the strength and weaknesses of their work (educators' perspective and self assessment purpose);
- they can be an effective way of communicating with parents, giving parents concrete examples of students' development over time as well as their current skills (assessors' perspective);
- they can help students take responsibility for setting goals and evaluating their progress (p281) (self assessment purpose).

The description of advantages by the three theorists depict three functions of a portfolio, namely, an assessor, educator and learner function. Different functions mean different responsibilities; therefore it is important to explain the different roles. An assessor conducts assessment using criteria or a standardized tool; there is no interaction with learners in the classroom during learning and teaching process. This means that the assessor's role is for evaluation purposes only. The assessor observes and makes a judgement (assess) based on the guidance by the educator. On the other hand, the educator interacts with learners in class through the process of learning and teaching by giving guidance of what is expected during assessment. This means that the educator has more responsibilities than an assessor.

This creates a problem because what is an advantage to the assessor will not necessarily be so for the educator and learner or even vice versa. For example, it may be appealing and fun for learners to assess themselves and consult with their parents, the assessor may also find it appealing because everything needed is compiled as required and ready for evaluation, but controlling and maintaining the process might be strenuous or time consuming for the educator, e.g. late submissions, non compliance, etc.

2.1.4. **DISADVANTAGES OF PORTFOLIOS**

For Batzle (1992) the disadvantage of portfolio assessment is that it is time consuming. She therefore cautions educators to 'work hard through this transition of assessment in a comfortable pace' (p7) as a solution to this disadvantage. On the other hand, Barton (1997) sees the disadvantage of portfolio assessment as follows: the assessment requires learners to expand, that is, to research outside of the classroom context. This causes a problem because it means 'loss of instructor autonomy and local control' (p28). This will therefore have an impact on the validity and reliability of the assessment because collection of evidence by learners is not formally supervised by educators outside the classroom as will be the case in the classroom.

Despite the above-mentioned disadvantages, I am of the opinion there are more advantages of portfolio assessment than there are disadvantages as portfolio assessment. It has proven to be a dynamic form of assessment. Dynamic in the sense that there is interaction between both learners and educators. It has proved credible by giving learners a variety of choices on what to include in the portfolio Batzle (1992), moreover, a mark is generated for self reflection and evaluation (Linn et al, 2005).

Based on the descriptions, advantages, characteristics and disadvantages of portfolios, I am of the view that the implementation of School Based Assessment Portfolio in the NCS in South Africa was influenced by advantages more than by limitations.

2.2. General assessment changes: Formative and summative assessment

Introduction

This section gives an analysis of the roles and functions of assessment from a constructivist perspective. The main theme is to show a shift/change from the traditional, behaviourist perspective (rote learning) to the constructivist perspective (which understands that learners construct their own knowing). Portfolio assessment is a form of assessment formulated to close the gap of rote learning. I will show how the recent trends in assessment changed the ways of assessing learners through changing the contract of learning. It is worth noting that the changed contract of learning involves processes such as eliciting and working with learners' knowledge, giving feedback, encouraging self assessment and working formatively with summative assessment (Black; 2003 & Shepard;2000). All these processes in assessment are not easily done, there is a lot of work involved which I will describe in the nature of the contract of learning.

This section of the literature review uses four theorists namely, Shepard (2000), Black (2003) Gipps (1999) and Hamp-Lyons (2007) to demonstrate what is involved in assessment for learning. The main theorists' ideas to be engaged are Shepard (2000) and Black (2003) because they outline the general assessment changes from the traditional, behaviourist perspective to a constructivists' perspective clearly. The other theorists' ideas will be used to show the similarity of ideas/opinions. The discussion will focus on what is needed, that is, the preconditions, the nature of the contract of learning and how contracts of learning should be re-negotiated.

2.2.1. **The preconditions of the assessment changes**

Shepard (2000) describes a range of processes (mentioned in the introduction) of what is involved in doing formative assessment or assessment for learning. According to Shepard (2000) changing the contract of learning is a prerequisite for using assessment for learning. Those processes she is referring to are not only used in assessment but also in the process of learning and teaching in general. This means that each process cannot operate separately in assessment for learning, but as an integrated process. For example, *self assessment* will not work properly if there is no *feedback*. It is therefore worthwhile to discuss briefly how each of these assessment processes function.

2.2.2. **The nature of the change in assessment**

In order for assessment for learning to work effectively, it requires a change in the contract of learning. Shepard (2000) argues that a change involves changing the culture of learning. This means changing the assessment strategies and classroom practices. These include viewing assessment and learning as an integrated process rather than viewing the two as separate entities. The two processes (assessment and learning) should work collaborately and support each other. 'To accomplish the kind of transformation envisioned, we have not only to make assessment more informative, more insightfully tied to the learning steps but at the same time change the social meaning of evaluation' (Shepard, 2000:10). The question will then be, can changing the assessment strategy or culture really (in practice) support and enhance learning? The response to the question will be revealed in the analysis of data later in the study.

Black (2003) shares the sentiment that an educator needs to actively create this new learning environment. He argues that the "learning environment has to be engineered to involve pupils more actively in the tasks" (p10). So, he shows how educators can teach learners how to reflectively review their work for revision purposes, assess themselves by setting their own questions and marking them, and coming up with assessment criteria for improvement purposes. In that way, formative assessment "will be seen as part of the learning process" (p9).

To accomplish the change in the culture of learning, Shepard (2000) believes that both the learner and the educator should work collaborately and interactively to make learning possible. The educator asks the right question, identifies the learners' weaknesses in learning and design and develops assessment tasks that will help the learner to think critically in understanding the subject matter. "The teacher finds ways to help pupils restructure their knowledge to build new and more powerful ideas" (Black, 2003:10). Furthermore, during the process the educator will reflect on his or her own role in teaching and learning process. By so doing, evaluation of teaching is taking place, that is, "assessment is used to examine and to improve teaching" (p12). These processes are indeed a collaborative, integrated process, moreover a clear indication that changing a contract of learning in its nature is a process which requires involvement of both stakeholders (learner and educator), with the educator as the initiator or the creator of change. The final question will then be: how does the educator initiate or create the change?

2.2.3. **Re –negotiating the contract of learning**

Shepard (2000) asks, ''How might the culture of classrooms be shifted so that students no longer feign competence or work to perform well on the test as an end separate from real learning?" (p10). She gives a range of techniques as a response to the question. One of the key techniques for renegotiating the contract of learning is feedback. According to Shepard (2000), giving learners feedback discourages wrong or right responses, but rather encourages them to come up with solutions. This means 'making thinking visible and making excellence attainable' (p12). "Feedback should cause thinking to take place" (Black; 2003:7). Gipps (1999) used the term 'questioning' as one way of giving feedback. The questions serve the same purpose of assisting learners to correct themselves and identifying their own mistakes.

Hamp-Lyons (2007) reveals that feedback is at the heart of the process in assessment, "it is central to the effectiveness of classroom based and formative assessment" (p491). According to her, feedback assists the educator to model and shape appropriate performance of learners and at the same time gives guidance to learners on how to self- assess. This kind of feedback clearly depicts the manner in which assessment strategies and classroom practices have to be changed. Moreover, it is evidence that the educator no longer associates errors with lack of intellectual ability (as it was previously done in the behaviourists era), rather, the educator

diagnoses the cause of the learners' errors in order to give appropriate feedback. The process of giving feedback is indeed interactive because the learners concentrate on "self correction" whilst educators "guide the student through the solution process" (Shepard, 2000:11).

Another technique for renegotiating the contract of learning is through self assessment. "An essential aspect of meta cognition is that learners appraise and regulate their learning by self assessment or self evaluation" (Gipps; 1999:374). Giving the same view, Shepard (2000) believes that self assessment gives learners more authority over their learning. Learners take responsibility for their own work by being honest when analyzing their own work. Before learning, teaching and assessment takes place, learners first think about their learning in terms of the set goals (Black; 2003).

To produce greater outcomes, self assessment needs to be complemented by peer assessment**.** Like self assessment, the process is the same. The difference is that in this instance learners assess each other. According to Black (2003), the value of peer assessment is that "pupils may accept from one another criticism of their own work which they would not take seriously if made by their teachers" (p7). This is an indication of a shift, a change in the culture of learning, most importantly a change in the assessment strategy and practice.

All these techniques discussed in this section are likely to support, enhance and give new meaning to learning if there are assessment criteria**.** This means assisting learners to understand and know what will be used to judge their work. "There should be opportunities when criteria are discussed and negotiated with the learners. In that way assessment becomes a more collaborative enterprise" and it helps learners to know whether they are being judged fairly or not (Shepard; 2000). Educators should share the criteria and standards appropriate to the assessment with learners (Gipps; 1999). The combination of all these techniques is called dynamic, on going assessment.

Dynamic, on going assessment means working formatively with summative assessment. It involves assisting learners to reflect on what they have learned, to guiding them to set questions and responses and to understand what is required in the assessment process. The timing of assessment is also changed; it is done during and in the middle of a teaching and learning process rather than waiting for assessment to come at the end. “Such interactive assessment can reduce anxiety in the test situation and thus encourage best performance” (Nuttal;1987 cited in Gipps; 1999:376).

Furthermore, the educator provides assistance when learners need guidance during the process of learners working on the piece they will hand in for assessment. “Pupils take responsibility for their own learning” (Black; 2003:11). Learners change from behaving as passive recipients of knowledge offered to become active learners who take control of their own learning. By so doing, a change in assessment strategy occurs, because educators focus on teaching concepts that learners do not understand. “This does not mean the teacher giving up responsibility for students learning and progress; rather, it means involving the learner more as a partner” and “producing best performance rather than typical performance” (Gipps; 1999:386). It enhances learning of learners and engages them during assessment (Gipps; 1999).

The School based assessment portfolio in South Africa is part of a move from assessing for certification purposes to assessing for learning. From the findings in the analysis of data it will be interesting to find out how grade 12 business studies educators changed and negotiated the contract of learning in their respective classes when doing SBA portfolio tasks.

I would like to draw from my own personal experience to illustrate the argument presented by the theorists. Changing or engineering a new culture of learning was difficult for me as an educator. Firstly, the large number of learners made it impossible for me to create a favourable environment so that learners could take responsibility for their own learning. Feedback through marking dominated, whether the assessment was formative or summative. Learners took their work seriously if they saw the marking, that is, the marks that were obtained. Self and peer assessment was done often and taken seriously by learners. The reason being they liked to be in control and to show their power and authority. This was evident on the markings. They marked each other too strictly and they justified why they had

done so. The assessment criteria were discussed before so that learners knew what is expected of them. However the dynamic ongoing assessment process was not always dynamic. Due to a large number of learners and time constraints I used to attend to individual learner' problems on topics that I know constitute more marks during assessment. I also gave learners more research on the same topics. My emphasis was on preparing them for summative assessment and less focus on formative assessment.

Looking back at my classroom experiences, some processes such as discussions of the rubric and self and peer assessment was done in a constructivist manner but not in other instances, such as giving feedback and dynamic on-going assessment. The old traditional behaviouristic approach was used (unintentionally). The contract of learning in my classroom was therefore a mixture of the constructivist perspective and behaviouristic perspective.

2.3. **Bureaucratic and Professional accountability demands on Teachers**

This section discusses bureaucratic and professional accountability as an essential component of the study under investigation. The reason being that there are two different ways of holding educators responsible for their work, which have substantially different impacts on policy implementation. I will also give examples of school based assessment portfolios though the discussion touches on all aspects of assessment changes. I will explore the relationship between different forms of accountability and the general assessment changes.

According to Darling-Hammond (1990) accountability is the most problematic issue facing the education arena these days. There are different ways of holding educators accountable. However, she suggests that any model or form of accountability has the following purpose: 'to set educationally meaningful and defensible standards, establish reasonable and feasible means and provide avenues for redress or corrections in practice' (p60). She mentioned five models of accountability but put more emphasis on professional and bureaucratic accountability because the two contribute to the professional practice of educators in a school context.

In her opinion, "schools are a typical example and agents of bureaucratic accountability because policies are made at the top of the system and handed down to administrators, who

translate them into rules and procedures'' (p63). These systems range from designing policies, rules and procedures for ''monitoring student test scores, averaged for classrooms, schools and districts'' (p60). In this instance, educators are administrators and therefore required to teach, and assess learners according to the set rules and procedures. Darling-Hammond (1990) believes that bureaucratic accountability, like other modes of accountability, has its weaknesses and strengths. It can either work to the advantage or disadvantage of others. For example, it can work to the advantage of the bureaucrats because policy promotes uniformity and assumes standardization across all schools, this means ''producing outcomes the system desires" (p63). In some instances it can work to the disadvantage of educators because they have no say in the decision making process though they are more knowledgeable on the subject matter and assessment processes. These assumptions are detrimental and create problems in the learning and teaching process.

On the other hand, professional accountability implies educators as professionals making decisions either about teaching or assessment based on their professional knowledge. They identify problems and come up with possible solutions for the good of learners which is not stated in the rules and procedures. For this reason, Darling-Hammond (1990) strongly believes that "professional accountability improves the level of knowledge in the profession… and promotes continual refinement and improvement in overall practice as effectiveness rather than compliance" (p61). This means that instead of following the dictates of policy makers and bureaucrats, educators will teach best if given the opportunity to showcase their professional competence.

Fuhrman (1999) agrees that indeed assessment now has changed in its form. Unlike Darling-Hammond (1990) who gives a generic description of the forms of accountability, Fuhrman provides evidence of how accountability is now attached to assessment. Assessment results are increasingly the tool used to hold schools accountable. The direction accountability takes is in summative assessment results. Fuhrman shows how the results of assessment are used as evidence of quality in the system. This means that educators' professional abilities are judged according to the performance of their learners. Summative assessment in this instance serves as a measuring tool of learners' performance. This impacts on the teaching because educators put more emphasis on assessment rather than focusing on teaching and learning because they will be accountable for the outcomes. The knowledge learners need to internalize during

learning and teaching for future usage is no longer a matter of concern, rather educators put more emphasis on preparing learners for standardized tests, thus satisfying the needs of policy makers. Excellent results are the major expectation from educators to avoid being negatively sanctioned. “Assessment is the key instrument in the establishment of political control and imposing a narrow and bureaucratic form of teacher accountability” (Kelly; 2004: 12). Judging educators on learners’ test and results implies measurement, which is a behaviourist ideology on assessment and it has now carried over into the constructivist era (Shepard; 2000).

For example, as a classroom educator when I was assessing learners at the end of the teaching and learning process, I recorded the performance in order for it to be used for promotion purposes. Learners were consciously not worried about poor performance during continous assessment because those marks did not count, but they made sure that they excelled with summative assessment. I shared the same sentiments with my learners because my main wish was to see them progressing to the next grade. Assessment ended up dominating rather than working in collaboration with teaching and learning. This is a clear indication that assessment particularly summative, is dominating. In my classroom, it demonstrated the element of accountability imposed on me as an educator, because I was labelled as either a “good” or “bad” teacher in response to the results of summative assessment.

Observing the direction summative assessment is taking recently according the two theorists, Darling-Hammond (1990) and Fuhrman (1999) it clearly shows that the demands of the bureaucrats impact negatively on the professionalism of educators. The professional accountability of educators to educate learners by ensuring learners’ progress is now shifted to educating for assessment purposes.

In my view, bureaucratic accountability is related to the exam culture (Hamp-Lyons; 2007) because both practices dominate in assessment. I also associate the learning culture (Hamp-Lyons; 2007) with professional accountability because formative assessment which is part of learning culture and an element of professional accountability is not given much attention in practice (in the classroom). My personal experience as an educator is a clear example. This is also emphasized by literature that little attention is given to both practices, learning culture

(Hamp-Lyons; 2007) and professional accountability (Darling-Hammond; 1990 & Fuhrman; 1999).

The irony is that if the performance is poor, educators are accountable, but if it is good, the whole system receives a pat in the shoulder. I am of the opinion that this is not a fair accountability for educators because they do all the hard work of managing teaching and learning but when the feedback is negative educators account, yet when the feedback is positive the whole system benefit, including those in power.

In this study, it will be interesting to find out from the data that how the two types of accountability as described in the Fuhrman (1999) and Darling-Hammond (1990) impact on the experiences of grade 12 educators in compiling School Based Assessment portfolios in 2009.

2.4. Curriculum Implementation and Change

The study conducted deals with the experiences of educators in compiling School Based Assessment (SBA) portfolios. This sub section of literature is crucial because it highlights an overview of international literature in what is required in implementing new innovations and the challenges that go with it. SBA portfolios are part of the innovation in the South African curriculum, therefore it is important to highlight the requirements it followed and its challenges. A case study will be used where applicable to emphasize the argument made by the literature.

2.4.1. The requirements of curriculum change and implementation

Kelly (2004) states that there are many requirements when changing and implementing a new curriculum. I will draw out two key requirements which I believe are relevant to this study. He argues that a change in the curriculum is required when new knowledge emerges. Therefore the first requirement according to Kelly (2004) is that new knowledge emerges from the new curriculum. The new knowledge should allow learners the right to comment and to make contributions about their learning. The content should therefore contain flexible knowledge that will make this possible (Kelly; 2004). This means allowance of various

perspectives on the same knowledge. Therefore, he suggests that curriculum designers should design the curriculum is such a way that this type of knowledge is created.

The second requirement is human development which involves educating and changing the mind set of people participating in curriculum change. Though it is not an easy process, he believes that it is imperative to develop people who will be involved in the planning and the implementation before the actual change takes place. He further emphasizes the need to handle the process of human development with caution and those involved should be trained. Kelly (2004) strengthens this by saying "such development should be conceived within a democratic social context" (p121).

With reference to the new curriculum in South Africa, particularly on portfolio assessment, the two underlying principles (new knowledge and human development) are relevant requirements. After going through the two underlying requirements by Kelly (2004), I am of the opinion that the purpose of introducing portfolio assessment in the curriculum was derived from the first principle, new knowledge. It was an initiative to move away from the behaviouristic perspective of rote learning to authentic tasks (portfolio tasks) that bring together knowledge, skill, problem solving and the ability to apply them in a real world context. Like in any other curriculum world wide, portfolio assessment in South Africa needed implementers; this addresses the second principle, 'human development'. This means educators and all stakeholders (parents, educators, officials, etc) need development in order to implement these innovations. In the analysis of data, I hope to show how the two above-mentioned underlying requirements impacted in the implementation process in South Africa, particularly with grade 12 business studies educators.

Cornbleth (1990) gives another requirement that needs to be considered. She understands a curriculum as a socially contextualized process, that is, an ongoing social activity. This means it is shaped by contextual influences inside and outside the classrooms that affect ways in which educators and learners relate to the curriculum. For example, the relationship between the community, the school and the government officials (districts). In that way, the curriculum should be designed in a manner which embraces the culture of the community it serves because the school and the community environment shape people's behaviour, and "contributes to how they perceive the world around them" (p12). In addition, it provides

guidance on how teaching should take place because reasoning is also influenced by the curriculum.

Like Kelly (2004), Shepard (2001) maintains that the main requirement for change and implementation is 'transformation of assessment practices'. According to her, assessment plays a major role in the innovations because assessment can be used as a change agent. The educator can either break or make the curriculum by using assessment as a tool. For example, ''the content and character of assessment should embody thinking and reasoning abilities that are the ultimate goal of learning" (p1066). "Knowledge and skills gathered and learned in the assessment process should be ongoing processes" (p1065). Learners should be able to apply (new) knowledge and skills acquired in their every day life, be it socially, academically or professionally. This means rote learning and memorization (behaviouristic perspective), or creation of new knowledge can be promoted (constructivist perspective) through assessment. Therefore, Shepard (2001) believes that transformation in assessment practices can affect a particular curriculum. According to Shepard (2001), this is an indication of the power and the influence of assessment has on the implementation process.

Mc Laughlin (1976) points out how in most instances, educators tend to respond to curriculum change in one of the three ways. She based her argument on more than 300 evaluations of curriculum change in the United States. Most of the findings described failures, with only few a successes. These patterns were used but only the last pattern, mutual adaptation was a success:

(i) **Non- implementation**: In this instance, educators were always complaining about the new curriculum. They normally viewed the new innovations as a threat to their values as professionals. In some instances they felt these changes as not fitting properly into their context. In most cases they decided to ignore the new curriculum plan and continued teaching in their own old ways teaching. Moreover, they avoided using the new curriculum terminology such as 'outcomes', rather they made changes by using their professional lenses when teaching. This type of engagement means educators did not teach and use the content as stated in the policies or circulars, but rather continued their own professional understanding in their teaching. As can be expected, in the concepts that Mc Laughlin (1976) has developed, the new curriculum was not successfully implemented.

(ii) **Co-optation**: In co-optation educators implemented the changes brought about by the new curriculum yet they re-interpreted the innovations to fit their current understanding of the subject content and learning and teaching process. In that way, they implemented what they felt was essential to teach as a strategy to keep themselves out of trouble of the authorities. For example (I will use a South African example to make it clearer), they might have taught the learning outcomes (LO) and Assessment Standards (AS) which is new content/jargon, but the methodology in class used will be memorization and rote learning. Like non implementation, this implementation process did not succeed.

(iii) **Mutual Adaptation**: this is what took place in all of the curriculum change projects that could be described as successful change. Changes are implemented and new practices of learning and teaching are in the classroom. There is a balance of implementation of new policies and new learning and teaching practices. This is a result of educators taking charge of the implementation process by being fully involved. "Educators take into consideration the context in which policy needs to be implemented" (Mc Laughlin, 1976:213). In this type of engagement, it is important for the stakeholders to modify or change the design e.g. the plan or the practice curriculum or both. According to Mc Laughlin (1976), mutual adaptation seemed to be the only successful strategy in the implementation process. "Successful implementation is characterized by a process of mutual adaptation" (p168).

In order to link the responses in a South African context, I will use a case by Venter (2003). CASS and SBA will be used interchangeably as they refer to one thing and serve the same purpose in assessment. CASS is a term used in lower grades whilst SBA is used in the FET Band. Venter (2003) expressed his reservations about the changes brought about by the new curriculum with particular reference to the new assessment practices, continuous assessment (CASS) and the impact it has on educators. Venter reveals how non-implementation occurred among educators implementing CASS. He emphasized that 'teachers are being passive, disobedient and openly rebellious; becoming more anti-department and many schools are refusing to implement the second stage of their Senior Certificate because of the demands of CASS'. (Venter 2003:6).

There was also an element of co-optation. Venter (2003) argues that educators involved in implementing (CASS) used the words 'Learning Outcomes' and 'Assessment Standards' in their lesson plans but their teaching remained much the same (old practices of rote learning and memorization).

With regard to mutual adaptation, Venter (2003) shared similar thoughts with Mc Laughlin (1976) concept of mutual adaptation, that including educators as part of the role players in the planning and changing process of the curriculum is crucial. "'The proof of pudding is in the eating thereof. The real test, therefore, is to ask the eaters of the pudding before designing the recipes for disaster which have the eaters choking and spitting out" (Venter 2003:8).

As in the United States, the case study confirms that indeed mutual adaptation is the only process that can remedy the situation of successful curriculum implementation of any country. Based on the success of mutual adaptation, I will also take mutual adaptation forward to use it later in the recommendations.

2.4.2. **Challenges of curriculum change and implementation**

Though mutual adaptation seems to be the only successful implementation process, it is not an easy process to reach because of the challenges disturbing the process. I will explore these challenges in general and illustrate with South African curriculum as an example.

Prescribing the curriculum is the major challenge experienced by most countries. Prescribing the curriculum includes content, input, outcomes and competence (Hoadley & Jansen; 2002). There are a lot of factors that shape the gap between intended and enacted curriculum, emerging from prescribing the content. These factors disturb the plan and the practice of curriculum and they include ''teacher interpretation, teacher misunderstanding, resource constraints, learner background knowledge, teaching methods used, classroom shapes, class size, teaching style, etc." (p35). Due to these factors changes occur in a form of gaps. "Changes may be located at the level of classroom" (Gwyn et al;1992: 31). '…the curriculum is changed by teachers; they leave out some topics and bring in others even though the prescribed curriculum makes no reference to this" (Hoadley & Jansen; 2002:20). Furthermore, learners also cause a change in the prescribed curriculum by reinterpreting what

they are taught differently (Hoadley & Jansen ;2002). Moreover, Hoadley & Jansen (2002) emphasize that the expectations of policy makers through their inspection is that educators should follow the prescribed curriculum as it appears in the policy documents. These expectations cause changes in the intended and enacted curriculum. Therefore, they argue that these expectations are a challenge in the implementation process, because in recent debates about the greater expectations of educators, research showed that the same prescribed curricula is learned and taught differently in different schools, moreover in some instances, content (syllabus) and plans (teaching) are different. This is a bureaucratic mode at its worst because educators end up teaching to satisfy the needs of the bureaucrats instead of using their professional mode to teach learners. It will be interesting to identify these gaps later in the analysis of data with particular reference to the plan and practice of SBA portfolio tasks.

I will use the empirical evidence provided by Vandeyar (2003) and (2005) as an example to demonstrate some challenges in the South African context. Other challenges will be shown from the findings in the analysis of data. Vandeyar's findings revealed that new assessment practices in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2003) pose challenges to educators because it (NCS) provides high standards of assessment that educators do not understand. This becomes a challenge because it results in educators having difficulty in adapting to the new assessment practices. The question will then be, how can educators implement a curriculum they themselves do not understand?

Vandeyar et al (2003) provide case studies that show that instead of educators implementing what they don't understand, (the high assessment standards), they ignored certain processes of assessment practices in the guidelines and policy documents. "The new approach of assessment was stressful because educators might have not been prepared for the paradigm shift" (Nakabugo & Sieboger; 2001:54). The Department of Education prescribed the curriculum but educators taught it differently (Hoadley & Jansen; (2002). This confirms that indeed there is a gap between the intended and enacted curriculum, moreover it highlights the importance of using professional mode in a profession. Furthermore, it highlights the bureaucracies involved in the implementation process.

The second finding by Vandeyar which accelerated educators' ignorance to policy was the new and difficult jargon that accompanies the new curriculum. Vandeyar et al (2003) gave

an example of ‘Specific Outcome’, ‘Range Statements’ as some of the terminologies that educators were battling with. They did not understand the relationship between the terms, the impact and the role they have on assessment. These findings confirm Hoadley & Jansen’s (2002) argument that when prescribing a curriculum, the curriculum practice and plan do not always correspond.

In conclusion, to this sub section, I will draw in my own challenges of curriculum implementation. In the first half of 2008, just before I joined the district as a subject advisor, I was a Business Studies educator in a township school with more than 50 learners in one class. According to policy, I had to test, mark and prepare the achievements for all learners and prepare their SBA portfolio tasks to be handed in for moderation. If a learner did not meet the minimum requirement in SBA portfolio tasks (fail), I was supposed to re-assess the learners until they are competent (pass).

In this situation, I ignored the directive to reassess and instead I told my learners that they have to take their learning seriously because they will not progress to the next grade if they do not pass on the first assessment. It was time consuming for me to teach a large number of learners and at the same time do administrative work and re-assessment because re-assessment meant a lot of marking. With such a large number of learners it was too strenuous for me to re-assess until all learners were competent.

After reading literature for this study, I now realize that having done that, I was using my professional knowledge in order to maintain the value of assessment, though doing it differently from what policy advocates. The findings by Vandeyar and my past experiences as an educator indicate that there are indeed challenges when new forms assessment are introduced, moreover, the plan and the practice differs.

2.5. **Summary of insights gained from the literature review**

To conclude this literature review, the distinctions that I created and the main insights gained and taken forward to be used later in the study for recommendation purposes are as follows:

With reference to SBA portfolio tasks the following insights are gained:

Formative assessment or learning vs summative assessment for learning

Shepard's (2000) and Black's (2003) ideas reviewed depict that the two forms of assessment have different roles and different purpose to serve, either for learning and thinking purposes or for assessment purposes. In the findings I will find out for which one of the above purposes are educators viewing portfolio tasks.

In the general assessment changes, I picked up that SBA portfolio tasks have certain aspects of formative assessment /assessment for learning or classroom based assessment as referred to by Hamp-Lyons (2007) and lack some aspects.

With regard to ongoing dynamic assessment a directive is stated in the LPG (2008) and again emphasized in the SBA Guideline of 2009 that SBA portfolio tasks are an integral part of teaching and learning. "Assessment should be part of every lesson and educators should plan assessment activities to complement learning activities" (p3).

Using the subject under investigation in this study, business studies grade 12 policy assumes SBA portfolio tasks to be an ongoing assessment process that should be done formatively during the learning and teaching process. Assessment becomes an interactive process whilst the learner takes a lead in the learning. For example, one of the SBA tasks in business studies requires learners to do research and present the findings in a form of a classroom presentation. It is worth noting that the primary goal of assessment for learning (formative assessment) is to support learners' development and provide feedback, not seeing who passed or ranking them in abilities as depicted by the theorists above. However, the Subject Assessment Guideline (SAG) (2008) states that learners have to meet the 25% requirement in order to be promoted. This brings an interesting picture about SBA portfolio tasks. It

demonstrates that the directive in the policy states that the purpose of SBA portfolio tasks is to be ongoing and dynamic, the element of assessment for learning is not fully achieved, rather it seems the SBA portfolio tasks are designed "primarily to serve the purpose of accountability, or of ranking, or of certifying competence" (Black; 2003:2-3). In the analysis of data, I will show how this aspect of on - going dynamic assessment is implemented or practiced (by educators) in a real learning and teaching environment by educators in comparison with policy.

Regarding using feedback as one of the aspects of SBA portfolio tasks, the SBA Guideline (2009) and SAG (2008) assume that learners are given feedback about their learning at three levels. The first takes place at school level, the second at district level and lastly at provincial level in a form of rankings (marks). At this stage the 25% is calculated in order to be ready to be combined with the 75% for certification and promotion purposes. This contradicts with the initial assumption of SBA portfolio tasks as an integral part of learning and teaching. In this instance feedback is in a form of marks which determines the promotion of learners, ''serving the purpose of certifying competence". (Black, 2003:3) rather than 'serving cognitive purposes'' (Shepard, 2000:12). The policy documents reviewed in this study give no detailed explanation of how feedback should take place but rather emphasize the report card as a method of providing feedback (NCS, 2003). It means that learners are deprived of the chance to ask questions for self correction. Based on the theorists' view discussed about feedback, I am of the opinion that SBA portfolio tasks lack feedback as one of the aspects of assessment for learning because feedback is crucial aspect involved in doing assessment for learning or formative assessment, but if is not mentioned in the policy, educators are not alerted to do it.

The rubrics in the business studies grade 12 SBA portfolio tasks satisfy the aspect of assessment criteria in what is involved in doing assessment for learning. For example, rubrics consist of similar content as what Shepard (2000) refers to as assessment criteria. The SBA portfolio tasks in business studies grade 12 have assessment criteria which according to the NCS (2008) should be clear and unambiguous to the learner. The policy further states that ''learners should know what is expected of them. It is crucial that the educator share the rubrics for the tasks with the learners'' (p38). This means that SBA portfolio tasks meet the requirement of assessment for learning regarding assessment criteria.

The NCS (2003) holds the same views as theorists with regard to self and peer assessment as important aspects in assessment. ‘‘Learners’ evaluate their own and others’ performances’’ (p36). However, the difference is that self and peer assessment in SBA portfolio tasks is not dynamic because the judgement that counts is at provincial level which determines the 25% for promotion purposes. What makes the aspect of self assessment not to be achieved is that the judgment from provincial moderation is not known to learners, how the marks are calculated, how they are penalized, etc. This diminishes the idea of self assessment as giving learners authority over their learning; rather, it emphasizes other people (bureaucrats) acting on behalf of learners and educators by prescribing the tasks and marking.

Based on the above discussion of what is involved in doing assessment for learning or formative assessment, SBA portfolio task for grade 12 business studies do not mean working formatively with summative assessment. In order to emphasize the claim, I will demonstrate in the analysis of data what educators did in assessing SBA portfolio tasks. Using the findings of the data, I will show in the policy section the tension between summative assessment and assessment for learning or formative assessment in comparison with the findings. Following Darling-Hammond’s distinction, the tension is that there is bureaucratic accountability involved in SBA portfolio tasks in general. Moreover, the reasons that it counts 25 % of the final summative mark ‘prevents and drives out thoughtful classroom practices and excitement of ideas’ as it will happen in self and peer assessment (Shepard; 2000:9). According to Hamp-Lyons (2007) the tension will cease to exist if both cultures ‘‘can listen to each others’ voices’’ (p497). This can be managed by paying attention to the teachers’ voices through professional development. Hamp-Lyons (2007) believes that in assessment innovations, this is a crucial matter to be considered.

Difficulties in curriculum implementation and planning

Kelly (2004), Hoadley & Jansen (2002) and research findings by Vandeyar (2003 & 2005) enlightened us about the requirements and the challenges in curriculum plan and practice and they are summarized as follows:

<u>The requirements</u>

- Flexibility of new knowledge is important in order to accommodate different perspectives. (Kelly, 2004)
- In service training (human development) is crucial to prepare the mindset of stakeholders for change. (Kelly, 2004)
- Designing a curriculum that takes into consideration the needs of the community is essential. (Cornbleth, 1990)
- Assessment plays an important role in influencing the implementation process. (Shepard, 2001)
- Involving all stakeholders in the process (mutual adaptation) is the only option for a successful implementation of any curriculum. (Mc Laughlin, 1976) and Venter (2003)

- The two cultures: learning and exam culture are used different by educators when teaching and working with learners on SBA portfolio tasks. (Hamp-Lyons ,2007)

The Challenges

- There are gaps between the intended and the enacted curriculum that causes changes in the implementation process. (Hoadley & Jansen, 2002)
- There is a difference between plan and practice of the curriculum. (Hoadley & Jansen, 2002).
- There are bureaucracies involved in the implementation process whilst professional knowledge is ignored. (Hoadley & Jansen, 2002), (Vandeyar 2003, 2005).
- Ignorance of policy, (not necessarily non-compliance) by educators as an attempt to exercise professional knowledge by ensuring good quality or standard of learning and teaching. (Vandeyar, 2003, 2005) and my past personal experience.

From the purpose and administration of policy on SBA portfolio tasks

I observed that there is contradiction of ideas/opinions between policies. The NCS (2003) and the SAG (2008) are the two policies that stress the inclusion of CASS in school based portfolio for integration purposes but the other four policies emphasize the importance of the 25% mark obtained in School Based Assessment. Furthermore, Circular 73 of 2008 describes the disciplinary measures to be taken if the stakeholders do not comply with the

implementation process of SBA portfolio tasks but said little about non-compliance on CASS. In my opinion, the emphasis of the 25 % School Based Assessment is an element of bureaucratic accountability. This creates a serious problem because when assessment for learning CASS loses its value and purpose, educators start to develop a mentality of teaching for mark purposes. The list of administration requirements explicitly confirms that School Based Assessment is bureaucratic in its nature.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the way research is planned and implemented. This Masters report uses qualitative research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) ‘‘qualitative research is an inquiry in which researchers collect data in face to face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings” (p315). This is demonstrated by the interviews conducted with the educators and principals in this study. The thoughts, beliefs and perceptions of the participants (educators and principals) were analyzed and described by the researcher, (myself) who interprets and makes meaning out the responses (Mc Millan and Schumacher; 2006). It is important to first re-instate the research questions as they are guiding principles of the study under investigation.

The three research questions are:

- What do South African Education policies and Acts say about the key elements of school based assessment portfolios tasks for grade 12 Business Studies?
- What are the opinions and perceptions of grade 12 Business Studies educators regarding learners’ SBA portfolios?
- How do the departmental feedback reports evaluate the quality of educators’ work in compiling the grade 12 Business Studies SBA portfolios?

The **first research question** addresses what policy says educators should do in compiling school based assessment portfolio for grade 12 learners, that is, the requirements by policy documents**.** The guiding responses to this question is explored in the policy document analysis in the first section of chapter 4.

The **second research question** points to educators, their experiences in the implementation process of school based assessment portfolio for grade 12 business studies. Interviews are the method used in collecting such data.

The third research question points to the chief moderators' reports. The two reports of 2008 and 2009 provide descriptions of the different misunderstandings between educators, principals and the policy documents of what SBA portfolios are and the purpose it serves. Document analysis/review will be the research method to be used in analyzing the chief Moderators' reports of 2008 and 2009 and insights gained from policy documents. The moderators' report enables the researcher to have insight on outcomes/results of the implementation of SBA portfolio tasks.

Policy documents are useful in providing a descriptive account on the implementation of SBA portfolio tasks. Both the moderators' reports and policy documents are ready sources of information and data collected from them will be used objectively to identify gaps (if any) between policy and practice. The insight gained will be complemented with insight gained in the interview data for triangulation purposes. This is what McMillan and Schumacher (2006) refers to as beliefs, thoughts and perceptions of the selected persons. Furthermore, analyzing documents is crucial in this study in order to allow triangulation. "Documentary data are a good source of data" (Merriam,1998: 126).

Qualitative research in the field of education is crucial as it "provides extensive understanding and explanation about the phenomena; moreover, it contributes to theory, educational practice, policymaking and social consciousness and takes account of multiple realities" (McMillan and Schumacher 2006: 313). Therefore, this study aims to explore the understanding and explanation about the experiences of educators in compiling school based assessment portfolio for grade 12 learners in 2009 using different data collecting methods.

Furthermore, the study is hoping to contribute to educational practice through identifying the gap between policy and practice in the process of compiling learners' portfolios in grade 12. Finally qualitative research in this study will provide multiple realities such as the different perspectives coming from educators, principals and information from the analysis of policy in order to make the readers of the research to understand a social situation (McMillan and Schumacher; 2006).

3.1.1. **Validity of Qualitative research**

The main aim of this study is to explore the grade 12 business studies educators' experiences in the process of compiling portfolio of evidence for learners in 2008 and 2009, using different methods of collecting data namely; interviews (educators and principals) and document analysis (policy documents and moderators' report of 2008 and 2009). These two data collecting methods provide triangulation, which according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) contributes to the trustworthiness of data collected and in that manner addresses the questions of validity and reliability of the information emanating from those methods.

Mc Millan and Schumacher (2006) define validity as a "degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and realities of the world' (p324). They argue that in the true sense of the matter, validity addresses issues such as the mutual understanding between the researcher and the participants, that is, the researcher and the participants both agree on the degree, meaning and composition of the event.

On the same note, Merriam (1998) believes that through previous research, validity in qualitative research builds a strong theoretical framework. Furthermore, those ''research studies derive from rigorously constructed methods which are explicitly stated and data which is systematically obtained, described, analysed, argued about and subjected to openness" (p341). With reference to this study, the participants were tape recorded and they were told to be given the copy of the final research report if they want them. The Chief Moderator was informed verbally about the usage of the reports for this study and was also told to view the final analysis if he wishes to. All the respondents agreed and were willing to participate in the study.

3.1.2. **Triangulation of Qualitative research**

Triangulation is ''the use of three or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour'', moreover, it is "a powerful way of demonstrating validity, particularly in qualitative research'' (Cohen et al, 2000:112). The two methodologies namely, interviews and document analysis, provides triangulation because two sets of stakeholders

(educators and principals) and two types of documents (moderators' reports and policy documents) were used in the interviews. In this study triangulation was used the researcher (myself) collected information from more than two sources. Receiving the information from above mentioned multiple sources contribute to the trustworthiness of data. (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:325).

3.2. **RESEARCH METHODS**

3.2.1. **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS/REVIEW**

3.2.1.1. **Chief Moderators' Reports**

The Chief Moderators' reports explicitly reflect on the outcome of the implementation process of SBA portfolio tasks by educators and contain the expectations of the Chief Moderator, the challenges and the recommendations. The reports are useful for the researcher in order to understand the actual practice (implementation) in relation to the expectation of policy documents. The reports respond directly to the third research question. "Documentary data should contain information relevant to the research question" (Merriam,1998: 124).

A detailed report was compiled by the Chief Moderator of all learning area in Grade 12 at the end of the learning and teaching process in 2009 after provincial moderation, but this study will only focus on the business studies reports. The chief moderator as the department representative submits the report to the Moderation Unit of the Department of Education. The unit distributes it to all the district offices. As a district official I therefore had access to the reports. Before the reports were sent to districts during the marking of the final examination, the Chief Moderator was approached by the researcher (myself) asking for the usage of the Chief Moderators' reports for the study. Permission was verbally granted because according to the Chief Moderator, the reports are governments' documents and therefore they are freely open to public usage.

As a result, using this document analysis is acknowledged by Mc Millan and Schumacher (2006) who argue that analysing data from a documentary source ''lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer" (p448). On the same note, Merriam

(1998) describes documentary data as ‘‘good source of data that can be used in the same manner as data from interviews, can describe information and verify emerging hypothesis’’ (p126), and Cohen et al (2000) echo the same view by describing ‘‘document analysis as an improvement of quality in areas of concerns to facilitate the implementation of policy decisions and to evaluate the effects of the implementation of policy analysis and interviews” (p43).

3.2.2. **INTERVIEWS**

3.2.2.1. **Sampling**

The composition of the sample is as follows:

Two School based educators and principal from two relatively advantaged school
Two School based educators and principals from two less disadvantaged but functional schools. This means the sample was 4 educators, 4 principals that is a total of 8 people from 4 different schools.

According to Merriam (1998), McMillan and Schumacher (2006) and Cohen et al (2000), the results of making a deliberate decision on the sample for both educators and principals are to make the findings valid and reliable and the process trustworthy. Cohen et al (2000) describe purposive sampling as a form of research ‘to obtain data from a smaller group or subset of the total population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study” (p92). On the same note, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) have a similar view by describing purposive sampling as ‘‘the selection of particular elements from the population by the researcher that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest” (p126). McMillan et al (2006) further argue that the main aim of purposive sampling is that the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement and typicality. It is for this reason that, the four educators and four principals were purposefully selected because of their capabilities of performing relatively well; my (the researchers’) judgement to purposively select them was based on their continuous excellent results. This was observed in a provincial forum of 2009 which (all districts attend each year at the beginning of the year) when an analysis was done of the performance of all schools in the province. Consistency of performance was observed, hence the interest in the schools.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) and Cohen et al (2000) agree that the most problematic issue for researchers in most cases is the selection of the sample size, the representativeness and parameters of the sample, access to the sample and the sampling strategy. Indeed it is a problem because, firstly, there is no clear answer to the questioning of how large the sample should be, secondly it is difficult to be certain that the whole population is well represented, thirdly, it is not certain that access will be permitted to the researcher, and finally, the researcher might have difficulty in choosing a suitable method of sampling for the study, either random or purposive sampling.

In this study, Business Studies is not a compulsory subject in South Africa but rather one of the core subjects. A smaller group was selected because of the time frame of the study. Furthermore, a small group was possible because it is easily manageable. I selected 'a reasonable sample that accurately represents the whole population being targeted' (Cohen et al 2000: 92). I phoned the respondents to make an appointment to discuss the study and the purpose of the interviews. During the visit I presented the letter of permission from the Department of Education and a letter of consent including a background of the study. (See appendix A and B).

A minor problem was experienced with the principal of School A because of his overseas trip. The scheduled appointments to conduct interviews were postponed twice. Finally, I came up with a strategy of interviewing both the educator and the principal on the same day to save time and further postponements.

Aim of the interviews

The main aim of using interviews was to adapt to each interviewee situation and responses (Stewart et al (1988). In Cohen et al (2000) view's, interviews enables participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live (p267).What is more interesting is that the interviewees are from different school cultural backgrounds. Therefore as a researcher I was neutral in all the situations as an attempt to adapt to the interviewees' situation.

Open-ended questions were used to obtain data from sampled educators and principals. Open ended questions were useful in this research as they determine the exact words and sequence

of questions in advance. In addition, all the interviewees were asked the same basic questions in the same order; (Cohen et al 2000: 271) to minimize bias (Mc Millan and Schumacher; 2006). The questions were prepared in advance and the purpose of questioning was to get frank and open responses (Tuckman (1972) in Cohen et al 2000: 276). For the purpose of this study it is critical to consider the advantages and disadvantages of open ended questions:

Advantages

Open-ended questions allow the interviewee some degree of control over the areas of discussion and what to emphasize and how much detail to provide (Shipley 1996: 53). For this study this is essential because educators interviewed shared their understanding, feelings and attitudes. It is imperative that educators should not feel as if the interviewer is expecting to hear the correct answer.

Open ended questions encourage the interviewee's participation and often reveal the respondent's prejudices and attitudes, as well as insight into the interviewee's knowledge about the topic at hand (Steward et al in Shipley 1996). In this study, which establishes educators' responses to the process of SBA portfolio compilation, this advantage is very important. For example, educator and principal respondents were asked to express their attitudes about what upsets and excites them about SBA portfolios.

Disadvantages

According to Shipley (1996) and Oppenheim (1992) open-ended questions can be time consuming because responses tend to be long which may lead to the interviewee providing unorganised or rambling answers. This point might be relevant in this study because the researcher, who is the interviewer, had little experience in conducting interviews and he/she is the driver of the interview process. Stewart and Cash (1994) in Shipley (1996) agree that indeed an inexperienced interviewer with open- ended questions might find it hard to control the direction of the interview.

3.3. **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to McMillan et al (2006) one of the demands of research ethics is that the researcher needs to build a relationship of trust, openness, co-operation and acceptance with the participants. These issues can be cleared up during discussions and negotiations as an assurance between the researcher and the participants. The following need to be discussed intensively and a consensus needs to be reached: "informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, privacy and empowerment and caring and fairness" (p334-335). By so doing, I avoided affecting the participants negatively (Cohen et al 2000: 49). Moreover, as professionals, researchers should not add pain and indignity to the participants (p57). These above mentioned issues were discussed during the first phone calls I made when setting up appointments to see the interviewees. I explained to them that what we are talking about is confidential and what we will be discussing during the meeting and the interview is confidential. They were also told that a tape recorder will be used to record their inputs which will be destroyed after the completion of study. I explained that if they needed copies of the tapes they are free to get them after the completion of the study. They were told that their names will not be mentioned in this study including the names of schools and the district they fall under for anonymity purposes.

The study under investigation deals primarily with people as human beings. It is therefore essential to take into consideration the moral issues implicit in this research. I ensured that the subject matter (questions) did not affect the participants negatively as elucidated by Cohen et al (2000). In the permission letters I explained clearly the intention of the study without using vague terminology that the interviewees may not understand. The letters gave space for acknowledgement as an assurance that the content of the letter is fully understood.

I ensured that the ethical consequences of me being a district official were protected for issues such as informed consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and caring to be highly taken into cognisance in this study, particularly during interviews with principals and educators. My job description remained anonymous, and the interviewees were put at ease by the fact that a final copy of the report will be given to them per request to peruse. I ensured that in the document analysis deception is prohibited as the findings will involve the government (policy makers).This was done by using all policy documents and circulars that

talk about School Based Assessment Portfolios and the exact copy of the chief moderators' reports.

In order to avoid the problems that were highlighted by the theorists above, which alerted me a lot, I ensured that:

Interviewees were put at ease by declaring anonymity. The interviewees did not know that I am a district official. I presented myself as a student from Wits doing research for her Masters degree. The reason behind the anonymity was that if they had known my job status, they might have given me answers they thought I wanted to hear. In most instances, educators tend to be threatened by district officials as they regard them as their seniors, a situation which might have resulted in them giving me guarded responses. Moreover, the way of selection of schools was based not on who they were, but on where they worked. I did not have time to build a trusting relationship. I therefore decided to reveal only my Wits student identity. This was ethical as the findings will be used for my professional development and not given to the Department of Education.

I asked questions that were unambiguous. I asked simple questions (see attached questions asked in the appendix C) and allowed them to ask me if they did not understand

I probed the question if the response was not clear. I quickly paused/interrupted the interviewee if the response was irrelevant to the question in a polite manner by rephrasing the question in a short possible way.

Consequently, there was confidentiality and anonymity throughout the whole process of interviews and meeting dates were set by the participants so that they voluntarily became part of the study. Care and fairness prevailed all the time by allowing them to re-schedule the meetings and the interview because of the commitments of some of the interviewees. The consent letter states that they are given pseudonyms so as to protect their identities. The data collected from the interview transcripts will be held confidential and analyzed for research purposes. All data will be destroyed after completion of this study. Permission letters were given to principals and educators to ensure that all stakeholders grant the research consent. For fairness purposes, participants were also allowed to ask the interviewer to repeat the

question or to paraphrase the question if they did not understand clearly. Every time when I made an appointment to go and see participants, I reminded them about their right of self expression by assuring them that they will not be victimised in any way or the other and they are free to disengage themselves at any time when they feel uncomfortable with the process.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. **Introduction**

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected for the research under investigation. It responds to all three research question of this study, namely;

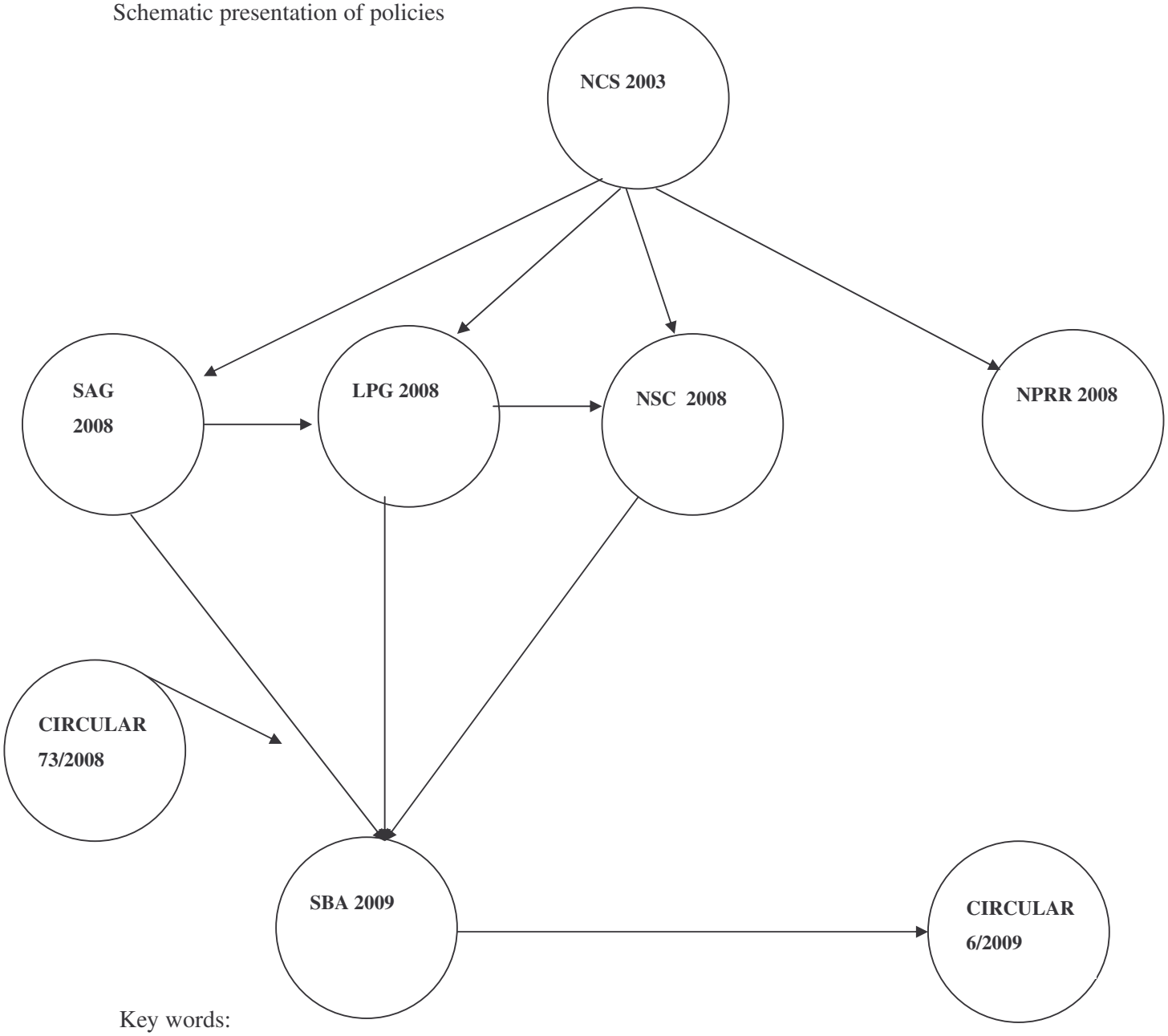
The data is organized in this manner:

- Description of policy documents on assessment (Question 1)
- Interview data expressed by educators (Question 2)
- Interview data expressed by principals
- Data on Chief Moderators' reports for 2008 and 2009 (Question 3)
- Comparison of the views of educators according to the culture and socio-economic background of the school: advantaged schools and disadvantaged schools. (see appendix D & E)
- A comparison of views between principals according to the culture and background of the school: advantaged schools and disadvantaged schools. (see appendix D & E)
- Comparison of the views of educators and principals advantaged schools and disadvantaged schools. (see appendix D & E)

The interview responses of both educators and principals respond to research question two. In order to protect the identity and confidentiality of the respondents, the schools will be identified as A, B, C & D. The educator and the principal from school A will be identified as educator and principal A, the same procedure will apply to all the respondents and their respective schools.

4.1. **DESCRIPTION OF POLICY DOCUMENTS ON ASSESSMENT**

Schematic presentation of policies



Key words:

NCS-National Curriculum Statements

SAG-Subject Assessment Guideline

LPG- Learning Programme Guideline

NPRR- National Protocol for Recording and Reporting

SBA- School Based Assessment Guideline

4.1.1. Background

The Department of Education (DOE) in South Africa implemented the National Curriculum Statements for FET phase in 2006 and the first final examination took place in 2008 for grade 12. The first new assessment for this curriculum was written in October/November 2008. SBA portfolios, is a new method of assessment in the South African education system. It is called SBA because all processes of marking and compilation are executed at school level. Quality assurance of the process is done by the school and the district. The term 'portfolio' is a new term in the education arena in S.A. and is used to describe the evidence gathered and achieved during and at the end of the learning and teaching process. Through portfolios learners have to produce evidence to be assessed by the educator in a controlled and supervised environment. Moreover, it is because several pieces of work are put together to demonstrate competence, which is called the SBA portfolio.

As a result, the SBA portfolio becomes a component of summative assessment which forms 25% of the total final mark. The Learning Programme Guideline (LPG) (2008), the Subject Assessment Guideline (SAG) (2008) and the SBA (2009 policies) informs the school based portfolio form of assessment that forms part of formative and continuous assessment leading to summative assessment. Like the curriculum, assessment has also evolved over time.

Firstly I will present the South African policies from general to specific followed by the purpose of SBA portfolios and later I will analyze the SBA portfolios in South Africa and how it fits in with the portfolios world wide.

It is imperative to discuss these policies because they respond to the first research question of this study. As can be seen on the diagram on the previous page, there are six main policy documents and two Circulars, from general to specific that govern the implementation, assessment and the administration processes of the new curriculum.

(i) **The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Business Studies (2003)**

This is the Outcome Based Curriculum document that replaced the previous Christian National Education syllabus and it is divided into four chapters. In general, the four chapters (1-4) of this policy outline knowledge that a learner should accumulate during learning and teaching and thereafter be able to apply (the knowledge) effectively in the world of work.

"The NCS Business Studies grade 10-12 (General) lays the foundation for the achievement of goals by stipulating Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards and by spelling out key principles and values that underpin the curriculum" (NCS, 2003:1). Chapter one describes the purpose of introducing the subject statements in the new curriculum. Chapter two introduces the key features of the subject, in this instance it is Business Studies. Chapter three: in (NCS) each learning area has its own subject statement; therefore this chapter contains learning outcomes with assessment standards, content and context for attaining the assessment standards.

Chapter four deals particularly with assessment and it is the core of this research. "This chapter outlines principles of assessment and makes suggestions for recording and reporting on assessment" (NCS, 2003:7). It prescribes the key principles of assessment which are reliability and validity. It emphasizes that processes of assessment reliability and validity are not always accurate in Business Studies. It is for this reason that the policy stresses that the educator should use CASS to choose a variety of options when making a decision about the learners' progress. Continuous assessment is then used "as a strategy to that bases decisions about learning on a range of different activities and events that happen at different times throughout the learning process" (p35). This means that CASS serves as a guiding tool in assisting educators to determine whether the learner will progress or not. The performance in According to the policy evidence gathered, during CASS, can be included in the School based portfolio. During the process of continuous assessment integration between teaching and learning must take place, (NCS; 2003).

(ii) **The Subject Assessment Guideline (SAG) of 2008 For Business Studies.**

This policy document provides a clear guideline on assessment in Grade 10-12 from 2008. The assessment part has been derived from chapter four of the subject statement mentioned above (NCS Business Studies) and describes in more detail, specifically providing a comprehensive detailed description of how to do assessment in Business Studies. ‘‘The policy is based on norms and standards of which all assessments should comply to” (p1). Moreover, it is a guide to assist educators in implementing School Based Assessment (SBA) portfolios for 2009.

The main content describes the assessment in the NCS in general (across all learning areas) and assessment of Business Studies from grade 10-12. This means that the policy starts describing the generics in assessment and then moves to the assessment specifics per learning area, that is, each learning area (subject) has the same information under general and differs only on the component of assessment.

With particular reference to assessment in Business Studies, the policy document outlines that knowledge, skills and values acquired should ‘‘promote entrepreneurial initiatives, sustainable enterprises and economic growth” (SAG: 2008:7). Educators are advised to prepare learners to excel in entrepreneurial activities. Therefore in their planning for teaching and learning processes and in planning for assessment activities, educators should ensure that the skills required in the business environment are achieved.

Continuous assessment as an informal aspect of assessment is emphasized and should be aligned with formal tasks (summative). Educators should set criteria on how to measure the learners’ performance in both formal and informal tasks. The policy emphasizes that it is essential to continuously assess learners in order to observe the areas of weaknesses though is not necessary to record these in learners’ achievement. All the forms of assessment to be used when continuously assessing learners are provided in the policy document.

Finally, the policy provides examples of the programme of assessment (summative tasks) , forms of assessment, the learning outcome and assessment standard to be achieved, the mark allocation and the content to be covered by that form of assessment in all the three grades

(grade 10-12). I will give an example of Grade 12 Business Studies of Term One tasks that goes into the portfolio only:

Term	Task	Form of assessment	Focus	Context
1	1	Research assignment	LO 1 AS 3 (Corporate social responsibility)	Critically examine the corporate social investment
1	2	Test 2	LO' s and AS' s covered to date	project of a business of your own choice

(iii) **The National Protocol for Recording and Reporting (NPRR) (2008).**

This is the overall policy document for all the grades (grade R-12). It is a standard policy for schools in terms of recording and reporting assessment of learners in schools from grade R to grade 12 and should be used in conjunction with the NCS Business Studies (2003). The suggestions made in NCS Business Studies (2003) chapter four about reporting and recording of assessment and suggestions from other NCS learning areas are put together into one document, namely NPRR (2008).

The main aim of this policy document is to "provide a regulatory framework for the management of school assessment records and basic requirements for learner profiles, educators' portfolios, report cards, record sheets and schedules" (p8). Moreover, "to regulate how learner performance is recorded" (p9). This is the implementation aspect of this policy because it promotes a bureaucratic way of working. Educators have to record learners' achievements as regulated in the policy. Incorrect recording will be regarded as misconduct and educators will be charged. The charge is described in circular 73/2008 (see p55 about the circular). The policy requires all the learner achievement should be done effectively and

efficiently and is for the educators to ensure "that adequate evidence of learners' achievement is collected using various forms of assessment" (p9-10).

The policy emphasizes the following already stressed in the NCS Business Studies (2003) both formal and informal classroom assessment should take place and learners should be given feedback all the time about their performance. Assessment, either formal or informal, "should be carefully designed to cover the learning outcomes and assessment standards of the learning programme/ area/subject. The design of these tasks should therefore ensure that a variety of skills are assessed" (p10). Moreover, continuous assessment in Business Studies is not used for certification purposes and emphasizing the importance of formal tasks (summative) for certification purposes.

The document's main focus is on record- keeping of learners' achievements. For example, the 25% school based assessment portfolio mark in grade 12 is used for summative assessment purposes and this does not apply in the other two grades in the FET Band. The procedure to record assessments in Business Studies (seven portfolio tasks), is clearly outlined in this policy document.

The processes in the NCS Business Studies (2003) and the SAG (2008) compliment each other. The wording used in both documents is in some instances the same (copied as they are from one policy document to the other).

(iv) **The National Senior Certificate (NSC) : A Qualification at Level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of 2008.**

This policy describes the regulations, rules and provision for the award of the National Senior Certificate at Level 4 (NQF). The NCS Grade 12 certification describes how it will be awarded. The policy outlines the types of qualifications, number of credits to be met, the duration and all other requirements in order for a qualification and certification to be awarded. The policy document ''is based on the norms and standards to which all assessment bodies in terms of sections 3(4) (1) and 7 of the National Education Policy Act (1996) must give effect". (p1).

The section on assessment focuses mainly on recording and reporting. According to the policy, ‘‘learners will be assessed internally according to the requirements as specified in the Subject Assessment Guidelines’’ (p13). A 25% (internal assessment) and 75% (final exam) split is emphasized by describing that a learner will only be awarded a qualification if the marks of the two are correctly and accurately allocated. The difference between grade 10 and 11 assessment compared to grade 12 is that grade 12 is moderated externally whereas the other two grades are moderated internally only.

Finally, concerning assessment, the policy provides procedures to be followed for recording and reporting both internal and external assessment. Seven level descriptors with corresponding percentages are given, ranging from 0-100 % in order to assist educators to assess learners at the correct level.

In general, this policy is the main policy document from which other policies are derived. The SAG (2008) and the NPRR (2008) discussed above are extracted from this policy because the information in the three documents compliments each other.

(v) **The Learning Programme Guidelines (LPG) Business Studies of 2008.**

Each subject/learning area has its own Learning Programme Guideline (LPG). This means there are 17 LPG’s because the NCS in Grade 12 has 17 subjects. The policy specifies the scope of learning and assessment for grade 10-12 in the Further Education Band (FET). ‘‘It is the plan that ensures that learners achieve the learning outcomes as prescribed by the assessment standards of a particular grade. Furthermore, it “assists educators and other learning programme developers to plan and design quality learning, teaching and assessment programmes’’ (LPG, 2008:7).

The policy starts by defining key terms in assessment such as what is a subject, a learning outcome and assessment standard. The policy outlines the four learning outcomes (LO), the assessment standards under each LO; the content and context the educator need to cover. This policy document provides detailed content about the knowledge and skills that are envisaged to be acquired by the learner during and at the end of teaching and learning process.

With particular reference to assessment, the (LPG) outlines how learners should be assessed in a particular learning outcome and states clearly the knowledge to be acquired in assessment. This is referred to as an assessment standard. The four learning outcomes in Business Studies has corresponding assessment standards to be achieved. In order for the learners to achieve the assessment standard, the educator in a form of assessment, either, formal or informal (assessment) needs to break down the assessment standard into forms of questions. In Business Studies the formal assessment tasks are prescribed in the School Based Assessment Guideline and the informal (continuous assessment) is up to the discretion of the educator but the policy stresses that it should be done continuously in order to monitor the learners' progress in understanding.

(vi) **The School Based Assessment (SBA) of 2009.**

This is a working document for schools only for the FET phase: grade 10-12 mainly focusing on assessment. It is a document that includes all important points about assessment in NCS. The important points are extracted from the three policies discussed above, namely, the SAG (2008), LPG (2008) and the National Senior Certificate: a Qualification at Level 4 on The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of 2008. Grade 10 and 11 has one SBA (the two grades included in one SBA) whereas Grade 12 has a separate SBA. It provides a detailed procedure including guidelines of how learners are supposed to collect evidence to show that learning took place through the compilation of a school based assessment portfolio.

According to SBA (2009), for the school based assessment, the educators have to prove that the process of teaching and learning took place by guiding learners in collecting, and gathering and demonstrating evidence of learning. The SBA (2009) is more detailed because it outlines a step by step procedure for compiling school based assessment per subject (even the annexures to be used) from the beginning of an assessment until the last process of submission for external moderation, and it includes the prescribed formal assessment tasks. The procedure does not focus much on learning and teaching in relation to the portfolio, but rather on prescribing assessment. When administering portfolio assessment, educators should follow the prescribed procedure because the content is sequenced according to the steps the educator needs to follow. For example, after completing Annexure A, the next annexure to be completed is B. The SBA (2009) provides the following content:

Introduction

Breakdown of the components of SBA

What should be in the educators' portfolio

Learners' evidence of formal assessment portfolio

Moderation processes of formal assessment tasks

Annexure A: Consolidation schedule

Annexure B: control list

Annexure C: school moderation

Annexure D: cluster moderation

Annexure E: declaration by learner.

Formal prescribed assessment tasks:

-Research assignment

-Project – case study and its Rubric

-Project – investigation and its Rubric

-Research presentation and its Rubric

Memoranda for the prescribed tasks

The recording sheets

Background of circulars

The content of circulars in the Department of Education topics is extracted from the main policies to provide additional information about issues (the topic) or changes in the policies. The Head of Department of Basic Education, the MEC and the Minister of Education have the authority to develop circulars. This means that a circular in Limpopo might be different from the circular in Gauteng, depending on the context of the issue at hand. There are issues that might concern Gauteng only; as a result a circular will only apply to Gauteng. The main purpose of circulars is to announce or to inform stakeholders about changes which previously applied as stated in the policy, but now need to be applied differently. In simpler terms it means a circular is an amendment or additions or subtraction from a particular policy. The status quo of the policy remains until the policy is reviewed (adding the information on the circular) and be given a new name or the same name with the new date. In essence, there can be a difference between the content in the policy and the content in the circular.

(vii) **CIRCULAR 73 OF 2008**

This circular was incorporated in the SBA (2009) about the disciplinary measure to be taken if the guidelines are not implemented as stated in the policy. The circular deals with the disciplinary actions of all stakeholders, i.e., learners, educators, school management team and officials in the Department of Education, if the process of compiling learners' school based assessment portfolios is not followed as described in the SBA (2009). The policy outlines the type of irregularity, the corrective measures and the action to be taken against the perpetrator.

(viii) **CIRCULAR 6 OF 2009**

The Topic / heading of the circular is called 'management and administration of grade 12 school based assessment and preparatory exam'. The main purpose of the circular is to emphasize in detail the duties and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the management and administration of grade 12 school based-assessment. It refers to the formal assessment tasks carried out at schools for marks (Circular 6/2009: 2 of 33). The circular serves as a reminder by providing dates for the administration of school based assessment, gives a summary procedure of SBA (2009) with a few additions like changing the names of annexures. Annexures provided in the SAG (2008), LPG (2008) and SBA (2009) were also attached in this circular. However, the name, some content and the format of some of the annexures in the circular have changed even though the content is primarily but not completely the same.

Most of the contents in the above-mentioned policy documents discussed in this section is complete and consistent with each other and in accordance with the overall purpose of education. Every policy describes its purpose clearly with no contradiction on content. However, some of the content repeats itself; for example, in the SAG (2008), LPG (2008) and SBA (2009) the programme of assessment, with all the dates and activities, is the same. In other cases, the name and format of some annexures are different although they convey the same information. The implication and the confusion is that the same documents were generated with different formats and names. For example the circular 6/2009 annexure **L** is essentially the same as annexure **D** in the SBA, but the name and format is different. Both annexures describes the purpose, process and evidence required for cluster moderation but their differences causes confusion. For example, the format in annexure **L** requires educators

to tick whereas in annexure **D**, educators need to tick and comment next to each tick. What is more interesting is that they are meant to convey the same information which is evidence of cluster moderation. The following are examples of problems encountered by educators:

In annexure **D** the name of the subject is already printed whereas in annexure **L** the name is not printed there is only a column provided for educators to write it in. The signature of a cluster leader is required in annexure **D** while annexure **L** requires the signature of the principal. This is a concern because principals don't attend cluster meetings so why should there be a provision for their signature?

With regard to the content used in annexure **L** terms such as Critical Outcomes are unfamiliar to the educators (including myself as a specialist). In annexure **D** the policy documents are abbreviated and written in full whereas in annexure **L** they are only written in full and more questions are asked in the annexure **L** than in annexure **D**. This is the second concern because at the cluster meeting it becomes difficult for the cluster leader to attach a signature because, not all educators are using annexure **L**.

It is will be interesting to find out in this study how these concerns have impacted on the implementation of school-based assessment portfolio tasks**.**

4.2. INTERVIEW DATA EXPRESSED BY EDUCATORS

BRIEF BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOLS

School A is a former model C school with the majority of the learner enrolment being white with a few black, Indian and coloured learners and the educator staff establishment being 99% white and 1 % non - white, that is, 46 educators in total. It is a relatively advantaged school performing exceptionally well in all the subjects including Business studies and it obtained a **100%** percent pass rate in 2008 with the first NCS exam.

School B is also a former model C school with the learner enrolment of predominantly Black learners, a few whites, Indians and coloured learners and the educator staff establishment being 92% white, 5% black, 2% Indians and 1% coloureds, that is 38 educators in total, two Indians and one coloured. It is also a relatively advantaged school, also performing excellently in all the subjects including business studies. The school obtained **96.2 %** pass rate in its first NCS exam the previous year.

School C is a township school where all learners, administration staff and educators are black. It is a less advantaged but functional school obtaining a **78.4%** pass rate in its first NCS exam in 2008. Even before the NCS, the school was popular for its outstanding, excellent functionality within the surrounding townships.

School D is also in the township, with all learners and educator staff establishment being black. The school is a less advantaged school but functional, obtaining **81.7%** in the first NCS examination in 2008. In its history it has been known for its continuous good Grade 12 results.

TABLE 1: BRIEF DESCRIPTION: EDUCATORS

NAME OF EDUCATOR	DISTRICT	TOTAL NO OF EDUCATORS INTERVIEWED	AFRICAN	WHITE	INDIAN	COLOURED	MALE	FEMALE
A	JHB NORTH	1		√				√
B	JHB NORTH	1				√		√
C	JHB CENTRAL	1	√					√
D	JHB CENTRAL	1	√					√

Similar and different views: Educators respondents

This part of the presentation of data primarily focus on extracting information from educators about the experiences of grade 12 Business Studies educators in the process of compiling School Based Assessment portfolios for learners in 2009. The questions are designed in a manner that will specifically obtain valuable information about their (educators) experiences.

1. **Understanding of what portfolio assessment is**

All four educators hold a similar understanding of what portfolio assessment entails. This became clear in their remarks when they stated:

Educator **A:** 'Work that the learner has covered is reinforced and tested throughout the year in portfolio tasks. A portfolio mark is then compiled for the year and it will form 25% of the learner's final mark'.

Educator **B:** "Every learner has a file which is actually evidence of work. It shows substantive evidence of the learner's progress as it forms 25% of his/her final examination mark".

Educator **C:** "Portfolio assessment is a compilation of learner recorded marks, all the work that learners have been given that is formal, and that should be recorded and makes up 25% of the learner's final marks".

Educator **D**. "The way I understand portfolio assessment is that, it is the evidence of learning the learner has done for the year and it forms 25% of the total mark, they only work for 75% in an exam"

All four educators are clear that portfolios provide evidence of learner work done and what percentage of the final marks are allocated to them. Two educators (A&C) focused only on formal testing and marks in their description of a portfolio, while B &D mentioned evidence of learning/progress which focuses more on learning rather than exam oriented.

2. **Knowledge of policy: Educators**

In response to the question about their knowledge of policies that governs SBA portfolios educators said:

Educator **A** She mentioned one circular (Circular 06/2009) as the policy document that assists her in compiling School Based Assessment (SBA) tasks.

Educator **B** She mentioned the SBA guidelines as the only policy document that assists her in compiling School Based Assessment (SBA) tasks.

Educator **C** The National Protocol On Recording Assessment (NPRR) is the only policy that was mentioned by this educator.

Educator **D** She mentioned all the documents; the SBA Guidelines, the SAG, the LPG, the NCS Subject statement and the NPRR.

The four educator respondents have knowledge of policy that governs the compilation of SBA portfolios. Each of the policies mentioned are used by schools in compiling SBA Portfolios for learners. Three educators (A, B and C) focused on one policy but used different names, whereas educator D mentioned five main policies. This means that the three educators focused more on specific policies. It is important to note that each policy document mentioned by the educators serves a specific purpose and the purpose is related to guidance in compiling SBA portfolios. More on the purpose of the policies was discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

3. **How do you prepare learners for SBA portfolio tasks / work with learners on them / administer them?**

The response to the question is as follows:
Educator **A:** She starts by teaching the LO. She does group activities. After a completion of an LO she gives dates and topics before for Assessment of the first task out of the three.
Educator **B:** She teaches first. Gives supplementary work. Give dates for first task and give the learners rubrics.
Educator **C:** She discusses the rubrics before she starts with the teaching and gives dates of assessment for the first task. When teaching she always refers to the rubrics. After completing a topic that covers the first tasks she gives learners homework. She then gives them questions of the first tasks and reminds them of the date for submission.

Educator **D:** Gives class activities of the same kind as those in the tasks, then gives learners dates and rubrics. She discusses with them how the rubrics work for the SBA Portfolio tasks. She issues out questions for the tasks and submission dates.

The pattern of preparing and administering the Learners for SBA portfolio tasks is the same for the four educator respondents though each educator uses her professional lens in doing so. The pattern is as follows: They all give rubrics, dates for assessment and give activities.
Educator **C** started by discussing assessment first rather than teaching content. Educator A, B and D are formal, they provide teaching first and thereafter discuss assessment. Generally speaking, the pattern demonstrates the emphasis is on assessment. Furthermore these patterns of responses follow. This means that learners do not have a say in the assessment plan, only the teacher can plan and later discuss with the learners. This strengthened Black (2003) view that the voice of learners is not yet heard in assessment, that is, to diagnose the problem. The marks and grading still dominates. The pattern also demonstrates Shepard's (2000) concern that though assessment for learning created the need for change in assessment, the change is still blocked. In this instance, the blockage is the emphasis on assessment as a measuring tool for certification, for grading and marks purposes and so is SBA portfolio tasks.
Educators **A & C** further pointed out that is unlikely that learners do re-assessments because most of the questions are attempted in the class work.
Educators said:

Educator **A**: "It's unlikely that my learners are incompetent in the tasks because we do some questions in groups in class as an exercise".

Educator **C**: These tasks are not problematic to learners because I pick some of the questions for class work, so it is not like they have never seen or don't know the questions at all.

This elaboration and the pattern imply that educators are operating within a summative assessment mode.

4. **How do the three common tasks in the SBA fit in with the learning programme educators have created for the year?**

Educator **A** and educator **C** both say that the three common tasks fit with the learning programme they have designed for the year. These educators have set dates for assessments and prepared topics to be taught for the year because it is their obligation and duty to teach and assess. This is illustrated by Educator **A** when saying: "the three tasks cover all that I have prepared for the year", whilst Educator **C** says: "They fit in well because according to my work schedule, this is exactly what I should teach and assess for the year. After each assessment task, I evaluate them by talking to them to find the problematic areas". By contrast, educators **B** and **D** feel that the three common tasks do not fit with the learning programme they have designed for the year. According to Educator **B**, "there is no integration of learning outcomes and assessment standards in the tasks, or is it the teacher's job? 'I have to show to my learners integration of the AS's and the LO's in my class exercises because in the common tasks it is not well illustrated'. Whilst Educator **D** says "No, they don't fit in because the SBA guidelines for that particular year are delivered late to schools by the district, so I continue to make a plan so that teaching and learning takes place without waiting". Educator **D** uses the previous year SBA guidelines because SBA Guidelines are always delivered late to schools after schools have already done their planning for the following year. According to educator D, when she receives the three common tasks for the current year, she slots in with what she has received from the guideline into their planning.

There are significant points that are brought up by the educators. Educator **A, C** and **D** show their professional competence by being proactive, ensuring that the teaching and learning takes place even if though there is a delay in the delivery of policy documents to schools. This highlights Vandeyar's (2005) opinion that educators are professionals and in some

instances they are required to uses their professional lenses to remedy certain situations in teaching, learning and assessment. This situation is a clear demonstration that educators use their professional lenses.

Educator **B** raises an interesting argument. In Business Studies there are four LO's and they are inter-related. For example, there is a topic in LO 1 that is related to LO 4. When teaching, the educator has to show the relationship between the two LO's even if she/he is teaching the LO. During assessment the two LO's can be used though the assessment is focusing on LO1 only. The integration is shown in the LPG (2008) only not in all the policy documents governing SBA portfolio compilation. Even in the common tasks the integration is not demonstrated. It is during this time that educators should teach in a professional mode to demonstrate to learners how assessment will take place when integrating two or more LOs. During assessment learners will battle less because they are familiar with the integrated concepts.

What is interesting from all the responses is that all the educators ensure that the assessment takes place as planned according to policy documents. This is a revelation of the dominance of summative assessment (Hamp-Lyons, 2007), and the educators teaching in a summative mode.

5. **Educators' perceptions on how the three SBA common tasks fit in with the specific outcomes and assessment standards to be covered for the year.**

Three out of four educators are of the opinion that the specific learning outcomes fit in with the assessment standards to be covered for the year. But three educators also think that the specific learning outcomes and assessment standards are not well covered in the three common tasks.

Educator **A**: 'You will find that in one task the AS' are not all covered'.
Educator **B**: 'In other tasks all AS's are covered but in other tasks not all are covered'.
Educator **C**: In some tasks yes, but in some no'.

There is a general idea amongst educators that learning outcomes and assessment standards are unevenly spread/covered. As a result they ensure that the rest of the topics not covered in portfolio tasks are taught to learners so as to prepare them for summative assessment.

When probed further to elaborate on how they are handling the crisis, educators **A** & **C** said they give learners tasks as they are prescribed but make sure they cover all LO's and As' in their teaching and in the class exercises . Educator **C** gave an example that in each class activity she writes an LO and AS' covered on top of the exercise to make sure that she covers everything.

In my opinion it is interesting to note how formative assessment and summative assessment are used to serve the same purpose, which is to prepare learners for the exam. SBA portfolio tasks were then used as a measuring tool.

6. **Opinion on how the topics covered in the SBA tasks relate to the topics covered in the final year exam, how do they prepare for learners for the final exam?**

All four are of the opinion that there is a relationship between the two, though each educator explains the relationship differently. This is depicted by the following responses:
Educator **A**: "There is a relationship, but not much correlation. There are certain topics in the final exam that needs the general understanding of learners and they are not covered in the three tasks. However, there are certain components that correlate, especially in the research assignment".
Educator **B**: "They (tasks) fit into a broader perspective of the work schedule but not in the final exam. Some topics and AS' are covered but not all'.
Educator **C**: "In the final year exam most of the LO's and AS's covered in the three common tasks are always asked in some low order and high order questions. So it means at least a certain portion is covered".
Educator **D**: "Yes, the topics do relate to the final exam, but not all, although as I mentioned earlier, not all LO'S and AS are covered (in the tasks), and even in the final exam they are not all covered".
The responses reveals that they know that the portfolio tasks cover a certain part of the LO's and AS' and that the remaining parts needs to be taught. Interestingly, this is not their

expectations. According to them they expect the tasks to prepare learners for final exam. This is further cited by educator **B** and **D** when probed further, that it becomes a waste of time for learners to bring new information from the research projects which they know are not going to be of assistance to them in any way in the final exam.

The responses reveal and confirm the argument of Hamp-Lyons (2007) that assessment still dominates in learning and teaching process. Moreover, teaching for assessment rather than assessment for learning is what the responses reveal. On the same note, the responses also outline the bureaucratic nature of assessment because educator's expectations are driven by the demands of the bureaucrats which are best performance.

8. **Views on the distribution of learning outcomes on the previous exams**

Educators **A** & **B** stated that the learning outcomes in the preliminary exams of 2008 and in final exam of 2009 were fairly distributed in October/November 2008 but not a full representation, certain topics were covered but not all. However, educators **C** and **D** see it differently.

According to educator **C:**

(i) "98% of the learning outcomes and assessment standards were asked in the October/November exam of 2008

(ii) '95% of the learning outcomes and assessment standards were asked in the preliminary exam of 2009, actually this paper did not differ much from last year's one. The content in this year's prelim was the same as last year, but it was asked in a different manner'.

(iii) '10% of questions in the 2008 final exam related to question in the SBA guideline of 2009'

Educator **D** believes that:

"all LO's are covered but not all AS's" and therefore she made the following distribution:

(i) In the October/November exam of 2008, common task 1 covered LO 1 & LO 4, AS 1, 2, 3, and 4. This is a contradiction because task 1 according to the LPG and SAG document should only cover LO 1 only. This is the work covered in the first term.

(ii) In the preliminary exam of 2009, common task 2 covers LO 3: AS 1, there is no AS 2, 3 & 4

(iii) In the SBA guideline of 2009, common task 3 covers LO3: AS 6, there is no AS 1, 2, 3, 4 &5.

These responses strengthened the previous one mentioned that, educator's expectation of the SBA tasks is for preparing learners for final examination and an emphasis on assessment for promotion and certification purposes.

9. **Incidents that excite educators about the potential of School based assessment (SBA) portfolio**

Nothing about SBA portfolio tasks excites Educators **A**, **B** & **D.** The reasons they provided are mentioned below in incidents that upsets them. What excites Educator **C** is "the fact that learners have a mark before they write an exam."

The response by educator **C** follows Hamp-Lyons's (2007) view that in most instances assessment as a measuring tool for obtaining marks is still dominant. The educator's expectation of learners progressing to the next grade is fulfilled in this instance.

10. Incidents that upset educators about doing portfolio assessment

Plagiarism upsets educators **B** and **D**.

Educator **B:** "learners do not stick to deadlines because they copy from each other".

Educator **D:** "If the GDE can come up with one date of writing the common tasks, rather than each school setting dates for themselves, because for now, anything is possible, a learner can get the correct marked task from another school and get 100%"

Educator **A:** "everything" about portfolio assessment upsets the educator.

Educator **C**: "Nothing" about portfolio assessment upsets the educator.

According to educator **A**, the administration and the similar tasks each year, are a waste of time. Cluster moderation also upsets her because 'I spend most of the time sorting out and preparing SBA portfolios. Educator **C** is satisfied with SBA portfolio common tasks, except for a few recommendations. She believes if those recommendations can be implemented, everything about portfolio common tasks will be perfect. Firstly she suggests that educators be involved in designing tasks because they are more knowledgeable on the subject than the department, secondly, that SBA portfolios be done at school level only as a continuous

assessment such as class and homework activities, it should not be externally marked as it currently done.

From the responses, the general feeling is that educators are not objecting to the idea of portfolio assessment but rather objecting to being controlled in a meaningless way. The administration surrounding SBA portfolio tasks and the tasks being the same in two successive years is a demonstration of assessment as a bureaucratic tool. Educators do not have the chance in this instance to operate in a professional mode, for example, contributing to the setting of the tasks; rather they are expected to be accountable to the demands of the bureaucrats by administering and the assessment SBA portfolio tasks. These responses are a demonstration of both bureaucratic accountability imposed on educators and the dominance of an exam culture.

11. **Incidents that made educators understand portfolio assessment better**

No particular incident helped Educators **A** and **B** except that educator **A** commented that "these portfolios are just a joke, I just do it because is part of my job, I have no choice. I understand that the department is trying to transform the education system, but this is not working, they should try something else. Maybe cut some of the processes like the paper work''.

Educator **C** is of the opinion that "being a grade 12 educator for the second year since NCS was introduced gave me a better understanding of what portfolio assessment is and its confusing requirements", whilst Educator **D** feels that "I now understand the 25%/75% split and the purpose of it, but the way it is implemented, I don't like it".

The comments from the educators showcase that the systems and procedures (bureaucratic demands) in the implementation of SBA portfolios need to be reviewed.

12. **How educators explained the value of portfolio tasks to parents**

Educator **B** is of the view that she will tell a parent that "portfolio tasks do not give a true reflection of the learner's skills abilities and do not instil work ethics or dedication to studies because of the repetition of the same tasks every year",

Educator **A** and **D** explained that portfolio assessment only counts 25% of the final mark; therefore parents should assist and give advice to their kids when they ask of it (help). This is illustrated by the following responses from the educator respondents:

Educator **A:** "Because portfolio tasks help to boost their portfolio final mark".

Educator **D:** "Learners benefit from the 25%, however, I am not sure how is it marked and calculated because it not a transparent process"

On the other hand, Educator **C** says "I would say this is the best assessment the GDE has introduced. The fact is that these tasks test so many skills like collecting valuable information on their own during research, this is advantageous for learners as it prepares them for the final exam because it not easy to forget the information in the final exam. Only if the tasks can be changed every year".

The comment of educator **A**, **C** and **D** demonstrate the value of portfolio tasks as serving the purpose for marks purposes and emphasizes the value of summative assessment.

13. **Views on whether learners are benefiting from SBA**

In this instance educators provided different views on how learners benefit.

Educator **A**, "**not** at all, because the tasks are the same every year so learners can copy what has been done by a best learner and get the same good marks".

Educator **B** "**No**, they are not benefiting because they are aware of what is expected from assessment, there is no creativity".

Educator **C**, "**Yes**, they are benefiting, because what they do in the three common tasks is relevant to what they will be assessed on in the final exam. In business studies it is even worse because it is part of the learner's life, when they watch TV, read the Business Times; there is something about Business Studies relating to their three tasks".

Educator **D**, "**Yes** they do benefit from the 25%, however, I am not sure how is it marked and calculated because it not a transparent process".

The response of educator **A** and **B** depict bureaucratic accountability of the process of compiling A SBA portfolio (the same tasks each year). Educator **C** appreciates the exposure learners receive in the process learning which is an element also encouraged by the constructivist's theorists. Educator **D** points out the dominance of assessment as serving the purpose of marks and certification.

Recommendations or suggestions of how the three tasks in the SBA can be improved

All the four educators suggest that:

- the topics be changed every year
- include educators in the compilation of the three common tasks
- cut or reduce the paperwork/administration

Recommendations about the three common tasks

Different opinions were given by educators as follows:

- Educator **A** has no additional information to say about the three common tasks.
- Educator **B** "educators must be given a chance to help or to give inputs in the design of the common tasks. Because they know the content better they design differently according to the learner's needs."
- Educator **C** recommends that: educators be involved in designing tasks because they are more knowledgeable on the subject than the department.
- The SBA portfolios be done at school level only as a continuous assessment such as class and homework activities, it should not be externally moderated as currently is done.
- Educator **D** said "Let the department change the way these portfolios are administered. This is time consuming".

The recommendations provided by educators about portfolio tasks are similar. This indicates common perceptions about SBA portfolios. This shows that educators are not concerned about assessing SBA portfolios but are concerned with the bureaucratic demands such as paperwork, lot of administration and the time it consumes in compiling.

Additional general information about the three SBA common Portfolio tasks

Educator **A:** "If the government can stop giving us lots of circulars that are not talking to each other, and also have one standard policy that we should use instead of lots of documents which in the end also confuse us".

Educator **B:** "I understand why we are given circulars, to make sure that we are doing the right thing when we assess learners, but we end up being confused of which document to use. Like these annexure in the circulars, I don't remember which one is it, but I remember I ended up not knowing which one to use."

Educator **D:** "If the GDE can stick to one thing, one policy document for uniformity purposes, see how it is working and then change it if is not working. Using different documents do not promote uniformity. Assessment such as SBA portfolios needs uniformity because it is still new in the country".

Educator **C** had no comment on additional information.

The responses of the three educators present issues and confusions around policy circulars and policy documents from the department. In my opinion, the educators are stressing bureaucratic accountability as their main concern because it prevents them from operating in a professional mode.

4.3. INTERVIEWS DATA EXPRESSED BY PRINCIPALS

TABLE 2: BRIEF DESCRIPTION: PRINCIPALS

NAME OF PRINCIPAL	DISTRICT	TOTAL NO OF PRINCIPALS INTERVIEWED	AFRICAN	WHITE	INDIAN	COLOURED	MALE	FEMALE
A	JHB NORTH	1		√			√	
B	JHB NORTH	1			√		√	
C	JHB CENTRAL	1	√				√	
D	JHB CENTRAL	1	√				√	

1. **Understanding of what portfolio assessment is**

All the four principals have similar understanding of what portfolio assessment is. This becomes clearer in their remarks when saying:

"Portfolio assessment gives structure and pace to work covered in the syllabus by staggering tasks through the year. It allows for easier control within the school by setting standards to which each educator must adhere". (Principal **A**).

"There are three tasks to this SBA portfolio. The kids do three tasks that are common, one in the first term, the other in the second term and the last in the third term" (Principal **B**).

"Portfolio assessment is a collection of evidence from learners work in which they are being assessed which adds up 25% of their final mark. The 75% is written at the end of the year. I just want to comment that the 25% /75% split only applies to the FET band, but I believe it should apply to all the grades". (Principal **C**).

"This is the assessment done by learners. They have to provide evidence of learning and it counts 25% of their final mark". (Principal **D**).

In my view, I do not observe any educational understanding of portfolio assessment; rather, their remarks demonstrate a bureaucratic understanding of portfolio assessment because their responses mostly focused on the marks allocation.

2. **Support of policy: principals**

The four Principal respondents value policy and support the usage of policy by educators. According to them it is important for educators to adhere to the different policies from the department.

Principal **A**: "I am the one who receive the policy documents from the district. Immediately I give them to the HOD to pass to educators to implement. If there is a circular, we first discuss it in the staff meeting before it is implemented".

Principal **B:** "It is important to follow policy because it gives teachers guidance on what they are teaching. But there are many of them, which I think is too much for the poor teachers".

Principal **C**: "I think it is good to do your work based on criteria because it gives you help to set standards and guide your pace. I guess that is what the policies are doing to educators".

Principal D: "Yes, I agree that policy should be followed. In addition to the policies from the department, the school has its own internal policies that are approved by the district. It is good because policies promote uniformity of certain processes and procedures across all schools.

Observing from the responses, only one principal respondent talk about discussing the policies. There seems to be a general sense that policies must be followed but they are not talked about or engaged with. This observation confirms the finding from the educators responses of not knowing what policy documents say about the spread of LO's, AS' preparatory/preliminary exam and the final exam.

3. **Knowledge of policy: principals**

Like educators **A** and **B**, Principals **A** and **B** have little knowledge of policy that governs the compilation of SBA. This is evident by only mentioning the SBA guideline as the policy available at the school to support educators in their planning of the three common (SBA)

tasks. When probed further to find out of any other policies, the principals seemed to only know this one policy.

Summarizing Principals **C** and **D** responses, they are like their educator counter= parts (educators **C** and **D),** they are more knowledgeable on policies that govern SBA compilation. This is evident by mentioning the four main policies that governs the compilation of SBA. When probed further to find out more, Principals **C** said: "There are also lots of circulars that we are given time and again; I forgot them because there are many of these things".

Lack of knowledge of policies that governs SBA compilation by principal **A** & **B** parallels the lack of knowledge of the educators **A** & **B**. In my opinion, this demonstrates a pattern because of the school's geographic location and the type of school environment the educators and principals comes from. It is clear that the pattern shows that respondents (both educators and principals) from the performing, advantaged school are less knowledgeable about policy documents that governs SBA portfolio, whereas the respondents from performing, disadvantages school are more knowledge. Furthermore, it strengthened the finding that policies are not discussed or talked about in staff meetings, which means that those educators and principals who knows the name of policies, do not know the content, and those who only know one policy, do not know either the names or the content.

4. **The support the principal respondents provide to educators**

All four Principals provide support to educators by monitoring the moderation on a regular basis. This is emphasized by the following responses:

"I check the marking of tasks and moderation by HOD's frequently." Two things: firstly we ensure that educators stick to policy because at the end of the day there is one common exam which is written by the rest of the country and secondly, we make sure that there is moderation that occurs from time to time to quality assure that educators are following policy". (Principal **B).**

"I support them (educators) by moderating their work here at school and also ensure that they attend cluster moderation". (Principal **C**).

"I constantly find out from the deputy in charge of curriculum if moderation took place internally and at cluster level". (Principal **D)**.

With reference to the remarks, it shows that principals see support as only ensuring that moderation took place at school and cluster level. This is a pure demonstration of bureaucratic accountability from the side of principals. No other form of support is mentioned even when probed further, nothing was given as extra support to educators.

5. **Views on whether learners are benefiting from SBA**

Principals **A, B** and **D** believe learners are not benefiting because "not all AS' and LO's are covered in the three common task and they do same things every year which in my opinion does not promote creativity". (Principal **A)**.

"Not really, I like the research part because learners take pride in their own findings, but when the same tasks are done each year, then it does not serve the purpose". (Principal **B)**.

"They cover most of the LO's and AS' but not all", but because the tasks are repeated it becomes monotonous." (Principal **D).**

On a different note, principal **C** believes that learners are benefiting. This is depicted by denoting that "Yes they do benefit from the three tasks. The fact that assessment of portfolios is split into two as mentioned earlier gives them a chance of succeeding because they have a mark already".

The principals share the same sentiments with the educator respondents. Like their educator counterparts they do not object to portfolio tasks as a form or aspect of assessment, but rather object to certain bureaucratic processes in the compilation, such as repetition of tasks. Furthermore, principal **C** raised an important fact which is raised by all educator respondents of the dominance of assessment as a measure for marks and certification purposes.

6. **Opinions on the function of the three common tasks as a preparation for learners for the final year exam**

Principal **C** and **D** said that the three common tasks serve as a preparation for the final exam. This is evident from Principal **C** saying "learners benefit because in the final year exam most of the questions are related to the three tasks and they are sometimes asked in certain question in the final exam", whereas Principal **D** said "yes, I think so, they prepare them for the exam, what they are assessed on the three tasks sort of relate to what will be asked in the final". By contrast, Principal **A** is of the opinion that "the three common tasks are intended to prepare learners but it has little impact because the portfolio tasks after school, cluster and provincial moderation are not returned to learners to revise with them as a preparation for the final exam". Principal **B** is of the opinion that "the three common tasks do not cover all the skills a learner should acquire, for the fact that they are repeated every year and do not cover all LO's and As', I don't think so. Some of the topics in the common tasks do sound familiar with the some questions in the exam, but I am not too sure which ones."

The principal's responses share the same sentiments with the educator's responses, on how the tasks prepare learners for final exam. Principals are also of the opinion that some topics in the SBA common tasks, do not relate to the topics asked in the final exam. According to policy documents that governs SBA portfolio, the programmes of assessment states clearly the each LO, AS and topic each common tasks covers. Furthermore, according to policy all LO's should be covered in the final exam. This means that there is a relationship between LO's, AS' and the final exam topics/questions. However, it seems as if both educators and the principals do not know the LOs, AS' and topics covered in the SBA common tasks, that is why they expect the SBA common tasks to cover "Everything", that is, all the LO's and AS'.

7. **(a) Incidents that excite Principals about the potential of portfolio assessment.**

In this instance the four principals gave different views of how the three common tasks excite them:

"It excites me because it gives guidance to educators and learners to the level at which they are expected to work, and secondly it provides GDE with the opportunity to verify that classroom teaching is indeed taking place". (Principal **A)**.

"The fact that learners go out to do research which also excites learners, moreover, this is in the culture of universities, therefore the research prepares learners for tertiary education", excites Principal B, in spite of his reservations about the repetition of tasks .

"What excites me is the fact that learners get a mark before they write the final exam". (Principal **C).**

"What excites me is that learners are prepared from the beginning of the year until the end of the year and they work throughout the year". (Principal **D).**

The responses of the three principals, A, C, and D provided bureaucratic reasons whereas principal B gave a professional reason. Comparing the principal's and educator's remarks, it shows that bureaucratic accountability dominates more than professional accountability. Moreover, it demonstrates and emphasizes that assessment as a measuring tool is dominant over assessment as a construction of knowledge.

(b) **Incidents that upset Principals about doing portfolio assessment**

What upsets all the four principal respondents is that:

- the three common tasks are repeated every year
- the administration that goes with compilation of SBA portfolio is too much for educators

Principal **A** and **C** elaborated further by saying:

Principal **A** : "SBA portfolio is restrictive because educators have to only use the prescribed tasks".

Principal C**:** "What makes me more upset is that the poor educators will go up and down trying to ensure that the paper work is perfect rather than focusing on the core business which is teaching".

There are similar views between the principal's and educator's responses in this regard. All the respondents in this study see the value and potential of SBA portfolio, but believe that there are few bureaucratic demands and processes that need to be minimised. Therefore, the bureaucracy that goes with SBA portfolio compilation also needs to be looked into.

(c) **Was there a particular incident that made Principals understand portfolio assessment better?**

All the four respondents said that what made them understand portfolio assessment better is the internal and cluster moderation educators do with the help of HOD's and the deputy principal. "I go through the tasks. I must say, they are interesting and going through the Subject Assessment Guideline of each subject helped me a lot. I know what the educators are going through; it's tough, really tough, I understand all the stress they have. When trying to do things right in the learners' portfolios, they run around like headless chickens" (Principal **A**).

Principal **B** states that: "Yes**,** I now understand it better because this type of assessment is running for the second year now, I now understand what the assessment requires; therefore I give my educators all the support they need when they go for cluster moderation like providing transport to take them to the moderation venue".

Principal **C** elucidate by saying "as I do the internal moderation I tend to go through all the tasks carefully, and these helped me understand portfolio assessment better, that is why I know the paper work it requires and that makes me angry".

Principal **D** is of the opinion that: "When signing learner portfolios after each assessment task, I am curious to find out what is it that I put my signature to. I then browse through the selected learner portfolio, I must I admit, teachers are doing more than enough on these SBA portfolios. They put all their energies on those portfolios".

The general feeling of the principal's responses is that the tasks are interesting but they bring about huge stress on the side of the educators. They superficially assist educators with the administration of portfolio tasks, that is, they are helpless in seeing added responsibilities on educators and being unable to alleviate the pressure. This is a demonstration of the bureaucratic demands imposed on educators. Though principals have authority and power over the control of schools, there are certain limitations to their powers and authority such as the paperwork, the administration of SBA portfolios and the repetition of tasks each year.

8. **Recommendations or suggestions of how the three tasks in the SBA can be improved**

All the four respondents suggest that:

- The tasks be changed every year
- Reduce the paper work

Principal A and B further suggest that the three common tasks should cover all sections. This is evident by Principal **A** saying, "the three common tasks should cover all the different sections because for now it does not cover all sections and all AS' and LO's", whilst Principal **B** said, I can say, "the LO's and AS's should be all covered in the common tasks so that learners accumulate the overall knowledge of the subject." Principal **C** suggests that, "With our type of schools SBA portfolio compilation is strenuous because of the number of learners we have. If GDE can reduce our classes to smaller classes, and make it compulsory that each school should meet the required number in a class, otherwise it is a good curriculum" and Principal **D** says that "I think the government should look into reviewing the content of this new curriculum so that the content in the SBA tasks should be more or less the same as the final exam. It will be excellent preparation for the final exam".

The responses of the principals (all of them) show the misunderstanding of the purpose of SBA portfolios. The four respondents think SBA portfolios should be like a syllabus, that it should cover all content. Their view is similar to the educators' respondents. Both their responses confirm that policy documents are not discussed and looked into, because the LPG (2008), SAG (2008) and the SBA guideline (2009) and (2010) shows the Content (topics) , LO's and AS's to be covered in the SBA portfolios tasks.

9. **Additional general information about the three common tasks**

Different views were expressed by the respondents:

Principal **A** and **B** had nothing to add, Principal **C** added by saying, "If the department can sometimes swap educators, for example, they deploy educators in the former model C schools to the township schools and vice versa, just for them to feel the workload of doing SBA tasks with a large number of learners and lack of resources". Principal **D** said "I suggest

that the Business Studies learners should be taken to the business world to go and practice or observe what they were compiling in their portfolios; I mean the research they have done".

Consequently, based on the responses, recommendations and additional information by both principals and educators, there is a similarity of responses within a school. They all demonstrate and appreciate the new assessment practice, the SBA portfolios tasks but is concerned about with the bureaucratic demands that go with SBA portfolios compilation such as lots of paperwork, the stress, the educators goes through, the administration and the repetition of tasks. The other dominant view amongst both respondents (educators and principals) is that they value SBA portfolios as measuring tool for marks (25%) purposes.

Concluding the presentation of data, one will emphasize that the most of the remarks from the majority of the respondents were bureaucratic in nature, demonstrating and confirming the dominance of bureaucratic accountability imposed on educators. Therefore the main dominant **insights gained from the interviews** are as follows:

The SBA portfolio assessment is seen by the respondents as a measuring tool for marks and certification purposes.

- Though the respondents seem to understand the policy that governs SBA portfolio compilation and value the new innovations in the education system, they are dissatisfied about the bureaucratic processes of administering SBA portfolio assessment.
- There is a clash in the purpose of SBA portfolios. There is a common emphasis on marks as a measure of success (25%) but at the same time the preparations and administration of SBA portfolios by educator has an element of assessment for learning, for example, giving learners rubrics before and discussing assessment procedures before the actual assessment takes place. This means that both elements of formative or assessment for learning assessment and summative assessment are used.
- The responses revealed that the support principals provide to educators is also bureaucratic in nature.

4.4. **CHIEF MODERATORS REPORTS**

INTRODUCTION

The main documents to be presented are the Chief Moderators' reports of 2008 and 2009. The reports outline "all aspects as observed during the moderation process" (Moderation Report: 2009, p1 of 12), the good practices, the challenges and the recommendations about the outcomes of portfolio assessment in 2008 and 2009.

Before the provincial moderation process, schools are required to sample learner portfolios according to the weakest, average and the best learners' portfolios. According to the LPG (2008) SAG (2008) and the SBA Guideline (2009), only 10% of the total number of learners in a school, to a maximum of seven learners' SBA portfolios are sampled for moderation. This means that if a school has many learners, it has to sample and select only seven learners because it is the maximum number. There are a number of comments from the Chief Moderators' report that respond positively and negatively to research question three of this study. Most of the comments are either, professional or bureaucratic in nature, or what Darling –Hammond refers to as bureaucratic accountability and professional accountability.

The Chief Moderators' Report: 2008 vs The Chief Moderators' Report: 2009

The first moderation of SBA portfolios took place in October 2008. According to the report, most professional and bureaucratic demands were raised as matters that need urgent attention because educators did not comply. The reports were comprehensive; for the purpose of this study I summarized them as follows:

October 2008

(Bureaucratic) Administration demands	(Professional) classroom demands
• Tasks were not dated in both the learner and educator portfolios. • Some marks were incorrectly converted.	• Some educators supplied learners with memorandum. • There was little correlation between the SBA task results and the preliminary exam results • School and cluster moderation was superficially done. • Incorrect use of rubrics. • There was copying between learners.

October 2009

Bureaucratic Administration demands	**Professional demands**
• Some Educators designed their own tasks that are not up to standard. • No signatures on the moderation tool. • No marks on the tasks but signatures are attached. • No remarks/comments were given on the moderation tool by the HOD or the principal. • Superficial moderation at cluster level, There was either: • No signature on the moderation tool.	• Some educators provided support to learners (praise). • Some educators met the expectation of the learning outcomes (praise). • Advantaged schools designed tasks that are up to standard (praise). • Most educators did not use the rubrics correctly, some rubrics were not marked. Recommendation by the chief moderator was that:

• No evidence of cluster moderation but signatures was attached. • There was incorrect use of colour pens for moderation purposes. • no relevant annexures in the educators' file, like annexure B from the SBA Guideline (2009) or Annexure L from circular 6/2009 which should have been picked up at either school or cluster level • The same marks at school and cluster level are awarded to the learner'. This looks as if the school and the cluster moderator just put the tick to show that moderation took place because the provincial moderation mark is far too different from the others. <u>Recommendation by the chief moderator</u> • More emphasis and responsibility must be placed by GDE and subject specialist at school and cluster level. • Moderation was done by four (educator, school moderator, cluster moderator and provincial moderator) people but still there was non- compliance in most of the learners' portfolio tasks'. (referring to the mistakes he picked up mentioned above).	• Educators need support on the usage of rubrics.

Observing the two tables above, there were more professional demands than bureaucratic demands in 2008; while in 2009 there were more bureaucratic demands than professional demands. The pattern of demands (bureaucratic and professional) triggers an interesting argument. Firstly, the pattern shows that in 2008, the first year of implementation of portfolio assessment, educators concentrated more on the needs of the bureaucrats rather than focusing on issues that require their professional knowledge.

According to the report of 2009, there was a bit of professionalism on the educators' side as is demonstrated by some praises from the chief Moderator. The pattern shows that educators concentrated more on issues that concern their profession (professional practices), which is content, hence the praises from the Chief Moderator.

Data of the two reports further present the following:

Professional Practices (related to professional accountability)

Designing their own tasks that are not up to standard (disadvantaged schools) and designing their own tasks that are up to standard (advantaged schools)

According to the Chief Moderator the majority of schools used the prescribed tasks, except a few which used their own assignment tasks. This is emphasized in the report saying "generally schools used the prescribed tasks. Other schools which used different assignments were indicated on the list of schools which need support" (p2 of 12). However other schools like……set their own tasks that are of good standard" (p3 of 12).

The Chief Moderator provided names of school which designed their own tasks that are up to standard and the names of those schools which designed tasks that are not up to standard. When checking the background of schools I realized that the schools in which tasks are up to standard are performing advantaged schools and those not up to standards are a combination of performing disadvantaged schools. The main cause of misunderstanding in this regard is that according to the SBA Guideline (2009) and Circular 6/2009, a school (excluding underperforming schools) can design their own tasks but the tasks have to be approved by the district first to ensure that the required standards are met.

The implication in this situation is that:

How can the Chief Moderator pick up that certain schools did not design tasks according to the required standards at provincial level moderation. This is because the quality assurance starts at district level. It means the right processes of quality assuring (bureaucratic support) did not take place properly at district level. This comment by the Chief Moderator demonstrates the emphasis on bureaucratic demands on the side of educators and ignores the roles and responsibilities of district officials.

Ineffective usage of rubrics by educators.

The Chief Moderator reports that though educators used the prescribed rubrics, "some educators needs urgent training on the effective application of rubrics, some educators did not mark the rubric but allocated marks, some allocated marks that do not correspond with the mark allocation on the rubric and in some there is no evidence that the tasks were read and assessed, but the rubric was completed". (Moderator's Report, 2009: p5 of 12).

The comment of the Chief Moderator shows that the marking of educators on rubrics was not reliable. Therefore the question of validity and reliability of the tasks becomes a concern. It is for this reason that the chief moderator recommended professional training of educators on the application of rubrics.

Educators provided additional support to learners

On a positive note, the chief moderator demonstrated satisfaction with the support given to learners by educators. The majority of learners provided responses that are of good quality. This quote backs up of the claim in the above (first sentence) *"yes, the answers on the prescribed guidelines were of good standard, it shows according to the answers given that there was additional support given by educators" (Moderators' Report, 2009: p2 of 12).*

Learners met the expectation of the learning outcomes

The Chief Moderator highlighted two things that made him believe that the learning outcomes were met by learners. Firstly: that educator provided additional support to learners

and secondly the responses given by learners in the tasks show that the learning outcomes have been achieved. This means that the chief moderator is satisfied that the LO's and AS's as described in the policy documents' the LPG (2008), the SAG (2009) and the SBA Guideline (2009) are covered.

The implication I picked up is that the Chief Moderator seem to know and understand the specific LO's and AS' that needs to be covered in the SBA portfolio tasks. However, data of the interviews show that educators and principals complain that the SBA portfolio tasks do not cover all the LO' and AS's.

Administrative demands (related to bureaucratic accountability)

1% of Learner portfolio tasks were not arranged properly

The SBA Guideline (2009) states clearly how the tasks should be arranged inside the learner portfolios. However during provincial moderation, 1% of schools did not comply with the arrangement. This stated in the chief moderators' comment when saying: "Certain schools, 1% of learner portfolios were not arranged according to the guideline, the names of schools are listed on the list of schools that needs support" (Moderator's Report, 2009: p2 of 12). This is demonstrates that the chief moderators seem to consider administration issues as important although they are of no importance to learning and teaching.

No signature on the moderation tool and no marks on the tasks but a signature were attached

The internal and cluster moderation tool is an instrument used to moderate at school and cluster level. The moderation tool is included in the SBA Guideline (2009) and in Circular 6/2009. The tool requires the cluster moderator at school level to put a signature as a validation of the moderation that took place.

However, the outcome of provincial moderation demonstrates that no signature was attached but moderation took place. Furthermore, in some instances marks were not awarded on the learner tasks (learners were not awarded marks) but a signature was attached. According to the Chief Moderator this is a demonstration of non compliance by educators. Again this is a

bureaucratic accountability issue because the internal moderator at school level should have picked up the problem before the learner portfolios can be submitted for cluster and provincial moderation.

No remarks were given on moderation tool by either the HOD or the principal during school moderation

Though in my opinion as a subject specialist, making comments on the quality of moderation at school is not an important issue, to the chief moderator it is. This is emphasized by the Chief Moderators 'comment when saying:
"Educators did not remark on the work, it seems that school moderation was not effective through out" (Moderators' Report, 2009: p4 of 12).

In all the policies that govern the compilation of school based assessment discussed in this study, there is no clause stating that it is compulsory to comment under general remarks. This shows that the Chief Moderator is operating in a bureaucratic mode, by putting unnecessary demand on educators.

In my opinion there are two reasons why educators did not do so. Firstly, educators know what is important and not important because they have professional knowledge. Secondly, the perception of educators is that SBA portfolio tasks serve the purpose for certification; therefore they see no need to comment.

The question is, what is the Chief Moderator's understanding of the purpose SBA portfolio tasks? Is it formative or summative? If he or she understands SBA portfolio tasks as formative assessment then there is a greater need for comments by educators, but if he understands it as a summative assessment, then there is no problem with the lack of comments.

Superficial moderation at school and cluster moderation

"Different coloured pens are useful for moderation at different levels because the next moderator can easily check if remarking was done". (Moderator's Report, 2009: p4 of 12).
"the same marks are awarded at school and cluster level moderation even though the marks the educator awarded to the learner are incorrect". (Moderator's Report, 2009: p5 of 12).

This comment highlights two things: that the Chief Moderator put emphasis on administration issues that are of no importance to educators and that there was lack of bureaucratic support from the department to educators but expected educators to do them.

Recommendations by the Chief Moderator

The chief moderator recommends that more emphasis and responsibility must be placed by GDE and subject specialists on school and cluster moderation. The moderation was done by four people (the educator, School Moderator, Cluster Moderator and Provincial Moderator) but still there was a lot of non compliance (Moderator's Report, 2009: p12 of 12). The comment by the Chief Moderator is stating who should be blamed for 'non-compliance of educators' by naming Subject Specialists, School Moderators and Cluster Moderators.

The Chief Moderator recommends that educators need professional training. What is interesting is that the suggested training focuses on supporting educators on what I think are bureaucratic administration demands that have nothing to do with the content. In my opinion the main area of improvement should be on professional demands.

Therefore the main dominant **insights gained from the reports** are as follows:

The chief moderator's comments are bureaucratic in nature. This is evident by emphasizing administration issues that are of less significance in the compilation of SBA tasks and by using words such as 'non- compliance' as though it is stated in the policy documents. The comment on administration issues that has nothing to do with learning and teaching reveals the emphasis of the chief moderator on summative assessment. If he views compilation of SBA tasks as assessment for learning, he would have not commented because in assessment for learning things like general remarks, signatures, etc, are corrected in the process of learning in many different ways, it is a dynamic ongoing process.

4.5. **DATA ON POLICY DOCUMENTS**

The purpose policy wants to achieve regarding school based assessment portfolio tasks

The purpose of school -based assessment portfolio according to the SAG (2008) is that portfolio "assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning". The policy wants to ensure that portfolio assessment *as a continuous assessment* (CASS) should be used "to develop learners' knowledge, skills and values, assess learners" strength and weaknesses, provide additional support to learners, revisit or revise certain sections of the curriculum and motivate and encourage learners'' (SAG: 2008:1). On the same note, The National Senior Certificate: A Qualification at Level 4 on National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of 2008 states that the purpose of the new assessment practice, namely, portfolio assessment, is to assess learners on what they know rather than on what they don't know. Moreover, to move away from assessing through examinations only, to ensure 'that learners move away from rote learning" (p2).

The same sentiments are echoed in the SBA (2009). The policy describes the purpose of portfolio assessment as a part of formal assessment; requiring learners to make a research and gather information that will form the learners' evidence for his/her formal assessment leading to summative assessment. The role of the educator in this instance will be to facilitate if the correct information pieces of work to be put into learners' portfolio, are collected. This means educators need to ensure the reliability, and validity of the pieces of work collected by the learner.

Vandeyar et al (2003) share the similar thought with the purpose policy documents wants to achieve by describing the purpose of portfolio assessment as a continuous process to monitor learners' progress and identify learner's strength and weaknesses. Furthermore, most the advantages by Batzle (1992) and Barton et al (1997) correspond with the purpose of policy.
Given the purpose policy wants to achieve on portfolio assessment as discussed above, the question will then be: what do all these expectations of policy documents mean to educators in the process of learning and teaching? The finding of this study will help to respond to the questions later in this study.

The administration policy put in place for school based assessment portfolios compilation.

The SAG (2009) prescribed the programme of assessment for grade12 by breaking down assessment into seven tasks, namely three SBA portfolio tasks, two tests, a mid year exam and a trial exam. The policy further prescribed content by dividing it into four Learning Outcomes (LO's). This means that the content needs to be covered in the four trimesters of the year. This prescription of what to do and when to do it is one of the innovations that accompanied the new assessment practice, portfolio assessment.

The promotion criteria as stated in the National Senior Certificate: A Qualification at Level 4 on National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of 2008 is the second innovation that accompanied the portfolio assessment. This means that the administration of promotion schedule changed, for example the seven School Based Assessment tasks now counts 25% now needs to be calculated according to policy for promotion purposes.

The LPG (2008) listed and prescribed FOUR LO's, the assessment standards for each LO and topics to be covered. The policy emphasizes that educators need to follow the given content so that learners can obtain knowledge that will prepare them for the world of work.
The Business Studies Subject Assessment Guideline (SBA) of 2009 is a detailed and working document for educators. There already prescribed seven pieces of work, called School Based Assessment portfolio tasks. The tasks and its memoranda are attached on this policy document. In addition there is a learner' portfolio and educator's portfolio containing the dated programme of assessment for the whole year, for example, Mid year exam: 8 June 2009.The guideline provides a detailed quarterly programme of internal assessment for grade 12 (see appendix D). Educators only need to come up with specific date for each form of assessment, the possible month for assessment is already prescribed. The policy further provides a detailed procedure and required documentation of what should be in the learners' portfolio and what should be in the educators' portfolio. (See the listed, required content including the name of annexures on page 44 in the description of SBA of 2009).

Circular 6/2009 strengthens the administration requirements of School Based Assessment portfolio tasks by providing a detailed process for each stakeholder. This means that the roles and responsibilities of an educator, principals, and district official are highlighted in the

circular. The circular further refers the stakeholders to Circular 73/2008 for disciplinary measures if the specified roles and responsibilities are not adhered to according to policy documents.

Based on these administration requirements, it will be interesting to find out from data what are educators' experiences regard these administration requirements.

Therefore the main dominant insights from data on policy documents are that:

There is a contradiction between policies. The NCS (2003) and the SAG (2008) are the two policies that stresses the inclusion of (CASS) in school based portfolio for integration purposes but the other four policies emphasizes the importance of the 25% mark obtained in School Based Assessment. Furthermore, Circular 73 of 2008 describe the disciplinary measures to be taken if the stakeholders do not comply on the implementation process of SBA portfolio tasks but said little about non-compliance on (CASS). In my opinion, the emphasis of the 25 % School Based Assessment is an element of bureaucratic accountability. This creates a serious problem because assessment for learning (CASS) losses its value and purpose, educators start to develop a mentality of teaching for mark purposes. The list of administration requirements (bolded above) explicitly confirm that School Based Assessment is bureaucratic in its nature.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter interprets and discusses the findings presented in chapter four and attempts to answer the three research questions of this study. The answers are derived from the educator's voices through interviews, the principals' voices through interviews and the Chief Moderator's report through document analysis, which in turn are triangulated with the policy documents and circulars from the National Department of Education that govern school based assessment.

It is important to re-state the critical research question in the findings in order to give clarity on the findings:

What are the primary challenges educators face in the process of compiling a School Based Assessment portfolio for FET Business Studies?

5.1. **On portfolio assessment:**

Similar opinions on the description and purpose of portfolio assessment: literature vs policy

Research literature on portfolio assessment discussed in this study demonstrated the importance of portfolio assessment by emphasizing more advantages than disadvantages. The significance is further depicted by policy whereby the composition of portfolio assessment describes more advantages than disadvantages. For example, the record-keeping or teacher portfolio as described by Batzle (1992) and the student portfolio as described by Barton (1997) is a requirement in the SBA (2009) and in circular 6/2009 which emphasize that both portfolios (learner and teacher portfolios) should be submitted for provincial moderation.
The advantages of portfolios also emphasize the idea of the national Department of Education in introducing school based assessment portfolio tasks which is to transform assessment in order 'to promote life long learning' (SBA, 2009: 3). This purpose promotes the culture of learning (formative assessment), thereby motivating learners by emphasizing learning (assessment for learning). However in practice, the findings reveal that:

Educators view SBA portfolio tasks as a tool for summative assessment when teaching the tasks. This is evidenced by all the educator respondents being excited about the 25% mark learners obtain before writing the summative assessment. Moreover, their understanding of portfolio assessment (including the principals 'respondents) is limited to 25% mark which learners benefit from.

There is a gap between the plan (purpose by policy) and the practice of SBA portfolio tasks by educators. Promoting life long learning is the primary purpose of SBA portfolio tasks, however, data reveals that they "give class activities that are close or even similar to those in the SBA tasks" (Educator D). Moreover, all the educator respondents emphasized the rubrics as crucial for preparing learners for assessment. This is indeed a gap because life long learning is equivalent to assessment for learning, which according to the findings is not what is implemented in learning and teaching, rather, preparing learners for summative assessment is what is practiced in class.

The SBA portfolio tasks are being implemented in both bureaucratic and professional mode (Darling-Hammond, 1990). The policy expect educators to promote the professional mode of implementation, hence it emphasizes lifelong learning. On the other hand educators act by following the bureaucratic demands of circulars. The circulars emphasize the disciplinary measures educators will account to if certain activities/processes are not properly adhered to. For example, the NPRR of 2008 leads educators into operating in a bureaucratic mode by charging them with misconduct if they record incorrect marks or give incorrect marks in assessment. The charge is further explained in circular 73/2008:25. It is for this reason that data shows that educators are teaching for assessment as a means of satisfying the needs of the bureaucrats. The most desired bureaucratic need to be satisfied by educators is excellent grade 12 results.

5.2. **On general assessment changes: formative vs summative assessment**

The confusion in educators' understanding in relation to the purpose of SBA portfolio tasks

There is evidence from the educator's interviews that educators see the potential of school based assessment tasks as preparing learners for the final examination. All the educator respondents describe their teaching and processes of conducting assessment as directed towards assisting learners to be ready for the end of the year exam. Most educators pointed out that they prepare and conduct school based assessment tasks so that learners can progress to the next level. These findings show that educators view portfolio tasks as a tool for assessment, i.e. summative assessment, when teaching learners and working with portfolio tasks.

The findings bring out the element of dominance of exam culture because educators seem to motivate learners through an emphasis on assessment (Hamp-Lyons, 2007). By so doing, educators seem to have missed the purpose and the intention policy had for SBA portfolio tasks as expressed in statements like, "one assessment cannot be totally valid and reliable…school based assessment focuses on the ongoing manner in which assessment is integrated into the process of teaching and learning." (LPG, 2008:35). Furthermore, "school based assessment portfolio should be used to develop learners' knowledge, skills and values." (SBA, 2009:3). These descriptions explain portfolio assessment as a tool for learning and formative thinking. On the same note, policy contradicts itself particularly on circulars. For example, the descriptions above from the LPG (2008) and the SBA (2009) promote formative assessment whereas at the same time the NPRR (2008) and circular 73/2008 promote excellence in the recording of achievement for summative assessment purposes.

Furthermore, policy contradicts itself by the moderation processes which are very bureaucratic, and this nullifies the intention of portfolio assessment tasks as promoting life long learning which an element of formative assessment is.

5.3. **On Bureaucratic vs professional Accountability:**

Confusion on the administration and decision making of School Based Assessment portfolio tasks: policy vs educators

Data from the interviews of both educators and principals (see appendix E & D) shows that educators have a problem with the SBA being prescribed and repeated every year by the department and will therefore would like to participate in the task design. According to data, the context is not about prescription of tasks or professional support, rather, it reveals how the needs of the bureaucrats are satisfied, that is operating in bureaucratic mode. This shows that the educator's usage of professional knowledge is limited by being channelled by policy demands. (Vandeyar, 2003&2005).

The demands made on educators (chief moderators reports) vs support needed: educators

In my analysis, I find both of the Chief Moderator's (reports 2008 & 2009) are bureaucratic in nature. The difference between them is that the 2008 report focuses more on professional responsibilities of the educators who are implementing the portfolio assessment. The bureaucracies occur in two ways: on the professional mode of educators and on the administration of SBA portfolio tasks by educators.

The first report display a focus on the professional mode of educators when working with portfolio tasks (see the reports on p75-77). Criticism is directed towards professional processes which educators use to implement SBA portfolio tasks. The second report emphasizes the administrative bureaucratic demands. Most criticism is focused on the administration of SBA portfolio tasks by educators. This pattern reveals that although both reports contain bureaucratic accountability, the second report is stronger bureaucratic emphasis. (The specific examples are elaborated further in 5.4.).

Moreover, to show that bureaucracy is the order of the day, principal respondents pointed out that a lot of criticisms have been imposed on educators and little is said about the hard work they put into school based assessment. They feel pity for educators, arguing that the paper work and the administration of school based assessment is too much for educators and at the same time they have to deliver content.

Bureaucratic accountability is further revealed by the principal's data. They emphasize the financial support they provide to educators such as travel allowances when they have to attend cluster and subject meetings. However, they mentioned nothing about the intervention or support they give to ease the workload (paperwork & administration) of school based assessment. These responses demonstrate that although principals have authority and power over the control of school in general, this (paperwork & administration) is beyond their control and indeed reveals the bureaucracy in the system.

5.4. **On curriculum Implementation & change**:

Challenges of SBA portfolio tasks

Data from all the respondents (educators and principals) highlighted the following as the main challenges: Lots of paper work, unnecessary administration, repetition and prescription of portfolio tasks. According to Hoadley & Jansen (2002) there is nothing wrong with a minimum amount of knowledge that all learners must know, the problem is "how things are prescribed" (p27). The 'how" in my opinion refers to non involvement of educators in the design of SBA portfolio tasks and the above mentioned challenges mentioned by all the respondents.

What is interesting is that all these portfolio tasks implementation challenges are bureaucratic in nature. All the findings discussed (5.1. – 5.5) reveal an element of bureaucracy because of how are they prescribed (Hoadley & Jansen, 2002). They demonstrate how the bureaucrats (policy) in this instance, influence the implementation of a curriculum by imposing bureaucratic accountability on educators about issues that educators are more knowledgeable on, for example, prescribing the tasks. The dominance of bureaucratic mode in the findings also demonstrates the context, that is, prescribing the tasks is not for professional support purposes but rather emphasizing the dominance of the bureaucrats.

The mismatch of expectations between educators and policy (chief moderators' reports) on usage of rubrics on school based assessment tasks.

As stated in 5.3. above, that the two reports are bureaucratic in nature, data on the chief moderator's report (2009) reveals the mismatch of expectations. The report shows that the majority of educators did not use the rubrics correctly. For example, the marking of the learner's work and the marking on the rubric did not correspond with the mark allocated. The comment depicts the bureaucratic mode of thinking on the side of the Chief Moderator. At the same time, the professional mode of thinking of educators is questioned in this instance. Furthermore, it unfolds and confirms that there are gaps in the implementation and practice of SBA portfolio tasks. In his own words the Chief Moderator refers to these administrative bureaucratic demands as "non-compliance" by educators.

Indeed this is a mismatch of expectations between the Chief Moderator and policy because the Chief Moderator's comment of "non-compliance" is not based on any policy document, how can he say educators are non-compliant? Circular 73/2009 that deals with disciplinary measures and misconduct in the administration of School Based Assessment made no mention of non-compliance on this matter. As a result, the Chief Moderators' report depicts bureaucratic accountability imposed on educators. Accountability in this instance is not a policy imperative but rather bureaucratically formulated in the form of a report from the Chief Moderator, who is a representative of the Government.

The above mentioned data confirms the following:

- There is a gap between planning and implementation of SBA portfolio tasks
- What is planned in policies does not always complement the practice in the classroom (Hoadley & Jansen; 2002).
- The policy suggests that educators can make a decision about learner's progress using (CASS), (SAG, 2008). However, in practice this is not the case; educators put more emphasis on formal tasks (SBA portfolio tasks) because they count for certification and promotion purposes. This claim is also confirmed in the case study by Venter (2003) that the new assessment practice (CASS) increases the workload of educators because of having too many formal tasks that are time consuming which make educators not to have sufficient time to do informal continuous assessment.

5.5. **On South African policy on Assessment**:

The contradictions between different policies

The findings from this section have been triangulated with the other findings from 5.1.-5.4. in this chapter. As a result only a few comments will be highlighted to avoid repetition.

From data in the policy documents the main finding was that prescription of tasks led to the bureaucrats (policy) causing confusion about the usage of annexures. For example, two annexures contains different information but serving the same purpose. This has caused confusion among educators not knowing which annexure to use. This confusion highlights that:

- The gap continues between planning and implementation of SBA portfolio tasks
- There was no mutual adaptation, hence confusion by educators.
- In most instances the process of learning and teaching SBA portfolio tasks is based on the bureaucratic mode of getting work done.
- The problem in curriculum change is how curriculum is prescribed, in this instance it means the problem is how assessment in grade 12 Business Studies, particularly SBA portfolio is prescribed. It is for this reason that it causes confusion among educators.

5.6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

A lot can be learned from the above-mentioned findings and the literature reviewed in this study. The following suggestions might help me as a Subject Advisor, my colleagues in the districts and policy makers for future planning of any curriculum implementation and change.

- **<u>On portfolio assessment:</u>**

Venter's (2003) research findings acknowledges the good practice in CASS by saying ''CASS has great value for education and has a good element, though the administration and workload needs to be re-examined" (p7). I agree with Venter (2003) by suggesting that the good element of SBA portfolio tasks of promoting assessment for learning be explicitly demonstrated in teaching and learning. For example, policy and practice should correspond. This will be possible if policy makers and district officials promote portfolio assessment as serving formative purposes. This means that the policies and the circulars should speak the same language of encouraging and instilling the culture about the value of formative assessment. The 25% mark should be mentioned less in the policies and circulars. This may eliminate gaps and any other barriers in the implementation of portfolio assessment because all stakeholders will be speaking in one voice, which is 'assessment for learning'. Moreover, the fact that literature sighted more advantages than disadvantages; it is an indication that indeed portfolio assessment has value in education. The roles of a learner, an educator and assessor are clearly outlined. It is for this reason that each player should play its role according to the expectation in order to have the desired outcome, which is 'promoting life long learning'. Reyneke et al (2010) emphasizes by recommending that "the benefit of SBA for learning are realized and teachers implement it as a process by which learners get to know what is expected of them" (p290).

If the above-mentioned can be exercised, the complicated findings by researchers on portfolio assessment will be minimal and ultimately be eliminated.

On general assessment changes:

I am of the suggestion that Hamp-Lyons (2007) view of listening to what educators are saying (their experiences) should be exercised in the learning, teaching and assessment process of SBA portfolio tasks. It is crucial not to just listen, but to act on the voice of the majority. For example, the findings revealed that the all educator respondents recommended their involvement in the design of the SBA portfolio assessment tasks. Acting upon such recommendations could lead into minimizing the confusions and contradictions experienced in portfolio assessment in this study.

Kelly's (2004) view of human development will be of great assistance in changing the mind set of educators. This will be possible through taking educators for training; professionally developing them on areas of assessment, e.g. the purpose, so that they can implement SBA portfolio tasks with the same mind set, which is assessing portfolio assessment for formative assessment purposes. In subject meetings, workshops and school visits with educators, subject advisors and district officials should encourage the formative way of assessment as a priority. With the knowledge acquired in the training process, they will be able to apply all the requirements of what is involved in doing assessment for learning (Shepard, 2000, Black, 2003). This is also recommended by Reynecke et al (2010) who argue that "the way forward is for the Department of Education to seriously invest in targeted, subject specific training and to continuously support in-service teachers" (p279). By so doing, "assessment will be used to maintain and raise standards as a source of data for curriculum evaluation to improve quality of provision as form of extrinsic motivation and a device for diagnosing the educational needs of individual pupils in order to plan the most effective curricular diet for them" (Kelly AV,1992:129).

Putting these ideas into practice by all role players in assessment (portfolio), the confusing ideas experienced such as using portfolio assessment as a tool for summative assessment will be reduced and as a result assessment for learning will serve its purpose.

On bureaucratic and professional accountability:

I am persuaded by Vandeyar's (2003) view that it is important to acknowledge the professional judgement of educators and allow them to operate in a professional mode when working with SBA portfolio tasks. The findings of this study showed dominance of bureaucracy imposed on educators. If policy makers and district officials can give educators more accountability on their profession, that is, the dominance of professional accountability in the learning, teaching and assessment processes, the chance of successful implementation will be increased. By so doing, this will be confirming Darling-Hammond (1990) and Fuhrman (1999) that we need to start moving away from operating in a bureaucratic mode and start concentrating on a professional mode of doing things. Moreover, "CASS will no longer be seen as something that must be done to satisfy the bureaucrats rather than a professional judgement" (Reyneke et al:2010: 287).

In this instance, the combination of professional knowledge and knowledge acquired in training will be of great significance in making the implementation of SBA portfolio tasks successful.

On curriculum Implementation & change:

The literature reviewed enlightened me that in any curriculum implementation and change, there is always a gap between the plan and the practice. Giving educators to implement SBA portfolio tasks in their own professional mode not necessarily deviating from policy will increase the chances on successful implementation of portfolio assessment. Policy must be followed, but it should allow professional judgement. Furthermore, once the implementation process becomes a success, policy makers and district officials will realize the value of educator's professional judgement and understand that "it is impossible to guarantee that teachers will understand and teach as intended" (Hoadley & Jansen; 2002:34).

By so doing, they will be exercising what Mc Laughlin (1976) refers to as mutual adaptation, making educators take full charge of the curriculum change and implementation process and if not, there is no way that portfolio assessment will serve the purpose for which it was intended.

On South African policy on Assessment

If policy makers can re-examine policies to ensure that policy documents and circulars disseminate the same message to educators confusion will be eliminated. If there is added information or an amendment on policy documents and circulars, policy makers and district officials should inform educators about the change in both documents. Reyneke et al (2010) argue that teachers ought to be empowered with, though understanding, a thorough understanding of policy and a clear vision of how it should be implemented (p289)". They also recommend that subject advisors should continuously assist educators in setting standards for effective teaching, learning and assessment.

Furthermore, the Chief Moderator's report should be compiled in line with policy to avoid usage of words which do not appear in any of the policies as findings are revealed. Moreover, the Chief Moderator should work in collaboration with the policy makers in promoting professional accountability on educators. His comments should be based on professional development of educators rather than commenting in a bureaucratic mode as the findings depicts.

In conclusion, in response to the three empirical sub research questions of this study, using the insights from literature reviewed, the findings are:

Research question 1: **What do South African Education Policies and Acts say about the requirements of SBA portfolio tasks in grade 12 Business Studies?**

- The Policy plan and implementation is not always the same, there is always a gap between plan and practice.
- There is more emphasis on the bureaucratic mode of implementing portfolio assessment of policy makers than on the professional mode of implementing portfolio assessment.

Research question 2: **What are opinions and perceptions of grade 12 Business Sudies educators regarding learners' SBA portfolios?**

- There is more emphasis on the bureaucratic mode of implementing portfolio assessment.
- Professional judgement in the process of compiling SBA portfolio tasks is ignored.
- The process of compiling SBA portfolio needs to be re-examined.

Research question 3: **How do the departmental feedback reports evaluate the quality of educators' work in compiling the grade 12 Business Studies SBA portfolios?**

- The moderator's reports are bureaucratic in nature.
- There is more emphasis on criticism than on professional support.

On the **critical research question: What are primary challenges in the process of compiling School Based Assessment portfolio for FET Business Studies?**

- Portfolio assessment does not serve the purpose it is intended for, which is formative assessment.
- In practice, in the learning and teaching process, the SBA portfolios serve a summative purpose.

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