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Exploring FET District Subject Advisor's understanding of the tension between formative assessment and summative assessment during the shift from the National Curriculum Statement to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Exploring FET District Subject Advisor's understanding of the tension between Formative Assessment and Summative Assessment during the shift from the National Curriculum Statement to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

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DECLARATION

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

_____

Mary Malia

_____

Date

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the District Subject Advisor's (DSAs') understanding of formative and summative assessment. DSAs understanding will play a significant role in assisting teachers to implement assessment in schools. The understanding of the existing disconnection between formative assessment (FA) and summative assessment (SA) will address the discrepancies between school based assessment (SBA) and the final examination mark. Much as DSAs understand different forms of assessment and their purposes, it was evident that there was shortage, or lack, of teacher development. It was observed that what DSAs know and understand in theory does not translate into practice in schools. The findings of the study suggest that the problem might be systemic. The role of DSAs is more one of monitoring policy compliance, than one of development and support.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANA:	Annual National Assessment
CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CASS:	Continuous Assessment
CIF:	Curriculum Information Meeting
CRA:	Criterion-Referenced Assessment
CTA:	Common Task Assessment
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
DSAs:	District Subject Advisors
FA:	Formative Assessment
FET:	Further Education and Training
GDE:	Gauteng Department of Education
GET:	General Education and Training
LPG:	Learning Programme Guidelines
LTSM:	Learner Teacher Support Material
NCS:	National Curriculum Statement
NPRR:	National Protocol on Recording and Reporting
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
NRA:	Norm-Referenced Assessment
SA:	Summative Assessment
SAGs:	Subject Assessment Guidelines
SBA:	School Based Assessment
SSIP:	Secondary School Improvement Plan

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Assessment has always been part of education. Tasks, exercises, examinations, set and marked for learners by teachers, are usually involved. There are, however, many different methods of assessment and different ways in which they can be used.

The National Curriculum Statement (grades 10-12) on assessment mentions two sets of assessment in school; daily and programme assessment. Daily assessment is continuous, and informal, while programme assessment is formal and graded. Daily assessment tasks are the planned teaching and learning activities that take place in the subject classroom. Programme assessment is developed for every subject. These are integrated in a school's assessment plan, which is made available to parents and learners during the first week of the first quarter of the year.

The programme of assessment consists of tasks completed during the school year, constituting 25% of the final promotion mark. It is apparent from the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) that daily informal assessment tasks in the classroom are the building blocks to formal and graded tasks that inform whether a learner is promoted, or completes grade 12 successfully. Formal Programmes of Assessment are recorded and included in the formal reports to parents and school management teams.

This is known to District Subject Advisors (DSAs) and teachers as School Based Assessment (SBA). SBA and Continuous assessment (CASS) are often used interchangeably by DSAs and teachers. For the purpose of this study, the focus was mainly on the interaction between formative and summative assessment. This study attempted to answer the following question, and aimed to highlight a new, deeper and more complex understanding of assessment changes during the shift from NCS to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

How do DSAs understand the tension between FA and SA during the shift from NCS to CAPS? Since 1990, and especially since 1999, there has been intense curriculum reform in South Africa (SA). South African teachers in the FET phase have been provided with Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAGs) providing guidelines for assessment in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) grades 10-12. Assessment in the NCS is an integral part of teaching and learning. For this reason, assessment is required to be part of every lesson and teachers are encouraged to plan assessment activities to complement learning activities.

Vandeyar and Killen (2007) highlight that many South African educators are either unable, or unwilling, to implement healthy assessment and teaching practices. An improved understanding by DSAs of assessment, and the tensions existing between FA and SA, has the potential to influence the teacher's implementation of assessment. Their fundamental role is to support teachers, and to ensure that national and provincial assessment policies are adhered to and implemented in schools.

This is a synopsis of the general problems and challenges raised by FET phase teachers, as I interact with them. My role as the District Assessment Official is to ensure that the tasks given to learners are of good quality, incorporating different levels of Bloom's taxonomy, and that the SBA delivered by the District at the end of the year is fair, valid, reliable and authentic.

Following are a few of the challenges faced:

Many resources are used for administrative work such as time spent on marking and recording; there is no time for teaching or providing feedback; much time is spent on SBA, which constitutes only 25% of the final promotion mark, and this leaves no time to focus on preparing for the end of year exam, which constitutes 75% of the final promotion mark; there is too much bureaucracy from the District office, and as a result teachers teach to test and for accountability.

Of all the problems raised, the issue around the discrepancies between the 25% formative and 75% final exam mark provoked the question raised in this study about the tension between formative and summative assessment. The National Policy on Recording and Reporting (NPRR) guides how 25% SBA should be formatively conducted to prepare learners for the end of year examination, and any time spent on it cannot be wasted time. Much as SBA tasks are used formatively, they have become mini-summative assessments.

When information is used for formative purposes it is never complete, as new information is always linked to, and integrated with, prior learning. Subject assessment guidelines and policies state that each and every learner ought to be given extended opportunities to improve performance. However, because the SBA mark obtained by the learner has been used for reporting, it is perceived inalterable. This is a substantial confusion, which creates tension between formative and summative assessment. A balanced system of assessment is important for an improvement in the quality of learning and teaching.

1.2. Problem Statement

Perie, Marion, and Gong (2009), state that summative assessment can be given at the end of the semester. This is where a difference in understanding can be seen, and probably where the confusion lies. School Based Assessment (SBA) constitutes 25% and is designed to be used formatively to prepare learners for the end of year examination. The examination constitutes 75% of final promotion mark. However, SBA is recorded and used for reporting at the end of each term.

Learners are therefore not always awarded adequate extended opportunities to continuously improve on School Based Assessment (SBA. The end of term mark is sometimes closed and not used formatively to provide feedback and inform teaching and learning. SBA is then perceived as only summative, and teachers tend to focus on teaching to test and accountability. SBA is not constantly used by teachers to diagnose where learners are in their learning, and then inform instruction as suggested by research.

The focus appears to be only on recording and reporting and adhering to submission dates at the District Office. These records, which require a lot of time to compile, are at times not even used to identify gaps and to improve learning and performance. This imbalance between formative and summative assessment creates tension and impacts on learner achievement.

Since the DSA's role is to support teachers in the implementation of FA and SA, their own understanding or perception of the tension that exists is crucial. This is especially true during the current shift from NCS to CAPS. Summative assessment is exclusively used for promotion, accountability, and grading purposes. The use of summative assessment in isolation is an indication of the lack of quality learning and teaching taking place. The system currently depends on the DSAs' adequate understanding of assessment policies, to support teachers.

1.3 The Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore how FET DSAs understand the tension between FA and SA during the shift from NCS to CAPS. It sought to explore the nature of the change during the shift from NCS to CAPS. The goal of the study was to determine the DSAs' own understanding of CAPS, and practices that guide the implementation of assessment. Implementation of policy poses many demands on DSAs in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which does not take place without interpretation, or re-creation, of policy. Interpreted versions of policy are created from personal; subjective frames of reference. Bowe (1992) elaborates on this:

> Practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers, they come from histories, with experiences, values, purposes and interests which make up the arena differ. The simple

> point is that policy writers cannot control the meanings of their texts. Part of their texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, etc. (p. 22)

1.4 Rationale

An interest in the subject arose due to current employment within the field of assessment in GDE as the Assessment District Official. The responsibility of this role is to ensure that national and provincial assessment policies are implemented by schools (Department of Education: Circular 41/2001). This study will provide a basis for improving the use of assessment to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning. If DSAs clearly understand assessment in the new CAPS, they are in a better position to support and guide teachers in implementing its assessment principles.

The report on the review of NCS states that the system was almost completely dependent on Subject Advisors to act as intermediaries between policy and implementation in the classroom. Assessment in the classroom is used to inform teaching and to improve learning. This is a relevant topic for research since the South African education system does not receive value for money. Although many resources are being channelled into the system, the desired outcomes have not been achieved. Despite the enormous efforts by teachers to teach during school hours, in the morning, after hours, over weekends and during the holidays, learner performance remains alarmingly poor. Clearly there is a need for all the stakeholders, particularly DSAs, to understand different assessment practices, and the tensions that exist around their implementation. The outcome of the research presented here has the potential to add value by filling this gap.

1.5 Research Question

How do DSAs understand the tension between FA and SA during the shift from NCS to CAPS?

1.5.1 Research Sub- Questions

- What is the DSAs' understanding of assessment?
- What is the DSAs' understanding of FA and SA?
- What is the DSAs' understanding of the relationship between FA and SA?
- What is the DSAs' understanding of the tension between FA and SA?
- What is the DSAs' understanding of assessment shifts from NCS to CAPS?

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Assessment has proven to be a very critical tool that is central in order to achieve the teaching and learning goals. However, different learning goals might require different types of assessment. The value of using a wide variety of assessment techniques can never be underestimated. Contemporary research into assessment has indicated that assessment is interwoven into teaching and curriculum planning. Despite the growing literature on assessment, educational change, policy change and teacher's practice in the classroom, relatively little has been done on the role of DSAs in the context of curriculum and assessment. The DSAs are based at the district office and are expected to support teachers in implementing assessment policies. The role of DSAs can no longer be overlooked, for policy change will not have the desired effect if they are not accompanied by an empowered and capacitated supportive process intended to strengthen implementation at the schools. This realization that DSAs are imperative as supporters and even trainers of teachers in the implementation of policy during the shift from NCS to CAPS, calls for their understanding of assessment during this shift to be ascertained. The purpose of the review is to establish the important links between existing knowledge and the research problem.

2.2 Bernstein's Three Message Systems and Theory of Framing

The study has been framed by Bernstein's **'three message system'** or '**triple message system'** of schooling (1996) referred to as curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The three are interdependent and inseparably interwoven to ensure that quality learning and teaching is taking place in schools. Teachers are guided on the specific content to teach in a particular phase or grade, which activities to teach and most importantly how to assess whether learning has taken place.

However, for the benefit of this study I will focus on assessment**.** According Bernstein (2000), in order for teachers to achieve quality education, they need to be acquainted with what to teach, whom to teach, and how to teach and how to assess. Lack of effective curriculum delivery results in serious tension between formative and summative assessment, mainly because teachers sometimes do not know what constitutes the work necessary to achieve good results.

Assessment remains embedded in teaching and learning, during the process of teaching and learning, the teacher makes an assessment of the learner's performance even if only intuitively i.e. when teachers are teaching, they are also assessing (Brown, 2004). Assessment and learning, as stated by Feuerstein and Jensen (1980) are seen as inextricably linked and not separate processes because of their mutually-influenced features. Classroom assessment should be the servant, not the master, of curriculum (Lambert & Lines, 2000, p. 178).

The link between assessment as carried out in the classroom, and learning and teaching has become convincingly crucial (Shepard, 2000). This relationship is often represented as a triangle:

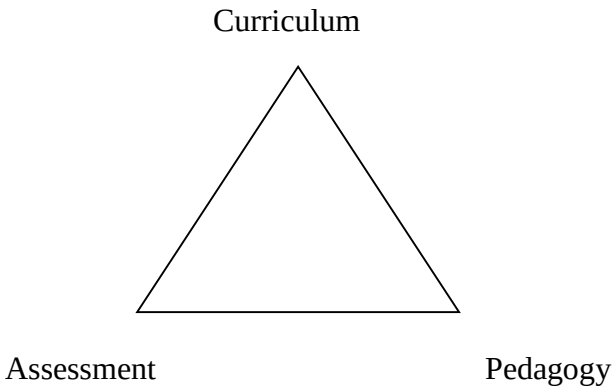


Figure 1: Bernstein's Triple message system

The interrelatedness of teaching, learning and assessment has the potential to substantially improve the quality of teaching and learning.

How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and principles of control (Bernstein, 1971). Policy developed at the macro level (National) is filtered to the meso level (Provincial and District) and to micro level (Schools) for implementation. DSAs' role is to ensure that schools adhere to policy as prescribed. These widely applied prescriptions are to be adhered to and implemented as documented, however Bourdieu's (1991) concept of the significance of background and cultural capital of both the learners and teachers in the classroom is useful in this study. Power and control tend to disempower DSAs and teachers to a certain extent, decreasing the autonomy in their functioning.

Bernstein's theory of framing (1971) further helped to frame this study. He explains the different ways in which knowledge can be organized in a curriculum.

Bernstein (2000), refers to framing as the control of communications in local, interactional pedagogic relations, including those between parent and child, teacher and pupil, etc. This concept supported the exploration, in this study, of not only the DSAs understanding of the disconnection between FA and SA, but also how strongly formal assessment was framed during the NCS vis a vis, how it is framed in the CAPS. Bernstein (2000) highlights pedagogic communication as one of the factors that contribute to a lack of meaningful mediation and poor results. Framing is used to determine the structure of the message system, pedagogy. It refers to the form of the context in which knowledge is transmitted and received (Bernstein, 2000). The principle of framing is the means of acquiring the legitimate message.

This study attempted to apply his concept of framing: In her review of the NCS, the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga, appointed a task team to identify the challenges and investigate how they can be addressed and develop a set of practical interventions to respond to noted challenges. One of the key areas noted for investigation was assessment, particularly CASS. However in responding to this challenge, CAPS is very silent. CAPS does not give a clear picture of how SBA will be administered in the area of formative assessment according to its (formative assessment) intended purpose. It is not clear as to how SBA should be done to ensure that the goals of formative assessment are also met. The short term intervention (Department of Education: *Curriculum News*, 2009) was mostly concerned with the discontinuation of portfolios, and this created confusion around whether SBA should be done

away with. CAPS does not seem to address this immediate challenge of juggling the disconnection created by this confusion. CAPS became part of medium and long term interventions, with the vision to achieve real improvement in learning within a five year period.

NCS findings records that a plethora of policies, guidelines and interpretations of policies often created discrepancies and repetitions. The framing was very weak with assessment policies being interpreted and implemented differently, hence the disconnection between FA and SA. In the NCS DSAs act as intermediaries between curriculum policy and implementation and yet their roles differ from province to province.

In responding to this challenge, CAPS streamlined and clarified policy by developing one curriculum and assessment policy statement for every subject. Streamlining and clarification of assessment policy has the potential to strongly frame policy. CAPS records a better planning indicating easy sequencing and pacing. In the GET, a new assessment policy was never developed to support the NCS. As a result, teachers and parents are confused about several aspects of assessment.

The framing is likely to be strong in the CAPS since during the CAPS training by the department of basic education (DBE) it was mediated that CAPS will simplify and streamline assessment requirements. The quality and status of assessment will be improved by conducting regular national assessments at grades 3 and 6 and replacing (Common Assessment Tasks) CTAs with Annual National Assessment (ANA) for all grade 9 learners in Mathematics, Home Language

and English. The ANAs which were meant for improving learner performance produced alarmingly poor performance as announced by the Minister of Basic Education.

NCS findings recorded complicated planning requirements and administrative burdens of teachers, making little contribution to improving learner attainment. This shows weak framing with a less coherent planning to improve learner performance. CAPS strongly frames planning which reduces teacher's administrative requirements and planning, allowing more time to teaching, however the autonomy of teachers in the classroom is still questionable.

Formative assessment ensures active learner participation, the goals for the lesson and the criteria to judge progress towards goals. The lesson goals may vary in detail for different learners according to their previous experience and progress in their learning. Strongly framed sequencing might leave some of the learners at the recognition rule where they achieve and deprive them the opportunity to acquire the realization rule of mastering and applying what they have learnt. The NCS envisages producing learners that among others are able to demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems.

Formative evaluation can assist the pacing of a lesson/text, in other words the teacher is able to follow the sequence but also ensuring that students acquire the legitimate text/message. CAPS documents align topics and assessments with available time allocations per subject. During the CAPS orientation/training it was emphasized that it is not changing curriculum but repackaging

and streamlining the content. As a result the allocation of time for each subject was left unaltered even though alignment of topics and assessment was done.

The evaluation and assessment of the content taught: It is very important to assess and evaluate students not only at the end of the lesson but also at every sequence of the lesson Bernstein (2000). Clarke (2005) states:

> In order formative assessment to take place, there is a need to be clear about the aims for students' learning-not just what we want them to learn, but how we want them to learn, so that they leave school with the desire to learn and with enough knowledge about how to do this if left to their own devices.

Even though the overview of CAPS talks about clear explicit criteria, it does not explicitly unpack the presentation of CASS/SBA. It talks about systemic evaluations that are meant to improve learner performance.

This section briefly explores curriculum changes in South Africa with the view to focusing on how assessment was framed over the years and how it is framed in CAPS.

Curriculum under apartheid (Nated 550): The education system was centralized and the management of curriculum was authoritarian and top-down, concerned mainly with implementation and compliance with assessment policies. According to Gultig, Hoadley, and

Jansen (2002) the education system was dictatorial, controlling and policies designed nationally by management and implemented by schools**.** Curriculum was completely content driven with very stringent prescription for sequencing of contents and scope of content. The relationship between the kind of knowledge formally codified in the school curriculum and everyday knowledge has been abandoned (Taylor, 1999). There was no recognition of prior learning and as a result, learners did not really make a connection between their prior learning and the new information mediated.

Content was strongly framed, controlled and defined by the teachers. Assessment was also very restricted (strong framing) and focused primarily on examinations and tests. Curriculum was examination driven, and emphasis was placed on end-of-year, summative assessment. There was a very strong top-down manner of mediating learning; policies prescribed at national level were cascaded down to provincial level/districts and then to schools. The classroom was more teacher-centred with less learner engagement and involvement.

Post-apartheid (Curriculum 2005): In 1998, the government embarked on a transformational outcomes-based education (OBE) with the most integrated form of curriculum (Taylor, 1999). Integration became the dominant design feature of C2005; the reason for this was an attempt to counteract the rigidities of the old, subject-based curriculum (Gultig et al., 2002). New assessment techniques and procedures were prescribed, such as formative and continuous assessment. Assessment became part of teaching and learning throughout the year and not only summative at the end of learning. Baseline and diagnostic forms of assessments were introduced, recognizing prior learning and everyday knowledge. Furthermore, C2005 discouraged the use of

marks and percentages, and introduced a number of complicated assessment requirements such as Common Tasks of Assessment, portfolios and research projects. There was a lack of content specification in curriculum and no clear guidance was given as to what learning outcomes were to be achieved each grade.

In 2000, the review of curriculum (NCS) aimed to strengthen and streamline content. The report of the ministerial to review the curriculum in 2000 gave a wide-ranging critique of the curriculum. Among other key challenges was the lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy. As a result the review committee proposed the introduction of a revised curriculum structure. Between 2003 and 2005 teachers were trained and oriented to the revised NCS. Content was controlled and defined by both the learners and teachers compared to C2005. There was a little bit of tightening in assessment laying emphasis on the application of formative assessment. Curriculum driven by assessment, and most prominence put on formative assessment during the year.

Much as DSAs and teachers were introduced to formative assessment, there were still a lot of policy prescriptions from the top compromising the teacher's autonomy to a certain extent. 2008 was the first year in which school students wrote a Senior Certificate examination based on the outcomes-based education. NCS review committee records that assessment has been a challenge for teachers ever since C2005, when an unnecessarily complicated approach to assessment was introduced. As a result, teachers and parents became confused about several aspects of assessment, from progression requirements to performance descriptors.

Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, explains in *Government Gazette no.33528* that A National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement is a comprehensive and concise policy document, which will replace the current Subject and Learning Area Statement, Learning Programme Guidelines for all subjects listed in the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12.* The minister further made an important statement to the effect that CAPS must not be seen as a new curriculum, but only as a refined and repackaged NCS Grades R-12. Hence it is imperative for implementers of CAPS to understand what it entails in order to achieve its intended purpose.

Comparison between Current and Amended NCS: Department of Education (DoE) 2011. Curriculum News: Improving the quality of learning and teaching strengthening curriculum implementation from 2010 and beyond.

Table 1

OLD / Current	**NEW / Amended**
Subject Statement supported by Learning Programme Guidelines (LPG) and Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG)	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)
NSC: A qualification at Level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF); and An addendum to the policy document, regarding learners with special needs	The policy document, National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the NCS Grades R – 12
Nine principles underpinning curriculum	Seven principles underpinning curriculum

The NCS Grades 10 – 12 consists of the Subject Statements and the Qualifications and Assessment Policy Framework.	The NCS Grades R – 12 consists of the CAPS and the policy document, National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the NCS Grades R – 12
General Education and Training (GET) Learning Areas and Further Education and Training (FET) subjects.	Subjects across the curriculum

CAPS is repackaging and streamlining content and assessment by illuminating to DSAs and teachers what, how and when to teach and assess. Each subject has a grade-by-grade demarcation of content and skills to be taught and learnt.

2.3 Views on assessment in general

According to Lloyd-Jones (1986), assessment lies at the core of learning. He examines the differences between evaluation, assessment, testing and examinations. He defines assessment as being incorporated in evaluation, testing and examinations. Hence the term assessment is generally used interchangeably with testing, evaluation and examinations but Butler and McMunn (2006) assert that the terms are not synonymous, and suggest that the key to using assessment well is to understand terminology.

They view *Evaluation* as judgment regarding the quality of assessment. "It is mostly a summative process whereas assessment, if done correctly, is both formative and summative" (McMunn, 2006, p6). In the same breath, McMillan (1997) views evaluation as making judgments about quality, how good or bad performance is. He claims that assessment does not happen by the way but, there are excellent reasons why it happens. He also declares that

assessment is an integral part of the learning experience and a very important tool for the teacher. But he argues and acknowledges that these tools of assessment can be flawed.

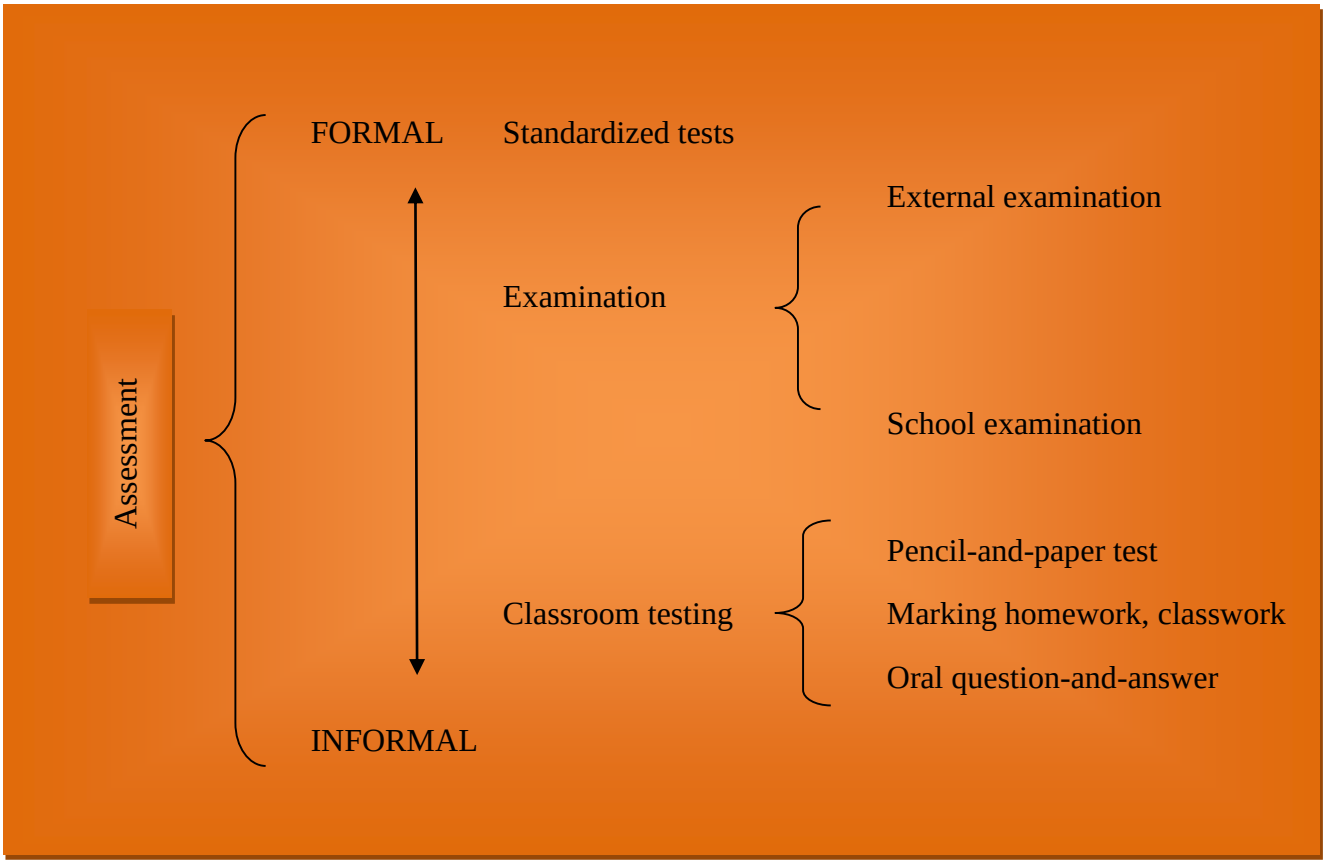
Most of the literature suggests that assessments should be a planned activity designed for a number of purposes. Fairbrother (1980), Deale (1975), and Lloyd-Jones (1986) share the same sentiments in their views about the concept of fitness for purpose. Lloyd-Jones (1986) emphasises that the reason for assessment should inform the relevant method and the type of information sought. These should be aligned to the skill or content area that is being assessed and to the nature of the subject. Fairbrother (1980) adds that teachers have to know what is it that they are trying to accomplish and be clear about what they want to do. Teachers should not teach for the sake of teaching, or for syllabus and work schedule completion.

Butler and McMunn (2006) admit that most teachers did not receive adequate training in assessment and so they apply methods that were used by their own teachers. They mention noticeable shortfalls in classroom assessment as failure to distinguish between various purposes for assessment: diagnostic, formative and summative. McMillan (1997) claims that whether done prior to, during or after instruction, the first step in any assessment is to clarify the specific purpose or purposes of gathering information (planning).

Deale (1975) argues that the test should have specific aim-if there are confusing/conflicting aims the test might be dangerously misleading. He underscores that a purposeless test is meaningless

and can yield results that are false, inaccurate and misleading. Once the aim is established, the test technique should be suitable for the purpose intended.

Diagram 2 shows the range of testing techniques for assessment of attainment (Deale, 1975)



Fairbrother (1980) laments that teachers tend to think that the purpose of assessment is for choosing one pupil rather than another, and that is why the techniques developed are essentially norm-referenced. Furthermore he mentions that learners are subjected to a lot of assessment

which is not used to inform teaching and learning but mainly used for recording and reporting. They have no further purpose of either remediation or identifying the challenges in the teaching and learning process, which is what formative assessment is all about.

Fairbrother (1980) echoes the sentiments of most of the literature: teaching and assessment are not separate and detached skills.

The term assessment has been misconstrued by some teachers as the end of term or year examination and not as a tool to aid learning. Assessment is a necessary part of teaching and learning and not only an end product. 'If the teacher is taking his or her job seriously he or she ought to know the current status of development of the children in his charge and to do this he or she needs to be equipped with a variety of techniques to make his assessments and to record and interpret the results, Deale (1975). Niyogi (1992) asserts that Assessment should be used not simply to judge how much kids know but to illuminate the nature of their knowledge and understanding in order to help kids learn

Formal assessment includes quarterly examinations that are written in the four terms, including preparatory examination in matric and end year examinations. These formal assessment tasks are recorded and also used for reporting.

Informal assessment take place during teaching and learning, can take place at the beginning, middle and end of the lesson. These informal assessment tasks may not be recorded; they are not

used for reporting. Continuous assessment (CASS) takes place throughout the course and contributes formatively towards the final examinations.

Formative assessment supports and monitors the learning progress. Informal and formal SBA forms part of formative assessment. Summative assessment is concerned with a final summing up, and is often used for grading, ranking and selection purposes. SBA may also be used for summative purposes at the end of the term but formatively throughout the year.

Lloyd-Jones's (1986) view is that assessment is often equated with tests and examinations and laments that this is misleading since neither is essential to assessment. Deale (1975) claims that testing does not exclusively mean a formal written test. There are many test techniques available e.g. quick and informal method-oral question and answer around the class. A test is a particular situation set up for the purpose of making an assessment, while an examination is just a large-scale test, or a combination of several tests and other assessment procedures (Lloyd-Jones, 1986). He claims that until we are clear about **why** we are assessing, we are unlikely to make the right decisions about the key questions **when**, and **what**, and **how**, and by **whom**.

The results of assessment without a purpose can then be misleading to both pupil and parents. Sometimes learners do well throughout the year and produce very low marks at the end of the year.

Deale (1975) is in agreement with most of the literature, that assessment is an important part of teaching, but emphasizes that adequate time must be allocated for doing it properly. If it takes a long time to make a test, then testing should be done on fewer occasions and done better; the opposite procedure (to test badly and often) is a waste of everyone's time. It is necessary to strike a balance. In-depth and systematic planning is needed to ensure strong validity. For a test to achieve its intended purpose, it should be planned. Unless a test is planned, it is unlikely this will happen.

2.4 Views on formative assessment, Summative assessment and standardized testing

In light of the changes noted during curriculum shifts, the following section will zoom into assessment as an all-embracing term. This section sought to distinguish between the three types of assessment; formative, summative, and standardized assessment/high stakes and their intended purposes. Wrigley (1986), claims that assessment is undertaken because we are interested in outcomes and standards.

In an attempt to explore the question asked here about the way in which FET DSAs understand FA and SA, the study drew from Perie, Marion, and Gong (2009): The distinction between summative and formative assessment was based on their intended purposes, audience, and use of the information. This study also attempted to determine whether there is a common understanding of summative and formative assessment between research and South African DSAs in FET phase. FA, SA and high stakes testing form the components or parts of the whole

assessment system. Harlen (2007) asserts the significance of the synergy and interconnectedness between them, and the impact each has on the practice of the others.

2.4.1 Views on formative assessment

Formative assessment: FA (Assessment for learning) is used by class room teachers to diagnose where students are in their learning, where gaps in knowledge and understanding exist, and how to help teachers and students improve student learning. Black and William (1998) defined formative assessment as one aspect of formative instruction. They argue that formative assessment cannot stand alone but must be a part of a whole system that uses the information from the assessment to adapt teaching to meet the learner's needs. Formative assessment is integral with the learning, and takes place throughout learning.

Formative assessment is used to inform the educators and learners about the learner's progress in order to improve learning. William and Black (1996) argue that in order to serve a formative function, an assessment must be able to close the gap between what the learners already know, and desired levels of performance. Black and William (1996) assert that formative cannot stand in isolation but must be part of a whole system that uses the information from assessment to adapt teaching to meet the learners' needs.

Clarke (2005) indicates that the role of the senior management team plays a significant role in the implementation of formative assessment in schools. She further warns that the senior managers should not only support the introduction of formative assessment, but be committed to

seeing it happen, giving time and resource support for extensive trailing and meetings. It is also important to draw up a new school policy on assessment reflecting formative assessment principles. SMT also need to ensure there are systems in place for new staff to be inducted into formative assessment.

Shepard (2000) makes a very strong statement that classroom assessment must change in two fundamentally important ways: the way that assessment is used in classrooms and how it is regarded by teachers and students. This study endeavours to explore DSAs understanding of FA and SA, since their core function is to support and help teachers in the more appropriate and fruitful way of implementation. The assessment is embedded within the learning activity and linked directly to the current unit of instruction.

Deale (1975) mentions continuous assessment as part of formative assessment and it is used constantly. However Capper (1996) views continuous assessment as an essential part of the teaching and learning process that operates at the classroom level. He argues that it is a general way that teachers can determine how well their students have learned what has been taught.

When the Black and William (1998) review of formative assessment was published, the aspect which received most media attention was their findings about teachers' feedback to students. Teachers should constantly give learners constructive criticism of their own work. "The most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement is feedback" (Hattie, 1992)

In her end note, Clarke (2005) reported that feedback from teachers applying formative assessment strategies has been overwhelming. Her research demonstrates that formative assessment makes a significant difference to students' progress- in their ability to be confident, critical learners, to achieve more than ever before and raising their self-esteem.

Lloyd-Jones (1986) also mentions feedback as an essential component of formative assessment. He asserts that assessment gives the teacher and learner feedback, information about whether the learning objectives are being achieved. Feedback is more useful if it is given immediately.

Deale (1975) claims that feedback helps the teacher to teach more efficiently. Feedback can help to address clear the misconceptions and correct them. Teachers can use feedback more formatively to help learners learn better.

Assessment is no longer used only to give an overall progress report at the end of the year or for promotion. Black and William (1998) warn that teachers have to recognize that shifting focus to formative assessment may require a change in teaching and may require creative thinking from teachers. It is used to establish what learners already know, to diagnose the nature and cause of the learning barriers experience by a specific learner. It monitors and supports the process of learning and is used to inform teachers and learners about the learner's progress in order to improve learning. Formative assessment is a dialogue between teacher and students that

encourages reflection on their learning, the teacher uses information about on-going learning to adjust teaching so that all learners have opportunity to learn (Harlen, 2007). Both the informal tasks and SBA are used formatively to give feedback to learners that provide advice on how to improve or move forward.

"Every teacher who wants to practice formative assessment must reconstruct the teaching contracts so as to counteract the habits acquired by their students" (Perrenoud, 1991). Shepard (2000) links formative assessment to scaffolding expressing the dynamic process of formative assessment in which supportive adults or classmates help learners move from what they already know to what they are able to do next. Scaffolding and formative assessment are strategies that teachers use to move learning forward.

2.4.2 Views on summative assessment

Summative assessments: SA (Assessment OF learning) is given at the end of the semester or school year to evaluate students' performance against a defined set of content standards. Summative assessment in classrooms can also be based on informal and formal activities; these assessments enable the stakeholders to tell how much a learner has achieved by a certain stage. They could also be teacher-administered end-of-unit or end-of-semester tests that used solely for grading purposes. Summative assessment gives an overall picture of a learner's progress at times when teachers have to give an overall progress report, such as end of term or year. It is used to report to others about the achievements of a learner. Harlen (2007) groups the purpose of summative assessment into two groups, namely: 'Internal' and 'External'. The department of education in the National Protocol of Recording and Reporting (NPRR) stipulates that formal

tasks must be recorded and be used for reporting every term. This term reporting creates an impression that this assessment is summative and may not be used formatively.

Summative assessment is concerned with the final summing up. The judgment it makes is for the benefit of people other than the learner. It is strongly established in most schools. It is entrenched in the public examination system. Great importance is attached to it by parents, employers and the public in general.

The essential characteristic of summative evaluation is that judgment is made about the student, teacher, or curriculum with regard to the effectiveness of learning or instruction, after the learning or instruction has taken place. Research has estimated that teachers spend more than one-third to one-half of their class time engaged in one or another type of assessment activity (Stiggins & Conklin, 1992) however the tendency is to focus on tasks and tests that report what a child is able to do at a certain point in time, summative assessment.

2.4.3 Views on standardized testing

The intended purpose of standardized testing such as ANA in South Africa, amongst other things is to provide the Department of Basic Education (DBE) with important information that will help the Department develop and review policy, and support teachers . However, the attachments of consequences to such tests have led to them being called high stakes tests. The comparison of schools in terms of learner performance has led to some schools being labelled underperforming. Standardized testing and high stakes testing are sometimes used interchangeably; however for the purpose of this study standardized testing will be used. McMillan (1997) claim that

standardized testing has been criticized over the past years as having few positive implications for teaching. He asserts that they are here to stay, despite their criticism of encouraging teaching to the test.

According to Deale (1975) Standardized tests are designed to measure some particular aspect of attainment, personality, intelligence, etc. standardized means that the test has been widely tried out under controlled conditions and the scores analysed so that the results of an individual on the test can be related to some 'normal' or 'average figure'. They are take a long time to make because the test has to be given to a large number of people in order to work out norms; analysis has to be done to make sure that it gives rise to stable and consistent scores.

He makes a point that where the content of the test is important (it must relate to the school subject) there is a serious risk either that the test will be unsuitable for use in many schools because of different syllabuses or that the school's syllabus will be constrained in order to fit the test.

Deale (1975), flags the danger of standardized tests as the possibility of distorting the results by deliberately teaching for the test e.g. the risk lies in the temptation to alter the programme to suit the test, the risk is much greater where such tests are used in external examination. The teacher using a standardized test in a school must make a conscious effort not to let it influence his or her teaching.

One other aspect he highlights is that in order to standardize marks between groups something must be common. A common test can be used as a moderating instrument to standardize assessment between different groups. Butler and McMunn (2006) backs the above observations that standardized tests are large scale tests that are used to collect information about student learning and are administered in the same way across many classrooms so that the data can be used for making comparisons. They further bring in the issue of controlled conditions that any test can be standardized if the conditions under which it is given are controlled and if identical scoring mechanisms are used for each group who takes the test. "Tests are of 'high stakes' when the results are used to mandate actions that affect stakeholders in education or simply when the public perceives the tests to be of high importance" (Butler & McMunn, 2006).

Deale (1975) hastens to caution that if it is not possible to arrange a common paper, then steps must be taken to ensure that teacher's standards of marking are similar. According Capper (1996) evidence has shown that teachers and students devote great amounts of time to teaching and learning those topics they expect to be on the test. Because of the high stakes attached to standardized tests, teachers are likely to teach to test and for accountability. David (2011) argues that standardized tests serve an administrative, rather than an educational, function.

Shepard (2000) cautions against the pervasive negative effects of accountability tests, and the extent to which externally imposed testing programs prevent, and drive out, thoughtful classroom practice. Jansen (1999) says,

> Educators' conceptions of assessment are likely to be immune from the influences of the system within which they work. When the system emphasizes content, conformity, and high-stakes summative assessment, as it did in South Africa during the apartheid era, it is not surprising for teachers to believe that assessment is primarily about learner and school accountability.

In essence this is saying, even teachers or DSAs who have a clear understanding of the purposes of different types of assessment may not be able to practice as such because of the environment in which they work.

It is clear from the above definitions that each assessment component is used to gather and collect information to be used for a particular purpose.

The reason for development of the standardized tests in CAPS was to respond to the crisis of poor performance, the department of education introduced the standardized tests to address the problem with the intent of improving performance. Despite the criticisms levelled against the high-stake tests, their value of standardization and benchmarking still remains huge. David, (2011) makes contrasting statements about how these tests can be used; firstly, she shows the positive side that if standards are demanding and tests accurately measure achievement of those standards, then curriculum and instruction will become richer and more rigorous.

Standardized tests are usually national or state-wide standardized achievement tests. Falk, & Drayton (2004) say if a test is 'standardized' it has set rules for administration, such that everyone taking the test receives the same exact directions and has the same restrictions of time

and resources i.e. all examinees take the test under reasonably equal conditions, with the expectation that standardization affords all examinees a fair and equal opportunity. Most standardized achievement tests are norm-referenced, in that an individual's performance is compared to other test takers.

Findings from a study conducted by Falk & Drayton (2004) suggest that districts chose markedly differing strategies for raising scores on standardized tests, and that the approaches taken influenced the nature of pedagogical and curriculum changes in the classroom. They also found that standardized testing has resulted in an emphasis on increased coverage of disparate topics, narrowing the range of instructional practices, increased focus on test preparation, and increased use of drill and practice.

Taylor (2008) makes reference to the term 'internal accountability systems' used by Elmore, Abelmann and Fuhrman (1996) to signal the processes through which the school organizes effective curriculum delivery. According to the findings by Elmore et al (1996); in all successful schools in their sample there were strong internal accountability systems in place. Harlen (2007) makes a very interesting yet heavily loaded statement that being accountable means being responsible for one's actions and being able to explain to stakeholders why and how certain things were done or why they were not done. She says that people can only be held accountable for actions or outcomes over which they have control. In the context of student' learning, teachers can only be held accountable for what they do in the classroom and for what learning opportunities they provide.

Accountability emanating from standardized has a potential to draw the attention of teachers to focus on maximizing of outcomes assessed. This is also likely to lead teachers to teach to the test and for accountability, compromising the quality of learning and teaching.

Taylor (2008) refers to the study by Chisholm and her colleagues that much time is spent by teachers during school hours completing forms which appear to serve little purpose and other bureaucratic compliance, such as formalistic planning documents, and extensive assessment reports on the performance on individual learners. Darling-Hammond (1989) states that bureaucratic accountability does not guarantee results, it concerns itself with procedures; it is effective only when procedures are known to produce the desired outcomes, and when compliance is easily measured and secured.

The DSAs role is to support and monitor that there is compliance and that provincial and national policies are adhered to. This concern was one of the challenges documented in the report of the NCS review team, hence subsequent to that, portfolios were discontinued (2010). Darling-Hammond (1989) suggests the bureaucratic conception deprives the teachers the opportunity to use their cultural capital, skills, knowledge and other expertise they possess to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum planning is done by administrators and specialists; teachers are to implement a curriculum planned for them. Inspection of teachers work is done by hierarchical superiors, whose job is to make sure that the teacher is implementing curriculum and

procedures of the district. The tension created here is trying to strike a balance between meeting the state's goals and the needs of individual students.

2.5 The disconnection between FA and SA

Black and William (1988a) write:

> Tension between FA and SA arises when teachers are responsible for both functions: there has been a debate between those who draw attention to the difficulty in combining the two roles and those who argue that it can be done and indeed must be done to escape the dominance of external summative testing. (p. 19).

In light of the above distinctions made between FA and SA, drawing from literature, this section will present how the two create either synergy or disconnection. Harlen (2007) takes a different approach by listing characteristics of FA and SA and shows how the two roles can be combined in practice and the differences, difficulties or challenges turned into advantages or how to create synergy between them. This implies that much as FA and SA are intended for different purposes, how the practitioners understand and present them will result in either a tension or synergy. The DSAs understanding under study has a potential to inform their supportive role either exacerbating the disconnection or creating a synergy.

Formative SBA constitutes only 25% of the final exam mark and summative final exam mark constitutes 75%. DBE records learners performing extremely well during the year and failing dismally at the end of the year. The good performance during the year sends a wrong signal to all stakeholders including the learners themselves. These results may deceive learners not to put more effort in their studies. DBE is sitting with a lot of appeals year in year out after issuing out results. Parents do not understand why children are failing when they have been doing well during the year.

Lack of effective curriculum delivery result in serious disconnection between formative and summative assessment, mainly because teachers do not always know what constitutes the work necessary to achieve good results. Gipps (1999) claims that more recent trends show assessment being used to control and drive curriculum and teaching. Here the issue is control, through centralization of curriculum and/or assessment.

Falk and Drayton (2004) found that standardized testing has resulted in an emphasis on increased coverage of disparate topics, narrowing the range of instructional practices, increased focus on test preparation, and increased use of drill and practice. Does this contribute to the tension between formative and summative assessment? When the stakes are high, teachers might focus on teaching to test and for accountability as a result the intended purpose of formative assessment to improve and impact on the quality of learning and teaching might be compromised. When a comprehensive assessment program at the classroom level balances formative and summative student/achievement information, a clear picture emerges of where a student is relative to learning targets and standards. 'Assessment for learning' complements

'Assessment of Learning' (Clarke, 2005). One enables learning, while the other measures learning. Summative assessment (assessment of learning) should be aligned with the goals of formative assessment (assessment for learning) and used at the end of a unit learning.

In South Africa the standardized tests are developed by the Department at the macro level, then cascaded down to DSAs and then to teachers at the micro level. Johnson and Strange. (2007) found that the work of school and district leaders has changed dramatically and rapidly, due to the demands of external accountability. Schools rarely improve in response to mandates that call for uniform compliance.

Compliance is therefore going to be measured by the outcomes and not the inputs made by the teacher. Today's accountability pressures require public schools to meet the ambitious performance improvement goals in all schools, regardless of their past performance or current capacity to improve (Johnson et al. 2007). In order to increase effectiveness of teaching and learning in every school, district office (DSAs) are required become architects of improvement.

The DSAs understanding of the current assessment system has a potential to improve assessment practices in schools and to improve learner performance. Because of the hierarchical nature of the system, the DSAs often pursue policies that are disconnected from student performance, are unrealistic given available resources and are in conflict with one another. This implies that DSAs support focuses more on what policy dictates e.g. if the Subject Assessment Guidelines states that three formal SBA tasks must be offered and completed for term two, failure to adhere to

those stipulated time frames is viewed as non-compliance. The teacher is then deprived the opportunity to give feedback to the learners, the learners often do not engage in expressing and communicating their understanding and their skills, most importantly the teacher cannot adjust teaching so that all learners have the opportunity to learn.

Harlen (2007) brings a different perspective that there is no hard and dividing line between FA and SA and that rather than a dichotomy between FA and SA there is a dimension of assessment purposes from the purely formative to the purely summative. This implies that a formative assessment can be used summatively, and a summative assessment can also be used formatively. This suggests that an assessment should be defined by the purpose it is intended for.

Bloom (1971) looks closely at the purpose of both formative and summative assessment, the overlap that exist and the relationship. He views the main purpose of formative assessment as determining the degree of mastery of a given learning task and to pinpoint the part of the task not mastered. The purpose is not to grade or certify the learner; it is to help both the learner and the teacher focus upon the particular learning necessary for movement toward mastery.

On the other hand, he views summative evaluation as directed toward a much more general assessment of the degree to which the larger outcomes have been attained over the entire course or some substantial part of it. The communication to the student of information about his progress is the very essence of formative evaluation. Summative evaluation of learning can be used in this fashion also. He makes a statement that can be a study on its own that: 'providing

feedback to students is a legitimate purpose of summative evaluation of student learning, even though formative evaluation focuses on this intent'.

He claims that since there is some overlap between formative and summative evaluation with regard to subject matter, it is likely that they their test results will be related. There is a relatively high relationship between the performance of students on two or more formative tests and their performance on summative tests given several months later. He claims that it is possible to predict the results on summative tests several months in advance. It is also possible to anticipate results on summative tests while the instruction and learning process is still going on. He furthermore makes a non-committal statement saying that if the teachers and learners desire it is possible to change the forecast.

In conclusion, Butler and McMunn (2006) underscore that no inferences should be made that one assessment is 'good' while another is 'bad', or that one type of assessment stimulates higher order thinking more than the other. They acknowledges much overlapping and that any given assessment activity may fall in into several groupings. Formative assessment is flexible informal and idiosyncratic while summative assessment is fixed, formal and standardized for all students, McMillan (1997).

2.6 FA and SA in South Africa

Van der Berg and Shepherd (2008) makes a statement that continuous assessment (CASS) is formally becoming an increasingly important part of the evaluation of South African students at the matriculation level, with the weight attached to CASS in the final matriculation mark having been increased to 25%. Clearly, SBA has become the focal point of classroom practice. The quality of teaching and learning envisaged by formative assessment discussed above is becoming increasingly compromised. DSAs advisors seem to be focusing on monitoring that all SBA tasks are completed and not necessarily on how they are administered and used. As a result SBA appears not to be serving the intended purpose of formative assessment. To strengthen this claim, Van der Berg and Shepherd (2008) state that CASS is the form in which students get feedback on their performance during the matric year, and such feedback is likely to have an important impact on their preparation and effort for the matriculation examination. One of the oldest findings of psychological research is that feedback facilitates learning (Thorndike, 1931, cited in Hammond, 2005).

Learners need to receive continuous constructive feedback that outlines where their strengths and areas of developmental needs are. This will improve the learners' meta-cognition skills. Weak assessment in the school system could mean that students are getting wrong signals. This may have important consequences for the way in which they approach the final examination which constitutes 75% weighting of the final promotion mark. This result in serious discrepancies between CASS (SBA) and the examination mark. SBA, if not used formatively may present the results which are not a true reflection of learner performance. Formative assessment (SBA)

constitutes 25% and summative assessment (final exam) constitutes a bulk of 75% exam mark of the final promotion mark 100%. The bulk of marks allocated for the final exam may create a perception that it is more important than SBA. In focusing on the summative final exam, practitioners may miss on the opportunity to use SBA formatively as a vehicle to improve leaner performance.

The study conducted by Van der Berg and Shepherd (2008) evaluates the quality of the school-based CASS, compared to the externally moderated matriculation examination using Umalusi data on CASS and matric exams for a number of subjects for 2005 as well as the two previous years. It was however disturbing to note the widening gap between the mean CASS and examination marks in different subjects in the findings. Van der Berg and Shepherd (2008) argue that in the South African context, poor quality CASS, which is set by the teacher at school level, may not support the learning outcomes set by the National curriculum standards for matriculation. This again reflects the relationship between assessment, curriculum and pedagogy and the negative impact that may result from lack of interrelatedness. This also shows how the quality of a task/test set for learners can have impact on their overall performance.

Van der Berg and Shepherd (2008) continue to claim that poor quality assessment give students wrong signals that could influence their learning strategies, their effort for the final examination and their planning for the future. Hence CASS marks are not perceived as a good predictor of examination marks. The study explores the DSAs understanding of the tension between FA and SA that which may influence the teachers' understanding and implementation. The findings of the study by Van der Berg and Shepherd (2008) showed widening gaps between CASS and

examination marks in the years 2003, 2004 and 2005. Worsening examination marks were indicative of an increasing disparity between what is being taught and assessed within the school, and what is being tested in the examination. These discrepancies between SBA and the final examination mark show the tension that exists between the two. A learner who has done well should stand a better chance of doing well in the final examination.

2.7 Assessment changes in response to policy.

Lloyd-Jones (1986) underlines that assessment is part of the learning process and must be planned and not handled only at the end of a course or unit. Changes in assessment methodology will have curriculum repercussions-for example, on time tabling, resources, lesson planning and teaching methods. He asserts that changes in curricular objectives or methods are made; there will be a need to change the assessment. In his view assessment can either shape or misrepresent your curricular objectives.

Capper (1996) suggests that testing can be used as a powerful and cost-effective policy tool to improve educational quality. He also suggests that educational policymakers can use tests as a policy tool to improve teaching and learning. His view is that assessment can be used to communicate with, and provide feedback to, all stakeholders about the knowledge and skills that are important to learn, and the way in which they should be taught.

2.8 Reasons for poor assessment practices in SA

From the case study they conducted, Reyneke, Meyer and Nel (2010) claim that problems with assessment in South African public schools persist. The disconnection between formative and summative assessment attest to this claim. In 2008 thousands of candidates taking South Africa's first ever National Certificate Examination could not receive their end of year results because of a failure to report school-based assessment (SBA) tasks. SBA constitutes 25% and it is a requirement for National Curriculum Statement for a learner to be resulted. This disconnection resulted in some of the schools failing to submit their learner's SBA. Reyneke et al(2010) conducted a cross-sectional survey with a random sample from statistical services Department of the North West University (Potchefstroom campus) in 2006.

The focus was on: why is SBA not serving its purpose of enhancing learning and preparing candidates for the high stakes external examinations? The question suggests that the purpose of SBA is to enhance learning and to prepare learners for the final examination. If SBA is conducted formatively, it is likely to enhance learning and teaching and therefore improve performance. Here are some of findings by Reyneke et al. (2010):

Only 15.38% of the participants regularly made use of formative assessment. This implies that majority of learners could not always rely on timely feedback for improvement.

Participants complained that CASS, in its current form adds heavily to the workload of teachers and learners. One of teacher's responses was that the choices of assessment tasks are too many

and that the number of tasks could be reduced in order to rather use one task to assess more than one outcome.

Participants expressed concern about the fairness and reliability of alternative forms of assessment, the fact that learners cheat. CASS is not always a true reflection of learners' performance.

Teachers cannot understand the weighting of CASS, why it makes out such a small percentage of a learners' promotion mark: "So many tasks to assess and eventually all this work only counts 25% of the final promotion mark"; "CASS takes up a lot of teaching time, I do not find it worth all the effort, seeing that it only counts 25% of the final mark". Ignorance of the various types and purposes of assessment was confirmed by the participants' response to another question regarding the type of assessment used to assess whether desired outcome(s) has/have been reached. The findings from the survey by Reyneke et al. (2010) explain the reason why there is so much tension between formative and summative assessment.

2.9 Conclusion

Literature in this chapter explained formative assessment as the key to achieving the goal of teaching and learning. It also explained how assessment can be used to monitor the progress of

learning and to inform future instruction. Of importance was a message that teachers cannot assess for the sake of assessing and that assessment should be a planned activity with an intended purpose. The purpose of summative assessment as summing up was explained and the importance of the relationship between formative and summative assessment mentioned. The two should not work against each other but for each other. Policy has the potential to either enhance the use of formative assessment or diminish the use thereof. If done correctly, is both formative and summative. Teachers should not teach for the sake of teaching, or merely for syllabus and work schedule completion.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology employed in this study. The study employed the mixed method of research, which incorporates a quantitative method/approach using questionnaires, followed by a qualitative method using focus interviews, to explore FET DSAs' understanding of the tension between FA and SA during the shift from NCS to CAPS.

A mixed method design, employing the quantitative approach followed by the qualitative approach, was used. An advantage of this approach is that it can show the results (quantitative) and explain how they were obtained (qualitative) (Schumacher & McMillan, 2010). By using both approaches, the strengths of each method were incorporated, and the deficiencies addressed.

Firstly, a pilot study was conducted amongst 6 DSAs, and data was collected using questionnaires. The data was analysed, and the results used to assess the validity of the questions asked. Upon assessment of the validity of questions, a survey was conducted among 70 DSAs, using questionnaires to collect data. It was initially intended that the analysis of this data would be completed later, and the results written for publication. However, the richness of the data necessitated analysis, which contributed immensely to the overall findings of the research. After the collection of data using questionnaires, focus group interviews were conducted.

The following aspects of the research design are presented: research method, sources of information; method of data analysis; validity, reliability and generalizability; dissemination of results to possible audiences; and exploration of its strengths and weaknesses.

3.2 Research Method

3.2.1 Quantitative Method: Questionnaires

Data was collected using questionnaires presented to a specifically identified group. Close questions were used to collect data from a larger population of 70 FET DSAs from the five districts. The researcher used the following two methods to collect data: self-mailing the questionnaires to all the 5 district offices, or contact the respondents by email asking them to complete an attached questionnaire. Following up with email can be easy, inexpensive and the responses are likely to be quick, but respondents could select whichever method was most convenient. Each sampled respondent was allocated an identification number, which also appeared on the questionnaire and the addressed envelope to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and enable tracking of responses.

Respondents were assured that the coordinators of the five districts would not have access to their responses, nor would they be made aware of unreturned responses. Participant consent forms specified that participation was voluntary.

Questionnaires were hand delivered to and collected from the target population. Questionnaires were also addressed to specific individuals with a carefully written, dated consent letter requesting his or her co-operation, guaranteeing confidentiality and voluntary participation, and explaining the purpose of the study. They also provided the researcher's name and phone number. A return envelope to ensure anonymity was also included. Two carefully structured follow up reminders were sent to those not responding, one about a week after the questionnaire was sent, and the second a week later. The researcher gently asked for co-operation again, and offered to send another questionnaire.

The grouping of items followed a logical pattern. In order to avoid feelings of hostility in respondents, the questionnaire began with neutral questions and placing sensitive questions in the middle. Questions on the same topic were placed together, with a short introductory statement.

The first part of the questionnaire focused on assessment in general, then FA, SA, the tension between FA and SA, and finally, policy-NCS-CAPS. A provision was also made for general comments. The respondents completed the questionnaire without assistance. The management plan outlining time frames was compiled to ensure that questionnaires were completed within a reasonable amount of time and retrieved in good time for analysis.

A Likert scale of closed questions was used, in which the respondents were offered a choice of five alternative replies. A Likert scale is a format in which respondents are asked to strongly

agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree, or perhaps strongly approve, approve, and so forth. For the purpose of this study the format included: Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. Oppenheim (1996) records that closed questions are easier and quicker to answer; they require no writing; and quantification is straightforward. However, the disadvantage is that participants cannot express themselves and therefore may be irritated if they feel they feel the choice of answers fails to do justice to their own ideas. Despite this, closed questions remained the best option in this case since it was possible to ask more questions within a specified length of time, and thus accomplish more, at less expense.

3.2.2 Qualitative Method: Focus Group Interview

The focus group was chosen because it is a methodology that reflects the dynamics of individuals. In this study, focus groups were also used as a supplementary source. Whilst Morgan (1997) argues that a focus group serves as supplementary source of data that relies on some other primary method, such as a survey, and is used as a source of follow up data to assist the primary method, the use of focus group as a primary source provided access to a wide range of issues regarding the DSAs' views and understanding of formative and summative assessment. Morgan (1997) says that it is the researcher's interest that provides the focus, whereas data themselves come from the group interaction. Khan and Manderson (1992) assert that focus groups are formal. They are likely to involve inviting participants to the discussion and they also stress the distinctive role of the moderator.

Among the other criteria that have been offered as a distinguishing feature of focus groups are their size and the use of specialized facilities for interview (McQuarrie, 2011). Focus groups usually include 4-12 participants (Basch, 1987; Krueger, 1988). In this study; two groups were selected; firstly a pre-test or pilot test with five FET DSAs for different subjects was conducted before the study, which later no longer served as a pilot, but became part of the study. Pilot work can be of the greatest help in devising the actual wording of questions and it operates as a healthy check (Oppenheim, 1996). A pilot study with purposively selected participants, who will not form part of the study, was supposed to precede this data collection.

Ambiguous questions were clarified, and this provided with detailed information not predicted or anticipated. It was a purposively selected focus group of five Life Sciences FET DSAs from the five districts, for the main study. The rationale behind the initial selection was to focus on a group of DSAs offering the same subject, even though questions asked would not be subject specific. However, only three DSAs out of five turned out in the latter group. Since the guide did not include subject specific questions, which would disadvantage the former group, the researcher decided to combine the two groups and make one focus group of the eight DSAs, including the pilot. Each participant was given an identification code, which they mentioned every time they responded to ensure confidentiality, anonymity and to allow responses to be tracked. However, in Chapter Four, the identification numbers have been replaced by pseudonyms to make the report more reader-friendly.

Morgan (1997) states that focus groups provide access to forms of data that are not easily obtained from participants' observations and open-ended individual interviews. A focus group

was chosen as a qualitative research method because it yields large amounts of data in a brief period of time; gives rise synergistically to insights that may occur in individual interviews, and "[adds] depth, detail and meaning at a very personal level of experience" (Patton, 1990, p. 18). Morgan (1997, p. 6) defines focus groups as "a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher". According to Vaughn et al. (cited in Puchta and Potter (2004, p. 6), a focus group usually contains the two following core elements:

- A trained moderator who sets the stage with prepared questions or an interview guide, and
- A goal, which is to elicit participants' feelings, attitudes and perceptions about a selected topic.

The researcher's involvement with the participants stimulated interest, and accelerated discussion. It was possible to engage them fully, and therefore obtain in-depth information. The focus group is a form of qualitative research; it is a group interview, although not in the sense of an alternation between a researcher's questions and the research participants' responses. Instead, the reliance is on interaction within the group based on topics that are supplied by the researcher who typically takes the role of a moderator (Morgan, 1997).

Focus group interviews are more of an interaction, dialog, or conversation between participants in a non-threatening and relaxed environment. Krueger's definition (1994, p. 6) supports this assertion: "a focus group as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment." Morgan (1997, p. 6) affirms that focus groups are more than just interviews probing questions and soliciting answers:

"the hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" Morgan (1997, p. 6).

According to Mouton and Marais (1988), the qualitative paradigm is based on induction, holism and subjectivism. A qualitative research strategy is inductive in that the researcher attempts to understand a situation without imposing pre-existing expectations on the environment. Drawing from Huysamen (1997), it may be said that the qualitative method is used to obtain in-depth information, discover underlying motivations, feelings, values, attitudes and perceptions. This enables the researcher to gain a richer understanding from the study. "The researcher needs to suspend, or 'bracket', any preconceived ideas about the phenomenon to elicit and better understand the meanings given by the participants" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p346). Mouton and Marais (1988) state that:

> The aim in qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework for a subject to speak freely and in his or her own terms about a set of concerns which the researcher brings to the interaction and whatever else the subject may introduce.

It is significantly different from quantitative research. Scott and Morrison (2007) highlight the strong links between qualitative and interpretative approaches. It is emergent and interpretive in nature, whereas quantitative research is based on observations that are converted into discrete units by using statistical analysis, which is a more positivist position. The focus group is a form of qualitative research; it is a group interview, although not in the sense of an alternation between a researcher's questions and the research participants' responses. Instead, the reliance is

on interaction within the group based on topics that are supplied by the researcher who typically takes the role of a moderator (Morgan, 1997).

Focus groups were chosen as a qualitative research method because they result in large amounts of data in a short amount of time; give rise synergistically to insights that may occur in individual interviews and "add depth, detail and meaning at a very personal level of experience" (Patton, 1990, p. 18). In qualitative research, words are the data. Maykuk and Morehouse (2002, p. 18) sum this up when they say that "words are the way that most people come to understand their situations". In Chapter Four, the study seeks to find patterns within these words, and analyse them.

Neuman (1997, p. 328) cautions that the flexibility of qualitative research should not lead researchers to believe that this type of research is an easy option. Although there are no uniformly fixed guidelines, qualitative research requires rigour and dedication. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explain qualitative data analysis as a primarily inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. The categories may come from the researcher, the participants or the literature review.

3.3 Source of information and data collection

This study was narrowed to the Further Education and Training (FET) District Subject Advisors in one of the regions in Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). The aim of the research was

fully discussed with the DSAs to secure cooperation and also to allay any fears and to avoid misunderstandings. As per the initial plan, the researcher employed the survey research method using a questionnaire instrument to measure the variables. Data was collected using a questionnaire on a purposively selected audience, after which focus group interviews were conducted. Morgan (1997) asserts that focus groups provide access to forms of data that are not obtained easily with participants' observations and open-ended interviews with individuals.

The study employed focus groups as an interview technique using open-response questions to obtain data on DSAs' understandings of the disconnection between FA and SA during the shift from NCS to CAPS. The interview was semi-structured; it was guided by the researcher/moderator. The interview guide covered the most important or key questions the study asks. These included general questions about assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment, the tension between them, and the shift from NCS and CAPS.

The interview logistics used were borrowed from those discussed by McMillan and Schumacher (2010). The date and time for the interview was convenient for the respondents in each group. The duration was 1½ hours or more. This helped ensure that respondents were not subjected to very long interviews that might compromise the validity and reliability of the data collected. Follow up questions that were not included in the interview guide were added to the guide. Audio recording was employed as the principal means of capturing information, and permission to use audio recording was obtained beforehand. Audio recordings provided a verbatim record and could thus increase the validity and reliability of data. Notes were also made as the discussion proceeded, in order to enhance the reference source.

Prior arrangements were made with participants to ensure that the venue was convenient and the environment would allow them to respond naturally and honestly. The setting for the interview was therefore non-threatening and comfortable. The site selected for the interview was quiet and allowed recording of the session and was accessible to all participants. The boardroom was furnished with a table for participants and a moderator was placed at one end of a table to produce a U-shaped seating arrangement for the participants, to maintain control over each individual's level of participation. It was noted that focus groups can be quiet costly and require that the researcher be skilled in group processes and qualitative research. The researcher went to the site of the interview to minimize the financial constraints on the part of the respondents.

The purpose of the interview was made clear at the beginning of the interview. To put respondents at ease the session began with a broad and open question. Open-ended questions were used to encourage respondents to express their attitudes, emotions, ideas, sentiments, suggestions or opinions in their own words. More difficult questions were asked in the middle of the interview (Morgan, 1997). As a result a rapport was created, which allowed the researcher to contact the respondents at a later stage, if further questions arose during the interpretations and analysis of data.

3.4 Method of data analysis

Data analysis is defined as a means of organizing and interrogating data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others, Hatch (2002).

When analysing quantitative data, a programmed spreadsheet was used. The responses of all participants, per question, were captured, and so provided a summary of the total number of responses per question (see Appendix 8). The data was then translated into graphs which presented the broader views of participants per question. Questions sharing the same viewpoint were plotted on the same graph.

When analysing qualitative data either an inductive, open-ended approach or a deductive, structured approach can be applied. Grounded theory was more relevant to this study; the findings are grounded in the information that was collected during the focus group interviews Scott and Morrison (2007). Scott and Morrison (2007) state that research findings are grounded in the information that is collected in the field and becomes the key data of the study.

Analysis was inductive in the sense that it began with particular pieces of evidence, which were brought together into a meaningful whole. In the analysis the verbal responses of the group were reviewed, and recurrent patterns, similarities, and differences sought. Hatch (2002) argues that qualitative researchers do not begin with a null hypothesis to retain or reject. In Bogdan and

Biklen's words, "you are not putting together a puzzle whose pictures you already know. Qualitative data analysis involves an inductive dimension, moving from specifics to generalizations. You are constructing a picture that takes shape as you collect and examine the parts" (1992, p. 29). According to Hatch (2002), findings generated from this process are grounded in the data. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) warn that vast amount of data can seem overwhelming.

Firstly, the way that all participants responded to each question was examined, and the data was organized into separate, workable units by bringing some order or structure to it. Shank and Brown (2006) refer to this procedure as sorting findings and discoveries. At this point it was possible to identify consistencies, differences, overlap of information, and interrelatedness and connections of questions.

Secondly, units of meaning were identified by placing them in brackets, according to the interview guide. This procedure is referred to as organizing the findings by Shank and Brown (2006).

Thirdly, notes or comments related to the units were jotted down, and an attempt was made to group similarly themed comments or notes.

It became evident that data analysis is the most mysterious and most difficult part of qualitative research, as highlighted by Hatch (2002). Wolcott (1994) presents three options for organizing and presenting qualitative data: description, analysis and interpretation. Transcribing was also difficult, time consuming and tedious. An assistant was hired to complete this task.

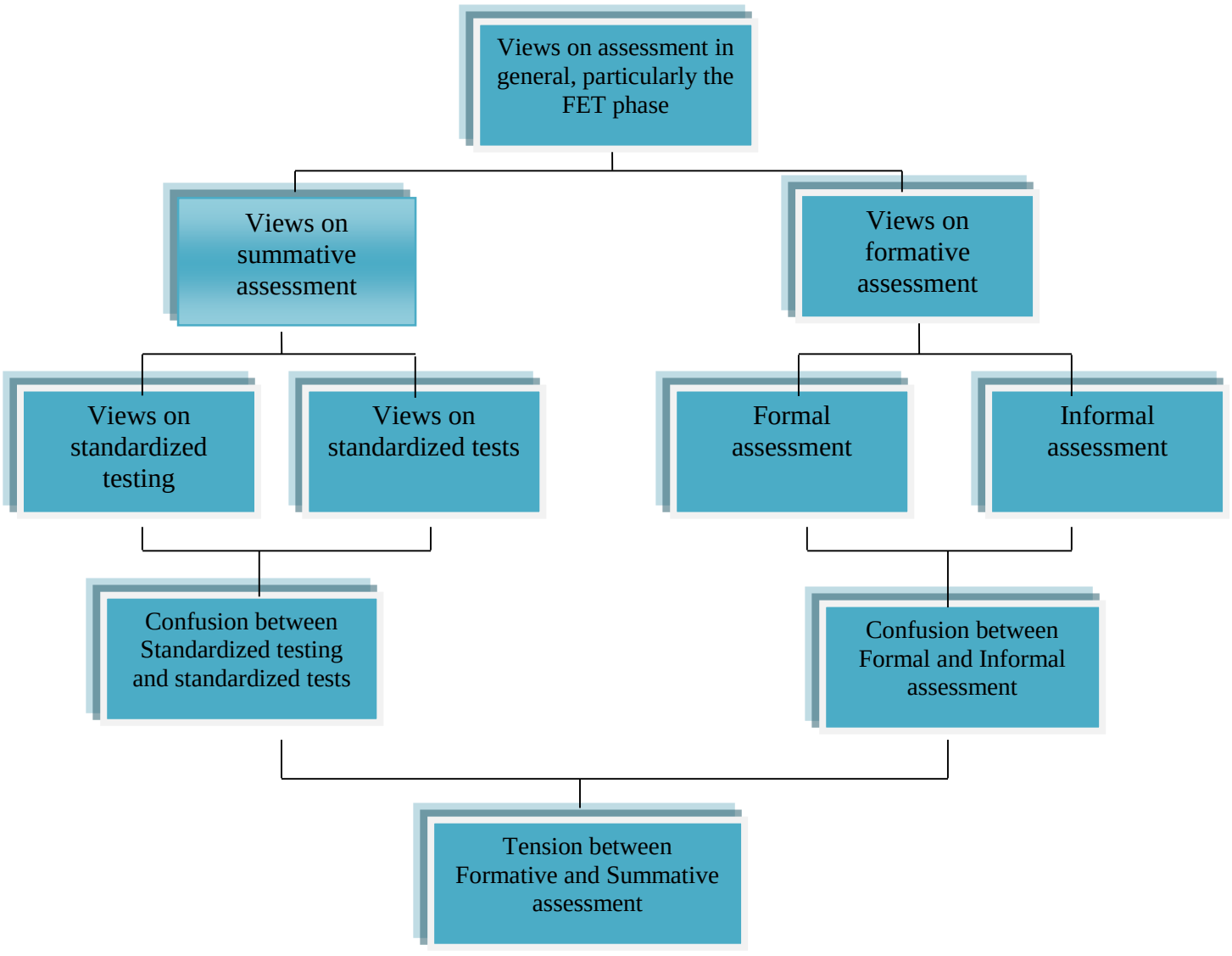


Diagram 3: Organizing, coding and analyzing data

3.5 Validity, Reliability and Generalizability

Care was taken in the formulation of questions for questionnaires and those of the focus group interview to keep them relevant to the aims of the research, as well as to the specific questions that it intended to answer. However, Nyamathi and Shuler (1990), in a discussion of validity in focus groups, argue that they have high face validity, due to the credibility of comments made by participants during discussions. This credibility is important in determining the acceptance of findings, and seems to be the only form of validity that can be claimed for focus groups.

3.6 Dissemination of results

The results will be shared publicly with all interested parties. The only part of this educational research that is not public will be the actual identities of participants. Ethical research strives to protect the identity and privacy of participants.

3.7 Strengths and weaknesses of research design

The following have been identified as the limitations of the study:

Because of the size of the sample and the purposive selection, the findings of this study cannot be generalized, but may offer insight and avenues for broader scale research. The conditions under which these findings were compiles were controlled. The use of closed questions deprived the researcher of the opportunity to probe, and limited the ability of the participants to express themselves. Misinterpretation of a question can go unnoticed; however provisions was made for

the participants to comment, in order to minimize this limitation. This may have compromised the validity and reliability of data. It was difficult to obtain all the responses. Scott and Morrison (2007) argue that focus groups are open to the criticism that findings may be limited to group members. The limitation is that the results cannot be generalized to the rest of the population and therefore trends can neither be predicted nor prescribed. Because focus groups are controlled and driven by the researcher's interests, there is uncertainty about accuracy of what participants say. Interacting in a group may also influence what each individual will contribute to the group. Participants may not be comfortable to discuss certain issues in a group situation.

Morgan (1997) argues that there is a very real concern that the facilitator, in the name of maintaining the interview focus, will influence the group interaction. Krueger (cited in Morgan, 1998, p. 49) highlights the certain limitations of, or possible problems with, focus groups, namely:

- distractions;
- too few or too many participants; in this study there were fewer than expected. This was as a result of other competing priorities;
- lack of equipment; and
- the problem posed by the size of the room in which an interview is conducted.

The following have been identified as the strengths of the study:

In both the questionnaires and the focus group, the strengths and advantages outweighed the limitations and disadvantages. The quantitative method, which made use of questionnaires, did enlighten the extent to which DSAs understand the disconnection between FA and SA during the shift from NCS to CAPS. Both methods supplemented each other and produced rich data in an attempt to answer the main question in this study.

Closed questions are easier and quicker to answer; they require no writing; and quantification is straightforward, Oppenheim (1996). With closed questions the researcher was be able to ask more questions at a given length of time and accomplish more with less expense.

Unlike individual interviews, in focus groups the researcher is able to access a number of people within a short space of time. This saves time, especially when all participants honour their interview appointment

"The major advantage of focus groups is their capacity to produce concentrated data on precisely the topic of interest", states Morgan (1997, p. 13). The topic of assessment seems to be of great interest to the DSAs and this is supported by the depth of knowledge they have provided and the passion with which they welcomed new knowledge from others. The qualitative study that made use of a focus group interview, was able to uncover the nature of the DSAs' understanding of assessment.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with participants or when accessing archival data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Strict ethical measures were adhered to during this study, as outlined by the Faculty of Education and the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee.

The researcher was familiar with about seven of the focus group members. She and they attended the quarterly provincial curriculum information forum (CIF) together, and some were colleagues interacted with on a daily basis. The most crucial ethical consideration that had to be considered was confidentiality. One of the disadvantages of knowing the participants personally is that they were more likely to say what they think the researcher wanted to hear, and avoid relating the facts.

Full disclosure regarding the aspects and purpose of the study was made to the participants. Permission was requested to conduct research from the five districts. Informed consent where participants indicated their understanding of the research was obtained. The participants were not compelled or coerced to participate. Participant's details will be kept confidential and no names will be mentioned in the report or any of the data, only pseudonyms will be used. Participants were informed that any raw data will be destroyed within three to five years of this project. Only the research supervisor involved, and the WITS examination board, and any person nominated as an external examiner, will have access to data elicited from participants as part of this study.

Among others the form included the ten informational points suggested by Johnson and Christensen (2008):

1. Purpose of the study
2. Description of the procedures and the length of the time needed
3. Description of any risks or discomforts that may be encountered
4. Description of the benefits from the research
5. Description of an alternative procedure or intervention that would be advantageous
6. Statement of extent of confidentiality
7. Names of people who might be contacted about the study
8. Statement that participation is voluntary and participants can refuse to participate at any time without penalty
9. Statement of the amount and schedule of payment for participation
10. Statements written at no more than an eighth-grade level

3.9 Conclusion

The quantitative method making use of questionnaires illuminated the extent to which DSAs understand the tension between FA and SA during the shift from NCS to CAPS. The qualitative study making use of focus group interview uncovered the nature of their understanding. Both methods did indeed complement and supplement each other to produce rich data in an attempt to answer the main question.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussions of the findings in both the focus group and the questionnaires. The discussions have been structured in a way that aims to provide the reader with an understanding of DSAs' views on assessment; their understanding of formative and summative assessment, the relationship between formative and summative assessment, DSAs' response to policy and practice with regards to curriculum, policies (NCS and CAPS), standardised tests and common assessment, school based assessment (SBA), their views on teacher's planning of assessment implementation, the role of DSAs in developing, supporting and monitoring assessment implementation. The discussions also refer to the disconnections and contradictions in the implementation of assessment.

4.2. DSA's understanding of assessment

4.2.1 Introduction

This section describes DSAs understanding of assessment in general. It focuses on the following key issues which emerged during group interviews and the questionnaires: understanding of SA, understanding of FA, the relationship between FA and SA, the extent to which DSAs value matric examinations and results.

4.2.2 Summative Assessment (SA)

The discussions around SA were impossible without contrasting it with FA and formal assessment in particular. The following key words were traceable throughout the DSAs' understanding of SA: **judgmental**, **interpretations**, **summing up**, **progression**, **product**, **summary**, **destination**, **formal**, **afterthought**, and **promotion**.

SA was also referred to as an end product and explained as an assessment **of** learning. Dannies said in his contribution:

> "Ehh well my take on this is that umh when the curriculum was developed assessment was perceived to be the integral part of curriculum so which means assessment ehh was not supposed to be an afterthought. Assessment is used you know during teaching and learning, is not the end product but it is used from the beginning throughout until the end.

The analogy of a journey, afterthought and a destination by Dannies was explored again and discussed at length and it became the frame of reference for other DSAs throughout the discussions. The impression made was that, the destination in one's journey is vital since it will determine the route, direction, path and means to be taken to reach the aspired destination, goal, aim, objective or target. It is important to know where you are going in order to embark on the right journey. This was supported by Cecilia when she made use of GPS coordinates to express

the view that it is important to have travelled well on the journey to a destination. It is important to take stock of the journey:

> I liked the process versus pressure analogy, whereas if formative is a process and a journey then summative is when you get there you just figure out your GPS coordinates to see how well you have gotten there. So it really is just taking stock of the journey (ya).

DSAs view SA as the form of assessment administered after completing a concept or a topic. SA is preceded by teaching, learning and all other processes mentioned during the discussion of FA. It was therefore explained as a summary at the end of a lesson, term and year. It was also explained further as assessment of learning. Some of the examples of SA tasks mentioned were tests and examinations. The expression 'sum up', from summative, was mostly used to explain SA.

SA, according to George, has a lot to do with decision making about whether the learners should be promoted to the next grade or not. Here a judgment is passed, whether a learner has achieved the set outcome and has met and satisfied the promotion requirement as stipulated by policy, or not. The general view was that SA decides the fate of the learner. Dannies said,

> I want to concur with ehh latter speaker and the former one to say summative is for purposes of promotion, basically, to pass a judgment, whether this learner has attained the outcomes or not whether this learner is competent or not, it's for summative and this is the one that we give at the end of a year or a week or a month or a section, it's summative. So basically for purposes of deciding the fate of learner ya of making a

> judgment ya you actually have to come up with a judgment to say this learner has attained or has not, (has achieved) or has not, (is promoted).

It was mentioned that SA also involves reporting of learner performance to learners, parents and other stakeholders. End of year matric examinations were cited as perfect examples of SA. Matric examinations are written at the end of the year and the results are reported to learners, parents and other stakeholders. The results are also used to decide the fate of the learner, including whether the learner may be admitted to university or not. This is evident in George's contribution below:

> A summative assessment determines the end where you report to people, this is the situation so it is at the end. You call your examination grade 12 examination that is some kind of summative assessment.

According to Meisie, SA is summing up for the purposes of promotion and progression. SA is viewed as the form of assessment that entails formal assessments. DSAs are of the opinion that SA in its nature is formal. DSAs displayed a common understanding of what SA is but held disparate views on whether the decision made or product achieved can be used formatively or not. This claim is backed by the contrasting discussions made by Minky and Meisie below. Minky illustrated by demonstrating that SA is used for decision making and that once the decision is made, there isn't much that can be done. A destination has been reached and the journey has ended. In her contribution, she portrayed SA as the form of assessment that is sealed off, that does not allow for further engagement. She said,

> But can we say it is judgmental. But to me it's judgmental. Summative is judgmental because like we have said it's only that the time that you receive your results, there is nothing that you can do to say let me go and write, again maybe I score eh a much better mark at that moment there is nothing that you can do but in the future yes you can, but a decision has been made.

A decision is made whether the learner proceeds to the next grade or not. She further points out that no intervention can be made. However, Meisie suggested that SA can still be used for intervention. She used a practical analogy of a person who has gone for a driver's license test:

> Suppose someone wants to be a driver, when they are doing their driving lessons with the instructor, eh suppose they are at a gradient, starting from a gradient and then the car rolls back. The instructor is going to inform them that if you roll back, you're going to fail. So your car must not roll back. That is formative assessment but on the day for driving test, if the car rolls back, what will the 'what is he called? Eh the traffic officer', say you failed. So that is the difference between the formative and the summative. If they failed, they failed that test but there can be another chance for the learner to do another tests, another summative test at a different stage but they can't do it there and then and say no now that we have told you, if it rolls back you have failed, you can try again let's see if you can do, they can't do that because now it's summative tests.

Learners can still be given an opportunity to redo and improve; the difference between SA and FA is the timing. They can repeat the grade or if it is Grade 12 they can reregister, apply for remarking, and write supplementary examination. Meisie, unlike Minky, was of the view that SA is not a sealed off exercise and that it can still be used formatively. The learner is either

promoted or progressed to the next class or failed and retained in the same grade. The learner can only re-register the following year or repeat the grade. SA is explained as a summary of what the learner has been assessed on during FA.

It was also indicated that SA should not include completely new things; it should address the content that was taught throughout the lesson, topic or year. This made an impression that assessment and curriculum are related and that FA is supposed to be evident in SA. They claim that SA should be preceded by FA and not vice visa. Different questions might be used to test different skills. Minky said:

> So to me it's a summary of the assessment or formative assessment that was given to the learner throughout the year or during a particular time.

It was also indicated that it is important to analyse the results of SA even though it is explained as a destination. Priya noted the following:

> Eh the other way is also to analyse the summative assessment because if you look at the activities that are in the summative assessment and then you bring them back to formative assessment and they can get the alignment of the two, then I think it will be clear for them.

The results of SA can be used to inform future teaching and learning. Here DSAs provided insight into feedback obtained during the road shows conducted at the beginning of the year. The feedback was perceived to be used to inform future teaching.

The DSAs shared that road shows are a platform that is created to provide feedback about the performance of learners in the previous end of year grade 12 examinations. They are normally led by the internal moderators. Internal moderators of different papers in different subjects are given slots to present and lead the discussions of the reports on the overall performance of learners. The reports discussed cover performance trends, overviews of learner performance in all papers, and diagnostic question analysis of all papers written. Priya continued:

> Evidence used in summative assessment, yes it can be used. I see with the feedback that teachers get at road shows about how learners eh tackle certain questions, which questions they answered well, what can be done to improve. That type of feedback, it helps teachers to go back and teach in a different way and in that way, that feedback is not assisting those learners, but it's assisting the next generation

Errors and misconceptions were discussed and suggestions for improvement were made per question/topic. Priya's comments below shows how SA is used formatively:

> Uh I'm just going to add on what they have said. I mean the evidence helps in redressing the mistakes eh maybe eh that were done or the omissions to close the gaps.

Internal moderator's reports are compiled in consultation with markers under the leadership of senior/ deputy chief and chief markers. They are normally compiled and distributed in advance to DSAs to make copies and distribute to teachers during the road shows.

The question of whether assessment is always judgemental showed the difference in views as to how assessment was perceived as a measurement tool. 44% disagreed that assessment is always judgemental with 16% strongly disagreeing. 18% were on the fence, and another 18% agreed, whilst only 4% strongly agreed. The findings broadly suggested that assessment is not always seen as judgemental. There is however evidence of a low level of certainty.

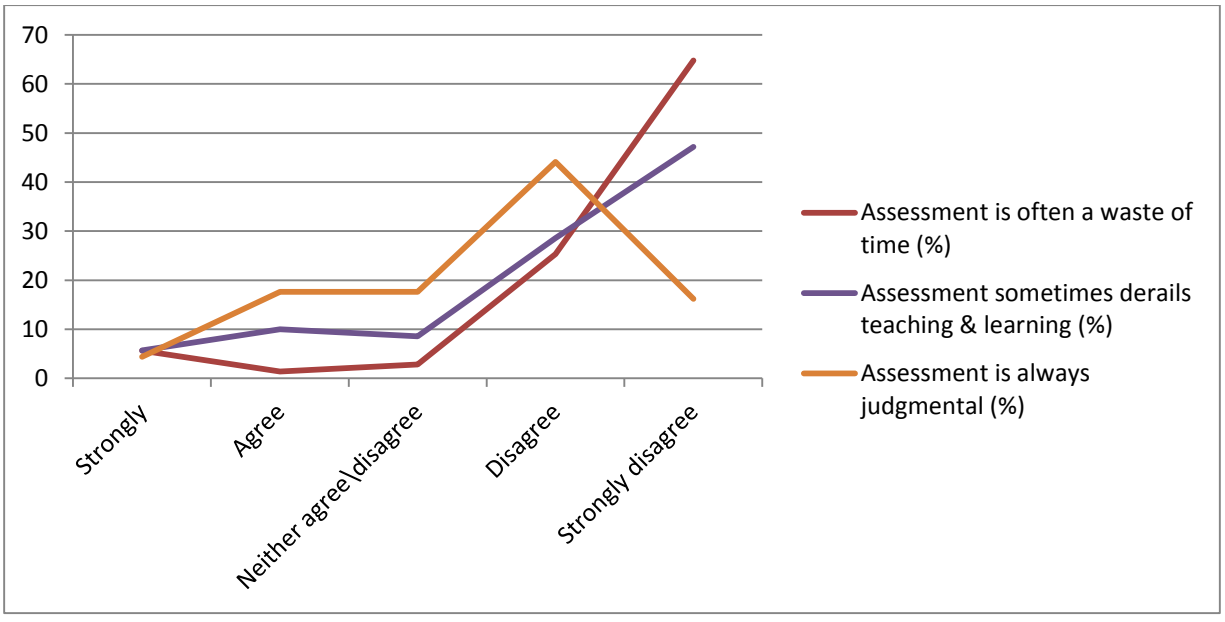


Figure 1: relationship between assessment, teaching and learning in practice.

During the discussions, Minky explained why she saw summative assessment as judgemental;

> Summative is judgmental because … it's only that the time that you receive your results.

Whilst DSAs acknowledge that assessment results are not only used for the purposes of admission and placement in tertiary education, they view grade 12 assessment as the last leg of schooling which plays a significant role in preparing learners for tertiary education. They held different views on whether assessment in the FET Phase prepared learners adequately for assessment in tertiary education. The DSAs argued that matriculants are not able to do well in assessment in tertiary institutions. They argue that there is not always alignment between the FET phase and performance in tertiary institutions.

> Eh mm another gap with in that regard is also the level of assessment of the skills and knowledge at grade 10, 11 and 12 and what to be expected to be assessed at tertiary. That's a gap between tertiary institutions and high school level, that is the other reason why our learners, after completing even if they come out distinctions they won't cope at tertiary level (basically because there is no alignment) exactly.

However, Minky suggested that the type of school a learner attends determined the skills, values and attitudes required in tertiary education.

> To me, that will depend on the type of school that the learner attends.

Even though some DSAs view assessment as a tool to prepare learners for tertiary learning, Minky pointed out that the gap between attainment at school and performance at tertiary institutions is the reason why learners are not necessarily successful in tertiary institutions even though they obtained distinctions in Matric.

During the discussions, DSAs further mentioned that SA is administered after a topic has been completed. They indicated that the amount of work covered in SA was greater than that covered in FA. The impression made was that in SA one can assess the work covered based on a considerable amount of content, as opposed to FA. With FA, interventions and expanded opportunities can be explored. This is explored further in the following section. SA is also used for interpretations and judgments about the progression and promotion of learners. SA passes a judgment and decides the fate of the learner, whether the learner is competent or not, whether the learner has achieved or not.

SA is a sum up towards the achievement of a goal. The purpose is for progression and promotion. It is assessment of learning. The participants believed that once a decision is made at this stage nothing can be done. Some, however, argued that there is something that can still be done. In the example of a learner at a driving school made above, the instructor will teach the learner driver that the car must not roll back on a steep and if it does roll back during the training, the learner is given an opportunity to retry without any consequences. This is FA, but if the learner fails during testing, a decision is made that he/she has failed. The learner driver will be given an opportunity to try at a later stage.

4.2.3 Formative Assessment (FA)

Most of the DSAs view FA as a day-to-day form of assessment that involves the development of both teaching and learning. Formative assessments are viewed as building blocks or monomers of a larger product. During the discussions FA was regarded as a continuous journey. They reported that FA prepares both the teachers and learners for summative assessments (SA). The following key words were evident throughout the DSAs' understanding of FA; **developmental**, **forming up**, **building up**, **process**, **continuous**, **journey**, **feedback** and **scaffolding**. It is also viewed as assessment for learning.

Meisie's claim illustrates this view:

> I would say um formative assessment uh is the assessment which is done on day to day basis in order to build up the learning, teaching and learning process. Formative, forming up, building up, eh which will come in different tasks and in different activities and which also prepares the learner for the summative assessment and I would say formative assessment would help the teacher, the learner and the parent to see where our strength and our weaknesses are, eh are we moving towards achieving the set goals and if not, what can we do to achieve the set goals.

Meisie suggested that formative assessment could be used by stakeholders to predict learner achievement; she spoke about what should be, what could be, and not what is. Dannies argued that FA is used for developmental purposes. It includes employing different types/forms of

assessments such as class work, homework, projects and assignments. It was then indicated that informal assessment tasks are used for FA.

Cecilia and Maria tentatively suggested that formative assessment could be seen as form of formal assessment, and after some discussion Cecilia referred to FA as both formal and informal assessment, because they both play a fundamental role in building and laying a foundation for teaching and learning. However, an ample research base suggests that practitioners have difficulty implementing formative assessments (Marsh, 2007).

DSAs mentioned the many different methods of assessment and different ways in which they can be used. Meisie explained that when assessment is done there should be a reason why it is done, and how it influences further learning: in other words, its purposes and effects.

Contrary to Fairbrother's (1980) view that teachers tend to think that the purpose of assessment is for choosing one pupil rather than another, DSAs demonstrated that they understood some assessment methods and purposes thereof. Cecilia mentioned that different types of assessments will be able to accommodate a range of learners with different learning abilities and therefore embracing inclusion in learning:

> I think assessment is also important ehm, with regards to the types of assessment, the forms of assessment because different learners are going to do better at certain parts whether it would be a practical component or something like that so I think it's also endeavours to assess a learner holistically, I think is also important.

The four questions in the questionnaire sought DSAs' understanding and views on the message sent by formative assessment, whether or not the message is reliable or not, and their opinion as to whether the results of formative assessment used quarterly can be used to predict learner performance.

In Figure 2, it can be seen that 30% of the DSAs strongly agreed that formative quarterly results send wrong signals to stakeholders, with a further 9% strongly agreeing. Similarly, 46% disagreed that formative assessment is not a poor predictor of learner achievement, with another 27% strongly disagreeing. 58%, however, agreed that formative assessment can be used for marks with a further 13% strongly agreeing.

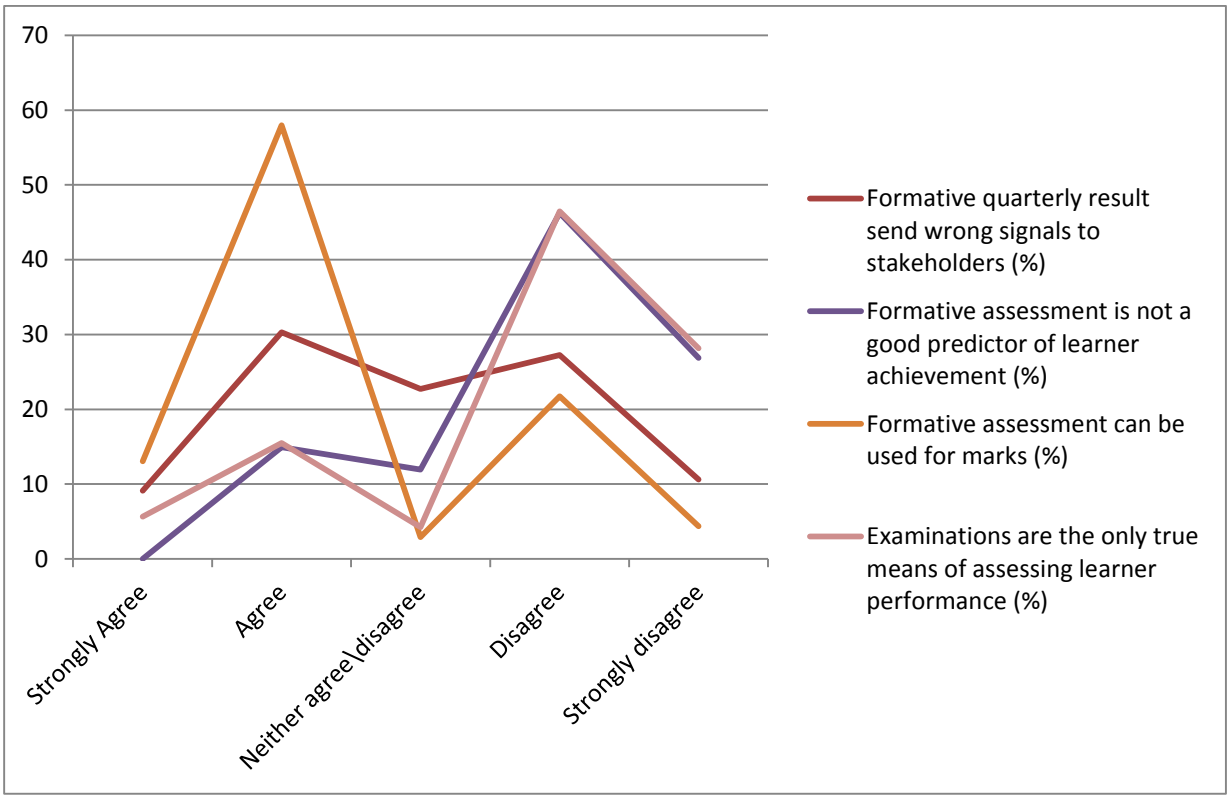


Figure 2: Relationship between formative assessment and learner achievement

Although the above graphs suggest that DSAs were divided about whether formative assessment can be used to predict learner achievement at the end of the formal task, there was more agreement that it can be used for marks. The interview data however suggests otherwise. The quantitative data shows that the DSAs strongly believe that the results of formative assessment are not predictors of learners' future performance.

This disjuncture between the questionnaire findings and that of the focus group could be explained in number of ways: Their role as DSAs in compiling SBAs, the end of year results which show discrepancies between SBA marks and the final examination marks, while policy suggested that there should be a correlation, has led them to doubt the validity of SBAs.

George said that FA is informal; it happens during the process of learning. It is conducted at regular intervals during the teaching and learning process. FA is not about passing judgment but it is a process working towards real learning or achieving set goals. FA is depicted as the form of assessment that assists in identifying weaknesses, addressing them and identifying strengths, enhancing them. FA is not necessarily used for promotion or progression. Parents are also able to track performance of their children and not taken by surprise at the end of the year. Minky said,

> They need to identify the weaknesses and the strength of their children, so as to support them accordingly.

This suggests that there is a gap between what DSAs know and understand in theory and what actually happens in the classroom in practice. They mentioned the need to offer teachers an intensive training in using formative assessment to improve learner's performance. They suggested that because assessment is not used formatively, the results do not offer reliable information to stakeholders. Clarke (2005) recommends that stakeholders should then be brought on board to ensure effective and efficient implementation

There was an immense confusion between formal and informal assessment. Some viewed FA as including class work, homework, and assignments, etc., and classified under informal assessment. These tasks are not recorded and are not used for reporting. This is an indication of the misunderstanding of FA by DSAs.

FA is viewed as both formal and informal; DSAs believed both play a role in laying a good foundation for learning. Informal is explained as assessment that is not formal. It is done in a very informal and casual way and is not recorded. Informal assessment was also seen as a very important part of assessment, which is used in assessment **for** learning, and not assessment of learning. The group highlighted the importance of recording informal assessment tasks but according to assessment policies, informal assessment tasks are not supposed to be recorded or used to determine the school-based assessment mark or year mark. Only formal tasks should be recorded.

4.2.4 The relationship between Summative and Formative Assessment

The questionnaire tended to focus on two aspects of the DSAs' views of assessment: two questions reflected general views about the relationship between assessment and teaching and learning, and two other questions related such views to practice. Each is discussed below:

Fig 3 shows that 87% of the respondents strongly agreed that assessment was an integral part of teaching and learning, with a further 10% agreeing. Similarly, 64% strongly agreed that assessment, teaching and learning are usually inseparable, with another 28% agreeing. This suggests that DSAs broadly see the importance of the connection between teaching, and assessment.

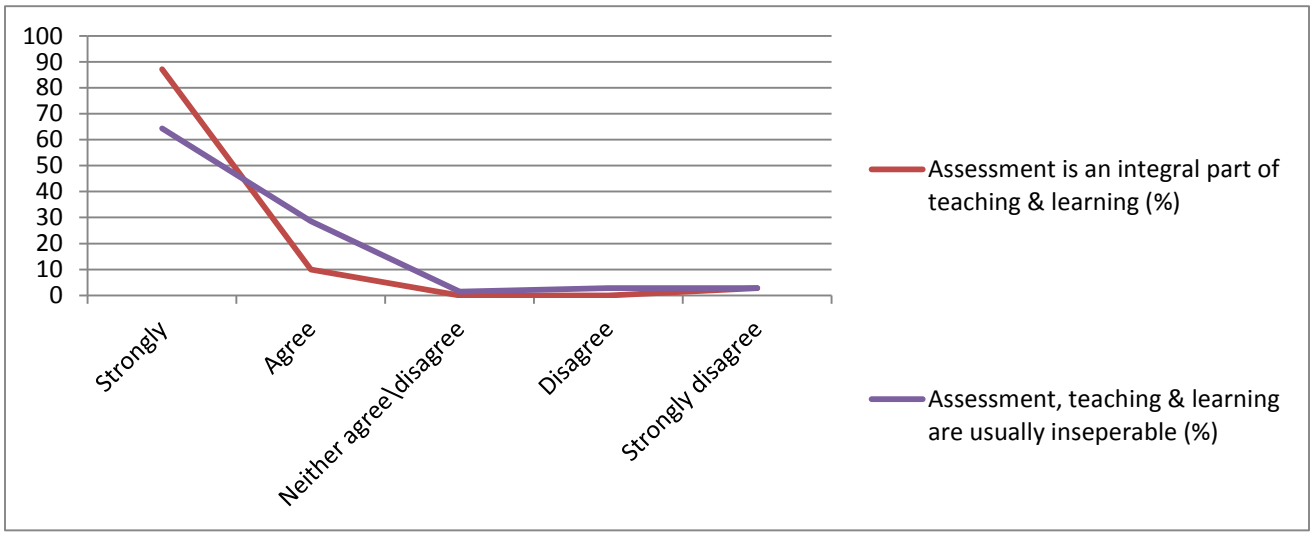


Figure 3: Relationship between assessment, teaching and learning

DSAs agreed on what the importance of the link between classroom assessments, learning and teaching is (Shepard 2000). They explained that learning is not a linear process and that assessment is not supposed to be an afterthought at the end; it forms an integral part of teaching and learning. Taken together, curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment interact in an iterative and sometimes cyclical process (Bernstein 1996).

Although DSAs understood that assessment and learning are inextricably linked and not separate processes, as shown by Feuerstein et al (1980), they also saw that in practice, it is often separated from learning. This showed that even though they knew and understood that assessment forms the integral part of teaching and learning, it is still employed in isolation. Although the DSAs value the potential of assessment to support teaching and learning, they are less certain about how this relationship can be supported in practice.

Minky expressed this contradiction:

> It assists the teaching and learning process because it is part of teaching from the planning up to the final assessment of the outcomes.
>
> Although assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, it is so important and so often misused that it is considered separately.

DSAs in both the quantitative and qualitative data tended to agree with the view of (Black & William, 1998; Lloyd Jones, 1986) that the interrelatedness between teaching, learning and

assessment can substantially improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, they over-emphasised the role of assessment in learning and are very optimistic about its future as stipulated in the policy documents.

The quantitative data was supported and backed by the qualitative data. There is a strong corroboration between the two, both are of the view that assessment lies at the core of learning.

George explained assessment as a journey and a continuous process. He viewed assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning and not an afterthought or destination. Assessment is viewed as a day-to-day event which happens every day during teaching and learning to establish whether learners are working towards achieving the set goals or outcomes throughout the journey, and whether learners finally achieve the set goals when they reach their destination. Assessment is used to direct future teaching and learning that must take place.

> It must be journey bound it must not be like a destination, it must not be something that you know when you apply assessment it must also be you know in the form of teaching. Assessment should not be isolated from teaching and learning. Curriculum and assessment should not be 2 separate processes running parallel but they should be interrelated and interdependent.

Whilst DSAs see a strong relationship between teaching, learning and assessment, they seem to have reservations regarding the impact of this relationship on teaching practice. One would

assume that if assessment is seen as an integral part of teaching and learning, it could be used formatively and also to project learner performance.

The quantitative findings about DSAs' views of the tension between formative and summative assessment focused on the knowledge and skills mastered in both, whether the two are complementary and whether summative assessment should be given more attention than summative assessment. The assumption was that if they test similar knowledge, they should be given equal attention, and they should be complement, rather than compete with, each other. The three questions are jointly discussed in fig 4 below:

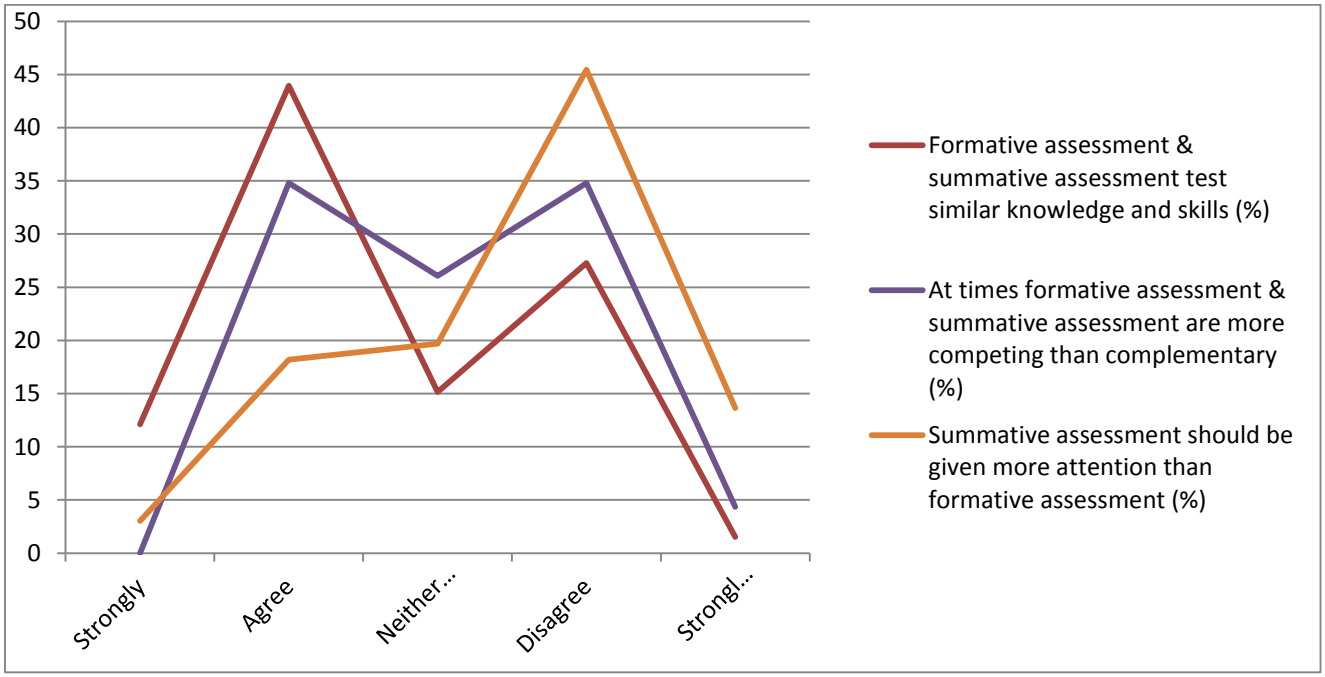


Figure 4: Tension between formative assessment & summative assessment

The graph (Fig 4) shows that 44% of the DSAs agreed that formative assessment and summative assessment test similar knowledge and skills, with a further 8% strongly agreeing. However, 27% disagrees whereas 15% of them are unsure.

Conversely, 35% agreed that formative assessments are more competing than complementary, and equally, 35% disagreed. On the other hand 18% agrees that summative assessment should be given more attention than formative assessment whereas 45% disagrees.

The findings show a certain level of tension in the sense that DSAs views are spread almost equally between agreeing and disagreeing and a sizeable percentage of those that are uncertain. The fact that equal percentage agrees and disagrees that at times formative and summative assessments are competing is a sign of the tension that exist. Quite a substantial percentage of DSAs disagrees that summative assessment should be given more attention than formative assessment, again with about 20% being on the fence.

This suggests that although DSAs somewhat disagrees that summative assessment should be given more attention than formative assessment; they are less certain about the relationship between the knowledge and skills tested by both. Qualitative data indicated the tension.

Because SBAs are developed by DSAs, given timeframes, and monitored to ensure implementation, is not surprising that tension is inadvertently created between the two.

The question asked during the discussions was whether FA and SA are complementary or competing. There was a concurrence that ideally the two should be complementary. FA assessment will complement SA if there is continuous feedback given to learners after tasks have

been administered. Then the issue of SBA constituting 25% of the final promotion mark and the final examination constituting 75% was brought into the picture.

The SBA (25%) as FA is working towards the final exam mark 75%. The participants in the study, however, acknowledged the fact that it is a struggle to see both as a collective. They also agreed in principle that 25% SBA should be aligned to 75% examination mark. The two cannot be separated and seen as separate entities. There was also a common understanding that evidence collected for FA purposes can be used for SA. Evidence collected for SA can also be used for FA; this is done during the road shows conducted at the beginning of the year by examiners. The examiners give educators feedback on the grade 12 examination so that they can align their teaching even though this will not benefit learners who wrote but it will assist the system in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

They were of the opinion that ideally, FA and SA should complement each other. FA should prepare learners for SA. They view SBA as formative summative –forming to sum up. They argue that the way, in which FA is administered, it is developmental or building up and that it competes with SA. FA and SA compete because of the time factor. Teachers are under tremendous pressure from the District to complete certain tasks at a particular given time. If teachers are unable to plan then the two types of assessment compete. Planning is very important, i.e. making use of assessment plans and distributing the work adequately. Recording of formal assessment marks is usually not done on time, only at the end of the year. DSAs claim that teachers separate teaching and assessment. They do not view assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.

FA comprises informal assessments throughout the year and prepares learners for SA. Too much attention is not given to FA. Learners are not exposed to informal activities in their workbooks. It was lamented that teachers seem not to be taking FA seriously. SA is assessment where learners sit at the end of the term and they are assessed on work done throughout the term and year. SA is important for learners to go to the next grade. DSAs say FA should not be used as criteria to take learners to the next grade. They also argue that FA is not thoroughly monitored because learners are awarded a lot of marks that cannot be verified. They view SA as a true reflection of learner performance. It is however judgmental and there is nothing that can be done after a decision has been made.

> SA is a summary of what a learner has been assessed on during FA. Difficult questions should not be shelved for SA. Learners should be exposed to practice to respond to questions at all levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

Skills must be evident in the question asked even if the questions are not the same.

DSAs are of the view that in order to create synergy between the two, teachers need to be trained and developed on different types of assessments and their value. It is also important to create alignment between FA and SA. To a great extent they believe teachers should be mentored with regards to SBA and its significance.

4.3 DSAs response to policy and practice

4.3.1 Curriculum: NCS-CAPS

In the qualitative data DSAs predicted that the introduction of CAPS will play a fundamental role in strengthening the use of formative assessment in teaching and learning. However, implementing formative assessments systems requires significant change in how teaching and learning occur in the classroom.

The quantitative findings about DSAs views of assessment in relation to policy tended to focus on three aspects of policy: Formative assessment in the NCS and Formative assessment in CAPS and whether assessment is examination driven.

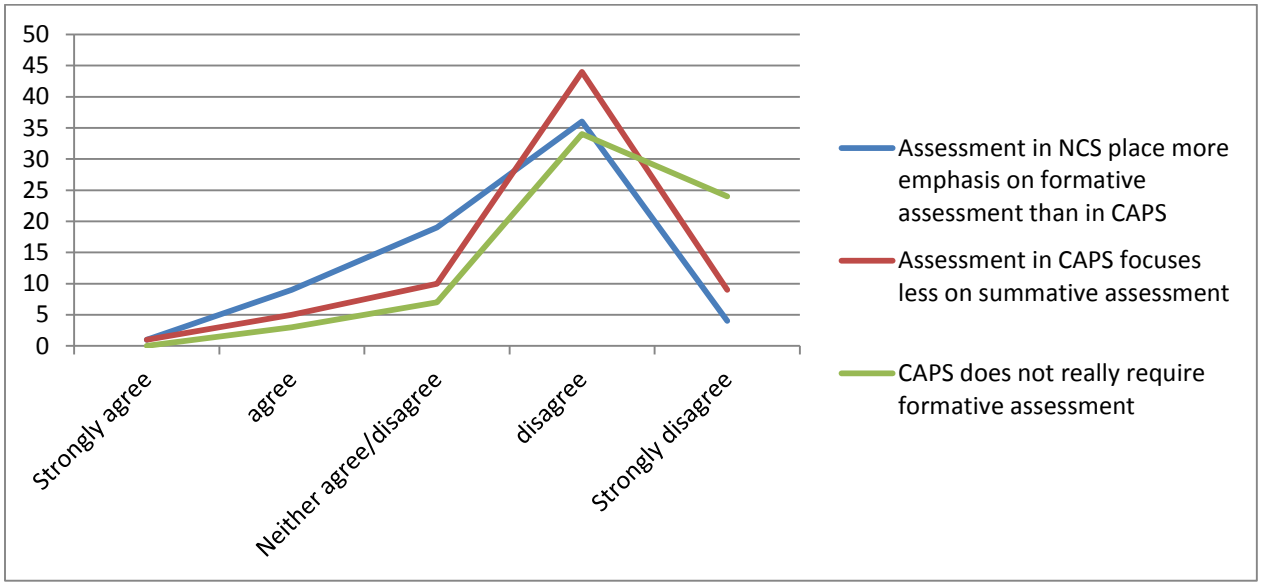


Figure 5: The position of policy: NCS-CAPS regarding the implementation of formative assessment

The graph above (Fig 5) shows that 52% of the DSAs disagreed that assessment in NCS placed more emphasis on formative assessment than in CAPS, with a further 6% strongly disagreeing.

64% disagrees that assessment in CAPS focuses less on summative assessment with 13% strongly disagreeing. 50% disagrees that CAPS does not really require formative assessment with a further 35% disagreeing.

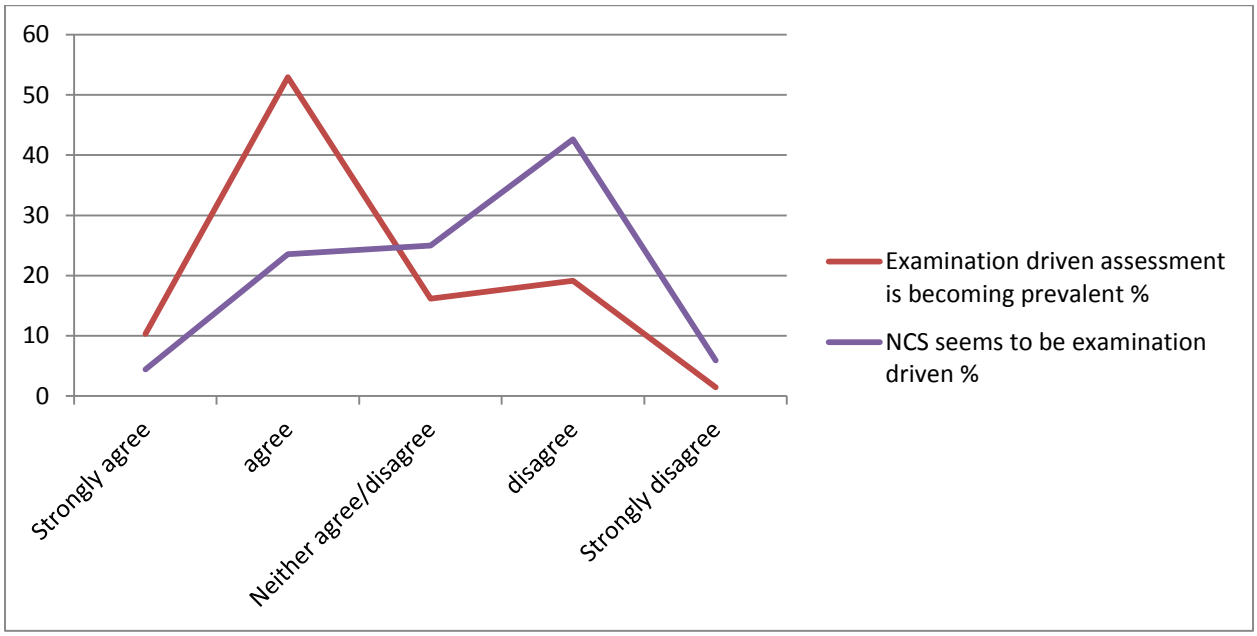


Figure 6: Examination driven assessment

The graph (Fig 6) above shows that 53% agree that examination driven assessment is becoming prevalent and 10% strongly agrees. Only 19% disagrees and 1% strongly disagrees. This data confirms that according to DSAs, in theory CAPS focuses on formative assessment but in practice summative assessment is becoming prevalent. 43% disagrees that NCS seems to be examination driven and 6% strongly disagrees. 24% agrees and 4% strongly agrees.

Whilst most of the DSAs disagreed that assessment in NCS placed more emphasis on formative assessment than in CAPS, a significant number disagreed that assessment in CAPS focuses less

on summative assessment. In both questions there is a considerable number which shows a level of uncertainty.

This suggests that DSAs are less certain about the role of formative assessment in the NCS and CAPS even though in their views, CAPS really require formative assessment. This could also be the disconnection between what policy requires in theory and what is implemented in practice.

In the qualitative data the issue of policy has shown to be pervasive because it was almost impossible to discuss any question without linking it to policy. It could be that the disparity between theory and practice is brought about by policy prescripts and the bureaucracy within the department of education. This shows how policy plays a significant role in guiding and directing the implementation of assessment. In some cases the guidelines are misconstrued and executed as prescribed policy.

The qualitative findings indicated no major or glaring changes or shifts from NCS to CAPS but more of a modification. DSAs claim that assessment is clearer, more specific, and more focused in CAPS. Some things are clearer than in the past. CAPS prescribes what to be taught, and when, and it also compels teachers to do more FA; they believe this will lead to better SBA and SA. Cecilia said that it is more of a modification of one document than a shift. Maria commented:

> According to me there shouldn't be any changes because that was policy, uhm the document it's just a lot more clearer and a lot more specific and a lot more focused but there shouldn't really be a major difference in the assessment

However, there some changes were identified. In the NCS the focus was on group work but assessed was done individually. With CAPS the focus is on an individual. CAPS has increased the number of tasks therefore intensifying formal formative assessment tasks. It was indicated that the focus in Life Sciences has been more on theory but CAPS has introduced practical examination. DSAs argued that learners will now be better prepared for tertiary. Content framework has also shifted a little bit. Meisie summed up the changes:

> There are quite a number of changes. Eh the focus in NCS, when normally focussing on the, they can do the task in a group and the learners can submit and each one get an individual mark but with CAPS, we are going to focus on the individual (ok). The number of tasks it has also changed. We used to have one test, two control tests, now are going to have four in Life Sciences. Eh the type of activities, like in NCS and even previously with practical work in Life Sciences. We never had practical exam, now we are going to have a practical exam.

DSAs felt that the emphasis on frequent testing was an improvement as learner's got enough practice prior the final examination. Formal tests are a good tool to measure performance and are also introduced in lower grades. They see assessment as becoming a process of learning.

These changes in the NCS were contrasted with Nated 550 and curriculum 2005. DSAs argued that Nated 550 was content driven, classroom confined, learner centred and exam focused. Those challenges were addressed during curriculum 2005. The main focus was on theory than practice. Curriculum 2005 and NCS also came with their own challenges of administrative workload for teachers, poor learner performance, confusion or lack of clarity with regards to content framework. This brought about competition or tension between FA and SA.

CAPS is now addressing the work and content demarcation. DSAsbelieve that we are moving towards an assessment that is meant to assist the teaching and learning process. This however is not clear as to how it's going to happen in practice, the role of DSAs does not allow them to monitor and support the use of formative. The tool used focuses on completion of SBA tasks; as a result teachers do not use these tasks formatively to improve teaching and learning. Some felt South African education system is moving in circles but a very interesting analogy was made that it is going in circles but for the better. There is always an improvement. The system is actually moving in a spiral form. Priya compared CAPS to Nated 550 and highlighted some similarities. She argues that the shift demonstrates moving in circles, which implies going back to the old curriculum. However Meisie used an analogy of a spiral, rather than a circle. She believes CAPS demonstrated going upward and forward rather than backwards. Meisie gives her opinion,

> Eh when it comes to the support system, if we look at the all the assessment changes, with Nated 550 we focused on exams. So our support to teachers and schools was content driven and then with the introduction of curriculum 2005 and also NCS thereafter. And now they were streamlined during NCS to 7 tasks neh but like what number 90 indicated

> is like we are going in a way we are going in circles but I wouldn't want to say it's a circle. I see it as a spiral like, we are going in circles but (upwards or forward) ya that's how I see it.

DSAs welcome the shift to CAPS; they believe it is the best way to administer assessment. More tests will expose learners to formative assessment. According to DSAs more tests shows formative assessment. I argue that more tests do not necessarily mean formative assessment; this could be one way of compliance especially if teachers did not set those tasks.

Minky claims that some of the teachers would not give learners beyond what policy prescribes.

During the assessment interviews, a journey was taken to explore the shifts from pre 1994 to the transition into CAPS. It was mentioned that South African Education System is intensifying formal assessment. More formal assessment tasks have been added in the introduction of CAPS. Formal assessment is also introduced in the lower grades in CAPS.

Previously the NCS recommended very few formal assessment tasks. DSAs are of the view that formal assessment can better prepare learners for the end of the year examination. Meisie indicates that the pre -1994 curriculum (Nated 550) did not recognize SBA. The focus was on the final examination. This suggests that the focus was on summative assessment as opposed to formative assessment. In intensifying formative assessment, SBA became part of the final promotion mark constituting 25%.

Previously assessments were results driven. It was mentioned that when C2005 was introduced there was a shift from individualism to collectivism. Learners were working in groups and assessment could also take place between peers. Moving to CAPS, DSAs observed that assessment is going back to the Nated 550 trends of individual assessment. Going back to Nated 550 could mean that we are going back to using more of summative assessment than formative assessment.

4.3.2. Standardized testing

This section focuses on the DSAs understandings of standardized tests, the relationship between Summative Assessment and Standardized tests as well as Standardized testing and teaching to the test.

The following key words were used throughout the discussions; **formal**, **summative**, **set standards**, **instrument**, **validity**, **reliability**, **fairness**, **authenticity**, **benchmarking** and **Bloom's taxonomy**. They mentioned that the administration of standardized tests should be monitored to ensure that there are no deviations from the set standards. The instrument used should be fair, valid and reliable.

DSAs appear to understand standardized in 2 ways; as being of good quality and as common assessments.

Firstly, they use Bloom's taxonomy to explain a standardized test and view it as an assessment that is of **good quality**. In other words a standardized test is seen as an assessment of good standard. In workshops run by DSAs, they have emphasized the need to set papers of good quality and many workshops have been organized for Bloom's taxonomy even though in practice teachers are not given an opportunity to set such papers.

Minky showed that the use of weighting grids show different types of questions according to levels of Bloom's taxonomy:

> We emphasize on the use of weighting grids when setting a standardized test and I would like to believe that a test that has got a weighting grid, when teachers are setting a particular test, they use a weighting grid to say so many questions are for knowledge, so many questions are for this and that. To me that is a standardized test. It can have that structure that we are looking for, Section A can be low order questions and so on, Section B can have questions that learners must respond to eh a particular data, they can have an essay in Section C but by looking at the test you cannot tell whether it is standardized.

Secondly, DSAs view standardized tests as **common assessment** administered to all learners in a grade at a certain point in time. George's definition said:

> Standardized tests are common tests, they have a certain standard, and they are common that's my understanding. Standardizing processes say we want to achieve a particular level in educational development and then how are we going to achieve that by designing tests that are standardized.

Both these understandings differ from the meaning of standardized testing in which the test has been widely tried out under controlled conditions and the scores analysed so that the results of an individual on the test can be related to some 'normal' or 'average figure',

DSAs view of standardized tests is that they are common tests that are set by the DSAs at Provincial and National levels. They view standardized tests as common tests which are required to incorporate all cognitive levels of the Bloom's taxonomy and that these tests must mirror the end of year examination. Meisie gave an example: of standardized tests in Life Sciences. She indicated how their structure was similar to that of the final examination.

Common assessment in the FET was held in high regard by DSAs and teachers. This type of assessment is said to ensure commonality across schools, districts and the province. Sitting for common assessment requires the teachers to follow the same work schedules with the same subject content. It was indicated in the discussions that DSAs play a significant role in monitoring the progress of learning and teaching as well as judging whether the learners have achieved the set goals.

Since many of the assessments are developed by DSAs rather than by teachers it is surprising that the disconnection between assessment and teaching and learning is not stronger. An alternative explanation may be that if teachers are teaching to the DSA tests, the connection between teaching, learning and assessment reflect a series of summative tests in which teachers and learners are held accountable rather than reflecting a formative use of assessment in which they can adapt teaching to better respond to learner needs (Hugo, 2013).

4.3.3 The relationship between Summative Assessment and Standardized Tests

The questionnaires focused on the DSAs view of the relationship between summative assessments and standardized testing, whether they are the same or if one is part of the other. Their views are illustrated in fig 7 below:

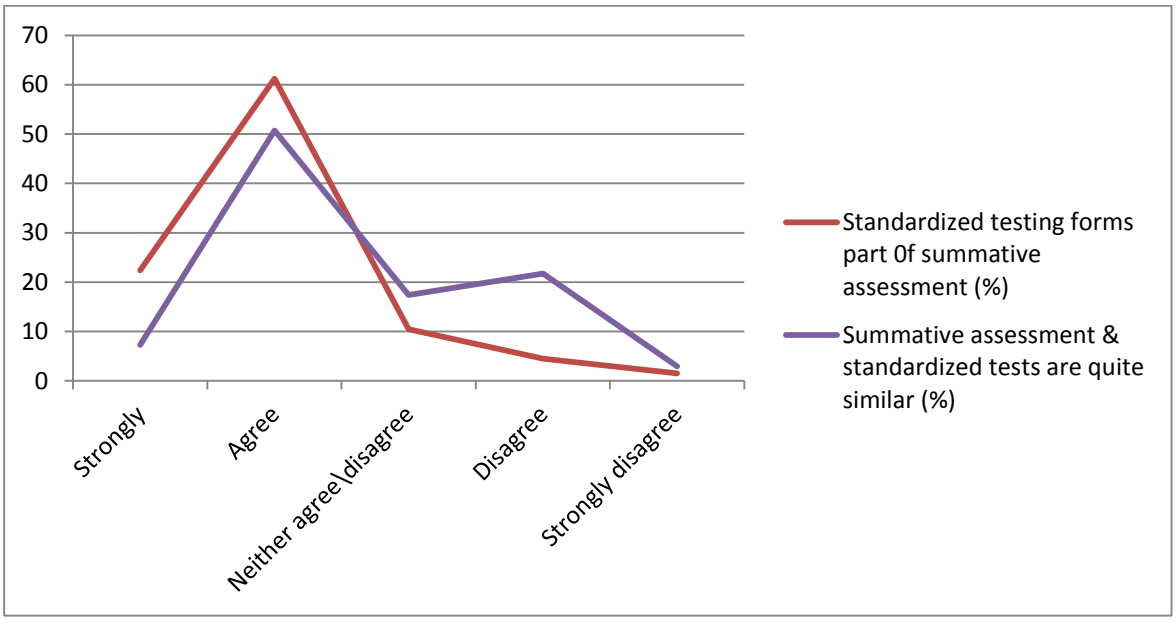


Figure 7: Relationship between summative assessment and standardized testing

51% of the DSAs agreed that summative assessment and standardized tests are quite similar, with an additional 7% strongly agreeing. 22% disagrees whilst 17% of them are uncertain.

61% agreed that standardized testing forms part of summative assessment, with another 22% strongly agreeing. A large number of respondents 58% agree that standardized testing forms part of summative assessment, they are unsure whether or not they are the same. The other interpretation is that the difference between summative assessment and standardized tests is that standardized tests sometimes provide opportunities to do corrections or use the results to inform future teaching.

Standardized testing can be done per month or per term. It can also prepare learners for the final examination. The purpose of standardized testing according to Dannies is for quality assurance and also for bench marking. Standardized testing seems to be presenting the same characteristics of SA. Matric examination mentioned here was also cited as an example of formal assessment and therefore SA. However they can also form part of formative assessment as part of SBA. They conclude that standardized tests when used as the final examination are summative and when used as SBA are formative. This claim was supported by Dannies' comments:

> Ehh the purpose of standardized testing ehh would be like as indicated for quality to assure quality and for benchmarking and ehh to ensure that ehh there are no deviations from ehh from the standards that were set initially and to make sure that ehh the instrument that is used is valid and reliable and ehh for also for to make sure that ehh the instrument is authentic so that's basically that. (Authentic for all, yes. It's the same

instrument used for that particular group of learners is that what you saying). So that would be the purposes of ehh that would be the purpose of standardized testing, to make sure that standards that were initially set are upheld, upheld in the sense that the instrument should measure what is supposed to measure and to ensure that it meets those ehh sets standards ehh and for benchmarking purposes.

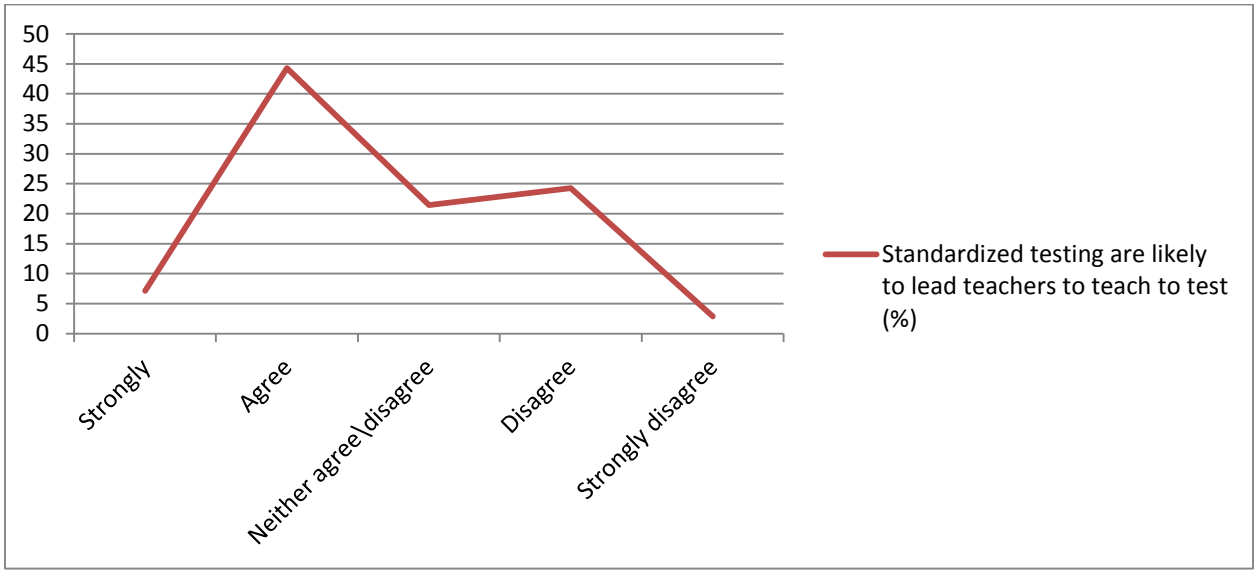


Figure 8: Standardized testing and teaching to the test

The graph (Fig 8) shows that 44% strongly agrees that standardized testing is likely to lead teachers to teach to the test and 7% agrees. This suggests that DSAs acknowledges that standardized testing lead teachers to teach to the test, which could be a result of the way in which it is managed and monitored at all levels. Teachers are expected to have covered certain topics before administration of such tests; this can put pressure on the teachers to prepare for the test, compromising the process of teaching and learning formatively. Standardized testing has been criticized over the past years as having few positive implications for teaching, McMillan (1997).

The discussions around standardized testing has ended with more questions than answers. DSAs gave different views regarding what standardized testing is and the purposes thereof. What is unclear is whether DSAs think that teaching to the test is a good practice or not.

Once a test has met all the requirements mentioned above, it can then be used to compare learner performance across the schools, District, Province and National.

4.4 School Based Assessment (SBA)

4.4.1 SBA and FA

The quantitative findings about DSAs views of SBA in general tended to focus on two aspects of assessment: the one aspect compares formative assessment, which is assessment for learning and CASS, which is continuous assessment that does not improve either learning or teaching and the other examines whether SBA should be discontinued

The graph below (Fig 9) shows that DSAs were divided about whether SBA can be seen as formative assessment or not. The data shows a level of uncertainty; 33% agree that formative assessment and CASS are quite similar, 32% disagrees whilst 3 strongly disagrees and 16% are unsure. 53% strongly disagree and 31% disagrees that school based assessment should be discontinued. Largely DSAs are of the view that school based assessment should continue.

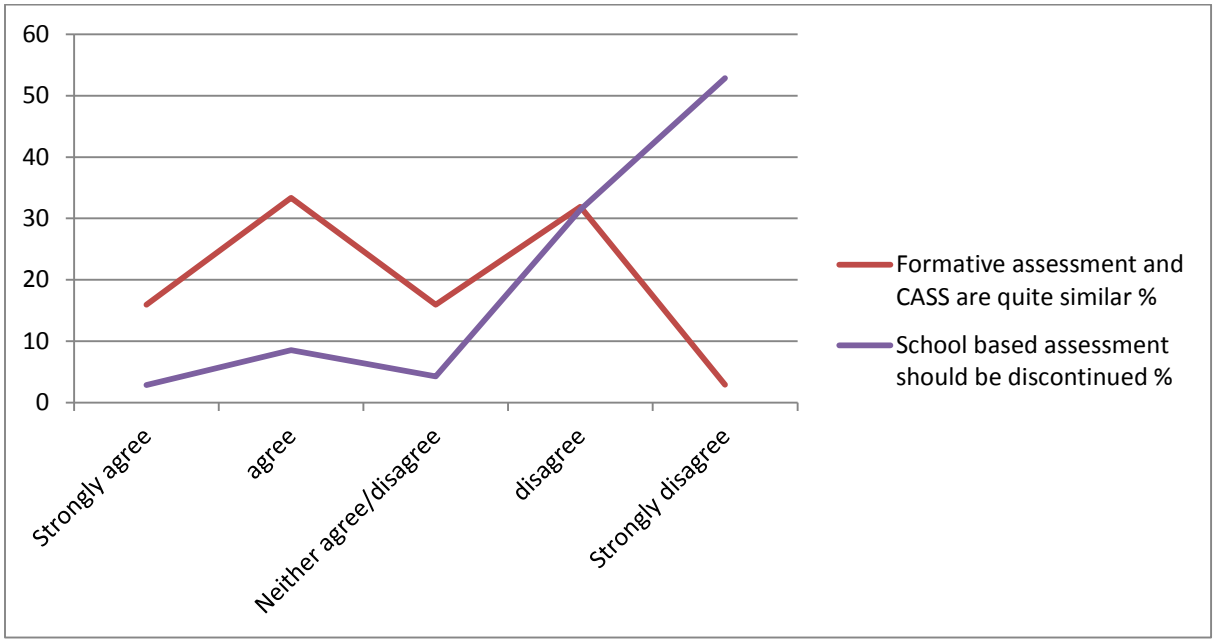


Figure 9: relationship between formative assessment, CASS and SBA

Throughout the discussions SBA appeared to be the most commonly known type of assessment or possibly the only form of assessment in the FET phase.

This uncertainty suggests that school based assessment might be perceived as the only form of formative assessment in theory even though it is not, in practice. The data also suggests that DSAs do not see assessment as a tool for teachers to develop and use tests formatively, but that it allows the district to monitor teacher progress in covering the content to be taught.

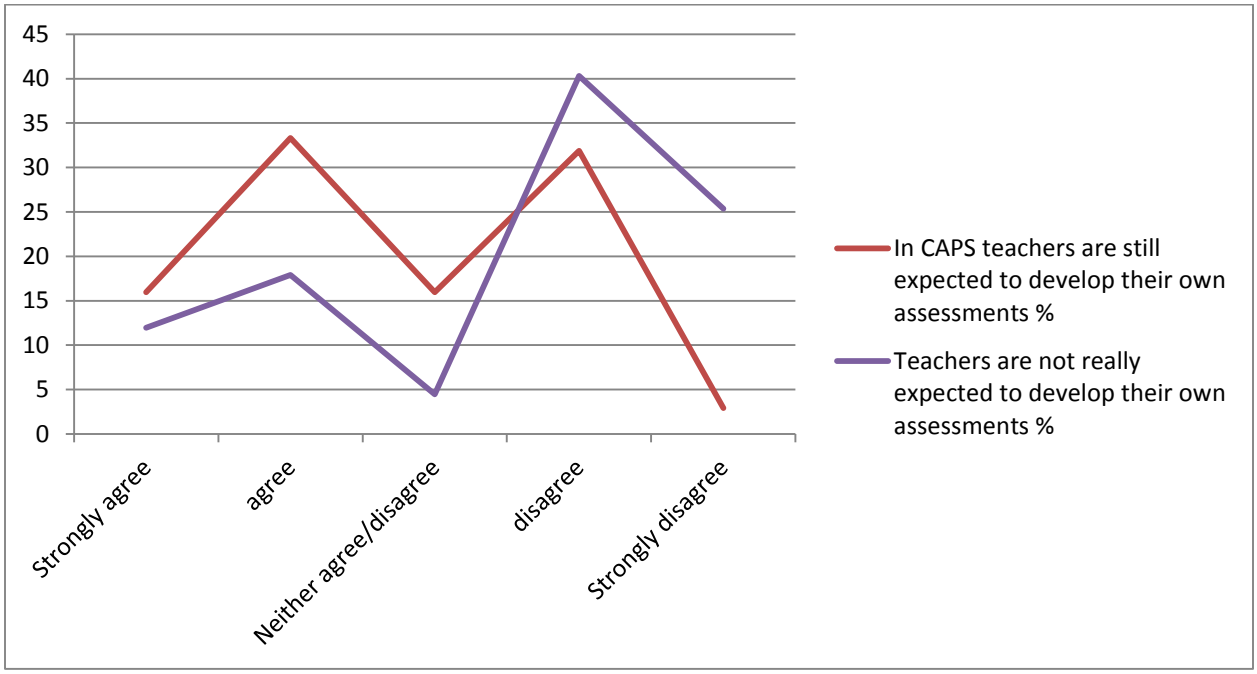


Figure 10: The responsibility to develop assessment tasks

In the graph above (Fig 10) 33% agrees and 16% strongly agree that in CAPS teachers are still expected to develop their own assessments. 32% disagrees and 3% strongly disagrees. This data suggests that DSAs are not sure whether teachers should set their own tasks or not. If DSAs are uncertain about who should set the tasks then the use of formative assessment remains unsure. Most of the SBA tasks are common tasks that have been set by the DSAs in their specific subjects. These formal SBA tasks are presented in different Subject Assessment Guidelines.

Some DSAs stated that SBA forms the most credible form of formal assessment because of the way in which it is administered and the results recorded. These results are also used for reporting to the learners, parents and other stakeholders at the end of each term.

Priya indicated that SBA also forms parts of FA. It should be part of teaching and learning. She said in her comments,

> Actually the SBA eh to me it's like part of learning and teaching, ya like eh 32 said it matters the most under which conditions the tasks are administered, that's very important and then educators need to understand that SBA's, they build towards like maybe summative eh assessment at the end, it should be developmental.

It is likely that those who indicated that they valued SBAs in the questionnaire did so because of their perceived credibility, rather than their potential to be used formatively. This is borne out by the strong belief that school based assessment should be continued.

According to the DSAs, SBA is supposed to be a build up towards summative assessment. During the discussions it was mentioned that SBA as part of FA should be developmental.

DSAs think teachers do not take SBA seriously. They separate SBA which is 25% from the final examination mark 75%. George says that they still battle to see 25% SBA as working towards the final mark 75%. They are battling to use SBA formatively in preparation for SA. They acknowledge that their focus is on SBA only and that SBA tasks are not used for diagnostic purposes; failure to do diagnostic analysis could result in learners repeating the same mistakes done throughout the year and at the end of the year. They indicated that teachers leave recording of SBA until very late and this contributes to administrative workload.

In responding to the question of whether SBA enhances teaching and learning, Cecilia made mention of the teachers' content knowledge, their enthusiasm and the passion they have for what they do. She highlights that for SBA to enhance teaching and learning the following should be evident:

- The teacher has to be good, with adequate content knowledge;
- The task must be of good quality incorporating all levels of Blooms taxonomy and
- A good tool which is valid, measuring what it is supposed to measure, should be used.

George said that SBA is a repetition of the content done in class and that the same themes and concepts are included in the final examination. He agreed that SBA can enhance teaching and learning because it is aligned to the summative assessment at the end of the year:

> 'In my opinion yes indeed it is very useful at school level, why I say so is that learners that engage in SBA activities. SBA activities is in a way form of a repetition of content they do in class because it is the same themes it's based on the same themes that they are tested when they do the let's say the final exam or learners who did well in SBA at school certainly are more conversant with you know the final ehh assessment ya.'

DSAs indicated that sometimes teachers want to complete all SBA tasks prescribed by the Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAGs) and then focus on teaching. This shows that some teachers do not link SBA to the final examination mark and there is therefore no alignment between the two. As a formal formative type of assessment it appears not be used for developmental purposes to prepare for SA. Based on the above account I claim that SBA to a

certain extend is done for compliance and for accountability by other teachers even though some DSAs understand it to be developmental and integral to teaching and learning. Minky says,

> I think that is the problem or that is a mistake done by the teachers themselves because they separate teaching from assessment. They don't see assessment as an integral part of teaching.

Priya indicated that in order to ascertain the credibility of SBA, it should be conducted/ administered under controlled conditions. Teachers have to manage and monitor SBA to ensure that the 25% is creditable. SBA that is not monitored will lead to learners obtaining high SBA marks and presenting outstanding performance throughout the year. This performance is sending wrong signals to parents and learners. This was backed by Cecilia,

> Even if you give a formal task like an SBA task, it has to be done under certain conditions within a certain time frame using a certain assessment tool. If it's going to be an exam or a test we would also expect certain structures to be in place. You can't just assess Willy-nilly, there has to be a certain conditions and structures and things in place in order for that assessment to be well fair, valid and reliable?

Good results yielded by unreliable SBA can deceive and mislead the parents, teachers and learners themselves. Parents may be under the impression that their children are doing well. They become surprised when they fail at the end of the year. It becomes inexplicable why their

children fail at the end of the year yet they performed exceptionally well throughout the year. Teachers think learners are achieving the set goals and learners' meta-cognition skills are misinformed. This claim is backed by Priya's comments,

> So if the conditions are not monitored eh strictly learners might maybe copy or be assisted or assist each other and then they are going to pass the task and that would give learners a false impression that they, you know that they are, they know what they should know. Only to discover that at the end of the year, now when summative assessment comes, the marks drop and then that is why maybe in some cases we have parents complaining that learners have been passing all throughout the year but come end of the year exam, learners fail. So the conditions under which they write this SBA tasks, it's important.

It was however acknowledged that sometimes there is a disjuncture between the SBA, content and the final examination mark. Learners are given tasks, feedback is done, intervention is done but now the final examination mark carries a different content.

George drew attention that teachers need to be trained so that they can see a relationship between SBA 25% and final examination mark 75% and not treat them separately or in isolation. SBA is not only formal but it is formal – informal, it is not only SA or FA but summative formative. This claim is backed by George's comments:

> It is formal informal the SBA, it is formal informal because the marks that we get from the SBA we record.

Some participants think SBA should be escalated to 50%, in that way teachers will take it seriously. Minky said,

> Now it is very worrisome that people take time to do content and want to do SBA at the end or they concentrate on SBA and you know ya and then maybe if it was my take I would say 50% SBA, 50% that promotion and that ya (ok) because it is really helpful and you see.

The question still remains; will the tasks be valid, reliable and authentic? Will the tasks be monitored to inform teaching and learning? SBA contributes to the final promotion mark yet it is unreliable and unauthentic in the manner in which it is administered.

In conclusion, the DSAs seem to understand what SBA is, what it entails and its purpose. There appears to be a discrepancy between what they know and what the teachers know. At the beginning of the interview DSA explained their roles; this is what Minky had to say,

> I'm a District Subject Advisor for Life Sciences. And what is it that you do exactly as a subject advisor? Mm I monitor and support curriculum implementation in schools that are offering Life Sciences as a subject, I'm also responsible for developing educators with regard to content, I also set common exams and at times controlled tests, I moderate SBAs, I monitor exams especially the NCS exams and grade 12, monitoring also of (Secondary school improvent programme) SSIP classes, writing of reports, I think that's exactly what I'm doing.

They indicated that it is their role to develop teachers on the subject content and assessment for effective curriculum delivery. This was George's view,

> We uhm sit apparently in this forum as subjects advisors and for anything to happen in any subject, we are the drivers, we are the drivers of processes. We are supposed to hold workshops and say to our teachers because that will be you know uhh cascading the information downwards we have to have structures were we develop our, the teachers ehh and prepare them for the process,

Teachers are implementers and therefore require adequate knowledge of SBA in order to use it as an integral part of teaching and learning and to create a positive synergy between SBA and the final examination mark. This claim is backed by numerous ways in which the issue of training, workshops and development was alluded to.

4.4.2 SBA and planning

The DSAs had shared the same sentiments regarding planning of assessment. They indicated that planning of assessment is fundamental to the implementation of formative as well as summative assessment. They have identified a gap that teachers do not plan assessment implementation in the classroom. It is done haphazardly and randomly. They also identify themselves as being the drivers of the process of training and developing teachers on the aspect of planning assessment.

Maria commented despondently,

> I am going be very bold and very outspoken, until the teachers have ethics of working and planning, uhm this is not going to work. Uhmi will state it boldly, they are lazy to plan, if you don't plan it's not going to work, uhm assessment means constant planning.

DSAs underlined lack of planning on the part of teachers. They are of the view that assessment without planning may not yield the intended results. This claim is backed by one of the participants who highlighted that teachers do not have a work ethic. This includes having passion and commitment for what they do. Teachers do not plan their lessons, activities and assessments before going to class. They do not make researches of the topic to be taught or expand their content knowledge. There is basically lack of planning which defeats the ultimate goal. The above comment by Maria shows that DSAs understand the importance of planning assessment and are weary of the consequences thereof, they see themselves as part of the solution as curriculum supporters. George said,

> We need a lot of training and development for the implementers.

Lack of planning was also raised on many occasions as contributing towards poor assessment practices in schools. Assessment ought to be planned, as indicated earlier that it is part of teaching and learning. It must be a purpose filled exercise, meaningful assessment doesn't happen by the way. This is backed by Cecilia's comments:

> Teachers think they can walk into a class and ask a few random questions and then start teaching but in order for that to be a meaningful lesson you had to sit down and design a question that triggered thinking in a learner not just this random question that they think is going to lead to learning and I think that is the misconception, I think that it's got to be a planned activity.

DSAs indicated that teachers do have guidelines on how to plan assessment. There are work schedules for each and every subject that guides teachers on how to implement teaching and learning. They make recommendations on the topics to be taught, the time frames to complete them and the period i.e. whether the topic should be taught in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th term. Lack of planning mentioned interrupts work schedule completion and teachers are unable complete the syllabus as prescribed/recommended by policy. This claim was supported by Meisie;

> We have guidelines on what to assess on formally during the term for each subject, which I think is a very good move and also it assists the teaching and learning process because it's now making assessment to be part of the teaching from the planning and up to the final assessment of the outcomes

An example was shared where a teacher completes the formal SBA tasks before the actual teaching and learning. In this way assessment does not form an integral part of teaching and learning. They are not able to integrate assessment into teaching and learning. Teachers who are not planning are unable to cover all topics proposed for the term. This has got implications on the credibility of the results reported to the stakeholders. This also shows the gap created by the introduction of new curricula that are not mediated enough for teachers to understand what is expected from them as implementers.

DSAs indicated that since learners are ultimately going to write common tasks/exam teachers should plan to cover and complete the work schedule without comprising the quality of teaching and learning. Even with the shift from NCS to CAPS, the participants' main message to teachers would be that they plan to be successful and that planning is of great importance if they are to achieve envisaged goals. This was backed by Maria when asked what her main message to teachers would be about assessment in CAPS:

> Plan to be successful.

DSAs echoed the view that assessment is supposed to be planned; the type of questions that will be asked in the beginning as baseline evaluation, in the middle and at the end. Questions asked should be purposeful and relevant to the objectives of the lesson. Cecilia spoke about meaningful assessment, pointing out the fact that assessment cannot just be random questioning but it also has to be a planned activity.

Assessment is supposed to be a purposeful and meaningful exercise that will yield the intended results.

> It must be a purpose filled exercise, meaningful assessment doesn't happen by the way

4.5 The role of district subject advisors (DSAs)

Even though both the quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that DSAs do understand assessment, there seem to be a gap between their understanding and their role as curriculum supporters and teacher developers in which they support the teachers to implement and administer assessment in ways that will improve learner performance. There seems to be a disjuncture between DSAs' knowledge and understanding vice versa the teachers' knowledge and understanding.

The DSAs acknowledged that their understanding of assessment has the potential to influence teaching practice around the implementation of assessment. Their role is to support teachers and school management to ensure that national and provincial assessment policies are adhered to and implemented at the schools.

DSAs believe that we are moving towards an assessment that is meant to assist the teaching and learning process. This however is not clear as to how it's going to happen in practice, the role of DSAs does not allow them to monitor and support the use of formative. The tool used focuses on completion of SBA tasks; as a result teachers do not use these tasks formatively to improve teaching and learning. Some felt the South African education system is moving in circles but an interesting analogy suggested that this circular movement is spiralling upward, and so continuously improving.

Quality training and teacher collaboration are two main vehicles that promote the formative assessment-instruction cycle. DSAs have identified a gap in almost all the items discussed during the interviews. The gap was identified firstly, on the part of teachers in the sense that assessment implementation at schools seem to be incongruent with their understanding of different forms of assessment e.g. the use of assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning and secondly, on the part of DSAs in the sense that they themselves confuses FA and SA. This claim was backed by Cecilia and Minky's views on SA and FA, and Dannies and George's views.

Teachers have to be fully empowered and capacitated for quality implementation at the grass roots level. Since they are implementers they need to have special skills to improve the quality of teaching and learning in South African schools. This claim was backed by George,

> I am of the view and opinion that you know that assessment systems that we have in this country are of high quality. It is how we scuffle them or how we develop our teachers or people who implement these processes ehh that we can win and have systems that will prepare the learner for the after FET meaning tertiary. The systems are fine, you know the formulas are fine but it is our prerogative to see to it that the people who implement those processes to our learners are well developed ya.

DSAs' view point is that teachers separate formative assessment from summative assessment; they treat them as two different entities. It is indicated that they focus on formal assessment only or SBA tasks. They believe SBA is taking much of their time and it only constitutes 25% of the final promotion mark. They do not see the alignment between FA and SA.

DSAs reached a consensus that teachers should be trained on FA and SA. Workshops should be conducted to develop teachers on how to use informal and formal assessment formatively to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

They also believe that teachers ought to be trained on how to use SBA formatively to improve the results at the end of the year. Teachers should be developed on how to set tasks of good quality. In the beginning it was mentioned that South Africa has good and quality assessment systems but in order to yield fruits, teachers should be trained and developed. This claim was backed by George:

> I want to kindly re-iterate my earlier statement to say that, we need a lot of training and development for the implementers.

It is indicated that some teachers make use of different techniques to achieve intended goals but there is a huge number that still needs intensive capacitating. DSAs indicated that they themselves are the drivers of this process. It is their responsibility to ensure that the high and good systems are oiled and functional. They have to train and develop teachers to prepare and plan their lessons. They themselves need to be trained and developed to be able to adequately support teachers. Minky backs this claim,

> "We uhm sit apparently in this forum as subjects advisors and for anything to happen in any subject, we are the drivers, we are the drivers of processes. We are supposed to hold workshops and say to our teachers because that will be you know uhh cascading the

> information downwards we have to have structures where we develop our, the teachers ehh and prepare them for the process, thank you".

In conclusion, the DSAs seem to understand what SBA is, what it entails and its purpose. There appears to be a discrepancy between what they know and what the teachers know.

Teachers are implementers and therefore require adequate knowledge of SBA in order to use it as an integral part of teaching and learning and to create a positive synergy between SBA and the final examination mark. This claim is backed by numerous ways in which the issue of training, workshops and development was alluded to.

4.6 Conclusion

DSAs' understanding of formative and summative assessment seem to be more of theoretical and less evident in practice. Much as they seemed aware of the tensions that exist between the two, there is no effort to resolve the tension. The issue of policy seems to have a contributory factor. In general DSAs do embrace the assessment systems that are put in place despite the changing curriculum and assessment The challenge is whether the policies create sufficient autonomy for DSAs to guide and support teachers in implementing them successfully.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This research supports the use of formative assessment. The literature surveyed suggested that formative assessment provides the opportunity for teachers to examine their own instruction, measure their content knowledge, and identify their own strengths and developmental areas. Learners are also able to discover where they come from, where they are going, and how to get there. Rigorous studies conducted around formative assessment further strengthened this position. The literature has in many ways demonstrated the tension that exists between formative assessment and summative assessment. It became evident from the review, that a task may only be labelled formative or summative in terms of the purpose it is intended for. The outcome of the research conducted here, has the potential to add value to, and fill up existing gaps in the understanding of the relationship between DSAs' notions of the disconnection between formative and summative assessment.

The literature showed the impact of curriculum shifts and changes in assessment approaches and practices. This was the rationale behind the brief review of curriculum changes over the years, to frame assessment shifts from NCS to CAPS. Literature demonstrated that the introduction of the new curriculum ushered in a variety of changes regarding teaching, learning and assessment. The new curriculum is often presented as a transformation of old teaching, learning and assessment. This is a paradigm shift from promotion decisions based on results of a single test or examination to ongoing formative assessment.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Policy versus practice (theory versus practice)

The department of education at national and provincial levels designs policies on what, when and how assessment should be administered in schools. Both the teachers in schools and DSAs at District level are expected to interpret, implement and adhere to stipulated policies. The DSAs, however, have a role to mediate these policies to teachers and monitor that they are implemented. The District designs a tool that is in line with policy to support and monitor teachers in implementation. What is prescribed by policy in theory is not what is carried out in practice.

DSAs understand what policy prescribes but are still to master how it should be implemented in practice. The policy itself is quiet on how it should be implemented and is open to individual interpretation. The report derived from the tool that is used for monitoring and support during school visits does not deliver the expected outcomes. It is recommended that any measures used for monitoring the implementation of teaching and learning be aligned to policy if that which is enshrined in policy documents is to be translated into practice. The department of education should have regular meetings to mediate assessment policies, monitor and support implementation. Lack of support result in both DSAs and teachers opting for compliance with policy, without ensuring that assessment is used to improve teaching and learning. The approach should be 80% support and 20% compliance, as encouraged by the education authorities.

5.2.2 The diminishing role of Formative Assessment (FA)

Although there is no doubt that DSAs understand what FA is, its diminishing role continues. DSAs seem to be in a frustrating position of knowing what FA is and what can be achieved by its application but are restricted by the policy framework. When the Gauteng Department of Education undertook to train DSAs on assessment for learning, it was received with an overwhelming support.

The concepts; assessment FOR learning (FA) and assessment OF learning (SA) were introduced. During the training DSAs were skilled on how to train and develop teachers on the use of FA. The excitement and eagerness to impart the acquired knowledge faded away as there were no systems put in place to train teachers. The approach used to support and monitor teachers does not yield the desired outcomes. Instead their approach can be misconstrued to be encouraging teachers to focus only on the completion of SBAs. This could inadvertently lead teachers to teach to the test.

Both teachers and DSAs seem to be obsessed by being compliant to policy. Some of the teachers will even start by administering all SBA tasks, marking and recording them and then start teaching. They know that one of the most important things checked during the DSAs visit to schools is to verify whether they have completed the SBA tasks for that period. The approach of the DSAs has been 80% compliance and 20% support, recently the Gauteng Department of Education has been emphasising 80% support and 20% compliance but how the support should be provided is not clear. It is more disturbing to note that the role of FA continues to diminish even with the introduction of CAPS.

Once the SBA marks for a term have been recorded and used for reporting, learners are no longer given extended opportunities to improve. In this way SBAs are not used formatively to improve

the final performance. The system does not allow teachers to go back, identify challenges and address them. They are under pressure to complete tasks and meet deadlines. More workshops and information sharing forums are recommended to help improve the use of formative assessment to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

5.2.3 The validity and reliability of School Based Assessment (SBA)

According to departmental policies, SBA is formal assessment that should be recorded and used for reporting. This creates an impression that SBA is more important than informal tasks and in some cases learners could be exposed to them as the only form of assessment. The SBA constitutes 25% of the final promotion mark. The validity and reliability thereof is vital in order to produce a qualification that is credible.

SBA tasks are developed by DSAs at district and provincial level and this takes away a very important skill of developing tasks from teachers. Teachers ensure that learners complete all recommended SBA tasks per term. The tasks are marked, recorded and used for reporting. In essence the SBA is not necessarily school based and this might have an effect on its validity and reliability.

By the time these tasks are administered at schools, some of the teachers might have not covered all the topics, and therefore might not be able to measure what they purport to measure. Scaffolding of such tasks might be tricky and thus implicit. This could result in learners' lack of preparedness and in the end poor performance. This could also lead teachers to teach to the test.

The Grade 12 results in the past 4 years have shown a discrepancy between the SBA marks and final examination marks. SBA marks are way higher that the final examination marks; there is no correlation between the two. This is an indication of lack of validity, reliability and authenticity of SBA and the tension between formative assessment (25% SBA) and summative assessment (75% final exam). The results of SBA during the year send wrong messages to learners, parents and other stakeholders. Whilst it is true that some teachers are still struggling to develop SBA tasks of good quality, the department of education should put timeframes within which DSAs could impart skills to teachers to develop good quality SBA tasks which can be used formatively. DSAs should train teachers to set their own assessment tasks if they are to be used formatively. Common assessment tasks set by DSAs for teachers might not be used formatively to improve teaching and learning. Setting tasks for teachers could be disempowering, and deprive them of the opportunity to develop the most important skill of their career.

The role of DSAs should be redefined. Their approach should be more focused upon how to support teachers, and demonstrate to them how to use assessment formatively in order to improve both teaching and learning. It is important that they create a culture in which formative assessment can exist. Formative assessment remains a challenge, and this is attributed to the gaps in the system. The department of education should allow DSAs to operate autonomously by

developing their own programmes to support teachers. The monitoring tool does not encourage independent thinking and does not take contextual factors into account. .

5.2.4 Standardized assessment

There is confusion and misunderstanding of what standardized assessment is. The DSAs' understanding of standardized assessment is defined by; common SBA tasks that they set or develop and good quality tasks that incorporate all levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Any assessment of good quality irrespective of how it is administered and what the results will be used for is wrongfully regarded as standardized assessment. They do however see a relationship between standardized assessment and summative assessment. More training and workshops on standardized assessments are recommended to shed more light and most importantly so that they can achieve the intended purpose.

5.2.5 Understanding assessment, in particular formative assessment (FA)

There is no doubt that DSAs understand what assessment is and the significance thereof. However prior to the focus group interviews it was evident that some DSAs understanding of formative and summative assessment was incorrect. Some acknowledged that they have been misinforming teachers in their meetings and workshops. They were appreciative of the discussions and expressed their desire for such forums of engagement.

Again the role of DSAs in training and developing teachers is debatable. If DSAs understand FA well, why is it that the knowledge and skills are not imparted and why FA is still not implemented in schools? DSAs do not operate autonomously; they are guided by the operational

plan and the structured tools. Their performance is largely measured by the reports informed by the tool.

The findings suggested that DSAs view more assessment tasks (as prescribed in CAPS) as formative assessment, and that teachers do not understand the relationship between formative and summative assessment. Therefore DSAs as mediators of curriculum and assessment implementation must have a thorough understanding of the curriculum (CAPS). More workshops should be conducted for DSAs and teachers, on methods for the implementation of formative assessment, as well as to promote an understanding of the relationship between FA and SA. DSAs and teachers should realise that neither formative nor summative assessment can be treated as an end to teaching but both can be a solution to actual teaching and learning.

5.2.6 Areas of further research

Data was collected before implementation of CAPS and this might have shifted since then. Maybe assessment has become more summative in nature or formative as was anticipated by DSAs from the beginning.

Questionnaires could be used for broader audience to start a useful debate on the connection between formative and summative assessment. The findings could also be disseminated broadly within the department of education.

5.3 Reflections on the study

5.3.1 Correlation between qualitative and quantitative data collection methods

The nature of focus group interviews is such that participants tend to influence each other in their contributions and deliberations. Although this could be viewed as a strength, it may well be seen

as a limitation. Particularly in this study, this resulted in the shift of answers provided to the questionnaires from the responses given during focus group interviews. This may in part explain the lack of alignment and qualitative and quantitative findings in some cases resulting in data that is difficult to discuss with high levels of certainty. In my view the focus group interviews went well and the findings of the study need to be understood in that light of the research process rather than take them definitive in themselves.

5.3.2 Generalizability of the study

Even though the researcher tried to deal with the issues of generalizability by corroborating qualitative and quantitative data, this is only from only one region in GDE. This is not a large scale study and the findings can therefore not be generalized. The questionnaires provided a lot of valuable information even though it was not always linked to focus group interviews, they could therefore be used for further research in a large scale study.

5.4 Strength of the study

Although there is evidence of discrepancies between qualitative and quantitative data, the questionnaires yielded valuable data and may be used for another study. The focus group interviews appeared to have created a platform for DSAs to discuss the role of formative assessment in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

5.5 Personal reflection

5.5.1 Judgemental viewpoint

When I started this project I was convinced that DSAs do not understand what formative assessment is and its role in improving the quality of teaching and learning. In the end I was humbly impressed by their deep conceptual understanding. I learnt an important lesson that the system or environment within which one works can hinder the way one performs their function.

The research gave me a different perception of my role as a manager and I have moved away from being judgemental.

5.5.2 Shifted discourse

Looking back to when I started this project, my language has shifted significantly from being judgemental to being more cautious and academic. It was difficult to understand the different discourses and every time I spent some time without communicating with my supervisor, my academic writing would regress, and I would revert to judgemental language. I am grateful that my supervisor believed in me and did not give up on me even in times when I wanted to quit.

5.5.3 Misunderstanding of Standardized assessment

At the beginning of the focus group interviews I introduced myself and emphasised that I am a researcher looking for answers and that is why I was conducting research. I however realised that there were aspects the part where I truly did not have answers. I realised that I was as confused as DSAs and had to go back to the library to understand particular aspects of assessment. I now have a better understanding and hope that I will create a platform to share my insight with DSAs.

5.5.4 Impact on the relationship with DSAs

This project has changed my relationship with DSAs, I have become a different person in the way I interact with them. The deliberations during the focus group interviews demonstrated how different and valuable each one is, and most importantly the richness of the insights that each one shared. I will always cherish the moments I spent with my supervisor, the road was laborious but worth traveling.

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APPENDIX 1

WITS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

27 ST ANDREWS ROAD

PARKTOWN

JOHANNESBURG

2000

10 AUGUST 2011

Mary Malia

MEd Candidate

Dear_____

Information and Consent to participate in a research project

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in an MED research study to explore FET District Subject Advisor's (DSAs) understanding of the tension between formative assessment (FA) and summative assessment (SA) during the shift from the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). As part of the study you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless you request otherwise, your name will be kept strictly confidential at all times in all academic writing about the study.

RISKS

There are no unforeseeable risks in participating in this study. If you have any concerns about participation, or any questions that you would like to ask, please contact me any time.

TIME INVOLVEMENT

You are free to fill in this questionnaire at any time convenient to yourself.

SUBJECT'S RIGHTS

If you have read this letter and have decided to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study.

CONSENT

Please complete, sign and return the form below.

Thank You

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT

Mary Malia

Wonderboom Junction Cnr Lavender & Lavender West Street

Private Bag X945

Pretoria

0001

Tel: 012 543 1153/1094

Cell: 078 743 2780

Email: Mary.Malia@gauteng.gov.za

CONSENT

I am willing to participate in the study:

_____ Yes

_____ No

Signature_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2

WITS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

27 ST ANDREWS ROAD

PARKTOWN

JOHANNESBURG

2000

10 AUGUST 2011

Mary Malia

MEd Candidate

Dear_____

Information and Consent to participate in a research project

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in an MED research study to explore FET District Subject Advisor's (DSAs) understanding of the tension between formative assessment (FA) and summative assessment (SA) during the shift from the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). As part of the study you will be asked to:

1. Take part in a focus group interview of 5 Life Sciences DSAs.

2. be audio-recorded while participating in the interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless you request otherwise, your name will be kept strictly confidential at all times in all academic writing about the study.

RISKS

There are no unforeseeable risks in participating in this study. If you have any concerns about participation, or any questions that you would like to ask, please contact me any time.

TIME INVOLVEMENT

The interview and audio-recording will be conducted on a day and venue you agree on. The duration of the interview will be 90min.

SUBJECT'S RIGHTS

If you have read this letter and have decided to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. You will not incur any financial costs nor will you be remunerated for participation.

CONSENT

Please complete, sign and return the form below.

Thank You

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT

Mary Malia

Wonderboom Junction Cnr Lavender & Lavender West Street

Private Bag X945

Pretoria

0001

Tel: 012 543 1153/1094

Cell: 078 743 2780

Email: Mary.Malia@gauteng.gov.za

CONSENT

I am willing to participate in the study:

_____ Yes

_____ No

Signature_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 3

Carefully examine the scoring rubric below and encircle the response you think is appropriate. A provision has been made for comments to elaborate on your responses should you so wish to do so. A return envelope has been included, kindly return by: 12 September 2011.

ASSESSMENT IN GENERAL	**RATING**				
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree or disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
1.Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	5
2.Assessment is often a waste of time	1	2	3	4	5
3.Assessment sometimes derails teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	5
4.Assessment, teaching and learning are usually inseparable	1	2	3	4	5
5.Assessment is always judgmental	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT					
1.Formative assessment is too time consuming	1	2	3	4	5
2. Formative assessment is a not a good predictor of learner achievement	1	2	3	4	5
3.Formative assessment and CASS are quite similar	1	2	3	4	5
4.Formative assessment can be used for marks	1	2	3	4	5
5.School Based Assessment should be discontinued	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND STANDARDIZED TESTS					
1.Summative assessment and standardized tests are quite similar	1	2	3	4	5
2.Examinations are the only true means of assessing learner performance	1	2	3	4	5
3.Standardized tests are likely to lead teachers to teach to test	1	2	3	4	5
4.Examination driven assessment is becoming prevalent	1	2	3	4	5
5. Standardized testing forms part of summative assessment	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
TENSION BETWEEN FORMATIVE (FA) & SUMMATIVE (SA)					
1.FA and SA test similar knowledge and skills	1	2	3	4	5
2.SA should be given more attention than FA	1	2	3	4	5
3.Formative quarterly results send wrong signals to stakeholders about learner performance	1	2	3	4	5
4.At times FA and SA are more competing than complementary	1	2	3	4	5
5.Teachers are not really expected to develop their own assessments any more	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:					
POLICY: NCS – CAPS					
1.Assessment in NCS placed more emphasis on formative assessment than in CAPS	1	2	3	4	5
2.Assessment in CAPS focuses less on SA	1	2	3	4	5
3. CAPS does not really require FA	1	2	3	4	5
4. In CAPS teachers are still expected to develop their own assessments.	1	2	3	4	5
5.CAPS documents align topics and assessments with available time allocated per subject	1	2	3	4	5
6. NCS seems to be examination driven	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Semi-structured interview questions will be framed on the DSAs understanding of Assessment, FA, SA, tension between FA & SA and assessment shifts from NCS to CAPS.

Introduction
Thank you very much for availing yourself to this interview. I really appreciate your coming and your time.

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

You are participating in this research on a voluntary basis, remember that you can refuse to answer a particular question at any time or withdraw from the research process at any time. You will not incur any costs nor will you be remunerated for participation. If you have any questions about this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact: Mary Malia on 076 743 2780 or Ms Bronwen Wilson-Thompson, School of Education, University of Witwatersrand on 011 717 3198.

Questions:
FA and SA

1. What are your views and feelings regarding the future of formal assessment in SA in general and in your personal, particular case?
2. What is your understanding of assessment in the FET phase in general?
3. What is your understanding of FA?
4. What is your understanding of SA?
5. In your own opinion what is the purpose of standardized testing?
6. Do you think school based assessment (SBA) enhances teaching and learning? How

Tension between FA and SA

1. In your own understanding, FA and SA are they complementary or competing? How
2. In your own opinion do standardized tests improve the learner performance? How
3. In your own view how can synergy are created between FA and SA?
4. In your own opinion, can evidence used in summative assessment be used to help learning? How
5. In your view can evidence collected for formative purposes be used for summative assessment? How

Policy: NCS-CAPS

1. What would you say are the major changes in assessment between NCS and CAPS?

2. What do you think of assessment changes as a whole?
3. How have assessment policy changes influenced your supportive role in schools/your subject?
4. What will be your main message to teachers about assessment in CAPS?
5. What effect do you expect standardized testing to have on teaching and learning?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

APPENDIX 5: ETHICS CLEARANCE

education
Department: Education
GAUTENG PROVINCE

For administrative use:
Reference no. D2012/146

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**16 August 2011**
Name of Researcher:	**Malia M.M.**
Address of Researcher:	**P.O. Box 58092**
	Karenpark
	0118
Telephone Number:	**012 543 1153 / 078 743 2780**
Fax Number:	**012 543 1153**
Email address:	**Mary.Malia@gauteng.gov.za**
Research Topic:	**Exploring the FET district Subject Advisor's (DSAs) understanding of the tension between Formative assessment (FA) and Summative assessment (SA) during the shift from NCS to CAPS**
Number and type of schools:	**FIVE District Offices**
District/s/HO	**Tshwane North, Tshwane South; Tshwane West; Gauteng North and Gauteng West.**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX 6

1	Assessment is an integral part of teaching & learning	4	2	0	0	0
2	assessment is often a waste of time	0	0	0	2	4
3	assessment sometimes derails teaching & learning	0	2	2	1	1
4	assessment,teaching & learning are usually inseparable	2	3	0	0	1
5	assessment is always judgmental	0	2	2	1	1
	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT & STANDARDIZED TESTS					
1	Summative assessment & standardised tests are quite similar	1	4	1	0	0
2	Examinations are the only true means of assessing learner performance.	0	1	0	4	1
3	Standardized tests are likely to lead teachers to teach to test.	0	3	2	1	0
4	Examination driven assessment is becoming prevalent.	0	4	2	0	0
5	standardised testing forms part of summative assessment	2	4	0	0	0
	POLICY: NCS – CAPS					
1	Assessment in NCS placed more emphasis on formative assessment than in CAPS	0	2	3	0	0
2	Assessment in CAPS focuses less on SA	0	1	0	3	1
3	Caps does not really require FA	0	0	0	3	1
4	In CAPS teachers are still expected to develop their own assessments.	0	5	0	0	0
5	CAPS documents align topics and assessments with available time allocated per subject.	2	3	0	0	0
6	NCS seems to be examination driven.	0	2	1	1	1

1	Formative assessment is too time consuming.	0	1	1	3	1
2	Formative assessment is a not a good predictor of learner achievement	0	0	0	5	1
3	Formative assessment and CASS are quite similar	0	4	0	2	0
4	Formative assessment can be used for marks	1	5	0	0	0
5	school based assessment should be discontinued	0	0	0	4	2
	TENSION BETWEEN FORMATIVE(FA) & SUMMATIVE (SA)					
1	FA & SA test similar knowledge and skills.	0	4	0	2	0
2	SA should be given more attention than FA.	0	2	2	1	1
3	Formative qualitative results send wrong signals to stakeholders …	0	2	1	3	0
4	At times FA & SA are more competing than complementary.	0	1	4	1	0
5	Teachers are not really expected to develop their own assessments…	0	1	0	4	1

APPENDIX 7: QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY MAIN STUDY ANALYSIS

		Strongly agree 1	Agree 2	Neither agree / disagree 3	disagree 4	Strongly disagree 5
	ASSESSMENT IN GENERAL					
1	Assessment is an integral part of teaching & learning	61	7	0	0	2
2	assessment is often a waste of time	4	1	2	18	46
3	assessment sometimes derails teaching & learning	4	7	6	20	33
4	assessment, teaching & learning are usually inseparable	45	20	1	2	2
5	assessment is always judgmental	3	12	12	30	11
	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT & STANDARDIZED TESTS					
1	Summative assessment & standardised tests are quite similar	5	35	12	15	2
2	Examinations are the only true means of assessing learner performance.	4	11	3	33	20
3	Standardized tests are likely to lead teachers to teach to test.	5	31	15	17	2
4	Examination driven assessment is becoming prevalent.	7	36	11	13	1
5	standardised testing forms part of summative assessment	15	41	7	3	1
	POLICY: NCS – CAPS					
1	Assessment in NCS placed more emphasis on formative assessment than in CAPS	1	9	19	36	4
2	Assessment in CAPS focuses less on SA	1	5	10	44	9
3	Caps does not really require FA	0	3	7	34	24
4	In CAPS teachers are still expected to develop their own assessments.	15	38	6	9	2
5	CAPS documents align topics and assessments with available time allocated per subject.	24	35	7	0	2
6	NCS seems to be examination driven.	3	16	17	29	4

		Strongly agree 1	Agree 2	Neither agree / disagree 3	disagree 4	Strongly disagree 5
	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT					
1	Formative assessment is too time consuming.	4	13	2	31	17
2	Formative assessment is a not a good predictor of learner achievement	0	10	8	31	18
3	Formative assessment and CASS are quite similar	11	23	11	22	2
4	Formative assessment can be used for marks	9	40	2	15	3
5	school based assessment should be discontinued	2	6	3	22	37
	TENSION BETWEEN FORMATIVE(FA) & SUMMATIVE (SA)					
1	FA & SA test similar knowledge and skills.	8	29	10	18	1
2	SA should be given more attention than FA.	2	12	13	30	9
3	Formative qualitative results send wrong signals to stakeholders …	6	20	15	18	7
4	At times FA & SA are more competing than complementary.	0	24	18	24	3
5	Teachers are not really expected to develop their own assessments…	8	12	3	27	17

APPENDIX 8

MAIN STUDY

So thank you very much for availing yourselves to this group interview, I really appreciate your coming and your time, I know it was not easy because of the nature of work that we do and the tasks at hand including CAPS preparations. My name is Mary Malia, in fact it is pronounced Madia but spelled Malia, and it's a Southern Sotho Surname, so it is spelled Malia but is Malia. I am the researcher, I am a student at WITS and I'm looking into issues of assessment. This afternoon I'll be the moderator facilitating this discussion here. Please be assured that anything that you exchange in this interview is confidential and this information will only be used for the purposes of this research and to protect your confidentiality, no personal identifying information about you will be recorded in the research findings.

For this interview will make use of codes, if you can check your folders you have your own codes there and eh please kindly identify yourself by specifying your code before making a contribution, you would say number 3, number 32 before you make your contribution. I will keep on reminding you, I know it's gonna be difficult. This interview will also be audio recorded as indicated in your consent forms and this is basically for valid and reliable data, you know to get data verbatim and to ensure that the data that I receive is valid and reliable.

Research records will only be used for the purposes of this study and for my M.Ed. research report. You are participating in this research on a voluntary basis, remember that you can refuse to answer a particular question at any time or withdraw from the research process at any time without consequences. You will not incur any costs nor will you be remunerated for participation, and again the duration of this interview will be 90 minutes ok. Inside those folders I have included a consent form, if you could kindly read them and sign them and leave them before eh the session, before the end of the session. Eh ladies let me just remind you of the topic, I know you have seen the topic many a times from the questionnaires you know and eh the communicate that we engaged with each other in. My research topic is exploring the District Subject Advisor's understanding of the tension between formative assessment and summative assessment during the shift from NCS to CAPS, that is my focus this afternoon. Ladies questions will be categorized into three, you will have eh questions around formative and summative assessment, what is your understanding of formative and summative assessment, you will have questions around tension between formative and summative assessment and the third category would be around policy, NCS, CAPS Ok and maybe let us start with an ice-breaker whilst waiting for code 90 you know. I would like you ladies to introduce yourselves and maybe as part of the introduction just tell us eh what, you know something about what you like doing when you want to have fun. How do you have fun, who are you, what are you about and what do you like doing outside your work environment.

Code, number 11
Eh when I'm to have fun, I like exercising, I can go the gym and exercise and just after that relax (ok, exercising and relax, that's the fun part of it). And what do you do in terms of your job? Facilitate club sciences, Ok thank you

Code 32
Eh code 32 when she thinks she's having fun, that's when I'm at home with my family watching a movie or just laughing over a particular matter that has taken place or over some of the jokes

and I also enjoy shopping with my kids (ok) that's how I have fun. And your job? I'm a District Subject Advisor for Life Sciences. And what is it that you do exactly as a subject advisor? Mm I monitor and support curriculum implementation in schools that are offering Life Sciences as a subject, I'm also responsible for developing educators with regard to content, I also set common exams and at times controlled tests, I moderate SBAs, I monitor exams especially the NCS exams and grade 12, monitoring also of SSIP classes, writing of reports, I think that's exactly what I'm doing, I'm not sure if I have left something else but I have tried to sample what my duties entails (roles are). Ok thank you very much. Ladies now I'm going to go straight to our starter discussion question because I believe we need to have the question that is going to be very open you know and general for us to start with and obviously I'd like an opening statement from each and every one. You are allowed to take some notes, I think there's a page included in your folder to take notes if you want to or write something if you want to. My first eh question in my guide here is.

1. What are your views and feelings regarding the future of formal assessment in SA in general and in your personal, particular case?, your views and feelings regarding the future of formal assessment in SA, future of formal assessment in SA in general and in your personal, particular case? So this is a very open question (…the future of formal assessment in SA in general and in your personal capacity.)

You said the future neh (ya future, where are we going in terms of formal assessment in SA, in general, that's your own view, your own opinion)

Mmm Code 32 (thank you)
Well I think that the education system in SA take formal assessment eh as a very important part within the issue of assessment because currently with the NCS, learners do sit for formal tests which we call, which we refer to as the controlled tests, though the tests are so few according to me, I have realised that with the introduction of the CAPS, they have now increased the number of formal tests that the learners must sit for in a year, currently they only sit for two tests and two exams, but with the CAPS, they are supposed to sit for four tests provided the final eh document is not changed because the assessment part of it was supposed to be changed here and there (ok) and then they will also have two exams except that in grade 12 they will have three with the preparatory. So I really think SA take this very serious that learners cannot go to school and not be assessed formally and I personally think and believe this is a good thing, that they are doing to an extent that they have now introduced this issue of assessment formally in the lower grades, in the sense that they train our learners from a young age that they is so called assessment in a formal way, where we'll not have refer to anything, where you will have your teacher as the invigilator and there are rules that must be obeyed during that particular time, because even at a young age they are read those exam rules, this is to show how serious this issue is in many of our schools, I thank you. Thank you very much.

Code 11
Eh with regard to formal assessment, I see us moving towards intensifying formal assessment especially school based formal assessment on during the terms and eh why I say so is because like previously we used not to recognize school based assessment. It was only when the learners do the final exam in matric then it is recognized tests. The other tests were for the school, they were not recognized but at least now we have some guidelines on what to do from grade 10, like we are responsible for grade 10, 11 and 12. We have guidelines on what to assess on formally during the term for each subject, which I think is a very good move and also it assists the teaching and learning process because it's now making assessment to be part of the teaching from the planning and up to the final assessment of the outcomes. So I think we are moving

towards an intensified formal assessment and eh also with the activities, they are becoming more activities and with the introduction of OBE, we are now focusing on group's activities and so on and even the assessment, we could assess learners in groups and so on, but now with the introduction of CAPS eh our focus is now on the individual. They can do the activities in groups but the focus is on the individual, what an individual can achieve. (thank you very much, eh I'm going to park this last one for the last category of the policies because I'm also interested in what is happening in terms of policy during the shift from NCS to CAPS, but also I've picked from what you've just eh said that eh formal assessment is no longer going to, the focus is no longer going to be at the end like it used to be even during the term, you know it is being intensified. You are saying learners, teachers and every other stakeholder is going to begin to take it very serious, ok)

2. What is your understanding of assessment in the FET phase in general?, just assessment without even categorizing it. Assessing a learner in the FET phase. FET phase as the last leg of you know schooling and eh you know probably preparing learners for the world out there, mm.

Code 11
I think is involving checking where the learning and teaching is and where we want to take it to, you said without categorizing whether is formal and (for now), ya so it will involve all the activities that the teachers and the learners are going to engage in, in order to check where do we want to get to, where are we now, what do we have to do to get to where we want to get, that's how I see it in the FET. (And this is how it is being implemented?) To some extent (to some extent ok)

Code 32
Mm my understanding of assessment is that it is a process, eh a day to day event of which the stakeholders use it to check progress of teaching and learning and use assessment to direct future teaching and learning that must take place, that's my (in the FET phase particularly) in the FET.

(But do you think the assessment in the FET is actually preparing the learners for the world out there? You know we talking grade 10, 11 and 12, the exit. Are they ready to go to tertiary? The kind of assessment that we subject eh our learners to, does it really prepare them for the after FET?)

Code 32
To me that will depend on the type of school that the learner attend, if the learner is exposed to assessment as it is, remember that in assessment there are skills that learners are assessed on, now if a teacher during this process of assessment subjects learners to all those various skills at the end the learner will be able to be successful when is outside the school environment, when in a tertiary institution the learner will be able to function. I will also say that if we look at the number of graduates at Universities and Technicons even if the numbers are not that high but the few that are able to graduate tell us that, learners that are assessed in the FET are able somehow to function very well in tertiary institutions, though not all of them are able to (mm ok). (Any additions?)

Code 11
Eh mm I would like to back again to our previous eh mm curriculum, OBE and even NatEd. We used to mainly assess on the theory even if it's on practice, which is in the real world but learners will do it theoretically but now there exists a gap when learners go to tertiary institutions, then they tend not to cope with the pressure of now doing practical's or even when they are in the field of work and now with the introduction of CAPS especially in Life Sciences, we are now

going to have practical work in grade 10 and 11 which is something new, it was there but it was done theoretically, it was never assessed practically, it was assessed theoretically. Eh mm another gap with in that regard is also the level of assessment of the skills and knowledge at grade 10, 11 and 12 and what to be expected to be assessed at tertiary. If you take the content frame work of tertiary, let me look at even education, the teacher who is being trained to come and teach education at grade 10, 11 and 12, you might find that, that very same teacher is doing different content as compared to the content which is currently being taught in grade 10, 11 and 12 and that's a gap between tertiary institutions and high school level, that is the other reason why our learners, after completing even if they come out distinctions they won't cope at tertiary level (basically because there is no alignment) exactly.

3. Very interesting. Ok let me go to the next question in fact is the first category, formative and summative assessment. What is your understanding of formative assessment? What do you understand by formative assessment? You hear people talking formative assessment, summative assessment and ya but this afternoon I would like to get your experiences, your understanding of formative assessment

Code 11
I would say um formative assessment uh is the assessment which is done on day to day basis in order to build up the learning, teaching and learning process. Formative, forming up, building up, eh which will come in different tasks and in different activities and which also prepares the learner for the summative assessment and I would say formative assessment would help the teacher, the learner and the parent to see where our strength, where our weaknesses is , eh are we moving towards achieving the set goals and what can we do to achieve the set goals and is not necessarily for promotion (not necessarily for promotion, I hear you mentioning parents. I wonder what would be the role of parents in formative assessment. Do they have a role to play?). Yes they do. Eh let me talk from the point of a parent cause I'm also a parent, eh I'll know how my child is performing throughout the term, if I'm in constant contact with what is happening in the classroom, how the learner is performing during the day to day assessment. So that, suppose my child is not performing well, it won't come as a surprise at the end of the term when they do the summative assessment to say, your child is going to repeat the grade because she or he has this one, two, three problems but my role there is to see eh, they did an assessment on the water cycle, my child did not do well I can support the child with this resources so that they can do better, they can improve, suppose, because in most cases you will find that whatever comes within the formative assessment, it comes again in summative assessment, it might be in a different form.

Is very interesting to hear that and I'm just you know in the back of my mind I am thinking eh parents have got a very important role to play you know after what you have just said, so I am wondering and I don't want you to respond to this question. Are parents really supporting learners?, or supporting their children throughout formative assessment in order for their children to achieve the set goal, are they getting that support. I can imagine eh probably your intervention in that example that you just given would make a difference at the end of the day but what about a child who does not get any support from a parent then it would mean there's a gap right there that needs to be closed but let's not go there, let's focus on formative assessment.

Code 32
Formative assessment in my understanding is assessment that is done in a formal setting that is under supervision or in a controlled environment which is done for the individual or the learner, it is not done to the learner, it is done for the learner as it assesses the learning progress of the child. I also view formative assessment as a type of assessment used for scaffolding, building up

towards a type of assessment which will be used to make a decision about the learner's progress and it is at this level where parental involvement is key because remember at this stage we do not make a decision about whether the learner should proceed to the next level of learning or not, hence I'm saying this is where parents need to be involved. They need to identify the weaknesses and the strength of their children, so as to support them accordingly. Ok I have picked something from your contribution, you talked about formal setting but it has to take place in a formal setting, maybe let me extent it to try to find out what kind of settings would be formal settings? Is it a classroom or what would be a formal setting?

A formal setting, it can be a classroom, it can be a hall but to me this is where eh a situation where teachers must be there to invigilate the learners, so as we need to check if learners are able to respond to the questions being asked without referring or without seeking clarity from other learners or the teacher, hence I'm referring to a formal setting.

I want to extent the discussion because you see the focus of the study is in fact formative and summative assessment. I want to get as much eh information, you know your experiences in terms of formative assessment. Tasks that will be monitored neh in a classroom, formal setting examples would be a test, would be maybe a classwork, a practical test (a practical test) those would form part of formative assessment. I want to go back to the issue of a formal setting and formative assessment and you explained formal setting to say it should be under control of a teacher and it should be monitored by somebody examples should be invigilated to me it brings either a test or classwork that's where you can invigilate, see to it that learners are actually focused and they are not even referring from other sources

Code 32
The SBAs are part of formal assessment and we are aware that with the SBAs you also have assignments, you also have a research assignment, I forgot what the other one, where learners need to go out and get information but learners must still come back to the classroom, where they make their final draft in the presence of the teacher. This is to show that the learner was not assisted by either the parent at home in finalizing his or her homework that to me is a formal setting because that is not done at home, at home the child must only go and search for information, either go to the internet or to the library gather information, go back to the class and finalize whatever that he or she has researched about. So that does not only include the classworks and the tests. The assignments also form part of formative assessment. (Ok, any comment).

Code 11
I wanted to say, for formative assessment I would include uhm the formal as well as the informal assessment because eh they both play a role in building or in laying a foundation in the development of teaching and learning towards the set goals. (Then you are introducing another one formal and informal, so formative assessment is actually formed by both, formal and informal and what would be informal assessment then because I think we have touched more of formal even from the beginning)

Code 11
Uh informal would be assessment that is not formal ("laughs" it's a good one, ya I agree), like the teachers want to check if the learners have understood yesterday's work, they can start by a lesson, by giving questions which are not necessarily marked or recorded, oral questions they answer those questions, they can assess each other, that's very informal, (ok) is no recorded anyway and it's done in a very informal way (very informal way but not recorded) not recorded, not necessarily (formal recorded) ya. The formal we record (ok, so if I want to distinguish

between formal and informal, I can say formal assessment tasks are recorded tasks, informal are those that are not recorded)

Code 11
Not necessarily, because some teachers would like to record each and every assessment they do in class. So if we classify them according to recorded and not recorded, I don't think we are classifying them fairly. Eh I would say formally like what code 32 said is in a formal seating, is something which is part of the formal assessment programme, it's an expected test which they are given for this term, you are going to write this test covering this topics and it will be done on this day. Then informally I can come on a Friday to say by the way we are learning on reproduction and I would like to see if we really know all the terminology that is in this topic, then we have a terminology test, which we say it's a terminology test, that's not formal assessment, it's an informal assessment (ok).

Can we classify or categorize eh the recording according to the purpose, say recording for the purpose of maybe resulting or recording for the purpose of monitoring the performance. I agree with you. (Ok, do we agree?) Ya I agree.

Code 32
Whilst she was explaining, Code 11 was explaining I realized that sometimes we, we work with this things and you only realize when we are having a debate such as this, that you know what this issues are not as simple as we sometimes take them to be because if you really seat and think about what formative assessment is, it's true that in it you will have both informal and formal, otherwise I am aware we haven't talked about summative, with summative you will not have informal. Now if we don't put informal, if we don't classify it under formative then it cannot be anywhere and informal is a very important part of assessment because it is referred to as assessment that is used for learning, it is not assessment of learning, it is assessment for learning. So I also agree with what you have just said with regard to the recording part, it's important to record for various reasons. You record for, to inform the learner about his or her, the progress that the learner has made with regard to learning, you record for reporting purposes, you record to decide whether the learner must proceed or not. So recording is quite very important but I personally will not or maybe before this meeting I thought I will not record informal assessment but with this debate if it is for purposes such as to check the learners' progress then you can record. If there's a parent's meeting and the parents are there that evening you take the class lists, where you have recorded all your informal assessment and then you show the parent the progress that the learner is making with regard to Life Sciences for an example. (Thank you very much)

4. Can I then go to the next one? Summative assessment, what is your understanding of summative assessment? I'm glad that it was not difficult for you to talk about formative assessment without contrasting with summative, because I know is a very tricky one, is very difficult to talk about formative and not talk about summative but I think you did well. What is your understanding of summative assessment?

Code 11
(Looks like we start here) oh ok. Uhm I would consider summative assessment to be eish running out of words, when we now want to some up towards the achievement of the goal for the purpose of progression, ya (ok).

(Summative you had so much to say about formative).

Code 32

(Yes) eh maybe is because with summative, this is where a decision about the learners' progress is made. This is assessment of learning, this is where you assess the learner, you decide whether the learner proceed to the next grade or not and at this stage there is nothing we can do to improve the learners progress of learning. It is during formative assessment that we can try if the learner is not performing to a level that we expect that learner to perform during formative assessment we can do some intervention, prior to summative assessment so during summative assessment we just inform the parent, the learner is informed about whether he or she proceeds to the next grade. That's why maybe we will not have a lot of things to talk about (it sounds to be some kind of an unfair assessment because it is, you know from your definitions it's closed, judgemental, is final nothing can be done, you know it's)

Code 11
Is not that nothing can't be done but at that point in time, eh maybe let me take it to eh, suppose someone wants to be a driver, when they are doing their driving lessons with the instructor, eh suppose they are at a gradient, starting from a gradient and then the car rolls back. The instructor is going to inform them that if you roll back, you're going to fail. So your car must not roll back. That is formative assessment but on the day for driving test, if the car rolls back, what will the "what is he called? Eh the traffic officer", say you failed. So that is the difference between the formative and the summative. If they failed, they failed that test but there can be another chance for the learner to do another tests, another summative test at a different stage but they can't do it there and then and say no now that we have told you, if it rolls back you have failed, you can try again let's see if you can do, they can't do that because now it's summative tests. (They can try again later, ok)

Code 32
What is your definition of later? (Of) later. They can try again later.

Code 11
They can re-register, like with the matric exam is summative. If a learner fails they can go for remarking, they can write again supplementary. That's trying again later, they can repeat the year and write again. That's trying again later.

Code 32
But can we say it is judgemental? Like Mary said (the summative). (I didn't say it's judgemental, I was just you know from your statements, that it sounds to be judgemental). But to me it's judgemental. Summative is judgemental because like we have said it's only that the time that you receive your results, there is nothing that you can do to say let me go and write, again maybe I score eh a much better mark at that moment there is nothing that you can do but in the future yes you can, but a decision has been made. (Mm, so it's more of a decision has been made of whether or not you have met the requirements. The requirements have been set, you got to meet one two there, if you don't either you proceed or you are retained. Any other thing to say? Summative assessment).

Code 32
I also believe that summative, like when I explained what formative is, I said it is used for scarf holding. Now in summative, summative to me is like a summary of what the learner has been assessed on during the formative assessment, therefore teachers must not you know shelf those difficult questions for the summative assessment and not give learners such questions during formative. For any assessment there are cognitive skills that the learners must be eh exposed to, during formative assessment learners must be exposed to those cognitive skills, they are practising as to how to respond to questions based on those type of skills and during the

summative assessment the questions might not be repeated but the skill must be evident in the type of questions that are asked. So it mustn't be completely new something, you give a learner say only during the summative assessment, whereas during the formative assessment the learner has never seen a question based on an assay at all, it's unfair to the learner. So to me it's a summary of the assessment or formative assessment that was given to the learner throughout the year or during a particular time. (Thank you very much)

5. The next question in your own opinion, what is the purpose of standardized testing? What would be the purpose of standardized testing?

Code 32
A standardized test, to me it is eh, if you give learners eh a standardized test or my understanding of standardized testing. Is testing learners, one on the content that the learners should have learned at that particular time and standardized testing can be done per month, it can be done per term. It must involve the cognitive, the various cognitive skills according to their waiting. Standardized testing must prepare learners towards an exam that they will be sitting for (must be able to prepare learners for the final exam), ya that's what standardized testing is and at the same time we can talk about standardized testing in an exam. It depends on what one refers to, if you talk about a standardized test then it will be done per term and so on but if we talk of standardized testing, that can also include an exam.

I like this one, then I want us to talk about a standardized test, what is a standardized test? Because I see a standardized test here, I see standardized testing. What is a standardized test?

Code 11
I would think that standardized test is a test which is aimed at setting a certain standard eh by testing if learners have achieved the expected outcomes in a certain topic and on certain skills, eh standardized tests in Life Science for an example during the first term let's take grade 10, would have a standardized test on the content of the first term and we would include the skills, like what code 32 said that we are going to test them in the final. So in a way that's standardized test it's acting as a formative testing for the learners. (But what is it that is standardized in the test?) What is standardized are the knowledge, the content, the skills. We expect that standardized test to be structured in the same way a final exam is structured. The learners must be exposed to multiple choice questions, learners must be exposed to terminology matching, eh graphing skills, eh data skills, writing of an essay, that's a standardized testing Life Sciences

Code 32
(I see you nodding are you in agreement) I am in agreement with Code 11 especially that she mentioned the issue of the structure. Earlier on I said that if we talk of a standardized test, it must prepare learners for the end of year exam and in preparation for the end of year exam. It means the structure of that standardized test or of that test, it must be of the same standard of that of the end of year exam, hence the way standard is there in the standardized testing.

Let me ask this, you are District Subject Advisors in different districts having different schools, if your schools in your district, schools that are offering Life Sciences are writing those tests that you say are standardized neh, they are structured, they've got all those eh levels of eh cognition and all those things but they are different tests. School A is writing this well-structured test with all the levels of taxonomy and everything and School B and C and D. Can we say for your district, they have written a standardized test. Say for term 1, are they standardized tests?

Let me welcome code 90.

(Ok) Code 32
We emphasise on the use of waiting grids when setting a standardized test and I would like to believe that a test that has got a waiting grid, when teachers are setting a particular test, they use a waiting grid to say so many questions are for knowledge, so many questions are for this and that. To me that is a standardized test. The standard has been set by the waiting grid because I believe just by looking at the test you cannot say whether the test is standardized. It can have that structure that we are looking for, Section A can be low order questions and so on, Section B can have questions that learners must respond to eh a particular data, they can have an essay in Section C but by looking at the test you cannot tell whether it is standardized. I think the use of a waiting grid will inform whether the test is standardized or not (ok) but I believe even if they are writing different tests and all of them are having waiting grids for the tests that the learners are writing yes you can make a decision and say the tests, the schools in my district are writing standardized tests.

Code 90 you are welcome, you are very early, there was a miscommunication I guess. Ya but its ok, you are welcome and you are just going to join us and just go with the flow. Ja you have a folder there, there's a consent form inside, you will read it and after this and sign it but there is also a blank page that you can use to take notes, to takes notes as and when we discuss and we have categorized our questions into three. Formative, Summative we have discussed what formative assessment is, what eh summative assessment is, currently we are looking into standardized testing. The purpose of standardized testing but we wouldn't mind you know in the meantime, whilst eh 32 is. By the way we are using codes before you make your contribution please just mention your code, which is outside your folder. Your code, ya so you just mention your code and then you can make your contribution.

So whilst 32 is still out, whilst 32 is still out briefly your understanding of formative assessment. We just want to capture your understanding, because we've been getting you know different views and experiences of what formative assessment is.

Code 90
Ok I'm trying to think (yes you are allowed to think). Ya if I'm right formative assessment is this eh the informal tasks, informal assessment neh, ya that's the assessing learners like throughout the year ok, which I feel it's a good thing because it prepares them for summative assessment at the end of the term or at the end of the year and then through it you can actually see gaps that needs maybe to be filled maybe you can go back and correct whatever before they sit for summative. Ya so I think is a very essential part of assessment, informal assessment, I think is very important that learners be assessed. (I've picked up eh terms here, building, they've been talking more about "the building up", process and I'm getting that also from you. It's kind of developmental, preparing learners for the final, summative. Any other thing, well you are even allowed to contrast it with summative)

Code 90
Ok maybe in my field of work, what I have picked up at schools is that eh most educators do not give too much attention towards formative assessment and then that for me it raises a serious concern. It's like when you go to schools you find that eh learners don't have a lot of eh activities, informal activities in their work books, it's like the educators do not take that very seriously, so eh I'm for formative assessment and then when you look at summative, if I have to research and compare them (it's really up to you, I'm not going to confine you to one). Summative alright it's like where they sit at the end of the term maybe and assessed or tested on eh number of eh activities that they did or work that they did all throughout the term or all

throughout the year. Ok eh for me summative assessment also is important because I feel that for learners to go on maybe to the next grade, they need to be assessed on everything that they did in the or throughout the year, ya. So but I'm not for formative assessment being a criteria which can take learners to the next grade maybe it's because of the way it is addressed, like maybe eh learners are not given or are given, they are not like monitored thoroughly when they eh this informal assessment is administered to them, so hence you find that learners get a lot of marks from formative assessment. So I think summative it's more, is a true reflection. If a learner maybe performs well in summative assessment to me it tells me that, that learner is ready now to go to the next level.

Thank you very much (Code 90) 90, nine zero. We are still in standardized testing, just your opinion. What is the purpose of standardized testing? What would be the purpose of standardized testing? We had to go back and understand what it means. What does standardized tests and what is standardized testing?

Code 90
Ok is there a difference there, between standardized testing and standardized tests ("laughs" any difference, are they the same thing. Standardized tests and standardized testing, can we hear from you. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers)

Code 90
Alright, I think once you say standard, you know there is eh a criteria set maybe neh, there's a criteria set and then if a learner is maybe able to prepare for, if a learner is able to perform above that criteria or maybe let me put it in this way, if there is a test that needs to be set, it has to be at a particular standard neh maybe I'm thinking about standardized testing, that test has to be at a particular standard. It has to meet a certain requirement Ok and then if it does then it's not standardized (ok) ya.

Standardized testing and comparing of results back to that analogy that you have your schools, they are writing tests, they are all standardized according to what we discussed but can you compare the results, can you analyse the results of those schools and begin to compare the results. Should I rephrase?

Code 32
I don't think there is a need, while with me (maybe if need be, is it possible to compare, will it be fair to compare)

Code 32
To me it will be unfair to compare because though the tests were standardized, I should think they did not use the same measure to check whether the learners of a particular school can perform at this level, at a particular level unlike with the grade 12 and final examination and were learners in the whole country sit for the same question paper. So if learners write the same question paper then you can use that particular tool to measure the learner's competency.

It's very interesting because I'm now going to ask, the final grade 12 exam, matric. Is that standardized testing? Is the testing standardized and why or how?

Code 90
I think it is standardized because we are talking from a Life Sciences point of view because I think there were I'm like, I have a little idea. I think eh for grade 12 it is standardized because like I said there are certain measures eh or there's a certain criteria set neh and then if learners

can achieve that criteria then we can say they can, they are competent neh. So in grade 12 because in the exam it is stated eh like the percentages of the L.O's, eh or what type of LO, you have those types of LO's neh. So the exam, the question paper has to satisfy those requirements, the LO's and the assessment standards and the cognitive levels and you know all of those have to be at a certain standard. So if the question paper meets those criteria then I think it's a standardized paper (ok) mm.

6. Ok let me leave standardized testing and go to the next question. Do you think School Based Assessment enhances teaching and learning and how? SBA do you think it enhances teaching and learning? If yes how. You used to go like this this, do we change the set-up (laughs) give you a break.

Code 11
Ok I've taken a break for a while, ya I think School Based Assessment, it does contribute to teaching and learning, that was your question (yes). Eh although since with our School Based Assessment most of the tasks, they are tasks that are common tasks which are done outside of the school. So the School Based is in the task being done and assessed at school but they do contribute (to teaching and learning) to teaching and learning because they are set to achieve the same goals as the formative as well as the summative assessment

Ok they do eh formative eh School Based Assessment enhances teaching and learning. Any other views

Code 32
SBA's to me they do enhances teaching and learning provided teachers take efforts in ensuring that the tasks are done under controlled conditions unlike if the teacher eh can give the learner a task today and say submit it 2 months and the teacher never checks the progress, the teacher never provides time within the classroom and environment for the learners to proceed with the task. The teacher will only see the task on the day of submission and the teacher is not even sure whether the learners did the task all by himself or herself or whether the parent did the task for the learner. You see the skills that these learners are exposed to in the SBA are the skills that the learners will be exposed to when they are in tertiary institutions, writing of reports. Now if the teacher is so vigilant that he or she can provide learners with some time in class, you see if this learner can for an example come up with a hypothesis in a classroom environment with the teacher supervising then we are sure that this learner have the skills, this learner that is able to formulate a hypothesis without assistance by maybe the parent at home. The learner is able to record results and make a conclusion from the results that are recorded without any assistance by anyone and this are the skills that these learners are going to be expose to when they go to the university. They might not do the same content that they are doing, they might not be any alignment content but if the learner has got this skill then the learner can apply whatever.

Very interesting to hear that but you know I used to hear people saying it is time for SBA, I want to get learners to come and write this task and quickly prepare this task probably for recording and for reporting, did I miss something there, is it not happening that way. That people would focus on the task SBA and make learners sit and administer that task and then take it for marking or whatever. Do we have any feedback coming from SBA that would actually enhance teaching and learning because I don't know if we are talking enhancing teaching and learning after it has means after it has been administered? There has to be some form of a follow-up in fact before and during and after and then you know there's, we've been talking about interventions and other things. What is the status core?

Code 90
Actually the SBA eh to me it's like part of learning and teaching, ya like eh 32 said it matters the most under which conditions the tasks are administered, that's very important and then educators need to understand that SBA's, they build towards like maybe summative eh assessment at the end. It's not something that's isolated neh, it needs to be I don't know leaned to teaching and learning, it should be developmental. So teachers must prepare the learners also for that task the SBA task. They have to prepare them, it mustn't be like something I said isolated, they need to prepare them and then usually like she said, this tasks are linked to what they do to let's say maybe the syllabus if I use I don't know if it's an option or what. Ok so going back to the conditions under which the tasks are administered that is very important because, a certain percentage of marks here, eh the SBA mark is used to assist learners in passing at the end of the year. So if the conditions are not monitored eh strictly learners might maybe copy or be assisted or assist each other and then they are going to pass the task and that would give learners a false impression that they, you know that they are, they know what they should know. Only to discover that at the end of the year, now when summative assessment comes, the marks drop and then that is why maybe in some cases we have parents complaining that learners have been passing all throughout the year but come end of the year exam, learners fail. So the conditions under which they write this SBA tasks, it's important.

Maybe let me just throw this question. Eh SBA would you categorize it as being formative or summative and as being formal or informal?

Code 32
I would classify it under both (ok) formative and summative. Formative in the sense that the results there of are given per term, now though the results are given per term for an example, in grade 12 there was this eh SBA task based on the carrier time for an example. Now learners that were exposed to that task even though the learner has been resulted that will inform the learner whether the learner is competent or not. You see eh results have been made about that particular task, it is only one task like that for an example a hands on per year, they won't be any hands on that the learner will sit on. So a decision has been made about the performance of the learner with regard to that particular task which makes it summative assessment but it becomes formative in the sense that the learner, the teacher or the parent can use those results to improve on the learner's knowledge or on the learner's competence about that particular task or about the questions that were set in that particular test, hence I say I can classify SBA as both formal formative assessment as well as the summative.

Code 11
(How would you classify SBA, is it formative or summative assessment?)
Tricky one neh, ya eh School Based Assessment is formative, ya (formative) ya. (How so?) because we are working towards eh achieving the set goals. Let me take an example of one task in Life Science, hypothesis testing, this is an SBA task. Eh the teacher can expose the learners to a number of tasks for hypothesis testing informally, then when they are doing the SBA, the teacher can now expose the learners to a formal hypothesis testing task, right. Those bits and pieces which they have done in classwork for the hypothesis testing. They are formative to this formal assessment task, which is also formative to the final but suppose I'm giving a report on this term and there was one formal assessment task of the hypothesis testing which is the formal one which I have recorded for this term. I'm going to give feedback to the learner and to the parents about the performance of the learner on this hypothesis testing task but I'm not going to make a decision whether is going to fail or not because is during the term, that's why I'm classifying it as formative (as formative) ya.

Code 90
(Your take on this one)
Hey I do hear the debate that it can be formative as well as summative, eh but to me I could say it's more eh formative, but summative. Ok like maybe when we look at the way maybe sometimes the tasks are administered, sometimes they are all administered in a group. You find that learners work in a group although at the end they give individual reports, eh they write their own eh write-ups but the condition they differ from the way they are assessed or the way the summative assessment is conducted maybe at the end of term or at the end of the year. So it's informal SBA task, to me I think they are informally assessed. (Informally which means) more formative (more formative, (giggles) Ok and code 32 said it is formative, summative because end of the term, you would record and report. End of the term for a record and report, that's the summative part of SBA)

Code 32
And even though the learner did not perform well in the task, they won't be any other chance for the learner to redo the task and score a better mark (there won't be any other chance) let's park that one and go to our next category.

7. Tension between formative and summative assessment, in your own understanding formative assessment and summative are they complementary or are they competing and how?

Code 90
I think in actual fact they should be supplementary, they should complement each other in a way that eh formative should prepare learners for summative. So they shouldn't be like eh (competing) competing (ok, 32, 11)

Code 11
Ehm summative, formative, summative, forming to sum-up (giggles) (what does that mean then) eh formative it's meant to complement summative, In the sense that whatever the learners are exposed to during formative eh assessment, it's meant to build up, to prepare the learners for the summative assessment but there are other factors which come in, is the way the formative assessment is administered. You might find that eh is not even meant for building up or what, is just a task it's given that term is just a task then is just administered. So that's where it starts to compete with summative (32) I had not finished (giggles). The other factor which makes eh summative and formative to sort of compete, I think is the time factor. Eh teachers and learners they feel they are under pressure of completing, have you completed four task for this term, have you completed this number of terms for formative, for formal assessment. So the time factor, they find themselves under that pressure, I don't know maybe it goes back to the planning of the activities and so on but I think that contributes to making formative and summative to be seen as a competing but they are not supposed to, they are supposed to complement each other. I'm done (you done, thank you)

Code 32
Eh formative assessment and summative assessment, eh my understanding as to whether they are complementary or competing with one another. I don't see them as competing with one another. Formative is a build up towards summative as my colleagues have just mentioned (ok, thank you cause I didn't want to interrupt, (giggles). I learnt quickly.

8. Ok now you see I once met teachers who were so excited you know around April that I'm done with the syllabus. What does that mean, I don't, what is the syllabus, where does formative assessment fit there, if somebody saying I am done and the person is excited that I am done.

What is it that he is done with, do you have any idea, as subject advisors because you touched on the issue of time, that people are under pressure, you know to complete, eh SBA you know, eh ya which is kind of formative, you know complete it but now when one is done, by May, April, May, what is the implication)

Code 90
Eh you know what I would like to say is, the work that's prescribed let's say maybe for a year, maybe for let's say grade 12. The most important thing it's planning. The first step is to plan for that work, how you going to cover that work because we have what we call eh assessment plans, where you indicate, what must be completed when, ya. So if an educator maybe finishes by like April, I really do not understand that because eh the work that's prescribed must take a particular time or a certain time like maybe for grade 12 I think maybe it's must be finished before the preparatory exams. So it's standard in such a way that those topics maybe they cover that particular time. So if he finishes or she finishes at earlier in the year, it means maybe a lot of information has been given to learners at once. So I feel that, Ok he or she might finish by April but there should be time for revision, a lot of time for revision just to make sure that learners understand everything they have been taught and then in the assessment plan, there should be dates for the SBA for formal eh SBA task when they should be written. So if this particular work is being done, then a task eh relating to that particular work should be given to learners, so if everything is finished in April, I don't think the work has been eh distributed in the correct manner (ok).

Here I need teachers who are complaining that they spend a lot of time on SBA, which is only 25%, only 25% yet there is this 75%, a bulk of marks they don't have time to prepare. So I, that's where, it's the 75 % isolated from the 25%, when they write the 75% is it totally different from the 25. Is it I don't know if people are saying mhm we need more time for 75% and less for 25 because 25 it's you know only just a small amount of marks. What is your take on that one?, are they isolated?, can we complain to say 25% and yet the whole year but only 25%, you know only, I don't know how many months for 75% or one day for 75%?.

Code 32
I think that is the problem or that is a mistake done by the teachers themselves because they separate teaching from assessment. They don't see assessment as an integral part of teaching and I also believe that in a term, there is only one task per term and that task will not be done by the learners maybe in more than two weeks, so it means they have quite a lot of time, if those teachers are separating the 75 from the 25, then they will have even more time for the 75 than for the 25 because it is only one task per term. The problem is that teachers if they have to complain about the SBA, is that they don't do their recordings on time and so on and only at the end of the year during the time when they have to do revision during the time when they have to finalise the syllabus towards when the learners write or sit for preparatory exam, during that time that's when they start to work on their final marks for the SBA, hence now they start complaining that it's a lot for them but if they could sum up term mark, PAT task on the correct recording sheet, they wouldn't be complaining about eh too much time for SBA and then less time for the 75 as they put it.

9. I think you're going back to the issue of planning but what is your take is 25% eh throughout the year, is it ok. 25% SBA throughout the year?

Code 90
I think it's Ok especially because of the environment under which they write the 25% ya because there is a little bit of eh flexibility as compared to eh like maybe a fully fleshed exam (ok) ya

Because I wanted to know is that 75% completely something different from what they have been doing throughout the year?

Code 11
Eh number 11. I want to believe Mary neh, that this teachers who can finish their content framework in April, who can see eh the SBA and the final exam to be two separate intenti… eh, whatever, they are not Life Science teachers (giggles) I would like to believe that, because in Life Science eh the activities that we have in the SBA, they are linked to the exam. They are like formative assessment for, they prepare the learner for the exam. I'll go back to the example of eh hypothesis testing. We expect teachers to give learners tasks in their informal assessment on hypothesis testing before they can give the SBA hypothesis testing and definitely in the exam there's a question on hypothesis testing. So it is cemented there in the final exam and we should build it up through the different activities, the tasks that we are giving the learners throughout the year. So is not a waste of time, is not duplication, is not eh competing, I think that they complement each other.

10. Thank you very much. In your own view, how can synergy be created then between the two? How best can synergy be created between formative and summative assessment? Maybe if I can get contributions from each, so that we can save time. I am worried now. How best can we create synergy between the two, formative and summative?

Code 90
I think maybe the best way is by work-shopping our educators, maybe as subject advisors we need to take them aboard, you know explain the differences between the two and the importance's between the two and then that fact that they, you know that they are interrelated. So maybe we need to, is like eh to impress it in their minds you know, sometimes you know they don't do things, because they do not know them, ya. (so you talking training, workshop, capacitating the teachers)

Code 11
Eh the other way is also to analyse the summative assessment because if you look at the activities that are in the summative assessment and then you bring them back to formative assessment and they can get the alignment of the two, then I think it will be clear for them. Ehm I remember last year the question which I was marking, it was something that they have done in the SBA. It was on "was it last year" on "what was it" I forgotten now exactly what it was on but the schools that had done that task as it is in the SBA. The learners did not have any problems in answering the "i know it was either something on alcohol, FAS, Feta's Alcohol Syndrome" ya. They've done in the SBA and those that had done it, it was actually a giveaway because they had the knowledge and the skills and it was like just refreshing their mind.

So that's how complementing they are. I really need your opinion on this one, how can synergy be created between the two?

Code 32
Mmh, I believe that eh mentoring the teachers with regard to what actually is SBA and its importance with regard to the summative assessment. How does it impact summative assessment, I think this will definitely help (are you done? ok)

11. Eh in your own opinion can evidence used in summative assessment be used to assist learning? Evidence from summative can it assist learning. 11, 32 (giggles). It's going to be fast now, I can.

Code 11
Evidence used in summative assessment, yes it can be used. I see with the feedback that teachers get at road shows about how learners eh tackle certain questions, which questions they answered well, what can be done to improve. That type of feedback, it helps teachers to go back and teach in a different way and in that way, that feedback is not assisting those learners, but it's assisting the next generation.

Code 32
I think my colleague here said a very important fact. Well the results of summative assessment to me that is evidence enough of the learning that has taken place and that can also assist learning as 11 has just said.

Code 90
Uh I'm just going to add on what they have said. I mean the evidence helps in redressing the mistakes eh maybe eh that were done or the omissions to close the gaps.

12. My next question, I think you have responded to this one. Your view, can evidence collected for formative purposes be used for summative. I think you have touched on this one but it's you know, they are complementary, so it's build up towards the summative. So I'm going to leave this one to our last category.

13. Policy, what would you say are the major challenges in assessment between NCS and CAPS? I know that is not a change of curriculum but what would be major, are there any major changes in terms of assessment from NCS to CAPS? Code 11 you've been saying so much about CAPS, I was waiting for this category because that information I need (I thought I would pause for now so that)

Code 11
(giggles) I'm running out of words now, ehm the question is (are there major changes) major changes. There are quite a number of changes. Eh the focus in NCS, when normally focussing on the, they can do the task in a group and the learners can submit and each one get an individual mark, but in, we can assist them as a group but with CAPS, we are going to focus on the individual (ok). The number of tasks it has also changed. Eh like the tests, like what number 32 has indicated this, we used to have one test, two control tests, now are going to have four in Life Sciences. Eh the type of activities, like in NCS and even previously with practical work in Life Sciences. We never had practical exam, now we are going to have a practical exam. Needless to say the rest remains the same, the format of the question paper, then the marks, then skills that are they are going to be tested on. The content framework it has shifted a bit, eh but ya those are the changes that we are having in CAPS. (Ok, any additions, maybe)

Code 32
No I think 11 has covered almost everything.

Code 90
Ok maybe I can also add that eh the difference neh is that there's this chapter which is taught in grade 11, but it would be assessed in grade 12, we never had something like that (ok). Besides the area, knowledge area and the environmental study would be taught in grade 11 and then in

grade 12 is not there but they are going to be assessed on it (is it) ya, in their summative at the end of the year. (but is there any value in that? They are going to learn this year and then we are going to test them in grade 12. What would be the value, I don't know. Don't you want to get eh feedback, immediate feedback and see, intervene and I see assessment right at the end, but let's not, we wanted to see just to see the changes, are there any changes. Ya it's another debate let's not even go there)

14. And what do you think of assessment changes as a whole? Remember that we, from you know pre 1994 and then post 1994 and then here we are today. Where are we going, what do you think of those changes because obviously pre 1994 assessment was framed differently from post 1994. The framing is changing you know every time? What is your take, what do you think of these changes, are they helping, are we going somewhere, is it for a good cause?

Code 90
You know in my opinion eh I think we are moving back to where assessment was in the past (past meaning) eh pre 1994 you know the syllabus we did (NatEd) at school in our days, because now we are, they are going to write more tests as compared to NCS where there were only a few eh number of tests. So and then (You scaring me Poppy, you say going back to NatEd) the way group work you know (it is saying to me the framing is becoming strong again, you see when the framing it's weak then even learners are able to come to class and bring in the cultural capital to the class, you know prior learning and whatever that was not there before it's only happening now but you know we have learners who can go out there to the internet whatever they learn they can bring to the classroom, learning goes on and on and on and on. The framing it's loose, but pre 1994, the framing was strong such that eh you learn only in the classroom, there's no learning coming you know from outside. So ya let me get your opinion)

Code 32
Mmh your question was (my question is what do you think of assessment changes as a whole) Ok I personally prefer eh the way in which assessment is done now and especially with the CAPS that the learners will write more tests in practice for the end of year exam. You know before with what we are currently doing, learners could only sit for two tests, a June exam before the end of year exam and that was not practice enough for the learners because some teachers would not even bother to give learners beyond what the policy requires. So I like the way that assessment is being done now as compared to how it was previously eh with NatEd 550, when learners could only be resulted on the end of year exam. So at least now assessment is a process of learning, (are you done?) I'm done.

Code 11
Eh the changes in assessment I want to believe that they are addressing different challenges that we are facing as a society at the different stages. If we look at eh NatEd 550 the challenges that were around the type of assessment which was mainly content driven and classroom confined (and teacher apartment) they had to be a change, so that we also address quite a number of things, which I'm not going into and then if we look at eh curriculum 2005 and the NCS we also have the challenges at hand, which are the teacher workload which is mainly linked to the administration of the formal assessment. The learner performance which is poor, the confusion which is linked to lack of clarity on the content framework but if you look at the CAPS, with the introduction of the CAPS eh although we have that content being taught in grade 11 and now assessed in grade 12 is addressing workload and content demarcation as to fusion and so on. So I think we are moving towards eh assessment that is eh meant to assist the learning process. That's my opinion (well thank you very much for your input there).

15. Eh how have assessment policy changes influenced your supportive role in schools? Assessment eh policies, how have they influenced the changes? How have they influenced your supportive role at eh schools in your subject that is throughout, you know we've been talking about eh assessment changes as the District Subject Advisor, you went through this one and then this one and this one. How does that affect your supportive role?

Code 32
It's quite a challenging question (giggles) (you find it's business as usual, it's your role to support or do you, you know. Do you find yourself going backwards you know? Where are you as a support system at schools?)

Code 11
Eh when it comes to the support system, if we look at the all the assessment changes, with NatEd 550 we focused on exams. So our support to teachers and schools was content driven and then with the introduction of curriculum 2005 and also NCS thereafter. We had eh different types of activities but this activities I remember we had 17 tasks in the first place in Life Sciences, where learners had to do this 17 tasks and it was just, it tend to be too much, that's why we had that competition of formative and summative. And now they were streamlined during NCS to 7 tasks neh but like what number 90 indicated is like we are going in a way we are going in circles but I wouldn't want to say it's a circle. I see it as a spiral like, we are going in circles but (upwards or forward) ya that's how I see it. (mm I hear you and NatEd and then eh curriculum 2005 and then you NCS and then) and now we are back to focusing on content (streamlining, clarity but in a more back) because now we are, on our content but we have this formal and informal assessment (it's good to hear that from you).

Code 90
Ya my role as a supporter, is that, we are still on that one neh (mm). Ya with me I feel it's very challenging eh to support educators because myself I have to you know work hard at keeping myself abreast. I must be hands on and then when you go out there to schools, you also find teachers who are from that old school of thought who still doing things eh the way (NatEd), the NatEd way you know. And then it's really difficult. So this simply means that as Subject Advisors we need to work hard you know in order to move to you know that "is it a mind-shift" to make that heart transplant, ya that mind-shift with our teachers. So but I believe that the more we support them especially at the beginning, you know if you can give them that support, guidance you know through workshops, through eh ya training etc. to empower them. If we can do that at the beginning maybe at the end there or towards the end we will now be sure that they are doing the right thing in class (ok).

Number 32 just before the last question.

Code 32
I believe that eh assessment the way it is being done now has added more on our duties in the sense that at times the type of tasks that are there in the SBA some teachers can't even perform them and it means that I must set-up subject meetings in different clusters were there will be a demonstration of such a task and once the task is done, it will be my duty to go to the school and monitor if the task has been done. I have to moderate the learner's task. So I believe that we are definitely giving the necessary support with regard to the performance, I don't know which is the right term to use, execution of the SBA task (ok).

16. Thank you ladies, the last question. What will be your main massage to teachers about assessment in CAPS.? We would be training 6, 7 or 12 what will be your main message to those teachers as you go there? Assessment, what will be your main message about assessment in CAPS?

Your message 90

Code 90
Mm I think the main thing that I would mention is that, they shouldn't eh separate assessment from teaching and learning, it should be part, integral part in fact of teaching and learning and then I would also eh emphasis on prelim of the assessment task that is very important because if you plan for it, now it means that you bring it into the main thing, you not leaving it outside (ok).

Number 11, what would be your message? You having any message.

Code 32
Eish, assessment in CAPS should be administered in such a way that it helps or it assists learning.

32 your message

Code 32
I would like my teachers to understand assessment in two ways. That it is assessment, we have assessment for learning and we have assessment of learning and if I have one hour to give to each. I would give eh 55 minutes to assessment for learning and only 5 minutes to assessment of learning (mm you going back to 75, 25. I see a bulk going to assessment for learning, which is formative and then just small portion going to assessment of learning, which is summative, ok)

Yho ladies thank you very much, but lastly let me just get final closing statements from each and every one of you about anything that we have discussed, just your closing statement, assessment.

Code 32
Mm the debates that we had here today were to me eye opening, I can now view certain things in a different way. If I thought when we talk of formative assessment it's only formal assessment, at least from our deliberation today, informal assessment is also part of formative assessment from, you know that's what I gained today. Thank you Ausi Mary (thank you).

Eh Code 90
Ya it was very interesting I must say and Mary I can also thank you for inviting me to be part of this because it has made me even want to know more. So maybe I would ask you your field of study, so that I follow you (ok) and do this assessment (and ask this questions, remember that we don't know, that's why we asking, you know if we knew we would go and ask experts) and even sharing the information, this is really wonderful.

Number 11
Ya I think I would also advocate for such forums if like in our daily work, if we could have such forums where we have such debates and discuss on different aspects of our work especially

assessment because it's a hot potato and eh thank you very much for this Mary. We have learned quite a lot.

Thank you very much ladies, especially for making time, I know it was difficult and my apologies, you know to go beyond the agreed you know time but I think it was worth sitting. Thank you very much and I promise to come back and share with you the findings of the study. If you can just fill in the consent form and sign it for me. Oh you gave me yours, no I have it. I have signed but I don't know what you want.

8.1 PILOT STUDY

Ehh, this afternoon I really appreciate your coming and your time, most importantly your time, and ehh.

Please be assured that anything that you exchange in this interview is confidential and this information will only be used for the purposes of this research. To protect your confidentiality, no personal identifying information about you will be recorded in the research findings. Research records will only be used for the purposes of this study and for my M.Ed. research report writing. And maybe I need to indicate that this point that, ladies and gentlemen I'm going to refer to you, ehh using codes rather than names. You have your own codes from ehh the questionnaires, those are the same codes so we are going to use those codes and every time you want to interact and say something, please rather you know say your code first, so that during transcription I know which codes which is which Ok and you are participating in this research on a voluntary bases, remember that you can refuse to answer a particular question at any time or withdraw from the research process at any time. You will not incur any costs nor will you be remunerated for this participation. If you have any questions about this study or your rights as research participant, you may contact myself and my supervisor but remember you are here as a pilot participants, I'm piloting with you guys and you know thank you very much for that.

Ladies and gentlemen, ehh, you are invited to participate in this research study and the title of the research study is to explore FET District Subject Advisor's (DSAs) understanding of the tension between formative and summative assessment during the shift from National Curriculum Statements (NCS) to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and as part of this study ladies and gentlemen I request, you are requested to be audio recorded and I think earlier I had explained the reason, it is to capture information verbatim and also it will make this data to be more reliable and more valid. In your folders I have included, this ehh consent form. I'm just going to go quickly through the consent form, so that maybe by the end of this discussion you will sign it.

It has the title or description of ehh the research and that you will be audio recorded while participating in the interview, remember that it is a focus group interview, In fact your interaction is not going to be between the research questions and yourself as an individual but it is going to interaction with the other members of the group ehh, confidentiality unless you request otherwise your name will be kept strictly confidential at all times in all academic writing about the study. There are no unforeseeable risks in participating in this study. If you have any concerns about participation or any questions that you would like to ask, please contact me at any time. Right the interview and audio recording will be conducted today; the duration will be 90 minutes. If you have read this letter and have decided to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent

or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. You will not incur again any financial costs nor will you be remunerated for participation and then you will sign for me.

Ladies and gentlemen I want to go straight to the questions or the interaction for this afternoon, the semi-structured interview questions will be framed on your understanding of assessment, your understanding of formative assessment, your understanding of summative assessment, the tension between summative and formative and assessment shifts from NCS to CAPS, ok. I will start with an open question just you know to break the ice. I hope it is on. Colleagues can we please, ladies and gentlemen raise ehh our voices as we interact so that the information is captured.

1. Ladies and gentlemen, your views and feeling regarding the future of formal assessment in South Africa in general and in your personal particular case?
and I might mention that at this point ladies and gentlemen that, I'm a researcher this afternoon, I'm wearing a cap of a researcher, I know nothing about assessment and that is the reason why I'm studying, so I want to hear your views this afternoon I don't have any answers, I am actually looking for answers.

Code 13
Thank you, umm even though I think a lot of teachers rely too heavily when they teach on the formal assessment umm, some of them only teach so that the kids can pass formal assessment umm, and even though it very necessary, I don't think that we are going to see a change in formal assessment or uhh I think it's very necessary because it's an external form of assessment and it's the only way that one can ensure that the certificate that is given to a learner is worth something, you can't let a school assess a learner and give them and issue a certificate, you need that external formal assessment to ensure that the certificate the learner gets is something, worth something. We can say the learner has passed and this is the standard, so even though not everybody is happy with formal assessment I think it's here to stay and it's probably can only be weighted more heavily, ehh not so much for other subjects but in others, there is some subjects where they don't wait an external exam that heavily, I think it's coming. So formal assessment is here to stay, that's what you saying.

Code 19
In my opinion formal assessment ahh is only taught content around the formal assessment and the content that should have been done summatively, is never done properly and the scaffolding of the formative assessment is not in place , if that was in place people would understand the proper meaning of summative and formative assessment and that you can crossover, ehh things would be in place, but that's not in place currently in South Africa but I cannot see them taking it away formative assessment but more training, more understanding and more ehh training content wise, so that people would understand the entry level of certain topics, it might solve the problem. Again I'm hearing that it is here to stay, ok.

Code number 19 is saying more training and more scaffolding, meaning improving on what we have currently, (but I think the CAPS will resolve that because it's a lot more specific, Ok let's not go there). Ehh any other views regarding the future of formal assessment. Can we move to the next question? Well seeing that there are no (code please) oh ya and please raise your voice.

Ehh I'm Code number 104,
Ya I was to say seeing that ehh we not the, we fully agree with them, I think ehh is better that we take another question because there are dissenting ehh views on the matter, thank you

2. Ehh ladies and gentlemen what is your understanding of assessment in the FET phase in general? I think I have the right people here. FET your understanding specifically in the FET phase in general just your understanding of assessment.

Code 14
You know assessment generally has to do with the process of gathering information on performance undertaken, now gathering information in the form of you know with the purpose of analysing that information of ehh interpreting that information and recording and reporting that information, this is for the stakeholders to have a know-how of what is happening in order for us to be able to say one progress is from a level to another higher level, ya. Any other views, assessment in general FET particularly.

Number 19 ehh looking at the variety of tasks that's given to them to see what the skills level are, besides what number 14 said

I think ehh Number 13
I think assessment is also important ehm, with regards to the types of assessment, the forms of assessment because different learners are going to do better at certain parts whether it would be a practical component or something like that so I think it's also endeavours to assess a learner holistically, I think is also important. Because I'm just thinking that ehh assessment in FET obviously learners are at their last leg you know or phase of schooling, so surely they must be prepared you know for the world out there or tertiary institution, so assessment maybe is it playing the part, is it preparing the learners for that environment out there you know, because I think FET is very crucial you know we talking grade 10, grade 11, grade 12 that is the final

Code 19
The educator's point of view of assessment is incorrect because they are only looking at formative assessment ahh whereas summative assessment is ensuring the smaller parts and the teaching part and the checking if work can be done by certain learners and that is not in place in my opinion. Any other views

Ehh. Code 5
Ya in my opinion ehh assessment ehh plays a role of ehh ensuring that there is commonality across all the schools, ehh if you look at ehh the common examinations that you give to schools I should believe that they are aimed at ensuring that people do the same things. Ok people do the same things, the question then would be are those things of good quality, something that we you know we can sit and discuss you know and are those things really preparing learners for future that's another thing but I don't want us to go there.

I'd like to link (code) I'm 13 but I want to link up with number 19, ehh if ehh, you asked if it is preparing the learner. If the teacher is doing summative properly yes then those skills and attitude and so on will help the learner after school but if the teacher is only focused on formative: no, there won't be prepared entirely not properly.

Number 14
I am of thee view and opinion that you know that assessment systems that we have in this country are of high quality. It is how we scaffold them or how we develop our teachers or people who implement this processes ehh that we can win and have systems that will prepare the learner

for the after FET meaning tertiary. The systems are fine, you know the formulas are fine but it is our prerogative to see to it that the people who implement those processes to our learners are well developed ya. So you are going back to code number 19 because earlier she alluded to the issue of skills and training exactly.

Code 104
Ehh well my take on this is that umh when the curriculum was developed assessment was perceived to be the integral part of curriculum so which means assessment ehh was not supposed to be an afterthought so we suppose to teach and assess as we teach and learners are supposed to learn and be assessed as they learn so on that basis I want to believe that ehh because assessment would be that the sole purpose of assessment would be to actually find out whether the learners were, achieved what they are supposed to achieve based on the aims and objectives of a particular subject, now be that is may if ehh really assessment becomes the integral part of curriculum it's not an afterthought then ehh surely it should ehh prepare this learners for the world out there because ehh I want to believe that ehh all subjects have ehh aims and objectives and ehh this aims and objectives were taken from ehh the critical outcomes and the critical outcomes are very clear, their intention is to build a person that would be competitive out there, ehh the person that will be able to plough back to the country and ehh if our curriculum is thought as such and assessment are based on the curriculum, then it should prepare learners for the world out there, ya just a follow up on that one. Ehh assessment as an integral part of the curriculum meaning integral part of teaching and learning but I want us to come back to my question you know is it happening in the FET that assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, assessment is used you know during teaching and learning, is not the end product but it is used from the beginning throughout until the end. What is the status core in terms of assessment?

Code 19
I am going be very bold and very outspoken, until the teachers don't have it ethic of working and planning, uhm this is not going to work. Uhm I will state it boldly, they are lazy to plan if you don't plan it's not going to work, uhm assessment means constant planning to know where, who's your candidate sitting in front of you, what's your entry level should be for that topic, how should I assess it so that I ensure, even determining what my teaching methods are, what assessment methods I'm going to use and how, what intervention strategies I'm going to put in place, that is definitely not in place in FET. Are you then saying teachers or most teachers tend to be very lazy in terms of planning?, yes.

Code 13
It must be a purpose filled exercise, meaningful assessment doesn't happen by the way. Teachers think they can walk into a class and ask a few random questions and then start teaching but in order for that to be a meaningful lesson you had to sit down and design a question that triggered thinking in a learner not just this random question that they think is going to lead to learning and I think that is the misconception, I think that's, it's got to be a planned activity (I hear planning) mm

Code 14
I want to kindly re-iterate my earlier statement to say that, we need a lot of training and development for the implementers. I must emphasise once more that the systems are there, you see when we talk assessment in general and we want to find out whether this assessment processes are in place and is it happening in FET. Yes partially you know one would run on the

border line to say it is happening, it is not happening because in some instances there are certain individuals who use assessment techniques to achieve you know the intended goal and then there is a certain group that still is challenged by the concept now as I'm saying it must be emphasized that we need more as we say planning meaning that we must train this people and make them aware that assessment has to be the integral part. It must be journey bound it must not be like a destination, it must not be something that you know when you apply assessment it must also be you know in the form of teaching. It must bring forth that quality you know from the learner's answers rather than they must just you know fill pages with answers but there must be that kind of you know fibre in their responses because that and only that will be making them achieve those standards that we want to achieve and then I think at that stage we will be achieving and we will be preparing them for the next you know phase after FET. FET there is something happening but we need harness that missing element of training and developing the implementers. Can I close this question ehh with a follow up question to say if, you saying we. Who are you really referring to, who is we? We must train them, we must

Code 14
We uhm sit apparently in this forum as subjects advisors and for anything to happen in any subject, we are the drivers, we are the drivers of processes. We are supposed to hold workshops and say to our teachers because that will be you know uhh cascading the information downwards we have to have structures were we develop our, the teachers ehh and prepare them for the process, thank you. Thank you. I am going to the next question.

<u>What is your understanding of formative assessment? Because we've been talking assessment in general just formative assessment, what is your understanding of formative assessment</u>?

Code 14
Ehh it is assessment that ehh in my mind monitors learners' attainment or achievement at regular intervals during the learning process and provides information about that process, the goals it is happening at (continuously) regular intervals. Thank you. Any other view of formative assessment.

Code 19
It's not totally correct but in my understanding I prefer to use formative assessment as the capturing of marks uhh with summative assessment is done more regularly to check if my teaching was done correctly but it does not mean that summative assessment cannot be captured, marks cannot be captured but formative is more mark orientated, summative assessment is more determine that I succeed in my teaching and it's done more regular.

Code 104 yeah.
Well ehh I understand formative to mean ehh that kind of assessment that would ehh develop learners thinking and ehh help learners to ehh attain skills and ehh it's basically used for developmental purposes. That's what I understand formative to mean, examples of formative would be classworks, homeworks, ehh these short tests and ehh as a teacher as you teach ehh you would give those types of assessment or forms of assessment to actually know whether learners are following the grasping what they are supposed to grasp and ehh also you can use it to actually ehh improve your teaching because if you are teaching you give classworks and learners are not doing well, that would mean to you that perhaps I need to change my strategy, my teaching strategy, so that's my understanding of formative assessment. So you saying it's developmental (ya) and it is meant to reflect on both the learners and the teacher, learning and teaching, ok

Code 5, ya
So in my opinion it entails ehh those formal tasks that ehh the teachers do with learners in the classroom and those are the tasks that are used to inform progression and promotion. Ok it deals with formal tasks that will be used for (informing progression and promotion) at the end.

Code 13, Yes
It's also often standardized ehh activities were there would be a cross a grade or a district or a province ehh it's more a ehh assessment that is being standardized, were as summative you know it's really up to the teacher. The way he or she is going to approach this and, but formative is generally something that's also a little bit more common (more common) yes it would normally happen across the district or ehh, because it's sets as standard (it sets standards is common), ehh any other view I'm getting mixed ya, maybe let me give you know an opportunity to. Maybe this forum will also serve as a learning you know, you know ehh forum. I am just thinking as my colleagues are lauding that you know are we talking formal versus informal assessment and formative versus summative those concept are they aligning to each other. Surely you're asking the group, I am just throwing it to the table because when you talk, when we talk informal assessment we are talking those tasks that you do were you are not going to record marks, you know ehh casually informally and then when you talk formal ehh assessment, I want to believe that we talking ehh you are going to attach recording there, you are going to attach ehh marks, you know ehh judging progress through you know comparing peers' ehh achievements, I am moving towards that line and I was just thinking. Ok now when we throw formative to the party, when we throw formative ehh what is it saying as to what is summative saying you know in simple English summative, formative I'm just I will get help from the colleagues. I want us to try and focus on formative, we will deal with summative separately (ok) but <u>what is formative assessment</u>?

Code 104
I'm not so sure because I wanted to get into the debate of formal versus informal, formative versus ehh now that you saying we should ehh confined this to formative ehh perhaps I may need to re-iterate about formative and ehh believe you me it's very much difficult to define formative and not ehh contrast it with summative because with summative it will be that type of ehh, that kind of assessment you would give after a certain period, after a week or after you have completed a concept ya or a topic or whatever that would be summative, but with formative, formative it's ehh you can teach and ehh pose ehh questions but mere posing questions just to check if learners are still following you that type of ehh an assessment would be tempt formative because it's for purposes of development, it's developmental. So it stamps from there to say the moment you checking as whether learners ehh whether your methods of teaching are ehh reaching out to learners that would be formative but summative would be completely a different assessment because that would mean you give that assessment after a period of time and ehh even the amount of work would be greater (ok) ya. That is my opinion, Alright.

Maybe let me move to the next question, so that we begin to because I can see that is difficult you know to talk about formative and not talk about summative. Let me ask this one <u>what is your understanding of summative assessment?</u> and then we can then, summative assessment but you know I know it's important for us to be able to distinguish clearly between the two and then maybe later on compare you know and see how they link you know and ya the relationship between the two but what do you understand by summative assessment?

Code 13
I just want to give clarity but I might be incorrect here, is summative the informal and formative is the formal, that's my understanding. (Your understanding is) summative is informal (and)

formative is formal (ya I'm going to open this one for discussion also, it's a question you need) that is the question because ya that's the way I understood it. (I see that I can't run away from formal and informal and summative and formative you know ya)

Code 19

In my opinion summative is more, it comes from the word summary which can be at the end of a lesson or the end of a topic or at the end of a term whatever to me that is not formal assessment that to me is the scaffolding and checking was my scaffolding in place that the learners understand what I did there. In my opinion formal assessment is more focused on SBA and PAT. (Formative is more) more focused on not only but is focused on SBA and PAT, School Based Assessment which is the formal one, the formal tasks and the PAT is the practical tasks that is required for certain subjects. Mixed feelings I get.

Code 5
Ehh my understanding is that ehh tests, things like ehh examination that are written at the end of the terms are classified as summative assessment and those classworks and ehh assignments that they are given to learners are classified as formative assessment, that is my understanding. Ok can I take it further than to say ehh what would be formative assessment, would it be ehh formal tasks or informal tasks or both formal and informal. What is summative is it formal tasks, informal tasks or both of them.

Code 14
Right ya and ehh summative to me, I am going to fall a little into number 5 ok. Ehh it has to do with interpretations and judgments that's were interpretations and judgements are made by comparing individual learners abilities and assessment results with those of peers. So when you do that it is right at the end where you are going to up to come with judgement as to whether people go on or they stay behind then you come up with summative assessment. A summative assessment determines the end were you report to people, this is the situation so it is at the end. You call your examination grade 12 examination that is some kind of summative assessment (which is formal and informal?) it is formal. (So are you saying summative assessment is formal?) yes.

Code 104
I want to conquer with ehh later speaker and former one to say summative is for purposes of promotion basically to pass a judgment, whether this learner has attained the outcomes or not whether this learner is competent or not, it's for summative and this is the one that we give at the end of a year or a week or a month or a section, it's summative. So basically for purposes of deciding the fate of learner ya of making a judgement ya you actually have to come up with a judgment to say this learner has attained or has not, (has achieved) or has not ya, (is promoted) is not ya (it's summative) it's summative, alright I'm not going to close it now because I want us to go back to formative you know so that we clearly see because I want to leave this room very clear and is going to come from you. Formative assessment again, I'm going back to formative now, is it formal, is it informal.

Formative is informal (is informal) mmm. 14.
Formative according to my understanding is informal, why I say it's informal it says it is about learners attainment at regular intervals during the learning process and provides information about the learners progress you know it is on-going, it has got no judgemental implications, it's continuous (it's working towards) it's working towards a certain goal a certain goal, yes you know. It's working towards, it's developmental ya that is why we call em you know em your

research, your classroom interaction, your homework, your those forms of assessment are not cut and dry. They are also so continuous that the learner in the process learns because the learner will consult with a peer, the learner will consult with another teacher, the learner will consult with another stakeholder to gather information and now assessment during that time is mostly informal, it is not cut and dry we cannot say the learner knows this or does not know this at that stage. It's during the journey, thank you. I want to move because I know it will come up again in these questions, do you allow me to do that? Number 19 neh.

Ehh what is your own opinion about the purpose of standardized testing? Your own opinion about the purpose, not really what standardized testing is, but the purpose there of. Why do we have standardized ehh testing?

Code 13
I just want to get clarity, standardized testing or tests. Are you talking about examinations or just tests? I'm talking standardized test, I don't want to lead (ya) but testing obviously when you test, testing will involve tests. It can also involve examination but it is testing, thank you. I sound like I know what I'm talking about I don't know.

Code 19
If I understood your question correctly, that testing can be either SBA task, which is the formal task which can include tests it can include exams. If it's all of those things then it's maybe to ensure quality and quantity, so that you can measure apples with apples, ok. And to add on what she has said (number).

Code 5
Ehh standardization I should believe ehh it ensures that there is commonality across the grades in the school or even ehh across ehh the schools, mmm. 14 (standardization maybe we also need to tap into what are we talking about, when we talk about standardized you know testing or standardized tests)

Code 14
Standardized tests are common tests, they have a certain standard, they are common that's my understanding. Standardizing processes says we want to achieve a particular level in education of development and then how are we going to achieve that by designing tests that are standardized. While we are doing that we are standardizing, when we standardize it will help with at the end of the day analysis as to whether if our tests are at level, if it we have three levels, if it is higher level learners perform at a certain you know standard. So standardizing is a process that can help us see whether we are at a level at a particular level when we standardize things. So standardizing has advantages and disadvantages. (Let's not go there) standardizing has advantages and disadvantages but standardizing has a good purpose, you were asking (It would be) quality (thank you, for quality) for quality (ok). Ya

Code 104 yes.
Ehh the purpose of standardized testing ehh would be like as indicated for quality to assure quality and for benchmarking and ehh to ensure that ehh there are no deviations from ehh from the standards that were set initially and to make sure that ehh the instrument that is used is valid and reliable and ehh for also for to make sure that ehh the instrument is authentic so that's basically that. (Authentic for all?, yes.) It's the same instrument used for that particular group of learners is that what you saying). Ya what I'm saying is isn't it ehh we talking assessment it wouldn't be fair or an assessment would not be fair if learners would be told that they would be assessed on this and only to find that they are assessed on the other thing. So that would be the

purposes of ehh that would be the purpose of standardized testing, to make sure that standards that were initially set are upheld, upheld in the sense that the instrument should measure what is supposed to measure and to ensure that it meets those ehh sets standards ehh and for benchmarking purposes because ehh if that instrument is to be used, say ehh I want to give an example, let's say you have ehh a testing for a learner would sit for that and after passing that particular thing that would tell you that this learner is able to operate a computer for instance ehh and there are ehh instruments like that in other countries and ehh the one that you have said here, you would make sure that it ehh competes with ehh same instruments that are used for the same purpose elsewhere (ok) ya so like I'm indicating for benchmarking (ok).

In closing this let me ask ehh ladies and gentlemen to give me a few examples of standardized testing or one or two, we talked about benchmarking would be the purpose ehh ensuring quality would be the purpose there of. You know maybe examples of standardized testing that we normally you know use. What would those be?

Code 19
Base line testing to determine what your entry levels would be ehh it could also be SBA tasks to ensure ehh to determine which can be SBAs, which can be your PAT, which can be common tests, which can be common exams and that would help you to do to determine your SSIP programme, your intervention programmes, which schools need intervention (ok).

Code 14
Ya ehh I would take our work schedules as a classical example. You see when you have a work schedule, work schedule deal with time and focus. They deal with content now if you are going to say in particular subject, learners must be taught theme, five themes and then for the purpose of that level or phase of learners they cannot be taught anything that is, if it is history they cannot just be taught anything from A to Z that is history but there must be standards, there must be you know ehh regulation and management of content. Now that is a tool that says theme one, two, three, four would deal with A, B, and C and learners will be tested on this content in this level that is our advantage because you would not lose content focus, you are always on the focus and then you can test you know. You can create common tests because there's common content that is the advantage of standardizing you know systems.

Let me ask this question, what would be your expectations if you give your schools in Tshwane North for instance a common test to write. Is it just to give them the task to write and they can decide what time they write, they can decide how to ehh monitor or invigilate or whatever you know. What is standardized testing is it just giving them common tasks and it's fine. What would be your expectations for you to attach you know the, is it the name or to say this is a standardized test is it only because it's common that would say standardized

Code 13
Even if you give a formal task like an SBA task. It has to be done under certain conditions within a certain time frame using a certain assessment tool. If it's going to be an exam or a test we would also expect certain structures to be in place. You can't just assess willy nilly, there has to be a certain conditions and structures and things in place in order for that assessment to be well fair, valid and reliable. So are we then able to compare, if ehh we subject our learners to standardized testing, are we able to compare results say from schools. Can we compare those results?

Code 19

Provided the teacher does the analysis of marks, then you can compare ehh they can even go further and do analysis of certain sections to determine I need to intervene this section, which can then be done over the whole district for example all the learners that badly in this section so we need to intervene there. That can be another reason why you writing common papers because that teacher might not have asked a certain section in the same manner that the common test would have done it.

Ok can I step off this one ehh? Do you think school based assessment enhances teaching and learning and how, school based assessment (SBA). Do you think it enhances teaching and learning, how?

Code 13
It depends on the teacher, it depends on the amount of content knowledge and enthusiasm and passion. One can design a very good school based assessment tasks but when it comes to the actual delivery, it can enhance teaching and learning enormously especially if it's a very well designed task with a very good assessment tool that is very specific and it lays out everything that it should. So if you have a good task with a good tool and a good teacher, yes it does. Good teacher, good task, good tool, ok. Any other opinions? Do you think SBA?

Code 14
In my opinion yes indeed it is very useful at school level, why I say so is that learners that engage in SBA activities. SBA activities is in a way form of a repetition of content they do in class because it is the same themes it's based on the same themes that they are tested when they do the let's say the final exam or learners who did well in SBA at school certainly are more conversant with you know the final ehh assessment ya. So in that fashion it is very crucial.

Code 19
If I listen to my colleagues here now, if we look at none of the SBA tasks need to be standardized, it can be said by the educator then we coming back to what colleague number 13 said, where as you don't have a good task with a good tool and a good teacher then everything is going to fall flat. That is why it's very necessary for common good task and good tools are set to close that gap.

Thank you, can I move to the next category ehh the tension now between formative and summative assessment in your own understanding formative assessment and summative assessment are they complementary or competing and how? Are they complementing each other or are they competing against each other and how? Formative and summative, the sub-topic here is the tension between formative and summative, now in your own opinion, are they complementing each other or are they competing against each other and how?

Code 14 (14 yes)
In my opinion I think there is both competition and complement. Do I have to (yes) ehm, when you do formative assessment we must all agree again that we said it is regular and at regular intervals and then there are flaws there because it creates lasers fair, it creates it brings in the mediocre design of a task by some teachers who are not well developed to do those tasks. So until, until the implementers do justice to that kind of assessment we will still have challenges, now when we say you study something and you write and your faith will be decided by that, you pass, you fail, you achieve, you do not achieve at the end. That's when we say now, that was summative one brings in the elements of pressure and then there is quality there to achieve. With the other one it is developmental, it gives the learner time to research you know, there is that kind of laid back developmental processes which might not achieve anything at the end of the

day. The other one is too judgemental, it's too straight forward, it's destiny bound, it needs some kind of development because learners do not learn at the same pace. So you cannot simply say you are writing ehh trigonometry tomorrow here are the sums come tomorrow you are writing, you must go and study. You are going to be assessed on this, it sounds unfair but also if you say ehh after three weeks we will be, come let me show you this is how it is done, and the people do not even you know are involved in the design and making of those assessment tools it becomes a bit also detrimental. So you need a little bit of pressure, you also need a little bit of developmental time, expanded opportunity we call neh we call it, to create a scene age between you know the pressure and the process to achieve your intended goal. Ok any other view.

Code 104
Yah well I don't think ehh they are competing, rather they are complementary because ehh isn't ehh with formative assessment you, it's assessment for learning and ehh summative is assessment of learning, so there is learning. You are assessing to make sure that learners learn then ehh just to check if learners learned then you give that summative assessment. I don't think, I don't see the two competing, I see them rather as ehh as complementary. Assessment for learning and assessment of learning at the end, so they are complementary according to your opinion.

Code 19
In my opinion if the teachers are better prepared ahh what colleague number 104 said is one hundred percent correct but once again, there are time frame programmes and once it was back to planning again ahm if you don't plan all those different activities simultaneously and have a broader picture of what you planning for the week or the term or the year, it's going to fall flat.

Alright let me move onto the next one. <u>In your own opinion, do standardized tests improve learner performance and how</u>?

Code 13
I think it improves teacher performance more than, learner performance (how it improves teacher performance than learner performance, how so). Well just my experience from this year, ehm it was always set internally. Their tests, papers and stuff even their tasks and after a lot of experience and a lot of blood sweat and tears. I realized I cannot leave it to the teachers for many reasons there are logistical reasons like ehh within the area that I specialize in, it is not managed very well. So ahh not only ehh to improve teaching performance but to help the teacher because many of the teachers are given my subject at the beginning of the year with no training, so really it is to help them, they are not capable, they are not trained in many of the subjects they are teaching. So it does help their performance and the obviously if it's going to improve teacher performance it will in turn improve learner performance, (eventually it will improve learner performance, any other views).

Code 19
Provided the educator goes back, if the common task was done and the learners did poorly. Does the teacher go back and discuss whatever the learner couldn't achieve. Then it's got learner performance value. Ya, ok.

<u>In your own view how can synergy be created between formative and summative assessment</u>?

Code 14
(You touched on synergy at some point, how can this synergy be created between the two, because there has to be one). When we begin to talk synergy then we acknowledge there is

tension, when we begin to talk synergy then we say there is complement, there is ehh complement and competition. That is why we say you know ehh something that is just judgemental neh, to say that ehh you are going to grade three next year if you pass and the learner ehh you know, the synergy in that we must say, we must take what is good from summative, take what is good from formative neh because the other one will deal as number one for our sake with ehh quantity, the other one will deal with quality, now what is it that we want quality but when we say quality we also need hundred percent pass in a school but the results must also be of quality you understand. It's a good thing that we say they have passed but if they have all passed at level four, it's not solving our problem. It must also be passing qualitatively, so it must be two things that come together ok. It must also say when we talk journey bound or journey like and destination bound. If the other one says we judge you by this, the other one must say you have gone through this process and you have developed and at the end, we also complement it by saying you moved, you progressed to the next stage but it should not be judging your pass and that's it and then you don't care what happened or how you passed. So that is the synergy that we must bring together into the whole thing, assessment has to because we said it is integral, must be also, it must also be a process whereby people also learn you know the rubric neh. It's categories and levels must say to you in this essay we are looking for content, we are looking for language, we are looking for many other things and when you look at the rubric itself, it can be used as somebody can learn, can get information and learn from it, not just ehh one plus one is four and that's it you know, cut and dry but we must also have systems when we say when you have gone through this developmental stage ehh process you will proceed to a level, to a higher level do you understand what I'm saying. That is why when we set question papers we look at levels, level one, level two, level three, higher, medium and low and then we cannot just throw in low order questions into the question paper. There must be standardized, standardization that you have been talking about, were we must have ehh a certain percentage of low order, a certain percentage of medium and a certain percentage of high order questions based on the level of the learner you understand what I'm saying, those systems are helping us to bring you know, to bring marriage between the two assessment processes, thank you.

Ok can I can I ask this question because I know I'm speaking to facilitators, subject advisors. Ehh school based assessment neh which constitutes 25% of the final promotion mark, then you have your 75% which is the final exam mark. Now I want to know are your teachers ehh aware of school based assessment that is given to learners continuously throughout the year. Do they see that school based assessment as part of the final 75%, in fact this is my question or do they see 75% you know exclusively isolated there from the SBA that they offer throughout the year. Is it two separate things, two totally different things that January up to November or the 3 terms, it's SBA and now come end of the year they are doing something totally different from what they have been doing throughout the year. What is the situation or what is the perception of your teachers and maybe your perception as subject advisors because we are talking here synergy, is there any link you know between SBA and the final exam mark 75% and you can see a bulk of marks here 75% right at the end of the year. So should we be very worried that eih the 75% is only at the end of the year and throughout the year, it's only 25%. Should we be worried? Ladies and gentlemen 75, 25. I don't want to because we discussed formative and summative and SBA you know. Is it formative, is it summative or is it formative summative towards the 75 but is it exclusively isolated this 75% that we should be worried that such a bulk of marks only at the end of the year.

Number 14
I will approach it in this fashion, ought to be (ok) not neh. Ought to be but not. You see we and maybe some of us as well. I'm going to talk you know how one feels now, ehh we are all working towards the 75% from the beginning of the year. We are saying we want to pass but we

still have to struggle to see it as a collective, the SBA and the 75, the final and the promotional. Why I'm saying this is that we still have as we say uhm SBA is still at guideline, it's not you know documented and sealed to say this is your SBA. It is still you know at the level of guideline, schools can still design their own tasks. Now if in your work schedule you do not have the formal assessment tasks with your ehh everyday content working towards the exam, the exam then you are guilty of that of separating the two, then you are guilty of separating because I, in my own opinion in my subject SBA themes are themes that are going to be examined at the end. So it is the 25% that is done and it is aligned to what is being done throughout but it is my wish that even the teachers should sit in that fashion that this two things cannot be separated. They are a collective towards a particular goal, which is the final exam. Now it is very worry some that people take time to do content and want to do SBA at the end or they concentrate on SBA and you know ya and then maybe if it was my take I would say 50% SBA, 50% that promotion and that ya (ok) because it is really helpful and you see. It is formal informal the SBA, it is formal informal because the marks that we get from the SBA we record but SBA is also some kind of go and research you know it is that. It is not like cut and dry, that's my humble

Very interesting mmm. 5050., you know and ya I'm thinking 5050 and then the issue of training and skills and you know and good teacher, good ehh task, good tool and then what happens to the 50 marks bulk if there is no good teacher, good task, good.

Number 19
I can come back to my colleague and say ours is luckily is actually 5050 because of the practical component which is a very big research task. It pulls down to 25 75 but actually 50% is actually SBA research and only 50% of ours is exam. So I think more subjects should go towards that because it gives you a clearer picture of the learner getting involved during the year and not just focusing on the final examination (and the efforts, input)

I'm Number 13
I can't really comment my subject doesn't work that way. So we have one quarter practical component you know, 140 out of 400 counts for exam. So we have a very different set-up ours really is you work continuously from January you have to finish five formal tasks. It is so continuous, you so ya but what I do want to say is something that I appreciated that number 14 said. I liked the process versus pressure analogy, were as if formative is a process, a journey then summative is when you get there you just figure out your GPS coordinates to see how well you have gotten there. So it really is just taking stock of the journey (ya).

Thank you. Ehh the last question under this sub heading. <u>In your view can evidence be collected for formative purposes or in your view can evidence collected for formative purposes be used for summative assessment and how</u>? <u>Information evidence collected for formative purposes can it be used for summative assessment and how</u>?

Number 13
It's Ehh it's difficult ehh you see policy decides what gets used for summative. It is not up to an individual or a school or a district even uhm if policy states this is the conditions under which this assessment must take place and this is how much it must be weighted and this is when the results must be given and to whom it must be given it isn't really something we can really decide, is it.

Number 5
Ya so what I have ehh observed is that ehh the opposite of what you are saying is normally ehh being applied normally at the end I mean at the beginning of the year, there are road shows that

are conducted across the province, so this is where the examiners would give the educators ehh the fact that this is what the I mean the examiners would tell the educators about the things that have transpired during the examination and the educators would take that information and try to align their teaching towards ehh what the examiners have indicated to them, ya (I hear you).

So it's first summative and then you take the summative, you use it formatively throughout the year ok, instead of formative evidence being used for summative assessment.

Number 14
Look ehh we are wearing caps as subject advisors. We hold meetings throughout the year and it is at those meetings were we influence assessment because we are the authors of the SBA guideline documents and we have great influence into what should be formative assessment, what is should look like. So it is very very crucial neh at that stage the subject advisor at that stage influences formative assessment to a large extent and then what is being examined neh. We liaise with the examiners because we work in partnership neh. We work with the examiners, they give us content ehh focus and just before the road shows at this stage of the year especially we have memo discussions for marking processes, we have marking processes to discuss the what went through the summative and it is at the road shows where it is going to be delivered. That is why now at the road shows we are going, we are moving towards ehh sharing them with the examiners as subject advisors for us to throw in especially issues on SBA which greatly influences summative assessment. So we must begin to move to a level of influence were we say issues summative and formative assessment, we have you know we control.

Thank you, the last leg here it's about policy. NCS, CAPS the shift. What would you say are the major changes in assessment between a national curriculum statement and CAPS? Are there any major changes in assessment during this shift?

Number 19
According to me the shouldn't be any changes because that was policy, uhm the document it's just a lot more clearer and a lot more specific and a lot more focused but there shouldn't really be a major difference in the assessment.

Clarity and more focus.

Number 104
Yes I wanted to say ehm with ehh physical sciences and maths ehm there are no glaring differences other than to say ehh some things were put ehh they are clearer now than they were before. Ehh certain things are now prescribed in physical sciences for instance ehh we were not prescribing the experiments to be done but now CAPS is prescribing to say these ones should be done. So that's basically that to say, some components are clearer now than they were before (ok).

Number 13
I think what it's done is it has almost forced teachers to do formative assessment. It is a little bit more prescriptive when it comes to what must be taught and when. I think it's, I think it's gonna encourage formative assessment now. I suspect, I hope so, I think so (ok).

Any other thing, share the same sentiments

Ya we share the same sentiments but we must also emphasise that you see when we talk NCS, CAPS. I'm afraid to use the word shift you see, it is more of a modification of one document by

another but it is the same thing. So no drastic changes will be experienced rather modifications for the better (ok, no thank you).

What do you think of assessment changes as a whole? (be more specific) Assessment changes remember that when, I know that when we talk CAPS is actually not you know the ehh a change of curriculum but we've been moving from one curriculum to you know and from the beginning you mentioned assessment as the an integral part of the curriculum. So as a whole you know assessment changes, what do you think about them because I remember even formative assessment, we were not used to formative assessment ehh post 1994 you know introduction of formative assessment you know but during that time NatEd, it was more summative than formative but like you said now CAPS is encouraging more formative. So what do you think of the changes as a whole, assessment changes maybe are they benefiting the system, are we going somewhere with the changes ehh, are they positive.

Number 19
To come back to colleague 104. He spoke about the distinction, well all the colleagues spoke about the journey and the destination. It will only be to their advantage of cause it forces you to take a journey to get to your destiny (ok).

Alright, what will be your main message to teachers about assessment in CAPS, just your main message? You are about to go and train, what would be your message to your teachers about assessment in CAPS?

Number 13
Uhm there have been slight changes with regards to the waiting and so on. So that would obviously emphasised uhm but again uhh because the summative was so standardized and I know that it's going to be even more standardized in the next few years to the point that policy will change because they want to weight it more and so on but I will encourage formative assessment that will lead to better SBA, that will lead to better summative. It is something that I want to encourage.

Others what would be your message.

Number 19
Plan to be successful (that's your message to teachers, Ok plan to be successful).

Number 104
Mine would be, they must enjoy the journey, that is ehh they must take the learners through the formative assessment and if they do that learners will not grapple with formative assessment at the end of the year.

Your message number 14 I think here I have to get ehh everybody you know.

Number 5
Mine would be that educators should see teaching and assessment as one thing.

Number 14
Ya firstly I would emphasis to the teachers the purpose of assessment, that with assessment they will be able to assist learners with remedial purposes. They will be able to evaluate their own work, they will be able to monitor progress and in that fashion the desired outcomes and standards will be achieved.

Ladies and gentlemen thank you very much, thank you very much for participating in this focus group interview and I hope this data will help me finalise my study and I'm ready to come back and present the findings to you. Thank you very much.