

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

THE KWAZULU-NATAL SCHOOL LIBRARY POLICY AND ITS
FEASIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PROVINCE

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The KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its feasibility for
implementation in the province

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Mariana du Toit
18 July 2008

ABSTRACT

The research critically assessed the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its feasibility for implementation in the province. In order to provide appropriate perspectives and to contextualise the study, accepted standards of good policy formulation were taken into account, and the educational challenges for the sector and the Library and Information Services field in which policy development and implementation take place were delineated.

The study was guided by the following theoretical frameworks, namely a constructivist approach in interpreting and evaluating the role of school libraries within an education system based in constructivist principles, the traditional policy model to evaluate policy formulation and design, and a social constructionist view of policy in the interpreting of policy development and implementation. The epistemological basis for the Delphi technique too, the main methodology used in the study, was social constructivism.

The Delphi technique combined expert opinion in order to determine the adequacy of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and to test the suitability of the policy for implementation in the province. The study set out to systematically collect and analyse the data needed to reflect on the research questions. A research design comprising two phases, with a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies was used to explore the research questions. Firstly the qualitative data collected from the Delphi panel's expert opinion and responses was interpreted to analyse the policy document critically and to assess its implementation strategy. Practical implementation problems were identified, as well as gaps in the policy that might necessitate revision. Secondly, quantitative data from an analysis of existing surveys, questionnaires and reports provided an overview of the current state of school library provisioning in the KwaZulu-Natal province, and the school library models already being implemented in the province were evaluated against this background.

This study was undertaken in the belief that it would offer a fresh and objective response to the KZN *School Library Policy* and reflect in an informed manner on its adequacy as a policy document. The chosen methodologies and the data generated enabled the researcher to determine that the policy document and its implementation strategy met, to a large extent, the standards of good policy-making. Practical strategies for and solutions to the challenges of policy implementation in the province were generated. The research results provided sound guidelines for reviewing the policy and the implementation strategy and for developing a more comprehensive strategy for policy implementation which would in turn refine and refocus the provincial policy intervention.

The study has brought to the fore several issues that need to be resolved to facilitate school library development in South Africa. These concerns include the lack of support and overall direction from the national Department of Education as manifested in its reluctance to finalise national school library policy, the importance of ICT as a learning tool to provide to all learners equal access to information and finally the general lack of human, physical and financial resources required to achieve satisfactory implementation of the policy. Partnerships and innovative service delivery solutions are required to address the backlog in school library provisioning, even if this intervention takes place initially only on a small scale.

In keeping with interpretative research, recommendations are made and ideas put forward for future research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACE	Advanced Certificate of Education
COLIS	Community Library Information Services
COLTS	Culture of Learning, Teaching and Services
COTEP	Committee on Teacher Education Policy
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
DACT	Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism
DACTS	Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
DoE	Department of Education
ECSRD	Education Centres Supporting Rural Development
ELITS	Education Library, Information and Technology Services
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ETIS	Education and Training Information Studies
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Departments Committee
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IASL	International Association of School Librarianship
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZNDEC	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture
KZNDOE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
RTL	Resource Targeting List
LA	Library Association
LIASA	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LIS	Library and Information Services
LPYLP	Library Practice for Young Learners Project
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
LTSM	Learner and Teacher Support material

MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MiET	Media in Education Trust
NATIS	National Information Systems
NCLIS	National Council for Libraries and Information Services
NEIMS	National Education Information Management System
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
QIDS-UP	Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme
RAIN	Resource and Information network
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SAQMEC	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SALA	South African Library Association
SAPESI	South African Primary Education Support Initiative
SCHELIS	Standing Committee of Heads of Education Library and Information Services
SGB	School Governing Body
SITA	State Information Technology Agency,
SLEA	School Library Excellence Awards
SLDP	School Library Development Project
SMT	School Management Team
TAAA	Together with Africa and Asia Association
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNP	University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UWC	University of the Western Cape

The search for the truth is an elusive ideal.
J Mouton.

The implementation of Curriculum 2005 in 1998 was seen in many ways as a watershed in South Africa's educational history and represented a new paradigm in education. It was anticipated that the outcomes-based curriculum with its concepts of integration and lifelong learning as part of a new approach to education would transform the legacy of the past and provide equal access to education for all learners.

The school library sector perceived the focus on information literacy and lifelong learning in an outcomes-based teaching methodology as critical elements underpinning the teaching and learning environment offered by school libraries. The sector anticipated that these views would be similarly endorsed by national guidelines and policy which, in turn, would structure and focus interventions at national, provincial and school level. However, school libraries have thus far been largely ignored in education reform strategies and the onus on establishing and developing school library services has been left to provincial education departments.

This research investigates the way in which one province, KwaZulu-Natal, sought to address the problem of developing suitable school library policy for effective intervention. The research will be undertaken within a constructivist framework and the role of school libraries in a constructivist education system is considered. Social constructivism is the epistemological basis for the Delphi technique, the main methodology used in the study. In addition a social constructionist view of policy development and design was drawn upon. The research problem, research objectives and questions, as well as the rationale for the study are outlined in this chapter. Key concepts and related terms and ideas around which the study is built are defined, and an outline of the rest of the thesis provided.

1.1 Research problem

1.1.1 Problem statement

KwaZulu-Natal consists of densely populated urban areas as well as deep rural areas where schools are spread out or sometimes clustered. Schools vary in size from small farm schools with one or two staff members to schools with more than 2 500 learners and 70 staff members. The demographic and socio-economic environments in KwaZulu-Natal present major stumbling blocks to the provision of education in the province. The learning environment is compromised by the challenges of rural education such as lack of running water, sanitation, infrastructure, and electricity, lack of transport and also the fact that the language of instruction is never spoken outside the classroom. It is often difficult to retain staff in these schools.

KwaZulu-Natal has a high illiteracy rate: 18% of the population have had no schooling, and 31% did not complete primary education, that is grades 1 – 6 (EduAction 2004: 8). Former homelands and remote, marginalised rural areas have a low per capita income and a high unemployment rate. Critical health issues such as malaria, bilharzia, and the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal have resulted in a decline in teacher numbers and the loss of expertise. In the classroom these conditions have translated into poor concentration, absenteeism, and lack of motivation for teachers and learners alike, and moreover the numbers of orphans and out-of-school youths have increased.

The South African Schools Act differentiates between two categories of schools: public and independent schools. There are 6351 public and independent schools in KwaZulu-Natal (KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education 2007d: 14). These schools were administered by five separate Education Departments before the amalgamation of the departments in 1995. At the time the education and culture portfolio was the responsibility of one ministry in the province, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC), but after the 2004 elections the portfolios were assigned to two separate ministries and the department is presently referred to as the

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE). The service delivery environment in the province is discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

There exists on the ground enormous disparities between the schools in the province and the provisioning of resources. Those learners who have been denied access to learning resources now have to be prioritised for departmental funding and redeployment of educators. Special national and provincial initiatives that aim to address the backlogs in the province include the implementation of no-fee schools, the consolidation of rural and farm schools, employment of administrative personnel, teacher development, literacy programmes, and the provisioning of resources to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. These functions and programmes of the department will be outlined in chapter 2 under 2.5.

The *National Norms and Standards for School Funding* (South Africa, Department of Education 1998a) that became national policy on 1 April 1999 set out national norms and standards in terms of the Bill of Rights in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (South Africa 1996a), the *South African Schools' Act* (South Africa 1996c), and the *National Education Policy Act* (South Africa 1996b). The criteria for the allocation of funds according to the Resource Targeting List (RTL) were revised by the National Department of Education in 2006 since it was found that the monetary value of the school allocation was still too low and previous formulae for distribution had resulted in inequities across the country. The school fee exemption strategy had not adequately addressed the needs of poor households, and there was a need for better utilisation of the school allocation and clearer specifications regarding its intended usage. The National Department of Education now prescribes the targets (Heard 2006) whereas previously 60% of the provincial department's funding was allocated to the schools in the two lower quintiles (the poorest schools). Chapter 2 section 2.5.4 outlines the criteria for Norms and Standards for School Funding and the implications for section 20 and section 21 schools under the *South African Schools' Act* of 1966.

School library services have to be conceptualised and implemented against this background and moreover without the support of national policies or guidelines. Although several policy documents dealing with Library and Information Services (LIS) in South Africa have been published since 1992, not one of these deals exclusively with school library policy, standards or resource provisioning. This lack of focus on specifically school library-related policy has resulted in a policy vacuum and the marginalisation of school libraries in the educational sphere. The introduction of Curriculum 2005 and the significant role of library-based resources in the teaching and learning process require that education planners and administrators view school libraries no longer as optional or as a separate support structure. The school library is "integral and related to the on-going knowing process of the educational programme", it is the one place in the school where the full range of resources required for resource-based learning can be found (Hawkins 1988, cited in South Africa. Department of Education 1997c: 20-21).

In 1997 a discussion document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1997c) was developed by a committee under the auspices of the Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education in the National Department of Education. This draft as well as the *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1998b) that emanated from the discussion document, identified ways to redress the disparities in school library provisioning and introduced a flexible, transitional approach by outlining several library models from which a school community could choose. The proposed *Four-year Implementation Plan of the Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 2000a) offered guidelines for the implementation of these models in schools. This draft policy and the subsequent revised drafts have not yet been approved by the national Minister of Education, and this seeming reluctance has led to growing concern among school library professionals regarding national commitment to such a policy. The literature overview in chapter 2 outlines the process and its slow progress over a period of ten years.

The KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education and Culture 2003b) that was developed in 2003 takes these guidelines into account, but at the same time it is also directed by identified provincial needs and projects that have been implemented in the province such as the development of rural Education Centres and the introduction of mobile libraries. The policy was developed by the Education Library, Information and Technology Services (ELITS) Directorate of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, and the committee members included representatives from all sectors of the school library field: policy makers, regional advisors, other directorates in the Department, tertiary education, and relevant Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The provincial implementation strategy which was developed in tandem with this policy takes into consideration prevailing conditions both within schools and in the provincial Department of Education.

This policy and its implementation plan need to be tested against the educational landscape in the province in order to establish the feasibility of its implementation. The policy is in its third year of implementation and policy gaps as well as early implementation barriers have been identified and proposals put forward for policy revision and revised implementation strategies.

Menou (1991: 50) in defining policy, cautions against discontinuity in organisational planning since "policy shows you what game is to be played and what are the rules of the game... it does not tell you how to play the game". This latter statement has in fact been evident in the national initiative to formulate policy regarding norms and standards for school libraries. It is the researcher's opinion that, should the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* be appropriate to the needs of the province, the systems and skills required to implement it be in place, and the costs be sustainable (Pillay 1999: 245), then the policy will give the impetus and direction required to establish, develop and resuscitate school libraries in the province. As is the case with the national policy initiative, discontinuity should not prevent this policy from being fully implemented. However, the situation regarding the lack of national policy as indicated in 1.2 below should be regarded as a potential impediment to

implementation since the onus for implementation now rests with the provincial Department of Education. This means that implementation progress will be determined by the willingness of the provincial department to allocate funding annually. National endorsement of guidelines, norms and standards would ensure dedicated funding for implementation, and the prioritisation of school library development as an important instrument for curriculum delivery in schools.

It is nevertheless important that the provincial *School Library Policy* should meet the requirements of good policy and be mindful of the educational challenges in the province to ensure that intervention remains focussed and effective.

1.1.2 Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research revolves around two issues. The first is a critical analysis of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy*, and the second, its feasibility for implementation given the major challenges to education provision presented by the province's demographic and geographic environments. The study will clearly identify practical implementation problems, and test the appropriateness of the provincial policy models and implementation guidelines against the provincial educational background in which it will have to be implemented. An accurate audit of school library provisioning in the province will enable the researcher to establish the extent of the gap between the provincial policy proposals and the present situation in schools in the province.

All relevant data was made available to a Delphi panel, the research group who critically analysed and evaluated the policy document and, as experts in the field, identified gaps and possible barriers to implementation. Their findings are discussed in chapter 5. Point 1.3 describes the methods that were used to accurately determine the existing state of school library provisioning in the province, and to critically analyse and assess the provincial policy to ascertain its suitability for implementation.

The *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1998b) provided generic standards for various school library models that schools can implement. It further stated that the *National Education Policy Act* (South Africa 1996b) empowers the Minister to establish norms, standards and national policy in education, but that the implementation of standards for school libraries is a provincial matter, "this means that both the national and provincial departments should co-ordinate their efforts in making improvements in educational provision" (South Africa. Department of Education 1998b: 7). The document recommended that provincial departments should "develop a written school library policy which clearly identifies the school library model(s) [which are acceptable within the province], and establish guidelines and appropriate support services at regional or district level" (1998b: 36).

The national school library policy process has to date not been finalised due to a lack of direction and commitment from the national ministry, and the restructuring of the National Department of Education has resulted in the responsibility for school libraries being re-allocated firstly to the Further Education and Training (FET)¹ Branch and then to the General Education and Training (GET)² Branch of the department. Several subsequent drafts of the National School Library Policy were developed by a provincial working group consisting of the heads of school library services in the provinces and, in two instances, by an assistant director responsible for the procurement of materials for reading campaigns at the national office. However, to date no national policy directive has been forthcoming. Karlsson (2003: 6) argues that the working group's tentative formulation of norms and standards in the initial policy framework showed their inexperience in government processes and the "politics of policy", and that this led to the "diminishing status of the document." A full overview of the national policy process to date is given in chapter two.

¹ In terms of schooling this band consists of grades 10, 11 and 12 and is non-compulsory (Mothata, Mda and Cosser 1998).

² This band includes the reception year, grades 1 – 9, Learners with Special Education Needs, and Adult Basic Education and Training (Mothata *et al.* 1998).

1.1.3 Research objectives

As indicated in 1.1.2 above, the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its implementation strategy will be analysed critically and its feasibility for implementation in the province (its quality of being do-able) tested. The result of the research will form the basis of an accurate evaluation of provincial school library needs and identify short and long term planning goals for the successful implementation of the policy.

The specific objectives of the research are to:

- Analyse and critically assess the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* document and its implementation strategy by:
 - Using the Delphi technique as the main methodology for the research, in this instance for the critical analysis of the policy and its implementation strategy. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 237-238) perceive the Delphi method as the written partner to the Nominal Group Technique³, but with the advantage that the participants are not required to meet together as a group. Data collection resembles the Nominal Group Technique in that participants respond to a series of questions and statements in writing. The researcher collects written responses, collating it into clusters of issues and responses. The analysis is passed back to the respondents for comment, further discussion and identification of issues, responses, and priorities. Respondents are asked to respond to the group response, and can agree or indicate more substantial disagreement. By presenting the group response back to the participants there is general progression in technique to the polarisation of responses, thus a clear identification of areas of consensus and dissension.

³ The Nominal Group Technique is a face-to-face group judgment technique in which participants generate silently, in writing, responses to a given problem. The responses are collected and posted (but not identified by author) for others to view. Through group discussion the responses are clarified and further iterations may follow until a final set of responses is established (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 237-8).

- Accurately assess the present school library provisioning in the province and identify the most suitable existing models that are already being implemented in KwaZulu-Natal schools by analysing secondary data from the:
 - 1999 HSRC South African School Library Survey, Provincial report: KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d),
 - 2004 ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004),
 - Summary Report: Shongololo Pilot Project (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006),
 - Risk Management Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c),
 - School Library Development Project Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d).
- Test the appropriateness of the provincial policy against the results obtained in the proposed research programme.
- Determine the practical implementation problems that may necessitate policy revision, and evaluate these against the expert opinions offered by the Delphi panel in their responses.
- Suggest changes to the policy (if any) and propose further implementation strategies to address the needs/problems identified.
- Assess the implications for human resource development as well as the budget implications for the province.

On the basis of these objectives the study sought to offer recommendations for future research.

1.1.4 Research questions

The research will be guided by the following questions:

1. What are the key elements of the provincial policy and how adequate are they in terms of policy formulation and development?
2. How adequate is the provincial implementation strategy?

3. What are the practical implementation problems that need to be addressed with regard to the provincial policy?
4. Has the best strategy for the implementation of the provincial policy been identified and can it be successfully implemented?
5. Will the implementation strategy enable ELITS to implement equity and redress past imbalances?
6. Which are the most suitable school library models for implementation in the province? Are the models included in the policy adequate to address the diverse schools or are there alternative models that should have been included?
7. What is an accurate assessment of the present school library provisioning in the province according to the secondary data obtained from the surveys and reports listed above under point 1.3?
8. What key strategies did experts in the field identify through the use of the Delphi Method, and was the researcher able to refine the responses until consensus was reached?
9. Does the policy include the needed foci identified in the study, and if not, what can be recommended?
10. Does the policy need revision to include recommendations made by the Delphi panel?
11. Have any topics for future study been identified?

1.2 Rationale for the study

There were great inequalities in the provision of libraries to South African schools under the former education departments which resulted in widespread lack of facilities, inadequate resources, and a lack of trained personnel in the majority of schools. The disparities were further aggravated by the fact that there was no legislation enforcing departments to provide school libraries and establish library standards.

The 1997 draft *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1997c) represented the first attempt to formulate national

school library policy. It focused on the effective use of the school library to support the curriculum and located "itself within the context of socio-political and educational transformation that is driven by the new legislative framework and the educational paradigm shift to... outcomes-based education. Formulating school library standards is premised on the need for regulatory mechanisms that will ensure movement towards greater equity at institutional and provincial level" (South Africa. Department of Education 1997c: 3).

One of the difficulties in taking any corrective action on the past inequalities has been the definition of acceptable standards of provision. Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse (1996: 19) draw on Vermeulen (1994) and Stander (1993) to suggest "a useful approach would be to assess the mission, aims and objectives of the school library in relation to curriculum delivery as the basis on which to determine the nature, size and scope of the facilities and services". In the current study the researcher endeavoured to define acceptable norms and standards for library provisioning in the province, and evaluate the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy's* feasibility to meet these requirements.

This study also sought to test the efficacy of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* in addressing the problem of equity of resource provisioning in the province, and identifying the most successful models and implementation procedures. Unless affordable and sustainable library models can be identified, the province will shed its responsibility to provide access to curriculum-oriented resources. This lack of support will again relegate the responsibility to school communities to find alternative ways of providing learners with resources – thus further exacerbating the disparities between schools.

The researcher was a panel member of the task team that developed the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy*. She gained extensive teaching and school library experience as teacher, teacher-librarian, ELITS subject advisor and later as Chief Education Specialist responsible for the ELITS Directorate's Provisioning section.

Presently she manages the provisioning of starter collections to schools as per the provincial *School Library Policy's* implementation plan. She oversees the three ELITS Processing centres, the Mobile Library project, and the Education Centre Libraries as well as the School Library Excellence Awards programmes.

1.3 Assumptions of the study

The study was undertaken from the personal perspective that:

- Well-resourced and well-functioning school libraries are an essential component of a constructivist education,
- School libraries support quality teaching and learning and promote a reading culture and improve reading ability,
- Relevant policy that is endorsed at management/provincial/national level enhances and focuses service delivery and intervention strategies,
- Policy does not guarantee delivery and intervention in the form of significant and applicable training is needed,
- Equity and redress can only be achieved if schools are provided with adequate space to house current, relevant resources, and a teacher-librarian to manage the collection and coordinate intervention with the collaboration of all other teachers.

The researcher further accepts that in a complex demographic environment such as KwaZulu-Natal a range of relevant school library models are needed since the same model cannot suit the diverse needs of all the schools in the province.

1.4 Definition of key concepts

Key concepts in the proposed research are defined as follows:

- Analysis

Oxford English Dictionary (1989) defines analysis as: "the resolution or breaking up of anything complex into its various simple elements, the opposite process to synthesis", or "the separation of an intellectual or material whole into its

constituent parts for individual study; the study of such constituent parts and their interrelationship in making up a whole" (*Dictionary.com* 2002).

- **Appropriateness**

Appropriateness can be described as suitability, compatibility, or the "quality of being specially suitable" (*Dictionary.com* 2002).

- **Critical analysis**

Critical analysis is an "appraisal based on careful analytical evaluation" (*WordNet* [200-]). A critical analysis approach is typically found in critical literature reviews defined as "studies that provide an overview of scholarship in a certain discipline through an analysis of trends and debates" (Mouton 2001: 179). The "review of the literature is essentially an exercise in inductive reasoning...in order to come to a proper understanding of a specific domain of scholarship" (2001: 179-180).

- **Delphi technique**

"[The] Delphi [technique] may be characterised as a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem" (Linstone and Turoff 1975: 3). The method can be described as an iterative group judgment technique where the researcher forwards surveys or questionnaires to anonymous participants. Their responses are collated/summarised and re-circulated to the participants in multiple rounds for further modification or critique, producing a final group response (United States National Library of Medicine [200-]).

- **Develop**

To develop can be defined as the process of "working out the possibilities of or making something clear by degrees or in detail" (*Merriam-Webster* 1999). *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) defines to develop as unfolding something "more fully" or to "bring out all that is potentially contained in [it]".

- **Effectiveness**

Merriam-Webster (1999) states that something is effective when it produces "a decided, decisive, or desired effect".

- **Evaluation**

Evaluation is the process of determining "the significance, worth, or condition of, usually by careful appraisal and study" (*Merriam-Webster* 1999). Shafritz (1998: 818) states that evaluation determines the value or effectiveness of an activity for the purpose of decision-making.

- **Equity**

Equity is linked to the principle of redress. With regard to education the concept means that state resources must be utilised and allocated in such a way that the same quality of learning opportunities are offered to every child, thus counteracting "the inheritance of the past and creat[ing] equity for a fair and just culture of learning and teaching" (Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 18). This process is seen to include the protection of the rights of both learners and teachers to equitable treatment, affirmative action policies as well as increasing the representation of women in leadership positions (Van Wyk, Mothata and Steenkamp 1998: 4). This means that "learning resources... must be provided in a way which counteracts the inheritance of the past and creates equity for a fair and just culture of learning and teaching" (Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 18).

- **Feasibility**

"Something is feasible when it can be done or carried out" (*Merriam-Webster* 1999), and *Dictionary.com* (2002) defines feasibility as the "quality of being do-able".

- **Implementation**

Implementation is "the act of accomplishing some aim or executing some order" (*Dictionary.com* 2002). It gives "practical effect to and ensures actual fulfilment by

concrete measures ... and provide(s) instruments or means of expression for [implementation]" (*Merriam-Webster 1999*).

- **Investigation**

Investigation is defined as "a systematic examination; a study by close examination and systematic inquiry" (*Merriam-Webster 1999*), and "the action of investigating, the making of a search or an enquiry; systematic examination, [or] careful and minute research" (*Oxford English Dictionary 1989*).

- **Model**

The draft policy document *A National Policy Document on School Library Standards* (South Africa 1997a: 72) defines a model as "a type, a particular configuration based on a generalisation". It can also be described as "something set before one for guidance or imitation; something taken or proposed as worthy of imitation; something that may serve as a pattern" (*Merriam-Webster 1999*) or "a simplified or idealised description or conception of a particular system, situation or process... that is put forward as a basis for calculations, predictions, or further investigation" (*Oxford English Dictionary 1989*).

- **Norm**

The KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education and Culture 2003b: 6) defines a norm as a quantitative measure for the establishment and provisioning of school libraries. Examples are a minimum collection to learner ratio, specifications concerning size of furniture and shelving, or a per learner collection funding formula.

- **Plan**

A plan is "an orderly arrangement of parts of an overall design or objective; a detailed programme" and when used in the context of a project, it "often stresses imaginative scope and vision" (*Merriam-Webster 1999*). It can also be defined as "a scheme, programme, or method worked out beforehand for the accomplishment

of an objective" and "a programme or policy stipulating a service or benefit" (*Dictionary.com* 2002).

- **Policy**

Policy is "an administrative plan or series of guidelines, preferably written, which delineate acceptable practices and actions for a wide range of activities within an organisation" (Young 1983: 89).

Hart (Hart, T. 1995: 9) defines policy as "a purposive course of action based on currently acceptable societal values, followed in dealing with a problem or matter of concern, and predicting the state of affairs which would prevail when that purpose has been achieved". Policy can be understood as "a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions" (*Merriam-Webster* 1999).

Montviloff (1990: 7) describes policy as "a set of principles and strategies which guide a course of action for the achievement of a given goal... Policies are embodied in the so-called policy instruments... of the following kinds: legal instruments (constitution, parliamentary acts, laws, regulations, and international treaties), professional instruments (codes of conduct, professional ethics) and cultural instruments (customs, beliefs, traditions, social values)".

Menou (1991: 50) states that "a policy is a set of principles which guide a regular course of action. A policy consists of

- an image of the desired state of affairs, as a goal or set of goals, which are to be achieved or pursued
- specific means by which the realisation of the goals is to be brought about
- the assignment of responsibilities for implementing the means
- a set of rules or guidelines regulating the implementation of the means".

Rowlands (1996) and Browne (1997) investigate the field of information policy and propose guidelines for the design of information policy studies. Rowland's research will be incorporated in the proposed study in chapter 2 under 2.2.

The definition put forward by De Coning (2000: 3-4) will be used as a working definition in this research. He states that policy

- specifies the basic principles to be pursued in attaining specific goals,
- interprets the values of society,
- is usually embodied in the management of pertinent projects and programmes.

- **Policy analysis**

Dunn (1994: 29) defines policy analysis as "an intellectual and practical activity aimed at creating, critically assessing, and communicating knowledge of and in the policy-making process". Policy analysis can be "any type of analysis that generates and presents information in such a way as to improve the basis for policy-makers to exercise their judgement" (1981: 35). He cautions that "in policy analysis, the word analysis is used in its most general sense" and implies the use of intuition and judgement and encompasses not only examination of policy by decomposition into its components but also the design and synthesis of new alternatives".

Wissink (2000: 74) likewise describes the term policy analysis as a misnomer in respect of its actual content and advises that it should not be misunderstood. It may mean different things to different people, and although a clear-cut and comprehensive definition does not exist, there is agreement that "it implies a multidisciplinary approach that seeks to generate information about the decision process in order to provide the means for optimal policy decisions".

Hart (Hart, T. 1995: 15) states that policy analysis is "simply a structured way of thinking of choices before deciding on a particular course of action. Policy analysis helps people make the best choices in particular circumstances... it is a set of tools

designed to help avoid ... mistakes". He enumerates four reasons for performing policy analysis:

- it provides a useful set of tools for choosing the best course of action among various alternatives,
- it helps identify why one course of action is preferable to another, and this helps to promote and defend policy options,
- it enables people to dissect policy proposals of others and identify strengths and weaknesses,
- it helps to ensure that various decisions required to address a problem at different levels are consistent with each other (Hart, T. 1995: 15).

- **Policy management**

The concept policy management is "an umbrella term for policy initiatives concerned with process dynamics and, in particular, the capacity to manage critical phases and elements (including policy analysis and implementation) of the policy process" (De Coning and Cloete 2000: 50) and refers to a deliberate way to deal with policy issues and processes from start to finish (De Coning 2000: 4).

- **Policy process**

Studies of the policy process focus on the dynamics of policy formulation. The policy process has several phases and "studies of the policy process are concerned with how policies are actually made in terms of the actions taken by various people at each stage of policy-making" (De Coning 2000: 7).

- **Redress**

Due to gross inequalities in education provision prior to 1994 the majority of oppressed communities, and more particularly black South Africans, received inferior education. The schools for this sector of the community were under resourced, overcrowded, classroom provisioning was inadequate, and teachers were under or unqualified. These inequalities and many others need to be redressed (Van Wyk, Mothata and Steenkamp 1998: 4).

- **School Library**

The *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa.

Department of Education 1998b: 3) defines school library as:

- "a generic term that incorporates all forms and models of collection development and delivery,
- a teaching method to enhance the school's curriculum... not just a physical facility".

The document further states that the **collection** in a school library may comprise all media, equipment that enables educators and learners to access electronic media and information, and considers the people in the community as valuable information providers. The **users** are defined as educators and learners using the collection as readers and also to satisfy curricular needs, thus placing the school library within a curriculum context.

- **Standards**

Merriam-Webster (1999) identifies a standard as "a basis for comparison; a reference point against which other things can be evaluated".

The policy discussion document, *A National Policy on School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1997: 49), defines standards as "a measure, criterion or benchmark for setting conformitory requirements" and distinguishes between qualitative, quantitative and generic standards, the latter being common standards which should be applied in all schools regardless of their current school library provision.

Stander (1993: 80) states that **qualitative standards** "furnish a service with the fundamentals of philosophical basis necessary to render a meaningful information service ... are prescriptive by nature, since they articulate the principle of good information science", whereas **quantitative standards** "state, in measurable terms, the level of provision for buildings, materials, staff, budgets and other physical

conditions of an information service". She argues that the move away from quantitative standards to more qualitative standards is a manifestation of the shift from size to service in the information world, and that for standards to be meaningful there is a need for both types.

– **Strategy**

Merriam-Webster (1999) defines strategy as "a careful plan or method; the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a goal".

– **Ward, Circuit / District / Province**

A ward is an "administrative division of a constituency", a circuit "a minor administrative unit" (*DK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary*, 1998) and a district "a portion of territory marked off or defined for some specific administrative or official purpose" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989). A province is "a principal administrative division of a country" (*DK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary*, 1998). The province of KwaZulu-Natal is demarcated in 12 education districts, with circuits and wards, the latter being the smallest administrative unit. Demarcations for education delivery in KwaZulu-Natal are described in chapter 2.

1.5 Summary

This chapter defined the research problem in context. It justified the purpose of the study namely to critically analyse the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy's* adequacy in terms of policy design, and to investigate the policy's suitability for implementation in the province. The analysis will take into account both the educational challenges and the LIS field in which policy development and implementation take place.

Chapter 2 sketches the background to the study. The overview of policies and legislation influencing Library and Information Services directly or indirectly includes an outline of the service delivery environment in KwaZulu-Natal.

The theoretical framework and literature review are provided in chapter 3. The chapter focuses on school libraries' role in education, policy design and formulation and offers a brief summary of the Delphi technique.

Chapter 4 documents the research design and methodology followed in the study and justifies the choice of methodology. Topics such as instrumentation, questionnaire development, method of data collection, and ethical issues are explored.

The results of the Delphi as well as secondary data gathered are summarised in chapter 5, while chapter 6 analyses and interprets findings against the research questions the study aims to address. Chapter 7 discusses the main findings by drawing together findings from the previous chapters and offering recommendations.

This chapter outlines the Library and Information Services policy field during the 90s by giving an overview of the policy documents that influenced LIS during the time as well as policies and legislation still influencing the sector and specifically the development of school library policy. School library services are not provided in a vacuum and national policy initiatives as well as the provincial service delivery environment are outlined to provide perspective and contextualise the study.

2.1 Background

Nassimbeni (2001: 25) observes, citing Ball, that the LIS policy field of the 1990s was full of socio-political complexities where many of the participants and interest groups had unrealistic expectations of unfailing rationality in policy processes. They did not appreciate the "messy realities of influence, pressure, dogma, expediency, compromise, intransigence, resistance, error, opposition and pragmatism" (Ball 1990: 9) of an often conflict-ridden policy process in which they were protagonists, opponents, or observers.

The most important policy documents dealing with library and information services during this period were:

- *Report of the NEPI Library and Information Services Research Group* (National Education Policy Investigation 1992). The NEPI LIS report is considered to be the most important document influencing subsequent draft policy and legislation of relevance to school library development in South Africa. Nassimbeni (2001: 26) cites Lor (1993: 65) who saw the report, despite its flaws, as "a major and formative event... [that] brings [the LIS profession] closer [than ever before] to a paradigm shift in library and information work". The report established that very little policy existed concerning school libraries. There was a complete lack of cooperation between education departments as far as school libraries and school library activities were concerned. The report identified a need for national policy on the development of school libraries and found that the existence of a policy

was directly related to and enabled by the provision of school libraries, as was the case for example in schools administered by the House of Assemblies (White schools) and by the House of Delegates (Indian schools) (Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996; KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education and Culture 2003b).

- The TransLis Coalition's *Draft National Library and Information Services Policy* (TransLis Coalition c1993). The aim of the document was to develop "a LIS policy and programme which directed the process of participatory change and reconstruction in South Africa's libraries and information services" (Stilwell 1995: 39). The NEPI principles of democracy, redress, non-sexism and non-racism, and a unitary system were upheld in the document. It aimed to address some of the restrictions under which NEPI had operated, particularly to lobby politicians and policy makers... [and] influenced the LIS section in the ANC's *Policy Framework for Education and Training* (Stilwell 1995: 39).
- The African National Congress' *Policy Framework for Education and Training* (African National Congress 1994b) and *Implementation Plan for Education and Training* (IPET) (African National Congress 1994a). Definite proposals regarding the provision and use of learning resources in schools were made in the LIS section of the Policy Framework for Education and Training. It re-conceptualised the integrated role of learning resources and libraries in schools including the retraining of staff and the sharing of resources through multi-purpose libraries and community information centres. The Implementation Plan for Education and Training calculated both the costs of establishing and sustaining a collection of learning resources in secondary schools and the costs of personnel needed to administer and facilitate the use of those resources to acquire information literacy skills (Karlsson 1995: 3).
- *Guidelines of a proposed policy for community library information services* (COLIS) (1994). The document endorsed the vision expressed in the LIS chapter of the ANC's education and training policy framework and emphasised the principles of equal and free access, relevance to community needs and community participation, equity regarding the distribution and upgrading of services, co-operation and networking, and a service orientation (Stilwell 1995: 41).

- *Draft proposals for Library and Information services for South Africa (Arts and Culture Task Group 1995)*. This report dealt with the necessity to integrate and co-ordinate the elements of the LIS system in order to develop a more holistic approach to reconstruction and transformation (Nassimbeni 2001: 27). It noted the loss of many teacher-librarian posts controlled by provincial education departments (mainly in the white schools' sector) (Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 9).
- *Draft Report of the Interministerial Working Group on the Libraries and Information Services (LIS) Function (National Level)* (South Africa. Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and Department of Education 1996). The development of libraries for a literate society was highlighted in this report. It noted the need for national policy on minimum norms and standards for all libraries in South Africa, and proposed that the Department of Education (DoE) and the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) should be equal decision-making partners regarding library and information services. This split of governance has influenced the status quo in the LIS field as South Africa does not have one national Government department responsible for national LIS issues, and the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) remains the focal point for LIS policy matters at national level. This issue is discussed below under *The National Council for Library and Information Services Act (2001)* and the section on the National Council for Library and Information Services.

Research since 1991 has highlighted inadequacies in school library provisioning in South Africa. The listed documents, as well as research by individuals such as Stadler (1991), Olën (1993), Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse (1996), Karlsson (1996a), Lor and Van As (2002), and Hart and Zinn (2007) identify the following as the main problems being experienced in the school library sector:

- a general absence of facilities,
- insufficient provision of materials,
- insufficient physical accommodation,
- a shortage of trained personnel,

- the marginalisation of school libraries in the education field due to a poorly conceptualised approach to the role of information resources in teaching and learning, and
- a lack of co-ordination between school libraries and other LIS sectors resulting in poor liaison with public libraries.

This situation is not unique to South Africa. A 1990 survey in Namibia (Töttemeyer and Stander 1990) indicated that 77% of Namibian schools had no library, and in the north of the country where more than 77% of schools are situated, there were practically none. However, through donations the library services ensured that previously disadvantaged schools were provided with at least 200 books and some facilities had been upgraded by 1996. Financial provisioning had not improved despite "signs of improved appreciation of the role of the library in the overall development process" (Marais 1996: 61). Sturges and Neill (1998: 153) state that the majority of schools in African countries have no library, and where it does exist it is usually inadequately staffed, has outdated material, and is marginal to the teaching-learning process. Similarly Rosenberg (2001: 13) points out that, in Africa, school libraries "have been relegated to the last place on the scale of priorities. The school library systems set up with independence in many countries are no longer effective".

Hart and Zinn (2007: 90) note that the challenges facing South African education in 2007 are the ones that impact on school libraries too: the size of the school-going population, rural poverty, the apartheid legacy of school funding which directly impacted on the problems listed above, the poor qualifications and subject knowledge of teachers, and the continuing high rate of failure and dropout.

2.2 Policies and legislation influencing Library and Information Services

Rowlands (1996: 15) argues that it is impossible to detach information policy from its wider social and political context, and cautions researchers to guard against narrowly defining the scope of their work. He suggests that there is an information policy hierarchy that comprises three levels:

- Infrastructural policies: these policies "affect the information sector directly or indirectly, providing a social and economic context for its activities", for example education policy.
- Horizontal information policies that are specifically concerned with and "impact on the whole of the information sector", for example data protection law.
- Vertical information policies that have a "specific application to a particular information sector" such as laws on research councils" (Rowlands 1996: 15).

The school library sector is similarly affected by a number of policies and legislation. The following overview is categorised according to Rowland's hierarchy, and summarises the most relevant legislation and documentation influencing school library policy development.

2.2.1 Infrastructural policies and legislation affecting the sector directly or indirectly

The first section outlines policies and legislation that affect the school library sector directly and indirectly.

- *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996* (South Africa 1996a): In South Africa, present attempts at education transformation should be viewed against the background of the 1994 Constitution which stipulates that everyone has the basic right to education, including further education, and that education should be transformed and democratised in accordance with the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom which underpin the constitution (South Africa 1996a). The Bill of Rights, section 32 of the Constitution, deals with the right of access to information and the areas of exclusive provincial legislative competence, for example libraries other than national libraries. Schedule 5 lists libraries other than national libraries as functional areas of exclusive provincial competence (South Africa 1996a).
- *The White Paper on Education and Training: Education and training in a democratic South Africa, first steps to develop a new system.* (South Africa. Department of Education 1995): This was the first White Paper to state the

fundamental policy framework of the Department of Education, taking as point of departure the 1994 education policy framework of the African National Congress. It promotes an education system that is just and equitable, of high quality, and accessible to all learners. The new education system is committed to support lifelong learning and development for all people and states that "the significant curricular role of library-based resources demands that education planners and administrators cannot regard the school library as a separate optional support structure in the teaching and learning process" (South Africa 1997a: 20). This statement clearly implies that the state has an obligation to provide a library, as an educationally necessary facility, to all state schools. Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse (1996: 17) observe that "the new educational paradigm implies the retraining of existing library and media centre personnel... [and calls for a] new type of learning facilitator".

- *Norms and Standards and Governance Structure for Teacher Education* (Committee on Teacher Education Policy 1995). This document (1995: 16) envisages that the teacher-in-training will need knowledge of "...resources for learning from the local environment, for example from radio and television broadcasts, and support systems such as remedial services, professional resources, information resources, apparatus and information technology". Methodology courses should also ensure that the teacher is able to select and use a wide variety of resources, including information technology, and employ methods that will foster independent learning and demand an ongoing growth in reading competence (1995: 21). It further stipulates that all teachers-in-training should take a course in teaching media (1995: 48) and refers to media as "appropriate aids used by a teacher in training, including the use of the school library/school media centre/school resource centre, electronic media and other teaching media" (1995: 61).
- *The National Education Policy Act, No.27 of 1996* (South Africa 1996b): The Act empowers the Minister to establish norms and standards in education that will "provide opportunities for and encourage lifelong learning ... promoting enquiry, research and the advancement of knowledge", and improve the provision of

facilities that contribute towards quality education (1996b: 4-5). This statement can be understood to include policy and facilities for school libraries. The Act also stipulates that the implementation of standards is a provincial matter. Thus both the national and provincial departments should co-ordinate efforts to improve education provision (South Africa 1996b).

- *The South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996* (South Africa 1996c): This Act paved the way for a single, non-racial school system and provides for public and independent schools, and makes schooling compulsory for all children aged 7 -15. It places democratically elected governing bodies at the centre of all public schools for governance purposes, and has significant impact on provisioning in schools. School libraries are not mentioned specifically in this Act but the Schools Act has implications for school libraries arising from the following issues:
 - Functions of governing bodies: The legislation states, amongst other things, that the functions of governing bodies include the raising of revenue, and ensuring school development through the provision of quality education. This means that budgets should include provision for library-based resources to provide support for quality teaching. The Act also charges governing bodies to take all reasonable measures to supplement the resources supplied by the state.
 - Ownership of school property and resources: In providing learners with access to library-based resources a school could use the library of another school since the Act states that the Head of Department can allow reasonable use of facilities to other schools that do not have the facilities. However, the Act clearly states that all assets acquired by a public school are the property of that school, thus the library collection belongs to the school even if shared by another school (South Africa 1996c).
- *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st century* (South Africa. Department of Education 1997a). The Department of Education introduced a new curriculum with an outcomes-based approach to learning and teaching to transform the education system and bring South Africa in line with international trends of multi-skilling and globalisation in the sense that they can operate in an internationally interdependent economy. Information literacy skills were listed as a critical cross-

curriculum outcome in each of the eight Learning Areas. Hart (2002b) observes that "the ethos is one of lifelong learning, of critical thinking, of problem-solving". The continuous assessment methods recommend projects and portfolio work rather than examinations, and support a resource-based model of learning in which learners are encouraged to construct their own learning by engaging with learning and information resources.

- *A South African curriculum for the twenty-first century. Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005* (South Africa. Department of Education 2000c). The Review Committee was tasked to provide recommendations on issues such as the structure of the new curriculum and the level of understanding of outcomes-based education. The report indicated flaws amongst which were the structure and design of the policy, inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers, learning support materials that are variable in quality, often unavailable and not sufficiently used in classrooms, shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support C2005, and inadequate recognition of the curriculum as the core business of education departments.
- *The Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement* (South Africa. Department of Education 2001a) and the subsequent *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (South Africa. Department of Education 2002b) revise certain aspects of Curriculum 2005 (1997a), dealing in clear and simple language with curriculum requirements at various levels and phases. However, despite the assumptions made about the value of resource-based learning approaches, libraries are not mentioned and although the Learning Area for Languages includes a section on Information Skills no link is made between this Information Skills Learning Programme and access to reading, information and learning resources (Hart 2002b).
- *The Education Laws Amendment Act No. 31 of 2007* (South Africa 2007) amends the *South African Schools Act* (South Africa 1996c) and states under 5A (1) that the minister may prescribe minimum norms and standards for infrastructure and the provision of learning and teaching support material (LTSM). Under section 5A

2(a), dealing with school infrastructure, a library is mentioned, but under section 5A 2(c), the provision of learning and teaching support material, no mention is made of library resources, and the act only refers to "learning material" and "teaching material and equipment". This omission may well perpetuate the mistaken belief in schools that LTSM refers to text books only.

The following policy documents are relevant too and influence school library policy even if on a more indirect level.

- *The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage* (South Africa. Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology 1996) recommends that library initiatives focus on the necessary infrastructural requirements, including internet, to ensure equal access to information, and considers libraries to be an important part of cultural life.
- *The National Commission on Higher Education: Working Group on Libraries and Information Technology* (1996). This report suggests a basis for school library development for continuity in library use when learners progress from general and further education to higher education.
- *The Culture of Learning, Teaching and Services (COLTS) Campaign* (1966): the objective of this campaign was to re-instil a culture of learning, teaching and services in all schools, and called for all schools to be provided with basic resources. The COLTS campaign was subsumed under the Department of Education's Implementation Plan for Tirisano in 2000.
- *Language in Education Policy* (South Africa. Department of Education 1997b): the document is part of a continuous process whereby policy for language in education is being developed as part of a national language plan to include and provide for all sectors of society. The policy recognises cultural diversity and promotes the development of the official languages, a factor that has implications for school library provisioning and collection building.
- *The National Norms and Standards for School Funding* (South Africa. Department of Education 1998a) sets out the national norms and minimum standards in terms of section 35 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 and Section 3(4)(g)

of the National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996. It deals with procedures to be adopted at provincial level in determining resource allocations to schools. The cost allocation category (1998a: 29), other recurrent and small capital equipment costs, lists the following items to be reported on under the specified category: school books, stationery, equipment, and media collections. These norms and standards were amended in 2006 and are discussed in more detail below under 2.5.4.

- *Call to action: TIRISANO* (South Africa. Department of Education 1999a). This was a Statement of Policy and Commitment by the Minister of Education and the aim of this programme was to mobilise South Africans to build an education and training system for the 21st century. The nine areas for priority attention have three main themes:
 - a functional education and training system endorsing a healthy and prosperous nation,
 - remedying the injustice and assault on human dignity exemplified in the inherited educational deprivation, and
 - the ability of all South Africans to combine resourcefulness and determination in order to create educational opportunity and bring back education to the centre of community life.

The programme included statements of policy and commitment from the Minister of Education which were subsequently integrated in the *TIRISANO Corporate Plan 2000-2004* (South Africa. Department of Education 2000d), the *TIRISANO Implementation Plan 2000-2004* (South Africa. Department of Education 2000e), and the *TIRISANO Strategic Plan 2000 – 2004* (South Africa. Department of Education 2000f). The *Implementation Plan* focussed on five core programmes, one of which was a national literacy programme. The Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service (COLTS) campaign was incorporated in the implementation plan. The COLTS team identified the lack of learning and teaching resources as a challenge in respect of teaching and learning when school visits were conducted in all provinces.

- *Norms and Standards for Educators* (South Africa. Department of Education 2000b). This policy was promulgated in terms of the National Education Policy Act, no, 27 of 1966. The document provides detailed descriptions of educator competencies that will contribute to the implementation of Curriculum 2005: knowledge, skills, and values to make learning more relevant to the economic and social needs of the country. Of the seven roles attributed to successful educators at least the following require or can benefit from school library support: learning mediator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes, scholar, researcher and lifelong learner. The importance of content knowledge, pinpointed a major weakness, and is emphasised in the policy. Resources will be needed for educators to be successful in these roles.
- *Education White Paper 6. Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training system* (South Africa. Department of Education 2001b) describes the intent of the Department of Education to implement inclusive education at all levels in the system by 2020. Such an inclusive system will facilitate the inclusion of vulnerable learners and reduce the barriers to learning, via targeted support structures and mechanisms, which will improve the retention of learners in the education system, particularly those learners who are prone to dropping out. These requirements obviously have implications for school library provisioning.
- *The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation* (South Africa. Department of Education 2001d): focuses on the school as a whole and introduces an effective monitoring and evaluation process to improve the quality and standard of performance in schools, the place in which the quality of education is ultimately determined.
- *National Report on Systemic Evaluation* (South Africa. Department of Education 2003b): both the report on mainstream education as well as on inclusive education reveals unacceptably low findings in respect of literacy, reading and writing skills and listening comprehension tasks. The mean scores for all provinces were below 50% for the reading tasks and below 35% for the writing tasks. The major findings also indicate that there is a strong correlation between learner scores and the quality of the facilities available at schools. The same was true of learning and

teaching materials: learners in schools that had more learner and teacher support material (LTSM) obtained higher scores. Further systemic assessments were conducted in 2007 on representative samples of schools and learners at grade 3 and grade 6 levels to monitor achievement in literacy and numeracy. The findings from the grade 3 national assessment will be available in 2008 to guide policy and inform interventions in learning programmes, and in 2009 the grade 6 SACMEQ⁴ international assessment findings will be available to guide policy and benchmark learner achievement (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2008a).

- *White Paper on e-Learning: Transforming learning and teaching through information and communication technologies* (South Africa. Department of Education 2004): the document states that e-education is the ability to "apply ICT skills to access, analyse, evaluate, integrate, present and communicate information" (South Africa 2004: 14). These are information literacy skills acquired by participating in an integrated library programme where the necessary software will be available to assist learners to acquire research skills. Yet the document offers no support for schools libraries and states that "school libraries are currently unable to support resource-based learning in outcomes-based education" and promotes "the building up of ICT resources within school and public libraries to... provide access to digital libraries" (South Africa 2004: 28).
- *Draft National Literacy Strategy* (South Africa. Department of Education 2006a). This strategy links the scarcity of school and community libraries to low literacy levels. However, to address the problem the solution offered is a specialist reading teacher in each school whereas school libraries with a teacher-librarian would in fact be well placed to support and coordinate reading and reading programmes in the school (Hart and Zinn 2007: 101).
- *National Reading Strategy* (South Africa. Department of Education 2008). The document is the response of the Minister and Department of Education to promote reading in schools and to improve the reading level and competence of all learners. The strategy refers, amongst other things, to the lack of school

⁴ Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ): a collaborative network of 15 Ministries of Education launched in 1995. SACMEQ conducts educational policy research that can be used by decision-makers (SACMEQ 2007).

libraries and outlines current national campaigns that provide reading material to schools. A joint Library Strategy between the Departments of Arts and Culture and Education to provide classroom libraries, mobile library services to clusters of schools, block loans from libraries, and partnerships with provincial libraries are some of the interim measures the Department envisages until fully stocked school libraries can be provided (South Africa. Department of Education 2008: 18).

Added to the above are other initiatives and directives not enshrined in legislation, but also relevant, for example the Batho Pele⁵ principles (South Africa. Department Public Service and Administration [2000-]) underpinning service delivery, and the national Masifunde Sonke Reading Campaign. This reading campaign was initiated when the Minister of Education called for 2001 to be a focus year on reading. A key strand of the campaign was to get people reading and to build a nation of readers (South Africa. Department of Education 2001c). Some of the campaign's strategic objectives were to engage all involved in the book and reading chain as well as the corporate sector and civil society, to mobilise investment into a reading programme and to increase the availability and accessibility of local writing in all the official languages.

The Masifundisane Adult Literacy Campaign aims to eradicate illiteracy in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) by 2009 (Ndebele 2006). There are 1.2 million functionally illiterate people in the province of which 26%-46% reside in the rural areas and 8%-12% in the cities. The campaign is a cooperation project between the Office of the Premier and the Provincial Department of Education. The KZN Department of Education too has implemented a reading hour in all schools and announced the adoption of a "Drop All and Read Programme" in the province for 2008 (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2008a). The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism (DACT) and Department of Education have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (Nzimande 2008) to promote cooperation between public library and

school library services in the province. This initiative will provide library resources to schools near public libraries in rural areas, and will promote reading and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) programmes.

A partnership between the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Media in Education Trust (MiET) and the Royal Netherlands Embassy has resulted in the development of a business plan on Education Centres Supporting Rural Development (ECSR) (MiET 2005, 2007). This cooperation project has thus far established 90 fully operational strategically placed Education Centres that provide education resources to schools clustered around the centre. The 139 centres envisaged include 12 district centres and 127 school-based centres. Centre managers have been appointed in 45 centres, as well as 7 ICT specialists. ELITS takes responsibility for the establishment of libraries at the centres, training of library staff, and the rollout of a mobile library service from the district centres to schools in the cluster - during 2008 9 mobile libraries will become operational. Not all Education Centre libraries have been adequately staffed yet but 9 library assistants and 8 drivers have been appointed (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2008a). It is anticipated that this project will assist ELITS to bring resources closer to rural schools and teachers, since the district centre will serve as a depot for the mobile library. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has offered its Advanced Certificate in Education (School Library Development and Management) at various centres to accommodate rural teachers who enrol.

The second information policy hierarchy level is the horizontal level that has application and impact across the whole information sector.

⁵ Batho Pele is an initiative to ensure that public servants are service orientated, strive for excellence in service delivery and commit to continuous service delivery improvement (South Africa. Department Public Service and Administration [200-]).

2.2.2 Horizontal information policies and legislation specifically concerned with the LIS sector

Several Acts, specifically concerned with Library and Information Services in general although not necessarily for the school library sector have implications for and impact on the current Library and Information Services structure. These are:

- *The Legal Deposit Act No 54 of 1977* (South Africa 1977) which provides for the preservation of the national documentary heritage through legal deposit of published documents, provide for access to government information, and provide for a Legal Deposit Committee. The Act extends legal deposits to all media and extends the places of legal deposits.
- *The Copyright Act No. 98 of 1978* (South Africa 1978) which has major implications for Library and Information Services. The impact of digital media and the international dimension adds to the complexity
- *The National Library of South Africa Act (92, 1998)* provides for the establishment of the National Library of South Africa and for collecting, preserving, making available and promoting awareness of the national documentary heritage. This Act (South Africa 1998a) enforced the amalgamation of the South African Library in Cape Town and the former State Library in Pretoria into the National Library of South Africa
- *SA Library for the Blind Act No. 91 of 1998* (South Africa 1998b) – the South African Library for the Blind was established in terms of this Act to provide Library and Information Services to the blind and print-handicapped
- *The National Council for Library and Information Services Act No. 6 of 2001* (South Africa 2001) – the National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS) was established and inaugurated in 2004 to coordinate LIS in South Africa and to advise the Ministers of Education and Arts and Culture on LIS matters. The objective of The National Council for Library and Information Services Act was to establish a National Council for Libraries and Information Services (NCLIS) to advise the Ministers of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and of Education on all matters relating to Library and Information Services in order to "support and stimulate the socio-economic, educational, cultural, recreational... technological

and information development of all communities..., and provide optimal access to relevant information to every person in an economic and cost-efficient manner” (South Africa 2001: 2). It states that the council should advise the Ministers on a broad spectrum of library related matters regarding the development and coordination of services, promotion of cooperation among LIS, legislation, policies, principles and criteria, effectiveness of training, promotion of basic and functional literacy, and information literacy, and any other matter relating to Library and Information Services (South Africa 2001: 3-4). The Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology appoints the chairperson of the council (with the concurrence of the Minister of Education) as well as the members (after consultation with the Minister of Education), and presents the Council's annual report to Parliament. This dual responsibility creates uncertainty as to the responsibilities of each of the ministries.

Although the National Council for Library and Information Services is tasked with several relevant functions, its progress is hampered by many issues. The NCLIS established working committees according to the stipulations of the Act but the Council "started off on a disadvantageous footing" since its structure has no executive unit implementing the Council's decisions or physical facilities where NCLIS' work is carried out, and progress and success are further hampered by a limited budget (Ralebipi-Simela 2007: 172). The Council has recommended that the Minister change the status of the Council to that of an executive body to allow for the implementation of decisions in line with other national councils and the matter is currently under review by the DAC. The Council needed to clarify the roles of the council members during its first term, and to compound issues there are now three ministries represented on the Council due to the separation of Departments, namely the Departments of Education, Arts and Culture, and Science and Technology – all three of which need to participate equally in the Council's work (Ralebipi-Simela 2007: 174-175). Ralebipi-Simela outlines the strategic imperatives that the Council, and incoming Councils, still need to resolve, namely:

- The need for an implementation unit for NCLIS.

- The finalisation of a transformation charter for LIS.
 - Legislative deficiencies in LIS.
 - LIS funding.
 - Education, training and skills development.
 - Greater focus on school libraries.
 - Continually raising government and public awareness of LIS matters (2007: 176).
- *The Promotion of Access to Information Act No. 2 of 2002* (South Africa 2002) was enacted to give effect to the constitutional right of access to any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights, as well as to provide for matters connected therewith.

The third hierarchical policy level represents policies and legislation affecting specific information sectors for example the school library sector.

2.2.3 Vertical information policies and legislation affecting school libraries

Although there are policies and legislation at other levels of government such as provincial Library and Information Services ordinances, there are few official policies and no legislation specifically for school libraries (Lor 2002). South Africa moreover has no legislation governing libraries and the LIS sector in general. While there are some sectoral sources of policy such as legislation on science councils and universities, there is a vacuum as far as school libraries and special libraries are concerned. There are many library authorities at local, provincial and national level, but no one overarching body that formulates policy for libraries and Library and Information Services generally.

Lor (2002) questions the power of a paper constitution and maintains that broad acceptance and support are needed for government to translate principles and ideology into practical implementation. Librarians play a crucial role in the free flow of information in a knowledge society, and Library and Information Services are

unquestionably relevant as far as national development is concerned. However, he comments that:

- the national policy framework is fragmented, with too many authorities involved: local authorities, provincial government, national government, and statutory and private sector bodies,
- there is no single national ministry responsible for the library sector and the roles of the Department of Education and the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology need to be defined to minimise constitutional limitations,
- there is no national library or information policy,
- the role of the National Council of Library and Information Services needs to be spelt out, and there is possibly still a lack of solidarity in the Library and Information Services sector.

Van Audenhove (2003: 2) analyses the notion of the information society in South Africa firstly as political discourse and secondly by examining the broad evolution of South Africa's information society policy. He points out that, as South Africa has never formulated a formal Information Society policy, an 'unofficial policy' has grown out of initiatives from different departments' initiatives:

In this process one can observe a growing extension and complexity in:

- the content of the discussions
- the number of initiatives
- the number of actors and stakeholders involved
- the interrelations of processes
- the societal level at which the policy tries to have an impact (2003: 23).

Lor and Van As (2002: 101, 113), citing earlier documentation by Van Audenhove (1999), observe that South Africa has developed a complicated 'unofficial' policy (deduced from official statements and documentation) on the possibilities of ICTs for social change, yet the important role of libraries in development initiatives have been overlooked by policy-makers.

Clearly South Africa faces challenges of equity and redress in the post-apartheid and reconstruction era, but the important role of the Library and Information Services

sector as far as development, education and nation building are concerned, should be recognised and given due prominence and support. Furthermore, the hierarchical levels outlined above confirm the observation that "power, influence and decision-making in relation to information policy are inevitably scattered across different parts of government" (Rowlands 1996: 16).

2.3 National initiatives to develop school library policy

Several documents have been developed by the school library sector, and although none of the national initiatives have yet been officially recognised, these documents helped to create awareness for school library policy and encouraged provincial school library policy development. As far back as 1991 Vermeulen concluded that internationally it had been found that uneven provision and the quality of education could often be blamed on the absence of official policy statements. The school library sector sought to rectify the situation by initiating the development of the relevant policy documents.

The policy-building process started in 1995 with the School Learners and Libraries Conference convened by the Education Policy Unit in KwaZulu-Natal. Alternative models were explored at the conference since it was assumed that the curriculum reform would require access to learning resources for all schools, and that the resource backlogs in schools did not allow for a library in each school.

In 1996, the unit responsible for school library policy at national level initiated a policy building process for school libraries and two documents were developed which laid out a national policy framework for school library standards. The *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards: a discussion document* (South Africa. Department of Education 1997c) represented a first attempt to formulate school library policy. The discussion document was developed by the Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education in the Department of Education, and was circulated to, and workshopped in provinces during 1997 to ensure maximum participation from practitioners in the policy initiative. At the time provincial heads

of school library services and national education managers were represented on the Standing Committee of Heads of Education Library and Information Services (SCHELIS). The discussion document (South Africa. Department of Education 1997c) addressed the importance of school libraries as an integral part of the outcomes based curriculum in South African schools. It identified the school library as a teaching and learning method for which there were various models for development rather than as a mere physical space or room where library resources are organised and stored: "...it is no longer tenable to claim that there is a 'model school library' and a 'right way' of providing teachers and learners with a school library " (South Africa. Department of Education 1997c: 14).

The second document, *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1998b) was based on the 1997 discussion document (South Africa. Department of Education 1997c). The 1998 policy framework document (South Africa. Department of Education 1998b: 2) proposed a range of seven different models for developing school libraries, using either an incremental or phased-in (transitional) approach to school library development, thus acknowledging the inequity of library provisioning in schools. Schools were allowed the freedom to choose a model suitable for their own particular circumstances, and generic qualitative standards applying to all models were formulated. This policy framework (South Africa. Department of Education 1998b: 36) clearly stated that the implementation of standards for school libraries is a provincial matter, and that provincial departments should "develop a written school library policy which clearly identifies the school library model(s), and establishes guidelines and appropriate support services at regional or district level". This meant that the onus of improving school library provision in KwaZulu-Natal rests with the provincial Education Department, and a departmentally approved provincial school library policy is an important step towards achieving equity in the provisioning of library resources to schools in the province.

In January 2000 a draft document, *A Four year Implementation Plan of the Policy Framework for School Library Standards*, was developed by SCHELIS (South Africa. Department of Education 2000a). The plan charted the strategic direction and outlined activities to implement the proposed policy. The implementation plan identified six key strategies, goals and action plans over a four-year timeframe. The estimated cost of implementation was R34.2 billion.

Another document that was produced during the period when the school library policy initiatives began was the *National Guidelines for Co-operation between Community and School Libraries: sixth draft. November 2000 (UNESCO 2000)*. The initiative was commissioned by UNESCO and the document outlined general guidelines aimed at the implementation of co-operative agreements between school libraries and public libraries. When the UNESCO component relocated to Botswana the task group dissolved and the implementation plan was not finalised. However, the document provides useful guidelines that can be implemented between agreeing partners.

Due to re-structuring in the National Department of Education during 2001, the 1998 draft of *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* was again reworked and two subsequent unpublished drafts were circulated to provinces, the first being the *South African School Library Policy* (South Africa. Department of Education 2001e). This 2001 draft was forwarded to provinces in August 2001 for comment only. There was no engagement with provincial structures for school libraries on the development of this draft. However, the document empowered provinces to develop provincial school library policy. The draft document attempted to shorten the original 1997 discussion document as a first draft for a national policy on school libraries in South Africa, but the summarised document had lost most of the impact of the original document. Whilst it retained some of the thinking of the 1997 discussion document, it proposed the retention of only one model for setting up libraries in South African schools, namely the one school-one library model, and included a proposed implementation plan with costing. Le Roux (2002: 119) refers to

this document as "vague, unrealistic and poorly-researched" and observes that it appears to revert back to the notion of the school library as "a place and not as a teaching method being a catalyst for educational change". The second document, Policy on Library Services in South African Schools (South Africa. Department of Education 2002a), was issued as a revision of the 2001 draft. An invitation for comment was again extended to provincial school library structures. It likewise proposed that the one school-one library model should be adopted on the grounds of cost. The document listed eight models, and suggested that only three of these models would be suitable for implementation together with a centralised model: classroom libraries, virtual libraries, and a library for special needs (a new model that had not previously been introduced). However, it was observed that this combination of models would be too costly to the state and that equitable provisioning would only be possible if the same standards applied to all schools, namely a central library for each school. The comment does not ring true since a classroom collection would actually be more cost effective in small schools with only a few classrooms.

Karlsson (2003: 6) observes that, with the restructuring of the National Department of Education at this stage, school libraries, though impacting on all school phases, were initially retained under the Further Education and Training (FET) Branch, which deals with grades 10-12, rather than the General Education and Training (GET) Branch for grades R-9 where the bulk of school learners are enrolled. At the time it was argued that this would provide continuity. She believes that the Working Group's tentative formulation of norms and standards in the policy framework indicated their inexperience in government processes and their naivety about the politics of policy formulation, and led to the diminished status of the document. Further, the start-up of the Library Practice for Young Learners (LPYL) Project ⁶ in 1997, though intended to pilot aspects of the Policy Framework, might also have diverted the attention and energies of the national Department's officers dealing with school library matters at a lower level as well as lobbyists within the sector.

⁶ The LPYL was a Sweden-South African project to enhance the practice of school librarians in South Africa's nine provinces, especially in disadvantaged schools with few resources and inadequate infrastructure (Library Practice for Young Learners [199-]).

Nevertheless, in 2003 yet another document was produced, A Draft National School Library Policy Framework (South Africa. Department of Education 2003a). The draft proposed two library models: one school-one library and one cluster- one school library. Maseko (2004), at the time Project Manager: Children and Youth Literacy development in the GET branch, was driving the school library policy project and maintained that the original draft policy document was drawn up without it ever being discussed at senior management level with the result that there was no consensus about the document at the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM). Hence the policy document had repeatedly been referred back for further reviewing, leading to the 2001 and 2002 drafts. However, minutes of HEDCOM meetings obtained later indicate that the original draft was tabled, presented, discussed and approved on 12 August 1997 (Maseko 2006). Maseko (2006) believed that at the time the perception was that the document was imposing responsibility on schools to establish libraries whereas it should only have provided guidelines to provinces, which would have enabled them to develop their own policies according to specific provincial needs.

In 2006 a revision of the 2005 document, National School Library Policy (South Africa. Department of Education 2006c), was subsequently finalised by the heads of school library services in all provinces. This last draft proposes one model, namely the centralised school library, but acknowledges that models such as the following should be seen as part of a flexible, incremental approach:

- Classroom collections → Centralised library
- Classroom collections → Mobile library → Centralised library
- Classroom collections → Cluster library → Centralised library
- School community library → Centralised library

The policy initiative now resides, at national level, within the Children and Youth Literacy Directorate in the Chief Directorate GET: Curriculum and Assessment, Branch GET. The 2006 draft was, according to Maseko (2007) referred back once again since the ministry required updated statistics regarding the state of school library

services in all provinces. However, the contents of public school libraries was an agenda item on the Committee of Education Ministers' meeting on 6 August 2007 which possibly indicated that the process was still "alive" (South Africa. Department of Education 2007a).

In the foreword to the Department of Education's *Strategic Plan 2007 - 2011* the Minister states

... more schools will be provided with libraries and science laboratories to improve on reading, writing and numeracy skills from Grade R to Grade 12, especially in townships and rural areas. These resources will extend the joy of books to the majority of South Africans and will expand access to information in schools (South Africa. Department of Education 2007b: 4).

The Strategic Plan for the GET Branch lists the following strategic objective for 2007 – 2011:

To ensure effective implementation of the curriculum:

2007: All grade 8 and 9 classes have necessary LTSM for curriculum implementation.

2008: 60% of the poorest schools have access to necessary reference materials for curriculum implementation.

2009: 50% of all schools have access to library services and receive ongoing support from curriculum advisors.

2010: 60% of all schools have access to library services and receive ongoing support from curriculum advisors.

2011: All GET schools adequately resourced and supported for the effective implementation of the NCIS (South Africa. Department of Education 2007b: 40).

How this will be implemented, and whether this objective will be achieved with or without the support of national guidelines or policy regarding school libraries, remains to be seen. The fact that the school library portfolio now rests with the Directorate Children and Youth Literacy at national level seems to negate the importance of school libraries since reading and literacy programmes should be the responsibility of a school library directorate and not the other way round. The National Department of Education has been driving reading programmes such as the 100 Story Books Campaign and USAID's Books for Africa, and these programmes were rolled out at provincial level without any involvement of provincial school library services. The implications of this lack of coordination of programmes are that

schools benefiting from the projects receive no provincial support and training and the sustainability of the projects are minimised. Jansen (2001: 275) refers to the "lack of integration" where each [national] "policy process has its own agenda, actors and focus".

Hart and Zinn (2007: 99) observe that "the lack of urgency in the framing of school library policy ... points to a gap between librarians' thinking and that of educationalists". They quote Karlsson (1996b: 101-102) who speculated that it could be due to the conservative image of librarians or the fact that librarians stress the library as a collection rather than a learning tool.

Hart and Zinn (2007: 89) refer to the "conundrum of school libraries in South Africa" and call the lack of progress "puzzling". They offer some proposals for the way forward:

- The reopening of a school library unit at national level, lead by expert school librarians who can spearhead demands for dedicated funding, a national policy and the introduction of specialist posts for school librarians and an information literacy curriculum.
- National commitment to a school library policy that will bridge the barriers between the school library and e-learning sectors.
- A variety of innovative models of service.
- Strengthening the capacity of provincial support services (2007: 102).

The authors infer that the underlying problem may be the deeply held belief about libraries, where even school librarians are only half convinced of their importance and add: "perhaps the South African library profession has to identify more precisely what it contributes to education in South Africa and undertake focused, even if small scale, research to provide evidence" (2007: 103).

It is obvious that the policy making process has not yet moved beyond the conception stage, and the lack of support at national level has hindered progress. Le Roux (2002: 121) argues that:

... there appears to be an inability on the part of the school library profession to enter into a fruitful partnership with educators, other stakeholders and government aimed at joint development of school library policy guidelines which are based on the realities of current school service delivery on the ground and available provincial and local resources... [and] the LIS profession should make a combined effort to lobby stakeholders groups and government on this issue, while reconciling divergent interests and goals.

Nonetheless there remains strong agreement in the school library sector that, without national guidelines, provinces are not likely to develop provincial policy documents. Research has also shown that school library provision that is not supported by national policy, becomes vulnerable to financial cuts and local education policies (Knuth 1995: 292). Despite these arguments, the directorate responsible for school library services in KwaZulu-Natal has developed school library policy according to the provisions of the 1998 *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1998b).

The next section outlines the school library policy process in KwaZulu-Natal.

2.4 KwaZulu-Natal and School Library Policy

2.4.1 The Education Library, Information and Technology Services (ELITS) Directorate

In 2002 the Directorate Education Library, Information and Technology Services (ELITS), KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC), argued that it would no longer be possible to plan and deliver appropriate services in a vacuum, and initiated a process to develop a provincial school library policy based on the national policy draft initiatives. The document was the first official school library policy initiative in the province, apart from a document providing for the KZNDEC to develop school library media services supporting formal and informal education that was drawn up by a task team after the amalgamation of the education departments in 1996.

The ELITS Directorate contended that, apart from the mandate it had as a province to develop provincial policy, the *Master Strategic Plan 2003-2006* of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture supported and guided the initiative (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education and Culture 2003a) The 2003–2006 *Master Strategic Plan* provided for a number of strategic goals to be achieved by all sectors of the Department over a three-year period, and these goals still form part of the Department's *Strategic Plan 2007-2010* (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007e):

- Goal 1: "To provide high quality, relevant education to all its learners, regardless of age which will equip them with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to meet the challenges of the 21st Century" (2003a: 8, 2007e: 8).
- Goal 5: "To provide and utilise resources to achieve redress and equity and to eliminate conditions of physical degradation in institutions" (2003a: 9, 2007e: 8).

The KZN *School Library Policy* (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education and Culture 2003b) promotes among other things a whole-school information literacy policy, and its vision takes into account that such a policy at school level will inform, and be informed, by all other aspects of policy and planning. The policy document "acknowledges the shared responsibility of the teacher, and the truth that information literacy requires a close partnership between the teacher and the school librarian and the teacher" (De Jager, Nassimbeni and Underwood 2007: 143). The implementation strategy envisaged a rollout of a starter collection to 1000 schools per annum, starting in 2005. However, the annual allocation for the project has not increased and to date (2008) only 2 794 schools have been resourced instead of the anticipated 4 000, a shortfall of 1 206 schools (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d).

An overview of the ELITS Directorate and the service delivery environment in the province provides the context in which the policy is implemented.

2.4.2 Provincial Education profile of the ELITS Directorate

The ELITS Directorate presently falls under the Branch Education Service Delivery and Support Services (ESDSS) at Head Office, and is responsible for the planning and development of school library services in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The ELITS advisory service staff in the districts report to the Chief Education Specialist: ESDSS, who supervises service delivery in all sub-directorates in this directorate at district level. This means that ELITS has no direct line function with the district ELITS staff, and this often creates tension and disjuncture since the ELITS Directorate at Head Office develops policy to guide intervention yet the subject advisors implementing these policies report to a district supervisor, and the directorate at head office can only guide and monitor implementation. Moreover, the department is presently in the process of realigning the current structure.

The purpose statements of the ELITS Directorate are as follows:

- **Vision statement:** All learners in KwaZulu-Natal are information literate and have lifelong learning skills enabling them to live as responsible and informed citizens.
- **Mission Statement:** To foster the sustained development of school libraries and to create a culture of learning and reading in schools by:
 - providing all educators and learners in KwaZulu-Natal with quality resources,
 - developing the skills to manage or utilise these resources,
 - providing a professional support service for teacher-librarians and educators
 - redressing past inequalities,⁷
 - achieving equitable provisioning of resources (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture 2003b: 2).

In order to achieve its vision the directorate developed the *School Library Policy* in 2003, and this policy has since been elaborated on with the development and provincial adoption of ELITS' *Reading Policy Guidelines* (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2005), *ICT Guidelines* (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education

⁷ This reference points to the inequality in education and resource provisioning prior to 1994 as explained in the definitions section in chapter 1.

2007a) and a Reading Promotion Handbook (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2008b) offering reading strategies to support the implementation of a compulsory reading hour in schools in KwaZulu-Natal (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007b). A provincial Standing Reading Committee has been established and workshops on creative writing and storytelling, the use of newspapers in education, and book clubs in schools were held for schools. ELITS secured newspapers and magazines for 100 schools in each district to promote reading in the schools (MacGarry 2008). In 2003 the directorate introduced the School Library Excellence Awards (SLEA), an annual award programme to promote excellence in school libraries and encourage schools with good libraries by acknowledging them as models of good practice. Since 2003, 40 schools have received an award (Mbongwe 2008).

The ELITS Directorate has established four processing centres in the province where school library resources are processed for schools. In this way these centres provide support to schools without teacher-librarians or with part-time teacher-librarians who can then concentrate on the educational role of the school library. Material purchased for the School Library Development Project is processed at the centres before delivery to schools takes place.

The directorate has implemented a mobile library service that supports schools in the clusters around the district Education Centres. This initiative is a collaboration project between KwaZulu-Natal and Japanese donors, initially Together with Africa and Asia Association and since 2006, the South African Primary Education Support Initiative (SAPESI). A second initiative resulted in the development of an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) School Library Development and Management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2004 when ELITS secured bursaries for practicing teachers. Thus far 826 teachers have been awarded bursaries and have registered for the course that was offered at the university and at selected Education Centres to ensure access to rural teachers wishing to enrol (Hoskins 2006; MacGarry 2008).

The collaboration project between the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism and the Department of Education, referred to in 2.2.1, will commence in 2008. The Public Library Service will use the ELITS list of material purchased for the annual SLDP schools to procure additional resources suitable for schools. This material will be placed in jointly agreed upon public libraries, mostly in rural areas, where ELITS advisors will assist schools in the cluster through block loans and training. The libraries identified for the project will have computers with internet access and will employ Cyber Cadets to assist users and learners. The libraries will have a functions room that can support any form of literacy education. The DACT is in the process of developing a literacy strategy for their department and they envisage cooperation with the provincial Department of Education and with ELITS as essential components for the success of the project (Nzimande 2008).

However, no policy or intervention can be viewed or implemented in a vacuum and the service delivery environment plays an important role in determining restructuring priorities and the challenges to policy implementation.

2.5 Service delivery environment

Prior to 2006 the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education operated from four administrative regions. The organisational structure of the department could, at the time, be divided into six levels: Head Office, Regional Office, District Office, Circuit, Ward, and schools. Service delivery was hampered by the proliferation of structures, inherent hierarchy and geographical spread of the province, and a structural re-organisation was undertaken and implemented in 2006. The KZN Department of Education (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007e: 15) presently operates from twelve education districts (three clusters of four districts) in an effort to bring education closer to where implementation takes place, and to reduce management and administration tiers that delayed response rates on services rendered. Regional offices were abolished and service centres created that offer support service functions such as human resources and financial management to a cluster of districts, thereby enabling districts to focus on the provisioning of educational support to schools.

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education is the biggest provincial department with 22.3% of all learners in the country's public ordinary schools being in KwaZulu-Natal. The province has 2 819 115 learners, 75 464 teachers, 6 351 public and independent schools, and 9 Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges with 70 satellites (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007e: 14).

2.5.1 Demographic overview of KwaZulu-Natal

The demographic and socio-economic environments in KwaZulu-Natal present major challenges for the provision of education in the province. This is the backdrop against which education must take place.

The highest population density per magisterial district in the country is found in Umlazi, adjacent to the eThekweni Metro. Social dependency is closely linked to poverty since it measures the number of dependents for each member of the economically active age group, and these areas need support structures such as schools. The highest social dependency ratios in the country are in the Northern Province (58% dependent: 42% economically active), Eastern Cape (55%:45%), and KwaZulu-Natal (49%:51%). Poverty and education are inextricably linked and KwaZulu-Natal, which has the fourth highest rate of poverty in the country, has the largest number (5.3 million) of poor people with the highest rate countywide being in Polela near Pietermaritzburg (93.1%). The index of socio-economic deprivation lists Msinga as the magisterial district with the worst index score – it has a dependency ratio of greater than 40, an average of 2.4 years of education and only 1.4% of households are electrified (Bot, Wilson and Dove 2000).

2.5.2 The demand for education

Schooling is compulsory for all children aged 7 – 15 years as noted. In KwaZulu-Natal a high proportion of the population, 28%, is aged between 7 and 18 years. Inanda district, which is 81% urban, has the highest number of school going children in the country, namely 187 418. "In-migration" of residents into this area puts schooling facilities under stress. The province also has the highest number of 0-6 year olds,

which indicates current demand for early childhood development, and future demand for primary schooling (Bot, Wilson and Dove 2000).

In 2005, 97.7% of learners aged 7 – 15 years were attending some educational institution. There are geographical pockets where access still remains problematic, and countrywide 28% of those learners not attending school cite "no money for fees" as a reason. It is anticipated that the introduction of the no-fee schools' policy will have a direct impact on these learners (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007e: 14). The policy, which declares the poorest 40% of schools nationally as no-fee schools, is intended to benefit the poorest learners who, despite the fee exemption of the Norms and Standards Funding for School Funding, still experience problems having access to education. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007e: 17) was the first provincial department that voluntarily introduced the policy in 2006 (a year earlier than required) due to the extent of poverty and deprivation in particularly the rural areas. A large number of learners in these areas live in socio-economic need and are dependent on a small number of employed adults and older people on social grants, and where the incidence of child headed households is increasing. In 2007/2008 the number of no-fee schools in KZN will increase to 3 342, which means that the department will provide free education to 42.95% of learners in the province (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007e: 18). The policy is, however, geographically defined, and poor children who want to attend schools in wealthier areas will still have to negotiate the school fee exemption system and will also continue to pay high transport costs (Proudlock and Mahery 2006: 14). The policy is presently restricted to grades R – 9, thus leaving out learners 15 years and older. The fact that social grants cease when a child is 14 years and the School Nutrition Programme⁸ does not include high schools are factors that still contribute to the drop-out rate.

⁸ The National School Nutrition Programme improves education access specifically to the poor through a programme whereby the KZNDOE presently provides lunches to learners at 3760 primary schools (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2008a: 7).

2.5.3 Provision of education

The learner to educator ratio in KZN is 32.8 in public schools (including School Governing Body paid teachers) and 35.1 (excluding School Governing Body paid teachers) (South Africa. Department of Education 2006b: 4). The educator to classroom ratio is high in many KZN schools and there is a backlog in construction of classrooms. There were 1200 school buildings that were either unsuitable for education or that needed structural attention in 2000 (Bot, Wilson and Dove 2000: 53). Many schools have inadequate provision of water and toilets or use water sources and sanitation that are unhygienic. The availability of telephones and electricity has an impact on the quality of education, and 54% of schools in KZN are without electricity and telephones. KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the highest number of schools without libraries and specialised classrooms namely 4 058 schools or 77% (Bot, Wilson and Dove 2000: 59). Educator qualifications need to be upgraded since 20 076 educators in KZN (approximately 30%) are still under-qualified (Bot, Wilson and Dove 2000: 65). Since 2000 the KZN Department of Education has identified and enrolled 3 257 unqualified and under-qualified teachers for a National Professional Diploma in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education 2008a: 12). In her 2008/2009 budget speech the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education (KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education 2008a: 4) points out that the infrastructural backlog had actually been underestimated. She quotes data from the National Education Information Management System (NEIMS) which replaced the School Register of Needs indicating that there are still 1350 wood, brick and metal school structures that will require R2.4b to replace. Moreover an additional R25b is required to eradicate a backlog of 12 500 classrooms, 12 300 multipurpose rooms, 3 500 media centres, 3 700 computer rooms, and administrative facilities and toilets.

The majority of the KZN population lives in rural areas which lack services such as running water, sanitation, infrastructure, electricity, and transport. These are all factors that negatively influence staff retention in schools. In 2000 the cost of eliminating backlogs in education in KZN was estimated at R2.3 billion – and the

figure did not include maintenance of existing infrastructure or building of schools in new areas (Bot, Wilson and Dove 2000). In fact if the observations from the 2008 budget speech referred to above are taken into account this amount was very conservative (KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education 2008a: 4).

2.5.4 School funding in KwaZulu-Natal

Provinces are legally obliged to implement the National Norms and Standards for School Funding that sets out national norms and standards in terms of the South African Schools Act (1996). These norms and standards for school funding were reviewed and amended in 2006 (Heard 2006) due to pressures regarding low allocations, inequities, the need for clearer specifications regarding usage, and better addressing the needs of poor households as mentioned in chapter 1.

The Resource Targeting List (RTL) that is used to rank schools according to poverty levels and determine allocations to be paid focuses on the following principles as guidelines:

- Pro-poor distribution.
- The aim to make quality schooling possible without charging school fees.
- Eliminating inequalities in funding across provinces.
- Beneficiaries of the allocation are not to be the source of the data.

Previously the indicators used were based on two categories, namely school and community and took into account level of education, per capita income, dependency ratio, school road access, learner to classroom ratio, the condition of the building, and power and water supply at the school. The amended RTL uses community based indicators only: per capita income, dependency ratio, and functional literacy. The source of data previously used included the EMIS snap survey, the EMIS annual physical infrastructure, the School Register of Needs, and the 1991 and later the 1996 census, while the amended RTL is based on the 2001 census, and beneficiaries of the allocation are not to be the source of the data. The grouping used is now quintiles instead of the previous deciles that were used by the KZN Department of Education

(Heard 2006). The proportion of learners was previously province specific with the target being 10% of learners in each decile grouping. The quintiles are now determined according to a national listing: 10% in quintile 1, 22% in quintile 2, 22% in quintile 3, 21% in quintile 4, and 16% in quintile 5. The proportion of resources was previously determined by what the provincial education department could afford and based on the 60:40 principle whereby 60% of the resources were allocated to the poorest 40% of schools. The prescribed national targets now include an adequacy benchmark of R554 per learner and provinces are expected to develop a plan to meet these targets.

Guidelines for expenditure of the norms and standards allocation to schools are linked to Section 21 functions, namely school buildings, property and grounds maintenance and improvements, LTSM and equipment, and services. The full Resource Targeting Lists (RTL) are to be gazetted and made available on the Internet, and the provincial education departments must submit lists and models to the Department of Education (Heard 2006).

Schools have to allocate funds from their norms and standards budget for school library development, or in cases where they were given a core collection, to sustain school library development. Public schools have either section 20 or section 21 status under the South African Schools Act, the main difference being that schools that have section 21 functions allocated to them will receive a lump-sum per learner transfer in accordance with the Resource Targeting List and the expenditure will need to be accounted for, and schools that do not qualify for the transfer of section 21 functions will be informed of their allocation in accordance with the Resource Targeting List but the department will administer the funds on behalf of the schools. Section 21 allocation of functions is all about the capacity of the School Governing Body to perform certain functions regarding the handling and accounting of public funds, the meeting of contractual obligations and the ability to make financial decisions that are educationally sound (Heard 2006).

2.6 Summary

This chapter provided a background summary to the study by reviewing policies and legislation affecting Library and Information Services and the school library sector either directly or indirectly. National as well as KwaZulu-Natal initiatives to develop school library policy were outlined, and the service delivery environment in which the ELITS Directorate operate in the province was sketched to contextualise educational challenges. Chapter 3 puts forward the theoretical framework and literature review.

CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework that has informed the study is outlined in this chapter and includes the role of school libraries in a constructivist learning environment, concepts of policy and policy formulation, and the Delphi technique as a method of data collection. The literature review provides a summary of the Library and Information Services landscape in Africa and South Africa, and outlines school library policy development in international, national and local contexts. Elements of policy design and formulation are clarified and an overview given of the use of the Delphi technique in LIS research.

3.1 Theoretical framework

This research grappled with the following theoretical frameworks, namely:

- **Constructivism** to evaluate the role of school libraries within a constructivist education system. Constructivist learning theory is at the core of South Africa's Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement and school libraries are invaluable tools for providing the necessary resources required for constructing meaning as well as for building on previous learning.
- The **traditional policy model** to evaluate policy design, as well as the **social construction** view of policy in order to interpret policy development and implementation. Montviloff (1990: 129) points out that "policy-making is a continuous process which can never be considered as finished" and although the traditional policy model provides a more structured approach which is useful when the different stages and requirements of policy development are evaluated, the social construction view offers explanations for what Ball (1998: 126) refers to as "bricolage" and "... a complex process of influence, text production, dissemination, and ultimately, re-creation in context of practice".

The social construction view acknowledges that policy is constructed and sustained by participants, in other words the policy problem is not a phenomena on its own and independent of the participants. The question to be asked, according to Colebatch (2002: 82), is not only how to address the problem, but how is the

problem perceived, by whom, and how do they muster support for action by highlighting the problem.

Social constructionism analyses, according to Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006: 278) how signs and images create a certain representation of people and objects that underlie our experiences of them. Social constructionist methods are qualitative, interpretative and have to do with meaning. Where interpretive research concentrates on the subjective understanding and experience of individuals or groups, social constructionist research shows "how such understanding and experiences are derived from larger discourses". Interpretative approaches see people as the origins "of their thoughts, feelings and experiences", whereas social constructionism interprets the thoughts, feelings and experiences as "products of a system of meaning existing at social rather than individual level". This means that the most obvious difference between an interpretative approach and social constructionism is ontological, in other words a different assumption about the nature of reality to be understood (2006: 278). Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006: 283) observe, however, that the boundaries between research paradigms are not always clear-cut, and that particularly "interpretative and constructionist approaches frequently transmute into each other".

- **Social constructivism** to understand the epistemological basis for the Delphi technique. Doolittle (1999) cites Bakhtin (1984: 110) who observes that "truth is not to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for the truth, in the process of their dialogic action". This learning theory recognises the individual's contribution to the knowledge construction process and therefore too the role and contribution of each Delphi panel member in this process.

3.1.1 Curriculum change in South Africa

In theory, a curriculum represents a society's beliefs about its requirements of its school-leavers, about knowledge, and about the needs of its learners (Doiron 1999 cited in Hart 2002b: 52). The education system that the South African government inherited in 1994 was fragmented and divided according to race, geography and

ideology, and the curriculum was perceived to reinforce inequality (South Africa. Department of Education 2002b: 4). Subsequent curriculum reform, namely Curriculum 2005 (South Africa. Department of Education 1997a) and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (South Africa. Department of Education 2002b), led to a shift from the traditional aims-and-objectives approach (based on knowledge transmission or transfer) to outcomes-based education where learners are expected to construct their own knowledge (South Africa. Department of Education 2002b: 4). Although the concept of 'outcomes-based' was not new, it was anticipated that the new curriculum focus would change the South African education system drastically (Pretorius 1998: xi).

3.1.2 Constructivism

Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) are firmly rooted in the learning theory of constructivism, clearly stating:

It is about learners constructing their own understanding as they try to make sense of their own environment. It is about understanding and applying, not repeating back; it is about thinking and analysing knowledge, not accumulating and memorising information; it is about active learning and not passive learning (South Africa. Department of Education 1999b: 16).

Constructivist approaches to teaching and learning have emerged from the work of psychologists and teachers such as Dewey (1916), Piaget (1953), Bruner (1966), and Vygotsky (1978). Jonassen (1994: 35) isolates the following eight characteristics of constructivist learning environments that will facilitate knowledge construction:

- Providing multiple representations of reality,
- Representing the natural complexity of the real world,
- Focusing on knowledge construction and not on knowledge reproduction,
- Presenting authentic tasks in a meaningful context rather than an abstract instruction,
- Providing learning environments that are real-world, case-based,
- Cultivating reflective practice,
- Enabling the construction of knowledge that is context and content dependant,
- Utilising social negotiation to supporting collaborative construction of knowledge.

Constructivist teaching is based on the conviction that the most effective learning occurs when learners acquire knowledge through exploration and active learning. Hands-on materials replace textbooks, and learners are encouraged to "think and explain their reasoning instead of memorising and reciting facts". Thus education focuses on and links themes and concepts instead of concentrating on isolated information (McBrien and Brandt 1997). This process brings about knowledge integration instead of compartmentalisation, as well as meaningful learner involvement.

Although curriculum policy documents in South Africa do not state the school library's central role in teaching and learning in the curriculum, Dubazana and Karlsson (2006: 3) argue that the ideas underpinning South Africa's outcomes-based school curriculum present such a convincing case for school libraries that it is "difficult to conceive of and implement the outcomes-based curriculum without seeing that the school library is a necessary depository for learning and teaching support materials and a critical and nodal point for teaching and learning activities in the school".

Dubazana and Karlsson (2006: 2-3) base the premise that outcomes based education can be referred to as a "resource hungry" and consequently a "library-centred" curriculum on the following six philosophical and theoretical foundations inherent in the curriculum:

- The curriculum is embedded in the philosophy of constructivism where learners construct their own knowledge, an approach to learning that presupposes and requires the availability and use of quality teaching and learning resources.
- The critical outcomes stipulate that learners should be able to demonstrate their capability to work with, process and exercise judgement over information. These outcomes are readily achieved where information resources are available and accessible to learners.
- Teachers are required to actively engage with the curriculum by making curriculum decisions and developing learning programmes. The school library is crucial to this

role since it can supply a range of resources to assist teachers with constructing learning activities.

- Learners need to interact with diverse information resources if they are to become lifelong learners who possess the necessary skills, knowledge and strategies to access information and apply this knowledge to future challenges
- The emphasis is on a resource-based education and this requires that teaching and learning takes place within a context where learners and teachers interact with various information resources.
- The curriculum documents clearly advocate a move away from the reliance on prescribed textbooks as learners' primary source of information, and suggest a diversity of material referred to as learning and teaching support material (LTSM). The Curriculum Review Committee (South Africa. Department of Education 2000c: 52) state that "ideally Learning Support Materials (LSMs) have to include textbooks for each learning programme and other print materials like readers, atlases, dictionaries...teaching equipment such as maps, charts, globes, skeletons...". The school library can offer this diversity of resources.

The need for school libraries to underpin and support the new curriculum and to encourage reading seems clear and obvious. School library standards outlined below in 3.1.3 emphasise the important role of school libraries that are integrated in schools' learning programmes. However, as Hart (2005: 32) points out, school libraries "thrive in certain pedagogical climates". Whether such a climate exists in most South African schools is debatable as is the question whether any attention was given to the context of curriculum implementation.

3.1.3 The role of school libraries in education

The importance of school libraries and their crucial role in realising the above objectives have been well documented, both in international research documents (Scholastic 2006, State of Wisconsin 2006) and in policy statements such as the *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto* (2000), the *IASL Policy Statement on School Libraries* (1993), the Australian School Library and Library and Information

Associations' *Learning for the future* (2001), the American Association of School Librarians' Standards for the 21st-Century Learner (2007), and in the research findings discussed under 3.2.1.2.5 below.

3.1.3.1 International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)/United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

The *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto* (IFLA 2000) urges governments, through their ministries responsible for education, to develop strategies, policies and plans that implement the principles of the Manifesto. It states unequivocally that the school library is integral to the educational process:

The school library is essential to every long-term strategy for literacy, education, information provision and economic, social and cultural development. As the responsibility of local, regional and national authorities, it must be supported by specific legislation and policies. School Libraries must have adequate and sustained funding for trained staff, materials, technologies and facilities. They must be free of charge (IFLA 2000).

School libraries are seen as providing “information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in our increasingly information and knowledge-based present day society... [thus] equip[ping] students with lifelong learning skills and develop[ing] their imagination, thereby enabling them to live as responsible citizens” (IFLA 2000). The Manifesto emphasises the benefits of teacher and librarian cooperation: higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problem solving, and information and communication technology skills.

3.1.3.2 International Association of School Librarianship (IASL)

The IASL's *Policy Statement on School Libraries* (1993) quotes principle 7 of the United Nations declaration on the Rights of the Child:

... the child is entitled to receive education which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He⁹ shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his moral sense of social responsibility and to become a useful member of society.

⁹ This citation in the IASL document refers to the 1959 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child where the term 'he' was used to refer to the child.

The IASL views the existence and utilisation of the school library as a fundamental part of this free and compulsory education, since the school library is essential to "the development of the human personality as well as the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and economic progress of the community". The Association emphasises the role of public authorities to establish school libraries, and asserts that a "good school library with a qualified school librarian is a major factor in developing quality education".

3.1.3.3. Australian School Library Association

Learning for the future (Australian School Library Association 2001: 3) underlines the fact that "resource-based learning allows learners to learn from their own confrontation with information resources... Such active learning [enables teachers to] tailor information resources, learning activities, the location of those activities, and expected learning outcomes to the needs and abilities of each child". It also identifies the pivotal role of the school library and teacher-librarians as the key factors in the delivery of curriculum outcomes and attainment of educational goals.

3.1.3.4 American Association of School Librarians

The American Association of School Librarians (2007) distinguishes two kinds of "access" provided by school library programmes, namely **physical** access to the collection, and **intellectual** access. Intellectual access can only be achieved when the teacher-librarian collaborates with teachers in the teaching of learners to enable them to construct their own knowledge through the use of information resources. This document refers to the framework enquiry provides for learning, and points out the responsibility of the learner too, stating that:

Independent learners... must gain not only the skills but also the disposition to use those skills, along with an understanding of their own responsibilities and self-assessment strategies. Combined, these four elements build a learner who can thrive in a complex information environment (2007: 2).

These statements on the integral role of school libraries in the educational process are borne out by research as indicated in the next section.

3.1.3.5 Research findings

Research on the impact of school libraries on student achievement has shown that school library programmes influence learning outcomes and student achievement when the school has a full-time teacher-librarian who collaborates with classroom teachers to teach and integrate literature and information skills into the curriculum, and collaborate on projects that help learners use a variety of resources, conduct research and present their findings – in other words when the library is fully integrated into the learning process (Williams, Coles and Wavell 2002; Lonsdale 2003; Todd, Kulthau and OELMA 2004; Scholastic 2006). Lonsdale's research indicates that collaboration between class teachers and school librarians have a significant impact on learning (2003: 30). Montiel-Overall (2005: 24) argues that collaboration reflects a shifting philosophical view about the importance of working together to improve learning and to create an environment where each learner can achieve academic success. Collaboration fosters the two fundamental ingredients for academic success, namely creativity and innovative thinking. This argument for collaboration was also corroborated by the NEPI LIS report (1992). The Wisconsin Library Study (State of Wisconsin 2006) finds that teacher-librarians help learners "acquire unique skills not taught in the classroom, and information and technology skills essential for students in the 21st century".

Todd (2001: 2) points out that the hallmark of school libraries in the 21st century is actions and evidences that show that [the school library] makes a real difference to student learning, that it contributes in tangible and significant ways to the development of human understanding, meaning making and constructing knowledge.

He calls for a mindset shift to "evidence-based, learning-centred practice" that has at its core, concepts of knowledge construction and human understanding (2002: 3).

School libraries are integral to curriculum reform. New formats of knowledge and educational trends have evolved, requiring a shift from text-bound, teacher-centred and examination-oriented methods, to the acquisition of lifelong learning skills – as is the case with the introduction of Curriculum 2005. However, this shift requires a clear understanding of what a school library is and what it does (Knuth 1995: 291-

292). Research by Knuth, associate professor at the University of Hawaii, although undertaken in 1995, still offers valuable insight on school library policy. She observes that reasonable consensus exists at theoretical level that school libraries are:

- **principled** in that "they can be rationalised as integral to the actualisation of individuals in society". In developing countries this is linked to the development of a reading habit and a literate society which in turn is linked to the implication that "information literacy affects the acquisition of educational goods and life chances",
- **practical** in that they "maximise the ability of teachers to teach and students to learn". Materials are arranged and easily accessible and this facilitates sharing and the cooperative use of resources,
- **professional** in that they support best practice and curriculum reforms. School libraries promote the acquisition of research and enquiry skills and develop independent learners.

However, these theoretical attributes of school libraries will remain just that if learning in the school is not scaffolded and guided through a team approach between teacher-librarian, teacher and principal (Hart 2002b: 56), as suggested by Loertscher's (1999) research.

3.1.3.6 Loertscher's taxonomy and cooperation

Loertscher (1999) developed two taxonomies, which have become benchmarks in the field of school librarianship, as examples of various ways in which classroom teachers and teacher-librarians work together: the library media specialist taxonomy, which identifies various types of involvement between teacher-librarian and teacher, and the teacher's taxonomy of resource-based teaching and learning, which describes teachers' involvement with teacher-librarians. He identifies eight different levels of school library operation - ranging from the library that plays no role in the life of the school (and the teacher who uses self-contained teaching methods) to the library that is crucial to the school's existence. In this most evolved model the teacher and the teacher-librarian consult and contribute to curriculum planning and delivery as well as plan together for curriculum changes and their impact on the school library.

Loertscher argues that the school library only begins to fulfil its role when it is actively collaborating with teachers, teaching information skills, and running dynamic reading programmes. However, his taxonomy assumes that there has to be infrastructure in place - physical access – to develop and foster intellectual access. In the South African situation this does not have to be a central library, but can include the models set out in the KZN *School Library Policy*.

The school library is therefore an essential tool supporting learning and teaching in the school and providing equal opportunities to all learners. However, essential elements in this equation are physical facilities, a team approach and collaboration. In addition, a clear view is needed of the kind of learning required as well as careful planning and structuring of the learning activities. The *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto* adds another dimension which points out that the development of school libraries depends on legislative and policy frameworks. The current study offers a critical analysis of KZN *School Library Policy*, a provincial initiative to provide such a framework for school library development, and in order to analyse the policy document and its suitability for implementation in the province it is necessary to consider what is meant by policy, policy development and the policy process.

3.2 Policy

In order to interpret policy development and implementation both the traditional policy model as well as the social construction view of the policy process will be considered since both these theoretical frameworks have relevance as far as the development of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its suitability for implementation in the province are concerned.

Colebatch (2002) rightly observes that policy means different things to different people, and that the policy process involves not simply the pursuit of shared goals but the more difficult task of constructing a basis for collective action among participants who may have quite diverse views on the nature of the task (2002: 4). Policies are driven by a particular logic or ideology, and shaped by historical, cultural,

institutional and political factors (Levin 2001: 6). This view of policy is particularly true in South Africa where school library policy must be seen within the context of transformation in both the education and Library and Information Services sectors.

For the purpose of this research the following policy related conceptual frameworks will be taken into account:

- The policy cycle (stage) approach which sees policy as a logical succession of steps when the design of the policy document is evaluated.
- The social construction perspective on policy which sees policy as something that has to be constructed and sustained by the participants "in circumstances where they have choices about which interpretative maps to use, which cues to follow" (Colebatch 2002: 4). The suggestions of the Delphi panel will be viewed against this background too.
- Policy can moreover be looked at in terms of its impact on the three phases of school library development affected by it, namely:
 - The intention phase when policy can shape mission and provide a philosophical base
 - The institutional phase where policy can provide the basis for centralised support systems and individual faculties
 - The qualitative phase where existing services are improved, guidelines established and roles defined (Knuth 1995: 291).

These phases can provide a useful framework for evaluating the possible impact of the KZN *School Library Policy* as measured against a first evaluation report of 60 schools in the School Library Development Project (SLDP)¹⁰ (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d)

3.2.1 Policy concepts and the policy cycle

To arrive at a conceptual framework for a critical evaluation of the KZN *School Library Policy* and its suitability for implementation in the province, several policy

¹⁰ The SLDP is the implementation plan of the KZN *School Library Policy* whereby the 6 000 schools in KZN will receive a core collection of library resources during the period 2004/5 to 2010/11 (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture 2003b: 11).

related concepts need to be defined. This study, despite its constructivist approach, draws heavily on the contributions in Cloete and Wissink (2000) which take a normative approach to policy. While the study recognises this normative aspect it is nevertheless broadly constructivist in that it relies heavily on the experiential knowledge of the expert panel. Cloete and Wissink's text was written in and for the South African regional context, and addresses policy issues that are generic to developing countries across the world.

The development of policy analysis and policy management has been embedded in the development of various academic disciplines such as public administration and recently, public and development management (De Coning 2000: 5). Sociology, political science, and economics are also important sources of ideas and methodologies for public policy.

The phases of the policy process typically include initiation, design, analysis, formulation, dialogue and advocacy, implementation and evaluation. However, different approaches to aspects of policy development and policy terminology have developed over time as borne out by an assessment of concepts used in the field of policy and policy management. Definitions in the literature are varied and sometimes confusing given that various authors use terms in different ways and sometimes even interchangeably (De Coning 2000: 4-5).

Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 29) proposed a useful explanation of the concepts used in policy studies and policy analysis:

- **policy studies** is used to indicate an explanatory set of concerns (studies of policy content, process, outputs, and evaluation), and
- **policy analysis** for prescriptive activities in, rather than of, the policy process (information for policy making, process advocacy and policy advocacy).

This means that, as Hogwood and Gunn (1984) argue:

- studies of policy content focus on the descriptive nature of, for example, the origins, intentions and operation of policies,
- studies of policy output try to establish outcomes and indicators of policy outputs,
- studies of policy evaluation seek to determine how well policy outcomes have achieved policy goals,
- information for policy making refers to collection or analysis of data needed to make policy decisions,
- process advocacy intends to change the direction of a policy process,
- policy advocacy uses analysis in the argument for a particular policy,
- studies of the policy process examine how policies are made in terms of the actions taken by various participants at each stage of policy making (Hogwood and Gunn 1984: 27-8).

De Coning cites Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 28-29) and explains that "in general the term policy studies is most often used for descriptive accounts, and policy analysis for prescriptive exercises, with policy sciences as an umbrella term" (2000: 7).

This research can be categorised primarily as a policy study since it examines the policy process, including content and process (policy design, analysis and formulation), and will use the findings to anticipate output and evaluation. It does, however, contain elements of policy analysis since it will analyse the policy content in order to ascertain whether the best available options were selected to ensure that the required policy outcomes are achieved. In other words the policy fit will be analysed taking into account data obtained in the Delphi study as well as secondary data from a small sample of schools that were visited during the initial implementation phase of the policy (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d).

3.2.2 Specific policy-related definitions

The terminology used in the approaches to aspects of policy developments in the field of policy and policy management were clarified above. Researchers caution,

however, that analysis and assessment of definitions in the policy field show that there is no universally accepted definition, theory or model (Dunn 1981, Hogwood and Gunn 1984, De Coning 2000: 11). Definitions of policy and policy analysis were given in 1.4 and provide clarity on concepts used in the research.

Hart (Hart, T. 1995: 24) argues that policy analysis can be seen as a term used to "describe a step-by-step way of unpacking and understanding policy choices, and comparing possible outcomes" before deciding on a course of action". This research will, by means of a Delphi study, retrospectively unpack and evaluate the policy choices that were made in the formulation of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy*. The most important aspect of policy analysis, namely policy design, will be tested against the findings of the Delphi study.

3.2.3 Policy and policy-making theories

De Coning and Cloete (2000: 25-26) maintain that "grand theories of policy-making do not exist" and quote Hanekom (1987: 8) who states that all ... "policies are future orientated, usually aimed at the promotion of the welfare of society rather than a societal group, and take place within the framework of legally instituted bodies such as legislatures or government departments". This evolving process is emphasised by Wildavsky's observation (1979: 16) that "policies are not eternal truths, but rather hypotheses", and are subject to modification where new and improved ones are devised until these are again shown to be unsatisfactory.

Policy and policy-making theories have been closely associated with political paradigms such as liberal laissez-faire, socialism, and welfare statism, in which political values play an important role (De Coning and Cloete 2000: 26). There are various theories explaining the policy process, e.g. classical theory, liberal democratic theory, elite theory and system theory. Policy-making in South Africa since the mid-1990s emphasised participation and public choice which involve "direct representation, empowerment and active decision-making... [and where] a culture has been established that demands participation in all phases of the policy process" (De Coning

and Cloete 2000: 27). The authors observe that, where policy analysis was previously seen as a study field for academics and professionals, "the period since the elections has been characterised by an increased interest in the institutionalisation of policy capacity in organisational settings and in the nature of the policy processes it is likely to follow" (De Coning and Cloete 2000: 27).

On the other hand Jansen (2001: 272) argues that education policy in South Africa after 1994 demonstrates the state's preoccupation to settle policy struggles "in the political domain rather than in the realm of practice". This symbolic value assigned to the production of policy rather than implementation explains, in his view, the failure of education policy to "connect to the lives of teachers and learners in schools and classrooms". He refers to the "exceptional preoccupation with inclusivity and representivity in the make-up of working groups" in the production of policy throughout the 1990s as it was assumed that it granted legitimacy to policy: public hearings on education, teachers participating in the refinement of OBE, and developing learning programmes to name a few (Jansen 2001: 279).

3.2.4 Policy models and policy misconceptions

Theories are used to explain the policy-making process, and models "present problems in acceptable dimensions". Although there is no universally accepted theory of the policy-making process, "a useful model should include at least the phases of goal identification, authorisation, public statement of intent, implementation, and evaluation" (Hanekom 1987: 45).

This explanation provides the link between theory and models for policy-making and points out that the nature of the models should contain the basic phases of a policy process. There is a range of models within the theoretical frameworks for policy management that may improve facilitators' ability to design and evaluate policy. Although models can be useful in actual policy-making initiatives, they rarely translate into policy texts since it is often found that no single model, but various facets of models may be relevant, depending on the application (Ball 1998, De Coning and

Cloete 2000). The *Queensland Policy Handbook* (Queensland Government [200-]) states that

... policy development is not a linear process, neatly and predictably following a sequence of steps. Policy making is ambiguous and layered and not a single, uniform, transferable process. As such, the policy cycle should not be read as a staged and ordered process but an active and iterative process. The policy cycle model does, however, outline the key components to be considered in developing policy".

Christie (1999: 284) likewise refers to the view of policy as "a set of logically distinct activities in a cycle which progresses from problem definition, through policy formulation, adoption and implementation to evaluation and reformulation". She counter-proposes a "contingency approach" which "views policy as an inherently political activity in the 'authoritative allocation of values', and policy making as fluid, dynamic, and essentially contestational, involving compromises, trade-offs and settlements...[and] contend[ing] that policies are best understood in terms of practices on the ground, rather than idealist statements of intention or blueprints for action."

Researchers such as Ball (1998), Jansen (2001), Levin (2001) and Colebatch (2002) mention policy misconceptions that often lead to policy failure. Jansen (2001: 271) advises against a view of policy that he describes as "devoid of politics and of power, of competing interests and conflicting struggles", and identifies three common misconceptions regarding policy, namely the:

- deeply held conviction that what policy claims will happen,
- assumption of a linear logic between policy and practice (that it moves logically from intention to realisation),
- commonsense conception of policy as official documents or ideal statements made by government.

This statement is supported by Levin (2001: 6) who states that "policy matters cannot be analysed without considering the ways in which policies are driven by a particular logic or ideology, as well as the way historical, cultural, institutional and political factors shape it".

These criticisms can be linked to Colebatch's (2002) social construction perspective on policy that will be taken into account when the Delphi panel's responses to the KZN School Library's suitability for implementation in the province are analysed.

Brynard (2000: 174) likewise refers to the two approaches to policy development and implementation, namely top-down (forward mapping) versus bottom-up (backward mapping). **Forward mapping** starts with the policy message at the top and sees implementation as occurring in a chain, in other words it can be regulated from the top. On the other hand **backward mapping** advocates that the idea that implementation can be controlled from the top is a myth and accepts that implementation is untidy. Challenges and resistance to policy are seen as rational and implementation as a process of mediation between competing interests, which can have unexpected outcomes. This view requires an understanding of the discrepancy between actual and desired practice which policy will seek to close. Brynard (2000: 174) argues that there is a growing consensus that the major features of the two approaches should be synthesised since top-down and bottom-up forces will often exist simultaneously in most implementation situations.

3.2.5 The social construction perspective on policy

Colebatch (2002: 4) points out that policy has to do with control, with contesting the existing order and asserting the right to participate. Furthermore, policy-making is a social process, reflecting varying systems of values, and influenced by multiple and complex issues. This process means that the interplay between policy and social, economic and practical realities should be understood. The policy process may no longer simply involve the pursuit of goals, but the more difficult task of "constructing a basis for collective action among participants who may have quite diverse views on the nature of the task" (Colebatch 2002: 4).

According to the social construction view policy is a continuous process of social action and interaction (socially constructed) which leads to a lot of variation in the way people 'do policy'. Although the term policy is so widely used that it does not

always have a precise, clear definition, and may be used to mean broad orientation, an indication of normal practice, a specific commitment, or statement of values, Colebatch (2002: 7-9) concludes that the idea of policy usually rests on the following three "core assumptions about social order... and it is the worth of these ...

characteristics which gives policy so much of its power". These assumptions are:

- **The assumption of instrumentality**, namely that organisations exist to achieve their objectives, and success is measured against this realisation, and "policy is understood in terms of objectives and the way to achieve them" (2002: 8).
- **The assumption of hierarchy** that presumes that "governing flows from... the decisions of leaders with authority" and validates organisational activity. In other words it is assumed that policy authorises what will be done and sanctions a specific course of action. Colebatch (2002: 8-9) compares this process to "a central nervous system" that determines the choice of route and conveys this "down the line".
- **The assumption of coherence**, namely that "all bits of the action fit together and form part of an organised whole, single system; policy in this context has to do with how this system is (or should be) steered" (Colebatch 2002: 9). For the participants, according to Colebatch (2002: 9), "coherence is not so much one of the attributes of the policy as one of central problems: how to get all the different elements to focus on the same question in the same way", and he refers to this process as "pulling and hauling" where the policy players attempt to influence activities to manifest their perspectives.

Colebatch (2002: 10) further identifies three essential elements in the way the term policy is used, namely order, authority and expertise. **Order** denotes that there are systems and consistency because policy sets boundaries within which to act and frees people from the responsibility of making certain choices, in other words policy "draws a range of activities into a common framework". However, a major source of difficulty can be the dilemma of achieving consistency between different policy fields and the way they handle similar policy issues (Colebatch 2002: 10). **Authority** implies that authorised decision makers endorse and thus legitimise policy, and even if they

may not have much to do with policy design it nevertheless "draws on their authority and cascades down through the hierarchy". Lastly, policy exists in relation to some identified subject area or field of practice, and **expertise** implies knowledge of the problem as well as the possible solutions to the problem. This view perceives policy as an "exercise in skilled problem-solving" (Colebatch 2002: 10). Policy outcomes will most likely demonstrate an ongoing tension between the assumptions and policy elements discussed above.

3.2.5.1 The basis for policy participation

According to the social construction perspective there are two dimensions to policy that impact on the way policy is perceived, and that will influence the policy-maker's interest and viewpoint on policy, namely a vertical and a horizontal dimension:

- The **vertical dimension** sees policy as rules and as the "transmission downwards of authorised decisions" where the selected action will endorse the values the decision-maker holds and pass these on to the subordinates implementing the policy. In other words this dimension stresses among other things "the force of legitimate authority" (Colebatch 2002: 23).
- The **horizontal dimension** views policy "in terms of the structuring of action", and realises that policy work takes place both within and across organisational boundaries. This means that there are many participants in the policy process, and since issues such as negotiation and consensus are important it may be beneficial to include people who participate in the policy process as policy-makers (Colebatch 2002: 23-25).

These vertical and horizontal dimensions differ from Rowland's information policy hierarchy, where he identified horizontal information policies as those impacting on the whole of a sector, and vertical information policies as impacting on a specific sector.

The two dimensions in the social construction viewpoint tend to assume each other since in order to implement authorised decisions the cooperation of those outside the

hierarchical line of authority will be needed, and on the other hand, understandings reached on the horizontal dimension will need the authorisation of the vertical dimension (Colebatch 2002: 24).

In order to identify policy participants the concepts of authority, expertise and order come into play again. **Authority** can rest in some authoritative figure or a collective body at the top of the system. What is important here is that "terms like 'policy-making' are not neutral... they are part of the resources of the participants". The flow may run both ways, as Brynard (2000) too indicated, top-down and bottom-up, and authority "frames the action", yet it may be "in ways that make it easier for some people and more difficult for others to take part in the process" (Colebatch 2002: 26-27).

Relevant **expertise** is a basis for participation since policy is not just about authorised decision-making, it is also about problem-solving. There may not be a clear field of policy-related expertise for each policy question and the same question may be addressed differently by experts, in other words there may be different expert answers to the same policy problem since one cannot assume that they have interpreted the problem in the same way in the first place. A body of expertise is thus a way of recognising problems as well as addressing them, and sometimes new expertise is being developed to challenge the existing pattern of policy knowledge (Colebatch 2002: 28-30).

Order is another basis for participation since "policy is concerned with making organised activity stable and predictable" (Colebatch 2002: 30). This order is generally seen as a problem of control in organisations – ensuring it is carried out through the organisation, and avoiding bureaucratic rigidity or excessive slack. It may involve a number of 'hands' as policy areas cut across organisational boundaries, for example labour policy being relevant to the education, health and many other sectors. New policy demands may represent challenges to the existing order and will probably be resisted. Even so the aim should be to focus less on alternative choices

and more on the common ground on which participants can converge since, as Colebatch (2002: 33) points out, "a great deal of policy activity is concerned with creating and maintaining order among the diversity of participants in the policy process".

3.2.5.2 Policy failure

Implementation failure seems to be a constant in literature on policy and the policy process (Christie 1999; Cloete and Wissink 2000; Jansen 2001; Colebatch 2002). The social constructive view identifies two perspectives (as discussed above under 3.2.5.1) that should likewise be taken into account when explaining this problem of policy failure:

- The vertical perspective perceiving implementation as authorised decisions at the top that coincide exactly with outcomes at the bottom with the only question being that of securing compliance. Policy is thus seen as emerging "pristine and fully formed" from a detached policy-maker. This is a view that gives legitimacy to policy.
- The horizontal dimension viewing implementation as an exercise in collective negotiation: "the focus shifts from the desired outcome to the process and the people through which it would be accomplished". Policy is seen as emerging "in the course of interaction among relevant participants". Colebatch (2002: 53) points out that this view gives efficacy to policy.

The implication of the social construction perspective is that although the view of policy as being the pursuit of goals is normal (the authority view with decision-maker and implementer) yet in practice there are many participants with distinct and possibly contradictory ideas regarding goals and priorities. Colebatch (2002: 67) argues that participants in the policy process try to build support for their activity, and statements of goals facilitate this. But the broader and less specific they are, the more likely it is that they will attract support.

Clearly policy planning needs to be a well thought through process in order to minimise policy resistance and unforeseen outcomes. In an attempt to arrive at a holistic interpretation of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its implementation strategy this research revealed the policy formulation process against the various stages of policy development, and at the same time took into account the social construction view where social action and interaction offer explanations as to the way people interpret policy. Dyer (1999: 45) sums this up when he cautions against assuming that "decisions to bring about change will automatically result in changed policy or institutional behaviour". The Delphi technique, as the main methodology used in the study, will generate expert opinion on the policy document and its suitability for implementation.

3.3 The Delphi technique

The Delphi technique was to be used as a methodology to analyse and critically assess the KZN *School Library Policy* and its implementation strategy in order to determine its suitability for implementation in the province. This technique is a group facilitation one that seeks consensus on the opinion of experts through a series of structured questionnaires where panellists respond independently and anonymously to one another's opinions,

3.3.1 Types of Delphi

The Delphi technique, originally developed by the RAND Corporation in the early 1950s (Linstone and Turoff 1975), found its way into private corporations, government, education and academia, and over the years was increasingly modified by practitioners. Some modifications are useful but others are random and undermine the quality and credibility of the technique (Gupta and Clarke 1996: 189). Powell (2003) observes that it can be difficult to distinguish between an actual lack of methodological rigour and the fact that Delphi comes in different guises, and cites Mead and Mosely (2001) who propose the term Delphi approach as a more accurate

description of many Delphi studies. Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 7) suggest the following categorisation, as described by Van Zolingen and Klaassen (2003):

- **Classical Delphi** is characterised by five features: anonymity, iteration, controlled feedback, statistical group response and stability in responses among those with expertise on a specific issue. Participants in this type of Delphi have expertise and give opinions to arrive at stability in responses on specific issues. Lang (1995) refers to this type as the **Conventional Delphi**, and notes that it is used to reach consensus and is typical of Delphi as it was originally conceived.
- **Policy Delphi** aims to generate policy alternatives by using a structured public dialogue instead of reaching stability in responses among experts. It is an instrument for policy development and promoting participation by obtaining as many divergent opinions as possible. This Delphi is characterised by selective anonymity (participants answer questions individually but may also meet as a group), iteration, controlled feedback, polarised group response and structured conflict.
- **Decision Delphi** is used for decision making on social developments. Reality is created by a group of decision-makers rather than from the ad-hoc decisions of only a small number of persons. Crucial to this type is that decision-makers involved in the problem participate in the Delphi. They are selected according to their position in the hierarchy of decision-makers and the aim is to structure thinking so that consensus can be achieved. The characteristic is quasi-anonymity since everybody knows the decision-makers from the beginning but questionnaire responses are anonymous (Hanafin and Brooks 2005: 7).

However, Hasson, Keeney and McKenna (2000: 377) report the use of the Modified, the Real-time and the Policy Delphi, and Osborne *et al.* (2001: 19) distinguish between Exploratory Delphi (classical), Focus Delphi (policy), and normative Delphi (decision). The Modified Delphi mostly uses a set of carefully selected items drawn from other sources or literature instead of an open-ended questionnaire to solicit first round information from the panel (Custer, Scarcella and Stewart 1999: 2). A

comparison between the Modified Delphi and the Conventional Delphi is provided in chapter 4, table 6.

In this study the Delphi technique is used to structure thinking around the characteristics of good policy as set out in the literature so that consensus or stability can be reached on the suitability of the policy for implementation in the province. The study will, therefore, adopt the approach of the Modified Delphi since it did not use an open-ended questionnaire except for the first part where panellists were asked to contextualise their stance on school library policy.

3.3.2 Paradigmatic assumptions underpinning the Delphi technique

Hanafin and Brooks (2004: 7) reason that it may appear that the epistemological basis for the Delphi technique favours the positivist paradigm since it assumes that the position of the researcher is that of an objective and uninvolved observer of social reality:

The objectivist position in the Delphi technique is supported through the utilisation of a quantitative approach to data collection and the application of single statistical measures to the identification of 'consensus'. The inclusion of 'experts' assumes an ontological position of single reality (on which 'experts' agree) and the reductionist approach to the identification of the phenomenon under study could also be understood as adhering to positivistic principles (2004: 7).

However, it can also be presented as subjective and qualitative since the aim is to achieve consensus through a process of iteration which is concerned with the opinions, ideas and words of the panellists (Hanafin and Brooks 2005: 7). The purpose of the methodology, which is to achieve consensus through group interaction, is consistent with an interpretative paradigm that can include many different paradigms, including constructivism. Group interaction presupposes that the panel members' attitudes and beliefs are not formed in a vacuum. When focussing of one's own attitudes and understandings it is necessary to consider those of others too, and Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 7-8) argue that "constructivism, and particularly social constructivism, appears to have most to offer in terms of understanding the

epistemological basis for the Delphi technique". The authors cite Lincoln and Guba (1985: 82):

Researchers in a variety of disciplines in the social sciences have been and are grappling with social constructivist approaches wherein the contribution of each individual in the context to the creation of a reality is recognised.

Social constructivists generally subscribe to an exogenic tradition of knowledge with the focus "on the arrangement of environmental inputs necessary to build up the 'internal representation' rather than on the person's intrinsic capacities for reason, logic or conceptual processing" (Gergen 1995: 18 cited in Hanafin and Brooks 2005: 8).

The Delphi technique has the potential to recognise and acknowledge the contribution of each participant, and the process of individual feedback about group opinion, where respondents have the opportunity to change their position on the basis of that feedback, provides a close fit with the use of environmental inputs to build up internal representations (Hanafin and Brooks 2005: 8).

"Certain parts of the Delphi technique are more coherent with a constructivist paradigm and others with that of positivism" (Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 8) thus making it difficult to draw clear conclusions about paradigmatic assumptions underpinning all Delphi studies. However, the authors suggest that the social constructivism paradigm has something to offer to the understanding of Delphi since it:

seeks to achieve individual reconstructions that coalesce around consensus through providing opportunities for knowledgeable participants to interact with each other in a structured way... [and it subscribes] to an ontological assumption that there are multiple realities (2005: 8).

This approach was followed in the current study. The literature review which follows outlines Library and Information Services in African as well as the South African context, and provides an overview of the policy formulation cycle. The Delphi technique and its growing use as a research method that can be "interesting... and applicable to real-life problem solving for librarians" (Howze and Dalrymple 2004: 174) is discussed in this section too.

3.4 Literature review

Education, politics and policy are closely linked, and the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* should be evaluated within the context of education and LIS transformation since 1994 as it is connected to political change and embedded in education.

3.4.1 Library and Information Services: an overview

Library and school library provisioning in Africa provide a broader perspective and background to the discussion of similar services in South Africa.

3.4.1.1 Libraries in Africa

Rosenberg (2001: 11-12) observes that libraries in Africa "are in decline and have been so for the last 25 years". This is despite the fact that information is widely seen as a national resource and a reliable flow of information is essential for the functioning of modern society. Moreover it is libraries that have played an important role in the communication of this information. Though most independent African countries had a flourishing network of libraries in 1975, these were, at the time:

- established and controlled by government,
- dependent on either government or donor funding,
- developed according to Western models of libraries and librarianship, and
- often followed the dictates and pressures of international trends and foreign aid.

However, as financial support decreased, the situation worsened as far as all libraries (academic, public and special) were concerned, and those that have continued to exist do so due to funding and support of donor agencies that has to a large extent replaced their previous budgets (Rosenberg 2001). Leach (2006: 133) notes that alternative funding as a means of compensation for declining government funding has, in many African countries, become "imperative rather than elective". He cautions that it should always be supplemental since libraries are publicly supported institutions and the institutions' mission and commitments may be skewed by donors, interest and advisory groups, thus compromising the libraries' traditional position of neutrality.

Sturges and Neill (1998: 92) argue that the library services that developed failed to meet the expectations and match the information needs of Africa and its people. Politicians and the general population viewed the Western library models with scepticism, apathy, and a grudging tolerance - an attitude that has persisted till today. Initiatives that tried to link libraries to development, such as those by UNESCO that centred on the National Information Systems (NATIS), failed to deliver and did not keep up with the considerable changes that took place in a complex African information environment. The authors view the African library legacy as a bookless society, where some governments suppress information, where there is no sense of public information policy as a priority, and the information available is often distorted and unreliable. They advocate that solutions should be sought from within Africa since there is a need

not merely for new approaches to librarianship, but also a creation of parallel, and very different types of information services to complement and partially replace library service... a model that is less formal, less book-oriented, more locally rooted and more precisely targeted at Africa's real and potential information users (1998: 227).

Such services should be based on "financial realism, self-reliance, sustainability, democracy, responsiveness and communication" (1998: 137), and the authors propose the following examples:

- reading facilities such as reading rooms,
- services still called library and resource centres,
- cultural centres,
- technology-based services,
- itinerant services not attached to any one place (1998: 179).

3.4.1.2 School libraries in Africa

Research has shown that school libraries in Africa are similarly neglected (Töttemeyer 1994; Rosenberg 1998, 2001; Endra 2001; Mswazi 2003; Khumalo 2006). Studies quote lack of staff, inadequate accommodation, the absence of relevant, adequate stock and no school library budget, ineffective leadership, the exclusion of school librarianship in teacher training curricular, and especially the lack of government

legislation outlining standards to guide planning and development as the common problems hindering the development of school libraries in Africa. Policy initiatives in Namibia (Marais 1996; Namibia. Ministry of Education 2008), Uganda and Swaziland (Mswazi 2003; Khumalo 2006) have yet to be approved. Another point raised by Khumalo (2006: 17, citing Töttemeyer 1994), is the "conflict between libraries and African culture... where libraries encourage independent learning and thinking in societies based on respect for elders and obedience".

Khumalo (2006: 16-19) refers to the economic decline affecting social and educational systems in most African countries and the fact that governments view school libraries as non profit activities. Until recently most schools functioned in education systems teaching a limited and teacher centred curriculum, and personnel responsible for school libraries usually have no library qualifications and a full teaching load. The book trade in Africa cannot compete with established overseas publishing companies, and stocking school libraries often means purchasing expensive and sometimes even irrelevant material.

Rosenberg's (1998) case study of projects through which schools in Africa gained access to supplementary reading materials, echoes the research findings quoted in 3.4.1.1 and she stresses the importance of the following:

- support received from officials at all levels,
- the role of NGOs as long as Education Departments do not abdicate their responsibilities towards school level provisioning,
- the problem of sustainability since most of the projects in her case study were donor-dependent (1998: 118-127).

All these factors result in school libraries that are marginal in terms of their impact on the teaching-learning process (Sturges and Neill 1998, Rosenberg 2001). One of the biggest problems is the fact that librarians and teachers are not convinced of the importance of the value of libraries, and teachers often persist in using the rigid and sterile teaching methods which they themselves experienced as children. Sturges and

Neill suggest that a solution will be to place a much stronger emphasis on the rationale for school libraries in the training programmes offered by both library and teacher training institutions (1998: 157).

However, Rosenberg (2001) argues that school libraries are not necessarily the most cost effective way of providing access to reading materials to support education. Such collections lack immediate accessibility and are expensive because they require professional organisation, special premises and equipment, and do not encourage teacher involvement, thus perpetuating the situation where teachers do not use books in the teaching process and neither do learners in the learning process (2001: 21). She points out that classroom libraries encourage strong teacher support, involvement and commitment because of immediate control over the way the material is organised and used, the cost is moderate, and no extra room or staff are required. Old style libraries are simply not sustainable due to lack of funds but also because they often do not meet the needs of local people. She also points out (2001: 22-23) that librarianship is concerned with the communication of information and ideas, and since this skill needs not be linked to the physical entity of a library it can be used to develop and support other approaches to ensure that librarians continue "contributing to the process of ensuring that Africa's population has access to the information it needs".

Many of the problems under discussion affect the school library sector in South Africa to varying extents.

3.4.1.3 School libraries in South Africa

A literature survey conducted by Olën (1996) on the role of South African school libraries in initial teacher training and in schools, their usage, learners' perceptions of their purpose, and the fostering of information literacy skills, echoes findings elsewhere in Africa:

- subject teachers do not value and are, in fact, often negative about the value of school libraries,

- establishing a school library is costly and having one does not guarantee that its usage will be such that will be justified,
- teachers' teaching styles and attitudes influence learners' use of the school library,
- teachers are not role models for learners regarding reading and the use of information,
- memorisation and rote learning do not encourage critical thinking and problem solving that will equip learners with information handling skills.

Olën (1997: 10) argues that school libraries should have a pivotal role to play in the transformation of education in South Africa, but for this to happen educational authorities need to "take cognisance of the many variables which affect school library use so that mistakes of the past are not repeated". Training during teacher education, although a "lengthy process", is imperative since it enables all teachers to incorporate resources in their teaching programme, and emphasises the value of information skills and reading as well as the important role of the teacher-librarian and the school library in the acquisition of these skills (1997: 10-11).

The variables influencing teachers' and learners' use (and often under-usage) of the school library comprise factors found in the community, the school and the school library itself (Olën 1997: 11-30). Physical factors include socio-economic conditions, school library facilities, as well as a lack of books in indigenous languages. The factors associated with intellectual access that can likewise result in under-utilisation of school libraries are, among others, the accessibility of the contents of the resources, especially in a multiracial school population, qualified teacher-librarians, teaching styles, and the integration of resources and information – in other words collaborative planning for the integration of resources in the teaching programme.

South Africa's school library provisioning can be perceived as two extreme opposites (Hart 2002a: 2), namely 'North' where libraries in the advantaged schools compare well with the best examples in the world, and 'South' (the majority of schools) where the 'library' is seldom more than a few shelves of tattered books. This view is

underscored by surveys of the literature on school librarianship in South Africa in the 1980s that highlighted, at the time, the concern that school libraries were under-utilised and remained on the periphery of schools' learning programmes (Overduin and De Wit 1987). The post-apartheid education system inherited a situation where, according to national report of the South African School Library Survey of the Human Sciences Research Council (South Africa. Department of Education 1999c: appendix table 1 and 2) 5695 of the 22 318 school surveyed nationwide (25.5%) had an on-site library and an additional 4 692 schools (21%) had some sort of collection or box service with which learners could access the curriculum. The 2008 National Reading Strategy (South Africa. Department of Education 2008) cites the Monitoring Learning Achievement Survey of 1999 which surveyed 25 145 schools nationally and found that 22 101 had no space for a library, 3 388 had space but no books, and only 1 817 (just over 7%) had library space that was stocked with books (South Africa. Department of Education/UNESCO/UNICEF 1999).

Lor [200-] comments that the disparities caused by apartheid has led to a situation where few schools other than the privileged ones have a central library and a teacher-librarian, a culture of rote learning existed in schools and there was poor co-operation with public libraries. Moreover the lack of school libraries poses a "grave threat" to the implementation of Curriculum 2005 which emphasises resource-based and learner-centred learning (Lor [200-]). It placed a burden on the public library sector where librarians need education in information literacy in order to meet learners' needs (Hart 2005: 281). Both Bawa's (1996) and Hart's (2005) research recommends new roles and responsibilities for public libraries to foster cooperation with the school sector, and Le Roux (1996, 2002) proposes better co-operation between community and school libraries to alleviate the lack of support for schools.

However, although the new outcomes-based curriculum requires the support of well-resourced school libraries if learners are to construct their own knowledge as indicated under 3.1.2, the matter of school libraries and their role in curriculum change is not a clear-cut issue. Brown (1988) remarks that such changes would require a change in

the basic beliefs of teachers about how learners learn before they will change the materials and teaching approaches they use. Christie (1999: 286) adds to this view and comments that research has shown that, despite a wide range of policy interventions, there has been little fundamental change in pedagogy in the past hundred years. Where reform has occurred it has been around first order changes, which are changes that make what already exists more efficient and effective without significantly disturbing basic organisational features, rather than around second-order changes which seek to transform familiar ways into new ways of solving persistent problems, and introduce new goals, structures and roles.

Research undertaken by the School of Education at the then University of Natal (University of Natal. School of Education 1999), now the University of KwaZulu-Natal, sought an answer to questions regarding what policy says teachers should be doing, what they are actually doing, and the "fit" between policy and practice. The policy documents examined included the Coalition of Teacher Education Programmes, Norms and Standards for Teacher Education and guidelines and regulations relating to code of conduct, developmental appraisal and general duties and responsibilities. Some of the conclusions arrived at are that teachers were found to be very strong in foundational competences, and much less so in reflective competences. The school context had a profound influence on the way in which different educator roles and competences were made sense of, prioritised and practiced. The study indicated that "policy is insufficiently sensitive to the context in which it will be implemented and played out" (1999: 6). Policy does not appear to "acknowledge the need for role prioritisation" in that teachers have pragmatic concerns like the need to exercise control in classrooms. As far as equity is concerned, the study stated that the values and practices inherent in policy are based on the image of a school with particular cultural and material resources – such as would be found in historically advantaged schools (1999: 7).

Jansen (1998), Christie (1999) and Potenza and Monyokolo (1999) question the implementation of an outcomes-based curriculum in South Africa's education

landscape. Potenza and Monyokolo (1999: 182) believe that Curriculum 2005 was implemented before the key pillars of curriculum development namely learning material and teacher training were in place. Jansen (1998) points out that the environment works against the conditions for the curriculum's success which are smaller classes and individual support. He argues that, for curriculum implementation to succeed, teachers and managers would have to be trained and retrained, classroom organisation changed, and parental support secured. Furthermore new forms of learning resources would be needed and these would include teacher dialogue and exchange – in other words a total re-engineering of the education system and Jansen (1998) believes that there is neither the fiscal base nor the political will to intervene at this level of intensity.

Although Curriculum 2005 represented an important step away from content-laden curriculum and emphasised learning by doing, problem-solving skills, skills development, and teacher involvement in curriculum development, Christie (1999: 282) draws attention to the fact that implementation has been highly problematic and poorly planned. It has further been perceived as top-down implementation. Teachers were insufficiently prepared for the outcomes-based pedagogy and resources for implementation were inadequate.

Hart (2002b: 61) reasons that an explanation for the weak position of school libraries in the South African school system can be found by again turning to theories of learning and teaching whereby school librarians might interpret the implications of the new outcomes based curriculum as good news, yet this assumes two things: "that educators understand what a school library is and what its programme aims at; and secondly it assumes that the concepts fundamental to Curriculum 2005 - like constructivist learning approaches - are understood".

Furthermore the government has neglected school library development opportunities such as Curriculum 2005 and the subsequent revision of the curriculum, and nationally conditions in many existing school libraries in South Africa have been

allowed to deteriorate in the period since 1994 (Hart 2002a). Karlsson (2003: 9) argues that "in the absence of clear direction that should have come through policy and a regulatory framework, conditions in many of the existing school libraries have been allowed to deteriorate". Due to the lack of national government commitment to policy and funding for school libraries teacher-librarian posts have been abolished, collections have deteriorated or were dismantled, and presently little incentive remains for experienced teachers to enrol for the few school library courses still offered by universities (Hart 2002a).

The challenges confronting education in South Africa offer insight into the challenges facing school libraries in the country (Hart and Zinn 2007: 90). These include the size of the school going population, rural poverty, the apartheid heritage of school funding, continuing high rates of dropout and failure, the backlog in basic facilities such as water and electricity in schools, the redress of historical disparities in teacher/learner ratios, and teachers' poor qualifications and subject knowledge that hinder the implementation of Curriculum 2005.

Presently five of the nine provinces in South Africa have active school library support services but the status and influence of these services are limited by

- the fact that only one province's school library service functions at executive management level, the others are all sub-directorates or divisions of a sub-directorate,
- advisors who are placed in decentralised district offices and report to a district manager,
- the number of ex-training college staff who lack the required qualifications but were absorbed into school library support services after the rationalisation of colleges of education,
- school library support services that are aligned with inappropriate departments within education (Hart and Zinn 2007: 93-4).

All these issues touch on the underlying question regarding deeply held beliefs about libraries as posed by Hart and Zinn (2007: 103) where they point out that school librarians are perhaps only half-convinced of their importance, and suggest that 'the South African library profession has to identify more precisely what it contributes to education in South Africa and undertake focused, even if small-scale, research to provide evidence.' Moreover, for curriculum reform to succeed learners and teachers not only need access to learning and information resources but they need to be educated on how to utilise the resources to construct knowledge. School libraries and school library policy are the enablers and facilitators of this process.

3.4.2 School Library policy development

Policy standardises provisioning and promotes focussed intervention. This section reviews the school library in the international as well as national and provincial context.

3.4.2.1 International research on school library policy

In 1993 IFLA endorsed several recommendations regarding school library policy and standards during a pre-conference seminar on school librarianship (Galler 1996: 292):

Recognising the lack of awareness at all levels of the importance of libraries in national development; that adequate funding for school libraries is crucial to their development; and that strong library policies are a bargaining tool in requesting support for increased library development, ... [it was recommended that] IFLA should urge its member associations to work with other educational and professional bodies to encourage national education authorities to develop a policy on the role of school libraries in national development, as part of their national education policy; to introduce necessary legislation; and to improve financial support for school libraries and centralised support services for school libraries.

It was also recommended that existing standards in the various countries be examined and that the information be disseminated through the IFLA membership. Galler's (1996: 293) literature search indicated that:

- School library policy could be a provincial or state responsibility (e.g. in Canada), but many of the policies were not enforced,

- The lack of clear purpose for school library development in some countries hindered school library development since the aim, role and benefits of school libraries were not agreed upon.

Galler (1996: 293-4) conducted a survey, the short-term aim being to:

- provide evidence that many countries lacked overall school library policy, and where policy existed it was not enforced by law
- collect information on existing standards, guidelines and policies, and
- foster awareness and understanding on the importance of the role of such standards, policies and guidelines.

The survey questionnaire, which focussed on national library policy for school libraries, was sent to 100 countries in November 1994, and 51 responses were subsequently received. The analysis indicated that 25 countries (including South Africa) responded that there was an official policy statement regarding school libraries in their country. The list of documents received (Galler 1996: 296) indicates that this South African policy document was a report from the Transvaal Education Department's Media Service: *School Library Media Centres in a new dispensation for Library and Information Services*, compiled by T.J. Swart. This document could, however, not have referred to a national policy at the time and it should be presumed that it was a provincial document.

Most of the respondents to Galler's survey indicated that the development of a school library policy was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education/Education and Culture. Some countries (16) confirmed that other agencies regulated school libraries in the absence of an official policy, and 14 stated that these agencies had produced a formal document. A further 10 countries indicated that there were other standards for school libraries in the absence of formal policies, and 20 countries confirmed that there was a mechanism/office supervising the application of an official policy. However, although most respondents agreed with "the importance of school libraries to the development of a nation, there [was] very little actual work being done to

either enforce existing policies or create new and appropriate ones" (Galler 1996: 297).

School library policy research undertaken by Knuth (1995: 290) stresses the importance of "understand[ing] the interplay between policy and social, economic and political realities in order to achieve goals involving the evolution of effective school libraries." Policy is developed at all levels, from the macro level of worldwide trends and national legislation, to the micro level of the school, and Knuth (1995: 290) argues that it is essential to understand the fuller picture in order to understand the implications of policy at one's particular level. Since policy-making is a complex process, intervention in policy formulation and implementation is more effective if participants have a "basic knowledge of the limitations and complexities of policy-making" At the same time it is a social process reflecting varying systems and values.

Although policy without a statutory basis may be expressed in many other ways such as policy statements, the creation of regional services, forming advisory committees, the use of consultants, or affiliation with organisations on projects, it is formalised policy that tends to make "subsequent action more coherent and consistent" because it "provides a rallying point for development", and prevents "scattered school library programmes and marginal development". Knuth (1995: 292) states:

Lack of a statutory base creates critical gaps in school library development, variable implementation, a lack of coordination, inadequacies in institutional infrastructure, duplication of effort, and under use of resources. School library provision that is not supported by official policy becomes vulnerable to financial retrenchment and local educational politics.

In a research project conducted by Zinn (2006) she found that few trained teacher-librarians established libraries and/or library programmes in their schools after qualifying at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). She argues that one of the reasons for this failure is the fact that "the lack of school library policy at national and provincial level provided no impetus for developing a school library" (2006: 33).

Research of various frameworks for school library policy and surveys of a broad range of policies show that school library policy is frequently connected with national development initiatives, and reading projects (Knuth 1995). At the same time effective policy is "congruent with national perceptions of the definition and purpose of the school library; when this congruency is lacking, difficulties arise" (1995: 293). Where school library statutes are embedded in education legislation, often within curriculum reform initiatives, they are viewed as educational tools and framed within an educational context, and substantive school library development has resulted in these countries. Curriculum 2005 offered such an opportunity in South Africa, but, as was pointed out in 3.3.1.3 above, the "congruency" was lacking and the opportunity was not exploited. School library development has reached its highest level in countries where federal initiatives sponsored short-term policy initiatives resulting in "spurts" in school library development (Canada, the United States and Australia). When the states or provinces are responsible for policy and infrastructure, development can be uneven (Knuth 1995).

Researchers (Le Roux 2002; Karlsson 2003; Zinn 2006; Hart and Zinn 2007) agree with Knuth's (1995: 290) view that "effective [school library] policy may push development forward [and] non-existent or poorly devised policy hinder development at every phase from conceptualisation, planning, implementation through qualitative improvement efforts". In many instances school library policy development in South Africa seems to be a series of missed opportunities and even though the process has been ongoing for the past ten years no policy or guidelines have been formally approved yet.

3.4.2.2 School Library policy in South African context

The overview of the literature on school library standards in South Africa provides insight into the status quo of the current policy process.

3.4.2.2.1 School Library Standards

As far back as 1958 the South African Library Association (SALA) concluded that standards usually cover funding, buildings, personnel, collections, and services, and act as criteria against which a service is measured (Friis *et al.* 1957). Overduin and De Wit (1987) conducted a survey of school libraries in South Africa and concluded that, without official policy, schools and teacher-librarians tend to subjectively apply their own practices and procedures. The formulation and documenting of policy would be an essential standard and benchmark for South African school library development (Vermeulen 1991; Kakoma 1997).

Vermeulen (1991, 1992, 1994) made a significant contribution to the literature on school library standards in South Africa. She analysed documents on standards from several countries to identify common trends, as well as South African syllabi to determine approaches to teaching. South African surveys were studied to gain an overview of local school library provisioning, and selected school library programmes were evaluated during a follow-up survey to ascertain the levels of input that would be required for a successful school library programme in secondary schools. She developed a model which could assist with the development of standards for secondary school libraries in South Africa (1992: 114-115).

Vermeulen pointed out that standards should be set because international findings indicate that uneven provision and lack of quality education can often be blamed on the absence of official policy statements such as standards. Moreover, school library standards stimulate the development of libraries, and improved libraries lead to improved teaching (Vermeulen 1991: 150). She emphasises that the formulation of objectives is a key element in the development of standards, and the school's own as well as national educational objectives should be analysed when standards are formulated (1991: 151).

In essence standards:

- are criteria against which school libraries may be measured and tested,

- provide a model for achieving the objectives of the school library as an integral part of the teaching programme,
- serve as a stimulus for development,
- may be used as an evaluation instrument, and
- assist decision-making regarding the establishing, planning and administration of services (Vermeulen 1991: 150).

Library standards need to include qualitative as well as quantitative elements in order to cover both underlying principles as well as numerical statements of needs:

... qualitative because objectives (and the functions required to achieve the objectives) are basic to the ideal of development and improvement. Without a statement of what library services are supposed to do, the means for doing the work, that is, quantitative standards, cannot be determined successfully (Vermeulen 1991: 150).

School library standards should be in line with educational theory and practice, and regardless of the type of library they are applied to (classroom collections or central libraries) be sufficiently realistic not to be seen as unattainable by the majority of schools still trying to establish a service. At the same time, they should also provide a stimulus for improvement to those schools that have already made some progress (Vermeulen 1991: 153).

Stander's (1993) research on problems concerning school library standards in developing countries is based on the hypothesis that needs in developing countries are so distinctive that models for school information services from First World countries can not be successfully adapted, but that "indigenous" standards should be formulated to address local needs (1993: 77-78). She comments on the multidisciplinary nature of this type of study since it involves literature studies from the fields of library and information science, development studies, as well as education (1993: 76,78).

Stander (1993: 77) concludes that school library services in developing countries have failed to become part of the teaching process, and that very little is known about the actual and potential users of school libraries and their information needs. She identifies a need in developing countries for an awareness of the important role of

information in education and development, and for a willingness to address existing problems within the framework of existing limitations. These realities should be reflected in information service guidelines, and, like Sturges and Neill (1998) and Rosenberg (2001), she advocates a service with indigenous models and solutions that will provide for the needs of the local users, and accommodate both collectiveness and diversity in information planning (1993: 96).

Library and Information Service policy initiatives in South Africa prior to 1994 did not address school library standards. The NEPI LIS report (1992) and the ANC's Implementation Plan for Education and Training (1994) referred to the restructuring of library and information services but neither proposed standards for school libraries.

Bawa (1996) developed an implementation plan with both short- and long-term goals for resource provisioning in schools in KwaZulu-Natal. She argues that a school library in each school in the province will not be affordable in the near future, and suggests the planning of joint public/school libraries for resource provisioning. Her recommendations are that the school library provisioning section should be incorporated into the Provincial Public Library System, and the procurement function be removed from the school library advisory service of the Education Department.

3.4.2.2.2 School library policy development in South Africa

In November 1995 the Education Policy Unit of the University of Natal convened the *School Learners and Libraries* conference in Durban where a wide range of role players identified and examined tested international library models, and discussed their suitability, strengths and weaknesses as alternatives to the traditional centralised school library model (Karlsson 1996b). The models included were shared or joint-use community-school libraries (Sweden), regional school community libraries (South Australia), mobile library buses (rural Brazil), virtual libraries (widely used in developed countries), and classroom box libraries (Karlsson 2003: 4).

A conference resolution was sent to the national Ministry requesting the Department of Education to develop policy to address inequities and disparities in the school library sector. In July 1997 the Department of Education convened a stakeholders meeting to identify the need for a project to investigate norms and minimum standards for school libraries. The policy framework document developed by the research working group (South Africa. Department of Education, 1997c) which included most of the models identified at the 1995 conference, was subsequently discussed at provincial meetings during 1997. In 1998 the *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa. Department of Education 1998b) was completed for presentation to the Minister of Education (Karlsson (2003: 4).

In order to guide future planning and development a comprehensive set of data relating to school libraries and their human and physical resources was needed. In 1999 the Department of Education awarded a tender to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to conduct a National School Library Audit (South Africa. Department of Education 1999c). According to the KwaZulu-Natal report of this survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d) 42.8% of schools countrywide had access to a library service or a library collection/box service. The proportion of schools with on-site libraries was low and in KwaZulu-Natal, for example, only 24.1% of schools had on-site libraries. Moreover, the reliability of the audit's findings was contested at the Library and Information Association of South Africa's conference in 2000 (Paterson 2000 cited in Hart 2002a). Delegates commented that principals had claimed to have a library in the belief that the school would receive library materials. Zinn (2006: 23) points out that principals often view any room with a few books, regardless their condition or usefulness, as a library. The findings of this survey are discussed in chapter 5 under 5.2.1.

Although a Four Year Implementation Plan for the draft document was released by the Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education (CTDE) in 2000, the national school library policy process was suspended due to the restructuring of the National Department of Education, and the National Ministry has to date not

finalised any school library policy, despite the fact that several revised drafts have been prepared by the heads of provincial school library services and the unit responsible for school libraries in the National Department of Education. However, the draft document as well as the subsequent drafts (elaborated in chapter 2) clearly state that the onus for implementing the policy will be on provincial Education Departments who will have to ensure that learners' constitutional right to basic education, and by implication to learning resources, is entrenched in provincial legislation. During 2002-3 the ELITS Directorate, KZN Department of Education, developed a provincial school library policy based for the most part on the drafts of the proposed national policy but adapted to suit local needs. Despite Karlsson (2003: 5) cautioning that provinces developing their own policies are open to "the danger of disjuncture when the national regulatory policy is finalised" it was believed that the province could no longer afford to wait for the national draft document to be finalised before taking the process further on provincial level. However, Hart (2002a: 8) suggests that it signals "impatience with the stalling of policy at national level and perhaps will be the catalyst for nation-wide action" and, in 2007 Hart and Zinn (2007: 99) comment that "the energising effect of the policy document might be seen in the audit undertaken by ELITS to gather baseline information to guide its interventions".

School library development opportunities have been overlooked. The rationale for school library collections as learning resources was already implicit in curriculum policy in 1997, yet Karlsson (2003: 5) remarks that there was no collaboration between the two Departmental groups (school libraries and curriculum review) tasked with developing school library and curriculum policies in 1996-7. Thus they did not benefit from each other's expertise and this resulted in the marginalisation of school library matters in the Ministry's agenda. The curriculum policy documents show very little recognition of the role of school libraries or the important linkages between curriculum and library resources. Consequently the two Revised National Curriculum Statements of 2001 and 2002 perpetuate the unsatisfactory situation and still do not mention school libraries, despite two representations made by the School Libraries

and Youth Services Interest Group (SLYSIG) to the Review Committee (Karlsson 2003: 5, Hart 2002a: 7).

It has perhaps mistakenly been assumed that teachers (and policy makers) understand the educational purpose of a library and share the belief that the links between resource-based approaches and libraries are obvious (Hart 2002b: 8). Only about one quarter of today's educators have had any exposure to school libraries (Olën 1996). Karlsson (2003: 6) concludes that this could be the reason why government committed funds to its Masifunde Sonke Reading Project, but failed to finalise the school library policy that would logically underpin and drive the project: the exposure to "only disadvantaged, under-resourced and deteriorating school environments, has shaped a perspective that sees school libraries and librarians as unrelated to curriculum access and hence as expendable luxuries". However, the delay in school library policy adoption and implementation may provide an opportunity to revisit some aspects of the Policy Framework to identify other alternatives to the expensive model of a centralised library and a qualified librarian in each school:

"the policy needs to provide a mandate that recognises our history and our diverse schools and enables provincial departments to implement equity while responding appropriately to their local conditions. A blind approach based on 'one size fits all' may be based on equality, but it runs counter to equity that seeks to redress historical imbalances now and not in some idealised future" (Karlsson 2003: 13).

Knuth (1995: 294) pointed out that policy failure can be linked with issues such as the failure to adequately develop comprehensive policy, in other words there is no criteria for the rationalisation of programmes and resources, and the incongruence of official policy with actual educational practices. This lack of comprehensive policy has been alluded to in comments regarding the Masifunde Sonke campaign (above) as well as the *National Reading Strategy* - initiatives that do not link and bring together existing projects or sufficiently take into account provincial constraints and conditions in schools. The issue of policy formulation and implementation has come under scrutiny in research by Jansen (1998, 2001) and Christie (1999).

Jansen (2001) conducted seven case studies of post-apartheid education reform to seek theoretical explanations that were coherent and contextualised, and to find evidence for his theory of "political symbolism as explanation for non-implementation in South African education reform after apartheid" (2001: 271). He maintains that he has searched in vain for logic in policy-making connected to any serious intention to change the practice of education on the ground. He observes that 'the lack of fit between education policy and education practice is commonly explained in terms of the lack of resources, the legacy of inequality and the dearth of capacity to translate official vision into contextual reality' (2001: 271). Yet this view is based on the presumption that government means what it says, namely that policy will be implemented, that policy moves from intention to realisation, and that policy is official documents or ideal statements made by government. It is, however, "a view of policy devoid of politics and power, of competing interests and conflicting struggles" (2001: 271). Christie (1999: 289) adds that reform is not simply a matter of getting policies right. She points out that the attempt to introduce a new curriculum in the context of extreme shortages for curriculum materials and teacher development has brought major difficulties, and cautions that successful change needs continuous interaction between vision and conditions on the ground. These arguments could offer some explanation as to why the national school library policy has not yet been finalised after ten years of lobbying.

Karlsson (2003: 7) expresses similar concerns when she cautions that the school library sector will need to ask questions about the "transformative strength of new library practices, the strength of political will to implement policy locally, the commitment of sufficient resources for sustainability, and the extent to which equity will be realised". She draws attention to the danger of narrowing the vision articulated in the Policy Framework of 1998 and argues for the re-conceptualisation of the school library service and the role of the school librarian for the era of HIV/AIDS:

School library policy should be in the vanguard of redefining the school library contact zone and developing new spatial practices for the devastating social transformation that the HIV/AIDS crisis will surely bring. The policy hiatus has therefore offered us the chance to put the lens again to what we can learn from other countries further along in responding to the pandemic, and harness the minds of lateral thinkers and civil

society, to conceptualise norms and standards for a school library space and practice that penetrate and burst the barriers of this era (2003: 7).

Due to heightened popular involvement, theoretical concepts about policy have evolved and are increasingly accessible as can be seen in the number of interest groups seeking their share of scarce resources as Knuth (1995: 290) points out. School library interest groups should realise that their interests compete with others but at the same time their endeavours can "influence the presence or absence and content of official policy" (Knuth 1995: 290). Part of this process is the need to understand the "interplay between policy and social, economic and political realities in order to achieve goals involving the evolution of effective school libraries" (1995: 290). Both LIASA and SLYSIG have intervened and tried to influence the national school library policy process, but seemingly the interplay referred to here has thus far not resulted in any progress.

The following section briefly outlines the policy lifecycle and specifies criteria for the development of policy.

3.4.3 Policy design and formulation

The KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy*, its implementation strategy, and its feasibility for implementation in the province will be reviewed against the background of the basic elements of policy formulation and design. In order to be able to evaluate the policy document's adequacy the criteria for good policy design and development in the process of policy analysis need to be established and the quality of the decision-making in the policy process evaluated.

Policy design is probably the most important phase in the policy analysis process (Roux 2000: 115) and it requires clear formulation of the policy problem, goals and objectives, and policy alternatives.

3.4.3.1 The policy life cycle

Policy theorists have devised different models of the policy analysis process (Anderson 1997; Hart, T. 1995). The policy process usually starts when a policy issue or problem is identified by stakeholders who feel that they are detrimentally affected by the status quo (Meyer and Cloete 2000a: 97). Dubnick & Romzek (1999: 197) wrote on the “ecology of policy-making”, and detailed the stages in the process: problem identification, problem articulation, agenda-setting, policy formulation/design, policy legitimisation, programme design and development, programme implementation, policy evaluation, policy reassessment, and policy change.

Colebatch (2002: 49-51) refers to the cycle model where stages are presented as a cycle, suggesting a natural progression from one stage to the next. The successive stages are broadly:

- The determination of goals according to the objectives the authorised leaders wish to achieve,
- The choosing of courses of action that will realise these goals, from a range of options and in the light of the relative costs and benefits of each,
- The implementation of these courses of action or choices which are then carried out by other workers,
- The evaluation of the results. The outcome can and should be evaluated in order to ascertain whether the decisions were thoroughly and economically put into effect (efficiency evaluation) and the implementation of the decisions had the expected outcome (effectiveness evaluation),
- Modification of the results which can be achieved by amending the policy in the light of the evaluation.

Hart (Hart, T. 1995) emphasises the importance of policy skills in the new South African democracy. He argues that practical and sustainable public policies are needed, that policy elitism should be avoided, and that openness in the formulation of policy should be encouraged to promote informed policy dialogue. To achieve this he identifies six practical steps that will build policy skills (1995: 18-19), and contrary

to the policy theorists who firstly identify the problem, he argues that decision-makers should firstly identify underlying values (a belief that something is good and desirable) and aspirations (a desire to achieve something that is presently out of reach). This is the first and most important step since

- policy decisions often require choosing between conflicting values and aspirations,
- it is important to establish which ones should be prioritised,
- it helps decision-makers to decide which of the predicted consequences of their actions are the most important, something that is key to the inevitable trade-offs that have to be made during policy analysis.

This step is not to be confused with policy analysis, but should the subsequent analysis show that the aspirations are not achievable, policy decisions may have to be adapted and difficult choices made. Hart (Hart, T. 1995: 18) observes that the chosen options should then, in the end, always be measured against the important values and options articulated at the outset: "policy analysis seeks to ensure that policy decisions are both consistent with important values and grounded in reality".

Further steps are similar to those commonly identified in policy research, namely clear formulation of the problem, identifying alternatives, deciding which dimensions are the most important, predicting likely outcomes, and measuring the chosen course of action against the values and aspirations identified in step one (Hart, T. 1995).

Nassimbeni (2001: 25) succinctly sums up that policy analysts broadly describe two sequences in the policy process, namely policy creation (how issues are converted into agendas) and policy implementation (how policies are carried out and change and influence the way things are done). Hart's steps outline only the first cycle, namely policy formulation.

3.4.3.2 Defining the problem

Despite the different ways in which the policy process is conceptualised most authors agree that it always begins with the identification and definition of a specific problem (Anderson 1997, Colebatch 2002). Roux defines a problem as "a significant and

unwanted discrepancy" (Macrae and Wilde 1979: 23 cited in Roux 2000: 115) and observes that a

researchable problem must exist which, after thorough data collection and systematisation of knowledge, can lead to a point where alternatives can be identified and recommendations made ...[and it is thus] clear that the method of policy analysis, be it prospective or retrospective, aligns closely with the procedure and methods followed in conducting any kind of scientific research (Roux 2000: 115-116).

Roux (2000: 117) cautions that "systematic, methodological policy analysis is not possible if the problem is not defined", and that ideally the problem should be concerned with target group expectations, with those affected by the policy outcome, as well as with the significance of differing values and culture groups in South Africa (2000: 115).

3.4.3.3 Goals and objectives – the desired future

There is no value in problem identification if clear goals and objectives are not formulated (Roux 2000: 115-116). There should be no confusion regarding "where we want to go, what we want to achieve, and where and how we want to address the issue at stake". For the purpose of policy design Roux (2000: 117) views goals as broad purposes and objectives as specific aims. Fox and Meyer (1995) offer the following definitions:

[a goal is] ... an unrealistic state not yet achieved by the members of an organisation but which they regard as desirable... [and] an unrealised state or condition that the members of an organisation do not possess, but which they deem necessary (1995: 55)
[an objective is] a short-term goal that can be deduced from an organisation's mission and that could be stated by means of a process or negotiation (1995: 88).

Table 1 below illustrates the differences between goals and objectives that should be kept in mind when formulating future policy:

Table 1: Goals and objectives

Characteristics	Goals	Objectives
Specification of purposes	Broadly stated (for example to establish school libraries)	Concrete (for example annually provide 1 000 schools with a starter collection)
Definition of terms	Formal (the quality of school library services refers to access to library resources)	Operational (the quality of school library services refers to the number of school librarians employed in schools)
Time period	Unspecified (in the future)	Specified (in the period 2004/5 – 2009/10)
Measurement procedure	Non-quantitative (adequate access to library resources)	Frequently quantitative (the number of libraries provisioned per annum)
Treatment of target groups	Broadly defined (schools in need of libraries)	Specifically defined (6000 schools in the 12 educational districts)

Adapted from Roux (2000: 118)¹¹

However, the continuous developmental and changing nature of society means that no policy is ever complete in terms of outcomes or effect, and may require retrospective analysis and the identification of new and relevant goals and objectives. The following are useful questions to assist with this identification process, and, being both empirical and normative, would provide data that is both prescriptive and descriptive over time:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- What is hindering us?
- How well do we handle multiple objectives?
- What do we need from other institutions?
- What do we require from our own institution?
- What will we regard as success?
- Should success be quantified?
- On what conditions does success depend?
- What will we do if objectives are not met? (Roux 2000: 120.)

¹¹ Roux adapted the table from Dunn, N.W. (1994: 196).

The next section discusses policy constraints – often the very factors that necessitate the generation of policy alternatives.

3.4.3.4 Constraints

The identification of goals and objectives is not always easy and precise. Policies that are complex in terms of the demands of the interest group may display multiple and sometimes conflicting goals and objectives, and may require that some objectives be traded off for the more widely acceptable ones. This can be achieved by prioritising objectives and then optimising them in sequence, thus selecting perhaps not the best solution but one that will satisfy a larger section of the interest group, and agreeing on the minimum, acceptable level of performance for some goals to find possible solutions for the remaining goals, for example to convert less important goals and objectives into constraints (Roux 2000: 122).

Other constraints that should be avoided (Roux 2000: 122-124) include

- budgetary: the best policy option may not be practical or favourable,
- political: policy options favoured may be in the best interest of the party and not the people who are supposed to benefit from the policy,
- organisational: these include ineffective structures, lack of training and inadequate human resources,
- inadequate information which limits policy-makers' ability to specify clear objectives, or on the other hand information overload which likewise makes it difficult to identify precise objectives,
- fear of change resulting in officials' reluctance to accept policy options,
- over quantification where policy issues could be better addressed by common sense, good judgment and logical reasoning,
- subjectiveness that hampers the setting aside of personal value preferences and the impartial investigation of options,
- inadequate satisfaction of divergent needs where finding solutions to one problem may complicate others.

It is important that these restraints are taken into account during the policy design process to ensure that the policy that is eventually developed will have anticipated and addressed the issues that could hinder and limit successful policy implementation.

3.4.3.5 Generating policy alternatives

There is a certain complexity and interrelatedness in the identification of clear goals and objectives and the identification of alternative policy options. After formulation of the problem, the policy analyst should determine precise goals and objectives and identify alternative policy options. This is a process that requires lucid judgment and anticipation of future events, but at the same time it demands a coherent understanding of the identified goals and objectives. Policy analysts should be acquainted with underlying considerations and principles, not only when determining sound policy goals, objectives and alternatives, but also when choosing between feasible alternatives. It is easier to identify objectives that are realistic when alternatives and their consequences have been identified (Roux 2000: 119). Dunn (1994: 196-197) suggests that alternatives may be found in sources such as:

- authorities (experts in a specific field),
- scientific themes (development of new theories and paradigms – for example Curriculum 2005),
- parallel cases (experiences in other countries, but taking local values and practices into account), and
- analogy (similarity between different kinds of policy problems).

These guidelines link well with the purpose of the Delphi technique since opinions are sought from panel members who have expertise in the field and who can also compare the situation with parallel cases.

The identification of alternatives as well as strategies to achieve these alternatives requires not only a systematic search but critical and creative thinking, intuition and sound judgment. It is important too that this enquiry should not be biased in favour of a specific outcome. It is necessary to systematically consider even what may be

perceived as unthinkable options since this thoroughness will ensure that policy-makers are prepared for dramatic changes and reverses that may significantly change the basic criteria which they use. This way paradigm shifts like the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa, which caught many strategic planners unawares, are introduced (Roux 2000: 130).

Karlsson (2003) refers to such paradigm shifts when she observes that, as far as school library policy is concerned, policy analysts need to move away from the concept that one size fits all:

the increasing number of education policy reviews only a few years since their introduction, the discontent of many stakeholders that has given rise to new social movements (though still in their infancy) and vocal groups lobbying for education rights, the critique from the media and researchers, all point to the inadequacy of our policy changes in the immediate post-apartheid period and a growing realisation that they need at least to be refined and improved in the light of experience. If the school library sector in South Africa were to stand as a microcosm of that social change, then it is constructive to critically assess what we have achieved in the school library sector... Are South African policy-makers producing a new space and new practice for school libraries that will respond to the imperatives of the post-apartheid era? Or is it only more of what we did in the apartheid era? (Karlsson 2003: 2).

When searching for suitable alternatives it should be kept in mind too that:

- it is unlikely that any policy will be ideal in terms of all goals (there is no perfect policy alternative),
- a preferred policy should not be contrasted with obvious unattractive alternatives, subjectivity should not overrule objectivity,
- alternatives should be mutually exclusive (if they relate too closely they should be combined into a single new alternative),
- do not end up with too many alternatives,
- alternatives that are too general and all-inclusive may not be practical,
- describe alternatives in terms of a concrete set of action, i.e. move from concept to reality (Roux 2000: 131-132).

The elements of analysis in determining alternatives represent an iterative and interactive series of events as Roux points out (2000: 133), and as such the elements of analysis are not a linear series of steps. As was pointed out in 3.2.4,

good policy works backwards and forwards as the understanding of the problem deepens.

3.4.3.6 The feasibility of alternatives

When the analyst determines the feasibility of alternatives, relevant evaluation criteria should be set up that align with the requirements of a specific policy issue to bring goals and alternatives together in a way that will facilitate choices. Evaluation criteria include effectiveness, political acceptability and socio-economic feasibility, as well as cost. The policy analyst must identify the advantages and disadvantages of different alternatives to choose the best policy option, and as such is faced with three tasks when bringing goals and alternatives together, namely:

- predicting the impact of alternatives,
- valuing impact in terms of criteria,
- comparing alternatives across disparate criteria (Weimer and Vining 1989: 203).

Forecasting enables the policy-maker to construct various policy scenarios and to rank options before selecting the alternatives that will bring about the expected future (Roux 2000: 134-135).

3.4.3.7 Forecasting

Roux describes forecasting as a "rational, explainable phenomenon based on the realities and facts which surrounds us and which enable us to develop insight and intuition" (2000: 139). The members of the Delphi panel (as outlined in chapter 4 under 4.2) were required to likewise use insight and intuition to predict and assess the suitability of the KZN *School Library Policy* for implementation in the province.

Forecasting makes it possible to identify alternative policy options and can improve the quality of decision-making, but at the same time there are constraints that restrict the usefulness of forecasting as indicated in table 2 below.

Table 2: Forecasting

Improving decision-making	Constraints restricting forecasting
Identifies limits to achievement	Accurate, systematic assessment is not possible when information about important aspects is not available
Establishes rates of progress	Researcher's control over variables influencing scenarios determines accuracy of the forecast
Describes the alternatives that are open for choice	Complexity of the scenarios and data needed for assessment determines the success of the forecast
Indicates possibilities that might be achieved	If it is not possible to determine a linear cause-effect relationship between important variables, it hinders the accurate assessment of the implications of such variables
Provides a reference standard for a plan	Insufficient resources and cost can be detrimental to success
Provides warning signals that activities cannot be continued	The longer the time-span the more inaccurate the projection becomes

Summarised from Roux 2000: 137-141)

The determination of alternative policy options by means of information is the objective of policy analysis, and forecasting, even if not a perfect process makes it possible to account for the possible effect of a proposed policy. As such those who formulate policy cannot risk implementing policy decisions without formulating the implications of policy choices over a specified period (Roux 2000: 141).

The elements of policy design described here under 3.3.3 were incorporated in the Delphi questionnaire to enable the panel members to identify the key elements of the *KZN School Library Policy* and their adequacy in terms of policy formulation and development.

The next section provides an overview of the Delphi technique as research methodology in Library and Information Services.

3.4.4 The Delphi technique in literature

Delphi is growing in popularity as a research methodology in LIS where Howze and Dalrymple (2004: 174) view it as an effective way of building consensus without all the disadvantages normally associated with meetings.

3.4.4.1 The Delphi technique and LIS research

One of the earliest reviews on the use of Delphi in librarianship was an article by Fischer (1978). He reviewed Borko's (1970) report on a Delphi study dealing with the improvement of library and information science education in the United States that was undertaken by the Institute of Library Research Unit at the University of California. The basis for the report was the problems in library science education that were identified in a group of special reports. Approximately 80 research projects that could contribute to the solution of these problems were categorised and the number of items were reduced to 36 to simplify the study and pre-tested to iron out problems. The study was conducted over two rounds. Fischer (1978: 67) concludes that, despite Borko's careful questionnaire construction and thorough statistical analysis, the same ranking could have been achieved by random sampling of librarians or library school students. In addition he points out that there was no indication that the results would form the basis of future research projects, thus questioning the usefulness of the research.

In 1972 Wennerberg (1972: 242) reported on a study conducted by the Swedish Administration for Administrative Development, where the Delphi was used "to reduce uncertainty about future events in the field of information and documentation and to identify relevant alternatives of action". A group of 49 experts was involved and the Delphi was conducted over three rounds. The Delphi technique was used to investigate about 200 events and their probable time of occurrence according to the following three thematic groupings, namely:

- tomorrow's library,
- technological breakthroughs in information storage and transfer, and
- future developments in the field.

Again Fischer (1978: 66) comments that, although the study was interesting, the article did not indicate how the information gained would be used in long-range planning.

Since then the use of Delphi as a research methodology in librarianship has become more popular. Howze and Dalrymple (2004: 174) observe that, according to a May 2003 scan of dissertations, the popularity of the Delphi technique as a research method in LIS is growing, and they attribute this mainly to the fact that reaching consensus has become such a lengthy process because domineering opinion leaders often influence reticent members in face-to-face meetings. Delphi affords the opportunity to seek expert opinion to solve a problem, and incorporates the opinion of all participants and that in itself is, in their opinion, an additive to any group process. Their 2003 search of Dissertation Abstracts, on the term “Delphi study” and limited to title searching, yielded 797 studies, of which 767 were doctoral dissertations; this included 15 studies in library science, of which 14 were doctoral dissertations (2004: 176).

Delphi (in LIS) has most frequently been applied to forecast trends and events, and to reach consensus on policies or issues. The following are some examples where Delphi was used to study issues in librarianship:

- research priorities in social welfare library and information work (Wilson 1975),
- public library goals (Lundberg 1981),
- the impact of CD-ROM technology in academic and special libraries (Stocks 1990),
- the future of libraries and information services (Van Trier 1992),
- high school students' use of databases (Neumann 1995),
- personnel and budget allocation for a university library (Kao 1997),
- digital libraries (Kochtanek and Hein 1999),
- Web site selection (Green 2000),
- future developments of electronic journals (Keller 2001),
- the future of the library and information science profession (Baruchson-Arbib and Bronstein 2002),
- factors influencing question routing and assignments (Pomerantz, Nicholson and Lankes 2003),
- the future of library as place (Ludwig and Starr 2005).

Most of these studies have used Delphi to survey experts who were geographically dispersed, or heterogeneous local groups comprised of experts with different backgrounds/perspectives - both situations where Delphi can be easily applied to reach consensus.

To summarise, the Delphi technique is in essence a series of sequential questionnaires or 'rounds', interspersed by controlled feedback, that seek to gain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts (Linstone and Turoff 1975). Three broad categories are commonly used, namely Classical (Conventional), Policy and Decision Delphi. The modified Delphi, which will be used in this study, has become popular too. The advantages and disadvantages of the Delphi technique are complementary. The adoption of an anonymous approach to data collection can facilitate positional openness but at the same time may lead to a risk of lack of accountability. The potential to harness a wide variety of views about different variables and across geographical areas has greater appeal than other alternatives, which may involve face-to-face interaction, but in doing so some nuances may be lost. It is argued, however, that the advantages of this approach outweigh the disadvantages for this research project.

3.5 Summary

The framework in this chapter has provided guidelines on the role of school libraries in a constructivist curriculum environment, policy formulation and what constitutes good policy taking into account that the policy process is never clear-cut and without challenges of its own. This research subscribes to the view that curriculum change will require the support of school libraries of various types as vehicles to create opportunities for knowledge construction, improving literacy levels and fostering a love for reading. Nevertheless, the study takes into account the numerous challenges facing education provisioning on provincial as well as national level, in other words all those factors that hinder both physical and intellectual access to resources. These challenges require resolutions that are supported at national and management level,

and that will offer guidelines and options for school library development in all schools, thus promoting equity and redress.

The next chapter introduces the research design and methodology and provides an outline of the method of data collection. Ethical issues are discussed to establish whether the study conforms to the prescribed ethical requirements.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter draws on conclusions about similar methodologies used in other studies to describe and explain the research design and methods used to determine the adequacy and suitability of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* for implementation in the province. Firstly it outlines the proposed study and research design giving details of the choice of methodology. The instrumentation, questionnaire development and method of data collection are explained. To conclude the evaluative and ethical principles underpinning the study are discussed.

4.1 Proposed study

The aim of this study, as discussed in chapter 1, is to evaluate the KZN *School Library Policy* and its feasibility for implementation in the province. This evaluation will take the following objectives into account:

- accepted standards of good policy making practice in order to assess whether the policy document and implementation plan meet the identified standards,
- the suitability of the provincial policy for implementation in the province against the challenges of the KwaZulu-Natal educational landscape.

It is further anticipated that the results of the research will establish whether there is a gap between the provincial policy proposals and the existing situation in KwaZulu-Natal schools, and that, by identifying disparities and implementation barriers, the research results will provide the ELITS Directorate with sound guidelines to review the policy and implementation strategy.

4.2 Research design and methodology

The background to the study and the literature review in chapters 2 and 3 sought to underpin the research questions that were outlined in chapter 1 under 1.1.4. The main objectives of the research were to:

- Obtain expert opinion on whether the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and implementation plan meet the standards of good policy making practice,
- Analyse the appropriateness of the provincial policy for implementation in the province, a process that required an accurate assessment of the present school library provisioning in the province,
- Identify issues that will necessitate policy review.

The research set out to systematically collect and analyse the data needed to answer the research questions in order to test the appropriateness of the provincial policy against the results obtained in the research programme.

As outlined in previous chapters, a research design of basically two phases and a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies were chosen to explore the research questions. Bertram (2004: 59) points out that quantitative methods are used "when *breadth* is required or to answer *what* questions" while qualitative methods are used "when *depth* is required ... or to answer *why* questions". Qualitative research, according to Powell (1993: 47) "focuses on viewing experiences from the perspective of those involved ... [and] tends to apply a more holistic and natural approach to the resolution of a problem ... [and gives] more attention to the subjective aspects of human experience and behaviour". Firstly a Delphi panel was used, as experts in the field, to obtain qualitative data to analyse and critically assess the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* document and its implementation strategy, and to identify gaps and possible barriers to implementation. Panellists also offered comment on the suitability of the policy for implementation in the province. Secondly, existing survey and questionnaire results were analysed to obtain quantitative data in order to assess the current state of school library provisioning in KwaZulu-Natal province. Methodological triangulation was used to enhance the validity of the data collected. For these reasons the findings could tentatively be applied in other similar contexts.

Although the study draws on a normative approach to policy design (as indicated in chapter 3) the research has been undertaken within an interpretive approach, since

the main methodology, Delphi, is consistent with an interpretative paradigm that views the world as changeable with people defining the meaning of a particular situation. The most important "endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion and Morrisson 2000: 22). In the interpretive approach the focus is on action, and as intentional behaviour it is future oriented, as is the evaluation of the suitability of the policy and the implementation strategy for successful implementation in the province (Cohen, Manion and Morrisson 2000: 22-23).

4.2.1 Choice of methodology

Research is a systematic process of enquiry based on empirical evidence, and as such the research process has to include the collection of data. A fitness for purpose approach means that the data collection methods must match up to the kind of data the researcher requires, which in turn will be informed by the research questions (Bertram 2004: 58). Thus the research questions determine what type or combination of methods is used: "the nature of the data and the problem for research dictate the research methodology" (Leedy 1981: 139).

The research objectives and questions that informed the type of data needed for this research were formulated in chapter 1 under 1.1.3 and 1.1.4. A literature review was undertaken to place the research project within the historical context of the relevant fields of Library and Information Science, Education, and Policy Studies, in order to establish gaps in the literature, and to identify appropriate methodologies used in similar studies. It further served to establish criteria for good policy formulation and implementation which was essential in order to find credible answers to the research questions.

4.2.1.1 The Delphi technique as main methodology

This study adopted the Delphi technique as the main methodology to combine expert opinion in order to determine the adequacy of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* in terms of policy formulation and development, and to test the suitability of

the policy for implementation in the province. The epistemological basis for the Delphi was discussed in 3.3.2, and the use of the methodology in Library and Information Services was summarised under 3.4.4.1 in the literature review.

The Delphi technique is a structured and focused qualitative research tool used to solicit and refine expert opinion in any given field in order to solve a problem or predict future consequences of an act (Lang 1995, Osborne *et al.* 2001). Consensus is gained through a series of rounds of questionnaire surveys, usually two or three, where information and results are fed back in summarised form to a pre-selected panel between each round (Powell 2003: 378). It relies on the premise that the collective judgment of experts, although it may be made up of subjective opinions, is more reliable than individual statements and is thus more objective in its outcomes (Osborne *et al.* 2001; Powell 2003). Linstone and Turoff (1975: 3) define the Delphi technique as "a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem". This definition, as defined in chapter 1, guided the methodology for the critical analysis of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its feasibility for implementation in the province.

Researchers have presented the Delphi research methodology in various ways: as a **survey** (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000), **procedure** (Meijer *et al.* 2003), **method** (Linstone and Turoff 1975; Fischer 1978; Busha and Harter 1980; Osborne *et al.* 2001), and **technique** (Lang 1995; Kao 1997; Powell 2003; Hanafin and Brooks 2005). This research will use the term Delphi technique or merely refer to Delphi.

The Delphi is named after the ancient Greek oracle at Delphi where the Greeks sought information about their future. It was developed by Olaf Helmer and Norman Dalkey in 1953 at the RAND (Research and Development) Corporation to address a future military issue (Linstone and Turoff 1975). Due to its flexibility it has since become a widely used research tool with extremely varied applications and

modifications (Powell 2003; Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000). The main categories of Delphi were outlined in chapter 3 under 3.3.1.

As a decision-making tool Delphi provides a structured approach to data collection in situations where problems do not lend themselves to precise analytical techniques (Ludwig and Starr 2005: 317), or where an anecdotal or completely subjective approach may be the only available alternative (Broomfield and Humphries, 2001). The Delphi's four basic features, namely structured questioning, iteration, controlled feedback, and anonymity of response, optimise the use of group opinion and minimise the adverse qualities of interacting groups:

- **Structured questioning**, through the use of questionnaires, keeps a clear focus on the study and allows the researcher to "control the process and channel it into a compact product",
- **Iteration**, the presentation of the questionnaire over several rounds, enables respondents to reconsider their responses,
- **Controlled feedback** is achieved by allowing panel members to reconsider responses of the whole group as well as their own, and in this way all the responses of the panel are taken into account,
- **Anonymity** of responses prevents opinion being contaminated by strong personalities of dominant panel members (Lang 1995).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 239) succinctly summarise Delphi as bringing together "the advantages of clarity, privacy, voice and collegiality. In doing so it engages the issues of confidentiality, anonymity and disclosure of relevant information whilst protecting participants' rights to privacy".

The types of circumstances where Delphi can be useful as a research tool have been well documented, and Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 9) note its particular usefulness in situations where:

- precise analytical techniques can not be applied to a problem yet subjective judgements on a collective basis will be beneficial, as indicated above,

- the relevant specialists, being in different fields and occupations, cannot communicate directly,
- face-to-face group meetings cannot be organised due to lack of time and/or funds.

Other group approaches to reaching consensus have been considered but have been found to be less appropriate to the evaluation of the policy and its suitability for implementation in the province. These include nominal groups, focus groups as well as the establishment of working groups. In the current study the fact that the researcher formed part of the working group that developed the policy was a concern and it was possible that this issue would exert pressure on participants to conform, thus compromising the validity and reliability of the study. Furthermore, the Delphi incorporates the opinions of all participants and this was perceived to add value to any group process. It was believed that the particular area of expertise, experience or occupational position of the panel members who were geographically dispersed, could significantly influence understanding of the research problem.

Most Delphi techniques follow a broad procedural outline where the first stages, namely defining study questions, are common to the design of the majority of studies. However to ensure that relevant information is gathered, the design of the questionnaire distinguishes Delphi from other surveys (Howze and Dalrymple 2004: 175). The characteristics of a classic Delphi survey are generic and therefore applicable to the modified Delphi:

- A panel of experts who can provide insightful opinions on the problem concerned are identified. Participants can be widely dispersed geographically and information can be exchanged via fax, mail, or e-mail. The rationale of the topic is explained and they are requested to participate anonymously as independent panel members (Busha and Harter, 1980: 177).
- The subject of the study is circulated to the participants in an unstructured manner, usually in the form of one or two open-ended questions that allow the panel to elaborate freely on their responses. They can be asked to compile a list of value judgments, predictions or opinions about the topic (Busha and Harter, 1980).

- The researcher then synthesizes the material and collates it into clusters of issues and responses (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 238). This round can be circumvented if the researcher explores the issue comprehensively by gathering the information and using it to frame the questions to the respondents, as happens in the modified Delphi (Lang 1995).
- A questionnaire, based on the above analysis, is drawn up to determine the opinions of the experts and to elicit points of convergence and divergence. The analysis is passed back to the respondents for comment, further discussions and identification of issues, responses and priorities.
- The questionnaires are distributed repeatedly, each time incorporating the interpreted and reformulated information from previous questionnaires. The process is repeated until the researcher is satisfied that the best possible answer to the initial question and a certain level of consensus or stability has been reached: "By presenting the group response back to the participants there is a general progression in technique towards the polarisation of responses, [that is] a clear identification of areas of consensus and dissensus" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 239).
- The researcher then prepares a final report in which all the responses are pulled together.

Various **advantages** of the Delphi have been cited:

- Groups perform better than their best member in the decision making process (the n+1 principle) and thus the outcomes have greater validity than those put forward by an individual (Powell 2003: 377).
- Anonymity optimises group opinion while minimising drawbacks usually associated with group interviews such as reluctance to modify publicised opinion, dominant respondents, deference to authority, pursuing a single train of thought for a long time or becoming overburdened with periphery information (Lang 1995). Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 9) observe that anonymity of response is "likely to encourage opinions that are free of influences from others and is therefore more likely to be *true*".

- The iterative approach to data collection through questionnaires and feedback allows the researcher to utilise the 'collective human intelligence capability' found in expert groups (Linstone and Turoff, 1975).
- Questionnaires can capture a wide range of inter-related variables and multi-dimensional features (Gupta and Clarke, 1996: 186) and allow geographically dispersed panel experts to share their understandings (Busha and Harter, 1980, Lang 1995).
- The quality of contributions is improved since participants take part at their convenience, and reduced time pressures result in more deliberation and consideration of response (Linstone and Turoff 1975).

Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer (2000: 810) summarise the primary advantages of the Delphi technique as its "adaptability to diverse data collection strategies, decreased peer pressure secondary to anonymity and the ease of condensing opinions of many and varied experts into a few precise statements".

Potential disadvantages include the difficulty of defining and locating an expert panel, and data collection costs and the lengthy data collection time frames (Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer 2000). However, Powell (2003: 377) points out that the cost will depend on the scale of the survey, the number of rounds, and the complexities involved in processing the questionnaires. Moreover, the use of technology can automate and streamline procedures. (See section 4.5 for a more detailed discussion.)

Some authors have questioned the reliability, validity and credibility of the Delphi technique as a research methodology. Powell (2003: 377-8) cites Sackman's (1975) comment that anonymity may lead to a "lack of accountability of views expressed and encourage hasty decisions" And that moreover a consensus approach can "generate only bland statements representing the lowest common denominator". It could be argued, however, that this limitation is not unique to Delphi, since it can apply to most approaches to gaining consensus, such as working groups, nominal

groups, and even anonymous postal questionnaires, and the "use of experts and sequential processes may positively discourage such action" (Powell 2003: 378).

Several methodological issues, such as panel size and expertise, the number of rounds and questionnaire development, and analysis, feedback and consensus, may well jeopardise the credibility of this Delphi study. These issues and the decisions taken regarding each are discussed under instrumentation in 4.3.

To summarise, the Delphi technique is a structured research approach for collecting and refining knowledge from a group of experts in key areas through a series of questionnaires interspersed with controlled feedback. The interpretation and application of the Delphi technique is varied, and this research will follow a modified Delphi approach. Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 10) argue that the advantages and disadvantages of the Delphi can be viewed as complimentary: anonymity may facilitate positional openness, yet it can lead to lack of accountability. Moreover Delphi elicits expert opinion and a variety of views from participants across geographical areas, and avoids distractions inherent to round table discussion.

In this research it is believed that the advantages of the Delphi, as outlined in the literature, overshadow the possible disadvantages of cost, lengthy data collection, and the possibility of lack of accountability from panel members.

4.2.1.2 Surveys as secondary data

The other focus area of the research required an analysis of the suitability of the provincial school library policy for implementation in the province, a process that required an accurate assessment of the current present school library provisioning in KwaZulu-Natal, including school library models that were already being implemented in the province.

In order to assess the status of school libraries in the province, the researcher analysed the following secondary data:

- The results of the 2004 ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004), and the 1999 HSRC's South African School Library Survey in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d). These results were compared in order to put the provincial situation in perspective and to comment on changes and possible development and growth since the 1999 survey.
- A report of site visits by ELITS personnel to 60 schools in the province to evaluate the implementation of the School Library Development Project¹² (SLDP) by way of a structured interview and the use of an interview schedule.
- A Risk Management Report, undertaken by the KZN Department of Education Internal Control and Risk Management sub-directorate (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c) in order to evaluate risks to ELITS' service delivery, was used to corroborate some of the findings.

The 2004 ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) was conducted to provide a baseline set of data with which to inform decision-making and planning within the directorate. The response rate of 84% (5 156 of the 6 129 schools) was sufficiently significant to provide a representative picture of library facilities, library utilisation, management and supporting infrastructure in all districts of KwaZulu-Natal. To maximise reliability and validity there was extensive consultation with ELITS advisors to identify the information that would be needed to guide interventions and track programme implementation, and the researcher facilitated and coordinated this process, and liaised with the service providers who developed a two-page data collection instrument (a self-administered questionnaire to be completed by the person responsible for the library). The questionnaire was pre-tested in a small sample of schools, after which the data collection instrument was finalised. The questionnaires were distributed by the KZN Department of Education's Education Management Information Services (EMIS), and the forms were captured

¹² The SLDP is the provisioning programme whereby schools are given starter collections according to the provisions of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy's* implementation strategy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture 2003: 11).

using a custom designed database that linked the current EMIS data to the ELITS School Library Audit data (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004).

The researcher was at no time responsible for the input and data analysis of the data generated during the ELITS audit, or for the development of the interview schedule that was discussed with the staff at the 60 SLDP schools. This means that the researcher kept a distance from the key processes and only drew on existing primary data sources that had not been used before. The data from the relevant surveys was analysed and this analysis enabled the researcher to compare the literature, Delphi, and the survey and report results in order to answer the research questions. In this way methodological triangulation was achieved.

As outlined in chapter 3, Vermeulen (1991), Stander (1993) and Bawa (1996) used similar methodologies in their research. Vermeulen and Bawa used the survey method and experienced problems with poor returns (and in some cases no returns) of questionnaires, as well as the unreliability of information. Stander (1993: 77) used the data collected through a research project into the state of school libraries and the need for training of school librarians in Namibia, and researched and developed her hypothesis that indigenous standards based on local conditions should be developed for school libraries in developing countries.

It proved difficult for Bawa and Vermeulen to obtain access to schools. The result was that Bawa, in view of the lack of co-operation from the Education Departments and the restricted access policies, had to rely on alternative methods to collect data. Data obtained from a conference questionnaire, which generated a sample population of just two percent, were used. Apart from the questionnaire completed by the conference participants, all other data was obtained from departmental officials. An audit of school library provision and her investigation into stakeholder opinion could not be carried out and the resultant research relied heavily on research into the context of library provisioning in KwaZulu-Natal.

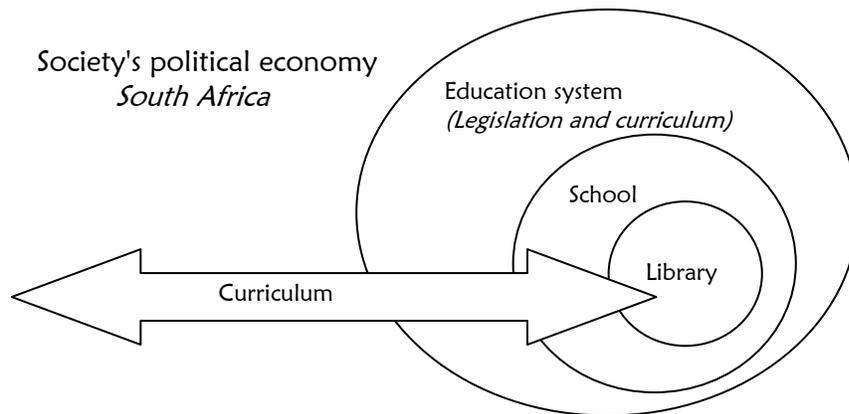
It is anticipated that the data collected with the surveys and reports used in this study will be more reliable since the ELITS Directorate had access to all KZN schools through EMIS for the distribution of the survey questionnaires, and ELITS and Risk Management officials likewise have access to all public schools in the province. The reliability of the information is an important factor since a study of this nature needs to give evidence of a true reflection and a clear understanding of the existing situation in schools in the province if the proposed evaluation of the provincial policy and its feasibility for implementation is to stand up to scrutiny.

4.2.2 Conceptual underpinning of the study

In order to refine a research problem, a theoretical framework upon which to base the research is needed. The elements or variables of a theory are logically interrelated, and if relevant theory exists, the researcher can deduce the research questions based upon particular relationships between these elements (Kaniki 1999: 19). The theoretical framework for this research was fully outlined in chapter 3 under 3.1. The personal perspectives of the researcher were enumerated in chapter 1 under 3, the assumptions of the study.

The interrelatedness of school library, school, the education system, and society's political economy ("a system within and open to other systems") is aptly demonstrated in figure 1 below that Hart (2002b: 53) adapted from Job's (1993) research, illustrating the environments in which school libraries operate. Hart (2002: 53) comments on international consensus that "the development of school library systems requires the support of explicit legislation" and in addition she adds curriculum as a facet that cuts across all these spheres, since it is the "funnel through which a society influences the schooling of its young people".

Figure 1: Environments in which school libraries operate



Hart (2002b: 53) – adapted from Job (1993).

A key factor for the current study was the context in the schools regarding the curriculum, that is, the study took place after the implementation of Curriculum 2005 had commenced.

4.3 Instrumentation

This section outlines the study methods and focuses on specific issues such as panel identification and expertise, questionnaire development, pre-testing and data-collection, consensus and analysis. This framework will be developed by drawing on other Delphi studies identified in the literature search. A Delphi study reported on by Hanafin and Brooks (2005) influenced the development of this section.

Seven key studies in the fields of Library and Information Science, Education, and Health were used throughout the section for illustrative purposes when methodological issues arose and choices had to be made. The studies were drawn from these disciplines since the research is placed in the LIS and Education disciplines, and moreover the Health Sciences offered a variety of research papers on Delphi as a research method and its use in issues related to medical libraries. The researcher used the following criteria for inclusion of the studies:

- Currency of the research - published after 1999,
- Reporting on the research itself,
- Discipline in which research was undertaken (LIS, Education, Health Sciences),

- Type of Delphi utilised,
- Published in English.

These criteria may have limitations in respect of the material identified but have proved to be sufficiently comprehensive to offer insight and a comprehensive overview of the key issues that were considered.

Table 3: Key studies

	Author	Research title, and main focus	Discipline	Delphi type
1	Custer, R.L., Scarcella, J.A. and Stewart, B.R. 1999	<i>The modified Delphi – a rotational modification</i> To identify competencies needed to update training requirements	Education	Modified Delphi
2	Kochtanek, T.R. and Hein, K.K. 1999	<i>Delphi study of digital libraries</i> To paint a broad picture of current status of digital libraries	LIS	Conventional Delphi
3	Osborne, J et al. 2001.	<i>What should we teach about science: A Delphi study</i> To determine characteristics of scientific enquiry and aspects of nature of scientific knowledge that should be essential components of school science curriculum	Education	Normative/ Decision Delphi
4	Baruchson-Arbib, S. and Bronstein, J. 2002	<i>A view to the future of the Library and Information Science Profession: A Delphi study</i> To examine the views of LIS experts on the future of the profession in the light of changes in ICT (formulate new goals and objectives)	LIS	Decision Delphi
5	Howze, P.C. and Dalrymple, C. 2004	<i>Consensus without all the meetings: using the Delphi method to determine course content for library instruction</i> To determine course content for a library instruction manual	LIS	Modified Delphi
6	Hanafin, S. and Brooks, A. 2005	<i>The Delphi technique: a methodology to support the development of a national set of child well-being indicators</i> To develop a national set of child well-being indicators as basis for a bi-annual report (to compare Irish and international standards)	Health	Decision Delphi

	Author	Research title, and main focus	Discipline	Delphi type
7	Ludwig, L. and Starr, S. 2005	<i>Library as place: results of a Delphi study</i> To gain expert consensus on the library as place and assist health librarians in designing new library spaces	Health	Conventional Delphi

The Delphi type was included as a criterion given that the researcher wanted clarity on Delphi types and modifications since the research would not utilise Delphi to measure movement towards group consensus, but to gather opinion and views from experts on clearly specified issues until consensus or stability of response was reached. This requirement will be discussed under 4.5.1.

4.3.1 Sampling

The selection of the sample of experts frequently involves non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive or criterion sampling. Participants are selected for a purpose: "to apply their knowledge to a certain problem on the basis of criteria, which are developed from the nature of the problem under investigation" (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000: 1010). As they are not selected randomly, there is no representativeness but the sampling, based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, does meet some predetermined criterion. Powell (2003: 378) maintains that the success of a Delphi rests on the expertise of the panelists and that panel size and the qualifications of the experts are two key aspects in the composition of a Delphi panel.

4.3.2 Panel expertise

The success and validity of a Delphi study depends on the expertise of the selected panel members rather than on the number of participants polled (Logan and Starr 2005: 317), and panellist should therefore be chosen for their "interest in the problem that is being investigated and their expertise in the field of study" (Howze and Dalrymple 2004: 175).

There is some agreement that expert participants involved in Delphi studies should be willing and able to make a valid contribution to the subject under examination (Powell 2003: 379). Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 15) caution that these two factors need to be balanced with the potential for bias and cite Van Zolingen and Klaassen (2003: 324) who point out that bias may be created if the researcher selects only one of the following types of respondents: those who are easily available, who meet the minimum criteria of expertise in the research area, whose reputation is known to the researcher, and panellists selected on the basis of self-ratings of their expertise. Van Zolingen and Klaassen (2003: 324) also suggest that participants willing to take part in the Delphi may favour the method, and as a result be more inclined to agree with other panel members. As has already been pointed out, this should be discouraged by the use of experts with professional insight, relative impartiality to the results, and the sequential Delphi rounds.

Table 4 below captures the criteria for expert eligibility in the key studies.

Table 4: Key issues relating to expert panels

	Author	N = Panel size Composition	Expert eligibility
1	Custer, R.L., Scarcella, J.A. and Stewart, B.R. 1999	N = 44 Two stakeholder groups: N = 22 contractors N = 22 policy makers Heterogeneous 3 Rotational panels Geographically dispersed	- Chosen for their unique perspectives of expert opinion
2	Kochtanek, T.R. and Hein, K.K. 1999	N = 21 Heterogeneous Single panel Geographically dispersed	Initial list of experts in the field of Digital Libraries identified by project group (internet, on-line bibliographic databases, other publications). Selection: - Contributions to conferences, literature on Digital Libraries - Collaboration on high-profile research projects - Conducted a trial Delphi with Delphi web-based software to reach consensus regarding which experts to contact

	Author	N = Panel size Composition	Expert eligibility
3	Osborne, J. <i>et al.</i> 2001.	N = 25 Heterogeneous Single panel Geographically dispersed 5 Stakeholder groups: scientist, philosophers, sociologists of science, science educators, science teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eminent in the field - Teachers: awards for teaching or had published - Recognised interest in science education - Expertise in primary or secondary phase - Renowned by their work or publications - Curriculum development
4	Baruchson-Arbib, S. and Bronstein, J. 2002	N = 40 Homogeneous Single panel Geographically dispersed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Years of professional expertise - Managerial positions - Publications
5	Howze, P.C. and Dalrymple, C. 2004	N = 34 Homogeneous Single panel Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faculty members - Local, homogeneous group sharing a common knowledge base
6	Hanafin, S. and Brooks, A. 2005	N = 87 Heterogeneous Single panel Geographically dispersed 4 Stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academics who had published in the area of children's research - Nominations from identified organisations - Members of national Children's Office research group - Nominees of Children's Rights Alliance - Each member then identified two more people with expertise from other sector than their own - Parents from different backgrounds and geographic areas - National parents' organisations - Study on children's view of their well-being included
7	Ludwig, L. and Starr, S. 2005	N = 30 Heterogeneous Single panel Geographically dispersed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Librarians, architects and space planners with recent experience in designing health services libraries - Opinion leaders with experience in library design - Should be from different regions of country

The key studies that were chosen for illustrative purposes defined expertise for inclusion (table 4 above) in the panels in many diverse ways, and used mechanisms to identify suitable panel members that ranged from very specific criteria (Hanafin and Brooks 2005; Osborne *et al.* 2001) to the inclusion of members on the grounds of faculty membership or organisational affiliation (Howze and Dalrymple 2004), the

positions they held (Baruchson-Arbib and Bronstein 2002), or their unique expertise as opinion leaders (Custer, Scarcella and Stewart 1999; Osborne *et al.* 2001; Ludwig and Starr 2005). Additional requirements included publications (Osborne *et al.* 2001; Baruchson-Arbib and Bronstein 2002; Hanafin and Brooks 2005), collaboration on high-profile research projects (Kochtanek and Hein 1999), and international reputation and awards (Osborne *et al.* 2001). There are no common characteristics since expertise was defined variously for the purposes of each study. The snowball effect, where panel members were asked to identify two other experts from a field other than their own, was used by Hanafin and Brooks (2005). Kochtanek and Hein (1999) used a trial Delphi to reach consensus regarding which experts to contact.

There are different perspectives regarding the composition of a Delphi panel. Some researchers advocate the use of heterogeneous groups, claiming that different perspectives from a wide base of knowledge leads to better performance since it allows a wider range of alternatives (Powell 2003: 379; Murphy *et al.* 1998: 38), although Murphy *et al.* point out that it depends on the purpose of the exercise:

If the aim is to define common ground and maximise areas of agreement, groups should be homogeneous in composition. If, in contrast, the aim is to identify and explore areas of uncertainty, a heterogeneous group is appropriate. The level of controversy which exists on an issue needs to be considered when selecting group members.

Howze and Dalrymple (2004) identified the 34 members of the library faculty to compose a local and homogeneous panel sharing a common knowledge base. Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 17) developed a "single panel of expertise, heterogeneous in formal knowledge and experiential base" after carefully considering the advantages and disadvantages of single and multiple panels, and Custer, Scarcella and Stewart (1999) selected a heterogeneous and geographically dispersed panel where two groups from different parts of the industry were included to provide breadth of insight. However, in studies in specialist areas it is considered acceptable to select specialists in that area, and although some researchers caution against bias where the experts are acquainted with the researcher (Murphy *et al.* 1998: 38), Powell (2003: 379) concedes that this may be difficult to address in truly specialised areas.

– **Selection of panel experts for this study**

Considering the research findings discussed under 4.3.2 above it is clear that the consideration of members for the Delphi panel is critical since effective selection will maximise the quality of responses which in turn will enhance the credibility of the study. As indicated by Hasson, Keeney and McKenna (2000: 1010) the Delphi often requires non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive sampling or criterion sampling where the researcher, as was done in this study, builds up a sample that satisfies specific needs, in other words makes specific choices about the people to include in the sample "to apply their knowledge to a certain problem".

The main concern in the selection of the Delphi panel for this study was to capture relevant expertise and at the same time ensure representativeness in the sampling, thus although the selection of panellists was tailored to the issue they were selected from various backgrounds within the subject under investigation. Stakeholders, those who are directly affected by the issue, were not included in the panel since there were panellists with relevant expertise regarding practice on the ground and secondary data would also be utilised to corroborate panel response to implementation problems. The Delphi was conducted by means of e-mailed questionnaires and this would have been problematic as far as school representation was concerned. From the small pool of teacher-librarians in schools it was unlikely that they would necessarily have the macro-level view required or be able to sustain participation over three Delphi rounds. The researcher believed that the teacher-librarians that would be able to participate would most likely be in the urban (and more advantaged) areas and lack the necessary insight into the challenges facing the majority of (mostly rural) schools.

Delphi researchers agree (Powell 2003: 379) that "experts should be chosen for their work in the appropriate area and credibility with the target audience" and this is illustrated too in table 4 above. In the case of this study, panellists were selected for their knowledge of context. The main criteria used were that the panel members should understand or have first-hand experience or knowledge of the conditions in the province and the educational climate in South Africa, and that these be

understood in a holistic way. Of critical importance to the analysis of the policy document and its suitability for implementation in KwaZulu-Natal is likewise an understanding of school libraries and their role in developing quality education.

The expertise of the panellists was identified in terms of a review of the literature, personal observation, conference presentations, being positional leaders, and as mentioned, by virtue of their practical experience in the field or their first-hand experience of the issue. The panellists, although all from the LIS field, have a wide variety of backgrounds. It was decided to include a panellist from Australia because of the similarities between the two countries, such as distance and rural provisioning, and to benefit from their experience in developing and establishing school library services. The panellist is an expert on school libraries and reading, and has initiated an outreach project in four rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal. She has spent time in South Africa visiting the schools and assessing local needs and has experience of local conditions and challenges.

The following broad constituency groups (categories) who hold expertise in the area of school libraries and policy development and implementation were identified:

1. Provincial School Library Services: management.
2. Policy and school library researchers and academics.
3. Non-governmental organisations with a focus on school library development in KwaZulu-Natal, and with practical expertise in the field.
4. Researchers and others with experience in specific areas not covered by category 2 or 3, for example the reading environment and reading programmes.

The panellists participating in the study were characterised by and included the following:

- High ranking managers at provincial level. The panellist has extensive knowledge of local conditions and the types of problems experienced both in schools and by school library services in the province.

- Professors in LIS. The panellists are au fait with local conditions in schools and have conducted research in schools. They possess the required holistic knowledge of the role of school libraries in education.
- PhD degree holders in relevant research fields who have specialised knowledge regarding school libraries, information skills and reading programmes.
- Experienced practitioners, and consultants in the African region. The panellist has worked extensively in KwaZulu-Natal schools, specifically rural schools, and coordinates several donor projects in schools and communities in the province in collaboration with local, national and international stakeholders.

The panel members have established research and publication records. Some are editors of LIS and/or school library journals and are active in school library related associations. Although the panel members all had an interest in the research topic, none would directly or indirectly benefit from the conclusions arrived at and thus, although the researcher personally knew some of the panel members, it was believed that this lack of immediate benefit for panellists minimised possible bias in the panel.

4.3.3 Panel size

There is wide variation in the number of panel members, as illustrated in table 4 under 4.3.2 and the question is open to interpretation by the researcher (Powell 2003: 378). Armstrong (1985, cited in Ludwig and Starr 2005: 317) observes that most panels consist of five to twenty members, Osborne *et al.* (2001:20) mention ten as a minimum for panels, and cite Delbecq *et al.* (1975) who maintained that in a homogeneous group, few new ideas were generated when the number exceeded 30. Dalkey and Helmer (Helmer 1983) used a panel of 7 in their original Delphi experiment in 1953. Powell (2003: 378) suggests that representativeness is assessed on the qualities of the expert panel rather than its numbers since Delphi does not require representative samples for statistical purposes.

Murphy *et al.* (1998: 27, 37) conclude that it may not necessarily be beneficial to increase the size of interacting groups since size affects processes within groups, for

example participation may become more unequal. However, it is conceded that generally more members will increase the reliability of the group judgment, and though it is theoretically likely that group size will affect decision-making the effects are subtle and difficult to detect. It is probable that reliability will decline below six but above 12 improvements in reliability will again be subject to diminishing returns (1998: 37).

The panel size in the key studies (table 4) varies from 21 to 87. There is no specific instrument for identifying the number of panellists but the amount of data generated by large panels influences the amount of data analysis and may lead to issues of data handling and analysis difficulties specifically if qualitative data is generated (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000: 1010). Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 17) point out that the size of the panel may vary according to the topics covered, the different perspectives included, and the time and money available to the researcher.

One or more panels can be formed. Custer, Scarcella and Stewart (1999) formed three panels in their rotational Delphi, and Osborne *et al.* (2001) included five individuals per group from five different interest areas in the field in their one panel. Hanafin and Brooks (2005) included four stakeholder groups in their panel: parents (N=1), policy makers (N=25), researchers (N=21), and service providers (N=12). There does not, therefore, appear to be an optimum number of panels or indeed, panel members.

- Panel size for this study

The research evidence discussed above was taken into account when the number of panellists for the study was considered, namely that a too large panel could generate an amount of qualitative data that would be difficult for the researcher to handle and analyse, the lack of evidence regarding panel size relating to the reality or validity of consensus processes, and the fact that representativeness is measured on the qualities of the expert panel rather than its numbers. These arguments mitigated against the option of more than one panel too, and despite the fact that there could be areas in

the questionnaire where panellists may not have expertise thus creating difficulties in interpretation (as indicated in a few of the results captured in chapter 5 of this research) it was thought that the advantages of a single panel outweighed the disadvantages:

- One panel would be conceptually more coherent,
- The evaluation of each aspect would be situated within the context of the overall 'whole policy perspective' and this may have a synergetic quality,
- The study would be less complex than that of multiple panels and would generate enough data for analysis (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000; Hanafin and Brooks 2005).
- The focus of the research is on the policy document meeting the criteria of good policy and consequently it might make it easier to strike a balance between impartiality and expertise through the use of one panel (Hanafin and Brooks 2005).

A single panel of expertise was thus formed, and although they were homogenous as far as the study field is concerned, namely Library and Information Services, they could be perceived as heterogeneous in "formal knowledge and experiential base" (Hanafin and Brooks 2005: 18).

Initially ten potential panellists were identified. Three declined to partake in the Delphi due to personal reasons, and seven agreed to participate in the study and made up the panel for the research project. However, two panellists did not return their questionnaires despite follow-up and only five of the anticipated seven panellists completed all the questionnaires. The resultant panel size raises questions regarding the validity of the research.

However, in a Delphi study conducted by Akins, Tolson and Cole (2005) response characteristics for 54 survey items are compared for the responses of the 23 actual study participants and two computer-generated samples of 1000 and 2000 re-sampling iterations. They point out that despite the Delphi's wide use there is "still

no clear identification or agreement as to what constitutes a sufficient number of Delphi survey participants to ensure stability of results". Although they identified only a few Delphi studies in the Health Services with less than 10 participants, they argue that "sample size in Delphi studies has been researcher and situation specific, and more often than not, convenience samples have been chosen dependent on availability of experts and resources." No standards have been established in any methodologically acceptable way and current literature (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000) only puts forward empirical choices on Delphi expert sample sizes made by individual researchers, such as convenience, purposive or criterion sampling.

The results from their study (Akins, Tolson and Cole 2005) indicate that "the response characteristics of a small expert panel in a well-defined knowledge area are stable in light of augmented sampling". This finding is particularly important for conducting Delphi surveys in knowledge or practice fields where the total number of qualifying knowledgeable individuals is limited. They conclude that reliable outcomes can be obtained with a panel of a relatively small number of Delphi experts, and that a small expert panel from a limited field of study "may be used with confidence".

It was anticipated that at least seven panel members would participate in the Delphi on the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library policy* but the data collected from the five remaining panel members was rich and varied, and consensus was reached on the majority of issues. The number of local experts in the field who met all the requirements was limited and although a better response rate would undoubtedly have further enhanced the reliability of the study findings, it was decided to go ahead with the small number of competent panellists who were prepared to participate.

4.3.4 Data collection

The Delphi technique requires a continued commitment from participants since they are questioned over several rounds and participant retention is important when data is collected at more than one point in time (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000: 1011), and the researcher should not underestimate "panel response burden and

fatigue factors" (Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer 2000). Other contributing factors could include:

- Not being fully informed about the study since this understanding builds a research relationship, and in the end the response rate is "at the discretion of the respondent" (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000: 1011),
- Excessive structuring of the questionnaire,
- Failure to take divergent views into account,
- Failing to compensate panellists adequately (Linstone and Turoff 1975: 5).

Compensation could be in ways other than monetary and could be taken to mean recognition, interaction with others with similar interests, benefit from information gathered and results obtained, and benefiting pedagogically by analysing the topic (Hsu and Sandford 2007; Lang 1995).

Prior to the start of the Delphi data collection each potential panellist in this study was personally contacted per e-mail to outline the purpose of the research, the method to be used, and to request their participation. This contacting was done to establish an open line of communication (Hsu and Sandford 2007) and several members of the sample replied to request additional information - mostly regarding the time commitment should they accept. The benefits of participation were pointed out to panellists. Once they agreed to participate additional information was posted to them. This included internal reports, surveys and statistical material not readily available outside the ELITS Directorate but that would prove useful to them in their own research as was subsequently noticed in a research article published by a panel member. The researcher undertook to forward the results of the study to them once it was completed, and ascertained whether remuneration would be required since the completion of the questionnaires would fall outside of their normal work load. A small token of appreciation (a modest gift voucher) was posted to each panel member after the third round questionnaire had been forwarded to them since they had all previously indicated that they required no remuneration for partaking in the Delphi rounds.

4.3.5 Response rates

Gordon (1994) observes that the anticipated response rate in Delphi studies is usually 40 - 75%, while Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer (2000) cite Linstone and Turoff (1975) who put the recommended response rates at 40 - 50%. Hasson, Keeney and McKenna (2000: 1012) refer to a response rate of 70%. Yet the response rate is of special concern to the quality of a Delphi study since the researcher needs to achieve the highest possible response rate in the initial questionnaire, and maintain it in the iterations so that the validity of the study is not jeopardised (Hsu and Sandford 2007).

The response rates in the key studies (table 3) used in this research varied. Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 20) reported an overall response rate of between 72 - 84% over all the rounds, and Osborne *et al.* (2001) achieved a response rate of 94% in all three rounds. Kochtanek and Hein (1999) reported that only 6 of the 21 panel members completed rounds 1 and 2, and 4 completed round 3.

In this research five of the seven panel members completed all three rounds, in other words a response rate of 71 percent was achieved and maintained in all three rounds. In order to ensure a good response rate non-responders were contacted per telephone or e-mail and time extensions were given for all three rounds due to timing issues such as holidays, international conferences, and periods when panel members were under added work pressure such as at the end of the academic year. The researcher was aware of the fact that the panellists were in professional positions and had busy and full workloads, and it was thought that the benefits of retaining all panellists for the full three rounds was more important than adhering to a strict time frame for the collection of the data.

4.4 Questionnaire development

Most authors in the key studies reported extensively on questionnaire development and rounds, especially Osborne *et al.* (2001) and Hanafin and Brooks (2005).

Baruchson-Arbib and Bronstein (2002) included examples from the questionnaire and

Hanafin and Brooks (2005) attached their full questionnaire as an addendum. Table 5 offers a summary of the questionnaire development in the key studies.

Table 5: Questionnaire development and Delphi rounds in key studies

	Author	Questionnaire development and Delphi rounds
1	Custer, R.L., Scarcella, J.A. and Stewart, B.R. 1999	3 panels – Rotational method 3 rounds for each panel. Responses were analysed to build next round's instrument 75 competencies were selected from documents and training material and divided in two major classifications. These were reviewed by a panel and pilot tested by a sample. The instrument was divided into three instruments (1 per panel) that were rotated through the sub-panels.
2	Kochtanek, T.R. and Hein, K.K. 1999	Project group formulated the initial questions based on articles written by invited panel members. They identified 13 broad areas, forwarded this to 21 panel members and generated 118 opinion statements from 9 responses (trial Delphi) Round 1: 118 statements – 6 responses Round 2: the same survey was distributed – 6 responses Round 3: contained 77 remaining opinion statements – 4 responses Some replied via web, others faxed responses
3	Osborne, J <i>et al.</i> 2001.	Round 1: An open-ended brainstorming questionnaire. Identified 30 themes Round 2: Rate and prioritise importance of themes, comment on accuracy and comprehensiveness of each, comment on the merging of related themes (28 themes) Round 3: Only most highly rated themes from round 2 (18), indicate priority and justify their ratings; comment on ways to improve wording 23 of the 25 members completed all questionnaires
4	Baruchson-Arbib, S. and Bronstein, J. 2002	Developed an on-line questionnaire with 47 statements based on the literature review. Examined three main issues Round 2: Only to the 26 participants outside group consensus
5	Howze, P.C. and Dalrymple, C. 2004	134 item checklist of learning objectives was sent to participants Round 1: Asked to rate objectives, add new ones, and offer comment. 100% responded Round 2: Results were sent to all and they were asked to rank again. 73% responded
6	Hanafin, S. and Brooks, A. 2005	Pre-testing and a two-round pilot study with 10 people not part of the panel resulted in changes in the questionnaire Examined indicators used elsewhere and an expert in area of data sources of child statistics identified indicators in the key areas. These presented as first round (thus semi-structured) Round 1: 3-part questionnaire, allowed comment on areas not covered Round 2: Key areas prioritised and feedback requested. Panellists'

	Author	Questionnaire development and Delphi rounds
		<p>comments added. Given chance for feedback and asked to add three areas not prioritised for inclusion in 3rd round</p> <p>Round 3: Analysis from round 2 discussed with agencies, organisations, government departments and advisory group – this contributed to 3rd round</p> <p>A separate study on children's understanding of well-being was undertaken and data incorporated at each stage</p>
7	Ludwig, L. and Starr, S. 2005	<p>Open-ended questions to a small team of experts produced 200 change statements – reduced to 78</p> <p>Round 1: Rate the 78 opinion statements and comment on their responses</p> <p>Round 2: Comments grouped as why and why not statements, asked to rate and comment again</p> <p>Round 3: Procedure repeated for the remaining statements where consensus was still possible</p> <p>On-line: Survey website</p>

In the key Delphi studies above the researchers used single or multiple panels over two or three rounds. In some studies the questions or checklists were generated before the first round by the researchers, sometimes with the help of experts or a small sample panel consisting of either the proposed panel members or a different sample. Other studies generated statements during the first round through open-ended questions. Two studies pre-tested the questionnaires, namely Custer, Scarcella and Stewart (1999), and Hanafin and Brooks (2005). Although some questionnaires were more structured (Custer, Scarcella and Stewart 1999; Baruchson-Arbib and Bronstein 2002) compared to others that allowed comment and feedback at all stages (Hanafin and Brooks 2005), all the studies allowed a degree of comment at some stage during the Delphi.

The researcher, while developing the questionnaires for each round of this Delphi, took into account issues raised about questionnaires in the literature such as the length of the questionnaire and the importance of clearly formulated unambiguous questions. Ethical issues regarding the completion of the questionnaires, for example not coercing panellists, and respecting the decision of the two panellists who did not

complete any questionnaires were likewise observed (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 246). The University of KwaZulu-Natal ethical guidelines were adhered to.

Questionnaire development was ongoing and the questionnaire was reviewed after each round. A colour font was used in subsequent questionnaires to highlight information and comment from panellists in previous rounds. In developing the questionnaires the view was taken that all panel members, by virtue of their involvement in the Library and Information Services field, would have some knowledge of the key areas for analysis and this would allow for the holistic nature of responses to be captured.

4.4.1 Pre-testing

The situation around pilot testing prior to the main Delphi study is unclear. Powell (2003: 378), for example, argues that 'pilot testing is optional although it may be useful to identify ambiguities and improve the feasibility of administration'.

However, Lang (1995) and Hasson, Keeney and McKenna (2000: 1010) argue that, as is the case with all good surveys, pilot testing with a small group should precede implementation. An analysis of the key studies used in this research (table 5) showed that Custer, Scarcella and Stewart (1999) pre-tested the questionnaire on a small sample before it was sent to the panellists, while Hanafin and Brooks (2005) undertook substantial pre-testing: a two round pilot study with 10 participants who did not take part in the Delphi. This resulted in changes regarding questionnaire layout, content, wording, re-grouping of indicators, and the format of response to the questionnaire.

In this research the questionnaire was pre-tested by a small sample of three with similar expertise to that of the panellists. Two of the sample members were in academic positions and could offer valuable input regarding clarity and the feasibility of administration, and a third was in the provincial school library sector and offered comment on practical issues. This pre-testing enabled the researcher to refine the

layout, clarify ambiguities, and simplify the questionnaire. In a few instances additional background information was included to clarify questions.

4.4.2 Round 1

Hsu and Sandford (2007) point out that the conventional Delphi adopts an inductive approach and begins round 1 with an open-ended questionnaire in order to collect information about the issue. This qualitative data is then converted into a structured questionnaire for the second round. In contrast the modified Delphi begins with a structured instrument for future questionnaire development. There seems to be no definitive answer as to which of the two methods is superior, and Hsu and Sandford (2007) conclude that the modified Delphi is appropriate if information concerning the project is available. The advantages and disadvantages of both methods are enumerated in table 6 compiled from Hasson, Keeney and McKenna's (2000) and Hsu and Sandford's (2007) research.

Table 6: Conventional versus Modified Delphi

Conventional	Modified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-ended questions can be ambiguous in nature and broad in scope, and this can lead to bias at the outset and to biased results. - Open-ended questions increase the richness of data collected. - Open-ended questions allow panel members free scope to elaborate on the topic and express their own ideas. - Open-ended questions generate a large and diverse set of statements that requires editing. <p>However, this inductive-type approach has been criticised on the basis of its inability to produce the level of information that a thorough literature review would produce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate option if information concerning the project is available - Close-ended, pre-established questionnaire allows researcher to verify the face and content validity of the instrument prior to distribution – an important and desired methodological improvement (validity verification) - Saves time of editing 1st round responses and preparing questionnaire output - Typically improves initial round response rates - Cuts down the drop-out rate of respondents completing open-ended questions and needs assessment type survey and not participating in the rest of the Delphi - Provides a solid grounding in previously developed work - Ensures that important statements are included - Panelists appreciate a completed instrument

This study on the adequacy and suitability of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* for implementation in the province took into account Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2000: 248) observations regarding the semi-structured questionnaire as a "powerful tool":

a series of questions, statements or items are presented and the respondent is asked to answer, respond to or comment on them in a way that he or she thinks best. There is clear structure, sequence, focus, but the format is open-ended, enabling the respondent to respond in his/her own terms. The semi-structured questionnaire sets the agenda but does not presuppose the nature of the response.

An open-ended approach to the first round was considered, but it was thought more efficient to adopt a semi-structured approach since a substantial amount of information is available in the policy literature and it was thought important that the data should inform the critical analysis of policy document and its feasibility for implementation. Moreover, the risk areas associated with modifications, as outlined by Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer (2000) had been sufficiently taken into account namely the recruitment of a representative panel, the clarification of procedures and a semi-structured questionnaire, and the caution not to insert the researcher's opinion into feedback. However, the questionnaire contained more than their suggested upper limit of 25 questions and "panel response burden and fatigue", as suggested by Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer (2000), may well have resulted in some contradictions in the results as pointed out in chapter 5 and 6 of this research.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections, the first part focussed on the conceptual framework of the panellists, the second part identified the key elements of the provincial policy and their adequacy in terms of policy formulation and development, and the last section considered the adequacy of the provincial implementation plan. The questions were unstructured, and in some instances panellists ranked for example the importance of identified issues on a scale of 1 – 5. Panel members were encouraged at all stages of the questionnaire to add additional comment.

4.4.3 Round 2

For the second round of the Delphi the first round responses from the panellists were analysed and added to the questions, thus introducing new ideas and offering the panel members the opportunity to respond to comment offered and to revise their initial response should they wish to do so. Content analysis was used to categorise comment regarding the panellists' approach to policy in school library context into six groupings. Further comment was requested and panel members were asked to indicate whether they agreed, disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the observations offered by the other members. Ratings/rankings of issues from the first round were included for comment and agreement or disagreement.

4.4.4 Round 3

The third round questionnaire included only the responses from the second round that required further consideration or clarification and issues on which consensus had been reached were excluded.

The degree of consensus reached indicated that three rounds had been adequate in order to gather the necessary data. This number of rounds is in line with research findings quoted by Hasson, Keeney and McKenna (2000: 1011) who advise, citing Schmidt (1997), that "knowing when to stop is crucial – too soon will provide results that may not be meaningful, not soon enough may cause sample fatigue and tax resources". In the seven examples of key Delphi studies (table 3) that were used for illustrative purposes in this research, five of the studies conducted three rounds of questionnaires and two gathered data in two rounds only (table 5).

4.5 Method of data collection

Questionnaire surveys often have low response rates and this can be minimised by adhering to good practices throughout in order to maintain response rates, for example ensuring that respondents are fully informed about the study, and issuing regular reminders (Cohen and Manion 2000: 263). In many Delphi studies the panel members are geographically dispersed and cannot be brought together at any stage of

the study and questions arise as regards the distribution of the questionnaires. The ease, convenience and comprehensiveness of e-mail may provide, according to Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer (2000), an incentive for the on-going involvement by the panellists.

Advantages and disadvantages as well as key issues emerging in respect of the difference between mailed and internet applications of the Delphi were identified by Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer (2000), Howze and Dalrymple (2004), and Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 26). Table 7 combines the research and adds personal observations.

Table 7: Advantages and disadvantages of e-mail use

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cheaper and quicker recruitment as far as time and cost are concerned. - Improved legibility of responses - Ease of data entry, resulting in decreased data entry time and errors - A decrease in response turnaround time - The ability to track transmission status (for example undeliverable due to incorrect addresses) - Study costs = researcher's time 	<p>The disadvantages are mainly technological and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unexpected changes of e-mail applications - It is difficult to distinguish between genuine non-response versus e-mails not received - The unreliability of panellist's e-mail capabilities/ institutional problems result in some panellists being unable to participate in some rounds - Some respondents may be unable to retrieve e-mail attachments in their original format - Virus protection prohibit the opening of attachments - Some respondents may experience incompatibility with Excel or MS word applications - Problems with mime encryption - E-mail anonymity: care should be taken to e-mail questionnaires to panel members individually as mailing lists display the names

Based on their own experience, Snyder-Halpern, Thompson and Schaffer (2000) offer practical advice to ensure good response rates in the case of internet applications, and to minimise some of the disadvantages outlined in table 7. The suggestions include individualising the e-mail list, embedding the questionnaire in the e-mail for those panel members who prefer not to receive an attachment, saving files down to an earlier version of Microsoft Word or Excel prior to mailing, sending the complete round questionnaire with each reminder e-mail as this avoids time delays due to requests for an additional questionnaire copy, and establishing a separate e-mail account for managing study data.

In this study it was decided to send the correspondence and questionnaires by e-mail as it was anticipated that this would save time and cost. The additional material that was not available in electronic format was posted to the panel members, namely a copy of the policy document, information on education provisioning in the province, and a DVD disk with the ELITS Audit.

None of the problems outlined in the table were experienced probably due to the size of the panel for this study. It would have been considerate though to attach the questionnaire to each reminder since one panel member requested a subsequent copy when the original one could not be found in her inbox. However, all panel members were aware that they could contact the researcher should they experience any problems. As far as the two panellists who did not respond were concerned, several follow-up e-mails were forwarded to them during the first round before it was assumed that they had decided not to participate at all.

4.5.1 Analysis, feedback and consensus

- Analysis

Data analysis involves both the analysis and careful management of qualitative and quantitative data, and in a Delphi study the analysis of data has two purposes: it generates feedback between rounds to panellists, and it identifies when consensus has been reached (Hanafin and Brooks 2005: 26). The methods of data analysis vary according to the purpose of the Delphi, the structure of rounds, types of questions and numbers of participants. Qualitative content analysis is used typically to identify major themes generated by the first questionnaire. These are then translated into a structured questionnaire and the data from subsequent questionnaires are analysed using ranking or rating techniques. Frequencies and ratings are specified and panellists are given the opportunity to revise previous scores – an important aspect in reaching consensus (Powell 2003: 379).

Descriptions or themes generated through content analysis must be verified to ensure that the data is fairly represented. Hasson, Keeney and McKenna (2000: 1012)

caution that, according to the Classical Delphi, items can not be added during analysis, and the participants' wording should be used with minor editing. They are also of the opinion that it will further structure debate if content analysis is used in conjunction with informal literature reviews and/or meta-analysis. Infrequently occurring items should not be omitted to keep the result list manageable since it was up to the panellists to judge the quality of items, not the researcher.

A number of different descriptive statistics are used in Delphi studies and there does not appear to be agreement about a best method of mathematical aggregation. This is illustrated in the data from the key studies in respect of analysis and consensus as summarised in the table 8.

Table 8: Analysis and identification of consensus

	Author	Main focus	Statistics	Consensus
1	Custer, R.L., Scarcella, J.A. and Stewart, B.R. 1999	To identify competencies needed to update training requirements	6-point scale Interquartile ratings Separate frequency and percentage scores for each of 2 focus areas	Consensus: Interquartile Range score of less than 1.2
2	Kochtaneck, T.R. and Hein, K.K. 1999	To paint a broad picture of current status of digital libraries	Likert Scale ranging (Web-based software application)	Likert scale ratings continue till consensus or stability (little change in subsequent rounds)
3	Osborne, J <i>et al.</i> 2001.	To determine characteristics of scientific enquiry and aspects of the nature of scientific knowledge that should be essential components of school science curriculum	Mean scores and standard deviations	Consensus: minimum of two-thirds (66%) agreement on any particular theme at the second or third round Stability: a shift of one third or less in participants' ratings between round 2 and round 3
4	Baruchson-Arbib, S. and Bronstein, J. 2002	To examine the views of LIS experts on the future of the	Scale: 1-5 Mean scores	General mean deviation for probability and desirability given in an appendix, but consensus is not defined in the research article

	Author	Main focus	Statistics	Consensus
		profession in the light of changes in ICT (to formulate new goals and objectives)		
5	Howze, P.C. and Dalrymple, C. 2004	To determine course content for a library instruction manual	Based on measures of frequency, mean and median	High consensus: clustering preference votes of 4 and 5 Low consensus: clustering preference votes of 1 and 2 Majority vote to strike an item deleted item Consensus of neutrality – consensus vote of 3
6	Hanafin, S. and Brooks, A. 2005	To develop a national set of child well-being indicators as basis for a bi-annual report and compare Irish and international standards	Mean and standard deviation in round 1 Percentages also used in rounds 2, 3	Ninety percent agreement
7	Ludwig, L. and Starr, S. 2005	To gain expert consensus on the library as place and assist health librarians in designing new library spaces	Five different Likert scales	Consensus – agreement by 65% or more participants

Qualitative material that was examined in the above studies was included in the feedback for subsequent rounds. In general the statistics presented in these studies above included standard deviations, scales, and interquartile ratings.

In this study content analysis was used to synthesise the first section of the questionnaire that contained the panellists' response to their conceptual framework. It was believed that this method of response analysis would be more suitable since the objective was not to measure movement towards consensus, but to elicit expert opinion regarding the adequacy and suitability of the policy document and its implementation strategy. The small size of the panel made an assessment of consensus or stability regarding these issues easy to assess.

- Feedback

In Delphi studies feedback on questionnaire analysis at each round allow panellists to reconsider their response in the light of the other respondents' judgments. Feedback has been defined as "the means by which information is passed between panellists so that individual judgement may be improved and debiasing may occur" (Rowe and Wright 1999: 370). It is an important process since feedback between rounds is the only communication between participants, it can widen knowledge and stimulate new ideas and in itself be highly stimulating (Powell 2003: 378). The levels of feedback vary, and it often provides textual or statistical material to participants. The aim is to repeat the process until consensus or stability is reached.

Successful feedback relies to a great extent on the expertise of the researcher as poor techniques of summarising and presenting the group response can affect the reliability of the study and the results obtained. Moreover, the number of items carried forward needs careful consideration to avoid introducing bias, and to ensure that the inclusion of too many items does not cloud the issue (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000: 1012). In other words, the researcher needs to keep the group focused and should, in preparing the feedback, carefully (and without bias) weed unnecessary information so that the group stays focused. The timing of feedback can be important: Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 28) cite Waldron's findings that there is a link between the increase in quality of the Delphi study as the time between filling in the questionnaire and receiving the next one decreases. In this study there was a considerable time lapse between rounds due to the fact that panel members requested extensions and were often unable to return the questionnaire within the specified time. However the fact that most responses were included in their original format in subsequent rounds ensured that panellists (and not the researcher) could decide on the importance of comments and at the same time could easily re-familiarise themselves with the content of the questionnaire.

Gordon (1994) compares the feedback process to a "controlled debate" where reasons for extreme opinions are made clear, fed back, and even if consensus does not occur, the reasons for disparate positions become very clear.

– **Consensus**

Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 28) contend that "consensus has been identified as one of the most contentious components of the Delphi method, and debates have centred on the position of consensus in such a study". Although the aim of the Delphi technique is to achieve consensus and the final round will usually show convergence of opinion, there seem to be no rules for establishing when consensus is reached, and Powell (2003: 379 citing Murphy *et al.* 1998) maintain that "mechanisms for the aggregation of scores may be open to arbitrary judgement". It is necessary though, even if the convergence of opinion is slight between rounds, to offer comment in the traditional Delphi on the degree of dissent and divergence (Murphy *et al.* 1998 cited in Powell 2003: 379). Murphy *et al.* (1998: 42) observe that Delphi literature has shown that the accuracy of the final group decision or opinion will depend on the accuracy of the first views offered since the dispersion of panellists' views lessen with each round. This is all the more reason why, as was done in this study, panel members decide what is important and comment is not discarded based on the researcher's opinion.

The number of rounds needed to reach consensus is determined by the researcher who decides when the best possible answer to the initial question has been achieved. In the key studies the number of rounds were decreased to as few as two where panellists were given statements based on a literature review and a checklist of learning objectives and early group consensus was achieved (Baruchson-Arbib and Bronstein 2002; Howze and Dalrymple 2004).

Consensus can be defined in a variety of ways and the following definitions are the results of Powell's literature search:

- Setting a percentage level for the inclusion of items with even this construed at different levels, varying between 100% and as low as 55%. Hasson, Keeney and McKenna (2000: 1011) put percentages in the literature between 51% and 80%,
- Saying that consensus was implied by the results, or occurred when most participants agreed,
- Defining consensus according to the stability of responses between rounds, or when most participants agreed,
- Leaving interpretation of consensus entirely to the reader (Powell 2003: 379).

Table 8 sets out definitions of consensus used in the key studies.

Although some authors have presented qualitative judgements of consensus, Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 28) maintain that an empirical approach is generally taken, and most studies determine consensus through statistically measuring the variance in responses across rounds. Less variance means greater consensus, but even this could arguably be interpreted as a consequence of attrition rather than consensus, since it was suggested that respondents with more extreme views were more likely to drop out of the study than participants with more moderate views.

Researchers have questioned the value of percentages and Lang (1995) suggests that stability of response is a more reliable indicator of success because it allows for divergent opinions to be acknowledged and included in the findings. The median response of the panel and the spread of the interquartile range are generally taken as the degree of consensus in the last round, but Lang (1995) points out that consensus can also be obtained by requesting respondents to appraise their competence in giving their responses. The answers from those who grade their competency level high are then taken as the median, rather than the group as a whole since it has been found that these experts achieve a result closer to the actual outcome than the rest of the group (Helmer 1983, cited in Lang 1995).

Ultimately it should be noted that consensus does not mean that the correct answer or opinion of judgment has been found. It only identifies areas that one group of experts consider important (a reliable expert consensus) and ideally the results should be used as a means for structuring group discussion or raising issues for debate (Hasson, Keeney and McKenna 2000: 1013). It suggests that "the extent to which the Delphi can achieve consensus is a function of the quality of the initial competency selection process, and the degree of controversy or clarity that exists in a given context area or profession" (Custer, Scarcella and Stewart 1999).

In this study it was decided that consensus would be reached when four of the five panel members agreed, and stability when the number of panellists agreeing remained the same over subsequent rounds or where it was clear in subsequent rounds that panel members did not change their responses. While a sense of consensus and stability on the issue was required, the statistical movement towards consensus was not measured. As indicated earlier, a key aspect of the purpose of this Delphi was to synthesise and analyse expert opinion concerning the adequacy of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its suitability for implementation in the province.

4.6 Evaluation of the research methodology

The Delphi is dependent on the experiential knowledge of its expert panel, and Powell (2003: 380) suggests that the scientific merit may reflect Mitroff and Turoff's (1975) affirmation that "an empirical generalisation or communication is judged objective, true or factual if there is sufficient widespread agreement on it by a group of experts". Yet most Delphi studies are not clear about the "framework in which the findings are to be judged" and, in the light of post-positivist paradigms "epistemological deliberation as to the interpretation of *objective*, *true* and *factual* is clearly an important task for the researcher" (Powell 2003: 380). Lang (1995) points out that it remains very difficult to evaluate the accuracy and reliability of a judgment method such as the Delphi, given that the technique is based on the determination of expert opinion with the result that the findings thus "become person and situation

specific". As a result comparison and measurement becomes problematical when each application of the methodology is different.

Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 31) observe that a "substantial literature has developed about the credibility of Delphi as a research method" and refer to Gupta and Clarke's (1996: 187) criticisms of the Delphi technique: conceptual and methodological inadequacies, the potential for sloppy execution, crudely designed questionnaires, poor choice of experts, unreliable result analysis, limited value of feedback and consensus, and instability of responses among consecutive Delphi rounds. Other criticisms levelled against Delphi have already been discussed throughout the chapter wherever they related to problem issues. However, some of Linstone and Turoff's (1975: 6) and Lang's (1995) concerns are relevant too. These concerns are:

- Imposing researcher views and preconceptions of a problem upon the respondent group by over specifying the structure of the Delphi, and not allowing for the contribution of other perspectives related to the problem. In other words, in the end the study may be at the mercy of the worldview and biases of the researcher.
- Assuming that Delphi can replace all other human communications in a given situation.
- Failing to show that results produced by Delphi have been consistently better than others achieved through other structured judgmental techniques.

One of the main criticisms levelled against Delphi is that it does not heed reliability measurements and scientific validation of findings. Since the method intends to correct for lack of conclusive data by drawing on expert knowledge and experience, Powell (2003: 380) argues that it should not be viewed as a scientific method that aims to create new knowledge, but rather a process whereby the best use is made of available information, whether that be scientific data or the wisdom of participants

An alternative method demonstrating the scientific merit of findings has been suggested for Delphi methodologies, namely "goodness criteria". One of the features to ensure the credibility in Delphi findings would be a *clear decision trail* defending

"the appropriateness of the method to address the problem selected, choice of expert panel, data collection procedures, identification of justifiable consensus levels and means of dissemination and implementation" (Powell 2003: 380, citing Fink *et al.* 1991). Furthermore Powell (2003: 381) suggests that goodness criteria "rest on the justification of detailed decision-making and rigour in the execution of the study. Further inquiry to validate the findings may be important. Both these processes will contribute to the credibility of the research".

Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 31) point out that there seems to be "potential for compromising credibility at all stages of the [Delphi] study". They indicate that their research has shown that there is little agreement as to what criteria should be used to judge an interpretative research approach such as Delphi. For example van Zolingen and Klaassen (2003: 328-329) suggest that the value-led nature of feedback and consensus as well as and the instability of responses compromise Delphi studies' validity and reliability as do the size of the panel and their level of expertise. Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 32) advise that specific guidelines be set around these areas in order to judge the reliability of a study.

Throughout this discussion on Delphi as a methodology to analyse the adequacy of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its suitability for implementation, a decision trail, as suggested by Powell, has been set up wherever methodological decisions had to be taken. Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 32) suggest that, as in their study, "responses and decisions taken on the basis of questions raised [and where literature was presented on these issues] can provide a mechanism for making judgements about the credibility of the study".

4.7 Ethical issues

"Ethical issues *saturate all stages of the research process* and start with the researcher's choice of topic and method" (Punch 1998: 281 cited in Hanafin and Brooks 2005: 32).

Social research requires the ethical protection of research participants and the key rights of all research participants revolve around issues of voluntary participation, informed consent, the risk of harm, privacy and confidentiality of data, and anonymity. This study conforms to the Ethics policy of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

All the participants in this study were identified on the basis of their expertise. Participants were not coerced into participating in the Delphi study and were free to withdraw from the research at any time and without any consequences to themselves. A letter was sent to the identified sample to inform them about the purpose of the study, procedures to be followed, and the contact details for the researcher were provided should they require additional information. Three participants enquired about the anticipated time commitment before they agreed to participate.

In any research the participant's right to privacy can be violated during the course of the investigation or after the study has been completed. In this case, all precautions were taken to protect the privacy of the participants through confidentiality and anonymity. The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 61) and such anonymity is a central feature of the Delphi technique. Individual responses in the questionnaire feedback were in no way linked to either individual names or positions. Details about panellists' background were intentionally limited under 4.3.2 since the subject field is relatively small in South Africa and it would be possible draw conclusions as to the identity of some of the panellists if too much information regarding their backgrounds were divulged. The researcher took care not to use a mailing list to e-mail the questionnaires to the participants and this reduced the risk of participants identifying any of the other respondents. Anonymity will be upheld and names of panellists will not be made known at any stage of the research or in the final thesis. Participants likewise expect that the confidentiality of data will be protected, and all responses in this study were treated in a confidential manner.

The researcher obtained informed permission from both the ELITS Director and the colleague who undertook the School Library Development evaluation to use the data. In her (the researcher's) position she had the required access to departmental information that is freely available to officials in both the department and the directorate.

The researcher believes furthermore that it is ethical to adopt a Delphi approach to evaluate the KZN *School Library Policy* and its suitability for implementation in the province. Due to the fact that panel members were dispersed over a large geographical area the Delphi allowed the utilisation of a group of experts that would not otherwise have been able to collaborate through any other group method. The Delphi further "equalises" participants by removing personality factors (such as opinion leaders) from the process and incorporating the opinion of all panel members (Howze and Dalrymple 2004: 176). Hanafin and Brooks (2005: 32) argue that other methods may not provide such a transparent decision trail for each panellist as the Delphi.

In summary, this study will actively subscribe to principles of mutual respect, non-coercion and non-manipulation, the support of democratic values, and the belief that every research act implies moral and ethical decisions (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). These principles will be used to guide each part of the study and at all stages, issues relating to consent, privacy and confidentiality will be key features.

4.8 Summary

The first part of this chapter outlined the proposed study, set out the research design and the methodology utilised to evaluate the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its suitability for implementation in the province, and clarified the conceptual underpinning of the research. The choice of methodology was explained and illustrated through the use of seven key studies and the clarification of issues such as instrumentation, questionnaire development and methods of data collection. The credibility of the study as well as ethical issues were discussed.

The next chapter will record both the results of the data gathered in the Delphi and the analysis of secondary data.

Chapter 5 presents the results from a three-round Delphi study undertaken to analyse and critically assess the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* as a policy document and as a tool for implementation in the province. The purpose of each question is explained and the results reported. In keeping with the qualitative constructivist approach of the study the results contain qualitative as well as some quantitative data. Observations and recommendations by Delphi panellists are recorded without interpretation in many instances in order to convey particular nuances and different perceptions, the "experienced realities" alluded to in constructivist research.

Four sets of secondary data are reviewed and analysed in order to establish as accurately as possible the present status of school library provisioning in the province as well as to identify practical implementation problems. This is an important aspect of the research in terms of providing data for assessing the suitability of the policy for implementation, and identifying the most suitable existing models that are being implemented provincially.

5.1 Results of the Delphi study

The Delphi technique, one of the methodologies used in this research to elicit, synthesise, share and dynamically generate expert opinion on the policy document, was discussed in chapter 4 under 4.2.1.1 and 4.3. The method involves the use of a panel of experts each of whom responds separately via a series of questionnaires. Their responses are anonymous thus enabling each panel member to have equal input. Initial responses are made separately and new ideas, which other members of the panel have not previously considered, may be introduced. The responses are then collated by the researcher and fed back to the respondents in a synthesised form. Respondents are again asked for a further response allowing them to revise their initial responses. The process is repeated (usually three rounds) to gradually produce consensus amongst the group (to the extent that this is possible), or for responses at least to become stable.

The Delphi questionnaire deals with the following topics in three sections:

1. The conceptual framework/s drawn on by each panellist.
2. The key elements of the provincial policy and how adequate they are in terms of policy formulation and development.
3. The adequacy of the provincial implementation strategy.

The questionnaire is semi-structured and due to the intention of the research to draw as much as possible on the panellists' expertise and small size of the sample, the first section consists of an open-ended question in round one for panel members to respond in as much detail as they would like. This research follows a modified Delphi approach in that the questions in the second and third part of the questionnaire are carefully selected and drawn from literature, to solicit first round information from the panel. Although the questions in these two sections are semi-structured, they allow for detailed response as well. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 248) observe that the semi-structured questionnaire is a "powerful tool" since there is "clear structure, sequence, focus, but the format is open-ended, enabling the respondent to respond in his/her own terms. The semi-structured questionnaire sets the agenda but does not presuppose the nature of the response".

The rounds are reported on in great detail to show the progression of the discussion and in an attempt to show the layering of the data received, *first round comment is included in the second round in blue font, comment from the second round in red font in the third round questionnaire, and comment from the third round is included in green font.* Direct quotes of observations or suggestions offered by panel members are indicated in italics in the text.

The combined results of the three rounds of the Delphi questionnaire are presented below. Questions where consensus was reached were not included in the next round unless further comment warranted inclusion. Consensus was taken as agreement by four of five panel members, in other words 80% or 100% agreement. Questions where no comment was offered although two panel members neither agreed nor

disagreed were not pursued since it seemed unlikely that it would generate fresh comment in the next round. Most of these types of questions include responses from panel members not directly involved in the local school library sector, and attention will be drawn to these results in the analysis. When there was a neutral, non-committal response and no further feedback for comment offered, it was taken that stability had been reached and the question was not further pursued in the following round.

Content analysis was used to identify categories and themes in the first section of the questionnaire. Holsti (1969: 14 cited in Stemler 2001) defines content analysis as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics or messages". Thus, qualitatively content analysis can involve any kind of analysis where communication content (including written) is categorised and classified. McKeone (1995) further highlights the difference between prescriptive analysis (where the context is a closely-defined set of communication parameters) and open analysis (that identifies the dominant messages and subject matter within the text). The researcher made use of open analysis to identify themes in the questionnaire.

5.1.1 Delphi questionnaire: section one

In section one of the first round the panellists are asked to offer a list of value judgments, predictions or opinions about their approach to policy in the school library context. In the second and third round they are given feedback from the previous rounds and may offer further comment.

The qualitative data analysis in this section is primarily an inductive process of organising the first round data into categories and identifying patterns among the categories. The following categories were identified as providing the scaffolding for, or the components of the panel members' conceptual framework in section one of the Delphi questionnaire:

- School library policy,

- Values,
- School libraries,
- Curriculum,
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and
- Training

The data gathered in the first section of the Delphi questionnaire will be presented under these headings. In the second round panellists were asked to indicate whether they agreed, disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the observations offered in the first round, and to offer further comment should they wish to do so.

The following value judgements, predictions and opinions were offered in response to the first open question in relation to the following.

5.1.1.1 School library policy

The first observation regarding school library policy is that *policy needs to be endorsed at the highest level in order to be accepted, and this will lend credibility to the policy, endorse implementation, and secure finance for implementation. Five panel members agreed in the second round. One panellist observed that *this is important for implementation which will, in turn, lend credibility.**

The second observation is that *national and provincial policies are needed to ensure the development and use of school libraries. They should inform each other and this links with the funded mandate expressed above in the first observation. Four panel members agreed with this statement in the second round, one neither agreed nor disagreed, and pointed out the dichotomy where the constitution puts policy under the national tier and its implementation under the provincial tier. Panellists were asked to comment on this dilemma and responded as follows in the third round:*

- *"This structure, where there is a separation between those who make policy and those who implement it, is not unusual and often the case in my own country (Australia). It is a challenge then for the province to implement policy that has been created by people that may be far removed from the reality on the ground.*

Good levels of communication and reporting are essential. It is also hoped that both sides listen to each other carefully.

- Provinces jealously guard what autonomy they have. Provinces differ and maybe implementation should be decided by provinces. It may be easier to lobby at provincial level rather than at national level and at times what comes down from national is viewed with disfavour as being foisted on provinces.*
- This is true. But I suggest we look to other sectors to see how the two tiers interrelate with regard to policy and implementation*
- Some provincial departments, unlike KZN, are unwilling to ratify policy that is not underpinned by national policy. This may be an excuse to avoid committing the necessary financial and human resources, but a firm national policy would remove that excuse."*

The third statement from panel members is that the slowness/lack of interest or commitment from the national minister's office to finalise/endorse school library policy is disturbing and the sector is losing credibility because of this problem. Four panellists agreed, commenting that this has very unfortunate consequences since it leads to the perception that *school libraries are unimportant and that school librarians are ineffectual*. One panel member disagreed and observed that *the whole sector is not necessarily losing credibility as long as practitioners keep lobbying - but something needs to be done about this*.

The fourth statement is that policies in themselves (although they are a necessary ingredient) will not transform the prevailing situation to meet the needs of both learners and teachers. Four panellists agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed. A panel member commented that this may be true, but "*without national and provincial policies, we have no mandate to begin transforming the situation, and no credibility*." Implementation is the key, as *so much policy development and non-delivery in the past has shown us*.

The fifth statement offered is that policy of all kinds should be grounded in a solid understanding of aims and appropriate mission statements*, clearly articulated, and practical and achievable. All five panellists agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed with the first part of the statement (indicated with an *) but agreed with the other two aspects.

All five panellists agreed with the next statement, namely that policy offers guidelines for and anticipated outcomes of implementation. The following comment was offered: *there should be space for unanticipated outcomes to be acknowledged and incorporated should they be positive, negative outcomes should also guide policy revision. Yet the two aspects should not be confused – policy should inform outcomes.*

The seventh statement is that policy must be owned by all those involved, a wide spectrum of role-players must buy into the policy and its implementation (four panellists agreed, one disagreed).

Panellists offered the following three comments in the second round:

- The problem does not lie with buy-in since both the KZN policy and the national drafts were widely discussed (and all stakeholder were *impatiently waiting* for the approval of the national policy), but with politicians' inability to realise the value and role of school libraries.

Three panel members agreed with the statement in the third round, one disagreed (*I agree that people are impatient. I'd like to know more about the reason for the delay before agreeing wholeheartedly with these words*), and one panel member felt only informed enough to agree with the first part of the statement.

- This does not mean that everyone will always agree – in reality there may be disagreement but all parties agree to own and follow the document despite their hesitations. *Waiting for consensus can be detrimental.*

All five panel members agreed with the statement, and one observed that this was mainly because one cannot assume that policy is set and not ongoing.

- Policy can gather support once written – as long as it has enough support in the right places.

All five panellists agreed, commenting that:

- The policy should continue to be lobbied. Acceptance of policy by all need not be a precursor to implementation: *it may not be accepted by grassroots if they never see any implementation.*
- *The draft national policy has been circulated, discussed, amended and approved for ten years. Aspects on which there are not complete agreement, (perhaps the school library and staffing models) do provide a choice and can be adapted to provincial circumstances.*

All five panellists agreed with the following two statements:

- The roll-out plan lends credibility to the policy and indicates that it is not merely an academic exercise – it offers hope to schools, and
- The policy document explores options for school library development taking into account the realities in schools. If text books are learners' only reading experience it severely limits their reading skills, thus the use of classroom, mobile and shared resources is an essential element in the context.

5.1.1.2 Values

Another theme emerging from the panellists' list of value judgments is that of values.

These values include:

- Redressing past inequities and ensuring that the school library makes its rightful contribution to educational transformation and reading in general, and
- Upholding the values of the Constitution, and education policy and approaches such as an outcomes-based curriculum.

All panel members indicated that they identified with and shared these values, but one panel member commented that although agreeing in theory, in practice school library policy may not be able to embrace all aspects of the Constitution, some level of interpretation and abstraction may be necessary.

5.1.1.3 School Libraries

The next category of value judgments offered by the panel members is broadly defined as school libraries and three comments offered by panellists were included in the second round:

- The school library should be appropriately stocked, staffed, and managed. Four panel members agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed and thought that *appropriately* should be qualified.
- A school programme cannot function effectively without the support, extension and enrichment offered by a well-resourced school library and professionally trained staff.

Three panel members agreed with this statement (two neither agreed nor disagreed) and the following two statements were included in the third round questionnaire:

A tricky one – an effective school library can assist but there are other means of acquiring knowledge and reading experiences. It depends on the “school programme” and what you want from it. Some might manage OK without a library.

Three panel members agreed with this statement in the third round and two disagreed:

- *Though they may think they are managing this is based on ignorance as to how much better education could be with a good school library supporting learning.*
- *I think there is consensus that the new curriculum works best in well-resourced schools and in schools where the resources are well- managed. This implies a library.*
- *A school might manage without a library/resource centre, but only by sticking to the textbook and applying some form of rote learning – this is not really effective.*

Even staff members who are not professionally trained in librarianship can run effective programmes and encourage reading and information studies. All panel members agreed with this statement in the third round.

Panellist observed that although the above statement was true in that these staff members can offer a functional service, *even they will benefit from formal programmes that open up new horizons – as we witness often in our ACE (Advanced Certificate in Education) courses - thus offering so much more.* One panellist pointed out that all teachers should be encouraging reading and developing information skills.

- *Having a staff member alone does not guarantee success. The school library needs a staff member with vision and knowledge and who can persuade others, and has the support of the principal and certain key educators.*

All panel members agreed, commenting that posts should be created, the *quality of the appointees should be looked at, and the attitude and energy of the librarian is key.* It was reiterated that *all teachers need to participate in an ideal situation, but if not, a few could make it all happen.*

5.1.1.4 Curriculum

The fourth theme identified in the responses of the panellists is that of curriculum. A panel member observed that *it should be made abundantly clear that an OBE curriculum has no chance of success in the absence of adequately stocked, staffed and managed school libraries, and that in the absence of equitable school library provisioning, the educational gap between haves and have-nots will continue to widen.* All panellists agreed with this statement in the second round. One observed that *it is probably difficult to isolate the absence of the library as a significant obstacle, as under-resourced schools tend to lack laboratories and other facilities as well. So, making this proposition clear might remain an assertion rather than something that has been demonstrated.*

5.1.1.5 Information Communication Technology

Panel members commented on ICT and its role in education and school libraries and this is the fifth category of value judgements identified in the first round. One panellist observed that *it has become an essential element and children who do not*

have exposure to ICT will be severely handicapped in the wider world. The following comment was included in the second round:

This aspect needs to be expanded rapidly, acknowledging that there are problems of infrastructure, training of educators and maintenance of equipment. All panellists agreed with this statement.

5.1.1.6 Training

The sixth category identified is training, and since most panel members have expertise in this field they had strong opinions on this topic:

- The training of educators is a crucial aspect of implementation and needs more emphasis than is currently being articulated.

All five panel members agreed with this statement in the second round, commenting that how to use books for information should be taught by educators of all learning areas, but they would need to receive training. Even text books might be better utilised if staff and learners knew how to find, extract and use information.

Panellists identified the following training needs: information literacy skills, some basic administration skills, the use of the school library and its resources. It was pointed out that if teachers do not have confidence in their own information literacy they will lack the ability to help the learners. Those teachers who had received training would be able to train fellow educators on site.

The value judgments or conceptual framework emerging from the panel members' response to this section of the questionnaire relate closely to the conceptual framework underpinning this research and elaborated on in chapter 3 under 3.2.

5.1.2 Delphi questionnaire: section two

The aim of the second section of the questionnaire is to analyse the key elements of the provincial policy and to ascertain how adequate these elements are in terms of policy formulation and development. The questions are semi-structured in as far as they are based on the elements of good policy design as identified in the literature

review and review in chapter three, but most are open-ended to allow depth of discussion. Responses from the first round were analysed to obtain frequencies, rankings and ratings. In the second and third rounds, panel members could indicate whether they agreed, disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with observations made by other panellists and offer comment. Some questions required rank ordering (2.21, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.7) and others required the panellists to rate their responses on a scale of 1 – 5 (2.18(b), 2.23, and 3.1).

5.1.2.1 Adequacy of the key elements of the policy

Question 2.1 was asked to establish whether the policy document identifies and defines clearly the following three aspects:

- The underlying issues it seeks to address
- The major causes of the problems, and
- The values which underpin the document.

5.1.2.1.1 Underlying issues the policy seeks to address

With regard to the underlying issues the policy seeks to address, one panel member indicated yes, these were identified and defined clearly, two thought the policy did not address underlying issues and two panel members indicated that it did *to an extent*, but they were *not sure*.

The two panellists who responded with a **no** stated that:

- underlying problems need to be clearly identified (in *crisper statements*) and articulated in one place. Three panel members agreed with this statement in the second round (two neither agreed nor disagreed) and commented that it might not be the role of policy documents to explore "underlying problems": *Policy should articulate what is to be done in the light of reports that identify issues and problems. So, policy responds to problems but does not necessarily explore them.* Three panellists disagreed with the above statement in the third round (two agreed) commenting that it is an easy option not to explore problems or talk about solutions. It is important to identify problems when looking for remedies

which constitute the policy. If the problems are not *acknowledged and delineated* they might be dismissed as *pie in the sky*.

- the following specific problems need to be included: inequitable resourcing and a lack of access to resources for the majority of learners, and the ignorance of most teachers and officials regarding information skills. Four panel members agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed) and pointed out that there is an *apparent lack of knowledge about the importance of reading in assisting learners to cope with their learning requirements*. Four panellists agreed (one disagreed), commenting in the third round that *everybody in education knows that the levels of reading are very low from various national and regional studies, and also everybody understands the importance of reading in learning. Perhaps what is not appreciated is that voluntary reading and access to a wide array of appropriate texts will vastly improve reading development and so enhance school performance. And that the vehicle for this is a school library*.

A further comment offered was that although these issues needed to be addressed, a policy document should not generalise since there could well be good as well as poor examples in all the areas mentioned. Two panellists disagreed (one agreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed) and commented in the third round that *major documents can 'generalise' as long as they acknowledge this. Sketching the bigger picture is their purpose*. Another panel member commented that it is well not to generalise but *the good examples are few and mostly in the 'previously' (and presently) advantaged environment*.

The two panellists who were **not sure** or thought that issues and problems were addressed **to an extent** commented that:

- The majority of learners are not taught in mother tongue and the importance of reading in the language of tuition (*meaning English second language*) can not be over-emphasised.

Three panellists agreed in the second round, one neither agreed nor disagreed, and there was a non-response from one panellist who wanted to know whether this meant a need existed for reading in mother tongue. The researcher included

the explanation in italics above in the third round and further comment was requested. Panellists pointed out that in an environment such as this, both mother tongue and the second language English need to be taught since reading widely in both languages is crucial: *Research has shown that mother tongue skills transfer to the second language, improving performance overall, and also that wide reading in the second language is the most effective way of acquiring fluency in that language, markedly better than formal language tuition. Both of these research results support the need for a wide range of reading resources, best provided in a school library.*

- To extract meaning from print is an acquired skill which implies practice and that is what the majority of learners do not have. All panellists agreed with this statement in the second round, and commented that this is an important reason why a school library with a wide range of suitable, relevant reading resources is so crucial. Learners cannot and will not practice reading if they do not have books that they want to read. All five panellists agreed with this statement in the third round.
- The conciseness of the policy document is its strength, but *an annexure outlining disparities in the province would add punch.* Four panel members agreed and there was a non-response from one panellist. It was observed that it may not be the role of a policy document to outline disparities but another document or report altogether that informs the policy. Three panellists agreed in the third round, but added that there should be a link between the two documents so that the relationship is clearly identifiable. Two panellists did not agree and thought it important that the information should be in the same document - *keep everything in one place and show the relationship between the problems and the proposed solutions.*

5.1.2.1.2 The major causes of the problems

One panel member agreed that the major causes of the problems had been addressed, one thought they had *to an extent*, and three panel members were of the opinion the

causes had not been addressed. The following observations were offered by the panellists who indicated that the causes had not been addressed:

- The causes are only implied, and need to be explicitly linked to a problem statement. Four panel members agreed, in the second round (one neither agreed nor disagreed).
- The majority of teachers have come through a system which is little different from what still pertains (three panellists agreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed).
- Management must see the need for library materials: four panellists agreed in the second round and one neither agreed nor disagreed. A panel member added *and the effective use of this material, and how this contributes to the educational experience.*

In the second round all five panel members agreed with the following two statements:

- This can also be addressed in an annexure that outlines disparities, and
- The lack of reading skills needs to be addressed.

One panel member conceded not having enough insight in local conditions to offer comment regarding some of the observations.

5.1.2.1.3 The values which underpin the document

Three panel members agreed that the values underpinning the document were identified and defined clearly in the policy document, and added that the document inspires confidence on the pedagogical level (the vision of libraries' role, OBE and resource-based learning). Four panel members agreed with this statement in the second round (one neither agreed nor disagreed).

Two panel members thought that values were *adequately* identified and defined, and offered three comments:

- The document needs to be stronger on the role of libraries in social inclusion. Three panellists agreed in the second round (two neither agreed nor disagreed), observing that the document should not lose a sharp educational focus. Four

panellists agreed with this observation (one neither agreed nor disagreed) adding that *the two go together – it is difficult to separate them.*

Another comment offered in the second round was that social inclusion might be difficult to measure. Three panel members agreed (*qualitative data often relies on anecdote*) and two neither agreed nor disagreed: *social inclusion is important – e.g. adult basic literacy is important. Functional literacy is important. Policy does not offer measurements. Social inclusion belongs in the mission/vision surely.*

- It should mention the role of libraries in providing life information (outside the curriculum). All panellists agreed with this observation in the second round.

- The role of information in the struggle against HIV and AIDS must be upfront.

Four panel members agreed and one disagreed in the second round, commenting that basic literacy around all medical matters is important. All five panel members agreed with this statement in the third round.

Another comment was that it should be *the role of information literacy rather, since one must be able to apply the information to everyday life's challenges.* Four panel members agreed with the statement in the third round, one disagreed: *Information in itself can be useless - people can be well-informed but still engage in risky behaviour* and another panel member was not sure *that it must necessarily be upfront.*

5.1.2.2 Other policy options

Question 2.2 stated that in formulating policy fear of change may sometimes make it necessary to accept less radical policy options. Panel members were asked whether, in their view, there are other more radical policy options which should have been considered. The panellists offered the following suggestions for other policy options:

- **The joint community/school library.** Four panel members agreed with this suggestion in the second round (one neither agreed nor disagreed). It was pointed out that this can be regarded as a special case of the centralised school library. The planning and management of this option is quite difficult and complex, especially in South Africa where school and community libraries are managed by separate structures, with the implications this has for budgets and staffing. However, there

are a few instances where this model is working quite well, and it is happening in a small way in the ECSR project.

- The policy developers were brave to articulate various options (three panellists agreed, one disagreed, and one neither agreed nor disagreed).
- It could be even more conservative, for example centralised, classroom and school/community library as a sub-category of the centralised model. Three panellists agreed with this statement in the second round (one disagreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed), commenting that the other options could be regarded as sub-standard and perpetuating inequalities. Two panel members agreed, two disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed in the third round, acknowledging that these perceptions exist, *but these might change if reasons for the variety of models are explained and if the path from one model to another is explained*. Another panellist observed that this *could be complicating matters at this stage. Keep it as simple as possible for starters*. Three panel members agreed with this observation in the third round, one disagreed, and one neither agreed nor disagreed.
- The choices may be politically or economically strategic. Two panel members agreed with the statement in the second round, three neither agreed nor disagreed.
- Vagueness and gaps may be useful as long as these are explained and the original spirit of the document is not lost. Three panellists agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed in the second round. Four panel members agreed in the third round that *when the gaps are filled in or the vagueness made more explicit the original spirit of the document should not be lost, and that guidelines rather than quantitative standards might be more feasible*. One panel member neither agreed nor disagreed.
- A positive change would be to move more quickly, although the policy seems to be doing what is possible within obvious constraints. Four panel members agreed with this statement in the second round (one neither agreed nor disagreed).
- The underlying principles and beliefs should result in good school library services. Three panel members agreed, and two neither agreed nor disagreed. A panellist

observed that this was an ambiguous statement: *it 'ought' to happen, but beliefs do not lead to good services.*

5.1.2.3 Purpose of the policy

Question 2.3 asked whether the broad purpose of the policy was clearly identified and precisely formulated, and four panellists agreed in the first round that in their view this had been achieved. One panel member did not agree: *the purpose is to build awareness. Central to purpose is the notion of three models. Inherent in the notion is the transitory nature of models. The progression from one model to next and what will bring about the shift needs to be spelled out.* All panellists agreed with this observation in the second round.

Four panel members agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed) with the observation that an appendix with three case studies, spelling out the progression, would be a good idea.

5.1.2.4 Policy objectives

In question 2.4 panel members were asked whether the objectives of the policy, in other words the specific aims, were clearly identified and precisely formulated. All five panellists were of the opinion that this had been achieved, and two panellists made the following observations which were subsequently included in the second round:

- Add a brief line addressing learners since teachers and libraries are mentioned but not learners who will ultimately benefit (four panellists agreed, one disagreed).
- Clarify the matter of libraries to be resuscitated (all five panel members agreed).
- Define collections – *the glossary only defines 'Learner and Teacher Support Material (LTSM)' and 'resources'. There is reference to online resources and library resources – it is suggested that the terms LTSM and resources be used* (four panel members agreed with this suggestion, one neither agreed nor disagreed).

5.1.2.5 Target group expectations

The next question, 2.5, asked whether the policy's purpose and objectives, when read against the background of the information gathered in the ELITS audit, took into account the possible expectations of the target groups. Two panel members thought the policy did achieve this and commented that a *plain statement that policy will establish and develop school libraries is needed*, and that it is assumed that by mentioning that libraries will be *resuscitated* the policy acknowledges that good school libraries have been allowed to deteriorate.

The other three panel members agreed but mentioned some concerns:

- The unrealistic expectations of teachers that central libraries are the only option. Three panellists agreed with this statement in the second round, one neither agreed nor disagreed, and one disagreed observing that *the expectation may be unrealistic... but alternatives will inevitably, and correctly, be seen as perpetuating inequalities*. Two panel members agreed in the third round (three neither agreed nor disagreed) commenting that the *observation suggests that what people complain about is non-delivery rather than efficient delivery of service on a modest scale, and that these perceptions are often ill-informed. The people who have these perceptions often have a rigid view of a school library because they have not directly experienced an organic dynamic service. It is 'all-or-nothing' thinking that is hard to work with since the alternatives to the simple centralised library are complex and evolving*.
- Due to training received/not received, teachers may have a limited understanding of the benefits of reading and information literacy. All five panellists agreed with this statement in the second round, observing that this should be dealt with in teacher and librarian training so that teachers are aware of the teacher-librarian's skills and the areas in which she can add value. The panellists all agreed with this observation in the third round.
- There is a certain amount of work involved which many educators seem to be unwilling to undertake. Only two panel members agreed with this statement, three neither agreed nor disagreed.

All five panel members agreed with the following three statements in round two:

- There should be mention of staffing, reading and literacy here
- It is important to keep those involved informed and motivated
- It may be problematic to manage such a big undertaking as quickly as possible and to sustain patience. A panellist mentioned that the *human factor is always an issue... as well as restructuring* as this often leads to staff being transferred before the aims (of the policy) have been achieved – and necessitate re-skilling of new staff members.

5.1.2.6 Values of various cultural groups

Question 2.6 asked panellists whether the broad purpose, objectives, and values underpinning the policy document had sufficiently taken into account the differing values and various cultural groups in South Africa. Three panel members agreed that the values of the various cultural groups had been taken into account, one panellist disagreed and one added *to an extent*.

The question elicited the following comments which were included in the second round:

- The document refers to overarching policy documents which take into account the situation/values in KwaZulu-Natal and nationally (two panellists agreed, three neither agreed nor disagreed).

All five panel members agreed with the following two statements offered in the first round:

- All groups want access to quality education for their children, and
- There should be mention of building literature collections reflecting and endorsing learners' cultures.

Four panellists agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed with these four observations:

- An important part of policy review would be to consult, and listen to the views of the differing cultural and minority groups.
- There is still the perception in some schools that a collection other than one housed in a central school library is *second- best*.

- The theme of social inclusion and social capital is emerging in the school library field and should be taken into account.
- There is a utilitarian emphasis on reading *skills* and *little* on other outcomes of reading literature. A panellist observed that *if this is the case work needs to be done here to redress this as skill acquisition is only one of myriad benefits of a reading culture in schools.*
- The aim seems to be to promote the school library as a methodological tool in OBE.

Some confusion followed as some panel members mistakenly referred to OBE as the tool and not the school library, and responses moved away from the school library as tool.

Two panel members agreed in the second round (one disagreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed) and pointed out that OBE is not *just a tool, but the essential underpinning of the educational approach.* Four panel members agreed with this observation in the third round, and one disagreed cautioning that it is unwise to put all the emphasis on one approach when change is fast and often.

Another panel member observed in the second round that *I didn't think that when reading the document. OBE is a 'tool' that could be used in promoting libraries and reading with the Department's management but it's not the be all and end all.* All panel members agreed with this statement in the third round, and it was pointed out that all approaches need continual reassessment.

If this is so, then I can understand the reason because policy documents need to be framed in the vocabulary of the decision makers and important stakeholders. Four panel members agreed in the third round, and one neither agreed nor disagreed commenting that *this could also be off-putting for the decision-makers when they look at the perceived cost [of implementing OBE and establishing school libraries at the same time].*

Panel members were of the opinion that there is value in expanding on the other dimensions of reading (all panel members agreed with this remark in the third round).

5.1.2.7 Conflicting aspects

When asked, in question 2.7, whether there are any conflicting aspects of the purpose and the objectives in the policy, four panel members thought there were no conflicting aspects, and the other panellist observed that section 3 (principles and beliefs) and 6 (policy outcomes) should be aligned to reflect beliefs and principles in both sections. In the second round three agreed with the observation and two neither agreed nor disagreed and no comment was offered.

5.1.2.8 Trade-offs and policy objectives

Question 2.8 asked panellists whether there were policy objectives that had seemingly been traded off for more acceptable ones so as to satisfy a larger section of the stakeholders. Four panellists agreed that there were seemingly no trade-offs, but that trade-offs invariably happen during the policy process (one panel member neither agreed nor disagreed). Three comments were included in the second round for further comment:

- The cluster model comprises a wide range of models (four agreed and one disagreed). Panel members pointed out that though this is not an ideal situation it is acceptable as an interim measure if well-managed.
- The policy does not mention building libraries for schools and this may force schools to adopt the second model (the cluster model). Three panel members agreed with this statement in the second round; two neither agreed nor disagreed.
- The three models are a realistic choice – two panellists agreed with this observation and three neither agreed nor disagreed.
- Most will view model three (centralised school library) as a *realistic choice*. Two panellists agreed with the statement, three neither agreed nor disagreed, and a panel member observed that it should read *desirable choice*.

Since the panel members who did not agree or disagree were not directly involved in local school library services the last two questions were not pursued. However, panellists were asked in the third round to offer further comment on their views regarding the inclusion of different models, and they responded as follows:

- There should be as many models as possible to meet all needs and to help cater for change as it occurs, and there can be even be a couple of options in one facility.
- Due to practical constraints (particularly overcrowded schools that keep encroaching on whatever library space there may be) other models have to be included.
- The cluster model (a well-resourced library shared by a few schools geographically close, each with smallish learner numbers and supported by a provincial school library service) is very suitable in some areas which often have three smallish schools in the same street. It is cost effective and can play a dynamic role in each of the three schools although it might be politically difficult to sell since the school with the library will be seen as advantaged.
- The school/community library, if based in the school, can be excellent in rural areas.
- The public library serving a large number of schools can only be a stop-gap and cannot play a meaningful role in the learning programme of each school. It can support fledgling school libraries, provide collections of learning/reading resources, and offer library orientation. It cannot develop integrated information literacy programmes in more than five schools.
- Classroom collections in primary schools can be excellent if replenished often (for example once a term) from a larger service (either public library service or the education department's school library support service).

5.1.2.9 Forecasting

Question 2.9 stated that the nature of a broad purpose and goals is normative, and as such contains elements of forecasting, that is to say it identifies the expected future. Panellists were asked what, in their view, was the expected future as revealed in the policy document, taking into account the statistical information regarding KwaZulu-Natal and the *Business Plan: Education Centres supporting Rural Development* that were forwarded to them.

The panellists' forecasts of the expected future (see A – E below for individual panellists' forecasts) were included in the second round, and they were requested to indicate whether they agreed/disagreed with these forecasts, and, where relevant, to rank the feasibility (how do-able will this be) in the last column (3 = most and 1 = least). Only 3 panellists ranked the feasibility, and in some instances only 2 and 1 panellists offered a ranking. The highest ranking possible is indicated in brackets. It is based on the number of panellists that offered a ranking, which is 3.

Table 9: Feasibility of forecasts

Panellist	Forecast and feasibility	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Feasibility ranking 1 least – 3 most
A	A system of well functioning and effective school libraries	4		1	7 (9)
	configured according to need/circumstance	3		2	7 (9)
	contributing to the holistic development of information literate learners in the province	5			7 (9)
<p>In the third round four panel members agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed) that the configuration is likely to be more according to circumstance than according to need. All five panellists agreed that, for such clear-cut forecasts, one would have to see the impact so far (how many <i>well-functioning libraries</i> have been established) since the policy was formulated a few years ago and policy is just one factor.</p> <p>One panel member pointed out that a positive view would assume appropriate resources.</p>					
B	Redress of the past for the majority of schools	4	1		6 (9)
	The expected future is taken care of in the implementation plan which rolls-out the policy	4		1	7 (9)
	The Education Centres Supporting Rural Development's (ECSR) Business Plan also addresses the backlog, with an emphasis on ICT	5			6 (9)

The panel member who did not agree regarding the issue of redress for the majority of schools argued that *there will certainly be some redress, and probably as much as is feasible, but inequalities are built in to remain*. In the third round four disagreed with this statement, and one agreed. It was pointed out that *transformation is surely meant to eradicate inequalities*. One panel member observed that *inequalities are 'built in' from the past and in all societies schools reflect socio-economics. But international research shows that the school library is one of the key factors that can make a difference. Children with access to a good library and information literacy education can rise above poverty*.

The term *taken care of* was perceived as too bold - two panel members agreed, and three neither agreed nor disagreed.

Four panellists agreed in the third round with the observation that *with areas like ICT almost no one can truly keep up with the cutting edge*. One panellist did not agree or disagree: *there are basics that can be implemented. None of us keeps up entirely with the cutting edge*.

C	Adequate provision of basic school library services to all schools in the province	5			7 (9)
	includes a library space (either centralised, in the classroom, or in a cluster)	4		1	8 (9)
	appropriate resources, ICT, programmes to promote information literacy and reading	5			6 (9)
	trained staff to support these endeavours services are to be implemented over time	5			7 (9)
D	The document had a plan for educational resource centres, this kind of network is clearly the way to address disparities and to spread support out from the central node	4		1	7 (9)
	The policy document lacks a focus on rural development (the implementation plan will begin with small schools – these are largely rural schools)	1	1	3	4 (6)
	The Business Plan for ECSRD emphasises ICT and perhaps reveals a weakness in the school library policy document where the concern is that ICT might be bought at the expense of print. It should <i>recognise and sell the potential of ICT in school libraries to leapfrog historical disadvantage</i>	4		1	2 (3)
	The “virtual library” need not be seen as at the top of a ladder of development, and in a revised policy the central school library model in the next draft might more firmly rather be sold as a learning resource centre – integrating computer room & traditional library	5			6 (9)

Panellist	Forecast and feasibility	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Feasibility ranking 1 least – 3 most
	Education Centres will have computer rooms, feed resources into schools, train educators, establish core collections etc – with an emphasis on rural redress. The second level model, Cluster libraries, includes the "educational resource centre" so there is no conflict in thinking. The Education Centres supporting Rural Development project does not clash with the vision of the policy document	5			8 (9)
	The issue remains of how the third model, the central school library, will evolve	5			6(9)
<p>In the second round panellists commented that: The emphasis on ICT could be a good or a bad thing, but the concern was about putting "all your eggs in one basket". Two panel members agreed, three neither agreed nor disagreed, observing that <i>balance of all tools and technologies is important</i>. One panel member observed that the policy document, <i>in its argument that ICTs do not replace print media, might come across as under-estimating the role of ICT and too rooted in the past. ICTs are not the answer to all problems but I feel that they should have more space in the policy document. Otherwise existing divides between the library world and e-education people will remain.</i> The policy document does not necessarily lack focus on rural development, two panellists agreed (three neither agreed nor disagreed). Panel members observed that an IT focus would perhaps be the best way to redress rural imbalance, and that, since the Business Plan ECSRD specifically focuses on rural schools the new policy will presumably incorporate its approaches. It is interesting that one panel member pointed out that since most KwaZulu-Natal schools are rural the policy, in her view, did not lack rural focus.</p>					
E	Learners in all schools in the province will have some form of access to library resources	5			6 (6)
<p>All five panellists agreed that this was possible provided learners <i>are 'allowed' access to them by teachers and are encouraged to use them</i>. The education of teachers and other staff regarding the importance of access to resources was underlined, and especially the encouragement aspect, since teachers too have to use the school library facilities.</p>					

5.1.2.10 Selection of alternatives

In question 2.10 panel members were asked whether they thought that the task team succeeded in selecting alternatives that would be likely to bring about the expected future, in other words the anticipated outcomes. All panellists agreed that appropriate alternatives had been selected, and offered additional comments which were included in the second round:

- A future policy (revision) should ensure that lesser services are not accepted as adequate, and that equity as objective is always kept in mind even though it will take time. All five panellists agreed with this observation.
- The cluster library is a complicated model and will require careful planning if it is to succeed. Four panel members agreed and one disagreed pointing out that, although complicated, the model had worked successfully in other contexts
- Certain vagueness is acceptable and may even be useful (in a policy document), and it might not be politically expedient to go into the financial implications of, for example, the shortages of space in schools revealed in the 2004 Audit. Three panel members agreed with the statement, one neither agreed nor disagreed and one panellist disagreed observing *political or not, inadequacies must be highlighted so that they can be addressed, otherwise where's the redress?* Since this panel member had previously commented that she did not think the document vague, it was taken that stability had been reached.
Four panel members agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed) with the following two statements:
- The progress from model two (cluster library) to model three (centralised school library) was not clear and would have to be explained in a revised policy document.
- Allowances had been made in the document for problems of distance and disadvantage.

5.1.2.11 Policy task team

Question 2.11 asked whether, in the panellists' opinion, the policy task team was sufficiently representative to make it likely that all major alternatives were considered and the stakeholders' concerns properly addressed. All panellists agreed in the second round that the document was developed by a broad and comprehensive list of stakeholders and that the experience of participants was certainly brought to the exercise. Question 2.12 offers panellists an opportunity to indicate whether there were any other important stakeholders who, in their view, should have been included in the task team. The panellists' suggestions were included in the second round:

- ICT representation from SchoolNet (four agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed).
- Community library representation since public/community libraries act as resource centres for learners in many provinces. All panellists agreed with this observation but observed that *it would be hard to choose who*.
- Public librarians since public libraries are increasing in number and scope (all agreed).
- Teachers, teacher-librarians, learners, parents, community members (three agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed). Panel members observed that teachers and teacher-librarians could be represented. The others would need too much bringing on board and slow down the policy development process and should rather be brought in with the implementation process. Four agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed with this observation during the third round. Panel members commented that *for full ownership it would be good to have parents and others involved in at least some part of the policy development. Great numbers are not necessary – one to represent all others could be chosen*. Others cautioned against too many people and mentioned the difficulty of choosing the representatives.
- The Public and Community Libraries Interest Group of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) should have been included. All panellists agreed with this observation in the second round, adding: *It would be a way of ensuring community library representation (four panellists agreed one panel member disagreed)*. *If this helps to identify suitable people with interest/experience then it's a good idea. What you need to guard against is having a broadcast approach that includes so many people with marginal interest/experience, but who nonetheless have opinions/inputs which can lead to unreasonable options and demands*. All five panellists agreed in the third round. One panel remarked that *they can also offer different perspectives and different ideas beyond the school field*.
Not all of the above will need to be part of all the consultations – some may only be consulted on areas that concern their area of expertise. Four panellists agreed

with the comment, one panel member neither agreed nor disagreed (*if full ownership is wanted as many people as possible needed to be involved at various levels*).

5.1.2.12 Practical and favourable objectives

Question 2.13 stated that, since government budgets are normally insufficient to satisfy all needs, it could be argued that policy analysts should opt for objectives that are practical and favourable. Panellists were asked whether, in their view **and based on their own experience in the field,**

- (a) governmental budgetary constraints were adequately considered in the policy document, and
- (b) practical and favourable objectives were chosen.

All panellists agreed that budgetary constraints were adequately considered and commented:

- On the strength of past good financial management and the implementation plan in the policy document the KZN Department of Education has made funds available that were not available in prior years. This is an example of practice influencing decision-making and being reflected in policy, making its implementation feasible (all agreed in the second round).
- There is no mention of restraints in the document (two agreed, one disagreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed).
- The premise of the choice of three models is surely that the third model alone is unaffordable. Four panel members agreed with the observation, and one disagreed.
- The implementation plan goes no further than core collections (four agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed). A panellist observed that therefore *education and lobbying are needed for additional funds to be made available*.

Four panel members agreed that the objectives chosen were practical and favourable. One panel member disagreed observing that the implementation plan reveals its

limitations in that it provides for core collections only. In the second round a panellist added *I see the sense in this last comment. But the objective of a core collection is practical. The support of the education resource centres will hopefully push schools to the next stage.*

5.1.2.13 Organisational constraints

Question 2.14 requested panel members to draw on their own experience and indicate whether adequate allowance was made in the policy for certain organisational constraints, namely:

- (a) ineffective organisational structures and work processes, and
- b) inadequately trained or unavailable human resources.

Panellists from outside KwaZulu-Natal (and not directly involved in the local school library sector) commented that adequate allowances had been made, while panellists more familiar with local conditions and working in the school sector noted as a constraint the two lines of authority where district ELITS officials report to district managers and not to ELITS which is a Head Office directorate. The possible difficulty of implementing a whole school information literacy policy was mentioned too.

The following comments were subsequently included in the second round:

- Policy implementation may be compromised due to head office and district line function problems (four panel members agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed). Panellists observed that re-structuring again may assist here, otherwise more education will be needed.
- It will be difficult to motivate schools to develop and implement a whole-school information literacy policy (three agreed, two disagreed). Further comment was that although not all schools may participate, *difficulties such as these when they arise should be worked through from all angles over time, and given the push of a policy and increased funding and ICT it should become easier.*
- *As much (allowance) as possible (was made): there are a large number of possible variables and issues here. Many cannot be dealt with in a policy document, but*

how they are dealt with will be informed by the policy document. All panel members agreed with this observation in the second round.

Panellists expressed some reservations regarding the second half of the question, namely whether adequate allowance was made for human resources despite the inclusion of a training programme in the policy document.

The following comments were made:

- A training and support programme has been devised to accompany the provisioning process. This is vital for successful implementation (all agreed). All panel members agreed with this suggestion and it was pointed out that, in fact, effective training should be included in pre-service teacher training
- It may be useful to think of local forums/interest groups for ongoing support. This type of support can be encouraged, rather than prescribed because by their nature these are voluntary associations. (Four panel members agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed.)
- More (ELITS) staff is needed (three panellists agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed)
- The lack of teacher-librarians is a problem. Four panellists agreed and one disagreed, stating: *my sense is that there are many trained teacher-librarians who are doing classroom teaching and not working in school libraries. I suspect that in the urban areas the lack of a post is a much greater problem than the lack of trained staff. It may be a problem to attract such people to deeply rural schools.*
- Human resources *might be the Achilles heel in the sustainability of the plans* – also in the Education Centres Supporting Rural Development project. Four panellists agreed with this statement and one disagreed
- The minimum standard of staffing for the cluster library is a full-time or part-time librarian. The panellist pointed out that a part-time librarian would actually be inadequate to serve a number of schools. All panellists agreed with this statement.

Question 2.15 requested panellists to list any additional organisational constraints that they thought should also have been taken into account when the policy was developed and the following observations were included in the second round:

- The training of teachers in the use of print materials, and also ICT. All agreed with this statement in the second round and one panellist suggested that the White Paper on e-Education should also be taken into consideration.
- The availability of locally produced resources and materials. Three panel members agreed that this could be a constraint, two disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed, commenting *locally produced resources are available, and where they are not, the capacity to produce them is. Demand will ensure supply.* Four panel members agreed with this statement in the third round, one neither agreed nor disagreed.
- The physical conditions in schools are an additional constraint. All panellists agreed with this observation.
- The rural environment in KwaZulu-Natal and the subsequent lack of other libraries in rural areas should influence policy modelling. All panellists agreed, and it was noted that the conditional grant of over R1 billion to the public library sector (with the aim of improving rural LIS) should be factored into future planning.
- Other provinces mentioned that KZN's top structure supported the initiative and gave the unit space to develop the policy – this lack of such support is an organisational constraint in most other provinces (three panel members agreed with this remark, two neither agreed nor disagreed).

5.1.2.14 Policy issues and objectivity

Question 2.16 pointed out that, when formulating policy, the heterogeneous nature of South African society requires a particular fastidiousness about objectivity and the setting aside of personal values so that issues can be investigated impartially. Panellists were asked whether there were, in their opinion, any issues in the policy document that should have been treated more objectively. Four panel members agreed that issues had been treated objectively. The following comments were offered by the other panellists and were included in the second round for general comment:

The policy assumes a common desire for information literacy and for inclusion in the information society.

- *This assumption is most probably correct, although many stakeholders may not be able to formulate the desire explicitly. The panel members referred to cell phone technology that is opening up everyone to the use of technology and access to information.*
- This (common desire) is an important principle and should underpin the document: *perhaps what is meant is that it should be argued more forcefully and not taken as a given. Four panellists agreed with this statement in the third round, and one neither agreed nor disagreed, stating that other environments are already moving away from the concept of information literacy to other more holistic and integrated views of how we teach skills, though in some cases this is only name changing. It is important that flexibility to facilitate change remains in built.*
- The lack of *take up* of some information society initiatives (like rural Telecentres) might show that people need to know why and when they need information. All five panel members agreed with this statement in the third round.

All SA parents and teachers would say yes if asked whether they wanted a school library with computers - but when given a range of alternatives (such as sports fields or toilets) it would be more difficult. And even if all still opt for a school library, the resulting library would not necessarily be used effectively.

- *It should never be necessary for parents and teachers to have to choose between toilets and education. If this is still the case, government has failed and is still failing its children. The problem is still that some people perceive education to be possible without the resources provided by a school library, which makes the question of choice between sports fields and libraries possible. The policy must maintain the assumption that the choice would be for education, and thus a library. All five panellists agreed with this observation in the third round, and added that maybe (it is) a bit idealistic but nevertheless desirable. The fact is that those choices still have to be made by communities, and it will need to do more than maintain the assumption – rather it needs to confront these attitudes in a*

clear explanation of why a school needs a library before a playing field so that we move beyond the present lip-service which calls the library “the heart of the school” but does not allocate resources. Panellists observed that the juggling of priorities faces all, and one would work with schools that choose libraries, since priorities and resources would influence their choice at the time. Although libraries were underutilised in the old dispensation it is hoped that changes in curriculum and teaching styles now would make the school library a living force, thus achieving the overall end result of the policy, namely well functioning libraries where materials are used effectively and enhance educational and personal goals.

5.1.2.15 Policy choices and divergent needs

Question 2.17 requested panel members to comment on the policy choices that were made in view of the fact that it is difficult to satisfy divergent needs since finding an answer to one problem may complicate others, and in a complex society like South Africa it is unlikely that all policy goals will be ideal. The following comments were offered by the panellists with much of the focus on the issue of models:

- The models are sensible and feasible, and good balance has been made. Four panellists agreed with the observation, and the one who disagreed observed that *the progression to a centralised school library is not clear.*
- *The models are realistic and non-exclusive, there is no mention of a one-size-fits-all concept but on the other hand there are a limited number of firm guidelines, all based on reality and experience.* Four panellists agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed. Panel members observed that the best choices possible were made in line with the views outlined in the question and the known constraints, and if a school were to come up with some other workable model that would probably not be discounted.
- Three panel members agreed with the observation that the influence of earlier Department of Education drafts restricted vision perhaps, but could not be ignored. The choice of three progressive models cuts down on the Department of Education models, and not necessarily to the detriment of the overall objectives.

Two panel members disagreed and the following comments were included in the third round:

- Solutions were less complex since the values and needs of the various groups do not diverge in this instance (four agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed).
- The biggest constraint that had to be taken into account was financial. A panellist observed that this included many aspects of implementation and not just book stock: lack of space, training of staff or hiring of specialist staff also have financial implications (four agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed).
- Panellists did not agree with the comment that the vagueness was inevitable at the time of the policy writing (two agreed, one disagreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed). Since question 2.2 also touched on the matter of vagueness this response was taken as signifying stability and it was decided that panel members will probably not agree on this matter.

5.1.2.16 Coverage of key elements

Question 2.18a asked panel members to briefly summarise the key elements of the policy as they saw it and (2.18b) to rate the comprehensiveness of coverage of these key elements. This combined summary of all responses was included in round two:

- Problem
- Background
- Vision and mission
- Purpose
- Principles (with redress and inclusivity highlighted)
- Guidelines, namely the choice of three models, sufficient diversity in implementation, whole school information literacy policy, minimum norms and the provision for future (ICT) developments
- Implementation
- (Its) basis (is) in experience

One panellist summarised the key elements succinctly as:

- Element one: its stated purpose of guiding the establishment and development of school libraries in the region (purpose).

- Element two: its vision of creating information literate, responsible and informed citizens (vision).

The second half of the question (b) required panellists to rate the comprehensiveness of the coverage of each key element they had identified in the policy document. They used a scale of 1 - 5 (1 being very inadequate, 2 inadequate, 3 neither adequate nor inadequate, 4 adequate and 5 very adequate). The elements and ratings (identified individually by each panel member) were combined and the results included in round two (table 10 below) where panellists were given the opportunity to comment. **All panellists indicated that they generally agreed with the other panel members' summary of the key elements. Only one panellist offered a comment.**

This question was valuable in as far as it identified the key elements but the rating is of little value since the panellists rated the comprehensiveness of only the key elements they had identified.

Table 10: Comprehensiveness of coverage of key elements with panellists rating their own key elements

Element	Very inadequate (1)	Inadequate	Neither adequate nor inadequate	Adequate	Very adequate (5)
Problem			x		
Background		x			
Vision and mission				x	
Purpose				xx	x
Principles			x	x	x
Redress				x	
Guidelines					x
Inclusivity				xx	
Sufficient diversity					x
Models				x	
Literacy policy				x	
Norms				x	
Provision for future developments				x	
Implementation					x
Basis in experience				x	
<i>Comment: A panel member observed (regarding the vision): More detail as to how this vision is to be achieved would be ideal, but this detail does not belong here. It should be developed in a separate support document drawing on international research and practice on the ground. Such</i>					

Element	Very inadequate (1)	Inadequate	Neither adequate nor inadequate	Adequate	Very adequate (5)
<i>a document containing curriculum support documents based on sound research would enable those on the ground to bring such a vision to fruition.</i>					

5.1.2.17 Adequacy and suitability of the school library models

Question 2.19 addressed the issue of models specifically and enumerated the seven school library models proposed in the 1998 draft of the *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa 1998: 16-23) as well as the models in the latest draft of the National School Library Policy (South Africa. Department of Education 2006c: 15). These models were considered by the policy task team when the KZN *School Library Policy* was developed. The models selected for KwaZulu-Natal were those already being implemented in the province, and also the most suitable according to the task team. Panel members were requested to take into account these documents as well as the additional material forwarded to them by the researcher (referred to in chapter 4 under 4.3.4) and, based on their own experience in the field, to comment on the adequacy and suitability of the models included in the policy.

Three panel members indicated in the first round that the models were adequate and suitable, and the other two had reservations about the cluster model (*the cluster model comprises a number of models... it is not quite honest to claim that there are only three models*). The comments below were included in the second round.

- The selection of the models was based on experience and is not cast in concrete, schools can select the most appropriate model for their circumstances (four panel members agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed).
- There are funding constraints for most schools, and the more affluent schools can pay for additional staff (three panellists agreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed).

- *One needs to keep in mind that a full-time teacher-librarian does not guarantee more reading by learners* – two panel members agreed with the observation, and three disagreed:

Guarantee may be too strong, but it would certainly make more reading easier and much more likely... there is something wrong if a fulltime librarian does not nurture more reading. All panellists agreed with this statement in the third round.

Panel members commented that continuing professional development and reinforcement of the role of the teacher-librarian are required. The lack of emphasis on reading in training modules was pointed out, as well as the fact that all teachers have to value the school library as a teaching aid for all subjects.

Regarding qualifications a panel member argued *we are too apologetic in our arguing for qualified librarians. It would be foolish to argue against say the need for qualified maths teachers just because there are bad qualified maths teachers or because there are excellent maths teachers without formal qualifications.*

- The aim should be for a central school library in each school but the benefit of the varied models is the ability of ELITS to provide minimum service to all in the short term, even to those in remote areas. All panellists agreed with this statement.
- The cluster model is a compromise due to financial constraints, and in fact comprises more than one model. In the second round three agreed and two neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, and in the third round all panel members agreed that a *compromise might offer excellent services – if the cluster library is the right choice for the circumstances and if resources are adequate for the mix of schools.*

The second part (b) of question 2.19 asks panel members to indicate whether other models should have been included, and if so to indicate which models. Three panel members indicated that the models were adequate. Four comments were included in the second round:

- No other models should have been included. Four panellists agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed), remarking *those presented were adequate but I would expect the option of including other models would remain open.*

- Co-operation with public libraries should be considered - all five panel members agreed.
- The norm of only 1 computer in the school library for learners limits the impact of the document, and the virtual library should not be seen as *the top of the ladder of development*. Four panel members agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed. A comment was made that the White Paper on e-Education of 2004 must be considered; *school libraries have to 'piggy-back' (on) it*.
- The cluster model must be *unpacked* (four panel members agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed).

5.1.2.18 Policy change and retrospective analysis

Roux (2000) cautions that the developmental and continuously changing nature of society means that no policy is ever complete in terms of outcomes or effect, and may require retrospective analysis. Meyer and Cloete (2000b: 239) emphasise the importance of realising that "policy changes take place before, during and after implementation... the truth is that policy change takes place throughout the policy life cycle". Hart (2002a) also comments on the changing landscape within which school libraries operate in South Africa. Question 2.20 focuses on policy change and panel members are asked to draw on their own experience concerning change and to comment on whether the six policy issues (a – f) discussed below were taken into account and adequately catered for in the KZN *School Library Policy*. In addition they can offer comment on other ways in which they think the changes could have been better managed or whether in their opinion, it is at all possible to successfully manage these changes.

Section (a) refers to the **dynamic and changing policy environment** where forces in the social, political, cultural and technological environments put pressure on policy-makers to effect changes to keep up with the changing reality around them, e.g. post apartheid South Africa and the merging of the previously race based Education Departments.

The following are observations from the first round that were included in the second round and are repeated here:

- There needs to be a mechanism for monitoring and implementation for reality check, and this should at the same time be informed by an environmental scan
- *The diversity in KwaZulu-Natal schools is dealt with in the policy document – hence the various models. This doesn't guarantee that everyone is satisfied with their lot but this is also good and could lead to change. No doubt the policy document will be revised from time to time if necessary. But you have to start somewhere.*
- *The policy outlines the provision of basic services rather than chasing the tail of the latest and the greatest. This is the way to go when equity is of paramount importance. Once basic services are in place then more can be added.*
- The issues were taken into account and can be successfully managed, but technological developments will demand flexibility.
- *Affluent countries with state of the art facilities are finding it difficult to keep ahead of the pace of change in the areas of electronic resource provision. In light of this fact the KZN policy, and those implementing it, are doing the best they can in difficult, but not unusual, circumstances. All panel members agreed with these five statements.*
- *Four panellists agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed) with a statement that policy should keep pace with development if it hasn't second-guessed the development and already made provision for changes.*
- *Three panel members agreed (two neither agreed nor disagreed) that the document attempts to balance demands and to talk to different sectors, and that its vagueness is useful in this difficult context.*

Section (b) of question 2.20 states that changes in political leadership can lead to policy changes both nationally and provincially (for example the changing policy focus of successive new Education Ministers at both levels) and panellists were asked for comment. *All five panellists agreed with the following two statements:*

- Needs should be articulated and policy drawn up by those closest to the problem. *If there is a change of leadership it is difficult to argue against an existing policy which is being implemented, and there isn't a vacuum which may be filled by someone who is removed from local circumstances.*
- Neglect or abandonment by decision makers up the chain are outside the policy makers' control, which is why lobbying and visibility once the policy has been adopted and while it is being implemented is so important.
- **Four panellists agreed (one disagreed) that social and political change, though relevant when it impacts upon education, should be seen as separate from the provision of library services and should not affect the roll-out of these services. The aims of this document should be seen as essential and therefore outside of the realm of political or social change, and change of ministers. A panellist observed that *experience has shown that different political bosses have different agendas and priorities, and this tends to have an impact on policy implementation, consequently reality may not match up. The panel member who did not agree argued that *this kind of thinking might explain the past weakness of school librarianship. Libraries must be shown to be part of social change. Perhaps the problem is the phrase 'social and political' which assumes that both are the same.****
- The connection between provincial policy and national policy might be an issue in future. (Three panel members agreed, two neither agreed nor disagreed.)
- **Three panellists disagreed (one agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed) with the statement that these *changes are very difficult, if not impossible, to manage arguing that it would be possible with *persistence, determination and flexibility.****

Question 2.20 (c) highlighted the aspect of the changing nature of institutions, pointing out that the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department had now (2006) restructured for the third time since 1994, the focus being on a move to smaller and more efficient units in the districts as opposed to regional structures. The table below outlines panellists' comments.

Table 11: Changing nature of institutions

Comment	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
<p>There is really very little policy makers can do to take into account events/shifts etc that are essentially out of their hands. Panellists pointed out that policy developers need to be aware of as many variables as possible so that a practical policy can be in place.</p> <p>- <i>Well-written policy need not be affected by organisational changes, as long as policy is communicated to, and owned by, those expected to implement it. This is also why an implementation plan should form part of a policy</i></p>	4 5	1	
<p>Smaller units are good, provided they have budget and autonomy</p> <p>- They also need management capacity, and should not have autonomy to the extent that they can derail policy implementation</p> <p>Panellists pointed out that these units would need freedom to move and take decisions with support and guidance of the parent unit – they need to <i>feel that (they) have some impact upon decision making no matter how far down the chain of responsibility (they) sit.</i></p> <p>- The units need active and interested staff</p> <p>- Sometimes larger units offer economies of scale that can be beneficial.</p> <p>A panellist observed that <i>economies of scale can be an illusion and delusion. Libraries can be set up from afar but I suspect close-to-the ground structures will be needed to sustain them and get them integrated in the curriculum</i></p>	4 5 5 5	1	
Two streams of authority (head office and district) may pose a problem	4		1
The policy document covers a large land area, any change to create greater efficiency and an increased ability to meet the vision of the document should be embraced	4		1
The Business Plan for ECSRD offers a wonderfully useful framework for the policy and more funds, staff and resources all round	3		2
<p>Shift to smaller units might affect the power and influence of ELITS to get the policy going, and make the unit weak and invisible (as happened elsewhere)</p> <p>- If this has happened elsewhere attempts should be made to analyse why and plan against it if possible.</p> <p>Panellists suggested that, although this situation could be capitalised on by some staff, it can be avoided through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closer links between ELITS and the districts - Careful structuring of the reporting lines - A strong Head Office component that has credibility, with the functions of the district officials clearly delineated, and again - good communication maintained 	2 5		3

Comment	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
The policy took these changes into account and it can be managed <i>I don't know if the policy did do this. Does it have much to say on organisational structures?</i> This comment can be verified in the policy document and was not included in the next round.	2	1	2

Section (d) mentioned the change in the resource base where departments needed to reprioritise and improve performance budgeting as a factor to be taken into account. All panellists agreed in the second round that this in fact makes it doubly important for accepted policy to be in place, and that improved performance in budgeting is to be celebrated as long as savings are redistributed within the field of education. Four agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed) with a statement that, although this was taken into account, it is difficult to deal with as the impact on performance is long-term.

Section (e) focused on changes in technological advances seen against the fact that only 10.4% of all schools in KwaZulu-Natal have access to computers for teaching and learning according to the White Paper on e-Education published in 2004. Panel members were in agreement on most issues mentioned regarding ICT. Their comments are included in table 12.

Table 12: Changes in technological advances

Comment	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
This is one part of redress which needs to take place	5		
The provision of electricity is a major stumbling-block	5		
Maintenance of ICT is an issue.	5		
Policy can only state what is desirable and then lobby	4	1	
- Policy is more than aspirations. It is meant to guide change, therefore it is essential to look at possible solutions and have some answers	5		
The policy addresses the need to provide ICT facilities	4	1	
The Education Centres Business plan also seems to hold out hope	5		
The basic skills and principles of reading and dealing with information can be learnt without access to IT, and once acquired it can later be transferred to that environment.	5		
- Good point, but not to let this hinder progress in ICT implementation.	5		
- Yes, but there is great demand by learners and their parents for access to ICT	5		
Panellists commented that this is common across countries and recognises a changing world, and should be optimised. Yet it was also observed that <i>at times there is an unrealistic expectation that ICT skills will open all doors. We can't really address this but should bear it in mind.</i>			
- <i>But this is not a reason for going slow on ICT but a reason for continuing with basic skills education as well.</i>	5		
- <i>I agree but admit that it is hard to convince ICT people of this. I think more research is needed to answer this question. I accept that ICTs have a huge impact on information seeking and might change the ground rules.</i>	4		1
A panellist noted that all forms of research should be ongoing but this should not hinder implementation - only facilitate change as more knowledge is gained both through research and experience			

The last section, 2.20 (f), enquired whether changes in policy solutions or service delivery strategies, for example the *Business Plan: Education Centres supporting Rural Development* (2005), could be accommodated in the policy. Three comments were included in the second round:

- All panellists agreed that the Business Plan ECSRD actually holds out hope for positive changes, and that regular review is crucial to accommodate new planning.
- Innovative solutions are needed and many are being implemented and these often lead the way in policy formulation (four panel members agreed, one disagreed).

- Change should be recognised as part of any policy as long as the initial vision and purposes of the policy remain intact. Three panellists agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed) and one disagreed commenting that *there may be reason to review these from time to time as well. As a general observation, sometimes change makes it necessary to reconsider even the vision.* Four agreed with this comment in the third round and one disagreed, observing that it *may not be the vision so much as how we get there.*

Question 2.21 sought to determine which of the above points (a – f in question 2.20) panellists thought would most likely influence policy changes throughout the *School Library Policy's* life cycle. Panellists listed them in order of importance and the analysis of the results are reflected in table 13 below. Only two panellists ranked all 6 issues, one ranked 5 issues, one 4 issues and one only ranked two of the issues. The issues not ranked were taken as nought and were not added to the score. The highest score would be 36 if all panel members had ranked all issues.

Table 13: Ranking of issues influencing policy changes

Policy issues	I m p o r t a n c e							Total
	(Most)						(Least)	
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0 -No ranking	
(b) Changes in political leadership	xx	x					xx	17 (36)
(f) Changes in policy solutions or service delivery strategies		x	xx	x		x		17 (36)
(a) Dynamic and changing policy environment	x	x		x		x	x	15 (36)
(c) The changing nature of institutions	x	x		x		x	x	15 (36)
(e) Technological advances		x	x	x	x		x	14 (36)
(d) Change in the resource base		x	x		xx		x	13 (36)

In the second round panellists were asked to comment on the above ranking. Comments regarding a specific policy outcome and its ranking follow directly below the ranked issue in table 14 below. The study sought stability or consensus on the large issues but also sought the depth of discussion on analysis of the issues in the feedback from the various rounds.

Table 14: Comment on policy outcomes ranking

Ranking	Policy issue	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
1	(b) Changes in political leadership (f) Changes in policy solutions or service delivery strategies (Non-response from one panellist, 4 commented)	1.5 (f) only	.5 (b) only	2
<p><i>Changes in political leadership happen all the time and shouldn't influence good policy implementation. Four panel members agreed in the third round, one neither agreed nor disagreed</i></p> <p><i>Changes in policy solutions could be as a result of feedback after implementation and are desirable. All five panel members agreed with this statement in the third round. Panellists observed that new incumbents sometimes want to invent their own wheel, and cautioned that policy implementation should be given enough time to show the practical strengths and weaknesses.</i></p>				
3	(a) Dynamic and changing policy environment (c) The changing nature of institutions	5		
5	(e) Technological advances	3	2	
<p>One panellist thought this outcome should rank fourth, while another two wanted it higher in light of the White Paper on e-Education.</p>				
6	(d) Change in the resource base	2	1	2
<p>One panel member was of the opinion that this outcome should have been rated third.</p>				

In question 2.22 panellists were given the opportunity to indicate whether there were any other changes in the policy environment which could adversely affect policy outcomes and implementation. Panellists offered the following comments and **all panellists agreed with the first four observations in the second round:**

- Some of the failures of local policy initiatives defy rational explanation, and *reside in the realm of chance, personality, factions, different agendas, champions and allies in the unpredictability of the policy process.*
- The extent to which the policy outcomes are embraced by those who implement them on the ground can have a major impact, particularly if the policy is not seen as relevant, or possible.
- The need for those on the ground to have the necessary skills is also paramount.
- Staffing policies inside the schools will either nurture the policy or break it. It was pointed out that if *all teachers are trained, this will go some way to alleviating this potential problem.*

Four panel members agreed (one neither agreed nor disagreed) with the next two comments:

- *The Revised National Curriculum Statement is an improvement over the previous 'new' curriculum documents but educators are still confused. There is an emphasis on resources but little training for educators in their use – and in fact, just what resources are.*
- *Reading is not adequately being taught in many schools as a result of the new curriculum. One panellist posed the question can you say that bad reading teaching is the 'result of the new curriculum'? Was it OK before? I would agree though that the new curriculum did assume too much about teachers' understandings and that many teachers threw out their well-trying techniques too soon, before they know what to replace them with.*

5.1.2.19 Likelihood of achieving outcomes

Question 2.23 requested panellists to evaluate the likelihood of the six outcomes listed in the policy document being achieved on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being very unlikely, 2 unlikely, 3 neither likely nor unlikely, 4 likely and 5 very likely), and to offer comment based on their own experience. The results of the panellists' ranking in the first round are presented in table 15. When a panellist ranked an outcome as 3 or 4 (3/4) half of the mark (1/2) was allocated to 3 and to 4.

Table 15: Achieving policy outcomes

Outcome	Most 5	4	3	2	Least 1	Total
(c) An integrated plan to establish, develop and resuscitate school libraries	x	xxx	x			20 (25)
(a) Wide-scale awareness of the policy		xxx	x	x		17 (25)
(b) Awareness of the menu of models		xx	xx	x		16 (25)
(d) Schools that are provided with relevant core collections including computer software and online resources, hardware to support the ICT programme, technical back-up		xx½	½ ½	x½		16 (25)
(e) A whole school information literacy policy created in each school		x	xx ½	x½		14½ (25)
(f) Extensive use effective integration of library resources (including ICT) with curricular and non-curricular activities			xxx ½	x½		13½ (25)

In the second round panellists were asked to indicate whether they agreed with the ranking and to offer comment should they wish to do so (there was a non-response from one panellist). Comments from the first round were included for further exploration under each ranking. Comments regarding a specific outcome and its ranking follow directly below the ranking row in table 16.

Table 16: Comments on policy outcomes ranking

Ranking	Outcome	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
1 (20) (Most likely)	(c) An integrated plan to establish, develop and resuscitate school libraries (N=4)	4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The positive outcomes should be obvious, but only in KwaZulu-Natal. Four panel members agreed with this statement and one disagreed observing that one can not assume this. - Although this is only a start and more support will be needed, the policy is in place and the ECSR Business Plan offers further support. All panel five members agreed with this observation in the second round. - It is important that this plan should also include pre-service and in-service training, and this ranking will depend on the evidence of progress so far. All five panel members agreed with this statement in the third round. 				
2 (17)	(a) Wide-scale awareness of the policy (N=4)	4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All five panellists agreed in the second round with the statement that this will depend on a concerted effort to publicise the policy and explain it to all involved <i>with energy and perseverance</i>. 				
3 (16)	(b) Awareness of the menu of models (N=4)	3		1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This will rest on the successful explanation of the models to all even though <i>most people will possibly only be interested in the model they wish to adopt</i>. All panellists agreed in the second round. One panellist pointed out that they should know about all models because of possible progression. 				
3 (16)	(d) Schools that are provided with relevant core collections including computer software and online resources, hardware to support the ICT programme, and technical back-up (N=4)	4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The issues of distance, funding, training are enormous (all five panel members agreed). - It's only a policy document– it's not a business plan! Three panel members agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed. It was pointed out that a policy document and a business plan go together – one informs the other. It was suggested that the roll-out plan needed a training component. - Technical back-up is an ongoing problem, even in the developed world. All five panel members agreed with this statement in the second round 				

Ranking	Outcome	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
5 (14.5)	(e) A whole school information literacy policy created in each school (N=4) (A panellist commented <i>this should be first or second in importance as it is the necessary basis for the success of library policy. And it should be feasible to do if the school sits down and decides on how to go about it.</i>)	3	1	

This outcome generated more discussion and four comments were included in the third round.

This would need a concerted and wide-scale training programme for schools. Four panel members agreed and one disagreed in the second round.

- The training programme should include management at all levels. All five panel members agreed in the third round.
- *It's not that complicated – and it's fundamental to all else. It can begin in some key 'corners' of the school and hopefully infuse the culture over a few years.* All five panel members agreed in the third round, adding *provided the school has a plan and does not leave it to chance.*
- *I've been thinking lately that we should use a different term – perhaps just 'information' policy or 'enquiry learning' policy?* Three panel members agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed. Observations ranged from *other areas of the world are moving to inquiry learning to one should not get bogged down in terminology - the aims are often the same.*

This is rare in any school and will depend enormously on the interest, skill level, drive and ability of those on the ground in each school. It cannot be imposed from outside as a lack of ownership from those concerned tends to see such policies fail. Four panel members agreed and one disagreed with this statement in the second round.

- But it needs to be introduced from outside in most cases. Four panel members agreed in the third round, one neither agreed nor disagreed offering the following comment:
 - *Yes, but, those from the outside cannot be seen to impose their policy without consultation and inclusion of those involved that have to work with the policy on the ground. Ownership by all will result in better outcomes.*
 - *It can be suggested and then assistance can be offered regarding formulation and a roll-out plan.*
 - *If change can't be introduced from outside then we will get nowhere. There is a lot of research and precedence in how to bring about change in schools.*

One school can always adopt another's - but whether it will be effective is the question. Four panel members agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed in the second round.

- *It is not that complicated. One doesn't need the whole school on board at one - one or two success stories and models will get more and more educators on board.* All panel members agreed in the third round: *the more on board the quicker change, and adapt perhaps rather than adopt.*

It would probably be difficult to enforce this aspect of the policy, as it depends on the management of the school. Three panellists agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed in the second round.

Ranking	Outcome	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
	<p>- Such a policy (<i>whole school</i>) would have to come from management or at least be ratified by management for it to be whole school. All panel members agreed with this statement in the third round and one observed that <i>sometimes things happen in schools despite management.</i></p>			
6 (13.5) (Least likely)	(f) Extensive use and effective integration of library resources (including ICT) with curricular and non-curricular activities	3	1	
<p>The following four first round comments were included in the second round:</p> <p>This would be difficult to enforce since it depends largely on the management of the school. Three panel members agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed in the second round:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>But not impossible over time and with support. This is informed by management, yes, but is really about the effectiveness of the school library and the ability and drive present in the teachers to take up what the library has to offer. All five panel members agreed with the statement in the third round.</i> - <i>'Enforce' is too strong maybe. Again why assume that management won't support it? Once information literacy policy is in place this will happen as a result. It does not have to happen in all corners of the school – just one. All five panel members agreed with this comment in the third round.</i> <p>Extensive use and integration would rely on considerable initial and ongoing training (also of the advisory service staff) and professional/technical support. All panel members agreed in the second round.</p> <p>Policy alone cannot bring about this kind of learning. Four panel members agreed in the second round and one neither agreed nor disagreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hence the emphasis on training and a new approach to the role of the school library. All five panel members agreed with this statement in the third round. - It can if it leads to information literacy policy in a school. Three panel members agreed and two disagreed, commenting that <i>only if there is take up and ownership, and understanding of the policy, and that the policy still has to be implemented.</i> <p>This relies a great deal on the skill level, ability and enthusiasm of those in schools. All five panel members agreed in the second round</p> <p>The following general comments from panel members were included in the third round:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>It's a very desirable outcome but will need a lot of work. All five panel members agreed with this observation in the third round.</i> - <i>The word 'extensive' limits this statement - this is difficult to achieve in even the most well resourced environments. Four panel members agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed. It was pointed out that it's still desirable - small steps.</i> - <i>This is ambitious but is the fundamental aim of the policy surely and therefore should be higher up. All five panel members agreed, adding perhaps we are being a bit pessimistic.</i> 				

5.1.3 Delphi questionnaire: section three

"Implementation cannot be seen as an activity to be carried out according to a carefully predetermined plan; rather, it is a process that, at the very best, can only be managed, and lessons must be learnt as one proceeds through the different implementation stages" (Brynard 2000: 187). The third section of the questionnaire sought to establish the adequacy of the provincial implementation strategy and explored issues around successful implementation.

5.1.3.1 Policy fit

Question 3.1 asked panel members to assess the fit of the policy with the problems it wanted to address (in other words to what extent has the policy document identified, understood and expressed the problem in its context), and to indicate their assessment on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 very inadequate, 2 inadequate, 3 neither adequate nor inadequate, 4 adequate, 5 very adequate). *One panellist did not offer an assessment, noting that *the problems need to be spelled out to answer this adequately*. Two panel members thought the policy fit was indeed very adequate (5), and two indicated that it was adequate (4).*

5.1.3.2 Factors adversely influencing policy implementation

Question 3.2 stated that the implementation strategy of a policy is based on certain assumptions regarding the following issues:

- a. the commitment of those entrusted with carrying out the implementation at various levels to the goals and methods of the policy
- b. the administrative capacity of implementers to carry out the changes desired of them
- c. the support of clients and coalitions whose interests are enhanced or threatened by the policy, and the strategies they employ in strengthening or deflecting its implementation

Panel members were asked to indicate which of the above factors were (in their experience and taking into account the information forwarded to them) most likely to

adversely influence policy implementation in KwaZulu-Natal. They were requested to rank their answer from most important (3) to least important (1), or to indicate if they considered all factors equally important (2). All five panel members ranked the factors and the highest ranking is indicated in brackets in table 17.

Table 17: Ranking of factors adversely influencing policy implementation

Factors adversely influencing policy implementation	Total
(a) the commitment of those entrusted with carrying out the implementation at various levels, to the goals and methods of the policy	11 (15)
(c) the support of clients and coalitions whose interests are enhanced or threatened by the policy, and the strategies they employ in strengthening or deflecting its implementation	11 (15)
(b) the administrative capacity of implementers to carry out the changes desired of them	8 (15)

In the second round panel members were asked whether they agreed with the above ranking:

Two panel members disagreed: *The factors rank equally (appear equally important) - they are all interconnected – without one it would be hard to have the other.* Four panel members agreed with this observation in the third round (one neither agreed nor disagreed) and commented that these matters tend to be interconnected in an education setting, but if there are *committed staff implementing and clients supporting this there would be a basis for lobbying for the capacity required.*

Three panel members agreed with the ranking, but cautioned against possible gaps between the e-education sector and school library sector regarding (c) above. Three panel members agreed with this observation in the third round (two neither agreed nor disagreed).

Panellists were asked to comment on two other comments put forward in the first round:

The only parties who may feel threatened are staff (at all levels) who may be inadequately trained. Two panellists agreed, two disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed observing that *other underperforming directorates may also feel threatened, as well as adequately trained staff who don't like change.*

The importance of ownership of the policy document and the ability to support this ownership should be stressed. All panellists agreed with this statement in the second round, and added *stressing it is not sufficient, there needs to be steps and processes that result in this*. All five panel members agreed in the third round and elaborated: *such as consultation, information dissemination, and professional development*.

Question 3.3 offered panellists the opportunity to comment whether there were any other factors which, in their experience, could limit the success of the implementation process. They were asked to offer comment and to rank these factors in order of importance (3 = most and 1 = least). In the second round panel members were requested to indicate whether they agreed with the comment and ranking of the first round, and some of their observations were included in the third round for further clarification. Four panellists ranked the importance of the factors, and in one instance only three panel members ranked the factor. The highest ranking possible is indicated in brackets in table 18 below.

Table 18: Factors limiting implementation success

Factors that can limit implementation success	Ranking
Training/ongoing professional development (All five agreed in the second round)	11 (12)
<i>It is hugely difficult to shift paradigms because of entrenched habit, comfort zones and the like. Four panel members agreed in the second round and one neither agreed nor disagreed. It was suggested that a champion in each school (preferably at senior level) was needed, and that planning should take this factor (the difficulty to shift paradigms) into account –it was no reason for inactivity.</i>	10 (12)
So much is going to depend on the librarians and their skills, knowledge and ability All panel members agreed in the second round, commenting that it should be <i>all teachers, not just librarians</i> and that training, good communication and motivation are necessary elements.	9 (12)
<i>School libraries have to make a difference - and preferably a measurable difference - to the quality of teaching and learning in the school. All panel members agreed in the second round and added that this is important for the credibility of the policy and increased levels of funding, and improved levels of performance should follow implementation of the policy.</i>	9 (12)
Possibly the inability to see the importance of resources in the context of enhancing reading and thinking abilities (three panel members agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed). A panel member observed <i>it is this inability that should be addressed by training and lobbying</i> , and all five panel members agreed with this statement in the third round.	9 (12)
Budgetary constraints by the provincial department/districts/whoever controls budgets, and competing for the same funding allocation. All five panel members	9 (12)

Factors that can limit implementation success	Ranking
agreed with this observation in the second round and suggested that <i>the policy needs ring-fencing of school library resources surely</i> . All panel members agreed and one stressed that districts need to take responsibility for their budgetary needs.	
The availability of appropriate resources (and whether these resources are being produced in the required numbers within the country). Three panellists agreed, one disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed. This comment was not included in the following round because it had been discussed under 2.15	9 (12)
The availability of trained professionals in the field as well as adequate training facilities. Three panellists agreed, and two disagreed in the second round observing that <i>as with resources, demand will ensure supply, and courses can be run anywhere, formal training facilities are not needed</i> . All five panellists agreed with both the above observations in the third round.	9 (12)
The implementation process is not just a matter of provisioning, one needs to ensure that the school library is transformed and is able to implement a whole school information literacy policy. Four panel members agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed in the second round, commenting <i>I agree in principle but the emphasis should perhaps not be on whole school policy</i> .	8 (12)
The dropping or flagging in drive and commitment over a number of years. Four panel members agreed with this statement in the second round (one disagreed). Panellists observed that policies need <i>champions who are committed and energetic, and that all teams need to reinvent themselves and their enthusiasm</i> .	8 (12)
A lack of innovative thinking when it comes to the use of all available resources. Four panel members agreed and one disagreed, adding that training will counter this. Others observed that there is a tendency to think that resources must be all ICT when much can be achieved with for example newspapers.	8 (12)
The demographics of the province, in other words distances and inaccessibility affecting the dissemination of resources and information. Two panel members agreed and two disagreed in the second round, mentioning that there are delivery services available through the Resources and Information Network (RAIN) in the province, and that the province is not that inaccessible.	8 (12)
The changes in (<i>policy</i>) environment over a number of years. One panel member disagreed (four neither agreed nor disagreed). Panel members reiterated that policy development should be ongoing and implementation should change to allow for this factor.	5 (9)

5.1.3.3 Problems to address

Question 3.4 asked panellists to list problems that were not adequately covered in their view. These problems could include issues such as practical implementation problems, possible implications for human resource development, budget implications for the province, and equity and addressing past imbalances.

There was a non-response from one panellist in the second round and only four panellists responded to this question. They put the following suggestions forward:

- Problems identified by this process could be addressed in a series of support documents that can be created to expand upon, support, and extend the scope of the policy.
- The policy should be kept clear and simple.
- The ECSRD business plan may fill gaps. A panellist commented that it must then be made clear that the two must be read together and not in isolation.
- Two panel members stated that the plans for getting the support and buy-in of schools are not adequately covered. One panellist observed that this should be part of the training, and mentioned that, for example, the ECSRD programme included a great deal of consultation before implementation.

5.1.3.4 Capacity for implementation

The next question, 3.5, requested panellists to draw on their own experience and the information in the documents was forwarded to them to indicate whether they thought there was sufficient capacity in the sector to play the role demanded by the plan. They could indicate too whether they anticipated that implementation might need to be adapted because of lack of capacity.

All panellists agreed with the following statements:

- Much will depend on the educators' understanding of the curriculum. A panel member remarked that *it certainly hampers teaching and learning when educators are unfamiliar with and apprehensive of the curriculum. But this policy process can play a part in building their understanding.*
- The implementation plan, with its promise to educate the educators and curriculum officials, shows understanding of this crucial issue.
- Especially those in positions of responsibility should continually seek relevant professional development (and this has implications for resourcing and training).
- As needs change appropriate staff with the necessary skills should be sought to enable the implementation of the policy, e.g. the area of ICT often needs specialised, highly trained staff and technical support (and cooperation with e-education policy implementers is important).

- Time lines may need to be altered due to unforeseen problems but the sector has the expertise.
- A panellist was impressed by the vision at the top in ELITS and the commitment of ELITS staff: *the policy document was pursued with energy and determination and KZN has a good reputation and track record.*
- The ECSRD business plan also intends to work in the neediest and problematic regions – *in fact the mandate was to work only in rural, under-resourced areas.*

Four panellists agreed in the second round that:

- The lack of capacity (or training, or interest, or all three) should be addressed rather than implementation adapted since the document has been endorsed by the provincial Minister of Education (one panel member neither agreed nor disagreed).
- There is a general concern about the human resources dimensions of this and many other initiatives, which require levels of skill and operation that have not been seen in abundance in the past. Capacity at school level will have to be increased. *One panel member disagreed and pointed out that each teacher needs some basic training and it needs to be part of pre-service training – and taken seriously.*

5.1.3.5 Implementation strategy

Question 3.6 afforded panellists the opportunity to indicate whether they thought that the implementation strategy needed to be adapted, and to indicate in what regard it will need to be modified. Panellists remarked as follows:

- *Specific changes are not needed but the strategy should be regularly reviewed and, for example changed timelines, as they occur, conveyed to all concerned. Four panel members agreed and one panel member disagreed in the second round, stating that the ECSRD does change things: it offers a new landscape for the implementation plan and it need not affect the policy framework - since the 3 models fit in well.*

- The policy could now be revisited in the light of the ECSR (four panel members agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed).
- Plans for getting the understanding and cooperation of school management and staff should be included (four panellists agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed).

The last question, 3.7, asked panel members to list the measures (such as guidelines or systems) that ELITS should, in their view, put in place to take the policy implementation process forward successfully. Panellists were requested in the second round to indicate their agreement with the statements from the first round and to rank the importance of each statement (1 most - 3 least). Only 3 panellists ranked the importance of each measure. The panellists' ranking is reflected in table 19.

Table 19: Measures that will take policy implementation process forward

Comment	Ranking
Make clear efforts to encourage the ownership of the policy by all: getting the understanding and cooperation of school management and staff (all five panel members agreed).	9 (9)
Ensure the employment of relevant professional staff to support implementation (all agreed).	9 (9)
Train ELITS staff so that they train school personnel and follow-up on the training and spend some time in the field (four agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed).	9 (9)
Put procedures in place for continual professional development at all levels (all panel members agreed).	9 (9)
Develop and disseminate support documentation that extends the policy giving detail and practical, research based examples (all panellists agreed)	8 (9)
Get a clear process in place to disseminate information and invite feedback and discussion (all panellists agreed).	8 (9)
Consult with industry/manufacturers/publishers to ensure the resources that are needed are being produced within the country (four agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed). Panellists commented that market demand will stimulate the development of resources (all panel members agreed with this statement in the third round) and that it was perhaps not prudent to use the word <i>ensure</i> (three panellists agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed, and one disagreed: <i>maybe, but we must try</i>).	7 (9)

5.1.4 Summary

The Delphi questionnaires critically analysed the KZN *School Library Policy* and its implementation strategy to establish the policy's adequacy in terms of policy formulation and development. Practical implementation problems were identified

and the policy's suitability for implementation assessed. Moreover the panellists reached consensus on most issues and where there was disagreement the panel mostly agreed with comments offered in further rounds. The results have sufficiently informed the research questions and will be further interpreted in chapter 6.

In the next section the secondary data which described the context in which the policy was to be implemented is presented.

5.2 Secondary data

The use of secondary data in research can save time and costs and offers the possibility of re-analysing previous findings. However, the researcher cannot control the data for data collection errors and is restricted in analysis by the original objectives of the research (Mouton 2001: 165). The main disadvantage is "the recurring question of validity" and Babbie and Mouton (2002: 265) point out that a research project will collect data suitable for a specific purpose and even though "it may come close" it may not quite be the information the researcher needs. This limitation means that one needs to verify that the question that was asked "provides a valid measure of the variable" that will be analysed. Since the primary analysis was undertaken by someone other than the researcher, it forces one to be explicit about the assumptions and theory that underlie the data (Mouton 2001: 164). These arguments hold true for the comparison below and will be discussed where these limitations apply.

The data in the next section comprises the results obtained from the following documents:

- KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Report of the South African School Library Survey 1999 which was commissioned by the National Department of Education and conducted by the Education and Training Information Studies (ETIS) in the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d). This report will be referred to as the HSRC Survey.

- Analysis of the 2004 ELITS School Library Audit, undertaken by the ELITS Directorate, KZN Department of Education, and captured and analysed by EduAction (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004). This data will come closest to the information required to provide a sense of the context in which the implementation of the policy occurs (Babbie and Mouton 2002: 265) since the survey form was developed to obtain information to target schools in the province more appropriately.
- Summary Report: Shongololo Pilot Project (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006). This was a pilot project undertaken by ELITS to equip 21 school libraries with hardware and software to manage ICT in their school libraries. The report only became available in 2007 and copies were not forwarded to the panel.
- ELITS School Library Development Project Evaluation Report conducted in 2007 (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d).
- Risk Analysis Report, undertaken by the KZN Department of Education's Internal Control and Risk Management sub-directorate in 2007, evaluating risks to ELITS' service delivery (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c).

Many of the documentation above have not been formally published and the ELITS documents in particular are not readily available outside the department.

A copy of the 2004 ELITS School Library Audit as well as an electronic copy of the Access database (of the audit) were forwarded to the Delphi panellists as it was thought that this information would provide an overview of school library provisioning in the province. Additional statistical educational data for KwaZulu-Natal compiled in 2003 by EduAction (2004) was forwarded to the panel members too. The Shongololo Pilot Project report was only drafted late in 2006 and the SLDP Evaluation Report was finalised in 2007. At that time the Delphi study had already commenced.

5.2.1 Comparison: Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Survey and the ELITS School Library Audit

For the purpose of this research it is believed that the combined data from these two surveys will provide an overall picture of school library provisioning and administration in the province, highlighting the landscape in which schools seek to provide and maintain school library services. It will further assist the researcher to identify the extent to which services provided have improved or deteriorated between 1999, when the HSRC Survey was undertaken, and 2004, when the ELITS School Library Audit was completed. The data-collection instruments for these two surveys are not identical. The HSRC's Survey form is a five-page questionnaire with three main sections, namely general library information, available library stock, and a personnel category. The ELITS School Library Audit form is a two page document with four focus areas: general school data, library resources, library management, and utilisation of the library. It stands to reason that not all the results in the two surveys will be comparable since there may not be common ground for comparison in all the categories of the two survey questionnaires.

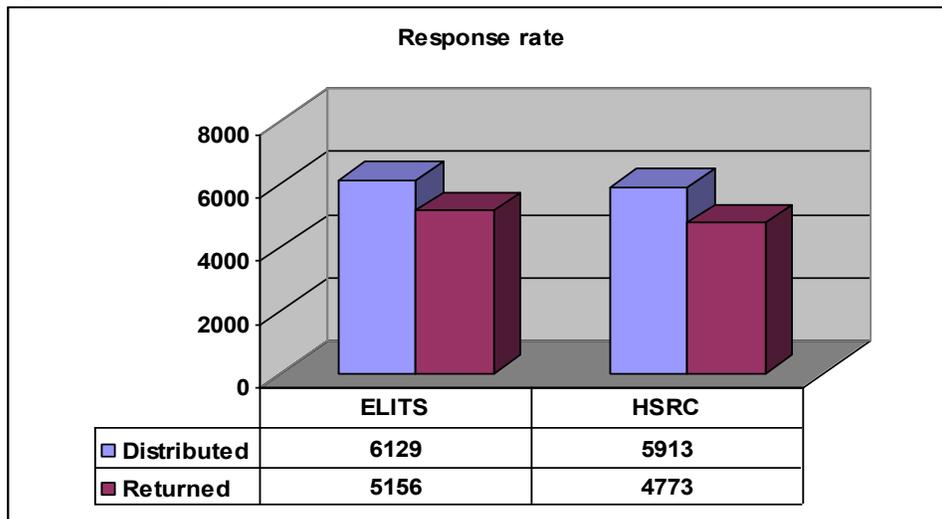
The main aim of both surveys was to obtain a baseline set of data which would inform decision-making and planning nationally and provincially. The data from the HSRC Survey was presented as a national report as well as detailed provincial reports, and this survey's KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Report was used together with the ELITS School Library Audit to compare data gathered in the two surveys.

The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) was pre-tested in a small sample of schools in all the regions and, after considering the comments received, was finalised and distributed to all schools through EMIS. The HSRC Survey indicates that the tender did not require that a pilot survey should be done, but that extensive consultation with the National Department of Education took place. The fact is that the integrity of the fieldwork process can therefore not be estimated. It is further presumed that a degree of "undercount" is highly likely (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 9).

5.2.1.1 Sampling and response rate

The response rate for the two surveys was respectively 80.7% for the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10) and 84% for the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 2). The HSRC Survey removed the pre-primary sample from the report since not all provinces had submitted data on these schools.

Figure 2: Response rates

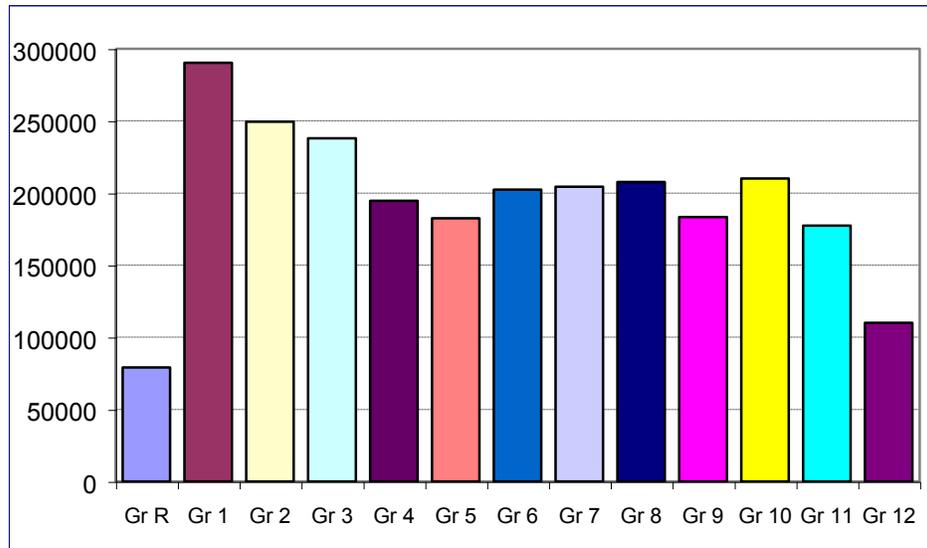


Both surveys obtained a data list from the EMIS unit in the province, but only the ELITS School Library Audit included a request for general data regarding school, number of learners per grade, number of classrooms and educators. The ELITS School Library Audit analysis (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 3) cautioned that the results in this section should be viewed against the fact that there were a number of non-responses: 281 schools (5%) provided no learner numbers, 530 schools (10%) omitted the number of classrooms, and 634 schools (12%) did not provide educator numbers. However, the average school size was an enrolment of 426 learners, with the highest enrolment in Durban area, namely 2 269 learners. The average number of teachers per school was 13, with the largest staff component (excluding the principal) reported as 71 educators, while 121 schools had only one educator. The average number of classrooms per school was 12 - the highest being 61, and 62 schools indicating that they had one classroom.

5.2.1.2 General School Data

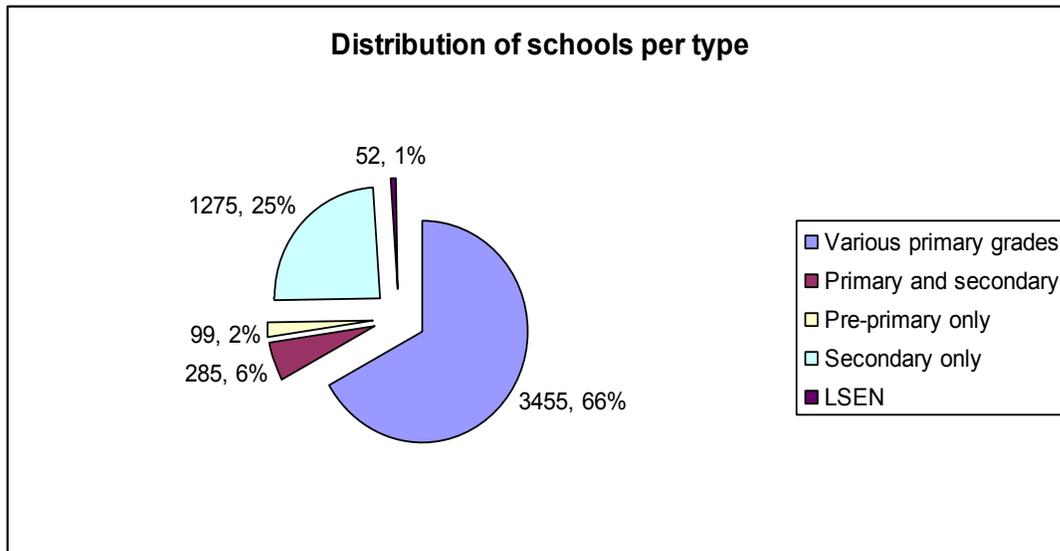
The ELITS School Library Audit offered data relating to learners per grade, and by far the majority of learners were to be found in the four primary grades as shown below in figure 3 (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 5).

Figure 3: Learners per grade



Of the schools responding 3 455 (67%) offered various groupings of primary grades and 1 275 (25%) offered secondary grades only. 285 schools (6%) offered both primary and secondary grades, and 99 schools (1.9%) offered pre-primary only. Fifty-two LSEN (Learners with Special Education Needs) schools (1%) submitted an audit return (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 5). Figure 4 gives a grouping of the schools per type.

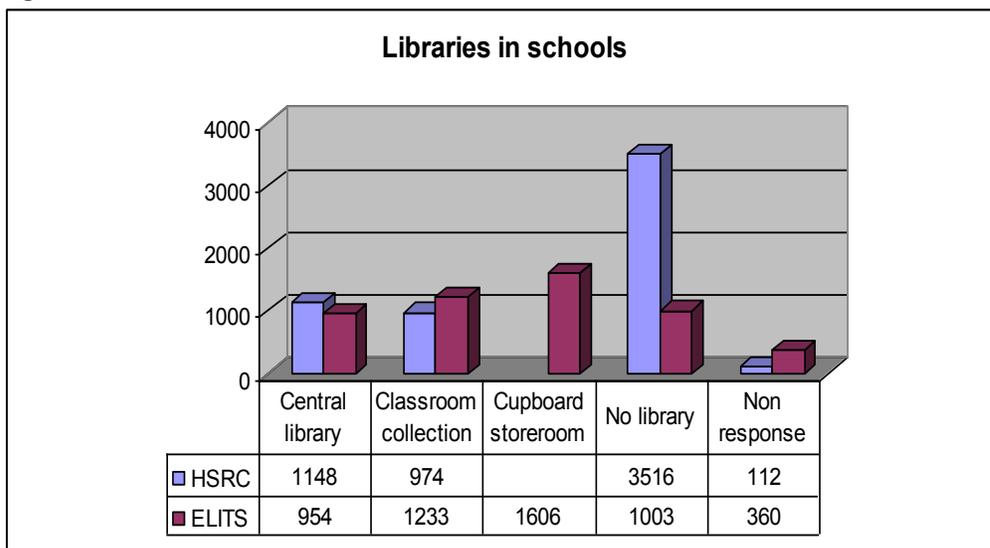
Figure 4: Grouping of grades



5.2.1.3 School library information

The HSRC questionnaire differentiated between schools with on-site libraries and schools with a classroom collection, while the ELITS School Library Audit identified schools with a central school library, a classroom library, as well as schools with library material kept in a storeroom or cupboard. The HSRC questionnaire only made provision for a yes/no answer to the question "The school has a library".

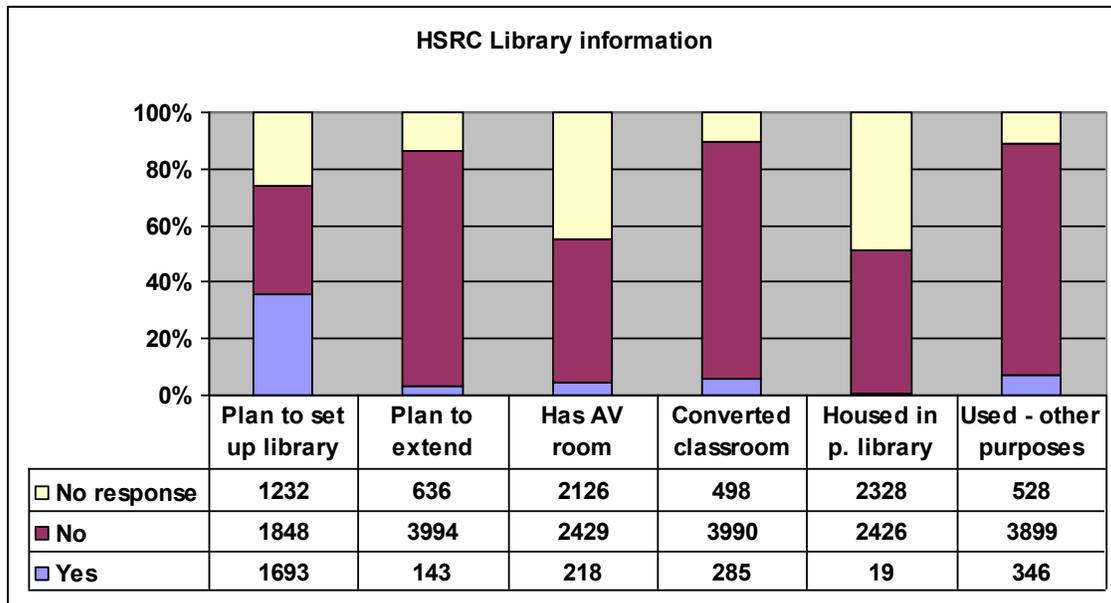
Figure 5: Libraries in schools



The HSRC Survey's breakdown specified the **974 classroom collections** separately but included this number in the total figure of 1 148, thus the classroom libraries should not be added again to the figure provided under central libraries. In other words 1 148 schools have central and/or classroom libraries. When the data refers to schools with libraries, it includes classroom collections (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: iv).

Other options were offered in the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10) and schools could indicate whether they planned to set up a library, extend the library, or whether the library is used for other purposes. Further categories included a separate audiovisual room, whether the library is a converted classroom or housed in a public library. Of the 1 148 schools with libraries 866 (75.4%) indicated that they had a purpose-built school library. The general information regarding school libraries from the HSRC Survey is reflected in figure 6.

Figure 6: HSRC Library information

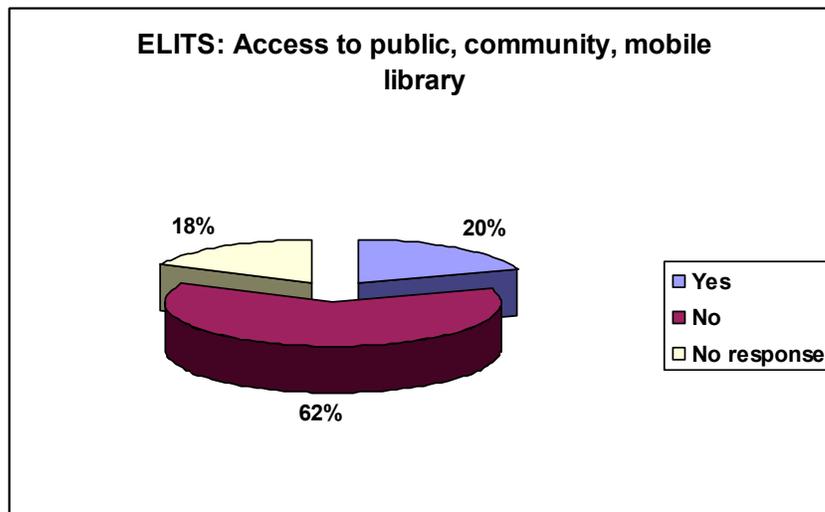


The analysis of the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 9) indicated that 954 schools (19%) had a central library, 1233 (24%) a classroom collection, and 1 606 (31%) stored books in a cupboard or

storeroom. When schools with no libraries (1 003 schools, 87.4%) were asked whether there was a room available that could be converted into a library, 462 schools (46%) indicated yes, and 428 schools (43%) responded no. There was a non-response from 113 schools (2.2%).

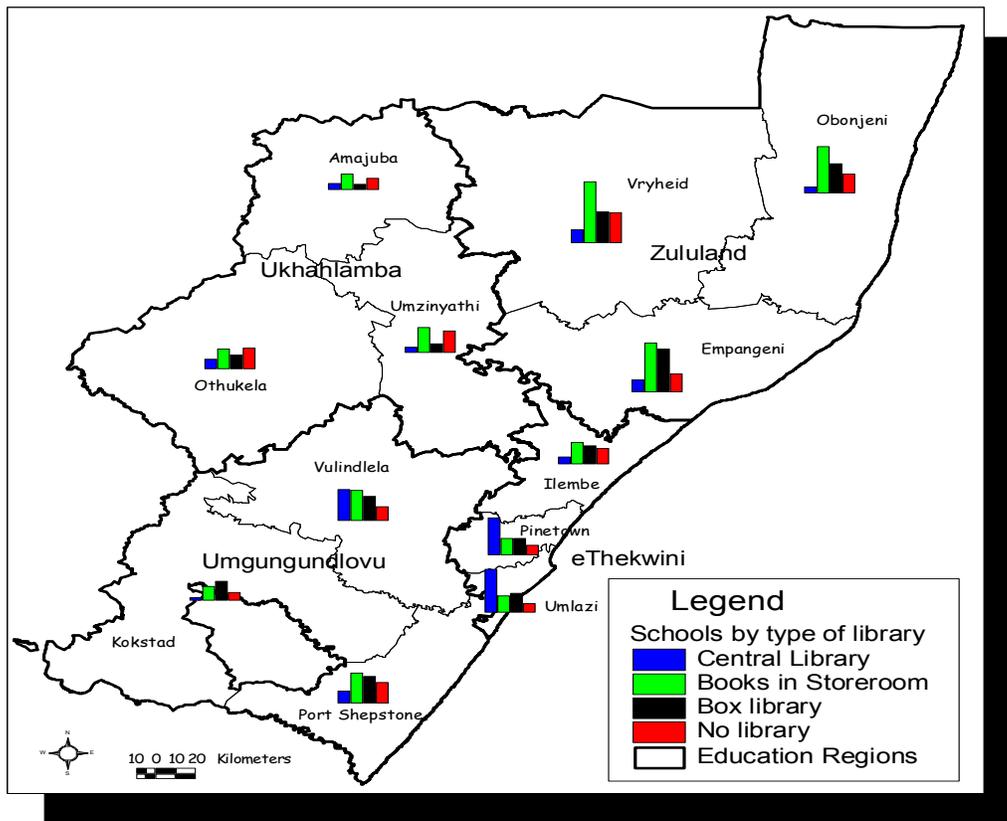
Both surveys sought information about public library use to ascertain whether learners make an effort to acquire information outside of the school library. Only a small proportion of the total schools, namely 19 schools (.002%) indicated that they had access to public libraries in the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10). In the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 18) schools replied as follows:

Figure 7: Access to other libraries



The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 8) includes a map, figure 8 below, indicating the spread of the different types of school libraries in the province. As can be expected, books in storerooms and box libraries were more prevalent in the rural areas while central libraries featured strongly in the urban areas around Pietermaritzburg and Durban. The same observation was made in the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10), namely, the proportionally higher availability of libraries in urban areas compared to the more extensive use of classroom collections in rural areas.

Figure 8: Distribution of schools by library type



(KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 8)
 (Please note that eThekweni refers to Durban and Umkungundlovu refers to Pietermaritzburg)

The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 6) requested schools to indicate whether there was **adequate security** for the safekeeping of library resources. Only 2 560 schools (50%) responded yes, 2 047 schools (40%) no, and there was a non-response from 549 schools (11%) schools. The HSRC survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) sought information regarding burglar proofing or other forms of security and reported that 217 schools with libraries (18.9%) indicated that they did not have security to protect the library property.

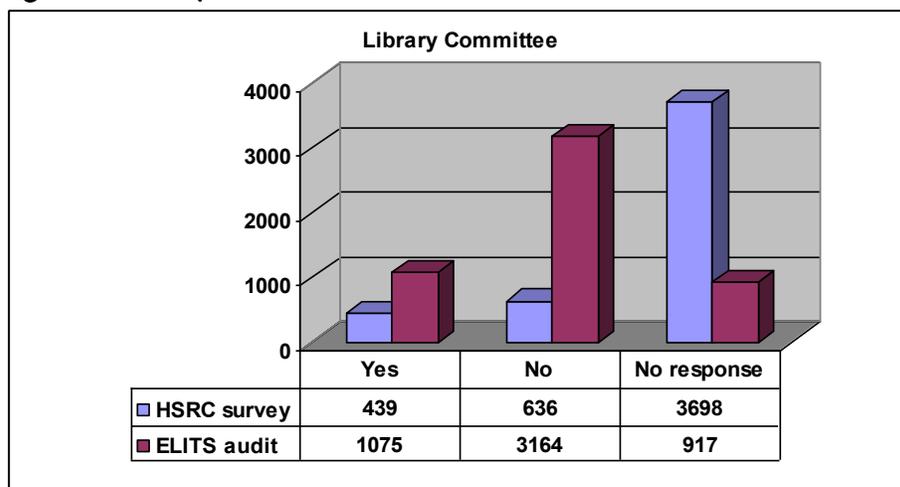
As far as **electricity** was concerned, the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) only included responses from the 1 148 schools with libraries: 958 of the 1 148 schools (83.4%) had electricity in the library and 148 (12.9%) indicated that there was no electricity. The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-

Natal. Department of Education 2004: 7) asked schools to indicate whether electricity was supplied to classrooms: 2 783 schools (54%) indicated that electricity was supplied to classrooms, and of these 1 763 schools (63%) indicated that all classrooms were electrified, 78 schools (3%) indicated that less than 25% of the classrooms had electricity, and 40 schools (1%) indicated that only one classroom had electricity.

5.2.1.4 School library administration

Both surveys requested information regarding the establishment of a school library committee in the school (figure 9 below). The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) only included the yes/no response from schools that have libraries, the other schools are given as no response. The survey further sought information regarding the composition of the committee, and the schools indicated that the following are members of the school library committee: principals, educators, non-educator staff, parents, learners and other. The respondents indicated that the school library committee develop library policy for the school, maintain, administer and control the library property, encourage library use, select library material, and fundraise for the purchase of resources. The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 6) established that the school library committee of 265 schools (31%) met every month, three schools' committees "rarely" met, five "seldom" and three "never". Four schools indicated that the committee had not met as yet since it was newly established.

Figure 9: Library committees



The HSRC survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) reported that 439 (48.5%) of those **schools with libraries** indicated that they had a **school library policy** and 1 120 (97.5%) had an **accession register**. In the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 9) 966 schools (18.7%) did not respond, and of those who responded 2 307 schools (45% of the total respondents) indicated that they had an accession or stock register: 1 610 of these schools (70%) indicated that this record was up to date and 620 schools (27%) indicated that the register was not current.

Both surveys asked for information regarding **school library automation**. The results from the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) indicated that 80 schools (1.6%) had a computerised library system, most of them in the Durban area. The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 10) reported a figure of 153 schools (3%) of which 124 were in the urban areas of Durban and Pietermaritzburg and only 39 schools in the rest of the province.

5.2.1.5 Budget

According to the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 12) 486 schools (10%) allocated a budget to their school libraries while 2 059 (43%) received no budget from the School Governing Body (SGB). There was a non response from 2 228 schools (46.6%). Some schools (363 – 33%) indicated that they received library income from other sources such as a sponsor, community and/or private support. The average budget allocation to those schools that allocate a budget amounted to R10 577.60.

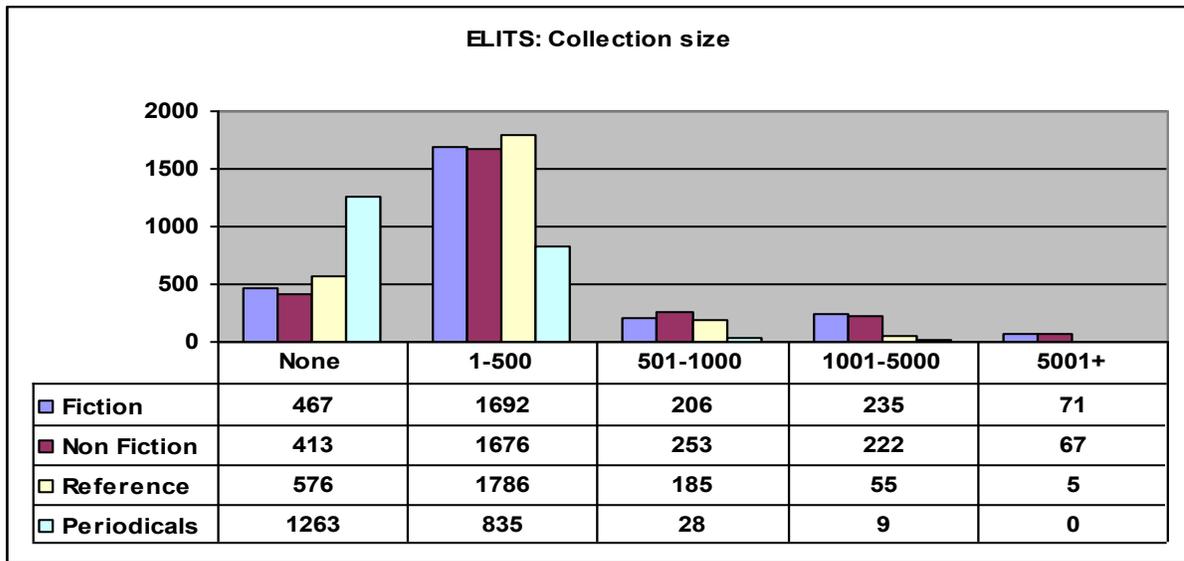
The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 16) reported that 1 234 schools (24%) received a budget and 2 971 schools (58%) received no budget - 951 schools (18%) did not respond. Only 764 schools (15%) provided details on the previous year's library expenditure and the amounts reported varied from single digit figures through to 6 digit figures. On average schools spent

over R11 000 on their libraries and the total spent, by all 764 school reporting expenditure, was R8 833 744. Comparing the learner enrolment at schools reporting expenditure, the average amount spent on the school library per learner was R22.16. Schools were asked to indicate which budget source was used to fund the library and 516 of the schools (37%) that receive a budget indicated that they received their allocation from school funds, 238 (17%) fundraised and 654 (46%) received funds from the norms and standards allocation. Twenty six schools indicated that the school library received funding from all three sources mentioned. Only 483 schools (9%) indicated that they received support from Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), 3 622 (70%) indicated that they received no support and 1 051 (20%) did not respond.

5.2.1.6 School library collections

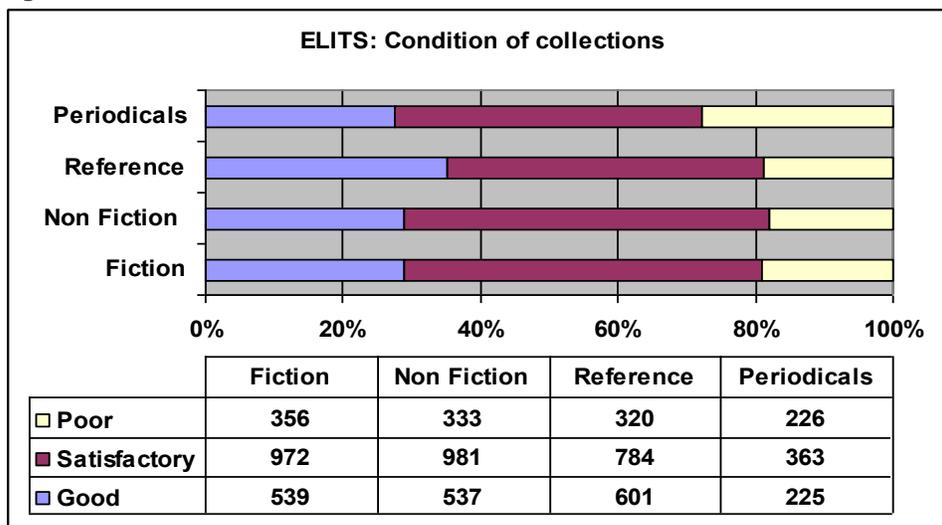
Both surveys reported extensively on school library collections. The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 11-12) requested schools to estimate the size of their collection, and to rank the condition of the collection. It was hoped that by not being too specific the response rate would not be compromised. Most schools indicated that their collection included fewer than 500 publications within each category, there was a non-response from 2 229 schools (43%) and an additional 262 schools (5%) indicated that they had no library collection. Figure 10 presents the ELITS data on the size of the school libraries' collections.

Figure 10: Collection size



Schools were asked to rank the condition of their collection as good, satisfactory or poor, for each of the types of material included in the collection (figure 11 below). Some schools (2 950 or 57%) did not rank the condition of their collection, but 50% of the respondents that responded ranked their collections satisfactory, 20% indicated that their collections were in poor condition, and 30% marked "good" (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 11).

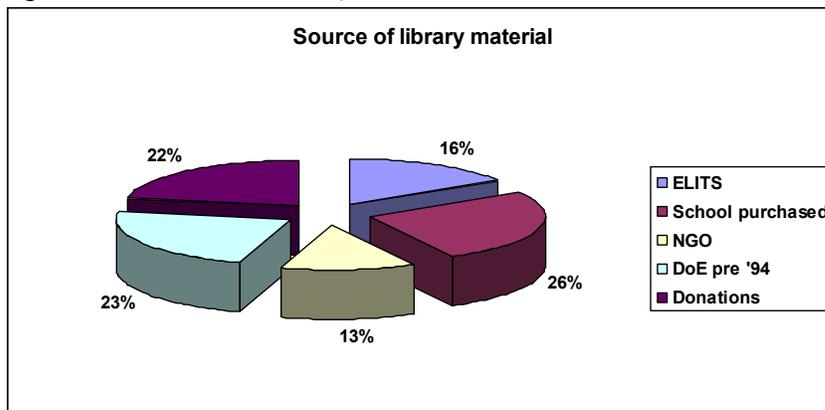
Figure 11: Condition of collections



The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: annexure table 14, 15), on the other hand, was more specific and requested fiction titles to be specified according to language. The results indicated that KwaZulu-Natal school libraries had an average of 1 310 non-fiction titles and 360 reference titles per school library, and the spread of fiction titles according to language was 1 060 English titles, 489 Afrikaans, 112 IsiZulu, 63 IsiXhosa and 20 SeSotho. The average number of fiction titles was given as 172.

The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 9) added to this information by requesting schools to indicate from where their library material had been sourced. Several schools indicated that their library stock had been sourced from two or more of the categories, and 17 schools indicated that their library stock came from all five sources.

Figure 12: Source of library material



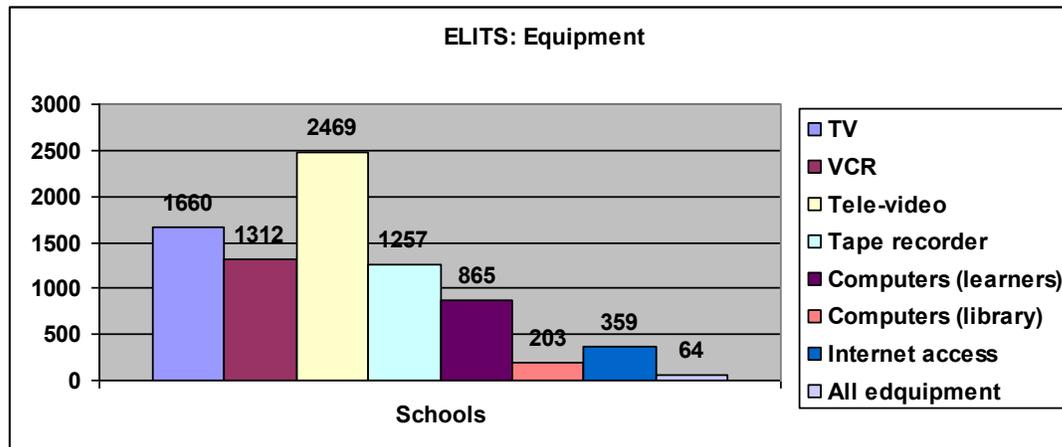
5.2.1.7 Equipment

There were 34 categories for school library resources in the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: annexure table 10.1 - 10.2, 11.1 - 11.6) where schools could indicate whether the type of material mentioned was available, and whether it was operational or non-operational. There were a further 14 categories for library furniture. On the whole this data supplies a detailed overall picture of the facilities available in school libraries at the time, but the analysis of the results is complicated by the number of items on the questionnaire list. What is of note is that,

as far as computers are concerned, the results indicated that 390 of all schools (8.2%) had computers that were used for administrative purposes, 245 (5.1%) had computers that were used for educational purposes, and only 118 schools (2.5%) had computers linked to the internet.

The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 13) requested schools to indicate the functional equipment in the school under seven categories and the results are indicated below in figure 13.

Figure 13: Functional library equipment



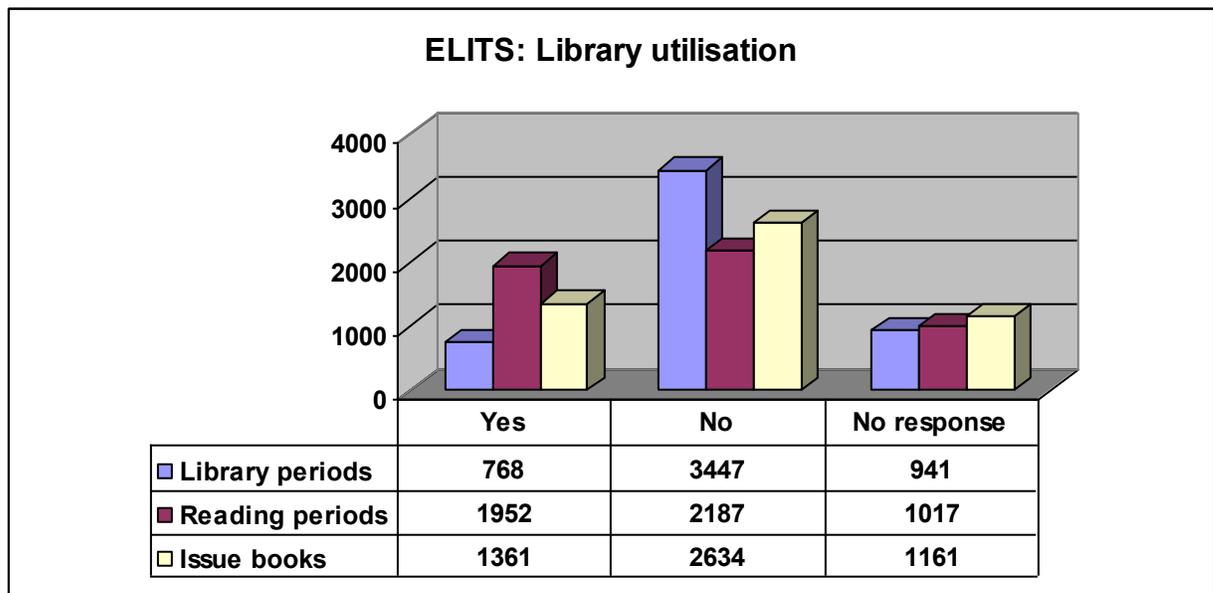
5.2.1.8 School library utilisation

The HSRC Survey's focus (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 12) regarding access and utilisation was on information regarding opening hours and school library usage. The schools with libraries indicated that their libraries were mostly used for book education (92.8%), for study purposes (88.6%), and to exchange library material (46.7%). As far as opening times are concerned, 154 schools (13.4%) indicated that their libraries were open for one hour per day while 13 schools' libraries (1.1%) were open ten and more hours per day. Only 319 (27.8%) of the schools indicated that their libraries were open seven hours per day. The majority of schools, namely 365 (31.8% of those with libraries) indicated that their libraries were open less than three hours daily. Some school libraries (155 or 13.5%) were open less than 50 days per annum, and 698 school libraries (60.8%) were open more than 150 days per annum. The majority of schools indicated low utilisation of

the school library: 277 (19.8%) indicated that 0-49 learners visit the library per day, and 246 (21.4%) reported that 50-99 learners utilise the library daily. The same held true for teachers: 419 schools (36.5%) indicated that 0-4 teachers utilise the library daily, and 336 (29.3%) said 5-9 teachers use the library per day. The data regarding grades being offered information skills indicated that 8 843 periods had been allocated in the 4 773 schools for the teaching of information skills, averaging at 1.8 periods per school per week. The report pointed out that it was difficult to assess the extent of learner and teacher utilisation without knowledge of school size.

The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 7) focused on information regarding time-tabled library and reading periods, an Information Literacy Programme, and Reading Motivational Programmes as indicated in figure 14. In addition schools were asked to indicate whether they issued books to learners. On average 54 books were issued per day: 26 schools indicated that they issue 1 book per day while a primary school in the Pinetown area with an enrolment of 1 087 learners reportedly issued 800 books daily.

Figure 14: Library utilisation

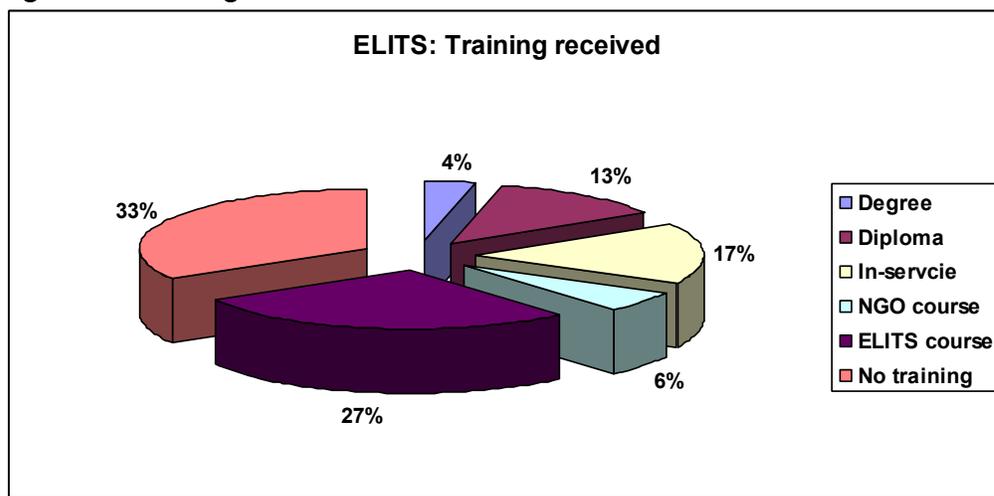


5.2.1.9 Personnel

The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 13) indicated that there were 1 885 school library educators in KwaZulu-Natal of which 1 028 (54.5%) indicated that they were employed full-time - but the data does not specify whether this means full-time educator or full-time librarian. The majority of the respondents were educators, and it is interesting to note that there were 180 principals, 29 deputy principals and 123 heads of department included in the number. There were 145 respondents who classified themselves as "other" and this would probably include parents and learners assisting with school library management. As far as qualifications were concerned, 341 (18%) of these respondents had a specialised library education qualification of which 226 indicated the type of qualification as a diploma, 21 as a degree, and 10 as a post graduate degree.

According to the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 14) 2 804 (54%) of schools had nominated a person to be responsible for the school library, but only 277 (5%) of these schools indicated that this was a full time position. Schools with a person responsible for the library were asked to indicate what training this person had received (figure 15). The majority of those who indicated that they had received training have attended an ELITS course.

Figure 15: Training received



The data from the two questionnaires was complimentary and, as was expected, did in some cases point to progress made (for example increased budget allocation) while in other instances indicate that conditions had deteriorated since the first survey was conducted in 1999 (fewer full-time staff).

However, the HSRC Survey was a first attempt by the National Department of Education to establish an overall picture of the extent of school library provisioning in South Africa. Likewise the 2004 ELITS Audit provided a baseline database for the ELITS Directorate and was the first attempt of its kind to gather school library data in the province. ELITS advisors have since 2004 been updating the audit forms when they visit schools and the directorate inputs the data on the data base. The results will be analysed in chapter 6 but it can at this stage be noted that there is an increase in the number of schools that provide some kind of library provisioning but the utilisation of resources ostensibly remains low in the majority of schools with access to resources.

5.2.2 School Library Development Project: Evaluation Report

The third set of data (as indicated in 5.2) was gathered by an ELITS official (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) who conducted site visits during 2006 at sixty schools that had received material from the School Library Development Project (the implementation plan of the *School Library Policy*). The data was gathered during these visits by means of a structured interview and the use of an interview schedule in order to ascertain whether the material received from ELITS was being utilised in the schools. The researcher analysed the raw data in the first written report and entered it for summary and analysis in an Excel spreadsheet. This information was not available to the Delphi panel at the time.

The sample consisted of 60 schools out of the 1 638 schools that had, at the time, been provisioned since the start of the SLDP programme. The majority of the schools visited were in deep rural areas and include 12 farm schools. The official conducting the interviews selected five schools from each of the twelve education districts from

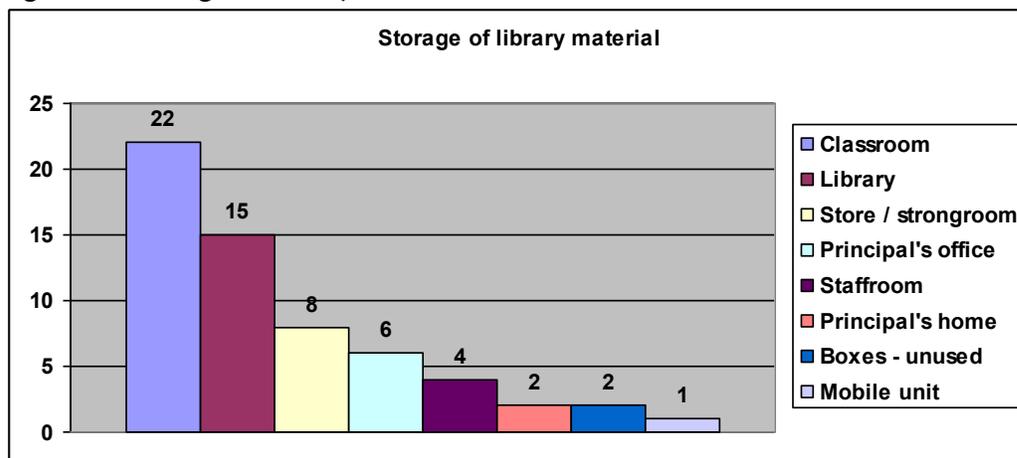
the list of schools that had been provisioned. These schools had received a core collection of library material to the value of R50 000 from ELITS, the value of the collection being based on the school's enrolment, namely 1 - 200 learners for this category. Hence it was expected that all the schools would fall in this category since the roll-out of the SLDP started with the smaller schools. However, there are seven schools that fell in the next category namely 201 – 499 and two schools in the category 500 – 999 learners. The ELITS subject advisors for those districts explained that these schools were ready to receive the material as they had libraries and a budget had been allocated to the library, whereas the smaller schools were not ready at the time. It does mean however, that a school entitled to a collection of R70 000 (or in the case of the one school, R100 000) only received material worth R50 000.

The results from the evaluation report are set out below.

5.2.2.1 Storage of school library material

All the schools visited confirmed that they had received the library material that was sent to them. The majority of schools (22 or 36.6%) stored the material in classrooms, and 15 schools (25%) kept their collection in a school library. Other storage areas identified included the principal's office or home, the staffroom, a store or strong room, a mobile unit or, as is the case at two schools, still in the boxes in which it was delivered as indicated in figure 16.

Figure 16: Storage of library material



The two schools where the material was being kept in the principals' homes had been damaged during a storm and the material was kept there to safeguard the resources – the one school is presently housed in a tent.

5.2.2.2 Access to the material and integration in the teaching programme

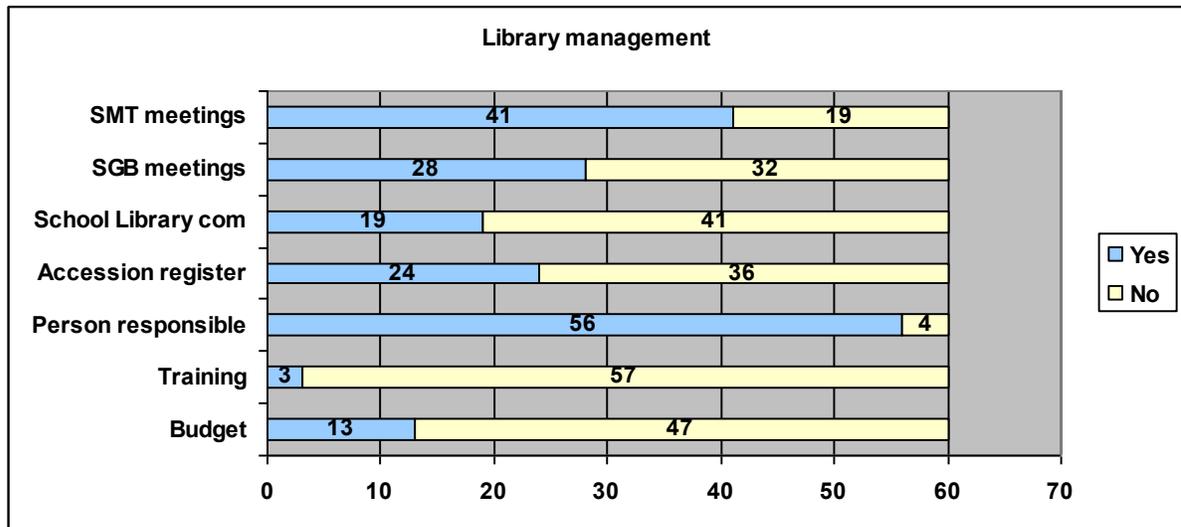
Forty five schools (75%) allowed learners and teachers access to the material but at the other 15 schools (25%) no one had access to the material. Where learners had access they could use the material in the classroom during school time. There were only 22 schools (36.6%) that permitted learners to loan the material for a period of between one day and three weeks, and could show current records of issues. In some cases use was restricted to learners in certain grades only (mostly the senior grades).

Schools were asked whether **teachers integrate the material in their teaching programme** and 43 schools (72%) confirmed that the material was indeed being used to some degree, and 17 schools (28%) indicated that the material was not being used. However, tangible evidence of use by the 43 schools, such as worksheets or independent work done by learners, could only be found in 12 of the schools (28%).

5.2.2.3 School library management

The data regarding school library management at the 60 schools is summarised in the figure 17 below. Although only 19 schools (31.7%) indicated that they had established a school library committee, 41 (68.3%) indicated that the person responsible for the school library attended School Management Team (SMT) meetings, and 28 (46.6%) attended School Governing Body (SGB) meetings. Seven schools (11.7%) indicated that the teacher responsible for the collection did not attend any of these meetings.

Figure 17: Library management



Most schools (56 or 93.3%) had assigned someone to take responsibility for the library collection but only 24 schools (40%) kept an accession register. The teachers in three schools had received training of some sort: one school was trained by READ, one received a visit from the district ELITS advisors, and one teacher attended a creative writing workshop organised by ELITS. Two of the schools in the sample had assigned a teacher with an Advanced Certificate of Education (School Library Development and Management) to the library, yet in the one school the material received was still in boxes and staff and learners had no access to it, and at the other school the material could only be used in the school and classrooms.

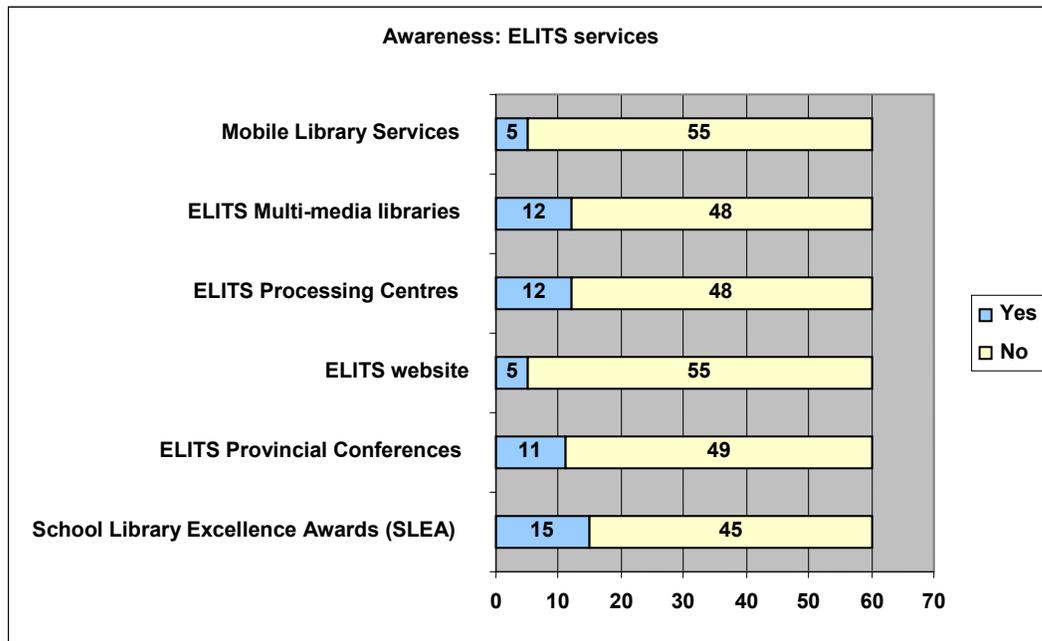
5.2.2.4 Allocated budget

Thirteen schools had allocated a budget for the purchase of school library material but could not spend this budget due to procurement difficulties. Budget allocations, where indicated, ranged from R1 000 to R40 000.

5.2.2.5 ELITS services

Schools were asked whether they knew about the services offered by the ELITS Directorate and the ELITS advisors in their districts, and their responses are indicated in figure 18 below.

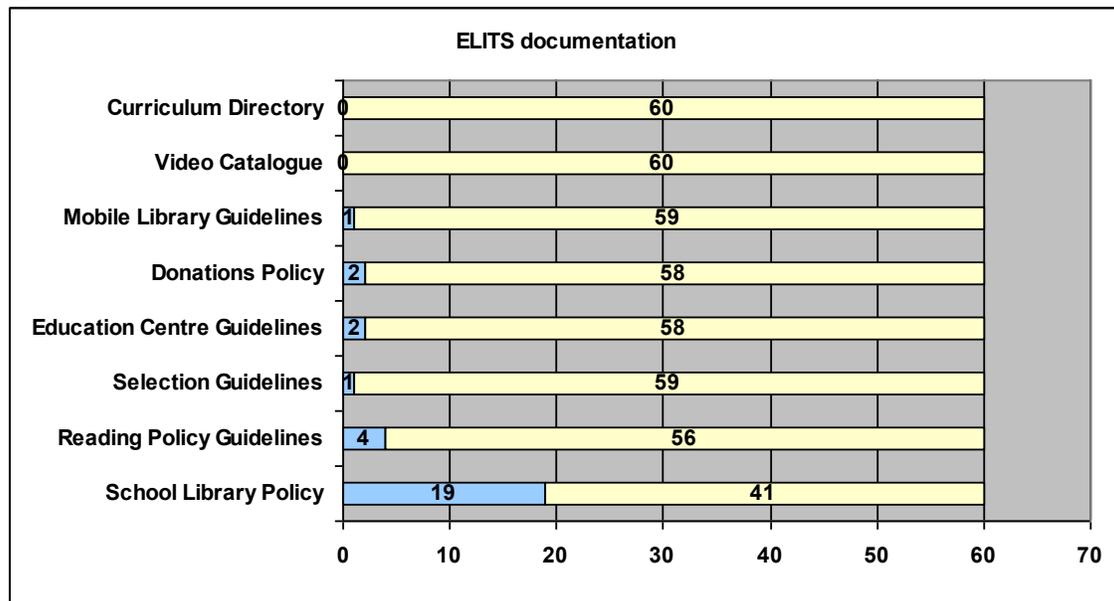
Figure 18: Awareness of services



It should be noted that 35 of the 60 schools (58.3%) indicated that they were not aware of any of ELITS' services. At one school the teacher-librarian was absent and no accurate data regarding this question could be gathered, and another school maintained that this was the first visit they had received from ELITS. This data reflects the lack of ELITS advisors in districts due to the fact that posts have not been advertised and filled: in 3 of the 12 districts there are no ELITS advisors and in 3 other districts there is only 1 ELITS advisor.

Schools indicated (in figure 19) that they had received copies of the following ELITS documentation:

Figure 19: Documentation received



At the time of the visits a limited number of copies of the Curriculum Directory and the Video catalogue had been distributed to district ELITS advisors only. However, the *School Library Policy*, *Education Centre Guidelines* and the *Reading Policy Guidelines* were readily available. Not all schools are involved in the Mobile Library Project and this may explain the fact that they were not given copies of the guidelines.

The overall picture emerging from the visits to these 60 schools is that there is a general lack of access to the resources that had been distributed. Teachers responsible for the collection need training on general library administration and all teachers need guidance regarding the integration of the resources in the teaching programme in order for learners to acquire information literacy skills and to foster a reading habit. It should be pointed out though that two of the districts do not have any ELITS advisor and four other districts have only one advisor assisting approximately 500 schools.

5.2.3 Risk Management Report: ELITS

This report was generated by the Internal Control and Risk Management sub-directorate of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KwaZulu-Natal.

Department of Education 2007c). It records the results of a risk assessment exercise and suggests possible ways in which controls could be improved to mitigate identified weaknesses in control or increase efficiency.

The team visited eleven schools that they had selected from the sample of sixty schools visited by ELITS to evaluate the implementation of the School Library Development project. The schools visited included one school in the Vryheid district, three schools in Umlazi district, two in the Pinetown district, three in the Ilembe district and two in the Empangeni district.

Several risk factors were identified, namely strategic, operational and environmental risks as well as the impact on employee morale among others. The researcher only highlights findings from the report that are relevant to the research topic and that can be utilised to validate results from the other data. The data from this report moreover points to the reliability of the data gathered in the other surveys as well as in the Delphi study.

5.2.3.1 Strategic risks

The report identifies strategic risks as "risks that relate to doing the wrong thing" (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c: 6), and enumerates the following risk factors:

- Library material may not be aligned with the curriculum resulting in ELITS not achieving its long-term goals of promoting resource-based education.
- The vision of the *School Library Policy*, namely that all learners are information literate and have lifelong learning skills, may not be implemented resulting in ELITS activities not being standardised and streamlined, a finding that endorses the Delphi panel's recommendation about better communication between head office and district (and between district offices and schools).
- There may be confusion about strategic direction resulting in wastage of resources.
- A shortage of ELITS advisors will compromise services (as was suggested in the SLDP evaluation report).

5.2.3.2 Operational risks

An operational risk is a risk "that relates to doing the right thing the wrong way" (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c: 7). The report outlines risk factors such as

- Educators may not realise the value of library services.
- ELITS may not adequately execute its mandate due to resource constraints.
- The annual allocation for the SLDP may not be sufficient.
- Certain schools may not allocate a library budget from their norms and standards allocation and thus compromise the sustainability of the SLDP.
- Unsuitable library material may be purchased or received as donations.
- Teacher-librarians may lack the relevant skills to execute their duties, and may not attend workshops and meetings. It is mentioned that teaching duties may aggravate the situation. (A teacher in the SLDP evaluation report mentioned that the taxi fare to attend workshops was R50, and this was too expensive with the result that they did not attend workshops.)
- Library resources may not be accessible to learners due to a variety of safekeeping methods found in schools.

5.2.3.3 Environmental risks

Environmental risks are usually determined by sources outside of the control of the organisation, and can also be referred to as external risks. The relevant risks mentioned here were learners who may lack parental guidance due to illiteracy, and the fact that certain schools may not be visited due to poor road conditions, faction fights or other such factors. What was not mentioned in the analysis was the effect of HIV and AIDS where the number of child-headed households had increased dramatically, a factor that surely contributes to many social problems in the school communities.

5.2.3.4 Recommendations

The report offers recommendations to minimise the risks outlined above, and these include:

- Involving top management to recruit more ELITS advisors and to ideally allocate them per ward.
- Liaising with the Department's Physical Planning Directorate about the building of libraries and provisioning of shelving in schools.
- Organising more training and workshops to equip teacher-librarians with the skills required to operate and manage the school library effectively.
- "Enlightening" educators about the importance of utilising library material, and involving all in library activities to make them aware of library management.
- Identifying and breaking down barriers such as those mentioned under 5.2.3.1 to 5.2.3.3 above.
- Educating School Management Teams (SMTs) about the importance of allocating a school library budget.
- Emphasising the importance of a school library committee.
- Ensuring that learners have access to library material that is kept in a safe and secure location.
- Liaising with Adult Basic Education to sensitise parents about the importance of reading.
- Physically visiting schools to ensure that evaluation forms correspond with the real state of affairs in schools concerning the utilisation of library resources.

All the above recommendations reflect the challenges facing ELITS in providing school library services to schools in the province and highlights findings in the 1999 and 2004 surveys as well as the SLDP evaluation report.

5.2.4 Summary Report: Shongololo Pilot Project

The Shongololo Pilot Project is an ICT project that was piloted by ELITS in 21 KZN schools. The aim was to equip these school libraries with the necessary hardware and software to manage Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) within the normal function of the school library. The emphasis was threefold, namely on the use of computers for information (CD-ROMs and Internet), for communication (e-mail), and for automating the library collection.

The project evaluation highlighted five important constraints, namely distance and terrain, lack of technical support, inadequate training, connectivity challenges, and the school library advisors' lack of access to ICT equipment. As far as distance and terrain were concerned, the pilot schools were scattered around the province and the terrain was sometimes inaccessible and this impacted on services especially telecommunications. The lack of technical support was considered to be the most difficult part of the project since neither the KZN Department of Education nor the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) provided technical support to schools. Training was given to schools, but the time allowed was not enough and it was commented on that all the staff in each school should have received training. Connectivity was problematic as modems were sometimes struck by lightning and the Telkom lines were often faulty.

The school library advisors who supported the project did not have access to office computers which offered the same as those in the pilot schools, namely full house software, printer and modem, internet access, and e-mail. The result was that they had no opportunity to practice and gain confidence.

The report concluded that "school readiness is key to the successful implementation of ICT and this means more than a school expressing a need for computers" (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006: 4).

The secondary data confirms in many ways the shortcomings identified in the literature review in chapter 3, but at the same time confirms the service delivery environment which militates against improved school library provisioning. It is against this background that the responses of the panellists should be viewed.

5.3 Summary

The data gathered in the Delphi as well as the secondary data from several surveys were presented in this chapter. The information gathered provides a somewhat bleak picture of the service delivery environment but at the same time offers

encouragement when progress made between 1999 and 2004 is observed. The following chapter will revisit the research questions and interpret the findings in order to provide answers to the research questions that were asked in the first chapter of this research.

CHAPTER 6 INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the results of the study in the light of the research questions and the literature reviewed in chapter 3. The discussion is grounded in the expert opinion of the panel members who took part in the Delphi study as well as the analysis of the secondary data gathered from the surveys as set out in chapter 5. Each one of the panel members can be considered an expert in a specific field of Library and Information Services. A high rate of consensus was achieved in the Delphi study. Methodological triangulation was used to enhance the validity of the data collected.

6.2 Conceptual framework

The interpretation of data is influenced by the theoretical framework of the project as well as the intellectual bias and experience of the researcher (Bertram 2004: 154). The theoretical framework of the study was outlined in chapter 3 under 3.2, and the value judgments or conceptual framework emerging from the panel members' response in the first section of the questionnaire relate closely to the conceptual framework underpinning this research. Policy is value driven and it is clearly important to be aware of the values or perspectives with which panellists approach the subject when the data is interpreted. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002: 3) state that "research is concerned with understanding the world and ... this is informed by how we view our world(s)". Hart (Hart, T. 1995: 18) similarly emphasises the importance of identifying values ("a belief that something is good and desirable") and aspirations ("the desire to achieve something that is presently out of reach") since policy decisions may demand a choice between conflicting values and aspirations and then it is important to determine which ones should take precedence.

The Delphi panel's value judgments endorsed many issues that were highlighted in the literature search regarding aspects such as values, school library policy, school libraries and curriculum, training, and ICTs.

6.2.1 Values

All panellists held up the values of the South African Constitution as set out in the Bill of Rights, and indicated their support for education policy and approaches (for example an outcomes-based curriculum). Addressing past inequities and ensuring that the school library makes its rightful contribution to educational transformation and reading in general were similarly endorsed. It was pointed out, though, that in practice school library policy may not be able to embrace all aspects of the Bill of Rights and some level of interpretation and abstraction might be necessary. This recognition is related to questions about the theoretical approach of Vygotsky (1978) which underpins the outcomes-based curriculum and whether or not the curriculum was in fact suitable for the South African context.

These values are similarly supported by both the *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto* (2000) and the *IASL's Policy Statement on School Libraries* (1993) as outlined in chapter 3, since the documents refer to the school library being "essential to every long-term strategy for literacy, education, information provision and economic, social and cultural development" (IFLA 2000) and that every child shall be given "an education which will promote [the learner's] general culture, and enable him¹³ on the basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his moral sense of social responsibility" (IASL 1993).

6.2.2 School library policy

The Delphi panel considered that both national and provincial policies which inform each other were important and necessary in order to ensure the development and use of school libraries. They believed that policy is accepted when it is endorsed at the highest level, and this in turn lends credibility to the policy, endorses implementation, and secures finance for implementation. This view did not, however, mean that policies in themselves would transform the prevailing situation to meet the needs of both learners and teachers, but it would provide a mandate to begin the

¹³ This citation in the IASL document refers to the 1959 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child where the term 'he' was used to refer to the child.

transformation and implementation process and mitigate against non-delivery. The lack of interest or commitment from the National Minister's office to endorse school library policy was recognised, and the panel was of the opinion that the sector is losing credibility since non-endorsement at this level leads to the perception that school libraries are unimportant and ineffectual.

Researchers such as Vermeulen (1991), Knuth (1995), Galler (1996), Karlsson (2003), and Hart and Zinn (2007) stress the importance of approved policy in the development of standardised school library services. The need for national policy on school library development was emphasised too in the findings of the NEPI LIS Research Group (1992), who found that the existence of policy was an enabling factor in the provision of school libraries.

School library policy should, according to the Delphi panel, be grounded in a solid understanding of aims and appropriate mission statements, be clearly articulated, and be practical and achievable. Although policy should inform outcomes, the panellists observed that allowance should be made for unanticipated outcomes (both positive and negative) to be acknowledged and addressed if necessary. These observations are supported in the literature as valid criteria for policy design and policy review (Roux 2000).

The panel considered ownership of the policy to be an important factor in its feasibility: a wide spectrum of role-players must buy into the policy and its implementation strategy. But on the other hand they observed that waiting for consensus can be detrimental and need not be a precursor to implementation - policy can gather support once written and accepted, a standpoint that takes into account Colebatch's (2002) view of policy as a continuous process of social action and interaction.

6.2.3 School libraries and curriculum

The value judgments put forward regarding school libraries indicated that the statement that a school programme cannot function effectively without the support, extension and enrichment offered by a well-resourced school library and professionally trained staff, is not as clear-cut as some panel members initially believed. Panellists pointed out that there are other means of acquiring knowledge and reading experiences, depending on what the "school programme" requires, and that even staff members who are not professionally trained in librarianship can run effective programmes and encourage reading and information studies. This latter point should be regarded with caution as Hart (2005) and Stilwell (2007a: 212) have both identified concerns regarding the notion that "anyone who can read can run a ... school library". Stilwell cites an example where in one school, the gardener's wife was running the school library. This perception contributes to a lack of recognition for the existence of professional competence. Nevertheless, researchers (Stander 1993; Karlsson 1995, 1996b; Sturges and Neill 1998) argue that school library standards and models that meet local needs have to be developed and their suggestions may well be reflected in aspects of the panel's observations above.

However, all consented that the new curriculum works best in well-resourced schools and in schools where the resources are well-managed, and this support can only be offered by a school library: *it should be made abundantly clear that an OBE curriculum has no chance of success in the absence of adequately stocked, staffed and managed school libraries, and that in the absence of equitable school library provisioning, the educational gap between the haves and the have-nots will continue to widen.* Therefore, where schools manage without a library/resource centre, it is done by not ranging beyond the prescribed textbook and applying some form of rote learning which is not really effective in terms of learning. Yet the panellists acknowledged that under-resourced schools may lack many other facilities too, and that at this stage the statement about the effective functioning of the school library programme might remain an assertion rather than something that has been demonstrated.

As far as the teacher-librarian is concerned, panellists remarked that it was necessary that posts should be created but that certain personal qualities of the appointees were important too, namely the attitude and energy of the teacher-librarian, vision and knowledge, and the ability to persuade and motivate others especially in obtaining the support of the principal and certain key educators. Knowledge and, as mentioned above, understanding of teaching and learning, are probably the most important requirements since the information literacy that underlies education requires a change in the way subject content is approached. Information literacy calls for higher order cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation). This need for higher order skills is a concern that will be raised by the panel in subsequent sections of the questionnaire.

The panel noted that although unqualified staff members might be able to offer a functional service, they would benefit from formal programmes that open up new horizons, such as the ACE (Advanced Certificate in Education) courses. Such education and training enables them to offer more, and to in turn assist all teachers in encouraging reading and the development of information skills. This type of collaboration is important since it fosters creativity and innovative thinking, two factors that are, according to Montiel-Overall (2005: 24) fundamental ingredients for academic success. What is more, this collaboration requires an understanding of teaching and learning and the ability to apply this understanding in working with other staff members to develop information literacy skills in the curricular context.

Equity is an important value which, as indicated earlier, the panel subscribed to. However, whether equity of school library provisioning can only be achieved through the provisioning of well stocked, staffed and managed libraries is debatable since there may be other equally effective, and probably more cost-effective, ways of providing access to information. This is despite some interventions being perceived as interim measures. It is a given that curriculum change and an outcomes-based curriculum need to be supported by adequate and relevant resources and someone who can facilitate access to these resources in a school. Such factors clearly constitute a

much needed base from which to develop service. There is, however, a need to heed researchers such as Stander (1993), Sturges and Neill (1998), and Rosenberg (2001), who appeal for a willingness to address existing problems within the frameworks of existing limitations (Stander 1993). There is a call for new approaches and the creation of parallel and different types of information services that are more "locally rooted" (Sturges and Neill 1998: 227). Librarianship is concerned with the communication of information and ideas, a skill that need not be linked to the physical entity of a library (Rosenberg 2001: 22-23) and should go beyond this base.

6.2.4 Information Communication Technology

The panel believed that ICT had become an essential element to be considered and that children who do not have exposure to ICT will be severely handicapped in the wider world. ICT is an aspect that, according to the panel, needs to be expanded rapidly, acknowledging that there are problems of infrastructure, training of educators and maintenance of equipment. These are valid observations and strategies such as professional development, partnerships and networking have to be used to facilitate the development of ICT in school libraries. Both the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d) and the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) highlighted the lack of computer usage for other than administrative purposes in schools. Zinn (2006), in tracing former students who had trained as teacher-librarians between 1976 and 2000, finds that computers are still mainly used for managing marks and setting exams. She concludes that in technologically-driven working environments managing the ICT programmes is seen as more attractive than focussing on libraries, and "the low level of ICT integration and the lack of library programmes meant that a convergence of the two was not possible in the near future (2006: 33).

6.2.5 Training

Training was considered to be of paramount importance, not only for the teacher-librarian as indicated above, but for all staff members and the panel suggested that the question of training needed more emphasis than it was currently receiving. They

identified not only training in some basic administration skills, the use of the school library and its resources, and information literacy skills, but importantly training in the general use of books for information, an aspect which should be taught by educators of all learning areas, since it was observed that even text books might be better utilised if staff and learners knew how to find, extract and use information through the use of tables of contents and indexes. This knowledge and these skills were considered all the more important because teachers who did not have confidence in their own information literacy would lack the ability to help the learners. Researchers too highlight the need for more emphasis on training programmes at both library and teacher training institutions (Karlsson 1995; Olén 1996, 1997; Sturges and Neill 1998) and observe that this training should promote a clear understanding of what a school library is and what it promotes, thus endorsing the value of school libraries and entrenching a teaching style that encourages critical thinking and problem solving.

6.3 Policy task team

Colebatch (2002: 22) observes that policy-makers often find themselves "part of an extended array of people with varying levels of interest in the question and quite distinct perspectives on it". He argues that the focus should not so much be on who makes policy, but rather on who participates in policy in order to obtain a more complete picture. Participation is not "a neutral question; who participates in a policy issue helps to shape what the issue is" (2002: 36). There is, however, a general assumption that authority is a basis for participation, as is expertise, although it is not always clear what type of expertise will be relevant since participants will view the problem differently and according to their field of expertise (2002: 25-30). What is important and what constitutes one of the elements of creating good policy, according to Hart (Hart, T. 1995: 55), is that stakeholders as well as interest groups should be involved "to the greatest degree possible, consistent with the nature of their input".

The Delphi panellists agreed that the KZN *School Library Policy* had been developed by a broad and comprehensive list of stakeholders who brought their experience and

personal insight to the exercise, in other words the panel was sufficiently representative to make it likely that all major alternatives were considered and the stakeholders' concerns properly addressed. Nevertheless, the panel suggested a number of additional stakeholders and interest groups who could add different perspectives and ideas beyond the school library field, namely representation from community and public libraries (a representative from the Public and Community Libraries Interest Group of LIASA). The rationale was that these libraries act as resource centres for learners in many provinces, teachers and teacher-librarians, learners, parents, and community members. A SchoolNet representative for ICT input was also suggested. It was further argued that, since the policy aimed to address problems of rural service delivery, rural representation was important.

An important aspect raised by the panel was that of policy ownership since they argued, and rightly so, that if full ownership is desired as many people as possible need to be involved at various levels. Karlsson (1995: 4) affirms that participation through consultative and advisory structures helps to build a "greater sense of ownership and responsibility among the user community". The panel members conceded that it would be difficult to choose the representatives, and involving people who might need too much bringing on board could slow down the policy development process, in other words one would have to *guard against ... a broadcast approach that includes so many people with marginal interest/experience, but who nonetheless have opinions/inputs which can lead to unreasonable options and demands*. However, they pointed out that a person representing parents or other stakeholders could be brought in at least for some part of the policy development process or during discussions around areas that concerned their area of expertise, or, in the case of parents, teachers and learners, they could be involved at the implementation stage.

The suggested additions to the task team would broaden participation and are in line with both Hart's (Hart, T. 1995) and Colebatch's (2002) observations regarding stakeholders, interest groups, and policy participants, and their role in the policy

process. Nevertheless it should be pointed out that, as listed in the policy document, there was indeed a SchoolNet representative on the policy task team, as well as a teacher-librarian and representatives from teacher-librarian forums and associations. The ELITS subject advisors on the task team, who work mostly with rural and underdeveloped schools, brought the rural perspective to the table.

The next section revisits the research questions and offers an interpretation of the findings within the framework of these questions.

6.4 Revisiting the research questions (Interpretation of results)

The research objectives, outlined in chapter 1 under 1.1.3, are to analyse and critically assess the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its implementation strategy to determine its feasibility for implementation in the province. The results obtained in the Delphi Study as well as the secondary data from the surveys and reports were described in chapter 5 and will be interpreted by means of the research questions.

The following research questions will be addressed in this chapter:

- How adequate are the key elements of the KZN *School Library Policy* in terms of policy formulation and development? This question addresses question 1 under 1.1.4 in chapter 1.
- How adequate is the implementation strategy and what were the practical implementation problems? This question addresses questions 2 and 3 in 1.1.4.
- How adequate and suitable are the school library models? This question addresses question 6 under 1.1.4.
- How achievable are the policy outcomes? This question addresses question 4 under 1.1.4.
- What is the state of the present school library provisioning in the province? This question will address question 7 in 1.1.4.
- Will the implementation strategy enable ELITS to implement equity and redress past imbalances? This response will address question 5 in 1.1.4.

The three remaining research questions in 1.1.4, namely questions 8, 9 and 10, will be discussed in chapter 7 since they relate to the way forward. The data which they provide bears on the key strategies identified by the Delphi panel, whether the policy included the necessary foci identified in the study, or whether others should be added, and offers recommendations for reviewing the policy. Possible topics for future study will be identified in chapter 7 as well.

The Delphi panel's views on the representativity of the policy task team are considered in the following section. This is in order to ascertain whether, in their view, the relevant role players participated in the policy process.

6.5 Research questions

Several research questions guided the research in order to ascertain whether the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* and its implementation strategy could realistically be implemented in the province. The first of these questions, research question 1 as outlined in chapter 1 under 1.1.4, sought to determine the adequacy of the key elements of the provincial policy as far as policy formulation and development are concerned.

6.5.1 The key elements of the KZN *School Library Policy*: adequacy in terms of policy formulation and development

This research question identifies the complexities surrounding the identification of clear policy goals and objectives, as well as the considerations to be taken into account when choosing the best available policy options. These elements, identifying goals and objectives, forecasting and choosing the best policy options to achieve the anticipated future, are a series of intertwined and interrelated actions (Roux 2000: 115) and often relate to more than one research question. Knuth (1995: 291) refers to this stage in policy development and its impact on school library development as the intention phase, where policy can shape mission and provide a philosophical base.

6.5.1.1 Clear identification of the policy problem

The policy process starts when a policy issue or problem is identified by stakeholders who think that they are detrimentally affected by the status quo (Meyer and Cloete 2000a: 97). Colebatch points out that policy participants often have markedly different ideas about what the policy problem is, in other words they are not "context-free", they have their own analysis of the problem and will seek support for what they perceive to be the most appropriate course of action (Colebatch 2002: 60).

In order to determine whether the KZN *School Library Policy* clearly defined the problem it wished to address it is necessary in the first place to evaluate whether underlying problems as well as the major causes of these problems had been considered in such a way that there was no blurring of issues, and whether these issues were considered in the context of the underlying values which underpin the document.

6.5.1.1.1 Underlying issues

A clear understanding of the underlying issues the policy seeks to address assist policy makers to choose the best policy options. The Delphi panel was of the opinion that these issues had not been identified and defined clearly and some panellists suggested that the underlying problems be articulated in one place (*crisper statements*), preferably in an annexure, to outline the problems and disparities more exactly. This annexure could either be linked to or form part of the document to show the relationship between the problems and the proposed solutions. Other panel members observed that policy responds to problems in the light of already identified issues without necessarily exploring them and believed that policy should not generalise but present the bigger picture. However, all agreed about the importance of identifying, acknowledging and delineating the problems for which the policy seeks to find remedies.

The panel suggested that specific, underlying problems be identified. Examples of these were described as inequitable resourcing, lack of access to resources, and lack of insight and knowledge regarding the importance of information skills and reading *in assisting learners to cope with their learning requirements*. These observations highlight the significance of physical access as well as intellectual access to a collection in order to equip learners with lifelong learning skills (IASL 1993, AASL 1998, IFLA 2000). The problem of access to resources will be discussed in 6.5.3 below where the findings demonstrate that the availability of resources in a school does not equate to access and utilisation of these resources.

The panel's perception of the importance and benefits of reading were clearly illustrated in the comments put forward, namely that learners are frequently not taught in their mother tongue, and yet it is vital that they read widely in both their mother tongue and the language of instruction. Panellists made three important observations:

- research has shown that mother tongue skills transfer to a second language thus improving overall performance, and wide reading in the second language is markedly more effective to acquire fluency in that language than formal tuition,
- extracting meaning from print is an acquired skill implying practice,
- national and regional studies such as the systemic evaluation of Intermediate learners in 2005 have shown that reading levels are very low and while there is a general understanding of the importance of reading in learning, there is no associated appreciation that voluntary reading and access to resources will *vastly improve reading development and enhance school performance*.

As was pointed out by the panel, the vehicle to achieve all this would be the school library which can provide a wide range of suitable, relevant material. Nevertheless, both the literature (Karlsson 1995, 2003; Hart 2002b) and the panel members' comments suggest that this view of school libraries, as an indispensable means to implement a resource-based curriculum and improve literacy and reading levels,

assumes a conceptual framework that often seems lacking in national policy makers, education management as well as at school level.

The *National Reading Strategy* (South Africa. Department of Education 2008) offers hope in that the document acknowledges the lack of libraries in schools and the negative impact this has on the quality of teaching and learning, and states that "libraries are the backbone of all reading communities" (2008: 18). However, the document does not outline clear implementation strategies, and current programmes such as QIDS-UP¹⁴ and mobile library services are not consolidated in one directorate in the provinces. The 100-books Project, for example, was rolled out in KwaZulu-Natal (as in other provinces) without the involvement of or consultation with the school library sector, consequently without any follow-up or training to sustain the programme. This point is illustrated by the fact that only three of the schools visited during the SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) had received the 100 books from the national department. In two of the schools the children had no access to the material, and in the third school the material had not yet been unpacked. The *National Reading Strategy* identifies the learner, the teacher, the parents and community, and the Department of Education at all levels as role players, yet there is no mention of the school library sector as one of the role players. There is no conditional grant to support the initiative as was the case with the implementation of e-Education and Inclusive Education. In KwaZulu-Natal ELITS has not been able to obtain additional funding to stock the mobile libraries and consequently the project has not progressed as anticipated. Zinn (2006: 33) correctly noted that there are stronger campaigns around reading than around libraries as enablers of reading.

Christie (1999: 281) identifies this same problem (but in the context of the implementation of Curriculum 2005) when she observes that almost no attention had

¹⁴ The Quality Improvement, Support and Upliftment Programme is a redress programmes aimed at improving access to quality learning and teaching resources to learners in schools in poorer communities. In KwaZulu-Natal schools in quintiles 1, 2 and 3 will be targeted over a three-year period and resource material and teacher training and development will be provided. The project resides with the Curriculum Directorate in the province (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007e).

been given to the context of implementation and how the new vision will be put in place in the profoundly unequal school contexts that apartheid left behind. She maintains that this is an approach that "implicitly assumes that policy can be separated from implementation". Provincial departments play a minimal role in policy formulation yet they have to implement policies and guidelines not of their own making and bear the budgetary burden of these. This problem can be perceived as a "structural disjuncture between power and accountability... [and] an ongoing source of tension in education" (199: 281). The proposals generally lack detail and specificity, provisions for redress and equity, or strategic planning to transform what actually exists.

6.5.1.1.2 The major causes of the problems

Since the panel indicated that the underlying issues were not adequately addressed, it is likely that the major causes of the problems would not have been dealt with adequately either. Panel members suggested that the causes be explicitly linked to a problem statement since management as well as teachers ought to be made aware of the need for, and effective use of, library material, and even more importantly, its contribution to the *educational experience* since most educators came through a system similar to the one that still pertains as was pointed out by Karlsson (2003) and Hart (2002a). The Library Association (2000: 1) further embellishes this view of the influence of the school library by stating that "school libraries are important to the learning outcomes of the whole school and the impact goes beyond its walls to the family and the wider community".

6.5.1.1.3 Values underpinning the document

Chapter 3 refers to Hart's (Hart, T. 1995: 18-19) conviction that decision-makers should firstly identify underlying values (a belief that something is good and desirable) as policy decisions frequently require that a choice be made between conflicting values and aspirations. This choice may require prioritising in the sometimes inevitable trade-off process that takes place during policy analysis.

The Delphi panel concluded that the values underpinning the policy document were identified and defined clearly, and that these inspired confidence on the pedagogical level (the vision of libraries' role, OBE and resource-based learning). However, the policy, without losing its sharp educational focus, needed to be stronger on the role of school libraries in social inclusion. Social inclusion may be difficult to measure (since *qualitative data often relies on anecdote*) yet at the same time panellists observed that it is inseparable from the library's mission and vision, and for example both adult basic literacy and functional literacy are important social issues (in the wider school communities) that affect school library services in rural areas too.

The role of school libraries in providing life information outside the curriculum needs to be highlighted too, and the panellists suggested that this addition should incorporate basic information literacy around medical matters (such as HIV and AIDS). They stressed the importance of such information to be **applied** to everyday life's challenges since information alone will not solve these problems and, as one panel member pointed out, can actually be of limited value or *useless* if not put to practical use. This observation is corroborated by Zinn's research (2006) regarding diplomates and certificate holders in school librarianship who fail to put their knowledge to practical use.

The panel members' assessment of the clear identification of the policy problem highlighted several issues and proposed solutions. Obstacles to realising the role of school libraries in education and lifelong learning were identified and corroborated by research findings from the literature.

The following two sections interpret findings regarding policy goals and objectives, and policy choices.

6.5.1.2 Policy goals and objectives

Policy goals and objectives help to clarify the policy problem. Before the identification and formulation of policy goals and objectives can be evaluated it is

necessary to ascertain whether the policy document is clear in the formulation of its **broad purpose**, in other words "where ...we want to go" and "what ... we want to achieve" (Roux 2000: 116). This statement means that in order to decide on a suitable course of action one needs to understand what the policy seeks to accomplish. Moreover, policies are never "complete in terms of (their) outcomes or effect" and are affected by changes brought about by factors such as technological advances or new political leadership which are issues discussed under 6.5.2. Colebatch (2002: 60) cautions that in practice there are many participants in the policy process, all with their own distinct and even contradictory ideas about goals and objectives. They may even, as was indicated earlier, have different ideas about what the problem is.

There was consensus in the panel that the broad purpose of the policy had been clearly formulated. One panel member, however, pointed out that the purpose, which is to build awareness, relies on the core notion of three models. Inherent in this conceptualisation is the transitory nature of the models since the ultimate aim is for schools to progress to a centralised school library, and it is important that the need for progression from one model to the next be spelled out and the factors that will bring about the shift be identified. The other panellists agreed and suggested including in the policy document an appendix providing examples in the form of three case studies that would make this progression of models clear.

The difference between policy goals and objectives is often unclear and practitioners and academics may interpret these concepts differently (Roux 2000: 117). The summary table, table 1 in chapter 3, outlined the characteristics with reference to suitable examples. Whereas policy goals are broad purposes that are rarely expressed in the form of operational identifications, policy objectives (specific aims) are often measurable in quantifiable terms. The Delphi panel agreed that the objectives of the policy were clearly identified and precisely formulated. It was suggested however that more clarity was needed over the matter of libraries needing to be resuscitated, and that the term "collections" should be defined in the glossary. In addition the panel

suggested including a line addressing the learners who will ultimately benefit from the policy.

From these responses it seems that all panel members were not clear about the difference between goals and objectives despite the fact that the questionnaire had been piloted. The question nevertheless could have included an explanation regarding the characteristics of goals and objectives in order to minimise potential errors. Objectives would, according to the definition given above, be the specific aims outlined in the implementation strategy such as the 1 000 schools to be resourced annually and R50 000 per collection allocated for schools in a certain category.

Weimer and Vining (1989: 188) argue that the most difficult step in policy design is probably the identification of goals and objectives, which are "invariably distinguished by being multiple, vague, changing over time and sometimes conflicting in nature". Moreover, the complexity of a policy as far as interest group demands are concerned increases the likelihood of multiple and sometimes conflicting goals and objectives (Roux 2000: 122). With regard to the KZN *School Library Policy*, the panel members believed that there were no conflicting aspects of the purpose and the objectives in the policy. One panel member suggested that section 3 in the policy document (principles and beliefs) and section 6 (policy outcomes) should be aligned so that both reflect beliefs and principles.

6.5.1.2.1 Target group expectations

A policy problem should be concerned not only with the expectations of those who will be affected by the policy outcomes, but also "with the significance of differing values and culture groups in South Africa" (Roux 2000: 115). Panel members agreed that, when examining the policy's purpose and objectives against the provincial background, the expectations of target groups had been taken into account and they commended the clear statement that the policy *will establish and develop school*

libraries. It was proposed that staffing, reading and literacy be included in the purpose and objectives of the policy.

Panel members offered the following observations regarding teacher expectations, understanding and motivation, namely that:

- Teachers view central libraries as the only option: some panel members considered this an unrealistic expectation while others insisted that alternatives will be seen as perpetuating inequalities, and as second-best. Panellists suggested that this view might be based more on non-delivery of library services than on *efficient service delivery on a small scale*. Furthermore, this perception, it was thought, could point to a rigid view of a school library where teachers have no experience of a dynamic service. It could also be attributed, the panellists suggested, to the fact that the alternatives to a central library are *complex and evolving*. This response relates to the data regarding the adequacy and suitability of the school library models under 6.5.3.
- Teachers have a limited understanding of the benefits of information literacy and reading, due in large part to the training received. A utilitarian emphasis on reading skills does not do justice to the myriad benefits of a reading culture in schools. Moreover teacher training programmes should acknowledge and deal with this problem, and where necessary, re-skilling of staff should take place.
- It can be problematic to sustain patience while managing such a big undertaking as the provisioning of core collections to schools over a period of six years. The issue is aggravated by the periodic restructuring of the provincial education department resulting in staff members being transferred before the policy aims have been achieved. What is important though is to keep those involved informed and motivated. This is a valid observation since the implementation period will most probably extend to eight or more years as the Department has not increased the budget allocation for policy implementation over the last three years. Even if this budget becomes a permanent annual allocation for library resources (as the directorate anticipates) it still means that schools will receive some library material every eight to ten years. The Risk Management Report

(KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c) pointed out that the annual allocation to the project is not sufficient and should schools not allocate funding from their norms and standards allocation "the School Library [Development] Project may perish in no time" (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c: [19]). If this comment is linked to the findings of the 2007 SLDP Evaluation Report and Zinn's (2006) research the ELITS Directorate will have to put procedures in place to monitor the policy implementation more closely.

However, not all panellists agreed that the differing values and various cultural groups in South Africa had been sufficiently taken into account in the broad purpose, objectives, and values underpinning the policy document. Even though they concede that the policy document does refer to overarching documents which take into account values and cultural groups both nationally and in KwaZulu-Natal, and accepts that all groups want access to quality education for their children, panel members thought that the policy could be more culturally inclusive by mentioning the building of literature collections reflecting and endorsing learners' cultures, and by listening to the views of the differing cultural and minority groups during future policy review. This suggestion is supported by the literature where Olën (1997: 30) identified a lack of books in indigenous languages and the accessibility of the contents of resources, especially in a multiracial school population, as one of the variables influencing the use of the school library.

An observation that the aim of the policy actually seems to be to promote the school library as a methodological tool in outcomes-based education (in fact the *essential underpinning of the educational approach*) solicited a mixed response. Panel members commented that the OBE emphasis could have been used as a device to promote libraries and reading with the Department's management (*framing the document in the language of the decision-makers*), but all approaches needed continual reassessment and they cautioned that it would be unwise to emphasise only one approach. It is interesting to note that Knuth (1995: 293) observes that where school library policy is embedded in curriculum reform initiatives and is thus seen as

an educational tool substantive school library development has resulted. She concludes that policy should explicitly formulate the school library's expected role in teaching and learning (1995: 295).

6.5.1.2.2 Divergent needs and policy choices

In a complex society like South Africa it is unlikely that all policy goals will be ideal since policy choices have to be made to satisfy divergent needs and in effect finding an answer to one problem may complicate others (Roux 2000: 124).

The panellists believed that, as far as the question of policy choices satisfying divergent needs was concerned *the policy models are realistic and non-exclusive, there is no mention of a one-size-fits-all concept but on the other hand there are a limited number of firm guidelines, all based on reality and experience.* They agreed that known constraints had been taken into account, and while the best choices were made other workable models would probably not be discounted. On the other hand two panellists argued that, since the needs of the various groups (for school libraries) were similar the solutions required were less complex. The adequacy of the policy models that were chosen is discussed under 6.5.3.

The earlier Department of Education (school library policy) drafts had been taken into account when the KZN policy was developed, and the panel commented that this influence may have restricted the vision of the policy yet the choice of three progressive models was not to the detriment of the overall objectives. They identify financial support as the biggest constraint to be taken into account since it could impinge on many aspects of implementation such as stock, space, and staff. Other practical implementation problems and constraints are identified and discussed under 6.5.2.

6.5.1.2.3 Trade-offs and policy objectives

When policy analysts have to make choices these invariably include trade-offs, especially when they have to consider more acceptable options so as to satisfy a larger

section of the stakeholders. Policy constraints were discussed in chapter 5 under 5.1.2, and this section assesses whether the objectives opted for in the policy were practical and favourable since government budgets are normally insufficient to satisfy all stakeholder needs (Roux 2000: 122).

Panel members consented that, although trade-offs commonly take place during the policy process, there were seemingly no (unfavourable) trade-offs in the policy document. They believed that budgetary constraints had been adequately considered as was reflected in the choice of three models (*since the third model alone is unaffordable*) and the provisioning of core collections only, and pointed out that education and advocacy would be needed to secure additional funds. There was agreement too that the objectives chosen are practical and favourable although one panel member observed that the implementation plan reveals its limitations in that it provides for core collections only. Yet in a subsequent round the same panellist explained *I see the sense in this last comment. But the objective of a core collection is practical. The support of the education resource centres will hopefully push schools to the next stage.* This panellist seemed to have a change of opinion. This is an indication of the potential Delphi offers to review one's standpoint when a different set of circumstances/views are offered by other panellists.

A panel member observed that the policy is *an example of practice influencing decision-making and being reflected in policy* - the ELITS Directorate's good financial management record prompted the department to allocate funds for the implementation of the policy. Other panellists observed that the allocation of funding was a constraint in other provinces.

6.5.1.2.4 Policy issues and objectivity

The heterogeneous nature of South African society requires a particular fastidiousness about objectivity and the setting aside of personal values when formulating policy so that issues can be investigated impartially (Roux 2000: 124). As far as the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* is concerned, most panellists agreed that policy issues had

been treated objectively, but comments from one panel member solicited a number of responses in subsequent rounds. The first observation was that the policy assumed a common desire for information literacy and for inclusion in the information society. Panellists suggested that this assumption was correct and in fact an important principle that should underpin the document and be *argued more forcefully and not taken as a given*. Reference was made to cellular telephone technology exposing users to the use of technology and access to information, and the lack of take-up of initiatives like the TeleCentres¹⁵ was explained by observing that people needed to be sensitised to the reasons as to why they need information from external sources. Stilwell (2007b: 103) agreed that this "form of [cellular] ICT access holds promise for addressing access and equity issues in future," citing Mostert (2005) who reported a mobile services coverage of 95 percent of the population in 2005.

The second premise was that, although parents and teachers might want a school library with computers, when this option becomes one of a range of alternatives to choose from (such as toilets, sports facilities or laboratories) the choice becomes more difficult – and opting for a school library would not necessarily mean that this library would be used effectively. Panel members had strong opinions about this statement and agreed that parents and teachers should never *have to choose between toilets and education*. *If this is still the case, government has failed and is still failing its children*. They argued that the perception that education can take place without a school library and resources was the real problem, and believed that the policy should uphold *the assumption that the choice would be for education, and thus a library*. The panel agreed that in reality these choices still had to be made, and that these attitudes needed to be confronted and changed *with clear explanations* (to move beyond "assumptions"). They rightly observed that priorities and resources did influence schools' choices at times and suggested one would initially work with the schools that choose libraries as a priority. It was hoped that, even though school libraries had been underutilised in the old dispensation, changes in curriculum and

¹⁵ TeleCentres are public places where people can access computers, the internet, and other digital technologies (Etta [2003]).

teaching styles would *make the school library a living force* that will achieve the policy's aim of *well functioning libraries where materials are used effectively and enhance educational and personal goals*.

The above observation regarding curriculum change and teaching styles is noted by Jansen (1998) who cautions that this anticipated change "represents a conceptual leap of staggering proportions from outcomes to dramatic changes in social relations in classrooms" and that it is based on flawed assumptions about what happens inside schools and classrooms.

6.5.1.2.5 Forecasting and the expected future

Since the nature of goals and objectives is concerned with what ought to be achieved by a policy, it contains elements of forecasting, that is to say it identifies the expected future. Policy makers need to know what they want to achieve in order to be able to select the most appropriate policy alternatives, in other words they need to take into account the probable impact of an envisaged policy (Roux 2000: 117-118).

The Delphi questionnaire firstly asked panellists to project what they perceived the expected future would be as revealed in the policy document, and secondly whether the task team had succeeded in selecting alternatives that would bring about this future (taking into account the statistical material and project plans which had been forwarded to them). The findings were summarised in table 9 under 5.1.2.9 and include the ranking the panellists assigned to each forecast to indicate its feasibility. The feasibility rankings are indicated where possible, with the second number being the maximum ranking possible, taking into account the number of panellists who ranked the issue.

The panellists identified five broad policy areas in their forecast namely access to school library services, library space, resources, support, and redress:

- **Access to school library services:** The panel envisaged the adequate provision of basic school library services to all schools in the province (7/9) where learners will

have some form of access to library resources (6/6), but, as a panellist pointed out, on condition that teachers *allow* access and encourage learners as well as teachers to use the resources.

A panel member predicted a system of well functioning and effective school libraries but the rest of the panel pointed out that one would have to see the impact so far (how many *well-functioning libraries* have been established) to fully agree with such clear-cut forecasts.

- **Library space:** Panellists forecast a library space, centralised, in the classroom, or in a cluster (8/9) that would be configured, more likely, according to circumstance than to need. They agreed that the issue of how the central library (third model) would evolve still needed to be resolved, and observed that a "virtual library" need not be seen as the ultimate model. It was further suggested that the central school library model in a revised policy might more firmly be sold as a learning resource centre, integrating a computer room with the traditional library (6/9).
- **Resources:** The panel envisaged (that the chosen school library model would house) appropriate resources, ICT, and programmes to promote information literacy and reading (6/9). As far as ICT is concerned the panel concurred that, while it is difficult to keep up with *cutting edge* developments due to constant growth and change in this field, the basics can nevertheless be implemented. They cautioned that there should be a balance between all the available tools and technologies. Although ICT is not the panacea for all problems, there was a concern that the policy document may well come across as too rooted in the past and underestimating the role of ICT, hence widening the divide between the library and e-education sectors. The example put forward was that the ECSRD business plan emphasised ICT whereas the *School Library Policy* stated that ICT should not be purchased at the expense of print material. This example may reveal a possible weakness in the policy document – the policy should *recognise and sell the potential of ICT in school libraries to leapfrog historical disadvantage*. It is possible that it was the stakeholders who formulated the policy, as KwaZulu-Natalians are very aware of the particular problems regarding connectivity in this province. There are low levels of education generally, low information literacy,

bandwidth insufficiency and difficulties in achieving and sustaining connectivity as was demonstrated in the Shongololo Pilot Project Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006). Nevertheless the panel observation is a cogent one, particularly when the potential of cellular technology to further leapfrog the digital divide are factored in (Stilwell (2007b: 103).

The above ranking (6/9) indicates that the panellists accepted that it would perhaps be optimistic to predict that appropriate resources, including ICT, as well as programmes promoting information literacy and reading, would be in place in the near future. Other factors come into play here, for example teacher training programmes that need to emphasise the value of school libraries in the learning programme, and teaching styles and attitudes that still promote rote learning (Olën 1996; Sturges and Neill 1998; Rosenberg 2001; Lor [200-]). As far as ICT is concerned, school readiness will likewise be a key factor to the successful implementation of ICT (KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education 2006). The KZN Department of Education has to date supplied 4 350 schools with at least one computer and a printer for administrative purposes, and in 2007 eight computer laboratories were established at schools as part of the White Paper on e-Education's implementation in the province. The ELITS Directorate's strategies to promote reading in the province were outlined in chapter 2 under 2.4.1.

- **Support:** Panel members forecast that trained staff who will support the above implementation of services over time would be available (7/9) and that this in turn would contribute to the holistic development of information literate learners in the province (7/9). Staffing is an important factor, since research has indicated that a trained (full-time) librarian collaborating with teachers to teach and integrate literature and information skills into the curriculum is essential for the full integration of the school library into the learning process (Todd, Kulthau and OELMA 2004; Montiel-Overall 2005; Scholastic 2006).
- **Redress:** The panellists anticipated that the implementation of the policy will provide redress of the past for the majority of schools (6/9). The issue of redress is discussed in question 6 below and comments are included there. What should be

noted is that panellists ranked this issue 6/9, thus acknowledging that the matter is complex and will require more than the intervention of the policy to be resolved over time.

However, the Delphi panel agreed that the policy alternatives that were selected are appropriate and will most likely bring about the anticipated outcomes. They highlighted issues that would need more attention when the policy is revised, and these suggestions are included in chapter 7.

The next section addresses the Delphi panel's views regarding the selection of policy options.

6.5.1.3 Policy choices

During the policy formulating process fear of change may sometimes make it necessary to accept less radical policy options (Roux 2000: 123). The panel's response to choices made regarding school library models in the policy document are discussed under 6.5.4 while more general remarks are included here in order to illustrate panel opinion on the subject of policy choices.

Panellists pointed out that the policy choices made might have been politically or economically strategic, but agreed that a certain vagueness and gaps in the formulation of these choices could be useful provided that the original spirit of the document was not lost when these gaps were explored. They advised that guidelines instead of quantitative standards might have been a more practical choice, as well as a shorter period of implementation although they conceded that the policy seemed to be doing what was possible within obvious constraints. There was partial agreement with the statement that the underlying principles and beliefs of the policy should result in good school library services. A panel member observed that although this is what "ought" to happen *beliefs do not lead to good services*. However, this observation can be countered by pointing out that one does need vision to envisage the possibilities in the first instance.

Concern regarding the effect of the time frame of the implementation strategy on the successful implementation of the policy was pointed out above. The comment that visible proof of implementation will give momentum to the success of the policy links with this observation. The issue of vagueness was brought up in other sections of the questionnaire as well. Colebatch (2002: 66) explains that, for example, goal statements tend not to be very precise since policy participants try to build support for their activities through these statements and "the broader and less specific they are, the more likely it is that they will attract support". The same would hold true for a certain vagueness regarding policy choices too.

6.5.1.4 Coverage of key elements

Policy failure can be the result of defects in the policy design, such as the lack of clear objectives, or inaccurate targeting of the policy programmes resulting in inappropriate prioritisation or little practical application of the policy (Meyer and Cloete 2000b: 249). This failing underlines the importance of addressing and including in the policy document all the relevant key elements that will ensure successful policy implementation.

The Delphi panel was asked to outline the key elements of the *KZN School Library Policy* and these were enumerated in table 10 in chapter 5. The preceding analysis of the panellists' views, regarding the adequacy of the policy as far as forecasting and policy choices are concerned, is reflected in their ratings of the comprehensiveness of the coverage of each of the key elements individually identified in the policy document.

All panel members agreed on both the key elements and the ratings assigned to each element by other panel members. The ratings for the following elements were given as follows: the vision and mission, purpose, principles, redress, inclusivity, models, literacy policy, norms, provision for future developments, and basis in experience were all rated as adequate. The purpose, principles, guidelines, diversity, and implementation were rated by the panellists as very adequate. Only the policy

background was rated as inadequate. The problem statement and the principles underlying the document were considered as being neither adequate nor inadequate and therefore rated neutrally.

One panel member commented that more detail was needed to outline how the vision would be achieved and suggested that a separate support document be developed drawing on international studies and practice on the ground, and containing curriculum support documents based on credible research to *enable those on the ground to bring such a vision to fruition.*

However, panel members were confident that the extent to which the policy document identified, understood and expressed the problems it wanted to address was adequate and for some even very adequate. Rating the adequacy on a scale of 1 – 5 two panel members believed the policy fit to be very adequate, and two indicated that it was adequate. One panellist suggested that the problems needed to be spelled out in order to assess the fit, and gave no rating.

6.5.1.5 Summary

The interpretation of data pertaining to this research question suggests that, as far as the adequacy of the policy document is concerned, there are some policy areas that need a stronger focus. The underlying issues to the policy problem need to be articulated to delineate the problems the policy seeks to address, and the major causes of the problems linked to the problem statement. A stronger focus on social inclusion was suggested, and it was noted that although the broad purpose of the policy had been formulated the transition between the models should be spelled out. Taking into account the perception of teachers that a central school library represents equity of access, the panel nevertheless consented that target group expectations had been taken into account. It was noted that collection building that reflects cultural diversity could be highlighted in order to provide appropriate resources and thus promote library usage. Lastly, the panel thought that divergent needs had been taken into

account in the suggested models, and that the chosen alternatives were realistic and appropriate to bring about the expected outcomes of the policy.

The next research question addresses the adequacy of the implementation strategy and the practical problems that were identified in this study.

6.5.2 The KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy*: the adequacy of the implementation strategy and practical implementation problems

Two research questions namely the adequacy of the implementation strategy and the identification of anticipated implementation problems (questions 2 and 3 in 1.1.4) have been combined to provide a comprehensive overview and analysis of the adequacy of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy's* implementation strategy and practical implementation problems that can be expected.

Dyer (1999: 45) comments that policy makers assume "decisions to bring about change will automatically result in changed policy or institutional behaviour" instead of planning out the implementation stages which follow from the decision to initiate change, and points out that "implementation is not a brief pause between a shiny idea and a smart delivery". These sentiments are mirrored by Brynard (2000: 177) who observes that implementation is not purely a managerial or administrative problem, it is a process concerned with who gets what, when, how, where and from whom, and not only are there multiple actors, but implementation also operates at multiple levels. Moreover implementation cannot be viewed as an action to be carried out according to a "carefully predetermined plan... it is a process that, at the very best, can only be managed, and lessons must be learnt as one proceeds through the different implementation stages" (Brynard 2000: 187). In managing implementation one strategically "fixes" variables over which there are some direct or indirect influence so as to induce change in the ones over which one does not have such influence, and through this process steer implementation towards more effective outcomes (Brynard 2000: 187). One such example is where ELITS adjusted the

number of school provisioned annually in order to continue with policy implementation and offset the detrimental effect of a fixed budget.

6.5.2.1 Critical variables

Scholars of policy implementation consistently identify five interlinked, critical variables common to different sectors and to countries in different stages of development (Brynard 2000: 165). The Delphi panel's views regarding these variables are discussed below.

The first variable (1) is the **content of the policy** itself (what it sets out to do [goals], how directly it relates to the issue, and how it aims to solve the perceived problem). The policy's adequacy regarding content was analysed and assessed under 6.5.1 above. The second variable (2) is the nature of the **institutional context** – the corridor through which the policy must travel and the boundaries by which it is limited in the implementation process. This context was discussed in the background chapter, chapter 2, and will be further interpreted below under change and policy issues in 6.5.2.2. The institutional context came visibly to the fore in the SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) where factors such as a lack of ELITS advisors in districts and the subsequent lack of communication and training resulted in resource material being underutilised in schools. The Shongololo Pilot Project Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006) demonstrated that the lack of hardware and software for advisors and of ICT support in the districts similarly affected the success of the project.

The other three remaining variables (3, 4 and 5) were put to the panel as (a), (b) and (c) below and they were asked to indicate which of these would most probably influence the KZN *School Library Policy's* implementation:

- a. the commitment to the goals and methods of the policy of those entrusted with carrying out the implementation at various levels,
- b. the administrative capacity of implementers to carry out the desired changes, and

- c. the support of clients and coalitions whose interests may be either enhanced or threatened by the policy, and the strategies they use to strengthen or deflect policy implementation (Brynard 2000: 165).

The Delphi panel ranked (a) and (c) above as most likely to adversely influence policy implementation in KwaZulu-Natal, namely the commitment of those implementing the policy, and the support of clients and their strategies to strengthen or deflect implementation. They surprisingly ranked administrative capacity to carry out changes as the least likely to influence implementation. In reality this aspect has been one of the biggest obstacles so far: apart from cumbersome procurement procedures, having the budget approved timeously, lack of administrative support in districts offices, and implementers at district level who have not always been able to support the policy initiative adequately. Factors that come into play are reporting lines where there are district demands that have to be met within certain timeframes, and where what head office perceives as urgent may be interpreted differently in district context. This lack of synchronisation relates to Colebatch's (2002) observation that policy means different things to different people, and his reference (2002: 65) to the structural tension between the vertical dimension that legitimises policy and characterises it by clarity of purpose, and the horizontal dimension that gives efficacy to the policy, where people seek to make sense of the action and recognises that there are a diversity of players and "scope for divergence over what constitutes worthwhile activity".

Not all panel members agreed with the combined ranking results, and commented that these factors rank equally since they tend to be interconnected in an education setting. Yet they pointed out that with committed staff implementing the policy and clients supporting the implementation *there would be a basis for lobbying for the capacity required* - thus validating their ranking above.

Panel members who agreed with the ranking cautioned against gaps between the school library and e-education sector, specifically regarding factor (c) that refers to

those interests that are "enhanced or threatened" by the policy. They identified people who may feel threatened by the implementation of the policy as staff at all levels who are inadequately trained, other underperforming directorates, and even adequately trained staff who don't like change. The panel proposed that the importance of ownership of the policy document and the ability to support this ownership should be stressed, or even better, there *needs to be steps and processes that result in this... such as consultation, information dissemination, and professional development*. The SLDP Evaluation report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d), although reporting on a small sample, indicates that "ownership" of the policy has not yet been achieved. Similarly the ACE students in 2005 seemed ignorant largely of the policy and few had seen the document (Stilwell 2006). The ELITS Directorate has thus far relied on district staff to workshop the document and distribute copies to schools, a method that has obviously not yielded the required results.

The question regarding sufficient capacity in the sector to play the role demanded by the implementation plan, and the possibility that the plan would have to be adapted because of lack of capacity, was put to the panel elsewhere in the questionnaire. Their response is discussed here since it is relevant to this research question.

Researchers such as Olën (1996), Sturges and Neill (1998), Rosenberg (2001) and Hart and Zinn (2007) have pointed out the adverse effect of lack of capacity to bring about the required changes regarding curriculum implementation, new methodologies and a paradigm shift as far as the role of the school library is concerned. All these factors have to be taken into account especially since the data from the Shongololo Pilot Project Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006), the ELITS SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d), and the Risk Management Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c) have highlighted similar issues. The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d) commented on the lack of use of existing libraries, and although improvements were visible in areas such as an increase in library provisioning and reading programmes in some schools according to the ELITS School Library Audit

(KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004), the sector will need to focus on intervention and training programmes to achieve success.

Adequate allowance for human resources is a vital element of successful policy implementation, and panel members expressed some reservations regarding this aspect despite the inclusion of a training programme in the policy document. Panellists pointed out that effective training should start in pre-service teacher training, and that it might even be useful to encourage the establishment of (voluntary) local forums/interest groups for ongoing support. It was perceived as positive that the policy's implementation plan showed understanding of this crucial issue by indicating that teachers and curriculum officials would be trained and informed, and the panel believed that even if time lines were to be altered due to unforeseen problems, the sector had the necessary expertise to cope. They mentioned that the ECSRD project's mandate to work only in rural, under-resourced areas would provide further support where it was needed most. The importance of continuous professional development was stressed, especially for those in positions of responsibility, and it was observed that this factor would obviously have implications for resourcing and training in the implementation phases of the policy.

The panel acknowledged that a great deal will depend on the teachers' understanding of the curriculum, and conceded that, when teachers are unfamiliar with and apprehensive of the curriculum, teaching and learning suffer as was corroborated in the research (Potenza and Monyokolo 1999; Christie 1999; Jansen 1998; Hart 2002b). Yet the panel expected that the policy process could *play a part in building teachers' understanding*. The ELITS Directorate has, since the approval of the policy in 2004, developed *Reading Policy Guidelines* and *ICT Guidelines* to augment the *School Library Policy's* implementation. Both documents were endorsed by the Superintendent-General of Education in KwaZulu-Natal. It is anticipated that these guidelines will indeed play a big part in building teachers' understanding of the role of libraries and reading in developing information literate and lifelong learners. In addition there are, as a panellist suggested, pockets of excellence in the province as

has been demonstrated in the annual School Library Excellence Awards programme. Since this programme's inception in 2003, 11 primary and 16 secondary schools in the categories class collections and central collections (rural, semi-urban and urban), as indicated in chapter 2, have received awards to honour their commitment and efforts.

Another suggestion was that as needs change skilled staff should be sought to enable the implementation of the policy, for example ICT often needs specialised, highly trained staff and technical support and it would be essential to cooperate with the e-education policy implementers in the province as well to ensure that school libraries are included in their planning. This issue was highlighted in the Shongololo Pilot Project Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006). Here it was found that ELITS advisors had difficulty supporting the project due to a lack of access to the required hardware and software, as well as to Internet and e-mail. This comment regarding skilled staff may, on the other hand, allude to the rationalisation of colleges of education when many of the college personnel were absorbed into school library services, some of whom lack the required qualifications (Hart and Zinn 2007). The introduction of specialist posts for teacher-librarians will alleviate this lack of support and, as pointed out by Stilwell (2007a: 212) may restore the "lack of stature... of the profession".

A panellist observed that capacity at school level had to be increased to counter concern about the human resources dimensions of this and other initiatives: each teacher needed some basic pre-service training, and he/she, as well as the institution providing the education, needed to take this training *seriously*. Linked to the question of capacity was an observation that it could be difficult under circumstances to motivate schools to develop and implement a whole-school information literacy policy, but the panel was confident that these difficulties could be confronted and addressed over time.

Staffing suggestions put forward by the panel included the need for more ELITS staff, and ensuring that cluster libraries have a full-time or part-time librarian as set out in

the policy, although the panel observed that a part-time librarian would not cope with a number of schools. Panellists conceded that human resources may be *the Achilles heel in the sustainability of the plans* in both schools and Education Centres, and that the lack of teacher-librarians too can hinder progress. At the same time it was pointed out by a panel member that there are many trained teacher-librarians who are teaching full-time instead of working in school libraries. S/he pointed out that *in the urban areas the lack of a post is a much greater problem than the lack of trained staff*. S/he also observed that it *may be a problem to attract such people to deeply rural schools*. This problem is partly being addressed through the ACE programme where ELITS collaborates with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) to offer school library training to teachers. So far more than 800 teachers have benefited from the programme. Many of these teachers are from rural areas and the programme is additionally offered at 9 selected resource centres as well as the Pietermaritzburg and Howard College campuses of UKZN in order to accommodate the students from those areas (Hoskins 2006). This endorses the panel's observation below that there is capacity in the sector, and as was mentioned earlier, what is needed is the development of pockets of excellence to motivate other teachers.

Since the policy document had been endorsed by the provincial Minister of Education, the panel members suggested that the lack of capacity/training/interest should be addressed, rather than adapting the implementation strategy, as it will become easier given the *push of a policy, increased funding, and ICT*. They commended ELITS' vision and the commitment of ELITS' staff, observing that *the policy document was pursued with energy and determination*

Many of the observations above endorse Brynard's (2000: 178) statement that "policies are continuously transformed by implementation actions that simultaneously alter resources and objectives... when we act to implement a policy we change it". Some of the changes commonly identified by researchers as issues that can alter policy implementation are discussed in the next section.

6.5.2.2 Change and policy issues

The developmental and continuously changing nature of society means that no policy is ever complete in terms of outcomes or effect, and may require retrospective analysis Roux (2000: 145). It is important to realise that "policy changes take place before, during and after implementation... the truth is that policy change takes place throughout the policy life cycle" (Meyer and Cloete 2000b: 239). Hart (Hart, T. 1995) comments on the changing landscape within which school libraries operate in South Africa as well. Taking into account the above observations, the panel drew on their own experience concerning change and commented on whether the six policy issues identified from the literature (Meyer and Cloete 2000b: 239-241) had been taken into account and adequately catered for in the KZN *School Library Policy*. Further they indicated whether these changes possibly could have been better managed. The panel members ranked the issues in order of their perceived likelihood to influence policy changes throughout the policy's life cycle (table 13, chapter 5).

The policy issues are discussed in order of their ranking. Two issues, namely changes in political leadership and in policy solutions or service delivery strategies ranked the highest, the dynamic and changing policy environment as well as institutional changes was ranked third, changes in technological advances fifth, and change in the resource base was ranked sixth. These issues are discussed next.

6.5.2.2.1 Changes in political leadership

Change of political leadership is a common cause of policy change in the government, and drastic policy change can occur when for example the ruling party is replaced (Meyer and Cloete 2000b: 241). On the national level a marked change in policy focus was apparent every time a new minister took over the education portfolio, and in KwaZulu-Natal too from the researcher's observations a change of the status quo was manifested whenever a new MEC for Education was appointed (2000, 2001, 2004) or when a new senior management team took over. Such change was even more evident when the ruling party in the province was replaced in 2004.

The Delphi panel ranked changes in political leadership high as an unforeseen issue that can call for policy change on both national and provincial levels. There was, however, consensus that the aims of the policy should be seen as essential and therefore outside of the realm of political change, and though changes may be relevant when they impact on education, they should not affect the roll-out of these services. Furthermore, if policy is developed by those closest to the problem, that is locally, the panel reasoned it would be difficult for new leadership to abandon implementation since the policy was already in place and being implemented.

The importance of lobbying and advocacy was stressed, and the panel conceded that, despite the above argument, in reality different political leaders have different agendas and priorities which do tend to impact on policy implementation. Yet not all panellists were convinced that these changes are very difficult (*if not impossible*) to manage, in fact they believed that with persistence, determination and flexibility these issues would be manageable, and that even the connection between the provincial and the national policy would not prove to be problematic in future.

6.5.2.2.2 Changes in policy solutions or service delivery strategies

Conventionally the government was seen as the main provider of goods and services, but Meyer and Cloete (2000b: 241) note that this view changed during the latter part of the 20th century. Attributed mainly to a lack of financial resources and technological advances governments are now more active in facilitating service delivery, in other words considering alternative service delivery strategies to direct service delivery. The establishment and development of Education Centres to support the Rural Development project is an example of a change in policy solutions or service delivery strategies, and as such would have to be accommodated in the policy's implementation strategy. The Delphi panel ranked policy solution and service delivery changes as an issue that can have the same high impact on policy implementation as changes in political leadership.

The panel members pointed out that innovative solutions and positive changes were needed and are in fact being implemented, and given that change forms part of any policy, they agreed that regular policy review should accommodate new planning. A panel member commented that future policy review may even affect the policy's initial vision and purpose or, as was pointed out, *not the vision so much as how we get there*. It was agreed that these changes should not influence good policy and are actually desirable if they are the result of feedback after implementation. Moreover, they suggested that policy implementation should be given enough time to show its practical strengths and weaknesses. As for the ECSRD, a panel member stated that the project actually *offers a new landscape for the implementation plan and it need not affect the policy framework... since the 3 models fit in well*. All panellists agreed though that when the policy is revisited, the ECSRD project needs to be taken into account.

As observed under 6.2.2 good policy should in fact anticipate and allow for changes, and one could add to this point by arguing that a certain vagueness in a policy document, as pointed out by panellists, allow for changes to be accommodated and for the document to talk to different sectors and attract more support (Colebatch 2002: 66).

6.5.2.2.3 The dynamic and changing policy environment

Social, political, cultural and technological changes may compel policy-makers to modify policies in an attempt to reflect the reality around them, and this issue ranked third in importance for the panel, together with institutional changes (below). It was reiterated that, if a policy has not made provision for anticipated changes, it should (be revised to) keep pace with development, in other words policy development should be ongoing and implementation should change to incorporate and allow for changes. Panellists agreed that the document deals with diversity in KwaZulu-Natal schools by way of the models, and though it may not be to everyone's satisfaction, it is a start. For them the provision of basic services will lay the foundation for equity, and once this has been achieved the services can be improved. They brought up the

issue of technological developments which would demand flexibility, but pointed out even affluent countries struggle to keep up with changes in electronic resource provisioning and the KZN policy implementers were thus *doing the best they can in difficult, but not unusual, circumstances*. The panel suggested that, for a reality check, a mechanism was needed for monitoring and implementation that is at the same time informed by an environmental scan.

These views are supported in the literature. Meyer and Cloete (2000b: 239) observe that due to the dynamic policy environment reactive policy change does take place, but the most effective policy change is pre-emptive, where the policy-makers predict policy environment changes and adapt policy timeously.

6.5.2.2.4 Institutional changes

In 2008 the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department restructured for the fourth time since 1995, this time referring to a "re-alignment of the structure" (KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education 2008c: 1). This issue was discussed briefly in chapter 2. There are positive changes in this restructuring process for ELITS, since the directorate will fall under the Branch: Planning and Support in the Chief Directorate: Curriculum Support Services. The department now views the services provided by ELITS to be more homogeneous with the curriculum in terms of its role in for example supporting the literacy programmes and establishing libraries in schools (KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education 2008b: 4). However, the consequences are that every time a new Chief Director is appointed ELITS needs to once again embark on establishing trust and understanding with the appointee in order to ensure that the ELITS vision and mission, as well as the directorate's mandates and projects, are understood and supported.

The Delphi questionnaire asked panellists whether, based on their experience, adequate allowance had been made for ineffective organisational structures and work processes, and the panel members commented on three main aspects regarding

institutional changes, namely the attributes of good policy, smaller operational units, and other service delivery options.

It was argued that although these shifts may be out of their hands, policy developers need to be aware of the variables that operate and should put a practical policy in place. Well-written policy should not be affected by organisational changes if it has an implementation plan and is communicated to and owned by the policy implementers. This ownership of policy is not without problems as Colebatch (2002: 4) points out when he observes that people construct their own (and often diverse) meanings. Yet, the panellists agreed that as much allowance as possible had been made in the policy, but there remained a large number of possible variables and issues many of which *cannot be dealt with in a policy document, but how they are dealt with will be informed by the policy document.*

There were noticeable differences in the observations made by panellists regarding allowances made for *ineffective organisational structures and work processes*. Those panellists not directly involved in the local school library sector commented that adequate allowances had been made, whereas those panel members familiar with local conditions in the school library sector identified this issue as a major constraint. The latter group of panellists pointed out the problems with head office and district line functions whereby there are the two lines of authority, and district ELITS officials report to district managers and not to ELITS which is a Head Office directorate. The KZN Department of Education's structure is a typical example of matrix management that is "based on two or more reporting systems that are linked to the vertical organisation hierarchy, and to horizontal relationships based on geographic, product or project requirements" (*BNet Business Dictionary 2008*). All panellists acknowledged in a subsequent round that head office and district line function problems may compromise policy implementation, and should restructuring not address the problem, more and better policy advocacy will be needed.

Smaller and more efficient units in an organisation are a world-wide reality and perceived to be less bureaucratic and less formal (Meyer and Cloete 2000b: 240). The panel perceived smaller units with budgets, autonomy (but not to the extent of derailing policy implementation), management capacity, and motivated staff to be a good solution for better service delivery. They pointed out that if these units can make decisions while maintaining support and guidance from the parent unit they will feel that they have some impact on decision making. The observation that larger units may offer economies of scale was countered by a comment that this can actually be *an illusion and delusion* since libraries can be set up from afar, but to sustain them and achieve curriculum integration *close-to-the ground structures will be needed*. Though two streams of authority could pose problems, the panel members acceded that should the change create greater efficiency and an increased ability to meet the vision of the document, it ought to be embraced since the policy document delineates policy for a large land area. On the other hand all agreed that, if the shift to smaller units weakened ELITS' influence (*as happened elsewhere*) attempts should be made to analyse reasons and identify solutions that will result in a strong, credible Head Office component, with district functions clearly delineated and reporting lines carefully structured, and most importantly, good communication maintained.

Some panel members linked this issue with the previous point, 6.5.2.2.2, and mentioned that the ECSRD programme put forward a useful framework for the policy and the opportunity to motivate for more funds, staff and resources. In reality these benefits have not yet materialised despite the fact that progress has been made in other areas. The department has not yet taken a policy decision regarding staffing structures, the centres are not integrated into the department's organogram, and there is a lack of alignment between the reporting lines of the education centres and that of the KZN Department of Education (MiET 2007). The ELITS Directorate has taken responsibility for supporting the libraries at these centres, and for the mobile libraries that service clusters of schools near education centres. However, requests for additional funding to resource the centre libraries and the mobile libraries have so far not been successful and the directorate utilises the project allocation received from the

Royal Netherlands Embassy as well as its limited line function budget to establish and assist these services at education centres.

The panel identified additional organisational constraints which they believed should also have been taken into account or factored into future planning. These include the physical conditions in schools, and the rural environment in KwaZulu-Natal with its lack of other libraries. It was anticipated however that the conditional grant of over R1 billion to the public library sector to improve rural LIS (R1 billion boost for libraries 2006) might address this shortage. A panellist mentioned that in other provinces, lack of support from top management would be an organisational constraint whereas the ELITS Directorate was given space to develop the policy and the department supported their initiative.

6.5.2.2.5 Changes in technological advances

This issue was ranked fifth in importance although a panellist argued that it should have been ranked fourth, while another two wanted it ranked higher in light of the White Paper on e-Education (2004). This document reported that at the time only 10.4% of all schools in KwaZulu-Natal had access to computers for teaching and learning. The data analysis from the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d) and the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) confirmed that learners in very few schools had access to technology for educational purposes, and the Shongololo Pilot Project Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006) outlined the difficulty of sustaining ICT development in some rural schools due to the distance and terrain, the lack of technical support, and school readiness which required more than just a school expressing a need for computers.

The panel agreed with most of the observations regarding ICT, and indicated that major stumbling blocks, such as the lack of electricity in schools and the issue of ICT maintenance, prevented the provisioning and use of ICTs in school libraries. They emphasised that this is one part of redress that needs to take place since there is a

great demand by both learners and parents for ICT access, and even if there is a sometimes unrealistic expectation that ICT skills *will open all doors* this perception should be optimised since it is common across countries and recognises a changing world. It was suggested that the ECSRD project too would contribute to ICT access for schools near the centres.

One of the panellists observed that the basic skills and principles of reading and information seeking can be learnt without access to IT, and once acquired can be transferred to that environment when the facilities become available, so both basic skills education as well as ICT access should be ongoing. It was agreed that more research was needed on the subject of skills transfer as ICTs *have a huge impact on information seeking and might change the ground rules*, but this too should not hinder implementation since research and experience will facilitate change as and when more knowledge becomes available.

A panel member observed that the policy does not address the need for ICT facilities. Several factors come into play as far as this observation is concerned, the first and most important being budgetary constraints where the allocation for the implementation of the policy has remained constant over the last four financial years instead of being increased annually and this has already resulted in a considerable provisioning backlog. As indicated in the Shongololo Pilot Project Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006), school readiness is key to the implementation of ICT in school libraries, and ELITS does not have the capacity to ascertain readiness in all the schools that are being provisioned. Secondly it was anticipated that the school library sector in KwaZulu-Natal would, as a panel member also suggested, piggy-back on the e-education roll-out. Unfortunately, as the ELITS Directorate is no longer represented on the provincial committee for e-education and could not argue its case for computers in school libraries this has not happened. The ELITS 25 Schools Project¹⁶ will however provide 100 school libraries each with 5 computers and a

¹⁶ The 25 Schools Project will establish functional school libraries in 25 schools per annum over a period of four years. These schools receive library resources and computers, and support from ELITS in the form of additional

printer over the next four years and these schools will be the pockets of excellence that ELITS will use to lobby for more funds in order to extend the project. It is also encouraging to note that, in terms of the e-education policy the KZN Department of Education has to date provided 4220 schools with at least one computer for administration purposes, while 160 computer laboratories have been established and 7665 teachers have received basic computer literacy and Information Technology training (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2008a: 11). This initiative will gradually change and improve the conditions in which ICT service delivery takes place. Ultimately this could have an impact on school readiness referred to in the report on the Shongololo Pilot Project by sensitising schools to the benefits of ICT and information.

6.5.2.2.6 Change in the resource base

Government departments are required to reprioritise and improve performance budgeting and new interventions and strategic priorities are factors that need to be taken into account when budgets for policies and projects are decided and allocated. The Delphi panel ranked this issue as least likely to influence policy changes.

The panel agreed that reprioritising to improve performance budgeting *makes it doubly important for accepted policy to be in place*, and that improved budget performance is to be applauded as long as the benefits are *redistributed to education*. They correctly pointed out that, though the availability of resources may have been taken into account, it is nevertheless difficult to deal with this issue as the impact on performance is long-term. One panel member maintained that this outcome should have been rated third.

However, in practical terms the change in resource base has resulted in the SLDP budget remaining the same over a period of four years, and the project has lagged behind in terms of its performance: instead of provisioning 4 000 schools by 2007/8

and sustained training with a specific focus on reading programmes and the integration of all types of resources in teaching programmes (MacGarry 2008).

only 2 780 schools have been provisioned and the implementation plan had to be adapted to reflect this backlog of 1 220 schools (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d). Other examples of reprioritisation have occurred when national priorities have had to be factored into financial planning without the support of conditional grants. The implementation of the mobile library project in KwaZulu-Natal is one such instance. The National Minister of Education mentions mobile libraries as one of the means used for the implementation of the *National Reading Strategy* and the National Literacy Strategy. As yet however no funds have been allocated to the project and the provincial Department of Education has to bear the cost of custom clearance and the resourcing of the mobile libraries.

6.5.2.3 Factors identified by the Delphi panel

The panellists were asked to draw on their own experience and to indicate and rank other factors that can limit the success of policy implementation. They agreed that training and ongoing professional development rank as the most important factor to ensure successful implementation. The second highest rated factor was the shifting of paradigms *because of entrenched habits, comfort zones and the like*, and they proposed that a *champion* (at senior level) was needed in each school. It was pointed out that planning should take into account this difficulty of shifting paradigms – it was no *reason for inactivity*. These two issues, training and teaching styles (paradigm shift) were discussed in chapter 3 and are supported in the literature by Olën 1997; Rosenberg 1998; Sturges and Neill 1998; Christie 1999, Todd 2001).

A comment made elsewhere regarding the curriculum and reading can be linked to these two issues as well as to the comments below: the panel agreed that teachers are still confused because, although the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) is an improvement over the previous 'new' curriculum documents, there is an emphasis on resources but little training for teachers in the use of resources and about what constitutes a resource. As far as reading is concerned, the statement that reading is not *adequately being taught in many schools as a result of the new curriculum* drew a response as to whether one can claim that *bad teaching of reading is the 'result of the*

*new curriculum'? The panellist conceded though that the new curriculum did assume too much about teachers' understanding and that many teachers threw out their well-
tried techniques too soon, before they knew what to replace them with.*

Six other factors were ranked with equal importance (in the third place) by the panel as far as the success of policy implementation is concerned, namely:

- The teacher-librarians as well as the teachers, their knowledge, motivation, skills and training, and their ability to communicate well.
- School libraries that make a measurable difference to the quality of teaching and learning in the school. It was pointed out that this factor was important for the credibility of the policy since improved levels of performance and increased levels of funding should follow policy implementation.
- The ability to see the importance of resources in the context of enhancing reading and thinking abilities was another issue that the panel suggested could be addressed through training and lobbying.
- The problem of budgetary constraints and competing for the same funding allocation. A possible solution suggested was the ring-fencing of the school library resources budget, but at the same time it was mentioned that districts too need to take responsibility for their budgetary needs.
- The availability of appropriate and adequate (locally produced) resources, although some panel members disagreed and observed that locally produced resources are available as is the capacity to produce them: *demand will ensure supply.*
- The availability of trained professionals in the field as well as adequate training facilities. Panel members added that, as with locally produced resources, demand will ensure supply as far as professionals are concerned, and pointed out that training courses can be run anywhere and not necessarily at a training facility. It should be noted that in the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) 2 401 schools indicated they have a venue that can be used for training purposes.

The panel ranked the following factors fourth in importance for successful policy implementation:

- The readiness of the school, specifically the school library, which must be transformed and able to implement a whole school information literacy policy so that the implementation process is not just a matter of provisioning. A panel member pointed out that the emphasis should perhaps not be on a whole school policy as this may be difficult to achieve. It was suggested that the policy should cover the plans for getting schools' support and buy-in more strongly. This aspect can be included in the training programmes, or in the implementation strategy. By securing the understanding and cooperation of school management and staff, and by lobbying, one can assume that the implementation of a whole school information literacy policy will be an achievable objective.
- The dropping or flagging in drive and commitment over a number of years can jeopardise policy implementation. The panel advised that policies needed committed and energetic *champions*, and that teams had to reinvent themselves and their enthusiasm.
- Innovative thinking will be needed when it comes to the use of all available resources. This issue can be addressed by relevant training, for example people tend to think that resources must be all ICT but training in the use of print materials can show that even newspapers can be a valuable resource.
- The demographics of the province could pose a problem. Distances and inaccessibility can affect the dissemination of resources and information. A panellist observed that the Resource and Information Network (RAIN)¹⁷ in KwaZulu-Natal can assist in bridging this problem.

In the preceding sections the panel identified implementation problems caused mainly through the way change affects policy. The panellists acknowledged the challenges and offered realistic solutions that could minimise the effect of these factors over which the policy maker and policy implementer have little control.

¹⁷ RAIN is a network that disseminates resources and information to all schools (or any number of selected schools) in KwaZulu-Natal. The project operates with funding from the Royal Netherlands Embassy. Local people are contracted to provide the delivery services, thus empowering communities economically (MiET [2008]).

6.5.2.4 Summary

Panel members agreed that some of the failures of local policy initiatives defy rational explanation, and *reside in the realm of chance, personality, factions, different agendas, champions and allies in the unpredictability of the policy process*. However, they believed that the extent to which the policy outcomes are embraced by those who implement these policies on the ground (and who should have the necessary skills to do so) can have a major impact, particularly if the policy is not seen as relevant, or possible. Staffing policies inside the schools too can either nurture or break the policy, but the panel pointed out that this problem can be alleviated if all teachers are trained adequately.

As discussed, issues such as practical implementation problems, the possible implications for human resource development, budgetary challenges for the province, equity, and addressing past imbalances all have to be adequately covered in the policy to facilitate successful implementation. The panellists' view was that the policy should be kept clear and simple, but at the same time it should balance demands and talk to diverse sectors. Most agreed that no specific changes were needed but that the strategy should be regularly reviewed and changes communicated to all concerned. They suggested that problems identified by this research could be addressed in a series of supporting documents that expand upon, support and extend the scope of the policy.

The next research question addresses the issue of the situation regarding school library provisioning in the province at the time of the HSRC Survey in 1999 and the ELITS School Library Audit in 2004. As explained in 6.3 the researcher believes that an overview of present school library provisioning in the province will provide background to the research questions that follow after this one.

6.5.3 The adequacy and suitability of the school library models

This research question addresses question 6 under 1.1.4. Several sections in the Delphi questionnaire dealt with the school library models that were selected and their

adequacy and suitability for implementation. Panel members had been supplied with background material regarding the seven school library models proposed in the 1998 draft of the *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* (South Africa 1998: 16-23) as well as the models retained in the latest draft of the National School Library Policy (South Africa. Department of Education 2005: 15). All these models were considered by the KZN task team when the policy was being developed, as was the fact that some models had already been successfully implemented in the province.

It has already been pointed out that factors such as fear of change can influence the choice of policy options, and moreover in any policy process the policy makers' choices invariably include trade-offs, especially when they have to consider more acceptable options so as to satisfy a larger section of the stakeholders. Panel members consented that, although trade-offs commonly take place during the policy process, there were seemingly no (unfavourable) trade-offs in the policy document. There was partial agreement that the three models are a realistic choice even though most schools may view the centralised school library as the most *realistic (or perhaps desirable) choice*.

As far as the policy models are concerned the panel observed that the selection of the models was based on experience and not cast in concrete, schools can select the most appropriate model for their circumstances. They all agreed that the ultimate aim should be for a central school library in each school, but in the mean time the benefit of the varied models was the ability of ELITS to provide minimum service to all in the short time, even to those in remote areas. Thus the models included were seen to be adequate but at the same time they advised that the *option of including other models should remain open*. It was pointed out that there was a definite need for a choice of models, even more than one in a school, in order to meet all requirements, cater for change, and compensate for the fact too that, due to practical constraints, overcrowded schools often encroach on whatever library space there is. This last observation was highlighted in the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10) where it was found that 346 of the 1 148 schools with libraries

(30.1%) in KwaZulu-Natal, used their libraries for other purposes (although it was noted that the meaning of the question may have been ambiguous).

Panel members considered a **classroom collection**, replenished often from either public library services or the education department's school library support service, to be an excellent option in primary schools. Researchers such as Rosenberg (2001) support this view, as does the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d) and the *National Reading Strategy* (South Africa. Department of Education 2008) by indicating that classroom collections are an excellent and underutilised alternative in the absence of school libraries. It should be noted that this type of library provisioning is probably the only suitable option for schools with a low enrolment and only one or two classrooms. In KwaZulu-Natal there are 888 schools with four or less classrooms, of which 346 have either one or two classrooms, and 476 of the 888 schools have an enrolment of less than 100 learners (O'Donoghue 2006).

The well-resourced **cluster model**, according to the panel, can be shared by a few schools geographically close and with smallish learner numbers. This model can be cost effective and play a dynamic role in each of the schools if the stock is regularly replenished from a provincial school library service. One panel member pointed out that this model may be *politically difficult to sell since the school with the library will be seen as advantaged*. There was some concern that the cluster model, which was perhaps a compromise due to financial constraints, actually comprised of more than one model. Nevertheless all panel members agreed that, although not ideal, if well managed it offers an acceptable interim measure, and a *compromise might offer excellent services given that a cluster library is the right choice for the circumstances and if resources are adequate for the mix of schools*.

The panel believed that the fact that the policy does not mention building libraries for schools may compel schools to adopt the cluster model. They pointed out again that the cluster model needed to be unpacked for more clarity.

Two other models were proposed, namely the school/community library and a partnership with public libraries. A school-based **school/community library** was seen as a good choice for rural areas, and it was suggested that this library model could be regarded as a special case (or as one panellist suggested, a sub-category of the centralised school library, thus narrowing the models down to a centralised library and a classroom collection.) The panel conceded that, since school and community libraries are managed by separate structures in South Africa, the planning and management of this option may pose difficult and complex problems regarding budgets and staffing. Nevertheless the model works quite well in some instances, and also in a small way in the ECSRD project.

The public library serving a large number of schools *can only be (considered as) a stop-gap* and cannot, according to the panel members, play a meaningful role in the learning programme of each school. It can *support fledgling school libraries* by providing reading and other resources, and offering library orientation. However, it cannot *develop integrated information literacy programmes in more than five schools*.

Two points were raised by the panel, namely that the norm of only one computer in the school library for learners limits the impact of the document, and that the virtual library should not be seen as *the top of the ladder of development*. The panel referred to the 2004 White Paper on e-Education and commented that it offered an opportunity for growth and that school libraries should *'piggy-back'* it. The second observation was regarding the perception that options other than the centralised school library would be viewed as sub-standard and perpetuating inequalities. The panel did not agree with this point of view although they acknowledged that these perceptions exist. It was suggested that the *reasons for the variety of models and the progression from one model to another* should be spelled out and clarified so that this perception can change.

Stander (1993: 76) points out that "library standards are not intended to be universally valid and strictly adhered to". Researchers such as Karlsson (1995, 1996a, 1996b, 2003) and Sturges and Neill (1998) concur and advise that information needs differ and innovative solutions should be found as far as library provisioning is concerned – the central library model cannot be assumed to be the only model, special types of intervention may be needed. Such types of intervention can be catered for by the policy models put forward in the *KZN School Library Policy*.

6.5.4 Achieving the policy outcomes

Issues regarding the suitability of the policy for implementation as well as implementation problems were addressed in 6.5.2 above and this research question focuses on the likelihood of achieving the policy outcomes as a way of assessing whether the policy can be successfully implemented. Data discussed under 6.5.2 is relevant to this research question too and will be referred to where necessary.

The *KZN School Library Policy* lists six outcomes and the Delphi panel evaluated the likelihood of these outcomes being achieved on a scale of 1 – 5, and their assessment (in chapter 5 tables 14 and 15) is discussed below in ranked order. There was a non-response from one panellist, thus the highest rating possible was 20.

6.5.4.1 An integrated plan to establish, develop and resuscitate school libraries

The panel ranked this outcome's likelihood to be achieved the highest (20) and commented that although this may *only be a start and more support will be needed, the policy is in place and the ECSRD Business Plan offers further support*. They agreed that this ranking would to an extent depend on the evidence of progress so far and emphasised the importance of including pre-service and in-service training in the implementation plan. In response to a comment about the positive outcomes of the plan being visible only in KwaZulu-Natal, one panel member maintained that one could not assume that this will be the case. Hart and Zinn (2007) as indicated previously refer to the "energising effect of the policy", and although this has mostly been evident in KwaZulu-Natal, the policy document and information regarding the

policy process and supporting documentation have been freely shared with other provinces. This cooperation and transparency may well have provided impetus to similar motivations for school library support in other provinces. The fact that both successes and failures are reported on in meetings and at conferences have made information available for project development if not policy development in other provinces, and has provided colleagues the opportunity to learn vicariously from one province's failures and successes.

6.5.4.2 Wide-scale awareness of the policy

This outcome was ranked the second most achievable (17 out of a possible 20) but panellists pointed out that this too will depend on a concerted and sustained effort (*with energy and perseverance*) to publicise the policy and explain it to all involved to ensure buy-in. This is a well-founded observation since awareness has proved to be difficult to achieve as ELITS relies on the motivation and dedication of district advisors to promote the policy to all schools. Due to the fact that so many ELITS posts are vacant in the districts and not being advertised due to successive restructuring initiatives, this has not always happened. The advisors train the schools that receive SLDP material and even there the SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) has shown that not all schools have received training. ACE students are given copies of the policy document as some are not even aware of the policy (Stilwell 2006; MacGarry 2008). The directorate needs to re-focus on this policy outcome.

6.5.4.3 Awareness of the menu of models

Although panellists agreed that most people would possibly only be interested in the model they wish to adopt, they nevertheless stressed the importance of successfully explaining all the models to everyone concerned because of possible progression to a different model. This outcome's achievability was ranked 16 out of a possible 20.

6.5.4.4. Schools that are provided with relevant core collections including computer software and online resources, and hardware to support the ICT programme

There are several constraints that can prove to be (*enormous*) obstacles according to the panel members, namely distance, funding, training, as well as technical back-up which they pointed out as being a problem even in the developed world. One panellist reminded the others that this is only a policy document under discussion, not a business plan, yet the panel observed that policy documents and business plans go together and that one informs the other. Once again the panel reiterated the importance of including a training module in the policy's roll-out plan. The possibility of achieving this outcome was ranked at 16.

6.5.4.5 A whole school information literacy policy created in each school

One panellist believed that this outcome should be ranked first or second in importance, and maintained that it is the necessary basis for the success of school library policy, and *it should be feasible to do if the school sits down and decides on how to go about it*. This outcome was ranked 14.5.

There were several comments regarding this outcome and its achievability. **Firstly** the panel agreed that this type of policy in schools would need a concerted and wide-scale training programme for schools, including management at all levels. They argued that this outcome is fundamental to all else, and that it is not that complicated since it can start on a small scale (*in some key 'corner'*) and in time instil the culture of information literacy in the school. The success however would probably depend upon whether or not the school already had a plan or whether it had simply been left to chance.

One panellist broached the subject of terminology, suggesting the use of *'information' policy* or *'enquiry learning' policy*. Comments from other panellists ranged from a remark that other countries *are moving to inquiry learning* to an observation that one

should guard against getting *bogged down in terminology - the aims are often the same.*

A **second** observation stated that this type of policy is not at all common in schools and will depend a great deal on the *interest, skill level, drive and ability of those on the ground in each school.* Moreover, if this is imposed from outside the school, it tends to fail because of lack of ownership from those concerned. Yet panel members conceded that a whole-school information literacy policy is in most cases introduced from the outside, but they stressed that consultation and inclusion of those who have to work with the policy on the ground will *result in better outcomes.* They argued that one can only suggest, and then offer assistance with formulation and a roll-out plan. One panel member, however, offered a very valid comment stating: *if change can't be introduced from outside then we will get nowhere... (moreover) there is a lot of research and precedence in how to bring about change in schools.*

The panel agreed that this aspect of the policy would be difficult to enforce since the directive would have to come from the school's management or at least be ratified by management for it to be whole-school (although (sic) *sometimes things happen in schools despite management*). Another suggestion was that schools can adopt or adapt another school's policy document and, as suggested earlier, with a few teachers on board and a few success stories and models, it will be possible to gradually involve more teachers.

ELITS has not yet gathered any data regarding the implementation of a whole-school information literacy policy in schools.

6.5.4.6 Extensive use and effective integration of library resources (including ICT) with curricular and non-curricular activities

This outcome's achievability was ranked the lowest (13.5). The panel rightly observed that policy alone cannot bring about this kind of learning, a fact that has also been pointed out in the literature (Olén 1997; Jansen and Christie 1999; Karlsson 1995,

2003). The panel consented that, if the policy leads to an information literacy policy in a school, and there is take up, ownership and understanding of the policy, then the policy can contribute to this type of curricular integration. But this would presume the implementation of the policy, an emphasis on considerable initial and ongoing training (including the advisory staff), professional and technical support, and a new approach to the role of the school library.

The panellists added that, although this teaching method is informed by the management of the school, there is no reason to assume that management will not support it. They believed that it is not impossible to achieve this over time and with support, and once an information *literacy policy is in place this type of integration will happen as a result – even if only in one part of the school.* The panel agreed that in reality the bottom line is an effective school library and the teacher's ability and drive to *take up what the library has to offer.*

In summary the panel agreed that this is a very desirable outcome, but it will need a lot of work and relies greatly on the skills level, ability and enthusiasm of those implementers in the schools. They pointed out that this *integration is difficult to achieve in even the most well resourced environments,* and that the word *extensive* may limit this statement since this type of integration can evolve in small steps. Yet, though ambitious, they indicated that this outcome was the *fundamental aim of the policy surely* and suggested that it therefore should possibly have been (ranked) higher.

Researchers (Jansen 1998; Christie 1999; Hart and Zinn 2007) agree that this outcome will be difficult to achieve since it requires a paradigm shift in the way teachers teach, and Brown (1988), as indicated previously, argues that moreover it requires a change in the basic beliefs of teachers about how learners learn. The ELITS School Library Excellence Awards programme has provided proof that the panellists' observation, that this can be achieved even if on small scale, rings true.

The interpretation of the Delphi results for this research question indicates that the policy outcomes can largely be achieved. The success of the implementation will, however, depend on extensive training programmes and policy advocacy. Moreover, the whole school information literacy policy proposed in the policy document will require the support of all in the school as well as assistance from ELITS. This information policy in a school will encourage the use and integration of resources, but it is the one policy outcome that the Delphi panel perceives as a challenge since it presupposes a shift in the way teachers teach and learners learn.

The next research question addresses the issue of the situation regarding school library provisioning in the province at the time of the HSRC Survey in 1999, the ELITS School Library Audit in 2004, and the 2007 SLDP Evaluation Report.

6.5.5 Towards an accurate assessment of the present school library provisioning in the province

In order to answer this research question the education background outlining the landscape in which schools in KwaZulu-Natal operate (discussed in chapter 2) as well as the results of the secondary data analysed in chapter 5 need to be taken into account. The focus of this interpretation will be on school library provisioning in the province and will highlight factors that can influence the establishment, sustainability and utilisation of school libraries and therefore policy implementation too. Data from the sources listed in chapter 5 under 5.2 was used to provide information and answers for this research question. The data sources were made available to the panel prior to the first mailing of the questionnaire. However some of the data has since been updated, for example a review of the Education Centre project and provincial statistics.

The interpretation should be viewed against the undercount effect in both the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999c: 12) and the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) where schools, suspecting that the information supplied may be used as a basis for resource allocation

in future, tend to under-represent resources since they anticipate that this will attract higher levels of either funding or resource allocation. The 2004 ELITS School Library Audit similarly noted that non-responses were taken into account and included in the analysis where practical, but that the missing data or non-responses affect the quality of the data (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 3).

6.5.5.1 General school data

The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) found that from the 5 156 schools that submitted audit forms by far the majority of learners (62%) were in the primary grades, 35% were in the secondary grades, and only 3% in the pre-primary grades (figure 3, chapter 5). Schools categorised themselves by type according to the range of grades they offered, and the results showed that 3 455 of the schools that responded (67%) offered various **groupings** of primary grades and a much smaller number of 1 275 (25%) offered secondary grades only. Both primary and secondary grades are offered at 285 (6%) of the schools, and 99 schools (3.2%) offer pre-primary only. The fact that schools offer various groupings has implications for the distribution of SLDP resources.

Library material is selected by a provincial selection committee and indicated as suitable for either primary or secondary schools. The material is packed and distributed accordingly in these two categories since the centres do not have adequate staff to divide the material into other finer categories. This means that some schools may receive material that is not ideally suitable for their learners as far as interest and reading levels are concerned. ELITS subject advisors were asked to assist by identifying these schools in advance and by notifying ELITS so that the collection can be adapted to meet the needs of the schools.

6.5.5.2 School libraries

Information regarding school library provisioning and resources enable the ELITS Directorate to guide intervention, to identify the kind of support required by schools,

and therefore target them more appropriately (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 2).

It was difficult to compare the data regarding school libraries from the two surveys due to the fact that the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d) reported in many categories only on schools with libraries, and these schools included those with classroom collections (figure 5 in chapter 5). What can be concluded from the data though is that of the 5 156 schools surveyed by ELITS and the 4 773 schools surveyed by the HSRC more schools had access to some type of library provisioning in 2004 than in 1999: 3 516 of the 4 773 schools (73.6%) indicated that they had no library in 1999 and only 1 003 of the 5 156 schools (19.5%) had no library provisioning in 2004 although there was a non-response from 360 schools (7%). The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) indicated that of the 4 796 schools which responded to the audit 1 606 schools (31%) kept material in a storeroom or cupboard, but even without these schools there were still 2 187 schools (42.4%) with either a classroom or central library in 2004 compared to the 1 148 schools (24%) in 1999.

However, the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10) did indicate that a reasonable number of schools (1 693 or 35.47%) planned to set up a library. At the time (1999) 346 of the schools (30%) in the sample indicated that their library was being used for other purposes. This was a high percentage since the data was gathered from the 1 148 schools with libraries. Most of these schools were in the Port Shepstone (39 schools or 11.3%), Pietermaritzburg (55 schools or 15.8%), and Durban North (82 schools or 23.7%) areas of KZN, suggesting, according to the survey, that urban schools are more likely to use their libraries for other purposes than rural schools. On the other hand schools could have interpreted this question as using the library for other activities (debating, public speaking, or exhibitions) and that could account for the higher number in the urban areas. A further 285 schools (24.8%) indicated that they did not have a custom built library but had converted classrooms into libraries.

In the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 9) 462 (46%) of the schools with no library indicated that there was a room that could be converted into a library. Although this may not be an ideal solution, ELITS encourages schools to set up libraries in unused classrooms since this can serve as a stepping stone to a better facility over time, and it is more important to offer a library service, even on a small scale, than no service at all while waiting for a custom built school library as was suggested by the Delphi panel too. Moreover, it is highly possible that resources that are kept in cupboards or storerooms (in 1 606 schools or 30%) will be underutilised or not used at all. The fact remains though that in many rural schools there is no space for a school library, and ELITS will have to liaise with the Directorate Physical Planning in order to find a solution to the problem as was pointed out too in the Risk Analysis Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c). Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse (1996: 9) note that all state schools make provision for a library or resource room and that in reality these areas often become "storerooms in which textbooks collect dust". The researcher agrees with her observation that in many schools there are multiple copies of textbooks still sealed in plastic packaging in these storerooms. However, school visits have confirmed that in several schools the space provided is for storage and not for library usage.

The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 8) analysed the spread of the different types of school libraries in the province and reported that books in storerooms and box libraries were more prevalent in the rural areas while central libraries featured strongly in the urban areas around Pietermaritzburg and Durban. The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10) similarly reported a higher proportionate availability of libraries in urban areas while rural areas indicated a higher use of classroom collections, and this situation was confirmed by the data from the SLDP Evaluation Report in 2007 (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d). However, an additional matter of concern is the fact that two of the schools visited for this report had not even taken the material out of the boxes in which it had been delivered.

The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: v) pointed out that book access through classroom collections seemed to be an "underutilised strategy in provinces that have low levels of school library access". Rosenberg (2001: 22) similarly argues in favour of classroom collections as the most cost effective way of providing access to resources; these collections promote teacher involvement because of the accessibility of the material, and that no extra space or staff are needed. These are factors that need to be taken into account in the present educational climate where many schools will not be able, due to financial and human resource constraints, to establish a centralised school library. The *National Reading Strategy* (South Africa. Department of Education 2008: 17) states that "all Foundation and Intermediate phase classrooms will have a "reading/library corner" and that schools are required "to set aside funds to ensure that teachers are able to create library or reading corners in their classrooms". The strategy further envisages collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture in developing a joint library strategy that will provide classroom libraries as a stepping stone to "ultimately the development of fully stocked libraries in schools" (2008: 18).

Adequate **security** is essential for the safekeeping of library resources. The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d) requested information regarding burglar proofing or other forms of security **in the library** and 217 schools (18.9%) indicated that their libraries did not have security systems or burglar proofing. The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) reported that 2 560 schools (49.6%) had adequate security while 2 047 schools (39.7%), the majority of which are in the Zululand area of KZN, responded that the safe keeping of library resources posed a problem. Since the HSRC Survey in 1999 only provided data for schools with libraries it is difficult to assess whether conditions had improved by 2004. However, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education is presently erecting fencing at all schools without fenced premises in line with its focus on safety and security in schools, and will be deploying close to 3 000

security personnel in schools (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2008a). This step may alleviate the problem to some extent.

To utilise electronic equipment school libraries need **electricity**. The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) reported that 958 of the 1 148 schools (83.4%) with libraries had electricity in the library. The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) included data regarding electricity in classrooms: 2 783 schools (54%) had electricity supplied to classrooms, and of these 1 763 schools (34.2%) indicated that all classrooms were electrified, while 78 schools (1.5%) had less than 25% of the classrooms electrified, and 40 schools (0.7%) indicated that only one classroom had electricity. However, this does mean that in 2 783 schools (54%) equipment can be used somewhere in the school, even if only in one specific classroom.

Both surveys offered information regarding public library use thus indicating whether teachers and learners made an effort to acquire information outside of the school library. The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10) reported that 19 schools (0.4%) had access to public libraries, whereas in 2004 (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 18) a total of 1 037 schools (20.1%) reported access to a public, community or mobile library service, and 398 of these schools (38.4%) responded that they took out block loans, in fact 38 of the schools accessing block loans had earlier indicated that they have no library. This represents an improvement since 1999, and the R1 billion government grant to public libraries to upgrade, improve and expand the sector will see more public libraries being built in areas with no access to library services. The cooperation project with public libraries will likewise provide access, including internet access, to schools clustered near these public libraries. Although schools preferably need resources of their own this project offers hope to many schools that have not been able to establish some type of library provisioning in the school.

By 2004 more schools had physical access to library resources, and a number of schools indicated that they had space that could be utilised to set up a library. In the 2007/2008 financial year the KZN Department of Education (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education 2008a) built 40 new libraries, and the ELITS 25 Schools Project will establish 100 additional libraries by 2010. The most positive improvement is that of access to public libraries to either supplement the school's resources or to provide resources where schools do not have libraries.

6.5.5.3 School library administration

It should be taken into account in the next sections that out of their total sample of 4 773, the HSRC Survey only analysed data submitted by the 1 142 schools with school libraries, whereas the ELITS data took into account yes and no responses, as well as the non-responses of the total sample of 5156 schools.

6.5.5.3.1 School library committee

The establishment of a school library committee provides a structured way to ensure that library planning forms part of the schools' policies for teaching and learning. In this way the library features in curriculum planning in a way that will promote the development of literacy and reading, reflect the school's profile of teachers, learners and community, and establish an agreed policy and development plan for the library that will take into account staffing, support, accommodation and funding needs (LA 2000: 1).

Although both the HSRC and the ELITS survey reported on the number of schools with a school library committee, many schools with libraries or classroom collections still do not see the need for a school library committee. The HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 10) indicated that 439 schools with libraries (38.2%) had a library committee as well as **school library policy**. The composition of the school library committee included principals, educators, non-educator staff, parents, learners and others. The HSRC respondents specified that the school library committee developed library policy for the school, maintained, administered and

controlled the library property, encouraged library use, selected library material, and fundraised for the purchase of resources.

In 2004 the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 15) indicated that 1 075 schools had a library committee, that is 49% of the schools with either a central library or a classroom collection. The school library committee of 265 of these schools (31%) met every month, three schools' committees "rarely" met, five "seldom" and three "never".

The SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) indicated that, in 2007, only 19 schools visited (32%) indicated that they had established a school library committee, yet 41 (68%) confirmed that the person responsible for the school library attends School Management Team meetings, and 28 (49%) attend School Governing Body meetings. However, according to the teacher-librarians, any discussions of school library matters at the meetings produced few results as little evidence could be found of school library integration. Since most of the sample schools did not have a school library committee it can be assumed that this affects the functioning of the school library provisioning in that the library services may become the responsibility of one person and staff may not be involved in any way and consequently not utilise the resources. However, the sample in the SLDP Evaluation report was mostly schools with an enrolment of less than 200 learners and this may have affected their perception for the need of a school library committee, especially in schools with fewer than 100 learners.

It should be noted that the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: v) commented on the low representation of parents on these committees. Given the importance of parent involvement in SGBs (and by implication budget allocation as was pointed out in the Risk Analysis Report) strategies need to be put in place to correct this matter.

6.5.5.3.2 Accession registers

An accession register is a tool to record stock acquisition and losses, and the use or non-use of this register has implications for stock control and accountability should audit queries arise. ELITS enters material distributed to schools on an automated system and the information is made available to internal auditors who evaluate directorate expenditure and the implementation of the SLDP.

In 1999 the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) indicated that 1 120 schools with libraries (97.5%) had an **accession register** whereas in 2004 (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004) the data showed that 2 307 schools (45% of the total respondents) had an accession or stock register. It should be noted that 1 610 of these schools (69.8%) indicated that this record was up to date and 620 schools (26.9%) indicated that the register was not current. However, the data reflected an improvement in the number of schools with current accession registers.

The SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) pointed out that only 24 schools (40%) kept an accession register and not all of these were up to date. The Risk Analysis Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c) commented on the lack of accession registers in the school they had visited as well and attributed this to teacher-librarians not being trained to accession material for record-keeping purposes.

This lack of stock control is often a result of teachers being appointed as custodians of the library resources in a school when they have a full teaching load. This argument holds true in the smaller schools too where there are more than one grade being taught in a classroom and the teacher finds it difficult to cope with additional administrative duties. Moreover, due to a lack of transport and the inaccessibility of some schools, few teachers work after school hours leaving little time for library administration.

6.5.5.3.3 Library automation

Although a computerised library management system greatly improves learners' access to and the organisation of library resources, the data below should be considered against the background of the number of schools with centralised school libraries in the province, the availability of electricity in schools, and library funding and staffing. Security at the school and a secure library facility will also play a role.

In 1999 the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) indicated that 80 schools (1.7% of all schools, or 7% of schools with libraries) in KZN had a computerised library system, most of them in the Durban area. The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 17) reported a figure of 153 schools (3% of all schools) and similarly the majority of these schools (124, or 80%) are in the urban areas of Durban and Pietermaritzburg with only 39 schools (25.5%) in the rest of the province. However, the names of the programmes being utilised reveals that at least 15 of these are Microsoft Office applications, and this suggests that the question was, in these cases, most probably interpreted as computer access and use instead of library automation. The ELITS 25 Schools Project, establishing 25 functional school libraries per annum over a period of four years and supplying each of these libraries with 5 computers for educational use as well as a library automation programme, will add another 100 schools to this total. The schools will be supported to sustain the programme, and will receive ongoing training for capacity building. The programme will include creative writing and Newspapers in Education workshops, and the schools will participate in an ELITS Reading Promotion programme. Regular monitoring will chart their progress.

Although there seems to be an improvement in ICT provisioning and use since 1999, the Shongololo Pilot Project Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006) showed clearly that managing ICTs in school libraries presents problems as far as distance and terrain, lack of technical support, inadequate training, connectivity challenges, and school library advisors' lack of access to ICT equipment are concerned (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2006: 3-4). The report pointed out the

important factor of school readiness which is the key to the successful implementation of ICT and means more than a school merely expressing a need for a computer. It is anticipated that the White Paper on E-education's requirements will stipulate that all learners and teachers in the General Education and Training and Further Education and Training bands should be ICT competent by 2013. This requirement should have benefits for the school library sector in the province too, although ELITS has been excluded from the provincial committee responsible for the roll-out of the ICT programme. This matter may be rectified when the ELITS Directorate is moved to the Chief Directorate: Curriculum Services this year.

From the above it is clear that school library administration remains a challenge due to the fact that there is a lack of teacher-librarians. Teaching staff have a full teaching load and often lack time to attend to library administration or take responsibility for the library resources. More schools have established school library committees yet the SLDP Evaluation report indicates that there was little evidence of any accomplishments.

6.5.5.4 School library budget

"The library should have a fair share of the total capitation because it is a whole school resource serving all staff and pupils" (LA 2000: 6). Learning resources need to be replaced in order to stay relevant to the curricular, reading and information needs of both teachers and learners.

The school library depends on the School Governing Body for funding and the data shows that very few schools allocate funding from their own resources to the school library. This lack can probably be attributed to financial pressures to sustain basic services in some schools, yet schools should take responsibility to improve reading and support curriculum delivery which includes the responsibility to provide resources other than text books and to set aside a budget to sustain and develop school libraries.

According to the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 12) in 1999 only 486 KZN schools (42% of those with libraries) had allocated a budget to their school libraries, and 363 (31.6%) received library income from other sources such as sponsor, community and private support. The average school library budget allocation in the 486 schools was R10 577.60. In 2004 the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 16-17) reported that 1 234 schools (24% of all schools) received a budget, of which only 764 schools (62% of the schools receiving a budget) provided details of the previous year's library expenditure. On average schools spent over R11 000 on their libraries, which meant that, taking into account the learner enrolment at the schools reporting expenditure, the average amount spent on the school library per learner was R22.16. The schools received the allocation from a variety of sources: 516 schools (37%) received a library budget allocation from school funds, 238 (17%) fundraised and 654 (46%) received funds from the school's norms and standards allocation. Twenty-six schools indicated that the school library received funding from all three sources mentioned, whereas a further 483 schools (9%) indicated that they received support from Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The SLDP Evaluation Report KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) noted that only 13 of the schools visited (22%) had been allocated a budget (ranging from R1 000 to R40 000) and some indicated that they could not spend this budget due to procurement difficulties. The Risk Management Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c) identified as a high operational risk the fact that schools are not allocating funds to the library, and commented that by not sustaining the SLDP, the programme "may perish in no time". This problem of sustainability as well as the reliance on donor funding was highlighted in Rosenberg's research (1998, 2001).

Leach (2006: 133) cautions that alternative funding should always be supplemental since institutions' mission and commitments may be biased by donor interest. Although alternative funding may not be such an important consideration as far as school libraries are concerned, the donation of library resources to schools poses many problems. Factors such as inadequate library provisioning and low or non-

existing budgets, as indicated in the data, compel schools to look beyond their own financial resources to supplement meagre library stock. Aid perpetuates library dependence and inappropriate donations can make a library grow without actually developing (Sturges and Neill 1998: 95-96). Book donations may reflect the priorities of the donors and not those of the recipients, and can stifle local authorship. Donations furthermore perpetuate the notion that books are not bought, and that indigenous languages are a secondary concern if at all. Sturges and Neill (1998: 99) argue that "even when donations are not detrimental to library collections, they harm the development of the continent's own indigenous knowledge base, book trade and publishing industry". A personal observation is that, apart from all the objections offered, the illusion that the school library is fully stocked because there are books on the shelves (despite the fact that most of the donated titles are often either unsuitable or dated) more often than not results in the principal withholding a budget allocation for the school library. ELITS has a draft donations policy which advises schools to view donated material before accepting it and provides guidelines on the type of material that can be useful. The document needs to be revised and endorsed by management as the SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) has shown that it has not been distributed freely to schools. The aspect of donations to schools needs to be highlighted at workshops and ELITS' subject advisors should be better informed regarding the contents of the document.

6.5.5.5 School library collections

The Library Association (2000: 6) recommends 13 items per learner and a minimum of 2 400 resources regardless of learner numbers to ensure that there is a full range of resources that will cover curricular information needs and provide adequate material for reading for all ages in the school. Although these requirements may be viewed as standards for the developed world, they nevertheless point to the functionality of school library provisioning. Budgetary constraints, discussed in 6.5.2.2.6, are only one of the challenges influencing the acquisition of adequate school library resources.

The average collection size of 1 842 titles in KwaZulu-Natal school libraries according to the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 12) is far below the suggested 2 400 resources per school. The survey pointed out that, apart from IsiZulu, titles in African languages were only available in small quantities. The breakdown of titles per non-fiction, reference and fiction was discussed in 5.2.1.6.

The Delphi panel commented on the availability of local material and indicated that demand will ensure supply. However, it is generally acknowledged (Van Zyl [200-]; Sibiya 2004) that government needs to support programmes to develop material in African languages since market demands and benefits influence many African writers to publish in English rather than a local African language. Galloway (2002) cautions that, "in spite of the new official status afforded by the Constitution, literature in the indigenous African languages remained trapped in the school-based market". The National Library of South Africa has, however, launched a campaign to identify and reprint out-of-print books that are considered classics in South African indigenous languages (National Library 2008).

In 2004 the ELITS School Library Audit focussed mainly on the size and condition of resource collections in schools. Most schools indicated that their collection included fewer than 500 publications within each category (fiction, non-fiction, reference and periodicals). Interestingly only 20% of the respondents ranked their collections as in poor condition (and possibly not being used) while 50% of the respondents ranked their collections satisfactory, and a further 30% indicated that their resource collections were good. The respondents indicated that library resources had been purchased by the school (26%), were provided by the Department prior to 1994 (23%), were provided by an NGO (13%), were donated to them (22%), and were provided by ELITS (16%). Seventeen schools indicated that all five of the sources mentioned had enabled and assisted them in establishing their school library (2004: 11-12, 17).

The high percentage of donated material is a cause for concern since most of this material has, during school visits by ELITS, been found to be totally unsuitable to support reading programmes or curriculum extension.

6.5.5.6 Equipment

The HSRC Survey data (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 11) reported extensively (table 11.2) on the availability of resources in the schools (32 categories) and library furniture (14 categories). Notably only 390 (8.1%) of all the schools had computers that were used for administrative purposes (of which 4% was non-operational), 245 (5.1%) had computers for educational use (of which 6.9% was non-operational), and 118 (2.5%) had computers linked to the internet, and 570 schools (12%) indicated that they had TV sets. Basic resources such as learner chairs were only available in 761 (66.2%) and tables in 810 (79.5%) of the schools with libraries.

Schools responding to the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 13) reported on functional equipment only and the categories were limited to seven. From the responses received most schools (2 469, 48%) had tele-videos and TV sets (1 660, 32%), 1 312 (25%) had VCRs, but only 865 (17%) provided computers for learners' use and 203 (4%) had computers that were used by learners in the library. A further 359 (7%) schools had internet access. There were 64 schools (1%) that indicated that they had all the listed equipment. These statistics underscore the findings in both surveys and by the Delphi panel namely that access to ICT for educational purposes needs to be expedited and promoted to utilise the opportunities offered by this information source (or as a panel member indicated, *to leapfrog historical disadvantages*) despite technological and social challenges.

6.5.5.7 School library utilisation

The extent of learner utilisation and the average teacher usage of the library could not be assessed in the HSRC Survey due to lack of information regarding school size and teacher numbers, thus the survey points out that the "spread of average learner

utilisation in lower categories may be reflective both of the number of schools in the province and of the relatively low average learner utilisation" (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: 12). Most KZN schools in the HSRC Survey reported that their libraries were used for book education (92.8%), study purposes (88.6%), and to exchange library material (46.7%). School libraries were open for different periods during the day, some less than three hours per day (519 schools), other for seven hours per day (319 schools), and 13 schools opened their libraries for ten and more hours daily. In addition 155 libraries were open less than 50 days per annum, and 698 libraries were open more than 150 days per annum. Most schools indicated low utilisation of the school library with less than 49 learners visiting the library daily in 277 schools, and 50-99 learners utilising the library daily in 246 schools. Teachers did not make better use of the libraries either: less than 4 teachers used the library daily in 419 of the schools, and in 336 schools only 5-9 teachers used the library daily. An average of 1.8 periods per school per week was allocated to the teaching of information skills/structured library periods. Overall the data indicates that learners enjoy limited access to library resources both during and after school probably due to the shortage of library staff, and this reduces the curriculum support role of these libraries (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: vii). It also points to a lack of change in teaching styles or a much needed paradigm shift as observed by the Delphi panel and argued by researchers such as Olën (1996), Todd (2001), Hart (2002a, 2002b) and Karlsson (2003).

The ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 15, 19-21) requested information regarding time-tabled library and reading periods, an Information Literacy Programme, and Reading Motivational Programmes. Schools were also asked to indicate whether **they issue books** to learners. On average 54 books are issued per day, while 768 schools (15%) had allocated a library period. 533 schools (10%) indicated that they had introduced an Information Literacy programme in their schools. For the purpose of the audit an information literacy programme was defined as a cross-curricular programme involving all educators in both reading and teaching and using information skills. The schools indicated that

various NGOs were supporting them with the introduction of the programme, and some schools referred to ELITS' support. The schools reported on the use of resources such as computers, CD players, reference resources, and reading schemes and others on methodologies such as formal teaching, mobile library usage, debating, readathons, dramatisation and integrated classes and assemblies. The low percentage of schools with an allocated library period or an information literacy programme indicated under usage of the available facility and lack of opportunity for learners to read or acquire information skills. It further pointed to a lack of integration of the resources in the teaching programme, as was confirmed by the SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d).

Reading Programmes were identified in the ELITS audit form as motivational programmes such as Readathons, public speaking, drama festivals and debating (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 20), and more schools (1 751 or 34%) indicated that they had introduced reading motivational programmes. Schools added World Book Day celebrations, story-telling competitions, shared reading, quizzes, choral verse and several others to the list in the definition. A total of 470 schools (9.1%) indicated that they had introduced both programmes. On the other hand half of the respondents (2 581 schools or 50%) had not implemented any programmes as yet. The ELITS Reading Policy Guidelines and the Reading Promotion Handbook, as well as the compulsory reading hour introduced in 2007 (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007b), combined with a renewed focus on reading promotion in schools, such as the *National Reading Strategy*, may significantly influence this percentage during the next few years.

Access to library material remains a problem in many schools and this was borne out by the SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d). Although 45 schools (75%) indicated that they allowed learners and teachers access to the material, only 22 schools (36.6%) could show current records of issues for a loan period of between one day and three weeks. Some schools restricted usage to learners in certain grades only (mostly the senior grades) or allowed access to the

material in the classroom during school time only since teachers would not let learners take material home *because they will lose the books*. In 15 schools (25%) no one had access to the material. When schools were asked whether **teachers integrate the material in their teaching programme** 43 schools (72%) confirmed that the material was indeed being used to some degree, yet tangible evidence of usage could only be found in 12 of the schools (28%). The data gathered in this evaluation report confirms that physical access does not always equate to intellectual access and that teachers need training in order to integrate resources in their teaching programmes and to realise the potential gains offered by the use of library resources.

It should be noted that three education districts have no ELITS advisors because the posts have not yet been advertised, and this fact has a negative effect on school library development in these districts.

The data verifies the challenges outlined in chapter 2 of this study. The schools where there is access to resources do not make adequate use of the resources and learners are often not allowed access to the material either. However, despite the many challenges progress has been made and the pockets of excellence do exist.

6.5.5.8 Personnel

Although the HSRC Survey (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: appendix table 18.2) reported that there were 1 142 school libraries in the KwaZulu-Natal in 1999, the survey data indicated that there were 1 885 school library educators/teacher-librarians of whom 1 028 were employed full-time. However the data did not specify whether this meant full-time as educator or full-time as librarian, a choice that was not clarified in the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents placed themselves in the educator category, while 180 were principals, 29 deputy principals, 123 heads of departments and 145 "other" – presumably parents or other voluntary helpers. Only 341 of these respondents (18%) had specialised library qualifications, 226 a diploma, 21 a degree, and 10 a post graduate degree.

In 2004, according to the ELITS School Library Audit (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2004: 14), 2 804 schools had nominated someone to take responsibility for the school library but this was a full time position in only 277 schools (5%). The majority indicated that they had attended ELITS courses (800 or 28%), while 102 (4%) held a degree and 365 (13%) had a diploma. However, the questionnaire did not specify "library" qualification and this number may well include teaching qualifications. What is of concern is the fact that 971 schools (34%) indicated that the person responsible for the library collection had received no training. This may account for the lack of library administration in schools visited during the SLDP Evaluation (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) and is surely a factor that contributes to the low professional status referred to by Stilwell (2007a). Although the Delphi panel conceded that someone who is committed may well develop a successful library programme in a school, the under-usage of resources and the lack of time allocated and access to these resources in schools (in both surveys) indicate that the plea for the introduction of specialist posts for teacher-librarians (Hart and Zinn 2007) is valid if the [school] library is to be the "backbone of all reading communities" as it is referred to in the *National Reading Strategy* (South Africa. Department of Education 2008: 18).

Schools usually assign a staff member to take responsibility for library material, and the SLDP Evaluation Report stated that 56 schools (93%) had identified someone for this task. However, very little had been achieved in many of these schools and the main reason for failing to manage the collection was given as lack of time. In schools with an enrolment of less than 200, teachers often teach more than one grade in the same classroom and would find it difficult to manage library resources on top of a full teaching load. Three of the teachers in the schools visited had received some training (one from an NGO, one at an ELITS workshop, and one was visited by an ELITS advisor). Two schools had assigned a teacher with an Advanced Certificate of Education (School Library Development and Management) to the library, but the one school had not even unpacked the material and the other only allowed the material

to be used in the school and classrooms. Zinn's research (2006) refers to the same lack of initiative found in teacher-librarians who had qualified at the UWC.

The Delphi panellists emphasised the role of training and professional development to ensure the successful implementation of the *School Library Policy*. The problems regarding line function and matrix management have been pointed out, and to this can be added the fact that there are still three education districts without any ELITS advisors because the posts have not been advertised since the department's third restructuring. The SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) highlighted the consequences of this lack of staff and staff support in its findings: 35 schools (58%) were not aware of any of the services offered by ELITS, and only a few schools had received ELITS documentation: 19 had received a copy of the *School Library Policy*, 4 had a copy of the Reading Policy Guidelines, and 2 schools had a copy of the Education Centres Guidelines. In one school it was reported that the principal was "puzzled" by the single copies they had received and wanted to know how to use the material.

In summary it can be concluded that there has been an improvement in access to library resources, but the fact that very few schools have qualified or even trained teacher-librarians, and the lack of administration of and accountability for the resources in schools is a cause of concern. Schools allocate the responsibility to a staff member, but the number of schools with a full-time teacher-librarian had dropped to 277 (5%) in 2004. Moreover, in 971 schools (34%) the teacher responsible for the resources had not received any training.

Intervention programmes, training at all levels, advocacy programmes and evidence of the benefits of school libraries in education, as suggested by the Delphi panel, will be needed to successfully provide equitable access to books, reading and information technology to all KZN learners, whether it be in the form of classroom, cluster or central libraries.

The last research question to be discussed in this chapter, question 5 in chapter 1 under 1.1.4, examines the likelihood of the policy and the implementation strategy enabling ELITS to address issues of equity and redress.

6.5.6 Whether the implementation strategy will enable ELITS to implement equity and redress past imbalances

Generating equitable access to educational resources and opportunities, and to critical facilities such as school libraries, is essential because:

- the school library represents the primary organisational node through which learners will interact with various information and communication technologies;
- the outcomes-based curriculum can only be successfully implemented with sufficient access to a range of learning resources of which the library is the key provider;
- the capacity of all citizens to access, manage and utilise information is of the utmost importance in the 21st century, particularly in developing contexts where unequal access to such technologies can aggravate social inequality (South Africa. Department of Education 1999d: iv).

Legislation and national directives lay the basis for equity and redress in education provisioning: the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) grounds education in the principles of democracy, equality and human rights, and guarantees the right to a basic education for all, the *South African Schools Act* (1996c) promotes access, quality and democratic governance in schools and provides the legal framework for equality and redress, the new outcomes-based curriculum endorses these principles and promotes lifelong learning where learners interact responsibly and with an inquiring mind with information resources, and the Norms and Standards for School Funding promotes redress in the funding of schools where the poorest learners receive seven times more non-personnel funding than other schools. Yet despite these directives there is still no national legislation or policy enforcing provincial education departments to establish library standards and provide libraries in schools and there remains, as was noted by the Delphi panel too, a lack of political

will and understanding among decision-makers as far as the relationship between libraries, learning resources and quality education is concerned (Karlsson 1995: 4).

Chapter 2 outlined the many educational demands competing for an allocation from limited provincial budgets, and in addition education departments have to address the challenges of lack of infrastructure, competency and resources in an effort to redress backlogs and establish equity in education provisioning. Moreover the data analysed under 6.5.3 above gave a clear picture of backlogs and disparities in school library provisioning in the province. The KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* was developed as an initiative of the ELITS Directorate to structure intervention and address disparities in school library provisioning in the province in an appropriate way. Karlsson (1996b: 2) rightly points out that the implementation of a "redressive programme concerning library-based resources is complex because not only does South Africa lack the financial resources to put a library in every school, but such an option assumes that this is a desirable and suitable model".

The Delphi panellists identified the underlying values of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* as being in the first instance to redress past inequities and ensure that the school library makes its rightful contribution to educational transformation and reading in general, and secondly to uphold the values of the Constitution, as well as education policy and approaches such as an outcomes-based curriculum. However they correctly observed that policy alone will not transform the prevailing situation to meet the needs of both learners and teachers and ensure equity. Implementation is the key, as *so much policy development and non-delivery in the past has shown us*.

All panel members agreed that the policy document and the implementation strategy deal with the diversity in KwaZulu-Natal schools by way of the models. Although only basic services will be provided, this will nevertheless lay the foundation for equity. Once these basic services have been established the next phase can be to improve the services.

When the panel was asked to predict the future as perceived in the policy document they anticipated that the implementation of the policy will provide redress of the past for the majority of schools. However, one panel member disagreed and pointed out that despite some redress, *inequalities are built in to remain*. The other panellists drew attention to the fact that the aim of transformation is just that: to eradicate inequalities. Furthermore schools reflect socio-economics in all societies and as such inequalities from the past can be perceived to be built-in, but *international research shows that the school library is one of the key factors that can make a difference (in terms of changing conditions)*. *Children with access to a good library and information literacy education can rise above poverty*.

Education Centres were similarly perceived as a way to address disparities and to spread support out from the central node, and according to the panel even more so when the emphasis on ICT is taken into account. These centres will have computer rooms, feed resources into schools, train educators, and establish core collections - with an emphasis on rural redress. They agreed that the second level model, cluster libraries, includes the education centres so the ECSRD project would not clash with the vision of the policy document.

Panel members did not agree with an observation that the policy document lacked a focus on rural development, an important aspect of any redress strategy, and argued that the implementation begins with small, mostly rural schools. They pointed out that most schools in KwaZulu-Natal are in fact rural, and possibly the best way to redress rural imbalance may be through an ICT focus given the problem of infrastructure and maintenance, and furthermore a revision of the KZN *School Library Policy* would presumably incorporate the ECSRD business plan's focus on rural schools. Karlsson (1995: 5) refers to the challenges of rural education noting that for farm schools "the school library is a fantasy" if one takes into account the conditions at these schools. Yet these learners have the same basic rights to education as urban learners and need equitable provision, but then in the form of other sustainable models as discussed under 6.5.3.

Although ICTs are not the panacea for all problems, there was a concern that the policy document may well come across as too rooted in the past and underestimating the role of ICT, hence widening the divide between the library and e-education sectors. The example put forward was that the ECSRD business plan emphasised ICT whereas the *School Library Policy* stated that ICT should not be purchased at the expense of print material. This may reveal a possible weakness in the policy document according to the panel, the policy should *recognise and sell the potential of ICT in school libraries to leapfrog historical disadvantage*. Panellists indicated (as mentioned earlier) that major stumbling blocks such as the lack of electricity in schools and the issue of ICT maintenance prevented the provisioning and use of ICTs in school libraries. They emphasised that this is one part of redress that needs to take place though since there is a great demand by both learners and parents for ICT access, and even if there is a sometimes unrealistic expectation that ICT skills *will open all doors*, this perception should be optimised since it is common across countries and recognises a changing world. It was suggested that the ECSRD project too would contribute to ICT access for schools near the centres.

In conclusion one cannot assume that the policy and its implementation strategy will enable ELITS to fully redress past imbalances and implement equity as far as school library provisioning in the province is concerned. It offers a way to start the process, and the policy enables ELITS to implement this intervention in a structured way even if it happens over a period of time. The implementation strategy will provide physical access of some sort to all schools, but issues of space and personnel will still have to be addressed. Training of both teachers and teacher-librarians has to be prioritised, and the indispensable role of the school library in the teaching-learning process needs to be understood and appreciated. However strides in the right direction have been made, and as suggested by the Delphi panel, pockets of excellence are being established and these will in time inspire and motivate other schools through their example and success.

6.6 Summary

This chapter linked the panellists' value judgments on issues such as school library policy, the role and value of the school library, ICT, and the importance of training as a tool to promote school libraries and encourage critical thinking and problem solving, to the conceptual framework underpinning the research. The representativity of the policy task team and the experience they brought to the policy development process were reviewed, as well as the importance of policy ownership. The chapter identified practical implementation problems and addressed research questions regarding the adequacy of the policy, the implementation strategy, and the school library models. Consideration was given to the present state of school library provisioning in the province and the likelihood of the policy achieving equity and redress in this sector.

Chapter seven will evaluate the strategies identified by the research, and suggest ways in which the identified foci can be accommodated in the policy. Recommendations for policy revision will be put forward, and proposals for further research offered.

This chapter reflects on the study by looking back and extracting strategies recommended by the Delphi panel, in determining whether the necessary foci were included in the policy or whether the policy needs revision to include the foci. Recommendations will be made in general, in keeping with interpretive research, and ideas put forward for future research.

Chapter 6 concentrated on the first 6 research questions to determine whether the key elements of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* were adequate in terms of policy development and formulation and the implementation strategy suitable for implementation, taking into account possible problems that could be encountered. The appropriateness of the school library models was assessed against the present school library landscape in the province, and the achievability of the policy outcomes outlined. Lastly the question was asked whether the policy's implementation strategy, in the opinions of the panellists, would enable ELITS to implement equity and redress past imbalances.

The three remaining research questions, listed in chapter 1 under 1.1.4, provide the framework for much of this chapter. The questions are interlinked and the issues discussed overlap to a certain degree.

- Research question 8 enumerates the key strategies identified and agreed upon through consensus by the experts in the field, namely the Delphi panel members.
- Research question 9 assesses whether the policy includes the needed foci identified in the study and offers recommendations.
- The last research question considers whether the policy needs revision to include recommendations made by the panel.

7.1 Key strategies identified and agreed upon

Research question 8 pulls together the strategies identified by the Delphi panel and upon which consensus was reached.

The theoretical framework of the study as outlined in chapter 3 and the value judgments of the Delphi panel (discussed in chapter 6) are relevant to this discussion. Since policy is value-driven it is important to establish similarities between the conceptual framework put forward in the study and that accepted by the panel in order to reach conclusions regarding the outcome of the research and to offer recommendations.

The Delphi panel's recommended strategies should be viewed in the context of the importance panel members assigned to the following beliefs which are fully endorsed by this study:

- Credible policy needs to be authorised at national as well as provincial level in order to provide guidelines for and anticipate outcomes of implementation, in other words to guide change. This type of focussed intervention has resulted in the accelerated development in school libraries in other countries.
- Policy without an implementation plan remains a statement of intent. The implementation plan tests the appropriateness of the intervention.
- School libraries are instruments of redress and equity, and have the potential to contribute to educational transformation. An absence of equitable library provisioning, including ICT, will widen the gap between well-resourced and under-resourced schools.
- Policy alone will not bring transformation, but by involving stakeholders at all levels during the policy process one builds a sense of ownership and responsibility. This involvement will ensure that policy options take into account educational practice on the ground.
- Training is a crucial ingredient in successful school library development. It will bring about and entrench new perspectives and promote holistic insight into the school library's role as a facilitator of reading and information literacy skills, and the construction of knowledge.

This study has demonstrated in both its literature review and the interpretation of its findings that all the above elements are inextricably linked to the establishment, development and sustainability of successful school library services and programmes.

On a practical level the Delphi panel translated their beliefs into the following strategies:

- The **school library** that is set up should meet the needs of the school and its teachers and learners. In order to provide such a service, space is needed, as well as a teacher-librarian, appropriate resources and access to the facility and the resources. The availability of these requirements ensures optimum intervention and benefit, especially if the teacher-librarian is qualified. The library provisioning does not have to be a one-size fits all. Different models, based on reality, experience and financial constraints, and chosen according to circumstances can provide some measure of library access to all schools. Such a service, even if it is a basic service, is a start towards achieving equity since a modest service is better than non-delivery. School libraries create a learning environment that supports reading, teaching and learning, extends the curriculum, and provides an indispensable component of education provisioning.
- Reading underpins school performance, and all the benefits of reading need to be emphasised. The importance of reading in both home language and second language should be stressed, since reading develops better second language skills than formal training alone. Panellists suggested that ELITS should consult with industry/publishers to ensure (*or at least try to ensure*) that the needed resources are being produced within the country.
- The school library supports the social and cultural environment of the school. This strategy emphasises the library's role in social inclusion, the acquisition of appropriate resources to reflect the different cultures, and promotes an understanding of cultural diversity.
- The role of ICT in the school library context needs to be expanded since it is a tool that can, despite the problems experienced with implementation in the present educational background, *leapfrog historical disadvantages*. The information skills

necessary can be acquired and transferred to the ICT environment when it becomes available, although ICT information seeking may require different methods too. The artificial disjunction between the e-education sector and the school library sector holds ICT implementation back and ways to promote cooperation should be found. The ESCRD programme can offer a solution by supporting and offering ICT programmes to schools near Education Centres.

- Training and ongoing professional development are vital components of a successful school library development programme and crucial to the achievement of the paradigm shift required by outcomes-based education. This includes pre- and in-service training at all levels since the whole school should be involved from management level down to each learning area teacher. In fact all teachers need to be confident in integrating resources in their teaching programme, promoting and nurturing reading, and assisting learners to develop information literacy skills through critical thinking. This type of learning programme requires, from the teacher's side, both innovative thinking as well as the innovative use of all available resources. The panel suggested that local forums may assist on a voluntary basis in this respect. As far as the subject advisors are concerned, procedures for their continual professional development should be put in place, and there should be follow-up on this training (*by spending some time in the field*).

The Delphi panel proposed that the lack of capacity (or training, or interest, or all three) should be addressed rather than implementation adapted since the document has been endorsed by the provincial Minister of Education. They expressed concern about the human resources dimensions of this policy (and many other) initiative(s) and the level of skills required. To overcome this potential barrier, capacity at school level will have to be increased, as has been established in this research. The SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) has confirmed that training and monitoring is required at all levels.

In chapter 1 the research objectives touched on the implications for human resource development and the budget implications for the province. Human

resource implications have been highlighted and discussed in 6.5.2.1 and the study has, through the Delphi, identified the need for training. The KZN Department of Education's Skills Development programme has made adequate funding available to each directorate to address identified training and skills development needs both at head office and in the districts.

- Arguing for qualified staff (*don't be apologetic*) and lobbying for the creation of posts for teacher-librarians is vital as demand will ensure supply once posts are available. A full-time teacher-librarian does not guarantee that more reading will take place, but the panel observed that there would be something wrong if this did not happen. They conceded that unqualified, motivated staff could also run excellent programmes and suggested that personal qualities such as enthusiasm, motivation and insight should be taken into account when appointments are made.
- Policy advocacy as well as continuous lobbying for human resources (*the capacity required*) and an increased budget to shorten the implementation period are important factors in ensuring successful policy implementation and sustaining motivation and patience among implementers and those who benefit from the policy roll-out alike. This extension of the implementation timeframe has been one of the constraints the policy grappled with, and the fact that the budget allocation has remained the same over the four years of implementation so far has aggravated the problem. The panel suggested that the school library budget should be ring-fenced to ensure its continued allocation.
- A mechanism should be put in place to monitor implementation and provide a reality check against which implementation can be measured and adapted if necessary.
- Clear and open communication lines with district staff where implementation takes place are necessary ingredients. This will enable district functions to be better delineated and reporting lines well structured in order to prevent disjunction between head office, districts and schools.

- Visible efforts should be made to encourage ownership of the policy. The school's readiness to develop and sustain a library, and obtain buy-in, understanding and cooperation of all role players ought to be better covered in training programmes.

As far as **policy** is concerned, the panel had definite views regarding the characteristics of good policy. Apart from upholding the values of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, policy should address inequalities and contribute to transformation. Good policy acknowledges and delineates policy problems clearly, and since the *School Library Policy* is embedded in education it should take into account educational frameworks such as outcomes-based teaching and learning. Policy constraints ought to be addressed and accommodated in such a way that the policy will make allowances for new developments and anticipated change. Nevertheless, the panel cautioned that lesser services should not be accepted as adequate and equity and redress should always be kept in mind *even if it takes time* to achieve them.

The Delphi panel suggested that specific measures be put in place to take the policy process forward successfully. These include the developing and disseminating of supporting documentation to extend the policy by giving details and practical, research-based examples, as well as clear procedures to disseminate information and invite feedback and discussion.

Some of the strategies put forward in the research can be addressed through policy intervention, others are more concerned with managing challenges in the educational environment and with service delivery and cannot be fully dealt with in a policy document.

Nevertheless, policy offers valid guidelines on how to manage problems and change. This study endorses the strategies identified by the panel and perceives their proposals as compelling and practical tools that will enhance policy implementation and impact.

The following section considers research question 9 and establishes whether the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* includes the foci identified in the study.

7.2 Policy foci

The Delphi panel agreed that the policy did include the necessary foci although not adequately in all instances. Table 10 in 5.1.2.16 provides an assessment of the adequacy (in the form of ranked responses) of all the key policy areas identified by the panel. Although panellists did not think that the content of the policy needed to change, they put forward suggestions to improve certain aspects that in their view were not adequately covered and these suggestions are included in the recommendations for policy revision in 7.3.

The KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* has been endorsed at the highest provincial level, by the MEC for Education, and includes an implementation plan as well as a timeframe for policy roll-out in the province. The implementation of the policy will redress disparities in school library provisioning in the province to some degree by providing starter library collections to all schools over a period of six years.

The foci, identified by the panel, broadly centred around adequate school library models so that schools can adopt a library model suitable to their needs, and suitably trained staff to provide access to resources in order to inculcate reading and information literacy skills in the school. The role of the school library in outcomes-based education and the role of ICT in school libraries were both emphasised, as well as training for capacity building and to promote awareness of the policy.

The strategies and foci that the panel members identified have outlined issues that, according to the panellists, should be addressed in policy revision. These issues, as well as findings from the previous research questions addressed in chapter 6, are combined below in a comprehensive list of recommendations for policy review. This addresses the last research question: does the policy need revision to include the Delphi panels' recommendations?

7.3 Recommendations for policy revision

Montviloff (1990: 129) rightly observed that policy-making is a continuous process that can never be considered as finished. Though the Delphi panel advised that the policy should be kept clear and simple the following issues identified in the research questions discussed in chapter 6, as well as recommendations put forward by the panel, should receive consideration when the policy is reviewed.

- The **policy task team** should include representation from public libraries as well as public/community libraries, and representation of parents should be brought in at some stage of the revision of the document. This suggestion is appropriate especially if viewed in light of the Memorandum of Understanding of the provincial Department of Education to be signed with the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, and the observation in the Risk Management Report that school governing bodies and parents should be made aware of the importance of the library and the school's responsibility to allocate a budget to the library.
- The **underlying problems** need to be articulated in one place in the document and/or its annexures. These problems are identified as lack of access to resources, and the lack of insight and knowledge regarding the importance of information skills and reading in coping with learning requirements.
- The **major causes of the problems** need to be explicitly linked to a problem statement to highlight the school library's role and contribution to the educational experience.
- The **purpose and objectives** of the policy need to include staffing, reading and literacy.
- The **role of the school library** in contributing to lifelong education should be addressed more specifically.
- The reference to the **resuscitation** of libraries needs to be clarified, and the nature of the collections in these instances defined.
- The central school library model in a revised policy might, and should, be sold more strongly as a learning resource centre that integrates a computer room and the traditional library.

- The role of ICTs in school libraries more generally should be emphasised. The lack of computer use for educational purposes was highlighted in both the HSRC Survey and the School Library Audit.
- The financial implications of, for example, a shortage of space need to be highlighted in order to address inadequacies - *otherwise where's the redress?*
- Mention of collection building that will reflect and endorse the learners' cultural diversity is needed to draw attention to such diversity.
- Social inclusion needs to be given more prominence in the document.
- Guidelines instead of quantitative standards are likely to prove more practical in achieving school library development.
- Plans for getting the support and buy-in of schools were not adequately covered in the policy document. A great deal of consultation should take place before implementation and this did not appear to have been the case. The importance of this awareness raising and consultation process has been highlighted by the SLDP Evaluation Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007d) as well as the Risk Analysis Report (KwaZulu-Natal. Department of Education 2007c).
- The ECSRD programme may assist in filling gaps and its role should receive attention in the policy revision. Relevant aspects should be included in more detail in the policy or alternatively it should be made clear that the two documents, the *School Library Policy* and the ECSRD business plan must be read together.

The panellists suggested that some of the problems identified by this research could be addressed in a series of support documents that could be created to expand upon, support, and extend the scope of the policy. Other suggestions include a separate document drawing on international research and practice on the ground, and curriculum support documents to detail how the vision would be achieved to add weight to the policy. This kind of supplementary documentation would assist policy implementers *to bring the vision to fruition.*

The cluster model would require careful planning to work successfully, and the progression from this model (and the classroom model) to a central school library needs to be explained and spelled out, and the factors which are likely to bring about the transition identified. This progression could be illustrated, as was suggested, in the form of three case studies provided in an addendum to the policy.

ELITS has, since the formulation of the *School Library Policy*, developed several guidelines to outline ELITS' mandate regarding reading, Education Centres, and ICT in school libraries. These guidelines should be briefly introduced in a revised policy to present a holistic overview of ELITS' interventions in the province.

Most of the panel members agreed that no specific changes were needed to the implementation strategy, but that the strategy could be regularly reviewed and changes (such as changed timelines) communicated to all concerned: policy implementation *should be given time to show strengths and weaknesses before reviewing*. One panel member pointed out that the ECSRD project *offers a new landscape for the implementation plan and it need not affect the policy framework... since the three models fit in well* with this project. The panel thought that a strategy to secure the understanding and cooperation of school management and staff for the implementation of the policy would improve the policy's implementation strategy.

The strategies identified by the Delphi panel have pinpointed not only policy areas that need strengthening, but offered realistic, well-considered suggestions based on expert opinion and a depth of relevant experience to take the policy process forward.

7.4 Recommendations for further research

The study provided a rich seam of issues that should be mined in future research.

For example:

- Follow-up research on policy implementation is required to evaluate the intervention of the KZN *School Library Policy* which is in its fourth year of

implementation. This research could also focus on the role of new players such as the ECSR project

- The teachers' and principals' perceptions of the role of the school library and their levels of awareness need to be researched and built upon in the local context in order to develop strategies that can lead to the paradigm shift required to implement an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning as identified in this study.
- The particular information needs of learners in rural areas have to be identified in order to address the rural educational challenges as identified in this study, and to focus appropriate intervention where most needed. This research can include rural communities since the data generated will be useful for the proposed public library/school library collaborative intervention programme between school and public libraries in KwaZulu-Natal (Nzimande 2008). The Memorandum of Understanding between the KZN Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism and the Department of Education will formalise a programme of cooperation commencing in 2008. The evaluation of this programme will offer guidelines to other provinces.
- The Education Centres supporting Rural Development project and the impact of Education Centres on education provisioning in the school clusters supported by the centre.
- The mobile library as an intervention project to bring resources to schools in rural areas.
- Research on school library models in South Africa/KwaZulu-Natal can determine accurately the benefits of specific models in specific local contexts and offer practical guidelines for the development and implementation of these models. This research would supplement a study undertaken by Nzimande on school clustering in the Nkandla area of KwaZulu-Natal (Nzimande 2007; Nzimande and Stilwell 2008).
- Measuring the success of various types and approaches to training as an intervention strategy in school library development and utilisation. This study identified the need for continuous training, and research of this kind can offer

guidelines on the most effective training programmes and at the same time provide empirical evidence of successful intervention strategies.

- The impact of the ACE (School Library Development and Management) programme on school library development in schools in KwaZulu-Natal where certificate holders teach.
- In-depth studies on the impact of school libraries on learner achievement in KwaZulu-Natal are urgently needed. This study identified the need for local impact studies and pointed out that such research can support the sector in lobbying for infrastructure, funding, and posts for teacher-librarians.
- The role of ICT and the internet in information seeking. Information literacy skills that will enable learners to use technology as a learning tool will promote redress and provide equal access to resources especially in environments where learners do not have access to these resources in their homes. This study indicated that research is needed to determine whether information skills acquired in school library context can be successfully transferred to an ICT environment when the technology becomes available.
- The National Department of Education's vision of school libraries and information literacy, an overview similar to Van Audenhove's analysis of South Africa's vision of the information society based on political rhetoric and policy initiatives should be captured. This research could provide insight into agenda-setting strategies and offer explanations for the national department's seeming reluctance to finalise policy for school libraries.
- Reading intervention assessment in project schools in KwaZulu-Natal to assess the success of the newly introduced reading policy guidelines is being undertaken by MacGarry (2008) and could be built on further.

All of the above centre on the crucial area of school libraries' role in social inclusion. This research, if undertaken in rural areas, may point the way to partnerships to address social exclusion in the form of community/school libraries as was suggested in the study.

7.5 Concluding reflections

This study was undertaken in the belief that it would offer a fresh and objective perspective on the KZN *School Library Policy* and its adequacy as a policy document, and generate practical strategies for and solutions to the challenges of policy implementation in the province. These strategies would at the same time, it was believed, establish gaps and offer guidelines for policy review. These objectives have been achieved.

The chosen methodologies generated rich layers of qualitative and quantitative data. The expert opinion gathered through the Delphi technique enabled the researcher to determine that the KZN *School Library Policy* and its implementation strategy met, to a large extent, the standards of good policy-making. The secondary data, although not tailored to the specific needs of the research, but through the process of reanalysis and comparisons between the different sets of data revealed the status quo of school library provisioning in the province. The proposed school library models could then be evaluated against this background.

The study's research design proved adequate to the task undertaken and acceptable responses to all research questions could be formulated.

The study identified strategies that confirm and build on the guidelines and interventions that ELITS has, since 2005, developed to augment the policy and define ELITS' interventions, namely renewed focus on reading, ICT, and the directorate's role in the Education Centres. This confirmation drew on the insights and soundness of the panel's recommendations.

Taking into account the additional strategies that were put forward, the ELITS Directorate can proceed to develop a comprehensive strategy for policy implementation and refine and refocus its policy intervention. The findings of the surveys that indicated that school library provisioning had indeed, despite the problems that were identified, moved forward between 1999 and 2004, have been

heartening. These improvements (more school libraries, school library committees, reading activities, and in some schools better administration of resources) cannot be attributed to the implementation of the policy per se, but do indicate that an active and for that matter pro-active school library directorate in the province working together on a plan for programmed change can bring about a heightened awareness of the potential and use of school libraries.

The observation that emerged from the panel that support from management was perceived as a challenge in other provinces once again emphasised the need for support and overall direction from a school library unit at national Department of Education level. Such a unit can drive the school library policy process, and address issues such as posts for teacher-librarians, funding for school libraries and a literacy curriculum as was suggested by Hart and Zinn (2007). The unit could coordinate national reading and literacy programmes and direct focussed intervention and cooperation between the school library, e-education and curriculum sectors.

This study has brought to the fore issues that need to be dealt with in order to accelerate school library intervention, namely reporting lines blurred by matrix management, ICT as a learning tool, and the lack of human resources. Reporting lines between the head office component and the districts need to be clearly defined through the strategies suggested in this study.

The school library sector needs to establish partnerships and find solutions to problems of ICT provisioning and use in school libraries. The KZN partnership between school and public libraries will offer one such solution to schools in some rural areas.

Provincial school library support services need to be strengthened. In KwaZulu-Natal vacant posts need to be filled as the lack of support staff has serious implications for training and the establishing and monitoring of services in the districts. Even good

policy will have little effect if there are no motivated and qualified implementers at district level who can guide schools in the development of appropriate services.

A question that needs to be asked at the conclusion of this study is whether the school library sector in KwaZulu-Natal and for that matter, South Africa, has taken up Todd's (2001) challenge presented at the IASL conference in Auckland. Todd urged the importance of connections and networking, rather than collections. He emphasised knowledge rather than information, and the need for evidence rather than advocacy. These may seem lofty ideals in a country which is still seeking to establish school library services in the majority of schools, where no overarching unit at national level exists nor a national school library policy, and no information literacy curriculum or specialist posts for teacher-librarians in schools. While trying to find innovative solutions to the sector's own distinctive problems, the challenge Todd puts to the school library sector spells out the changes that are likely to place school libraries at the centre of the curriculum, and bring about the necessary mindset in principals, teachers, teacher-librarians, learners and the supporting ELITS staff, envisaged by both the research and the *KZN School Library Policy*.

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Questionnaire on the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) School Library Policy and its feasibility for implementation in the province

- Please respond to the questions by inserting your response below each question next to the asterisk. **A few line spaces have been left open in the questionnaire, but there is no intended limit for the length of your response.**
- The researcher will sometimes offer additional background information regarding the question or the topic. The intention is not to influence thinking, but to present information identified as relevant in the literature on policy development and implementation, or to give additional information on local conditions. Since the questionnaire is being sent out in electronic format it was thought that it would probably be easier for the panellists if the additional information was incorporated into the questionnaire rather in a separate document.
- Some of the questions relating to local conditions may be difficult to answer but all panellists have experienced the South African context in some way. Nevertheless feel free to comment to the extent to which you feel able to comment. It is anticipated that fresh perspectives from a slightly different context will be beneficial to the research. It is also expected that the expertise, insight and experience of all panellists will enable them to draw analogies from their own contexts.
- The following background reading has either been posted or e-mailed to all panellists:
 - Posted:
 - KZN *School Library Policy* document
 - *ELITS School Library Audit* (CD)
 - KZN statistics
 - E-mailed:
 - *Business plan: Education Centres supporting rural development* (2005)
 - Copy of the Draft National School Library Policy (2005)
 - Keynote paper, IASL 2003, J. Karlsson.
 - *The LPYL in context*, G. Hart.

The questionnaire deals with the following topics in three sections:

1. The conceptual framework of each panellist
2. The key elements of the provincial policy and how adequate they are in terms of policy formulation and development
3. The adequacy of the provincial implementation strategy

Many of the responses will require an initial yes or no response. Please also convey your opinion as to why that aspect of the question is important. In many instances you will be expected to draw on your own experience of similar contexts.

1 Conceptual framework

1.1 As policy is value driven it is important at the outset **that each panellist offers a list of value judgments, predictions or opinions about their approach to policy in the school library context. Please feel free to do this quite informally in the space provided here.**

*

2 The key elements of the provincial policy and how adequate they are in terms of policy formulation and development.

2.1 Does the policy document identify and define clearly

a. The underlying problems and issues that it seeks to address?

*

b. The major causes of the problems?

*

c. The values which underpin the document?

*

2.2 In formulating policy fear of change may sometimes make it necessary to accept less radical policy options. In your view, are there other more radical policy options which should have been considered?

*

2.3 Is the broad purpose clearly identified and precisely formulated?

*

2.4 Are the objectives clearly identified and precisely formulated?

*

2.5 If one reads the policy against the background of the information gathered in the ELITS audit, do the purpose and objectives take into account the possible expectations of the target groups?

*

2.6 Do you think that the broad purpose, objectives, and values underpinning the policy document have sufficiently taken into account the differing values and various cultural groups in South Africa?

*

2.7 Are there, in your opinion, any conflicting aspects of the purpose and objectives in the policy?

*

2.8 Are there objectives that were seemingly traded off for more acceptable ones so as to satisfy a larger section of the stakeholders?

*

2.9 The nature of a broad purpose and goals is normative, and as such contains elements of forecasting, i.e. identifying the expected future. What, in your view, was the expected future as revealed in the policy document, taking into account e.g. the statistical information regarding KwaZulu-Natal and the *Business plan: Education Centres supporting rural development?*

*

2.10 Do you think that the task team succeeded in selecting alternatives that would be likely to bring about the expected future i.e. the anticipated outcomes?

*

- 2.11 In your opinion, was the policy task team sufficiently representative to make it likely that all major alternatives would be considered and the stakeholders' concerns properly addressed? (See particulars about each participant in the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* document.)

*

- 2.12 Are there any other important stakeholders who, in your view, should have been included in the task team?

*

- 2.13 It can be argued that, since government budgets are normally insufficient to satisfy all needs, policy analysts should opt for objectives that are practical and favourable. In your view **and based on your own experience in the field:**

- a. Do you think that governmental budgetary constraints were adequately considered in the policy document?

*

- b. Were the objectives chosen practical and favourable?

*

- 2.14 Drawing on your own experience again, do you think that adequate allowance was made in the policy for certain organisational constraints? Please comment on each of the following examples:

- a. Ineffective organisational structures and work processes

*

b. Inadequately trained or unavailable human resources

*

2.15 Please list any additional organisational constraints that you think should also have been taken into account when the policy was developed.

*

2.16 When formulating policy the heterogeneous nature of South Africa society requires a particular fastidiousness about objectivity and the setting aside of personal values so that issues can be investigated impartially. Are there, in your opinion, any issues in the policy document that should have been treated more objectively?

*

2.17 Roux (2000: 129-132) argues that, during the policy formulation process, analysts often find it difficult to satisfy divergent needs since finding an answer to one problem may complicate others. In trying to search for the best policy options all possible alternatives should be considered and the policy planners should be prepared for dramatic changes, even paradigm shifts. He advises that the following should be kept in mind:

- In a complex society like South Africa it is unlikely that all policy goals will be ideal
- Subjectivity should be avoided and the value preferences of those who will benefit from the alternatives should be kept in mind
- Alternatives that overlap too much should be avoided
- Formulating too many alternatives should be avoided
- Choosing alternatives that are too general and all inclusive should be avoided
- Concepts should be grounded in reality as far as possible

Please comment on the policy choices that were made in view of the above observation.

*

2.18 Without wanting to repeat, could you please

- a. Briefly summarise and list what, in your opinion, are the key elements of the provincial policy under discussion

*

- b. Rate the comprehensiveness of the coverage of each key element on a scale of 1 - 5 (1 being very inadequate, 2 inadequate, 3 neither adequate nor inadequate, 4 adequate and 5 very adequate)

*

2.19 The initial 1998 draft of the *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* listed seven school library models, namely

- one school one library, i.e. centralised library,
- one classroom one library, i.e. classroom or box library,
- one cluster (of schools) one library,
- one community one library, i.e. a community or joint-use library,
- one region one library, i.e. a regional library service that does not exclude libraries in schools,
- one learner one library (virtual library),
- one lifelong learner one library (community learning centres or education centres) (South Africa 1998: 16-23).

These models were considered by the policy task team when the KZN *School Library Policy* was developed. The models selected for KwaZulu-Natal were those already being implemented in the province, and also the most suitable according to the task team.

The latest draft (2005: 15) of the National School Library Policy also refers to models, as did Karlsson in her keynote address at the IASL Conference in 2003 (copies of both these documents were e-mailed to panellists).

Taking into account the above information, the statistics in the ELITS Audit, and your own experience in the field, could you please comment on:

- a. The adequacy and suitability of the models included in the policy

*

- b. Whether other school library models should have been included in the policy document under discussion, and if so, which other models?

*

- 2.20 Roux (2000) cautions that the developmental and continuously changing nature of society means that no policy is ever complete in terms of outcomes or effect, and may require retrospective analysis. Meyer and Cloete (2000: 239) emphasise the importance of realising that “policy changes take place before, during and after implementation... the truth is that policy change takes place throughout the policy life cycle.” Hart (2002) also comments on the changing landscape within which school libraries operate in South Africa.

Drawing on your own experience concerning change, to what extent do you think the following policy issues were taken into account and adequately catered for in the KZN *School Library Policy*? Please feel free to comment on other ways in which you feel the changes could have been better managed or even whether, in your opinion, it is at all possible to successfully manage these changes.

- a. The dynamic and changing policy environment where forces in the social, political, cultural and technological environments put pressure on policy-makers to effect changes to keep up with the changing reality around them, e.g. post apartheid South Africa and the merging of the previously race based Education Departments.

*

- b. Changes in political leadership that can lead to policy changes both nationally and provincially, e.g. the changing policy focus of successive new Education ministers at both levels.

*

- c. The changing nature of institutions, e.g. the KZN Education Department has now restructured for the third time since 1994, the focus being on a move to smaller and more efficient units in the districts as opposed to regional structures.

*

- d. Change in the resource base where departments need to reprioritise and improve performance budgeting

*

- e. Technological advances seen against the fact that only 10.4% of all schools in KwaZulu-Natal have access to computers for teaching and learning according to the White Paper on e-Education published in 2004.

*

- f. Changes in policy solutions or service delivery strategies e.g. the *Business plan: Education Centres supporting rural development* (2005) of which a copy was e-mailed to panellists

*

- 2.21 Which of the above points (a – f) do you think are most likely to influence policy changes throughout the *School Library Policy's* life cycle? Please list them (using a - f) in order of importance, starting with the most important and ending with the least important

*

- 2.22 Are there any other changes in the policy environment which can, in your own experience, adversely affect policy outcomes and implementation? Please list these and offer comments.

*

- 2.23 Please evaluate the following outcomes in terms of their likelihood of being achieved on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being very unlikely, 2 unlikely, 3 neither likely nor unlikely, 4 likely and 5 very likely). It would be useful if you could also offer comments based on your own experience.

- a. Wide-scale awareness of the policy

*

- b. Awareness of the menu of models

*

- c. An integrated plan to establish, develop and resuscitate school libraries

*

- d. Schools that are provided with relevant
- core collections including computer software and online resources
 - hardware to support the ICT programme
 - technical back-up

*

- e. A whole school information literacy policy created in each school

*

- f. Extensive use and effective integration of library resources (including ICT) with curricular and non-curricular activities

*

3 The adequacy of the provincial implementation strategy
--

Brynard (2000: 187) argues that “implementation cannot be seen as an activity to be carried out according to a carefully predetermined plan; rather, it is a process that, at the very best, can only be managed, and lessons must be learnt as one proceeds through the different implementation stages.”

- 3.1 On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 very inadequate, 2 inadequate, 3 neither adequate nor inadequate, 4 adequate, 5 very adequate) how would you assess the fit of the policy with the problems it wants to address, in other words to what extent has the policy document identified, understood and expressed the problem in its context?

*

- 3.2 The implementation strategy of a policy is based on certain assumptions regarding the following:
- a. the commitment of those entrusted with carrying out the implementation at various levels, to the goals and methods of the policy
 - b. the administrative capacity of implementers to carry out the changes desired of them

- c. the support of clients and coalitions whose interests are enhanced or threatened by the policy, and the strategies they employ in strengthening or deflecting its implementation

In your experience, and taking into account the information forwarded to you, which of the above factors are most likely to adversely influence policy implementation in KwaZulu-Natal. Please rank your answer from most important to least important, or indicate if you think that all factors are equally important

*

- 3.3 Are there any other factors which, in your experience, can limit the success of the implementation process? Please list these factors in order of importance, starting with the most important.

*

- 3.4 If, in your view, certain problems were not adequately covered, can you please list the problems that should have been addressed more comprehensively? These can include e.g. practical implementation problems, possible implications for human resource development, budget implications for the province, and equity and addressing past imbalances.

*

- 3.5 Drawing on your own experience and the information in the documents forwarded to you, do you think that there is sufficient capacity in the sector to play the role demanded by the plan, or would you anticipate that implementation may need to be adapted because of lack of capacity?

*

- 3.6 If you think that the implementation strategy needs to be adapted, please indicate in what regard it would need to be modified.

*

- 3.7 Please list the measures, e.g. guidelines or systems that ELITS should, in your view, put in place to take the policy implementation process forward successfully. Please rank your observations starting with the most important.

*

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E-mail sent to the panellists

Dear ...

I would like to invite you to participate, as a panel member, in a Delphi study on the suitability of the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* as a policy document and as a tool for implementation in the province. This policy was accepted as policy in 2003 and is currently being implemented in this province.

The purpose of my PhD research in Library and Information Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is to analyse and critically assess the KwaZulu-Natal *School Library Policy* document, and to investigate its feasibility for implementation in the province. The study will identify and test the appropriateness of the provincial policy models and implementation guidelines against the provincial educational background in which it is being implemented, and identify practical implementation problems. It will focus on questions around issues such as:

- The key elements of the provincial policy and how adequate they are in terms of policy formulation and development
- The adequacy of the provincial implementation strategy
- An accurate assessment of the present school library provisioning in the province according to the data obtained from the 2004 ELITS school library audit
- The suitability of the school library models included in the policy for this context
- Practical implementation problems and the possible implications for human resource development as well as the budget implications for the province.
- The best strategy for the implementation of the provincial policy to ensure equity so that past imbalances are addressed

I shall be using the Delphi Method as one of the methodologies for the research in order to elicit, synthesise, share and dynamically generate expert opinion on the policy document. The method involves the use of a panel of experts who each responds separately via a series of questionnaires. Their responses are anonymous in the sense that none of the others know who is included in the group or where each response originated from. This enables each participant to have equal input, and since initial responses are made separately, new ideas may be introduced by individuals, which other members of the panel have not previously considered. The responses are then collated by the researcher and fed back to the respondents in a synthesised form. Respondents are again asked for a further response allowing them to revise their initial responses. The process is repeated (usually three rounds) to gradually produce consensus amongst the group (to the extent that this is possible), or for responses at least to become stable.

One of the advantages of this method is that the participants are not required to meet together as a group physically since they respond to a series of question and statements in writing, or per e-mail as will be the case in this study. The fact that group responses are collated and made available to the panel members as part of the information required for the next round could perhaps be perceived as a virtual meeting.

Panel members will be given background information and other documentation to assist them to form an accurate picture of the present situation as far as school library provisioning in the province is concerned. An audit of school library provisioning in the province was completed in 2004, and an analysis of the statistics as well as copies of the relevant policy documents

will be made available to the Delphi panel. The material will be posted via conventional mail to the participants and it would be appreciated if you could forward your postal address to me should you agree to participate in the study. As mentioned, the questionnaires will be sent to the panel via e-mail.

The study's objective is to reach consensus, to the extent that this is possible, among the participants or to sharpen disagreement. To neutralise biases, I will cite the responses anonymously during the study. It is anticipated that the first questionnaire will be e-mailed to the panel members as soon as clarity has been reached about the constitution of the panel. The additional documents will be forwarded to all participating panel members before the end of November 2005.

I am well aware that participating in the panel will be demanding and time consuming. However, it is expected that the study will be highly interesting, and moreover, that the findings will be extremely valuable to guide the way forward as far as school library provisioning in the province is concerned. It is also expected that the conclusions reached will benefit school library policy implementation not only in the other provinces in South Africa, but also in other developing countries.

I sincerely hope that you will accept the invitation to participate in this study. I look forward to receiving your decision. Please indicate if you would only be able to participate if you could be remunerated for your time. I would then have to consider the number of panel members needed and weigh this up against the financial implications. Ultimately, if all participants are willing, the group contributions could be made available in a more popular format in addition to the conventional thesis, to achieve a wider sharing of the information and knowledge.

Yours sincerely

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