Eleven Eastern Cape teachers’ perceptions of the implementation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

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Abstract

A new curriculum, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was during 2012-2014 introduced in South African schools. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of how the implementation process of the curriculum was perceived by teachers. The study examined what the teachers’ general opinions about CAPS were, what experiences they had from the training in relation to the implementation, what strategies they used to further their understanding about CAPS and which factors affected their ability to implement the curriculum. Eleven teachers were interviewed in order to answer the research questions. Findings from the interviews showed that a majority of the teachers believed that the training that was supposed to prepare them for the implementation of CAPS had several faults.

Keywords: South Africa, Educational reforms, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, Teacher Training, Political power
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Introduction

The call from teachers to be taken as professionals seems to be heard from many different corners of the world. The circumstances might be different, but issues remain similar: teachers feel mistrusted by stakeholders, parents and learners. Their status is low and they struggle with a pedagogic practice that is undermined by large classes and poor resources. Because the discussions concerning schools are so similar, regardless of if it is in South Africa, Sweden or with people from other countries, with teachers, fellow students, principals or others, I have developed an interest to better understand the teachers’ situation. Many that I have met describe difficult conditions for teaching and a resignation towards seeing positive change in the near future.

A country’s education system is complex and how to govern it is not evident. What was the intention of a reform might not at all be the outcome (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000). Even though the hot topics mentioned above are relevant to many countries and although reforms might seem alike, there are many things within the educational context that have to be taken into account when understanding the development and implementation of reforms. Schools in countries with large socio-economic disparities are sensitive to educational reforms. A teacher’s classroom practice is a selection from a deeper, wide-ranging pedagogical knowledge - a selection reflecting resources available and the ethos of the school (Johnson et al., 2000). This implies that teachers that share the beliefs of a curriculum reform do not necessarily act in accordance with it because even if they know what to do, the constraints of the environment can hamper their ability to do it. An unfortunate consequence of the apartheid system is that there are two parallel education systems in South Africa, comprising of the public schools on one end and the previous all white former Model C schools on the other end. Johnson et al. (2000) adds that even with necessary equipment (such as lab-equipment, books, computers and upgrading of the schools physical environment) being brought into schools, the entire education system has to be transformed, which is a substantial task.

The last reform in South African schools was the introduction of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012. The South African government saw the need for a reform to make the curriculum more accessible for teachers (Department of basic education, caps q&a booklet). Teachers are the enablers of the policies; their training and internal beliefs, as well as teaching contexts will play a large role on the implementation of quality education. It
is now of interest during the last stages of its implementation to listen to what teachers have to say about it and how they deal with the changes. The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, from the teachers I have talked with, has been met with hesitance because the teachers have felt that it is just another burden laid on their backs. To better understand the situation of the teachers, this study will focus on how the implementation of CAPS has been undertaken by them and what assistance they have received in the process.

**Purpose and research questions**

The purpose of this study is to gain more knowledge and understanding about the introduction of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement as well as its implementation by teachers. The overriding purpose will be answered through the subordinate questions:

- What are the teachers’ general opinions about CAPS?
- How do teachers perceive the training in CAPS?
- What strategies do teachers employ to familiarise themselves with CAPS?
- Which factors affect the teachers’ ability to implement the curriculum?

**Literature review**

The literature review aims to give an understanding of the South African education system by first presenting a theory on the aim of post-colonial education in Africa. Then the South African curriculum reforms leading up to CAPS will be outlined, followed by a theory of the elements needed in a successful professional development. The last section of this literature review gives a theoretical framework for how a curriculum reform can be understood from formulation to implementation.

Looking at prevailing African discourses about education can help explain the post-apartheid South African curriculum development. The introduction of mass schooling fulfils two purposes in post-colonial Africa: to show that westernised modernity and opportunity for the masses has been achieved (Fuller’s theory referenced in Dahlström, 2002). He means that there are five strategies that are used in order to meet these goals of westernised modernity and opportunity for the masses: to signal modern bureaucracy, the state must first of all enforce modern bureaucratic forms and rituals. Second, curricula that are largely influenced by western knowledge and symbolism will be produced. Thirdly, a moral order sanctioned by the state will be understood as superior to indigenous knowledge. Fourthly, the mass conditions within the classrooms will be set up by the state as a means to ritualise the school
thus making them the rational norm. Fifthly, the child's virtue will be judged by a secular criterion that emphasise memorisation of facts and bits of knowledge. Fuller’s theory (referenced in Dahlström, 2002) can put some perspective on the prevailing situation of the South African education system.

Since the democratisation of South Africa in the year of 1994, the country has seen big structural changes. These changes were initiated in 1996 by the launching of the country’s first democratic constitution. Since then, changes have also affected the educational sector; it has at a hasty speed seen numerous curriculum, policy, management, monitoring and evaluation changes (Bansilal, 2011). These changes have been guided by a shift in educational philosophy, from performance-based, to competence-based education; Graven (2002) means that this philosophical shift has led to a conflict between new and old perceptions of teaching. But how has this clash of perceptions come into play in the curriculum process? Below the curriculum reforms leading up to CAPS will be discussed in a chronological order, focusing on the factors that made change necessary and the outcome of the reforms.

**Curriculum 2005**

Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was the first curriculum after the apartheid regime, implemented in 1998. Chisholm (2005) identifies it as a curriculum based on the principles of outcomes-based education, regarded as a means to come out of injustices of the past. C2005 focused on aims of the education and individual achievement in contrast to the previous curriculum that listed content in a subject-bound curriculum. The curriculum was to let students work at their own pace and the teacher input was no longer central; this would lead to a curriculum practice that was inclusive rather than exclusive. Dahlström (2002) argues that in order to make the shift from education for a few to education for all, there will inevitably be a shift towards learner-centered education. Chisholm (2000) affirms that the three pillars of C2005 were learner-centered education, outcomes-based education and a belief of integrated and non-disciplinary knowledge. This would be realized through seeing teachers as curriculum developers, using group work, community participation, and providing opportunities for critical thinking, etc.

After C2005 was implemented, critique was voiced against it. Harley and Wedekind (2004), for example, maintain that the intentions of C2005 were not being met; the gap between those formerly disadvantaged was still increasing in relation to those previously advantaged. Criticism was put forward by Nykiel-Herbert (2004) who meant that during the
implementation of C2005, trainers were not properly trained for the task at hand. They could explain the design and structure of the curriculum, but were not themselves skilled enough to effectively aid teachers with the implementation. Chisholm (2000) also recognised the lack of training as a contributing factor to the limited implementation of C2005. Other factors put forward were a problematic curriculum design - where the correlation between curriculum and assessment policy was not clear - as well as the increased burden on actors within the school that was related to C2005. The education field was during the implementation of C2005 additionally going through several structural changes such as restructuring educational departments, etc., which meant that the implementation problems were also on a larger structural level. The other activities on the educational field that were equally important to the implementation of the curriculum meant a limited focus on the curriculum (Chisholm, 2000). Resourced schools managed to cope with the changes but were not content with the large amount of paperwork required. Schools with limited resources had more acute problems such as poor infrastructure and large classes while also lacking teaching materials such as books, pens and pencils. Because the problems with the implementation were so large, a new curriculum soon replaced C2005.

**Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)**

Next in line was the Revised National Curriculum Statement developed for grade R-9 (RNCS), launched in 2004 (Department of Education, 2002). Afterwards a policy document was developed for grade 10-12 called the National Curriculum Statement which was followed by a revision of the RNCS in the earlier grades Dada et al. (2009). The RNCS is built on the principles of the Constitution of South Africa and C2005 (Bantwini, 2009). Thus, it is not a new curriculum but rather a revision that attempts to address the problems of C2005 (see section above). RNCS faced some implementation problems similar to C2005. According to Carignan et al. (2009) there was a vision of teachers’ identities and roles within an outcomes-based education system, but no indication as to what the teachers should do to shoulder these roles. Bantwini (2009) sustains that there was no plan for how the RNCS was to be implemented in under-resourced classrooms and also raises the issue that the teachers formulated meanings of the RNCS was not examined before implementation. Furthermore, Bantwini (2009) argues that in order for a curriculum reform to have a long-term effect, it has to be accompanied by other changes within the educational system. Rogan (2007) explains that an issue with curriculum reforms is that they often tend to focus on the new content and not on how the implementation should be undertaken. Johnson et al. (2000) maintains that in
poorly developed educational systems, teachers will not be able to make active educational choices but the environment will make the selection. They maintain that a curriculum implementation process thus has to carefully consider the context of teaching.

A study made by Singh and Singh (2012) among pre-service science teachers indicates some of the issues with RNCS. They have shown examples of schools where the RNCS policy documents for science have not even been put into use. The documents were physically there but were not used by teachers. The study sees many contributing factors to this state. First of all, the stream of new policies might have caused a problem where teachers do not have time to understand and implement a new policy before another one is put into place. They also recognized the fact that the language of policy documents was on a high cognitive level which caused a problem for full understanding among some science teachers. Teachers in the study also expressed that they were not familiarised with new content especially in the physical science subject area.

Because of the problems with RNCS, it was seen not as a relief; but extra paperwork. The curriculum introduced practices from developed countries, but the South African society did not have the financial and human capacity to realise them, and subsequently a frustration arose among the implementing parties. (Bantwini, 2009). Graven (2002) concludes that a tension had arisen between local needs and the need to be able to compete globally. In reflection of the many policy shifts, Bantwini (2009) maintains that curriculum reform has to be understood as a long-term solution; if the beliefs, values and experiences of teachers are neglected, there will be a gap between the intentions and the outcome, which seems to have been the case with the RNCS. Thus, there was a need for a revision of the curriculum so that issues could be resolved.

**Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)**

The Department of Basic Education (n.d.) realized the need for curriculum revision as teachers were facing insoluble issues when implementing RNCS. They have since identified crucial issues, negative to the quality of education and have made amendments for the curriculum to make it more comprehensive and concise in order for it to be easier to follow for teachers. These amendments resulted in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and are to be implemented 2012-2014.
A study from the Gauteng province indicates challenges intermediate phase teachers meet when implementing CAPS. A demanding workload and a lack of resources stole time away from implementing new policies (Mogashoa, 2013). The training the teachers received from the department of education before the implementation of CAPS was the possibility to attend workshops, which is the same type of training they received before C2005 and the RNCS. The study suggests that further training is necessary as a workshop of a few days cannot be enough to understand how to implement the policies successfully. Other than the limited time, the quality of the workshops varied; a large group of the participants in the study felt that the workshops were irrelevant to their classroom practices while another large group had an opportunity to get an understanding of how the policies would come to be used within their classrooms. The follow-up after the workshops was also inadequate according to the teachers (Mogashoa, 2013). However, in spite of the negative feedback, the teachers felt more comfortable with the workshops they received for CAPS and felt more prepared for the implementation than with other policies (this was before they started implementing it). Mogashoa (2013) points out that in order for the training to be relevant for teachers, their needs should be identified and taken into account when designing professional development programmes. The author stresses the need for additional training such as seminars, conferences, observations, networks of teachers etc.

This year represents the final stage of the implementation of CAPS which means that some teachers have been working with it for three years while some are just getting started. It should at this point be possible to get an indication from practicing teachers of how the implementation work is going. Mogashoa (2013) can shed some light on these questions but because it is made in another province than Eastern Cape and it is only among intermediate phase teachers, it is not certain that the results from that study will be similar to the current one as the context of schools might vary between provinces.

**Professional development**

Training for curriculum implementation might be seen as a type of professional development. According to Singh (2011) the professional development of South African teachers has been irregular. Lessing and de Witt (2007) also point to the inconsistencies of the curriculum policies. Luneta (2012) has, in a literature review, identified five characteristics of effective professional development:
Alignment with goals of the Department of Education, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS in South Africa) and teachers’ professional development needs

- Focus on the knowledge bases and the effective instructional approaches appropriate for high learning outcomes
- Inclusion of learning opportunities for acquiring new instructional strategies
- Provision of opportunities for reflection and collaboration among teachers
- Inclusion of built-in follow up and continuous feedback

Luneta (2012) stresses that no matter if the professional development is in the form of workshops or through communities of practice; there are some things that will make it successful. It must be relevant to the teachers' situations and constructed in a way so that they can gain from the experience. Participants should be active and have the chance to relate the theories to their own practice. Furthermore, it is argued that effective training needs to be continuous so that knowledge gained can be tried in the classrooms and then taken back to the training to be developed further. It is of interest for this study to see if the inconsistencies mentioned above prevail as continuous professional development is a way to implement the curriculum.

The politics behind curriculum reform

Under this heading, the political intentions behind curriculum reform and how intentions are being met during implementation are discussed. The interplay between the formulation and the implementation arena are discussed.

Lindensjö & Lundgren (2000) introduce(s) a theory for understanding the works of a reform. They suggest that there are different arenas in the education field that different actors traditionally would have access to. These are the formulation, transformation and implementation arenas.

The formulation arena

The formulation arena is where a reform is written. There are many actors present, such as members of the parliament, opposition parties, lobbyist groups and local departments, all with different agendas. Through beforehand formulated procedures, where relations of power come into play, a product can be achieved by compromises between dominating ideas and attitudes (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000).
The transformation arena
The transformation arena is where the reform is mediated from the formulation to the realisation arena. Different sources of media are the actors on this arena. The ability to control the actors on the transformation will have an impact on the outcome of the reform.

The realisation arena
The implementation arena is where the reform is actually implemented. Lindensjö & Lundgren (2000) make a distinction between the two activities: guideline-writing and field-implementation. The guideline-writing is where the public servants interpret the reform and make requisite regulations. The last step of the implementation process is referred to as the field-implementation, which is when the street-level bureaucrats, or teachers, actually implement the guidelines. Many researchers point to that process as critical for the success or failure of a reform.

The reform as a political process
Lindensjö & Lundgren (2000) give an explanation of the effects of a reform. It is formulated centrally and then followed by directives and information on how implementation should be undertaken. On a local level the, directives are translated into a set of decisions (B1 – Bn) which are to be implemented. B1 and B2 are procedures that usually already exist, although latent, on the implementation arena. However, because of the new resources and focus that are related to the reform, it can solve an existent problem. The changes B3-B5 are also seen as helpful and thus implemented. B6-Bn are actions that the street-level bureaucrats refrain from implementing because of a lack of resources, interest or beliefs in them. Even if A is transformed into B, it does not mean that reform A was unsuccessful. Because it motivated the changes B1 – Bn, it could meet an existing need and can thus be perceived as positive. The changes B will be adapted to A and use its terminology and when evaluated, one can conclude that A was implemented because B is described in the terms of A. This model is simplified and cannot be said to be always working, but it has nonetheless an explanatory power. Lindensjö & Lundgren (2000) maintains that the less precise the discourse of the reform, the greater is the chance for it to be implemented. On the other hand, if it is very precise and clearly defined, the transformation will be smaller and subsequently the goals will be less interesting.
The dissonance between the formulation and the implementation of a reform can be explained by understanding the different actors on the arenas. The adaptation of the reform is seen by the teachers as a way to translate the reform into realistic measurements. Because it was formulated centrally the direct implementation to the field would not have been regarded as suitable when considering the local power relations. Although the street-level-bureaucrats see it as making the reform realistic, the policymakers would regard it as a lack of power.

**Method**

This section will present the method of the study. The last parts of the section treat the selection of participants and lastly the ethical issues that is related to the study.

**Qualitative or quantitative research**

When choosing between conducting qualitative or quantitative research, there are different aspects to consider. According to Trost (2010), quantitative and qualitative research have different aims; quantitative research analyses relationships between variables and qualitative research analyses the relationship between people and aims to describe patterns of a phenomena. In qualitative and quantitative research, the perspective on fixed categories is different; in quantitative research, the statement “elderly woman” would be regarded as a variable whereas in qualitative research, it would be seen as a characteristic. When choosing between the two research-designs, Trost (2010) suggests that one should consider the purpose of the study and the terms that are used in the formulation of the research questions. If the study aims to find frequencies or percentages, with descriptive words such as longer, more, bigger, comparing and contrasting the quantitative research is advised. On the other hand, if the purpose is to understand or find patterns, qualitative research is suggested. The aim of this study is to understand perceptions of curriculum reform which indicates that a qualitative study is suitable.

**Choice of method**

An interview study has been conducted in order to answer the research questions. The reason for conducting interviews is that it can assist in understanding the respondents’ perspectives of the implementation process of the curriculum. An interviewer will try to understand the world through the eyes of the respondent and develop meaning from their experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale 2009). The aim of an interview is, according to Lantz (2013), to mirror the respondent, or to describe what happened between the respondent and the interviewer without putting the interviewers own perceptions into it. The idea is to not make presumptions
from the content of the interview but to critically reflect upon what was communicated at the time. Interviews are thus ideal as they attempt to understand the respondent’s idea of a certain phenomenon. The interview study can become a way of understanding the dynamics within schools; describing teachers’ reality is a crucial part of that as they constitute the biggest enabling factors of government policies.

Apart from the above mentioned aspects, another positive aspect of interviews is the flexibility of the process (Bell, 2007). The interviewer can follow up with interesting topics and clarify answers where needed; the intonation, pauses and gestures of the respondent might give a deeper understanding of the feelings the respondent has. A negative aspect of interviews is the amount of time needed for preparations as well as afterwards. The questions must be carefully formulated and asked in a natural sequence. Bell (2007) also points to the risk of being biased; it can be by pressuring the interviewed person to answer in a certain way, making presumptions or by distorting the judgment. To avoid that, it is important to be aware of the risk of bias and try to work against it by making sure that any opinions put forward can be motivated by facts and by constantly questioning the findings. In this specific study, an issue might be the relationship between me and the interviewed person as we are both representatives of our respective countries and cultures. I, as a representative of the western world, am traditionally in a position of power which I must be aware of. It can become a pressure on the others to participate or to feel subordinate. Because of that reason, it will be of importance that I keep good contact with the interviewed person and that I show that I respect them.

Sample
The convenience method was used for finding respondents (Trost, 2010). Schools situated in different areas were approached, but only schools in the township areas gave permission to conduct interviews and assisted in locating teachers. Because of the difficulty to locate teachers, all of those that were willing to participate were interviewed. However, this will not impact the study as it not of a generalising nature but instead only wishes to shed a light on the situation of the teachers in the study. In total, six schools were visited and eleven teachers interviewed. All of the schools are public schools and the number of learners in a classroom is typically above fifty. Five of the schools, Zamambo Secondary School, Nontyatyambo-, Zuko-, Bulelani and Msimbothi Primary School are situated in the same township. It is a township with a predominately black population that has many new inhabitants from rural
areas that are in search of an employment in the city. The last school visited was Fleet Primary School, situated in another township that has a predominately coloured population. The teachers had lots of experience in teaching (all more than ten years) except the teacher from Fleet Primary School that graduated and started working in 2012.

**Zamambo Secondary School**

Three teachers were interviewed at Zamambo Secondary School. The first teacher is a physical science and mathematics teacher that holds the position as the deputy principal of the school. The second teacher is a mathematics and mathematics literacy teacher that has a Master of Education degree and is currently working towards obtaining a PhD. The last teacher is also a mathematics and mathematics literacy teacher.

**Nontyatyambo Primary School**

The teachers at Nontyatyambo Primary School were interviewed together. The arrangement was agreed for their comfort, they expressed insecurity towards being interviewed separately and also expressed that it would be preferable in order to save time. The teachers interviewed taught grade one, four and seven.

**Zuko Primary School**

For the same reasons as above the teachers from Zuko Primary School also wanted to be interviewed together. The teachers were teaching grade two and grade six.

**Bulelani Primary School**

The teacher from Bulelani Primary School taught grade three.

**Msimbothi Primary School**

The teacher from Msimbothi Primary School taught grade four. She started her career at Fleet Primary School but was relocated. Xhosa is not her mother-tongue meaning that she does not share the mother-tongue with her learners.

**Fleet Primary School**

The teacher from Fleet Primary School taught grade two.

**Time disposition and execution**

**Document study**

I have between the 2014-09-01 and 2014-01-26 searched the ERIC database, the library of Umeå University’s database and Google scholar for literature. The search terms were: curriculum change, curriculum reform, in-service training, teacher attitudes, South Africa,
teacher education and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement. These were combined with an AND commando which means that I found documents that had all the search terms in them. I also did what is called a chain search where I found literature by going through the bibliographies of the relevant literature found in the database search.

**Interview study**

*Construction of the interview guide*

The questions asked during the interview can be seen in appendix II. They were written with guidance from Brinkmann and Kvale (2009). They suggest that during the beginning of the interview, the researcher should state the purpose of the interview, explain the usage of recording equipment and ask if the interviewed person has any questions regarding the study. It should be rounded off smoothly and give a sense of conclusion at the end of the interview. I have chosen to do this by stating that I have no further questions and ask if the respondent would like to add something or has any questions. A good question according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) is one that adheres to the theme of the study while at the same time creates a positive interview interaction. That the questions adheres to the theme of the study means that there would be a link between the research questions, the theoretical perceptions of the topic and to the analysis of the interviews that is to follow. When deciding the level of structure of the interview, they advise that one should focus on the aim of the interview. If one would like spontaneous and surprising answers, the procedure should also be allowed to be less structured. However, should the interview be more structured, it allows for a later analysis that will come more naturally. Should the answers be encoded afterwards, they should be asked with a future encoding in mind.

The other aim of a question is, as mentioned above, to ensure a positive interaction. Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) suggest that they should be free of an academic language, short and easy to grasp. They also advise to not start the interview with the most direct questions in order to not intimidate the respondent. These

*Analysis of interviews*

After the interviews were conducted they were then transcribed. After that, different parts of the transcription were highlighted to show to which area of interest it corresponded to. After that, the statements were summed up in shorter sentences, as Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) describe the technique meaning condensation. Lastly, the answers from the different interviews were categorised in order to see where the teachers’ perceptions differed and where they were coherent in order to make a fair description of the interviews.
Ethical considerations

In research within humanities and the social sciences, there are four demands that research has to fulfill for it to be considered ethical (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). These are the demand for appropriate information, consent, confidentiality and usage.

Demand for appropriate information

Before the participation, the researcher should inform the participants of what their task is in the project and what the terms are for their participation. They should be informed that participation is voluntary and that they have the right to call off their participation. No information that could affect their willingness to participate should be excluded. It is important to give an understanding of the project: what the purpose of it is and how their participation will be of service, where the results will be published and how the project is funded. Before the teachers' participation, they should be given a letter with information about the study and what their participation means (see Appendix I). That information should also be repeated orally, as well as information about how the recordings of the study would be used if the teachers agreed to being recorded.

Demand for consent

Participation should be preceded by a clear consent from the participant and the participant should be able to withdraw participation at all times. After all, necessary information about the participation the teachers consent was asked for.

Demand for confidentiality

Information about participants should be confidential and be kept so that unauthorized people cannot get hold of it. Information about identifiable persons should be dealt with in such a way that not a single person can be identified. After the interviews, the information that has been collected should be kept out of reach to others and in order to keep the respondents anonymous none of the names of the schools are authentic.

Demand for usage

Information collected about individuals can only be used for research and not for commercial or other purposes.

Result and analysis

The findings of this study comprise of material from eight interviews with a total of eleven respondents. Six of the interviews were held individually and two were conducted in groups
of two and three respondents. The findings from the interviews are presented below, divided into four sections whereby the last part of each section is analysis of the data.

**The teachers general impression of CAPS**

The teachers’ opinions about the curriculum could be divided into three groups: those who were positive, those who were indifferent and those who were negative towards it.

The teachers from Fleet, Msimbothi, Bulelani, and Zuko Primary Schools (a total of five) were positive towards the introduction of CAPS. All of them expressed that it is easier to plan according to CAPS than with RNCS because it is a comprehensive document that outlines a clear plan for planning the teaching. However, the teachers from Fleet and Bulelani Primary School mentioned that understanding the assessment guidelines had posed a problem with CAPS.

The teacher from Fleet Primary School graduated in 2012 and was thus trained for RNCS, the previous curriculum, during the course of her university studies. During her first year of teaching, she had to start implementing CAPS and according to her, it was a huge adjustment, but she found it a comfortable method because it was easy to adjust to. She, as well as the teacher from Msimbothi Primary School expressed a liking of the books they get from the Department of Education as they are of assistance when planning because they are well adapted to the curriculum. The teacher from Msimbothi Primary School expressed that CAPS, unlike previous curricula, can help a lot in schools where resources are lacking because of its fixed planning. She said:

> I think CAPS is more accommodating because it is for the teacher, I mean it really suits the need of a teacher. They can’t say I don’t know what to teach. Here you have got guidelines, you have got textbooks. I can literally show you a textbook, a mathematics textbook that I recommend to all of my friends; it gives you all that is expected from CAPS.

The teachers from Zamambo Secondary School, on the other hand, displayed a more indifferent feeling towards the introduction of CAPS. According to those teachers, not much has changed with the new curriculum. However, a few changes are noted such as a
rearrangement of subject matter, a decrease of paperwork, and a slightly different teaching approach. One of the teachers compares RNCS to CAPS like this:

We were told that we must always be facilitators of learning. So learners have to do things themselves but that resulted in a high failure rate in learners. Unlike now with CAPS we as teachers are the ones who are supposed to teach the information for the learners.

One of the teachers at Zamambo Secondary School was concerned by the worksheets they have received that are in line with the curriculum. According to her, they are too simple and if she used only them, then the learners would not be able to pass the exams.

The last group of teachers consists of three teachers from Nontyatyambo Primary School; they expressed that a difference with CAPS is the introduction of a second additional language and like the teachers from Zamambo Secondary School, they also mentioned the rearrangement of subjects. Unlike those teachers, the teachers from Nontyatyambo Primary School are not comfortable with the changes introduced with CAPS. They expressed that is it is problematic for them, that the number of subjects vary between the phases (natural science and technology is split into two separate subjects in grade seven only, for example) and that the curriculum is too packed with content, two factors which makes it difficult for the learners to follow the education. According to what the teachers said, they were also discouraged because they have not seen a decrease of paperwork with CAPS and the demands on the assessment are too extensive. One of the teachers said: “CAPS has paperwork, lots of paperwork. Let’s not take this theory that someone presents in TV. When you come down to our classes it’s too much”.

Conclusive analysis
According to the Department of Education (n.d.), the reason for the implementation of CAPS was to make the curriculum comprehensive and easy to use for teachers. The answers of the teachers that were positive towards the curriculum were in line with those intentions when they said that it is easier to plan according to CAPS. There can be many reasons to why the rest of the teachers were negative or indifferent towards the curriculum reform. Something that is clear in the responses of those teachers is that they do not express that anything significant has changed with CAPS; a few mention rearrangement of subjects as the main change, for example. According to Bantwini (2009) a curriculum reform needs to be
accompanied by other changes in order for it to be successful and have the intended long-term effects. When the teachers say that not a lot has changed with the introduction of CAPS, it can be an indication that for those teachers, the curriculum reform will not have the intended long-term effect. The teachers from Nontyatyambo Primary School that are negative towards the curriculum reform mention that there is a lot of paperwork for them in relation to CAPS. However, an excess amount of paperwork was a recognized problem with the previous curricula (Bantwini, 2009; Chisholm, 2000) that led to its further reformations. Both the teacher from Fleet Primary School and the teachers from Nontyatyambo Primary School mentioned problems with the assessment guidelines of CAPS, an issue that C2005 also had (Chisholm, 2000). That the current curriculum carries similar problems as the previous curricula can cause the teachers to develop negative feelings towards the current one as they will experience a sense of stagnation.

Training provided to the teachers

I have categorised the types of training accessible to the teachers in two categories: training from the department of education and training from other agents, such as NGO’s, external programmes and publishing companies.

From the Department of Education

Nine out of the eleven teachers attended workshops provided by the Department of Education before the implementation of CAPS. The teachers that did not attend were both from Zamambo Secondary School. The workshops lasted between a day and a week. The teachers spoke of the training in a similar manner. Seven of them mentioned that the time allocated for the workshops was not enough. Seven were not happy with the way they were organised. Firstly, too many teachers were called to attend at the same time which caused the hall to be filled with people. Secondly, the presenters were not themselves sufficiently familiarised with the content and could not answer questions that were asked, and the opportunity to ask them questions was limited. A Teacher from Nontyatyambo Primary school said: “It’s chaotic; you cannot hear at the back, there are no resources.” Because the hall was so full with people, the teachers expressed that they only went there to collect material, material that on some workshops was not sufficient for everyone to receive a copy. On the topic of the workshops, the teacher from Fleet Primary School said:

        Usually the people who present the workshops, they are not sure themselves what they are presenting. What they do, they just read whatever you have
there in front of you. They just read and it’s quite boring that way, so you don’t actually learn.

Two of the teachers differ in their opinion of the departmental workshops; those two teachers expressed positivity towards workshops specifically related to a subject. They were there provided with an opportunity to share some ideas of situations that might occur in a classroom and how they could plan their lessons according to CAPS. A teacher from Zamambo Secondary School said: “You know for a workshop to be interesting it has to be related to what is actually happening in the classroom. It provided us with an opportunity to share some ideas together as teachers.”

Of the two teachers that did not receive any training from the Department of Education, one did not get any training at all. The other teacher did attend other workshops with the Dinaledi programme which will be presented below. The teacher who received no training at all got the material that was given out on the workshop from a colleague and read it through. She wishes that she could get another opportunity to attend, especially with other teachers at the school so that they would all reach a common understanding of the curriculum. The rest of the teachers also mentioned that since the time of the workshops, that were all held during the first year of implementation, there has not been any follow-up on the training.

From other agents
Six of the teachers speak of additional ways to get assistance with curriculum, as well as other issues, than from the Department of Education.

Zamambo Secondary School is taking part of a programme called the Dinaledi programme. The respondent mentioned above that did not take part of the workshops from the Department of Education has instead been to content training workshops provided by the the Dinaledi programme. He explained that the programme is a collaboration between the mathematics, science and technology section of the Department of Education and an external organisation. The content training workshop did not go into depths about CAPS but instead addressed challenges for teachers. He expressed that the content training workshops had a clear topic of discussion that related to the classroom situation, trainers that were well prepared and a working administration. In conclusion, the respondent expressed to have gained when having participated in the training.
Another possibility brought up by the teachers from Nontyatyambo Primary School is the possibility to get book publishers to present workshops, something they value higher than the departmental workshops because, as they said, the presenters at those workshops are knowledgeable. They used to have such workshops during the time of RNCS, but have not been to one in relation to CAPS. The book publishers used to invite them but they have not done so recently and if the teachers would ask them to come to the school, they would be expected to buy material from them.

The last opportunity to get training, mentioned by the teachers at Nontyatyambo and Zuko primary school, is by the assistance of NGOs. At Nontyatyambo Primary School, there is a man from an NGO that has been training the mathematics teachers. The teachers mentioned that he could not assist the foundation phase teachers because he cannot speak Xhosa (which is the language of learning and teaching at that phase). The teachers at Zuko Primary School did also get help from an NGO, mostly with ICT development. They were equipped with five laptops and had training on how to implement the curriculum with the help of ICT. Five teachers were trained each Monday for a year from 2 o’clock until 5 o’clock. The training started with teaching the teachers basic computer skills. This year, five new teachers are being trained as well as members of the community. The teachers explained that the NGOs were able to help them and that they could access them in case they had any questions because they are still in the community even if they are no longer coming to the school. “Another thing that helps us as teachers is the NGOs, the NGOs are assisting us a lot. They give us support; support in terms of training us … it’s equipping us teachers for the IT.” -Teacher from Zuko Primary School.

**Conclusive analysis**

The teachers critique towards the workshops from the Department of Education was directed towards a few things: a lack of time, over crowdedness, unskilled trainers, that the participants were not able to get answers to their own questions and that there was no follow-up. Luneta (2012) maintains that for professional development to be successful it should be relevant to the teachers’ classroom situation, participants should be able to take part actively through knowledge exchange and link applicable theory to practice. Lastly, the training should be continuous so that the knowledge gained from it can firstly be tested in practice and then used again in further training. None of these aspects were fulfilled according to the teachers; the
workshops were a one-way mediation from trainers to the participants and there was no follow-up. However, the two teachers that were more positive towards the workshops did express that the training at those workshops related to their classroom practices and had an element of including the teachers. The training from the other agents such as the training from the Dinaledi programme, the book publishers workshops and the training from the NGOs covered different aspects for a successful training session; they were expressed to be closely related to the practical, continuous and to have trainers that were skilled and the teachers all expressed that they appreciated that training. This can be considered an indication for its success.

**Strategies to become familiar with CAPS**

Apart from the different kinds of training that the teachers received, they mentioned varying strategies that they were using in order to further their understanding of CAPS.

One strategy mentioned is to go to the Head of Departments employed at the schools or to the Subject Education Specialists from the Department of Education; an opportunity mentioned by four of the teachers from Zamambo Secondary School and Zuko Primary School. However, the teachers at Zuko Primary School said that it is difficult to attain help from the subject advisors because they are overcrowded with work due to there being many schools within their district. One of the teachers from Zamambo Secondary School also said that these posts are not filled at all times and that subject specialisation is not considered for the appointment, thus allowing for people unsuited for the job to be employed on such posts. In conclusion, the four teachers expressed awareness of the infrastructure put in place to assist them, but all of them mentioned circumstances that impeded them from using these resources.

Apart from using the Head of Departments and Subject Education Specialists, seven of the teachers mentioned that they have been helped by cluster groups. A cluster group is a group of teachers from different schools that have come together to share their knowledge. “You request from other schools, you invite other schools: how do you deal with this? How do you tackle this? And then you form sort of a cluster and you help each other” said a teacher from the Nontyatyambo Primary School about the cluster groups. Even though all of the teachers were positive towards the cluster groups, all but one said that the groups have not continued. The teachers gave different explanations for the discontinuation of the cluster groups. One sees it as the lack of interest from teachers to participate actively, whereas the other
explanation given is a lack of time for such activities during the working hours. The teacher from Bulelani Primary School is a cluster group leader; she explained that they do still meet but only when there is a certain occasion do they need to understand together as teachers. She also mentioned that she invited people from the district office that came to help the teachers understand the lesson planning and she intended to contact them again for further training.

Knowledge exchange among teachers at the school is mentioned by six of the teachers as a way of overcoming difficulties. These collaborations could take different forms. One of the teachers explained that if there is a topic in geography that is of a mathematical nature, a mathematics teacher could teach that topic instead of the geography teacher. The other teachers explained that they meet with the phases to exchange knowledge. The teacher from Fleet Primary School said that during the whole first year, the teachers of the same grade would come together and plan all the lessons together.

The last strategy the teachers were using to get familiar with the curriculum is to teach oneself by using the material from the workshops or to find additional resources. Three of the teachers, including the one that did not go to any workshops, explain that after the workshops were held, they individually studied the material that was handed out there in order to get a deeper understanding. “Reading through the notes and getting myself familiar with it; then we’re doing it in the classroom, that was much better for me.” - Said the teacher from Fleet Primary School about how she familiarised herself with CAPS. Additionally, two of the teachers mention that they use Internet or textbooks to find further information.

**Conclusive analysis**

Before the reform enters the realisation arena a mediation process takes place on the transformation arena (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000). The Head of Departments or Subject Education Specialists are actors on the transformation arena which mediate the curriculum to the teachers. However, as seen above they have not been active mediators for the interviewed teachers, which leaves place for other actors to enter the transformation arena. When teachers use other teachers as resources for learning or teach themselves, the teachers move from their traditional place as street-level bureaucrats on the realisation arena over to the transformation arena. When the teachers enter the transformation arena, they will interpret the reform through the information they received on workshops, or through external sources such as Internet and textbooks. Then the receiving teachers will act as actors on the realisation arena and take that
information and adapt it to the classroom practice. By entering the transformation arena, the teachers will make sure that the training they get through each other will be relevant to the classroom practice, which is one of the main ways to assure a successful professional development according to Luneta (2012).

**Factors that can affect the learning situation within schools**

Apart from training that prepares teachers for the curriculum, there are other factors which can help or hinder the teachers from successfully implementing the curriculum. Two such factors have been identified as influential to the teachers’ beliefs about the curriculum: the availability of resources and the use of English as a language of instruction.

The teachers have different views about the state of resources available at the schools but six of them mentioned resources have an effect on the implementation of the curriculum. Two of the teachers at Zamambo Secondary School mentioned that they are a well-resourced school compared to other schools in the area because of the resources from the Dinaledi programme. They have received laptops that are equipped with learning materials, study guides and textbooks and the school is equipped with a library as well as a science lab. One of them, however, means that in spite of the resources there are still challenges. According to him, the teachers do not use those resources because of a lack of interest to change the teaching practices from the teachers’ side. The last teacher from the Zamambo Secondary School is of a different opinion; she said that she lacks resources within the classroom as the learners do not have money to buy calculators and other tools for technical subjects. She wishes that there would be available calculators at the school that could be lent to learners. The teacher from Fleet Primary School identified a need for more resources, especially technological ones, in order to get a more successful implementation of the curriculum. The teachers from Zuko primary school said that they are able to implement the curriculum because of the IT that was made available to them through the help of NGOs, which are tools that can help them with the lesson planning.

Another factor that challenges the teachers is the language. The teacher at Msimbothi regretted that her learners cannot excel to the same extent as learners from former Model C schools because they have to learn in English even though their mother-tongue is Xhosa. She said “A child at our school coming from Xhosa would always have a problem, no matter what
the curriculum, the language of which they learn and teaching is always going to be a problem”. The teachers from Nontaytyambo Primary School also experienced language problems. They mentioned that the change from teaching a subject in Xhosa and then teaching that same subject in English after grade three is a challenge. They also expressed that the kids come to grade 1 not ready for school. The teachers explained that this is due to the situation in the townships where most children do not attend grade R or if they do, the curriculum is not being followed. The teachers’ said that they then have to start from scratch in grade 1 and that the curriculum is too much content for them to have time for the kind of progression in Xhosa that is required.

**Conclusive analysis**

The teachers mentioning the resources as affecting their ability to implement the curriculum cannot be seen as a coincidence. Johnson et al. (2000) submit to the idea that if resources are lacking for teachers, they will not be able to make active choices but the deprived educational environment will force them to act in a certain way; thus, when constructing a curriculum, the context of where it is to be implemented must be carefully considered. The teachers of this study have, in accordance with this, identified the resources as crucial to their teaching practice; whether they have said that they have enough resources or if they were lacking them. The fact that the teachers feel that the learners from their schools face problems due to language barriers whereas children from former Model C schools do not is an indication that the situational context of the teachers from the study was not carefully considered before introducing the curriculum. According to Harley and Wedekind (2004) a critique of C2005 was that in spite of its good intentions, the gap between formerly advantaged and disadvantaged schools were still increasing, therefore creating a need for reformation of the curriculum. The teachers express here that as long as English is the language of instruction, their learners will never be able to excel. To change from English can, however, be problematic for other reasons. Fuller’s theory (referenced in Dahlström, 2002) suggests that a crucial aim of post-colonial African education is to signal modernisation and mass opportunity, symbolism that might not be obtained if English is not mastered by the graduates of the educational system. Therefore, it is of importance to ensure that the learners’ background is not determining the learners’ success in the education system. The teachers are expressing that the aims of modernisation and mass opportunity are not being met by saying that the learners will not be able to excel as learners from former Model C schools will.
Discussion

The discussion starts by evaluating the method of the study, then it moves on to discussing the main findings, proposing further research and lastly the report is concluded.

Evaluation of the study and the method

Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) maintain that the aim of an interview is to understand how the respondent perceives the world. The results of this study can as such not be used to make any generalisations of a larger part of the population. The number of respondents is not large and they were not chosen by using any method other than that of convenience. The principals of the schools were first of all approached and asked for permission to do the interviews at the school. The principals in turn asked the teachers if they were willing to participate. Therefore, the principals could impact the choice of teachers. The sample as such is not so diversified because the teachers are mostly teachers with a long experience of teaching that come from similar kinds of schools so to make generalisations is not possible, but the aim of the study is not that but rather to understand their experience of the new curriculum.

In order to assure the quality of the study, several different strategies have been used. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) a crucial aspect of a study’s quality is dependent on the skill of the interviewer. They measure this skill by the interviewer’s knowledge of the subject, ability to converse, sensitivity towards the respondent’s use of language and a general knowledge of which aspects of the interview to drop and which aspects that are crucial to follow up on. I have taken some measurements to consider these aspects by first of all reading as much about the topic to ensure that I am knowledgeable; this aspect has been very important to establish a conducive relationship with the respondents, as my knowledge of South African contexts cannot be presumed because I am a foreigner. Secondly, I have tried (to) prior to the interviews get a good understanding of what my role in the interview situation is by reading literature on the topic in order to be able to structure and lead the interviews in a proper manner. When it comes to my ability to converse and sensitivity towards the respondent’s use of language, those are the aspects that are hardest for me to fulfill as I am a foreigner. To mitigate the impact of my short-comings, I have chosen to (in all interviews but one) have another interviewer, or a sort of interpreter, present during the interviews. Because the teachers are using English as a language of learning and teaching, it might be seen as a disqualification of their knowledge to not conduct the interviews in English even if their response might become richer if held in isiXhosa or Afrikaans. It was therefore not the role of
my colleague to interpret the interviews, but to clarify and explain where the ability for me and the respondent to reach a common understanding faltered because of language barriers. He also proved to be invaluable with the contact when approaching the principals and teachers for the interviews because of his sensitivity to the social context of the schools. In conclusion; my knowledge of the subject in correlation with his understanding of the social situation, the impact of the interviewer could be mitigated.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) define the reliability and validity of an interview study. The reliability is by them the consistency and authenticity of the study (meaning the ability to reproduce the study), an absence of leading questions and an arbitrary subjectivity. Validity, on the other hand, concerns the method of the study, if it can be said to mirror the phenomena or variable that was of interest for the study. To increase the reliability and validity of the study, the interviews have been recorded so that the answers can be controlled again and will thus not rely on the memory or ability of the interviewer to take notes during the interview. Much focus has also been put on creating the interview guide as to avoid posing leading questions or questions that are overly complicated. To ensure that all of the different areas of interest for the study were covered, the questions were categorised according to within which field an answer would be generated.

**Teachers general opinion about CAPS**

There was not one opinion in unison about CAPS among the teachers. The Department of Education’s (n.d.) aim with CAPS to be comprehensive and concise was only expressed as being met by five of the teachers. The other six teachers were either negative or indifferent to the introduction of CAPS. They had in common that they did not see a significant change coming with the introduction of CAPS. As it is now the last year of the implementation phase, the reform is in the process of being adapted by the teachers to the reality of the schools by translating the reform into realistic measurements. Lindensjö & Lundgren (2002) maintain that teachers will implement a reform fully or in part if it is seen as useful to them. The teachers that were the most negative to CAPS did not have anything positive to say about it, but instead expressed that the amount of paperwork was still excessive and that the rearrangement of subjects had not helped them. Thus, it seems unlikely that the new curriculum will bring any significant changes to their teaching practices. The teachers that were positive towards the curriculum reform were more positive to CAPS than previous curricula because it is outlining a clear plan to the teachers. The teachers that were more
indifferent towards CAPS all mentioned that it did bring a decrease in paperwork. Those two
groups can, because they believe it will give them something positive, use the curriculum to
their advantage. However, for them to do so (especially for the indifferent teachers), it is
important that the factors that are perceived as negative about the curriculum are resolved so
that they do not fall into the same perception of stagnation that the teachers negative to the
curriculum perceived.

**Teachers experiences of the training**

Eight of the teachers had similar opinions about the training from the Department of
Education; they were to a great extent critical to the training mainly due to the limited time set
for the training, unskilled trainers, too many participants and content that was detached from
their teaching reality. Two of the teachers were however a bit more positive because they
were at their workshops able to discuss how to plan according to CAPS, the content was thus
adapted to the teachers’ needs. The remaining teacher had not received any training and had
thus not an opinion about it. Mogashoa (2013) has in his study among Intermediate Phase
teachers in the Gauteng province reached similar results; it suggested that the time was
limited, part of the informants found the workshop irrelevant while others found it relevant
and lastly that there was no follow-up after the training. However, in spite of the limited
access to training, the informants still felt that the training was better than the training for the
previous curricula (Mogashoa, 2013); unlike the informants of this study that expressed that
they were more comfortable with previous training because the time allocated for that training
was more extensive. Furthermore, the informants of Mogashoa’s (2013) study felt, in spite of
the limited training that they were sufficiently prepared for the implementation of CAPS. The
teachers of this study did, although they had some reservations towards CAPS express similar
feelings; they did not mention difficulties with understanding the curriculum that they could
not overcome. Although they felt comfortable with CAPS they still stressed the need for
continuous training (Mogashoa, 2013) which is something that the teachers of this study also
requested.

The Department of Education has resigned from their responsibility to train the teachers
adequately according to what was said by the teachers during the interviews; instead, several
of the teachers spoke of other ways to attain training by external programmes, NGOs and
book-publishers. The positive sides of the programmes are, according to the teachers, that
they focus on their specific needs, are continuous and have skilled personnel. These programmes can, as long as the Department of Education is not, fulfill the needs for professional development because they meet the requirements Luneta (2012) outlined, see page 7. However, as Singh (2011) and Lessing and de Witt (2007) pointed out, a problem with the training for teachers nationwide is that it has been too inconsistent in the past. Thus, it is not sure that these programmes can solve the existent problems with teachers’ professional development because the opportunity to take part in such a programme depends on the access the school can gain to it. Luneta (2012) also points out that the content of the training should be in line with the goals of the Department of Education. This can be said to be a means to ensure that the original intentions of the policy-makers are being met. The other organisations are not actors on the formulation arena since they are not governmental organisations. As such, they have to make an interpretation of the intentions of the Department of Education and because they are independent of it they may make subjective interpretations. In conclusion, the professional development of independent organisations can be positive but it is not guaranteed that it will solve the problems of professional training that has been noted as troublesome in the past.

**Strategies used to become familiar with CAPS**

Four different strategies could be found among the teachers in order to become acquainted with the curriculum: finding help from government employed subject advisors and head of departments, the use of cluster groups, and inter-school knowledge exchange between teachers and teachers teaching themselves. No strategy was used by all teachers and they were not used on a regular basis. There were different reasons given for the inconsistencies, such as posts that were not filled, lack of time or lack of interest. The subject advisors, heads of departments and cluster groups are formal structures that are put in place to support the teachers. That these structures are not accessible to the teachers at all times is something that might have an impact on the implementation of the curriculum as they should be the channels for following up the teachers progress during the implementation. It is also an indication that problems with RNCS might still continue because as Carignan et al. (2009) noted, there were clear goals in the RNCS for the teachers to reach but no plan for how they should act to reach those goals. The fact that the formal support systems are not in place for the teachers means that the goals of CAPS cannot be efficiently communicated to the teachers and thus that consistent results of the implementation cannot be guaranteed. However, the teachers expressed that they, when those structures were failing them, turned to help each other. This
suggests that they as teachers have strategies for dealing with issues even if the leadership of the schools is not assisting them.

**Factors affecting the teachers ability to implement the curriculum**

The teachers mentioned language barriers and resources as obstacles, or enablers, to implement the curriculum fully. Some of the teachers experienced a problem with using English as the language of learning and teaching can have consequences for the teachers’ because it might alienate them from trusting the decision makers and in the long-run affect their belief in the reform. They can see it as a reform imposed by the actors on the formulation arena (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000), an unrealistic measurement that was not put in place to be a help but rather cemented the learners’ problems as non-fluent English speakers. Additionally, not having access to resources that are needed might further increase the problems with the reform on the implementation arena. That the access to resources varied between the schools, because some had accessed resources through external programmes, is again an indication of the inconsistencies of the implementation, signalling the lack of a strong central body that is implementing a well-structured plan.

**Further research**

When conducting this study, several questions could not be answered within the scope of the study, but some questions of interest were raised:

- How can the support system for teachers’ professional development be made more uniform?
- How do principals execute their role as pedagogical leaders of the school?

**Conclusion**

The aim of this research was to gain an understanding of the implementation process of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement from a teachers’ perspective. The interviews with the teachers showed that their opinions about CAPS were much diversified although their opinion about the training they received before the implementation was similar. A majority of the teachers were critical to the training that the Department of Education offered. To compensate for the training they did not get, the teachers had developed other strategies for gaining an understanding of CAPS. Several of the teachers’ relied on external actors and NGOs to get professional training. Those organisations could, unlike the Department of Education, offer relevant continuous training by trainers that were regarded as competent. Additionally, the teachers relied on written material and collegial knowledge exchange for
professional development. Because the training from the Department of Education was poor and the other training that the teachers received was so diversified, the implementation of the curriculum might be very different among the teachers. The training and professional development is part of the mediation process of the reform that takes place on the transformation arena (Lindensjö & Lundgren 2000). The Department of Education’s aims of the reform might not be coherent to the aims of the other independent organisations and the reform will thus be mediated in another way from the different actors. The last step of the implementation process is where the teachers adapt the reform to their teaching practices. The teachers will not implement the reform as a whole but they will use the parts that are essential to them (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000). The teachers that were negative towards CAPS are thus less likely to adapt their teaching practices to the new curriculum. A reason to why previous curriculum failed was that it did not close the gap between high-performing and low-performing schools (Harley & Wedekind, 2004). This study suggests that the schools had different access to training and resources for implementing the curriculum, indicating that their onset for implementing the curriculum is not similar, which might lead to differences. However, in spite of these differences, the issues the teachers had with the curriculum was not that it was too complex for them to understand; unlike RNCS that was said to have a language that was on a too high-level (Singh and Singh, 2012), they should thus be able to implement it given the right support. In conclusion, if the teachers are to implement the curriculum, they should get access to continuous training and measures to close the gap between schools.
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Appendix 1
Letter given to teachers before they have taken part in the study

To whom it may concern,

My name is Anna-Sara Björklund and I am a one-year master student from the University of Umeå, in Sweden. I am currently undertaking a study about how the implementation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement is being perceived.

As part of the study I am looking for teachers to interview about how they perceive the implementation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, which is why I am contacting you, as I would be very pleased if you would help me by taking part of the study. The findings will be used within a report that is to be published by the University of Umeå. You are guaranteed to be anonymous should you choose to take part of the study. If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by using the contact number or e-mail address below.

Yours sincerely,

___________________________
Anna-Sara Björklund
Telephone number: XXX-XXX XXXX
E-mail Address: XXXXXXXX
Appendix 2

Interview guide

1. What do you teach?

2. Have you taught something else before?

3. For how long have you been a teacher?

4. When did you start implementing CAPS?

5. What other changes have you seen in your school that is not related to the curriculum reform?

6. What is the difference between working with CAPS and using the older curricula?

7. How did you feel when you first heard about CAPS?

8. Tell me about the training you received before the implementation of CAPS.

9. How did the leaders of the training try to accommodate you and specific issues that you might have had?

10. What was the most important and interesting thing you learnt from the training?

11. How have you been able to relate what you learnt during the training to your classroom activities afterwards?

12. How did you feel about using CAPS after you had received the training?
13. What problems are you facing with the implementation of CAPS?

14. Where do you find help if you need help with an issue of CAPS?

15. How can you get continuous training in CAPS?

16. What changes would you like to see to the curriculum?