The Implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) in Lesotho
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Open Note of the IBE

The IBE has launched the Diploma Alumni Series to create a shared space to involve local education professionals into a global dialogue and inspire original research and meaningful discussion. It intends to position the diploma alumni as active and distinct researchers, producers and disseminators of local knowledge and mastery. These through the elaboration of small-scale innovative research projects that will eventually enrich and advance the development of quality curricula for all.

The Diploma Alumni Series is the result of a Diploma Alumni Grant established by the IBE in 2015 with the hopes of providing professional development opportunities for the diploma alumni. The idea of promoting a grant for small-scale innovative research derives from the valuable contributions of the case studies written by the participants of the Postgraduate Diploma in Curriculum Design and Development as part of their coursework. During the past years, participants have been producing comprehensive and unique case studies, sharing a variety of approaches, strategies and practices in curriculum initiatives across regions. These products have become essential tools and reference materials of the Diploma and Masters programmes, as they allow the participants to reflect on diverse contexts and perspectives and further apply these new ideas into ongoing curriculum reform and worldwide discussions on current and critical issues in curriculum, learning and assessment. Echoing the success of the case studies, the Diploma Alumni Grant enables and encourages the animated participation of diploma alumni in continuing with their professional development through evolving their case studies and research topics into small-scale in-depth research.

Endorsed and produced in the three official languages of the Diploma and Masters Programmes, English, French and Spanish, the series of research primarily presents effective and relevant practices around (i) curriculum policy and reform and (ii) teaching, learning and assessment. Through their research projects, fourteen Diploma Alumni, 9 from Africa and 5 from Latin America and the Caribbean, shed light on teaching and learning approaches used at local level as well as on the state of education and curriculum reforms in these two regions. The Diploma Alumni Series becomes, therefore, an invaluable asset as it highlights concrete education practices across regions, fostering inclusive and holistic approaches that are simultaneously community-based and an extension of the global discussion on the concerns of Member States. Along with the series In-Progress Reflections on Current and Critical Issues in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment, the Diploma Alumni Series aims to facilitate online interactions through continuous reflection and exchange of ideas between local and international experts.

Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope: Director, International Bureau of Education
The Implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (*Education for Individual and Social Development*) in Lesotho

**Abstract:** This study aims to analyse the content and consequences of the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (*Education for Individual and Social Development*) in Lesotho. Extensive literature review and analysis of the policy document (Policy 2009) are the main methods of data collection. In particular, the study analyses the context of Policy 2009, with a focus on the parts dealing with curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, using the model of Taylor et al. (1997). The study highlights the opportunities created by Policy 2009 for education development in Lesotho. The adoption of an integrated approach, and its associated concept of learner-centred pedagogy, has a great potential to make both basic and secondary school curriculum more responsive to the national developmental needs of the country. However, the analysis also revealed that certain assumptions of Policy 2009 are somewhat at distance from the reality found in schools, particularly with respect to pedagogy and assessment. Finally, the study concludes with a series of recommendations for overcoming the challenges and weaknesses of Policy 2009, as identified in the analysis part of the study. The recommendations include, among others, utilising other countries’ lessons learned from their curriculum reforms, providing adequate resources to teachers and schools, involving teachers in the reform process, and providing teacher training.

**Keywords:** Assessment – curriculum – education reform – policy – Lesotho
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# 1. Research Orientation

## 1.1 Introduction

The colonial legacy as evident in the education system of Lesotho and policies has resulted in plethora of problems, the most common being curricula offered by schools that are irrelevant to the needs and culture of Basotho. As such, the history of education development in Lesotho was largely one of expansion of mission education facilities. As Matsela (1979, p. 2) asserts, ‘under the suppressive effects of colonisation, social communities often modified their cultures to fit with the then-required patterns of survival norms of behaviour.’

However, when independence came to Lesotho in 1966, it ushered in a new sense of freedom of thought and action, which called to question the previous systems of education and curricula. As Matsela (1979, p. 2) states, ‘...although the post-independence period was initially marked with jubilations, it soon brought confusion and frustration in education in the previously white controlled countries.’ Lesotho was not an exception. The country had to devise its patterns and means of survival fast, or succumb and surrender its sovereignty to the dominant countries. The latter path was not only degrading, but also politically unacceptable to all those who had tasted the gall of colonial servitude. As Wallerstein (1966, p. 22) says, ‘a compulsory period of reflection took place simultaneously with the period of socio-political confusion and frustration.’

As a result, Lesotho began a flurry of Lipitso (Public Gatherings), with a view to soliciting input towards designing a policy and curriculum that would respond to the needs of the young nation. Running from October 1977 to March 1978, there was altogether a series of fifty-one such gatherings, in different parts of the country (Mosisili, 1981). Following this consultation process, a National Education Dialogue was held in 1978 for further consultation. The purpose of the gatherings, in part, was to relate education planning to overall national development plans and to inform any subsequent policy reforms. Additionally, the Minister of Education had, in 1971, announced the *Education Policy for Development* as a response to the perceived limitations of the education system inherited from the colonial administration. This policy recognized the central role of education in achieving economic growth.

As such the government envisaged the provision of an equitable Basic Education to all as a key development goal, while at the same time ensuring acceptable standards of quality. (The *Lesotho Education Act No. 10 of 1995*: Section 3[1] and [2]).

Basic education is regarded as an integral component of social and economic development and as a fundamental human right. It is also seen as an essential pre-condition for mid-level employment and secondary and post-secondary education and training, which will create the practical skills that will facilitate rapid integration of population into society, particularly into the employment market.

The New Integrated Basic Education Curriculum intends to bring about changes in educational beliefs, practices and structures with the goal of enhancing learners’ well-being and all-round development (Guan and Meng, 2007). Very little rigorous evaluation data is, as yet, available to determine whether or not this reform has succeeded in achieving these aims:

- What attitudes do teachers and principals have about the Integrated Basic Education Curriculum?
- Have beliefs about the goals of education been affected by the reform?
- What do classroom practices look like after several years of reform implementation?
- To what extent have teachers received New Curriculum training and professional development?
How has the structure and production of curriculum changed?
What are the main challenges to successful implementation of the reform?
Finally, and most importantly, what are the learners’ outcomes of the reform implementation?

1.2 Purpose of the investigation

The general purpose of the research is to analyse the text/content and consequences for implementation of the \textbf{Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)} in Lesotho. The specific objectives which flow forth from the general purpose are as follows:

- to determine the background to and nature of the \textbf{Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)} in Lesotho by means of analysing its content;
- to indicate the implication that the \textbf{Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)} holds for school-typical education by analysing the consequences for implementation of this policy in Lesotho;
- to reach findings and conclusions, and make recommendations, based on the research done for a more efficient and successful implementation of the \textbf{Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)} in schools in Lesotho.

1.3 Research paradigm, research methodology and research methods

According to Mouly (as quoted by Cohen and Manien, 1996, p. 40) ‘research is best conceived as a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data.’ Various research methods can be used as means of acquiring in-depth knowledge of the topic under study.

Most studies on curriculum issues in Lesotho are qualitative in nature, frequently using questionnaires for data collection, a situation which could deny depth and a broad scope in the research. Against this background, this research will be conducted through literature study to realise the general purpose of the study.

	extbf{Literature study}

According to Burns and Grove (2003, p. 43) a literature study is described as ‘those sources that are pertinent or highly important in providing the in-depth knowledge to study a selected problem.’ This background enables the researcher to build on the ideas of others. Therefore, to collect data for this research, sources such as journalistic accounts, indigenous accounts, books, newspaper articles, media reports, curriculum policies and different curricula documents were used to complement the qualitative and quantitative research methods. Moreover, information on the internet was integrated with the data obtained, in an attempt to add any other nuances that might reside in these sources. As Hulme and Grove (1994, p. 68) argue ‘reviewing relevant studies enables the researcher to clarify:

- which problems have been investigated;
- which ones require further investigation or replication; and
- which ones have not been investigated?’
Therefore, this directs the researcher in designing the study and interpreting the outcomes (Burns and Grove, 2003, p. 43). As such, employing a literature review in this research enabled the researcher to obtain a broader picture of the topic under study.

1.4 Demarcating the research area

The selection of the special procedure followed in demarcating this study is to a large extend influenced by the topic under study, the experience of the researcher and the anticipated objectives. As a result the researcher used both scientific and geographical methods of demarcation for this research.

1.5 Research outlay

In order to reach the stated objectives, the report of the research revolves as follows:

**Section 1**
A brief introduction of the Education Policies in Lesotho is given, followed by a brief orientation, statement of the problem, aims, objectives, orientation of the research methods, demarcation of the research, and summary of the section.

**Section 2**
The analysis of the content of the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)* is presented, as well as an exposition of the consequences for its implementation.

**Section 3**
A report on the findings and conclusions is given. Some recommendations regarding a more effective implementation of the Integrated Basic Education Curriculum in the schools in Lesotho are outlined.

1.6 Summary

This section focused on research orientation, and aims and objectives of the research. The research method (literature study), varying methods of demarcation, and the structure of the research were also given attention.

The next section focuses on the analysis of the text/content and consequences for the implementation of the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)* henceforth the implementation of the Integrated Basic Education in the schools in Lesotho with the purpose of highlighting the opportunities, threats and challenges it creates for education development in Lesotho.
2. Analysis of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009
*(Education for Individual and Social Development)*

2.1 Introduction

This section will give a brief overview on the analysis of the text/content of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 *(Education for Individual and Social Development)*. Accordingly, attention will be given to the consequences for the implementation the policy holds in the schools in Lesotho. Taylor, Razvi, Lingard and Henry (1997, p. 44) propose the following framework for the analysis of education policy: context, content, and consequences for the implementation of a policy. It is also mentioned that policy analysis involves the understanding of both the background and context of policies, including their historical antecedents and relations with other texts, and the short and long-term impacts of policies in practice (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 44).

They point out that policy analysis evolves around three legs, namely;

1. **Context**

   According to Taylor et al. (1997, p. 45) ‘context refers to the antecedents and pressures leading to the gestation of a specific policy.’ It follows that gestation of a policy is normally preceded by the socio-economic and political factors that may play a pivotal role in influencing an issue to be placed on the policy agenda. Besides, fortuitous alignment of the development of similar or related events in both the local and international arena may occur and create a conducive environment for a particular policy to be formulated (Taylor et al., 1997). Moreover, a policy may build on some developments that occurred sometime back and went on unfolding in such a way that a lot of pressure may be exerted on the state and its government until such time when they find no alternative but to place an issue on the policy agenda.

   Not only do the socio-economic, political and cultural context play a role in the gestation of a certain policy, but so do the so-called key players (Taylor et al., 1997). Key players in this regard refer to people involved in policy making processes, who thus have some special interest in promoting certain issues. Those people, therefore, become strongly committed towards ensuring the production of the policies to address such issues. The categories of these key players may include leaders of different pressure groups, heads of commission, education minister, inter alia.

   Taylor et al. (1997) also indicate that the political context in relation to the making of education policies is important. Thus argue that the government in power is subject to consideration in working out changes that could influence the gestation or failure of the policy.

2. **Text/content**

   Analysis of the text focuses on the content of a policy document. It also refers to the structure of the policy itself. As such involves the aims, principles and issues addressed by the policy. Taylor et al. (1997) state that any national policy for schools needs to provide as much direction as possible, while at the same time allowing adequate flexibility for other areas of the country to make their own priorities. For instance;

   - What principles, objectives and priorities were agreed upon within the framework of the policy?
To what extent should some freedom be allowed for different places, regions or schools to carry on what may be supported locally? and

- What assumptions underpin a policy?

Therefore, it follows that the analysis of the text of the policy answers the “how” and “what” questions of the policy. The way language is used in the policy may also help the policy analyst to identify the deep structure of the policy. Some policies are not written in direct and simple language and this leads to a situation whereby most readers fail to detect the direction or intention of the policy. Such contextual complexities render the policy ambiguous (Taylor et al., 1997).

3. Consequences and implementation

Analysis of the consequences and implementations deals with the policy directives (what the policy wants the schools to do) and their relevance to the institutions and areas where they are to be implemented (Taylor et al., 1997).

Policies that have a lot of ambiguities are vulnerable to distortion during their implementation stage and so the policy analyst has the responsibility to examine the implementation of a policy against the content to see if the policy is implemented according to its original intent. However, it should be borne in mind that ‘even without any obvious ambiguities in a policy text resulting from competing interest, there will be no single interpretation of a policy document’ (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 50).

The model of Taylor et al. (1997) will therefore be used for the analysis of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development). It follows that an analysis of the content and consequences for implantation of the policy will be taken into consideration in this part of the research.

Drawing upon literature on policy analysis, Olssen et al. (2004) differentiate between two forms of policy analysis, namely; analysis for policy and analysis of policy. They assert that analysis for policy has the purpose of making specific policy recommendations and providing policy makers with information; whereas analysis of policy examines the processes of policy construction and the effects of such policies on various groups of people. It may also focus on the content of policy, in which case researchers ‘examine the values, assumptions and ideologies underpinning the policy process’ (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 72). Thus, this section will take a critical approach and focus on both the analysis of policy and analysis for policy to probe the values and assumptions about curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and the possible effects of such on the learners and educational development as well as giving some recommendations for the future better formulation of the policy under study.

2.2 Analysis of the text/content of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)

According to Tyler et al. (1997) content refers to the structure of the policy itself. It answers the ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions of the policy. Since policy is a social construction, Ball (1994) argues that policy is both text and discourse, because policy texts carry discourses about educational values or ideologies that a society considers important. Ball further asserts, ‘discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when and with what authority’ (1994, p. 21). Thus, the focus in this section is on the Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social
Development) document as an official text serving a cultural function, giving people an opportunity to express shared values or ideologies regarding what should be taught in schools and how it should be taught and assessed (Walker, 2003).

The section is also meant to discuss policy, as it relates to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Therefore, it seeks to conceptualize the meaning of policy and policy analysis. In this case, the approach used was rooted in the tradition of the Neo-Marxist scholars, who see the primary task of policy analysis as to reveal the tacit assumptions and values in policy texts (Apple, 2004; Ball, 1994; Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992; Cornbleth, 1990; Eisner, 1992; McLaren, 2007; Olssen, Codd and O’Neill, 2004). The strength of this critical approach is that it provides a language of critique to question the ‘appearances and taken-for-granted practices’ (Cornbleth, 1990, p. 3), which may be ignored when researchers use the technical-rational approach. Thus, the approach helps to probe what is not immediately seen as problematic in Curriculum and Assessment Policy documents (Thompson, 2003).

Following Bowe et al. (1992), it is assumed that a policy text embodies contradictory and tacit messages about values and ideologies of which policy developers may be both conscious and unconscious of. These messages need to be unpacked in order to yield an understanding of the drivers of proposed curriculum reform, and their implications for schools and educational development. Bowe et al. (1992, p. 21) note that at the legislative level, policy texts are not necessarily clear, but rather ‘are generalised, written in relation to idealisation of the real world, and cannot be exhaustive.’ They further point out that official policy texts are often contradictory in their use of key terms, and are reactive to particular events and circumstances. This suggests that a curriculum policy text should be analysed alongside other relevant policy texts to establish inter-textual links, and in the context of its history and particular site of production.

The development of an education policy represents an arena, where interested parties struggle to dominate the prevailing discourse (Bowe et al., 1992). As such, a policy text carries messages about norms and values that dominant groups consider desirable for bringing about change in society. As has already been mentioned, policy texts produced in this arena are the products of struggle and compromise, as groups of actors are competing for control of their meaning (Bowe et al., 1992). This implies that a curriculum policy is never neutral, but always a political document, representing the interests of dominant groups (Apple, 2002; Jansen, 1998) as suggested by critical curriculum theory. This being the case, a critical policy analysis needs to go beyond explicit messages to examine the taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions about a good education practice.

In order to understand the kind of curriculum policy messages contained in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development), the document was subjected to content analysis. According to Berg (2007), content analysis involves the examination of artifacts of social communication, such as written documents. Although this method is usually applied in quantitative research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Wolcott, 1994), Berg (2007) argues that it can be equally effective in qualitative analysis. He assets;

‘Textual elements merely provide a means of identifying, organising, indexing and retrieving data. Analysis of the data, once organised according to certain content elements, should involve consideration of literal words in the text being analysed, including the manner in which these words are offered’ (Berg, 2007, p. 307).

As such the focus of this section of the research will be on sections of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) document dealing with curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, as well as other sections of the document, where there are relevant statements.
1. Rationale

According to Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) (2009) curriculum distortion by examinations does not seem to tally well with the goals of expanded access to vocational skills training, lifelong learning and increasing awareness on emerging global issues, such as functional knowledge on crippling effects of HIV/AIDS, deteriorating climatic and environmental elements, and others.

Bringing up qualified individuals is one of the crucial goals that societies give importance to. Being able to realise this goal is only possible through a good Curriculum, education and instruction. It is impossible not to see the effects of the innovations taking place in the curriculum as an extension of these innovations on people’s lives in our daily life. For this reason, in order for the learners to be able to sufficiently learn the subjects which are offered in school curricula, these subjects should be made meaningful for them and positive attitudes should be developed. Especially, development of societies and their keeping up with the times are possible through bringing up qualified individuals and making this functional.

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) the new approach to curriculum and assessment issues has been motivated by several factors, among which are the following:

- The realisation of the need for well-articulated and comprehensive policy guidelines, which offer universal direction to desired educational practices;
- New developments, including the Free and Compulsory Primary Education strategy, which require policy re-articulation and refinement;
- The need to redesign the primary education system to accommodate for an increase in the programme duration from seven to ten years of Basic Education;
- The Basotho philosophy of justice, equality, peace, prosperity, participatory democracy and mutual coexistence; and
- The need for a strong, positive link between curriculum and assessment.

The vision of the Integrated Curriculum in Primary Education is to educate all learners, regardless of individual differences, as educated, effective and efficient individuals who can be of help to their countries. The curriculum should nurture learners to develop a combination of skills, attitudes, values, perceptions and knowledge which are necessary for them, and to develop the skills of research-questioning, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making in order for them to become lifelong learners and to maintain their curiosity about the world and their environment.

Teachers should be encouraged and assisted to instill in learners not only the knowledge that they need in class, but also problem solving skills, rational thinking and positive attitudes that they can use when learning about the physical, chemical and biological phenomena and events taking place in their environment, along with their functionality and meanings. Lastly, the focus of the Integrated Curriculum should be to enable learners to assess the knowledge that they gain in schools with a new perspective and to reflect this knowledge on their future lives.

2. Philosophy of education

The framework is derived from the Basotho philosophical statements of justice, equality, peace, prosperity, participatory democracy and mutual co-existence which underpin their way of life. These have been aptly captured in various documents including the report on the Views and Recommendations of the Basotho Nation Regarding the Future of Education in Lesotho of 1978 and most recently Lesotho
Vision 2020 (2004). In summary, it is these principles, which form the core of Basotho national consciousness, that have informed the development of this framework. This Basotho philosophy can only be nurtured and instilled into upcoming learners if the Personal Spiritual and Social Learning Area is well designed and developed to promote such skills, values and attitudes. However, this Learning Area has left civic education as one of the contributing subjects thus one wonders how these issues will be promoted without it.

3. Language policy

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) recognizes the pluralism of the Basotho nation and the existence of other languages besides the two official languages of Sesotho and English. In that regard, the framework boldly asserts that mother tongue will be used as a medium of instruction for grades 1-3 (resources permitting), while English will be taught as a subject at these and other levels. It goes further to indicate that sign language shall also form part of the new language policy.

The national goals and aims of both basic and secondary education, as well as their pedagogical objectives have been identified in order to facilitate clearer understanding of the framework.

The deliberations centred on instruction of learners in mother tongue seem to be escalating at an alarming rate without universal resolutions which could be applied to the diverse communities in the African continent. The situation has in a number of cases resulted in an illusion of conditions which has profound implications on the quality of education.

Lesotho, like other African countries, is faced with a similar dilemma. The title ‘Language Policy’ in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) is used inappropriately, because, at the moment, there is no Language Policy in Lesotho. Therefore, it is not clear whether it was meant to refer to Language of Instruction or Language Policy as it is stipulated. The policy on education stipulates that learners should be taught using the mother tongue for grades 1-3. However, the policy remains silent about the language of assessment in those grades. The policy statement therefore seems to be a little bit ambiguous as far as the issue of Language is concerned.

First, the question of whose mother tongue the policy refers to remains unreciprocated. Could it be the mother tongue of the teacher who will be giving out the instruction at the time or could it be the mother tongue of some of the learners in the class? Moreover, the majority of people interpret the policy as referring to Sesotho language when talking about mother tongue while it in fact refers to mother tongue of different learners in the class. This interpretation has fueled sizzling debates around marginalising of minority groups in the country. As a result, issues of equity in the provision of education in the country have been challenged.

The Ministry of Education and Training (2009, p. 8) stipulates that ‘while acknowledging, as the Lesotho Constitution states, that Sesotho and English are the two official languages, and in recognition of the fact that there are other languages besides Sesotho and English, mother tongue will be used as a medium of instruction up to class 3 while English will be taught as a subject at this and other levels. From grade 4, English shall begin to be used as a medium of instruction and to be taught as a subject as well.’

Astoundingly, though the policy clearly enunciates that the language of instruction for grades 1-3 should be mother tongue, the prescribed text books for these grades are written in English. This further magnifies the challenge in that; teachers have to do their own translations of the content. Therefore, different teachers are most likely to come up with differing translations which can lead to some distortion of the meaning in context.
The concurrent use of English and Sesotho in the primary syllabus for grades 1-3 somehow creates much greater confusion in the classroom. The challenge with the different translations is that a lot of misinterpretation may occur.

The policy is also very silent about the language of assessment. Treating teaching as a separate entity from assessment defeats the entire process of constructive alignment and integrating the curriculum and assessment as stipulated in the policy. As indicated by Brown (2001), effective assessment methods and tasks should be related to the learning outcomes and the methods of learning. According to Girolametto, Weitzman and Greenberg (2012), lack of experience of rich literacy interactions in the home hampers the development of learners’ emergent literacy skills. On the same note, as stated by Girolametto et al. (2012) early childhood settings have tremendous potential to become important sources of emergent literacy experiences.

4. Curriculum and assessment

‘The Curriculum and Assessment Policy of 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) sets out a vision for education in Lesotho, where assessment and curriculum are closely integrated and mutually supportive. As a step toward achieving this goal, continuous assessment (CASS), was introduced in Lesotho as a key strategy.’

- In Lesotho, formative assessment and assessment for learning will allow teachers to move away from the traditional ways of testing, which have been found to be severely limiting in a number of ways.
- Teachers will share learning outcomes and success criteria with learners, so that learners know what they are learning and the standards they are aiming for. They will provide feedback (oral or written) that helps learners to identify improvement. This promotes a more active approach to learning and recognizes that motivation and self-esteem are crucial for effective learning, and can be increased through effective assessment techniques.

Moreover, Continuous Assessment (CASS) was introduced to ensure on-going and close monitoring of learners’ academic progress thus create opportunities for prompt remedial interventions where teachers have identified gaps. If teachers can implement CASS effectively in their respective schools, there would be a great improvement in retention of learners in schools for the stipulated ten years of Basic Education. According to the Lesotho Effective Delivery of Public Education Service: A review by AfriMAP and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (2013) the paradox of schooling is that the outcome thereof is determined by interlinked processes. Access requires engaged participation on a regular basis to produce learning, which is measured by assessments, and satisfactory performance in these assessments ensures continued participation and, eventually, certification. It is therefore not enough to have access to schooling; a child should stay in school long enough to benefit from what is taught/learnt, which, in turn, determines how far within the system a learner can progress.

5. Integrated basic education curriculum organization

The new Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) differs considerably from the previous model of curriculum organization. Unlike the previous curriculum structure, which emphasized disciplinary knowledge, the new model envisages an integrated curriculum. As defined in the policy document, the term integration refers to the holistic view and treatment of issues related to intelligence, maturity, personal and social development of the learner for survival purposes and economic development of the nation as opposed to the compartmentalized subject-based form of
instruction (MoET, 2009). This definition reflects the intention to make a curriculum more contextually relevant, by linking it with real life problems. Consistent with the notion of curriculum integration as conceptualized in the literature (Beane, 1997), the document prescribes that school life should be integrated with community life and everyday experiences of the learner.

To attain the goals of curriculum integration, the curriculum is aligned with practical life challenges relating to ‘high unemployment rate and slow economic growth, high poverty, rampant HIV and AIDS and contagious diseases, environmental degradation, gender equality and equity, human rights and democracy and many more’ (MoET, 2009, p. 15). These challenges are also identified, in other national policy documents such as Vision 2020, Poverty Reduction Strategy and Education Sector Strategic Plan, as development needs which need to be prioritized. The lucidity between the new Curriculum and Assessment Framework and the national needs of Lesotho is likely to lead to successful implementation of the policy intentions at the level of curriculum documents and school implementation. However, the achievement of the goals of the new curriculum will depend on the ability of the stakeholders involved in curriculum development and implementation to interpret this policy correctly in their specific contexts.

6. Curriculum aspects

Education is central to the survival of both an individual and a society. It should equip individuals with competencies necessary for advancement of their respective societies in different spheres of operation such as political, socio-cultural, technological and economical; and to cope with the challenges posed thereof. Some of these challenges are environmental degradation, unemployment, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and others, poverty, hunger and emerging issues.

In planning education, individual and societal needs should be taken into account. Thus curriculum as a planning tool for education should be as broad and inclusive to reflect both individual and societal needs. There is a need to develop learners holistically, whereupon the challenges should be addressed to improve the livelihoods of people. To achieve this, learners should be helped to acquire competencies to deal with challenges and improve their lives in a sustainable manner.

Curriculum aspects advanced here are intended to act as a tool to assist in curriculum planning and organization. They form an integral part of education for equipping learners with necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. These aspects would enable learners to face and cope with challenges they meet in their daily lives. Because the life challenges cut across all the aspects, each aspect will have a specific role to play in addressing the challenges. Therefore the aspects below should be taken into account when planning curricula for schools.

Rather than traditional subjects, the curriculum is based on curriculum aspects, which highlight the life challenges and contexts in which the learner is expected to function as an individual and a member of society.

A. Effective communication
B. Awareness of one’s self and others
C. Environmental adaptation and sustainable development
D. Health and healthy living
E. Production and work-related competencies
A. Effective communication

In order to meet the life challenges and cope with different experiences, communication is important as a means to express ideas and feelings. Thus learners should have the ability to communicate effectively in words, symbols, colours, signs, sound, media (print, electronic), and actions. Therefore, learners should be helped to develop the following skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

B. Awareness of one’s self and others

This aspect prepares learners to understand and appreciate themselves and others. They should understand their developmental processes, physiologically and psychologically, and how they affect their relationships. Learners need to acquire skills towards managing emotional and sexual feelings and enjoyment of safe and responsible relationships. They should be aware of their rights and responsibilities, and respect the rights of others.

This aspect should help learners to:

- Understand and appreciate the physiological and psychological developmental processes.
- Understand and appreciate oneself and others in terms of abilities, culture and beliefs.
- Develop culture of human rights and democracy.
- Develop intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in promoting peace and harmony.
- Promote values that pertain to dignity, equity, gender sensitivity, tolerance and conflict resolution.

C. Environmental Adaptation and Sustainable Development

This aspect addresses the survival of the learners in their own environment. The survival can be achieved by utilizing and maintaining available resources in such a way that the future generations can also enjoy them. Learners should therefore develop knowledge and skills towards sustainable use of the environment for individual and societal development.

The learners should therefore be helped to:

- Understand and appreciate the biophysical, political, social and economic parts of the environment and their interrelationships.
- Develop appropriate skills and positive attitudes to interact sustainably with the environment for socio-economic development.

D. Health and healthy living

This aspect provides understanding and appreciation of the physiological and psychological well-being of an individual in promoting healthy and safe lifestyles.

This aspect:

- Promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills for taking care of oneself, others and the environment to maintain and promote good life and healthy living.
- Develops appreciation of the physical and mental well-being of an individual in promoting healthy and safe lifestyles
- Develops positive attitudes and values towards maintaining good life and high standard of living.
E. Production and work-related competencies

This aspect prepares learners for the world of work. It should equip learners with the knowledge and skills to participate in productive and income generating activities. Learners should develop entrepreneurial skills that would facilitate creation of employment and alleviation of poverty.

This aspect should help learners to:

- Apply knowledge and skills in exploiting suitable resources in the environment profitably and sustainably.
- Apply knowledge and skills for income generation
- Develop and demonstrate positive attitudes and values towards self-reliance and world of work.

(Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009, pp. 16-17)

7. Learning areas

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) perceives an integrated curriculum, organized into Learning Areas to which all school subjects are expected to contribute. As described in the policy document, Learning Areas are seen as chunks, which are ‘used as filtering mechanisms meant to select concepts and principles derived from subject areas that address real issues and challenges’ (MoET, 2009, p. 18).

Also, Curriculum aspects spell out the ultimate intentions of education. To address these curriculum aspects, there is need to organize the body of knowledge into systematic and logical learning chunks. These chunks become means and modes by which life challenges are addressed, and they referred to as Learning Areas (MoET, 2009, p. 15). Learning areas highlight life challenges and contexts in which learners are expected to function.

To this end, the framework identifies five learning areas, which are intended to serve as quality control mechanisms to ensure relevance and coverage of key competences in curriculum planning and organization. The identified learning areas for basic education are:

A. Linguistic and literary;
B. Numeral and mathematical;
C. Personal, spiritual and social;
D. Scientific and technological; and
E. Creativity and entrepreneurship.

A. Linguistic and literary

This learning area is concerned with the foundations of language and its usage. It is a medium through which all learning areas can be adequately and effectively delivered. It promotes effective communication in all its forms. This learning area should help students to develop:

- Acquisition and understanding of linguistic skills necessary for effective communication in different contexts,
- Application of linguistic, creative and other skills in promoting literary works for socioeconomic development
- Positive attitudes and values necessary for effective communication.
Learners should be helped to:

- Communicate effectively through listening, speaking, reading, and writing in formal and informal situations; and
- Use and select appropriate words, colours, signs, sounds, graphics, symbols and media to communicate and interpret scientific, social, economic, technological, and political information.

**B. Numerical and mathematical**

This learning area promotes numerical and mathematical skills for everyday life and further learning. Specifically, it promotes:

- The acquisition of numerical and mathematical skills for effective participation in scientific, technological and socio-economic development.
- Application of numerical and mathematical skills in solving everyday problems and promoting socio-economic development.
- Appreciation of the contribution of numerical and mathematical skills in scientific, technological and socio-economic development.
- Development of positive attitudes towards mathematics as a foundation for further learning and career development.

**C. Personal, spiritual and social**

This learning area promotes the development of the learner as an individual and a member of the community she or he lives in. It helps students to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of themselves.
- Develop appropriate skills and attitudes towards development and nurturing of positive relationships with others regardless of cultural, social, religious or political differences and special needs.
- Cultivate desirable attitudes, ethical and moral values for personal and social development.

**D. Scientific and technological**

This learning area concerns the understanding of scientific and environmental phenomena in terms of physical, economic, social, political and technological development, and it therefore promotes:

- The acquisition and understanding of scientific and technological concepts, principles and processes for socio-economic development.
- Understanding of environmental phenomena in terms of physical, socio-economic and technological developments.
- Application of scientific and technological skills in solving everyday life challenges.
- Positive attitudes and values towards the use of science and technology in everyday life situation.

**E. Creativity and entrepreneurship**

The last learning area promotes understanding and application of creative and entrepreneurial concepts, principles and skills in addressing everyday needs, as well as attitudes and values in responding to such needs. Specifically, it should:
- Promote understanding of physical, socio-economic and technological environment as a prerequisite for earning a living.
- Promote acquisition and application of creative and entrepreneurial skills in solving everyday life challenges.
- Inculcate appropriate attitudes and values for promoting creative and entrepreneurial culture.

(Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009, pp. 18-20)

8. Core-competencies

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) core-competences indicate the capabilities that learners acquire as they go through the education system at different levels. They also indicate the learners’ ability to apply knowledge and acquired skills, values and attitudes, which are necessary to address content and new situations.

Therefore the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) aims to develop Core Competencies, which will enable learners to apply the knowledge and acquired skills, values and attitudes necessary to address both current and new situations.

The national aims of education stated earlier in this research express specific skills and attitudes and values to be developed in the learners as well as knowledge they will acquire and develop as a result of learning. In addition to process skills, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for personal, moral and social development form the core of the curriculum (MoET 2009, p. 17). Thus the core-competencies are:

A. Effective and functional communication
B. Problem solving
C. Scientific, technological and creative skills
D. Critical thinking
E. Collaboration and cooperation
F. Functional numeracy
G. Learning to learn

(Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009, p. 20)

9. Organization of school curriculum

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development), ‘the first seven years of Basic Education shall follow the integrated approach managed through five Learning Areas, with the gradual emergence of subjects in the last three years. In the last three years curriculum will be drawn from the core-contributing subjects to the respective five Learning Areas. However, learners/schools will be expected to take content from only eight of the contributing subjects’ (MoET, 2009, p. 21).

It is further stated that the two remaining subjects could be taken from any Learning Area while other languages may include French, German, Spanish and other internationally recognized languages. It is also reiterated that the maximum number of languages a learner can take is three. Also in this case it is not clear what the policy means by gradual emergence of subjects. The question to be answered is whether these subjects will emerge in grade 8 or in grade 9. The latter will have negative impact on learners’ performance in the upper basic level.
Curriculum for Basic Education

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development), learners will take minimum six and maximum eight subjects at the secondary level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Core-Contributing Subjects</th>
<th>Compulsory Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic and literary</td>
<td>Sesotho, English, Arts and Craft, Drama, Music and other languages</td>
<td>Sesotho and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerical and mathematical</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal, spiritual and social</td>
<td>History, Religious Education, Health and Physical Education, Development Studies, Life Skills</td>
<td>Life Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific and technological</td>
<td>Science, Geography, Agricultural Science, Technical Subjects</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Business Education, Clothing and Textile, Food and Nutrition, Home Management, ICT, Accounting</td>
<td>Any-subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Curriculum for Basic Education (MoET, 2009, p. 18)

For optimum learning, the policy document prescribes that learners should take a minimum of six subjects (i.e. at least one from each learning area) and a maximum of eight. It further specifies that the compulsory subjects of the secondary education core curriculum are Sesotho, English, Mathematics, Life Skills, Science and any other subject from the Creative and Entrepreneurial Learning Area.

However, this curriculum structure, as shown in Figure 1 above, seems to marginalize some subjects and continues to privilege others, which were previously designated as core subjects. With the exception of Life Skills, which is a newly added subject in the Personal, spiritual and social learning area, this structure still reflects the elements of the 1982 core curriculum reform, which emphasized Sesotho, English and Mathematics over other subjects (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982). The reasoning behind the decision to allocate them a high curriculum status is not clear in the policy document. In this regard, it is important to reflect on the following question: To what extent does the curriculum structure respond to the real societal needs and problems in Lesotho?

Ansell (2002) argues that while curriculum reforms in Lesotho are intended to address the limitations of the colonial education, most reforms in their curriculum structure still imitate the key aspects of colonial education. The same could be said about the current reform as conceptualized in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development). The proposed curriculum structure ridiculously marginalizes the practical subjects, which were and still are intended to address the national goal of education with production (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982; MoET, 2009). As can be seen in Table 1 above, within the Scientific and technological learning area, the structure gives science a priority while vocational subjects (Agricultural Science and Technical subjects) are consigned to an optional status competing for curriculum space with Geography.
This paradox may reflect a tension between meeting the goals of further education through traditional academic subjects, and the need to promote vocational skills necessary for preparing learners for the world of work (MoET, 2009). Also, it is not clear whether this paradox reflects a symbolic gesture to keep pace with international trends in education, which is a typical feature of policy reforms in other countries in the region (Jansen, 1998; Tabulawa, 2009). The new curriculum should create space for learners to follow different routes, so that those who decide to learn more vocational skills can take more practical subjects.

It is also noteworthy that the placement of Geography only in the Scientific and Technological Learning Area reveals a narrow understanding of the subject. Being a natural and social Science subject, Geography could also fall under the Personal, Spiritual and Social Learning Area. This is because this subject is divided into; Physical Geography and Human Geography. Thus, the proposed curriculum structure puts geography in a tight competition with well-established natural science subjects. This poses a threat for the subject to demonstrate its unique role in addressing issues of environmental sustainability and climate change, which are currently considered part of the priority areas for curriculum reforms, both in Lesotho and internationally (MoET, 2005, 2009). It is also important to note from Table 1 that the new curriculum structure gives priority to a newly-introduced subject of Life Skills Education.

While there are obvious implementation challenges facing Life Skills Education, notably lack of teacher preparedness, its inclusion in the school curriculum creates opportunities for the Lesotho education system to deal more effectively with issues of HIV and AIDS, which is seen as a multi-sectoral development issue with social, economic, and cultural implications (Government of Lesotho, 2004). The addition of Life Skills Education is also seen as signalling the government’s intention to encourage development of basic survival skills relating to self-awareness, assertiveness and interpersonal skills, psycho-social skills which have hitherto not featured very strongly in the secondary education system of Lesotho.

Notwithstanding the important role of Life Skills Education, as described in the foregoing paragraph, elevating only one subject to the status of a core in the Personal, Spiritual and Social Learning Area, has the potential of marginalising other equally important subjects. Giving schools an option to teach Religious Education, Development Studies or History has implications for achievement of the national goals relating to democracy, peace, spiritual and moral development, which are not important to Lesotho as a young democracy and a predominantly Christian state, but also ensures alignment to the philosophy of education underpinning this curriculum.

10. Pedagogy

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) advocates for the pedagogy of integration. To address the content of the school subjects shown in the curriculum structure portrayed in Table 1, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) advocates for a learner-centred approach, which is not new on the education scene of Lesotho (see for example, Ministry of Education, 1995). It is important to note that learner-centred pedagogy is currently the dominant paradigm in curriculum reform, especially in Africa, where it is intended to serve as an enabler of democracy (Chilsholm and Leyendecker, 2008; O’Sullivan, 2004; Tabulawa, 2003).

The idea originates, in part, from John Dewey’s experience-oriented conception of curriculum. Dewey was dissatisfied with aspects of traditional education, which he believed separated the learner from the curriculum. Influenced by the ideas of progressive education in the early twentieth century, Dewey linked the concept of curriculum with the learner, arguing that ‘the child and curriculum are simply two limits which define the same process’ (Dewey, as quoted by Jackson, 1992, p. 6).
By bridging the gap between the learner and the curriculum, John Dewey envisaged democratic teaching and learning processes, where control on the curriculum emerges from interactions, rather than from being externally imposed (Doll, 2002). Learner-centred approach is guided by principles such as free choices, implying that learners will have some control over instructional processes.

The *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)* document expounds on the kind of the learner-centred approach envisioned as follows: The focus in pedagogy has therefore shifted more to teaching and learning methods that can further develop creativity, independence, and survival skills of learners. Learners are expected to become more responsible for their own learning processes and thus should be able to identify, formulate and solve problems by themselves and evaluate their work (MoET, 2009).

As this quotation suggests, the current reform introduces a shift from teacher-dominated teaching methods to learner-centred methods, thus implying new roles for teachers and learners. In this current reform, it would seem that teachers are expected to act as facilitators of learners’ learning rather than as knowledge transmitters. It implies that learners can also be knowledge creators, and that they do not come to class as completely empty vessels waiting to be filled with information. In this way, the new policy contests the existing dominant teacher-centred methods, which are a typical feature of classroom teaching and learning processes in Lesotho (Nketekete and Motebang, 2008; Raselimo, 2010).

It is also evident from the quotation above that the new *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)* emphasizes development of skills, values and attitudes necessary for achieving rapid social and economic change. This could be seen as creating opportunities for secondary education to produce learners with vocational skills with which they can be empowered and can meaningfully contribute to national development. In this regard, it can be argued that the new *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)* reflects the social reconstruction ideology in terms of which learners are expected to use knowledge and skills to solve social problems (Schiro, 2008). This creates an opportunity for school teachers to teach context-specific content, skills, attitudes and values relating to life challenges such as HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation, which are identified in the policy document as imperatives for curriculum and assessment reforms.

Furthermore, although there is no indication of democratic principles such as active participation in the quotation above, the adoption of the learner-centred approach could be seen as a positive step towards consolidation of democracy. As the literature shows, the ideal of learner-centred pedagogy was seen as a catalyst to expediting the process of democratisation in most African countries (Chilsholm & Leyendecker, 2008). A few examples may be cited to illustrate this argument. Post-apartheid South Africa adopted Outcomes Based Education (OBE) from 1994 onwards, signalling a departure from apartheid education to a democratic dispensation (Cross et al., 2002). In Namibia too, the introduction of learner-centred education after independence in 1990 was regarded as a means of consolidating democratic ideals (O’Sullivan, 2004).

While the learner-centred pedagogy may be a highly celebrated education ideal in Lesotho, experience from other African countries exemplifies that, if not well adapted to the local contexts, it can potentially pose a threat to educational development. The educational ideas relating to the concept, as it is internationally conceptualized, are not necessarily relevant to all national contexts. They are also not value-neutral, as they carry messages that are intended to incorporate countries adopting them into the global economy (Tabulawa, 2003, 2009). Chilsholm and Leyendecker (2008) observe that developing countries adopted the philosophical ideal of learner-centred education as a result of international
pressure to transform their societies and economies from agricultural-based polities to modern (Western) and knowledge-based polities.

Although there are certainly potential benefits in drawing on global educational discourses, there is also need to adapt such progressive ideas as learner-centred pedagogy to local contexts so as to avoid a negative influence of international pressure and supremacy on the Lesotho education system. Another important aspect of the espoused pedagogy in the current curriculum reform is the interdisciplinary approach, requiring teachers to make use of knowledge from other subject areas when dealing with emerging issues. This is evident in the following quote:

“The first seven years of Basic Education shall follow an integrated approach managed through the five learning areas, with the gradual emergence of subjects in the last three years […]. In the last three years of Basic Education [Grades 8, 9 and 10], curriculum will be drawn from the core contributing subjects to the respective five learning areas”. (MoET, 2009: 21).

As the above quotation suggests, an interdisciplinary approach is adopted in the higher grades, where there is policy expectation for subject integration within Learning Areas. The adoption of this approach could be seen as strength, because it enables conceptual progression within specific subjects, and therefore creates opportunities for achievement of the goals of further education and training. In South Africa, the Curriculum 2005 Policy was criticized for overemphasis on integration with less attention being given to progression (Department of Education, 2000). Given that in Lesotho, as in other countries such as Botswana (Polelo, 2009), there is usually policy borrowing, the task force which developed the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) document may have drawn from experiences from South Africa and made a conscious decision to retain disciplinary knowledge at secondary school level.

While the adoption of the interdisciplinary approach has advantages for educational development, it gainsays the notion of curriculum integration as it supports the idea of organizing curriculum into discrete subjects rather than dissolving subject boundaries (Beane, 1997). This is likely to reinforce compartmentalized teaching in schools, which the policy was intended to address. Organizing subjects into discrete Learning Areas, as shown in Table 1, can easily encourage teachers to operate within a certain Learning Area and position themselves as specialists in that Learning Area. For example, English teachers may find it difficult or deplorable to draw content from the Scientific, Spiritual or Technological, Numerical and Creativity backgrounds. To this end, the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach may reflect conflation of concepts or a dilemma in promoting integrated learning while at the same time ensuring progression. This is not clear in the document and is left to the interpretation of individual readers or teachers.

Whether or not there was a careful consideration for adopting a mixed model of curriculum design, it is still possible that the adoption of the inter-disciplinary approach is based on a flawed assumption that there is a collegial environment in schools, where teachers can freely consult across subjects/Learning Areas. The findings of a recent study in some high schools of Lesotho reveal that such a collegial environment does not exist due to teachers’ epistemological beliefs and school organizational structures (Raselimo, 2010). As such, the envisaged change will require not only changing teachers’ beliefs about subject matter but also the organizational structures where subjects are organized into physically separate departments.

There is also an internal contradiction between the learner-centred pedagogy and most of the curriculum aims set for secondary education. The manner in which these aims are stated in the policy document is not consistent with learner-centred epistemologies. Out of six aims, four are stated in a manner that reflects an objective view of knowledge rather than the constructivist view, which is what underpins the envisaged learner-centred pedagogy.
The following extract illuminates this: at the end of the secondary education, students should ‘have acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to interact appropriately with the environment and promote socio-economic development’ (MoET, 2009, p. 13). The use of the word acquire, renders learners to a status of knowledge recipients. Yet the policy advocates for a shift ‘from knowledge acquisition to development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes’ (MoET, 2009, p. viii). Such a contradiction in the use of language may confuse curriculum developers and teachers alike in designing teaching and learning programmes thus pose a threat for successful implementation of the policy at the classroom level. The curriculum aims such as the one cited above, are in favour of high-stake examinations, which generally emphasize knowledge acquisition. As such, little will be achieved in terms of reducing the undue influence of public examinations on curriculum.

Subsequently, the policy says little or takes little effort to change both teachers and learners’ attitudes towards this new dispensation. One of the learners’ features that have an important effect on the learning process is their attitudes towards the lesson (Altınok, 2004). Attitude is a combination of positive or negative, learned and consistent behaviors towards a specific object (Magno, 2003). Turhan, Aydoğdu, Şensoy and Yıldırım (2008) describe attitude as an individual’s tendency to behave positively or negatively towards any event, object or group of people. They put forward that attitudes are not behaviours but that they are tendencies to display some behaviours and that they are abstract concepts; however, they stated that attitudes are possible to observe as in an individual’s forming a good or bad opinion of an event, reaching a decision and reflecting it on his behaviours. As for Demirel and Un (1987), they expressed that an attitude is a positive or negative reaction to an object, an event or a person. Attitudes are related to academic achievement because they develop in the learning environment in time (Magno, 2003). According to Bandura (1977), attitudes are often used together with motivation in order to achieve something.

Basically, an attitude is based on two features. One is that they are long-lasting and the other one is that they are cognitive, affective and behavioral. These two features are dynamic and they affect each other. The purpose of measurement of attitudes in education and instruction might be to predict the behaviours that individuals are likely to exhibit in time or in the future, and based on this prediction, change the existing ones and create new situations (Nuhoğlu, 2008).

In the learning process, teachers’ attitudes and behaviours have an influence on learners’ attitudes. When learners meet their teacher in a new class, they are open to any interaction which is likely to come from the teacher. During this process, learners get to know their teacher and develop ideas and feelings about him. In teacher-learner relationship, teachers’ dominant- obedient or hostile- affective attitudes affect learners’ attitudes related to the lesson (cited in. Altınok, 2004). Therefore, for the policy to be implemented effectively and efficiently the issue of attitude should be given an attention too.

11. Assessment

Unlike the previous assessment policy, which emphasized summative assessment (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982), the new policy prescribes that three strategies will be used for assessing learning. These are: formative assessment, remediation and monitoring of educational progress, with the first strategy taking the form of continuous assessment (CASS). There will also be summative assessment in the form of public examination at the end of grades 10 and 12, which will still be used for certification and selecting learners for higher education.

The policy however, extends the scope of such summative examinations to include also practical competences such as problem-solving and critical thinking (MoET, 2009). The focus on practical skills represents a shift from the traditional examination system, which covered only cognitive objectives, thereby marginalising learners with special cognitive learning needs.
Contrary to the current assessment practice, where all learners sit for a common examination, the new policy accommodates candidates with different abilities. It is stated in the policy document that ‘both group examinations and subject examination will be available for candidates of different abilities and circumstances’ (MoET, 2009, p. 24). Thus, access to higher education will not necessarily be determined by learners’ performance in group examination, but will be determined also by performance in subjects where learners have the best abilities.

This creates opportunities for all learners to show their potentials in final examinations and follow different career paths in tertiary institutions, even if they did not meet the requirements of group examination such as passing English language. However, realising this policy outcome will require sound career guidance programmes at schools, so that learners realise their potential abilities early enough in their school life. It will also require a change of attitude among parents and learners alike towards practical skills-based subjects. Reflecting on the challenges of implementing the curriculum diversification programme in Lesotho, Ansell (2002) notes that practical subjects were regarded by many parents to be inappropriate for preparing their children for those lucrative white-collar jobs towards which colonial education was geared.

Another feature of the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) is that CASS will contribute to the final assessment in all Learning Areas. The document emphasizes that CASS will be used for diagnosis of learning difficulties and to monitor performance of learners. Although the weighting between examination and CASS is not specified, this policy intention creates many opportunities for the enhancement of the quality of education in Lesotho. First, provided there will be equal weighting, it is clear that the implementation of CASS will most likely reduce the undue influence of public examinations on classroom teaching, which has long been identified as a major constraint to curriculum change (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982). Second, the implementation of CASS will create opportunities for assessment for learning, incorporating practical skills, which cannot be adequately assessed by pen and paper tests or examinations. Third, it is also likely to bring about quality in the teaching and learning processes through adaptation of instructional processes to meet the needs of individual learners, and increased parental involvement.

While the potential benefits of CASS, as outlined above, may be obvious, its implementation is likely to face challenges. Firstly, teachers’ inability to implement it might pose a threat to quality in educational assessment. It should be noted that the notion of CASS is not new in Lesotho’s education system. There were attempts to implement it in the early 1980s. Reporting on its implementation problems, Sebatane (1985) attributes the failure of CASS to among others, lack of clarity of the concept among the implementers, which include school inspectors and classroom teachers. In the case of the new policy on assessment, the same problem can be expected. Given that there is a strong tradition of continuous testing in the form of weekly and quarterly pen and paper tests in secondary schools of Lesotho (Tšilo, 2006), teachers are likely to interpret CASS as another version of this established assessment practice. Studies conducted in other national contexts and in Lesotho show that teachers generally understand innovations as minor variations of what was practised before (Blignaut, 2008; Raselimo and Wilmot, 2013; Spillane, Reiser and Reimer, 2002). Therefore, it can be argued that unless a clear distinction is made between CASS and continuous testing, teachers are likely to confuse the proposed model with continuous testing, thus posing a threat of continuity rather than change.

In view of the past experience with the implementation of CASS, as reported by Sebatane (1985), the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) document could have provided clear explanation of CASS and guidelines for implementing it. Furthermore, proper implementation of CASS at school level might be constrained by multiple contexts of schools and classrooms such as large class sizes, multigrades teaching and high teachers’ workloads, which are likely
to make it difficult to monitor the progress of individual learners. A shortage of teaching resources, such as computers and work-shops, might also constrain assessment of practical skills, especially in Science and practical subjects (Creativity and Entrepreneurial). Experience from other African countries illustrates that the implementation of assessment practices similar to CASS has practical problems in school contexts, where there are no supportive materials and equipment (Kampambwe, 2010).

One other challenge for CASS is the amount, or lack thereof, of trust that can be placed in teachers. To ensure its effective implementation, this will require constant monitoring by the Inspectorate, perhaps through devolution of more powers to principals and heads of departments. With more support from the Inspectorate, teachers are assured of a firm scaffolding to assist them to continue the quest to reach higher levels of achievement and implementation of the new policy. Such government structures as the Inspectorate are therefore pivotal if meaningful change is to take place. Finally, the implementation of CASS will require a shift in the focus of ECOL from examination to assessment. This will necessitate the renaming of ECOL to reflect its new role in providing assessment that facilitates students’ learning, rather than focusing more on measurement.

Subsequently, the policy advocates for Monitoring of Learners’ Academic Progress. Learners’ academic progress has been monitored through four main strategies, namely:

- **Daily**: where teachers assess and evaluate learners’ achievement during the teaching and learning;
- **Through the use of quarterly assessment packages**: These are administered at the end of every unit/quarter to assess and evaluate the level of achievement of learners with regard to the learning content covered in the unit/quarter. This permit teachers to provide remediation where learning challenges have been observed. It also motivates learners to strive for a better performance. Nevertheless, these Assessment Packages has the following weaknesses:
  - Only provide a room for the assessment of the two windows (Numeracy and Literacy) and leave out the integrated part of the syllabus for grades 1-4;
  - Are always delivered very late to schools, sometimes even when schools have already closed for vacations;
  - Do not take teachers’ effort to scheme jointly since they cover what teachers have not schemed in most cases (there is no collaboration between ECoL, NCDC and DEO);
  - They are very small in number thus schools are supposed to either write the tasks given to learners on the chalkboard or photocopy them. This is very difficult for schools as the former could only happen if teachers are very skillful in art since these tasks have some illustrations. Also, this will be unfair to other learners as the pictures drawn on the chalkboard will no longer be as clear as those in the task themselves. The latter will only happen if the schools have some funds, but it is well known that primary schools in Lesotho are no longer able to have sufficient funds because, with the introduction of FPE, parents are no longer expected to pay school fees, even the subvention offered by the government to schools is not enough.
  - End of Level Assessment: The *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development)* proposes the administration of the End of Level Assessment at grades 4, 7 and 10. These mark the academic phases of the Basic Education, namely; Lower, Intermediate, and senior Basic Education. This End of Level Assessment is meant to serve as a checkpoint aimed at assessing and evaluating the readiness of learners to proceed to the next learning phase.
2.3 Conclusion

The analysis of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development), as presented in this section, highlights a number of opportunities created by the new policy for education development in Lesotho. The adoption of an integrated approach, and its associated concept of learner-centred pedagogy, has a great potential to make both Basic and secondary school curriculum more responsive to the national development needs of the Lesotho country. The analysis has also revealed that the curriculum is aligned to the Lesotho development needs such as unemployment, poverty, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation. Addressing these national needs requires social constructivist approach, emphasising active learner participation, which is a strong aspect of the envisaged pedagogy in the policy document. Additionally, through the proposed continuous assessment, the framework creates opportunities for assessment of practical skills, which can contribute to personal growth of the learners and economic development of the country.

Although, the new framework represents a departure from the earlier reforms, some indications of continuity, rather than change, are still evident in the policy document. It has emerged from the analysis that the grouping of school subjects into discrete Learning Areas still mimics the structure of the 1982 Core Curriculum reform, by marginalising certain subjects in favour of others. The analysis has also revealed contradictions associated with the structure of curriculum and the use of language in some areas of the policy document. The curriculum organization model adopted by the new policy lies in tension with its stated claim of using integrated approach, thus posing a threat of partial implementation of the policy at classroom level. The teaching of subjects within specific Learning Areas is likely to perpetuate fragmented disciplinary approach denying teachers the opportunity to draw content from different Learning Areas and life experiences of the learners. Another contradiction was evident in the use of the Language Policy and medium of instruction. First, there is no language policy in Lesotho at the present moment; second, it is not clearly stipulated in the Policy whose medium of instruction should be used during the teaching and learning. Is it the teacher’s or learners’ medium of instruction. Another contradiction pertains to the visions of learner-centred pedagogy and curriculum aims.

Finally, we have observed that the policy also makes some assumptions, which are somewhat at a distance from the reality to be found in schools, particularly with respect to pedagogy and assessment.

In conclusion, it is argued that the attainment of the intended policy outcomes will be stifled not only by structural and contextual issues, but also by its internal contradictions, as described in this section.
3. Recommendations

The Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training has taken many initiatives to formulate and design different curriculum policies and curricula. Challenges such as involvement of all role-players of the school community in the policy making/curriculum development process, clear allocation of duties of the stakeholders, extensive consultation and empowerment of role-players of the school community were not always addressed. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development) has been viewed as a panacea to Lesotho educational related problems, however, this is not the case since the policy still reflects some weaknesses like its predecessors. It seems that a gap exists with regard to the policy and its implementation.

- As such, in order to avoid frequent curriculum change, the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) should thoroughly research curriculum of other countries. When adopting aspects from these curricula, resources available to the majority of Lesotho and the dynamics of its people should be considered.
- The facilities available at rural schools are not comparable to those at English Medium Schools and urban schools. The Government needs to increase funding for the education sector in order for the improvement of the infrastructure of previously disadvantaged schools. Educational transformation will not work without adequate resources.
- Teachers should be consulted about what is functional in the classroom when considering curriculum change. Research should be conducted by Teachers’ subjects Associations among their members on the curriculum issues and the results should be forwarded to the NCDC. This should be a continuous process to ensure that the NCDC knows exactly how the practitioners of the curriculum feel at any given time. Teachers would then take ownership of the changes that are implemented and be more positive about it. Teachers would be able to manage the implementation of a new curriculum if they are considered as integral parts of the change process. ‘Accepting that changing an educational curriculum can be a challenge, the involvement of all stakeholders, especially individuals who are directly involved in learners instruction, is an especially vital piece in successful curriculum revision’ Johnson (4).

- The NCDC must ensure that teachers have all the necessary information required for the implementation process. This means that educators must be consulted right from the initial stages of policy conceptualisation.
- Furthermore, it is not possible in the long run to establish good teaching in the classroom if schools and the educational system as a whole are functioning badly. Even if individual teachers are able to establish good classroom practice in spite of badly functioning schools/institutions and non-supportive educational authorities, this can only last for short periods. There are many examples of teachers trying to do their best in spite of lack of support from local and national authorities. Such situations too often end with stress and burn-out of teachers. There are also bound to be problems in a system with an excellent curriculum, but where teachers are not provided with the necessary moral and financial support needed to implement it. In order to support teachers in their efforts to improve the quality of education the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training and relevant education authorities must:
  o Provide high quality education and professional development to teachers;
  o provide teachers and schools with the resources necessary to offer quality education;
  o see that teachers have a salary comparable with other professions requiring the same level of qualifications and responsibility; and
ensure that teachers receive the moral recognition appropriate to their level of qualifications and responsibilities.

- pre-service training for teachers in Lesotho be adapted in the following manner:
  - Should contain four components: **Methodology, Pedagogy, Practice** and **Curriculum areas**. The best way to improve teacher quality will depend on conditions in each country. The presence of all four components is however essential to achieving a balance between general theory and the professionally oriented training. The component on curriculum should be stressed and supported by research.
  - It is of special importance to relate the professional ethics of teachers to the Convention of the Right of the Child. Several articles in the Convention have direct implications for the professional ethics of teachers. It is important that the teacher training institutions discuss and clarify how the provisions of the Convention should be incorporated into the ethics and professional standards of the teaching profession. For example what does it mean to take full account of the child’s best interest in all actions concerning the child, to protect the child from interference with privacy, to protect the child from maltreatment, to protect the child from drug abuse or to protect the child from sexual exploitation.
  - The minimum qualifications for teachers at the Basic Education level should be at least a degree since most teachers with Diploma qualifications seem to be struggling with the content proposed by the Integrated Basic Education Curriculum.

• It is therefore helpful to increase the status of the teaching profession and the perceived value of teachers by investing in improving the conditions and realities of the profession, as recommended below:
  - **Professional Conditions of Teaching**: The professional conditions of teaching also influence teacher motivation and attrition. Heavy workloads and large class sizes can significantly demoralise teachers. Teaching is also becoming more challenging due to increased demands to teach complex skills, heightened control by administrators, and decreased time to plan and collaborate with colleagues. However, a supportive professional work environment as well as positive relationships within the community can reduce these pressures and improve teachers’ motivation and effectiveness.
  - **Personal Conditions of Teaching**: Personal discomfort may make teachers want to leave their teaching post or even the profession. Inadequate housing options as well as the cost and travel time for transportation can contribute to low motivation and increased attrition. Moreover, teachers who are posted to schools away from their families may desire to transfer or leave teaching completely. Some teacher posts also involve more hardship than others, such as those in remote locations, in conflict zones, or in high-poverty communities. Teachers may need additional incentives to remain in posts where such personal conditions are less enticing. Attractive housing, running water, and consistent electricity are some of the most cost-effective approaches to motivate teachers in rural areas.
  - **Teaching Salary**: The salary for teachers influences the overall prestige and attractiveness of the profession and teachers often say that increased pay would improve their morale. In addition, there may be differences in salary between teachers of different levels—such as trained teachers and non-trained teachers—which can be a source of dissatisfaction, especially for the least trained and lowest paid teachers who may feel inferior. In many countries some teachers do not earn enough to live above the poverty line. These low salaries influence the motivation of teachers, who often turn to private tutoring or other part-time work to supplement their income, which can negatively affect classroom instruction. Moreover, late or inconsistent pay reduces teacher morale. Reforms that link teacher salary with learners’ performance are controversial and inconsistent across contexts, due largely to how teachers are evaluated and paid (e.g., by
individual, grade, or school). Yet, ideally teacher advancement and salaries would be connected to overall teacher quality. So it is suggested that teachers’ salaries in Lesotho should take cognisance of the following: educational background, geographical location, whether the school is a hardship/remote and teachers’ experience.

- **Additional Incentives:** Additional incentives for teachers may also be beneficial. For example, teachers may be motivated by opportunities for additional professional development or access to low-interest loans. Career advancement through attaining higher education qualifications can also make teaching more attractive. However, providing study leave options for teachers can be challenging because some teachers may not return to teaching after their period of leave.

The literature study conducted has indicated that the key driver to curriculum change success is the development of teachers’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and the alignment of teacher training methods to the current curriculum. Therefore, it is recommended that the following topics be considered and addressed when designing professional development opportunities for teachers who are implementing a new programme:

- **Programme Philosophy:** It is important for teachers to understand the philosophy behind the programme and how it may impact learners, parents, administrators and all other relevant stakeholders. This will enable teachers to understand why new Learning Areas have been introduced.
- **Content:** Teachers may find that the curriculum introduces unfamiliar content they have not taught in a while, like, for example, using a problem solving/learner-centred approach rather than a topical approach. It is therefore crucial to empower teachers so that they can deal with that content.
- **Resources:** Adequate resources should be available for implementing a new curriculum.
- **Mixed ability and multigrade teaching**
- **Curriculum integration**
- **Pedagogy of integration**
- **Time:** Teachers should be allowed enough time to prepare and deliver the requirements of the new curriculum and take time to understand the subject.
- **School Ethos:** The overall belief of the school in the new curriculum, for example, the fact that the school and community recognise the importance of the subject in the school curriculum.
- **Professional Support:** Opportunities for professional development, such as workshops, seminars, best teacher awards.
- **Professional Adequacy and Interest:** Teachers’ own interest, ability and competence to teach the curriculum.

**Implementation of the Integrated Basic Education Curriculum**

The introduction of the Integrated Basic Education Curriculum in 2012 marked a significant development in the history of primary education in Lesotho. It presented teachers, schools and School Boards with a unique opportunity to engage in professional development, improve learning outcomes, and prepare children for the challenges and opportunities of the future. The task of curriculum implementation is complex: it requires in-school management teams, as well as principals and School Boards to lead the implementation of change in the school as an organization. This study has identified a series of challenges with regard to this process, such as the fact that the majority of these groups have not yet received proper training on the implementation of the new curriculum in Lesotho.
Moreover, curriculum change takes place in the classroom and it involves teachers translating curriculum documents into practice, embracing new teaching programmes and methodologies, and providing a broader range of learning experiences for their learners. Effective curriculum change and implementation requires time, personal interaction, in-service training, and other forms of people-based support (Fullan, 1993). ‘In service training could be one of the major ways to communicate such findings to teachers Quality of education for all in the 21st century’ (Chinapah et al., 2000, p. 70). It is obvious that it is difficult for teacher to do a good work when they do not have the necessary resources available. It has also been revealed from the research that the majority of teachers still need some proper training on curriculum integration. It is therefore recommended that:

- Educational research must be strengthened as an instrument for improving educational quality, and the results of such research should be communicated to teachers in a better way.
- In-service training offered to teachers must be of a high quality. It is not acceptable that teachers are offered in-service training that merely means routine meetings and conferences. To guarantee a high standard, in-service training must be organized in cooperation with universities, colleges or other appropriate institutions specialising in higher and further education.
- Members of school management teams should undertake a more active role in the development and review of whole-school plans and should monitor their implementation. Members of the management team should be assigned responsibilities for the implementation of curricular areas.
- Schools should aim to promote excellence and to strive towards continuous improvement in teaching and learning. The progress of pupils in all Learning Areas should be a priority for teachers and learners in all primary schools.
- An additional emphasis should be placed on whole-school planning at school level, and the relevant support services should emphasize the link between the curriculum, the school plan, and individual planning.
- It is essential that all schools have written assessment policy incorporated in the overall school plan. This assessment policy should be clearly linked to the school plan for Integrated Curriculum and to teachers’ long-term and short-term planning. Assessment should be used for formative and summative purposes, and the emphasis should be on enhancing teaching and learning.
- Moreover, the link between classroom teaching and research is extremely important. It must be a link operating in two directions; information to teachers about the latest findings in educational, pedagogical and psychological research and information to the researchers about the problems in teaching experienced by classroom teachers. To find different forums for the exchange of such views and experiences must be a regular activity by the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training. Therefore, it is argued that strengthened pedagogical research based on these premises could be an important step in improving educational quality in Lesotho.

**Support Environment**

There is a need for support from National Curriculum Development officers, inspectors and District Resource Teachers to monitor the process of curriculum change in each and every school. Support provided may limit the problems teachers are encountering in their daily process of dealing with problems and questions related to curriculum. This could happen if the issue of school based curriculum, inspectors and curriculum committees are considered in many schools in the Mokhotlong District. According to Bantwini (2009:176) shortage of inspectors with sufficient background on curriculum related issues and human capacity in curriculum integration make the monitoring of schools focus only on few schools. Many schools end up not being visited for the whole year, especially those in inaccessible areas. This could be another factor which hinders the success of curriculum change in teaching and learning of integrated curriculum. Schwartz and Sadler (2007) point to the fact that effective teaching and learning require
support and scaffolding to ensure that teachers and students operate at their optimal skills level. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- The Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training should provide all the schools with proper infrastructure and teaching and learning resources.
- Early Childhood Education should be pronounced as free and compulsory for all.
- The government of Lesotho must employ qualified teachers to teach in the Early Childhood Education centers.
- The Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training should equip schools adequately with computers.
- The NCDC and ECoL must provide in-service training to principals on curriculum integration.
- The NCDC and ECoL must provide in-service education training to teachers on Information Technology (ICT).
- Parents, companies, NGOs and local retailers need to be sensitised on the need to equip schools with physical facilities as is the requirement with integrated curriculum.
- The NCDC and ECoL must carry out curriculum evaluation on a regular basis.

Areas for further research

This research was of the limited nature, therefore, a number of issues have not been resolved thus still need to be further explored. The following areas of Policy/Curriculum reforms still need further investigation:

- Analysis of the context of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (Education for Individual and Social Development).
- Strategies and methods to reach all the target groups of the policy;
- The relationship between mixed ability and multigrade teaching;
- Curriculum integration;
- Further research on the social context of this policy document, as understood by its developers, is recommended.
- It would also be interesting to explore the congruence between the policy messages and the newly developed adapted Lesotho General Certificate for Secondary Education (LGCSE) syllabuses, as well as classroom practice; and
- In addition, there are many new and emerging challenges to education and demand on curriculum, such as new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs); intercultural understanding; Sustainable Development; Learning to Live Together (LTLT); HIV and AIDS; Life skills and Sexuality Education; and Competency development for life thus a research on how best they can be integrated in the curriculum will be very important;
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