

**AN INVESTIGATION OF CONSTRAINTS  
ON THE FURTHER PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS  
AS CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKERS  
AT INDIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
THE GREATER DURBAN AREA**

by

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## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## ABSTRACT

The decade of the nineties has ushered in a period of socio-political transformation in South Africa. Demands for the democratisation of education imply that teachers will be expected to assume a more significant professional role, particularly with regard to curriculum decision-making. As a result of authoritarian curriculum policies and practices of the past, teachers have not had the same opportunities to participate in curriculum decision-making as their colleagues in many other countries (HSRC: 1981). This means that teachers in this country have, in the main, been forced to operate as "restricted" professionals and will need to move towards a greater "extended" professionalism (Hoyle: 1980). However, the extent to which teachers are able to become more "extended" professionals will depend on the identification and removal of constraints on their further professional development in this regard.

The primary aim of this study, therefore, was to investigate constraints on the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers within Indian secondary schools in the Greater Durban area. A stratified random sample, proportionally representing the three sub-populations of teachers (*viz.* Classroom Practitioners, Heads of Departments and Principals / Senior Deputy Principals / Deputy Principals), was drawn and a mailed questionnaire was used to survey attitudes and opinions pertinent to this study.

The main findings that emerged from the survey were:

- \* Whilst teachers themselves are desirous of becoming involved in curriculum decision-making at all levels, in most instances they are deprived of opportunities to participate in decision-making even at the micro-level of the school.
- \* Whilst some principals tend to profess a very liberal and progressive view with regard to teacher participation in curriculum decision-making, in reality they adopt a very prescriptive and authoritarian style of management.

- \* Pre-service and in-service education programmes for teachers do not adequately focus on teacher participation in curriculum decision-making.
  
- \* Within-school constraints are exacerbated by a lack of clarity about the education department's stance on the matter of teacher participation in curriculum decision-making.

The recommendations emanating from these findings were made principally with the House of Delegates' Department of Education and Culture in mind, but are likely to be applicable to all other existing departments of education in the country.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

In a world that is ever-changing, the quality of education that a child receives depends on several factors. The school curriculum must undoubtedly rank as one of the most crucial of these factors. Curriculum change is a world-wide phenomenon and in South Africa, too, the nature of the existing school curriculum is the subject of much debate and research.

Research abroad has shown that curriculum change and innovation are likely to be more successful if the practising teacher is involved in the decision-making process (Fullan:1972; McLaughlin:1978; Bolam:1981). Such studies have noted that prescriptive, top-down strategies do not always lead to successful classroom-level change. Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) identify three types of teachers in accordance with their response to curriculum innovation imposed from the top. Firstly, they describe the "dissonant rejectors" who simply refuse outright to implement a curriculum as required by the authorities. Secondly, they identify "consonant adopters" who are willing to faithfully implement an innovation provided that they receive the necessary back-up and can identify with the aims of the innovation. Thirdly, they identify the "dissonant adopters" who pretend that they accept the innovation, but only in order to retain their jobs. In reality, such teachers vehemently oppose the innovation.

Up to now, the practising teacher in South Africa has not had the same say in curriculum decision-making as his colleagues in many other countries. This point is summed up cogently in the HSRC's report on curriculum development, published in 1981:

If the extent to which teachers can contribute is compared to the contributions made by teachers in departments of education abroad (USA, England, Scotland, the Netherlands), it is evident that the practising teacher in the RSA has very little say in curriculum matters.

(HSRC : 1981 : 112)

Bradley *et al* (1986:57), while making reference to Cecil Beeby's (1966) study of the quality of education in developing countries, state that teachers in South Africa fall into all four stages of development or categories described below:

- \* The "Dame School" stage:

The stage at which teachers are neither educated nor trained.

- \* The "formal" stage:

The stage at which teachers are trained but not educated. Hence, the education system is characterised by rigid control.

- \* The "transitory" stage:

The stage at which teachers are trained and better-educated but lack full competence.

- \* The "meaningful" stage:

The stage at which teachers are both well-trained and well-educated.

However, given the highly centralised and bureaucratic orientation towards curriculum practice in South Africa, it would be wrong to assume that teachers in this country who are in the "meaningful" stage of development are accorded a greater say in curriculum development / curriculum decision-making. Also, the fact that large numbers of mainly Black teachers are not regarded as being in the "meaningful" stage is an indictment on the system of apartheid in this country. More appropriately, then, one can argue that the situation teachers in this country find themselves in with regard to participation in curriculum decision-making reflects the legacy of apartheid. As Tanner and Tanner (1980) might have put it, teachers in this country are presently required merely to function at the "imitative-maintenance" level with regard to curriculum decision-making. They are expected to be "routinist" in their objective of maintaining the status quo, and if change is made, they are expected to adopt it, not adapt it to local needs. Teachers are forced to accept things handed from above and to use them as directed. Such expectations of teacher behaviour most certainly do not underpin universally-accepted notions of professionalism and teacher autonomy.

Notwithstanding the above, South Africa is going through a period of transition. The demand for education reform in this country which culminated in the Soweto-uprising in 1976 has placed tremendous pressure on the Government to reconsider its system of apartheid education which is condemned locally as well as abroad. The appointment of the De Lange Commission of Inquiry into the provision of education in the RSA in the early 80s was as a result of the pressure brought to bear on the Government. Arising from this inquiry, the Government in its White Paper (RSA:1983:2) concluded that:

To bring about efficacious educational functioning ... the responsible professionals and professional educationists should be able to decide on the contents and presentation of educational programmes.

Although the document does not spell out clearly what is meant by "professionals" or "professional educationists", it can be inferred that reference is being made to teachers as professionals. This notion is, in the writer's perception, supported by the Government's acceptance of, inter alia, the following principle for the provision of education in the RSA:

The professional status of the teacher and the lecturer shall be recognized.

(RSA:1983:3)

Against this background, one sees the potential for teachers in South Africa to become involved in curriculum decision-making - not only at the micro-level (school/classroom), but also at the meso (regional) and macro (national) levels. However, the extent to which teachers can and may participate in curriculum decision-making at all three of the above-mentioned levels, may depend on the identification and removal of constraints on their further professional development as curriculum decision-makers.

## 1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate *Barriers* constraints on the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers, with particular reference to one group of the professional teaching corps in the RSA, namely teachers within Indian secondary schools in the Greater Durban area.

### 1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

In order to address the need for educational change in the country, one of the main actors in this enterprise, namely the teacher, cannot be overlooked. Fundamental change will only come about if you have a competent corps of dedicated teachers whose professional worth and status are recognized. We need to prepare our teachers for their enhanced professional role as curriculum decision-makers, and their further professional development in this regard needs to be addressed. In order to do this, we have to determine first and foremost the existing constraints on their further professional development as curriculum decision-makers. Only on the basis of findings in this regard can we hope to design appropriate pre-service and in-service education programmes that would assist teachers in facing the exciting challenges of the "new" South Africa.

### 1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

#### 1.4.1 Curriculum

The term curriculum is a controversial one. As Heneveld (1987:99) puts it, the term curriculum "can have many meanings"; however, "all the learning which is planned and provided for children at schools ... is the generally accepted view of what is included in the curriculum". In the South African context, because of the highly centralised control over the instructional programme of schools, there is a tendency to use the term "curriculum" to approximate a comprehensive syllabus document for a particular subject. For the purposes of this study, the term "curriculum" is used in a wider sense to embrace not only "the formal programme of lessons on the time table", but also "the climate of relationships, attitudes, styles of behaviour and the overall quality of life established in the school community as a whole" (DES:1980:1). A holistic view of the curriculum is adopted so that the term covers not only the "official" curriculum of schools, but also their "actual" curriculum and the "hidden" curriculum. As Burns (1987:151) points out, an effective teacher in South Africa is "one who is able to use those personal qualities of humaneness ... to transcend the constraints of a rigidly imposed curriculum and really function as an educator of the whole student".

### **1.4.2 Further professional development of teachers**

Whilst acknowledging that there are diverse views on the roles of teachers as professionals, the "further professional development of teachers" is envisaged along the lines of Hoyle's (1974:15-17) description of teachers as "extended" professionals (as opposed to "restricted" professionals) who see teaching as "a rational activity amenable to improvement on the basis of research and development" and who "perceive classroom activities in a broader educational context". The "further professional development of teachers" presupposes that teachers will want to engage in self-improving activities either as individuals or in groups. The concept of a profession and the notion of the professionalism of teachers are explored more fully in Chapter 2.

### **1.4.3 Curriculum decision-making**

According to Skilbeck (1982:22), teacher participation in curriculum decision-making is "more consistent with a professional self-image, with a sense of professional achievement and with a more complex sense of value and worth than is the functionary image". It is the writer's contention that if you accept that in a future South Africa teachers will not only wish to but also be required to operate as "extended" professionals, then their participation in curriculum decision-making will be the pivot on which their further professional development will rest. This implies that teachers would want to become involved, and ought to be involved, in curriculum decision-making at the macro (national), meso (regional) and micro (school/classroom) levels. The types of decisions they are likely to be involved in would include decisions pertaining to the aims of schooling, objectives, course offerings (subjects), course/subject content, topics, teaching methods, values and attitudes to be inculcated in pupils, selection of textbooks and other resource materials, and ways of evaluating students. Although it is conceded that decisions about the broad structure of schooling and norms and standards will, on the grounds of political arguments, be largely in the hands of the government, such decisions will have to be informed by constructive inputs made by teachers. After all, the teacher's participation in curriculum decision-making within the structure of schooling determined at a national/regional level will only be meaningful if he can identify with the aims and objectives of schooling decided upon. Teachers' lack of commitment to national/regional/local curriculum goals will further

widen the gap between the "official" curriculum and the "actual" curriculum of schools in this country. The need for teachers to be participants in curriculum decision-making at all levels particularly at the local/school level, is summed up by the following observation made by Carson (1984:25)

Teachers, by virtue of their professional training, experience and proximity to ethnic backgrounds, social circumstances and overall state of readiness of the students and attitudes of parents in local situations are surely best placed to assess the viability of the alternatives presented to them and to decide among them. This is not to say that teachers should avoid consultation with other interested and knowledgeable members of the educational community; nor does it deny external influence.

Put simply, if one accepts that in a future South Africa teachers would be required to assume the role of "extended" professionals, then one must not expect them (teachers) to live up to certain expectations if their curriculum decision-making role is marginalised and restricted to matters of a routine nature only. Especially at the micro level of the school, teachers should be at the forefront of decisions regarding the curriculum. Their experiences and expertise which are important factors that influence curriculum practice at the local level, cannot be brushed aside in favour of perpetuating a "functionary" image of teachers.

#### **1.4.4 Indian secondary schools**

In South Africa, the provision of education is essentially along racial lines. Accordingly, each population group is assigned an ethnically-based education department. "Indian secondary schools" refer to secondary schools controlled by the "own affairs" Department of Education and Culture, for Indians, which is part of the Administration : House of Delegates.

#### **1.4.5 Constraints**

Constraints refer to all the existing factors that militate against teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making. These may relate to the attitudes and perceptions of teachers themselves with regard to participation in curriculum decision-making,

their skills, their competence, the leadership styles of management staff at schools, the prescriptions made by the superintendents of education, time, resources and central government policy. The writer is of the view that the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers will not be possible if these constraints are not removed.

## **1.5 DIRECTION OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 2 begins with the premise that professional development of the teacher should occur side by side with curriculum development. The notion of the professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers is explored taking into account available local and international perspectives on the matter. The whole concept of a profession and, in particular, the professionalism of teachers in relation to theoretical foundations and orientations towards the curriculum in various educational settings are looked at closely in order to establish why teachers in different educational settings are made to perceive their professional responsibilities differently. The chapter also engages in a discussion of how divergent thinking on curriculum issues could be assimilated into shared ideals and a common ground for the benefit of teachers as professionals. The question of whether teachers should participate in curriculum decision-making is focussed on, taking into account the perceptions of teachers in the RSA and abroad. The facets in which teachers can participate are also examined. Constraints on teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making are looked at with a view to focusing on the South African scenario which rounds off Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used in this investigation, and Chapter 4 captures the research data which are analysed and discussed.

Conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study are set out in Chapter 5. Although the recommendations are formulated principally with the Department of Education and Culture in the Administration : House of Delegates in mind, they are likely to be applicable to all existing education departments in the country and a future single education ministry for all South Africans.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE SURVEY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The notion that the professional development of teachers hinges solely on the number and type of in-service and/or orientation courses organized for them by outside agencies is rejected by such writers as Hoyle (1980:50-53), Hoyle (1982:344), Skilbeck (1984:254-255) and Daresh (1987:3-11). True, such provisions do contribute to the professional development of teachers, but ultimately it is the commitment of teachers to their professional responsibilities, and the opportunities that exist for them to function as autonomous professionals, that determine their real professional development.

This study is based on the premise that the professional development of teachers should occur side-by-side with curriculum development (Heneveld: 1987:99-105). Since the professional responsibility of teachers revolves around the school curriculum, it is reasonable to conclude that meaningful professional development cannot take place if teachers are not afforded opportunities to participate in curriculum decision-making / development. Accordingly, this chapter attempts to explore the notion of the professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers, taking into account both international and local perspectives on the matter. In this regard, the two main types of professionalism of teachers, as explained in the literature, are considered with the view to focusing on constraints on the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers.

#### **2.2 THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSION**

The literature on the concept "profession" and its ideological connotations is voluminous. There is no doubt, however, that the concept "profession" has reference both to the individual practitioner and to the occupation as a whole. This is evident in the value assumptions built into the criteria by which an occupation is characterised as a profession.

### 2.2.1 Value assumptions

Hoyle (1980:45) identifies the following value assumptions contained in the criteria used to treat the concept "profession" as a descriptive category with reference to certain occupations:

- \* A profession is an occupation which performs a crucial social function.
- \* The exercise of this function requires a considerable degree of skill.
- \* This skill is exercised in situations which are not wholly routine but in which new problems and situations have to be handled.
- \* Thus, although knowledge gained through experience is important, this recipe-type knowledge is insufficient to meet professional demands and the practitioner has to draw on a body of systematic knowledge.
- \* The acquisition of this body of knowledge and the development of specific skills require a lengthy period of higher education.
- \* This period of education and training also involves the process of socialisation into professional values.
- \* These values tend to centre on the pre-eminence of clients' interests and to some degree they are made explicit in a code of ethics.
- \* Because knowledge-based skills are exercised in non-routine situations, it is essential for the professional to have the freedom to make his own judgement with regard to appropriate practice.
- \* Because professional practice is so specialised, the organized profession should have a strong voice in the shaping of relevant public policy, a large degree of control over the exercise of professional responsibilities, and a high degree of autonomy in relation to the state.

- \* Lengthy training, responsibility and client-centredness are necessarily rewarded by high prestige and a high level of remuneration.

The professional ideology presented above highlights "autonomy" as one of the main criteria by which an occupation is judged to be a profession.

### **2.2.2 Autonomy**

Hoyle (1980:43), in his exploration of this concept in the context of a profession, makes a distinction between the collective and individual dimension of autonomy:

It can refer to "the relative independence of the profession as a whole from political control and also to the individual practitioner's relative freedom from external control over day-to-day professional practice".

Such relative freedom, or autonomy, is achieved through professionalisation based on improvement of status and improvement of practice. The organized profession tries to bring about improvement in status through its efforts to meet the criteria which characterise the ideal-type profession, and by maintaining and even improving its privileged position as a profession. Improvement of practice involves the on-going improvement of knowledge and skills of practitioners.

It would be naive to assume that professionalisation leading to autonomy, as described above, occurs unhindered and naturally. In fact, it can be argued that professionalisation will depend on such factors as political ideologies and their associated implications for control, as well as the commitment among members of an occupation towards increased professional status. The attitudes of members towards professional practice and the degree of knowledge and skill which they bring into their practice are of paramount importance. Sockett (1976:8) explains that persons who are "blinkerered by their own prejudices or laziness" are certainly not autonomous in respect of their professional practice:

To be autonomous a person must be able to choose between alternatives on rational grounds ... Autonomy doesn't entail being able to act on whim, or without thought. Far from it. It implies being able to deliberate about alternatives in a situation. It implies seeking knowledge to inform those judgements. It implies not just waiting around to be told what to do.

The notion of "autonomy" as it applies to the professionalisation of occupations has several implications for teaching as a profession and for teachers as members of that profession.

### 2.3 AUTONOMY AND THE PROFESSIONALITY OF TEACHERS

As in the case of other occupations judged as professions by virtue of their degree of professionalisation and the professionalism of their members, the occupation of teaching is constantly under the spotlight. According to Thurlow (1982:19), much attention has been given to the question of "the professional nature of teaching and the professionalisation of the occupation" in other countries, but unfortunately not in South Africa. It can be argued that in the South African context the ideology of professionalism is espoused by the various teaching bodies, but that professionalism means different things to different people, depending on the political ideology they subscribe to. The constitutional arrangement in this country, whereby education is an "own affair" and also a "general affair", serves to divide education along racially segregated lines thereby also making it difficult for the establishment of a single professional body with which members of the teaching profession can identify.

The pressures that are brought to bear on the professionalism of teachers seem to be a world-wide phenomenon. The organized profession in some countries seem to be able to cope adequately with the "onslaught" against the "freedom of teachers", yet there are other countries where the organized profession has given in to the whims and fancies of politicians and other pressure groups. Following on an inter-governmental conference on the "Status of Teachers" held in 1966, and the recommendation that "the teaching profession should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties" (Morris:1977:207-213), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) undertook an international inquiry to obtain clarity on how teachers in the various countries perceive their professional freedom. The findings of this investigation, as discussed by Morris *op.cit.*, can be summarised as follows:

- \* Divergent attitudes exist in view of the different prevailing political philosophies and their implications for education and the professionalisation of teachers.
- \* By and large most teachers claim a considerable degree of autonomy over teaching methods. The general area of curriculum content (textbooks, syllabuses and

materials) is the most contentious in terms of "entitlement" and "infringement". Morris observes, however, that in practice it is difficult to maintain content and teaching methods in watertight compartments. In essence, if content is prescribed then teaching methods are circumscribed, and if methods are prescribed then they will be found to apply to certain ranges of content only (Ibid:207).

- \* Education, by its very nature, is inseparable from politics. The relationship between the teaching profession and politics is therefore a theme that has to be considered. However, Morris points out that "education and indoctrination are not the same thing ... to confuse them is to abuse the right to professional freedom as a teacher" (Ibid:213).
- \* There is no way of rescuing education from the political arena. However, the efforts of the organized teaching profession as well as the perceptions of teachers of their rights can contribute to the establishment of professional rights for all teachers in all countries.

In his research based on a random sample of teachers employed in state schools in Natal, South Africa, Thurlow (1985:23-34) found that teachers perceived teaching to resemble a true profession by virtue of its service orientation, but that the professionalism of teachers was thwarted by a lack of autonomy - "the most substantial proportion of teachers considered that the extension of personal autonomy was a necessary condition for professional status enhancement" (Ibid:31).

It is obvious from the literature on this topic that teachers generally make autonomous judgements about their everyday classroom practices. However, the notion of an autonomous professional as put forth in the foregoing exploration of the concept "profession" points to two types of professionalism prevalent in the occupation of teaching - Hoyle (1980) refers to these as "restricted" and "extended" professionalism.

### **2.3.1 "Restricted" and "extended" professionalism**

Hoyle (1980:49) hypothesises two ideal-types of teacher on the basis of a distinction between "restricted" and "extended" professionalism:

- \* By restricted professionalism I mean a professionalism which is intuitive, classroom-focused, and based on experience rather than theory. The good restricted professional is sensitive to the development of individual pupils, an inventive teacher and a skilful class manager. He is unencumbered with theory, is not given to comparing his work with that of others, tends not to perceive his classroom activities in a broader context, and values his classroom autonomy.
- \* The extended professional, on the other hand, is concerned with locating his classroom teaching in a broader educational context, comparing his work with that of other teachers, evaluating his own work systematically, and collaborating with other teachers. Unlike the restricted professional, he is interested in theory and in current educational development. Hence, he reads educational books and journals, becomes involved in various professional activities and is concerned to further his own professional development through in-service work. He sees teaching as a rational activity amenable to improvement on the basis of research and development.

Commenting on Hoyle's categorisation of teachers as "restricted" and "extended" professionals, Stenhouse (1978:144) notes that while the "restricted" professional cannot be discounted, limited role and limited autonomy is "not a satisfactory basis for educational advance". Stenhouse highlights the notion that "extended" professionalism involves autonomy of the teacher in a much broader educational context and is characterised by a

... commitment to systematic questioning of one's own teaching as a basis for development; ... commitment and the skills to study one's own teaching; ... concern to question and to test theory in practice by use of those skills (Ibid:144).

Berg (1989:58) claims that professionalisation and the type of professionalism among teachers "must be sanctioned by the environment" in which they are carried out. He explains that

the boundaries governing the practice of the occupation reflect the extent of this sanction. If we regard the relevant boundaries as being defined by a rule system, this rule system sanctions one type of professionalism - "restricted" professionalism. If educational goals are regarded as boundary markers, the scope for independent action on the part of school actors (teachers) is greater than that allowed by rule control and creates a basis for a different type of professionalism - "extended" professionalism.

Berg goes on to say that "restricted" professionals "act largely as implementors of central directives" and that their autonomy "is limited to their actual teaching duties, and the knowledge base they use is therefore confined to a sound knowledge of their subjects and of teaching methods". As opposed to this, he points out that "extended professionalism means that teachers also act autonomously outside the walls of the classroom" and that the occupational role of such teachers may be described in terms of "freedom with responsibility".

It is clear, then, that good professional practice and professionalism, achieved through professional development, imply (in fact emphasise) the decision-making function of the teacher. However, since the decision-making function of the teacher revolves primarily around the school curriculum, the extent to which he will be allowed to develop from a "restricted" to an "extended" professional will depend on certain deep-seated ideological and philosophical considerations which inform curriculum practices in schools, as well as on his perception of his role.

## **2.4 PERSPECTIVES ON THE CURRICULUM AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONALISM**

### **2.4.1 Theoretical foundations and orientations of the curriculum**

With reference to Habermas' (1972) "theory of knowledge constitutive-interests", Grundy (1987) illustrates how theoretical foundations and orientations of the curriculum underpin both curriculum and professional practices. She explains that, according to Habermas' theory, there is a relationship between the fundamental orientation of the human species towards preservation of life and rationality, and that the way in which that orientation works itself out in the life structures of the species will determine what counts as knowledge. In other words, the manner in which rationality manifests itself in self-preservation will determine what a particular social group is prepared to distinguish as knowledge. So, fundamental interests in self-preservation have cognitive as well as practical implications, and they also constitute knowledge in different ways. Habermas identifies three such basic cognitive interests in his "theory of knowledge constitutive-interests", and refers to them as a "technical interest", a "practical interest" and an "emancipatory interest" respectively. He explains that these three cognitive interests constitute the three types of science by which knowledge is generated and organized in

society : empirical-analytic sciences, historical-hermeneutic sciences, and the critically oriented sciences. In the words of Habermas (1972:308)

The task of the empirical-analytic sciences incorporates a technical cognitive interest; that of the historical-hermeneutic sciences incorporates a practical interest; and the approach of the critically oriented sciences incorporates the emancipatory cognitive interest (cited in Grundy: 1987:10).

On the basis of Grundy's (1987) discussion on the above, a summarised version of each of these three cognitive interests as they relate to curriculum and professional practice is presented below:

#### **2.4.1.1 The technical interest**

Like the practical and emancipatory interests, the technical interest is grounded in the need for survival and reproduction of the species as well as those aspects of society which are considered to be most worthwhile. To do this, persons have a basic orientation towards controlling and managing the environment. This interest correlates closely with the empirical-analytic sciences which are grounded in experience and observation on the basis of experimentation. The technical interest, therefore, gives rise to "instrumental action" based on technical rules which are, in turn, based upon empirical knowledge.

##### **2.4.1.1.1 The technical interest and its implications for curriculum and professional practice**

Interest in the control and manipulation of the environment is implicit in the orientation towards control of the "technically informed curriculum". It follows that a "technical" approach to curriculum design implies that the educator (teacher) will produce an educand (pupil) who will behave according to a pre-determined plan or image.

The technical interest, therefore, regards pupils as "objects" in the learning environment that have to be managed by the teacher in terms of certain rules and prescriptions. This implies that teachers and pupils are not "actors" in the learning situation - they have merely powers of reaction, i.e. to co-operate, to facilitate, to enable, to refuse, to obstruct and to sabotage. The curriculum design process is separated from the teaching process. Accordingly, the evaluation process is undertaken and controlled by those other than the teachers and pupils. Evaluation procedures objectify the pupil (learner) and are intended to judge how closely the "product" (learner) matches with a "guiding plan". The implications for teacher professionalism are obvious in curriculum practices informed by a technical cognitive interest:

- \* Teaching is regarded as a mechanistic process, and the teacher is seen as one who has to produce a certain "object", and if the "object" produced is not in keeping with certain pre-determined objectives and specifications then the mechanistic skills of the teacher will have to be improved upon.
- \* Since the curriculum is designed elsewhere, the teachers are under pressure to be productive in ways envisaged by the designers.
- \* So, teachers engage in reproductive work and the quality of their work is judged by the "products" they produce.
- \* Teachers and the effectiveness of their circumscribed actions are judged by inspectors and principals who have access to the "plan" of what constitutes "good" learning.
- \* Skill, not professional judgement, is an important factor, and so too is teacher attitudes towards "product", not "process".
- \* Theory has a prescriptive relationship to practice - it is applied to practice directly, without the need to be reinterpreted.
- \* The teacher is subject to supervision by others.

#### **2.4.1.2. The practical interest**

Unlike the technical interest which is "a fundamental interest in controlling the environment through rule-following action based upon empirically grounded laws" (Grundy: 1987:14), the basic orientation of the practical interest is towards understanding the environment so that one is able to interact with it, not manipulate and control it. Practical interest is grounded in the fundamental need of the human species to live in and as part of the world and not to be in competition with it in order to survive. The environment is, therefore, not regarded as an object, and persons interacting with the environment do so on the basis of a personal, yet shared view of a given situation. Thus, the practical interest is characterised by consensus on what is "good", and by practical action which seeks some improvement in a subject or situation. Practical action derives

from practical judgements informed by an understanding of the situation. The notion of consensus is important with regard to the interpretation of knowledge. Practical action centres around the process of making right decisions and deliberating on the choice of actions.

#### **2.4.1.2.1 The practical interest and its implications for curriculum and professional practice**

A curriculum informed by a practical cognitive interest is one which is determined on the basis of what is "good" rather than what is to be taught to achieve set, pre-specified objectives. The learner is not treated as an object, and since the curriculum is seen as something which belongs to the realm of human interaction it is concerned with the interaction between teachers and learners. Curriculum design is regarded as a process through which the pupil and the teacher interact in order to make meaning of the world. The "practical" curriculum is not a "contentless" curriculum when compared to a "technical" curriculum. Curriculum informed by the practical interest is a curriculum in which the content is never taken for granted. Content is not simply judged cognitively, but it is justified on the basis of moral criteria relating to that which is good. Unlike the product-centred approach of the "technical" curriculum, the practical interest informs curriculum practices that emphasise "process" approaches in which deliberation, judgement and meaning-making are central. The implications for the professionalism of teachers are as follows:

- \* In terms of the practical interest, what is right cannot be fully determined independently of the situation. Therefore, practical action is characterised by choice and deliberation. Since practical action is centred upon the decision-making function of the teacher, it allows for a greater choice of actions on the part of the teacher.
  
- \* Since the curriculum is concerned with the interaction between the teacher and learner, it is regarded as a practical matter in which all participants are regarded as subjects, not objects. Participants, therefore, have rights and status within the curriculum process. The teacher's decision-making function regarding the purposes, the content and the curriculum as a whole is highlighted.

- \* For the teacher whose work is informed by a practical interest, theoretical statements have the status of proposals for action, not prescriptions.
- \* The teacher is allowed to judge when and which aspects of theoretical proposals are to be applied to practice. So, while the teacher informed by a technical interest is regarded as the implementor of theory, the teacher informed by a practical interest is provided with opportunities for decision-making in a theory / practice relationship.
- \* Practical interest, therefore, serves the interest of professional autonomy and responsibility.
- \* Since "understanding", "interaction", "consensus", "judgement", "deliberation", etc. are key concepts central to the practical cognitive interest, the teacher's decision-making function and participation are not restricted to classroom activities only. He has a stake in curriculum design as well.

#### **2.4.1.3 The emancipatory interest**

The emancipatory interest is an interest to free persons from the control and coercion of the technical interest and also from the possible "deceit" of the practical interest. (It is argued that, in terms of the practical interest, one's interpretation of a situation could be based on a pre-understanding based on tradition. Such knowledge can, therefore, be deceitful in that it is based on a particular conception of reality). The notion of freedom is fundamental to the art of speech and to understanding. The concept of freedom is inextricably linked with interests in truth, justice and equality. The emancipatory interest gives rise to autonomous, responsible action based on prudent decisions informed by knowledge generated by critical theories, authentic thought and empowerment. Critical theories, such as Freudian Psychology, Marxism, theories of ideologies and liberation theology, explain how coercion and distortion operate to inhibit the freedom of either individuals in society or of whole societies. Authentic thought is, therefore, important for it takes place through a process of self-reflection which, in turn, empowers individuals and groups to take control of their own lives in autonomous and responsible ways.

#### **2.4.1.3.1 The emancipatory interest and its implications for curriculum and professional practice**

Fundamental to the curriculum informed by the emancipatory interest is the concept of "praxis". "Praxis" is defined as "a form of action which is the expression of the emancipatory interest" (Grundy : 1987:104). When applied to the subject of curriculum, the constitutive elements of "praxis" have specific meanings:

- \* Praxis entails a reflexive relationship between theory and practice in which each builds upon the other : The curriculum is not simply a set of plans to be implemented. It is an active process in which planning, acting and evaluating are all reciprocally related and integrated.
- \* Praxis takes place in the real world : The programme content of education must take into account the concrete, present world which reflects the aspirations of the people. It must not be constructed with hypothetical learning situations in mind.
- \* Praxis means acting with others, not upon others: Teaching and learning are to be seen as a "dialogical relationship" between teacher and learner, rather than as an authoritative one.
- \* Praxis does not take place in the natural world of animals, but in a world of "culture" : The social world is a "constructed" world and knowledge is therefore a social construction. Critique of all knowledge of the "natural" world is therefore the basis of curriculum as praxis.
- \* Praxis assumes that meaning is not absolute, it is socially constructed : A critical orientation to all knowledge is essential. Those with power to control the curriculum make sure that meanings are accepted as worthy of transmission.

Teachers and pupils need to challenge such meanings since they have the right to determine meanings themselves. Curriculum as praxis stresses that meaning-making is a political act.

The implications for teacher professionalism lie in the fundamental orientation of the emancipatory cognitive interest towards emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action arising from authentic, critical insights into the social construction of human society. The teacher is not one who just teaches, but he is one who is also taught since both the learner and the teacher are active creators of knowledge.

#### 2.4.2 The use of the term "curriculum"

The ideological and / or philosophical considerations that inform curriculum and professional practices are reflected in the use of the terms "curriculum" and "curriculum development" in various educational settings. Curriculum and curriculum development practices informed by a "technical cognitive interest" emphasise centralisation of control, pyramidal structures and vertical lines of communication, all of which cast teachers as technicians who are at best providers of technical services for the attainment of curriculum objectives determined elsewhere in the authority structure. In the "practical cognitive interest" tradition there is less likelihood of these diminutions of the autonomy of teachers, but rather a conception of democracy to which rational argument, open discussion and participation in decision-making are central. A curriculum based on the "emancipatory interest" is one which highlights the fundamental right of the individual to perceive things as he sees fit, as opposed to being subjected to the coercion of an objectives-based curriculum (technical cognitive interest) or the deceit of a humanistic curriculum (practical cognitive interest) which, according to critics, sometimes highlights the perception of elitist groups and individuals. The following are examples of the use of the term "curriculum" which relate directly to the "technical cognitive interest" and the "practical cognitive interest" respectively:

A curriculum is a teaching-learning programme or plan, which is designed in the light of certain aims and which contains at least selected and organised content ... In the case of a centralised educational system the curriculum has a prescriptive function and the definition should thus be extended to read as follows: It is a scientifically-based written programme for teaching and learning, comprising aims, relevant and organised content selected for this purpose as well as didactical guidelines (T.E.D.: 1988:3).

The curriculum ... comprises all the opportunities for learning provided by a school ... It includes the formal programme of lessons in the timetable ... and the climate of relationships, attitudes, styles of behaviour and the general quality of life established in the school community as a whole (DES : 1980:1).

### 2.4.3 Common ground and shared ideals

It may be argued that while the "emancipatory" approach to curriculum design and curriculum practice offers the greatest scope for autonomy, it is not likely to contribute on its own to the improvement of schooling and the welfare of learners. It has to be sanctioned by the education system, on the one hand, and needs to be backed up by organizational structures on the other hand, otherwise even those teachers who share an optimistic and innovative approach to education will reject it on the grounds that it is too radical and tantamount to systems anarchy. The emancipatory approach does contain many positive features which make it more in keeping with the "practical", "child-centred", "process", "humanistic" approach to curriculum design and practice. The emancipatory approach is associated with the pessimism of neo-marxists and, as such, is likely to find favour with the proponents of "People's Education" in South Africa. The emancipatory approach with its rejection of norms and standards creates possibilities for grassroots democracy within schools. However, whether this type of bottom-up transformation of the process of schooling is workable on its own, needs to be seen.

Despite these diverse curriculum orientations, writers such as Salili (1976) and Pratt (1987) do admit that a combination of excellence in research (technical curriculum) with humanistic commitment (practical curriculum) is likely to lead to desirable outcomes. Pratt (1987:160) sums up this point as follows:

Both the humanistic and technical positions may be stereotyped into extremes that appear to have irreconcilable views of the world and of education. Such an approach ... can overlook the common ground and the shared ideals of the two orientations. In practice, most schools and teachers combine elements of both orientations, exemplifying an eclecticism ... it is well that they do, for schools which pursue technical effectiveness at the cost of their humanity begin to resemble prisons, while schools which are humane but ineffective provoke a public backlash which demands that they revert to prisons.

## 2.5 TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

### 2.5.1 Should teachers participate in curriculum decision-making?

Although such factors as centralised curriculum control, decentralisation, political ideologies, and orientations towards the learner and to education determine the extent to which teachers should participate in curriculum decision-making, there is nevertheless overwhelming consensus that teachers should participate in curriculum decision-making (Carson : 1984). There is sufficient evidence (Belasco and Alutto : 1976; Buss *et al* : 1988; Conley : 1988) to suggest that teacher militancy is, in part, a reflection of increased desire among teachers to participate in decision-making. Poster (1972) makes the point that the classroom teacher is an integral part of the school-management structure and that the management of resources, pupils and the environment is not possible without the inclusion of the teacher in the decision-making process. The curriculum is the focal point around which the school-managment structure revolves, and hence the denial of teachers' rights to participation in curriculum decision-making is tantamount to disregarding the purpose for which a school is established in the first place. Poster (1972) states further that the teacher's participation in curriculum decision-making will influence his interpersonal relationships and that his contentment will influence his performance and job satisfaction.

A persistent theme throughout much of the research on this topic is that there is a relationship between the levels of job satisfaction experienced by teachers and their participation in decision-making. In a study exploring the relationship between "decisional participation" and "teacher satisfaction", Belasco and Alutto (1976) found that those teachers with low satisfaction levels, brought about by "deprivation of decision-making", are those who are most willing to consider leaving the profession. From the data gathered by these researchers, it emerged that the following are some of the more deleterious organizational effects of low levels of participation in decision-making:

- \* The concurrent emergence of low satisfaction and high tension is often accompanied by reduced levels of organizational performance and withdrawal from the situation through either lateness, absenteeism or various kinds of "on-the-job mental absences".
- \* Teachers with the lowest levels of satisfaction are those who are most likely to adopt the most militant attitudes and participate in such aggressive actions as striking, etc.

Research also shows that the younger teachers in particular who possess the newest, most modern pedagogical and up-to-date curriculum skills, require attention since they require increased participation in decision-making to boost their levels of satisfaction (Lieberman : 1956; Mason et al : 1959; Ryans : 1960; Belasco and Alutto : 1976; Doherty and Travers : 1984; Buss et al : 1988). Researchers argue that it is necessary for such teachers to be identified and for participative management programmes to be designed which meet their particular needs.

In his discussion on "factors which affect satisfaction and dissatisfaction of teachers", Sergiovanni (1967) identifies "achievement", "recognition" and "responsibility" as the factors which contribute predominantly to teacher-satisfaction. He explains that these factors relate directly to the teachers' task of teaching / educating, and that administrators therefore need to permit and to encourage teachers to exercise more autonomy in making decisions.

With particular reference to teacher participation in curriculum decision-making, Skilbeck (1984) emphasises that "curriculum decision-making is the staple of teachers' professional lives" and that the role of the teacher as a professional person cannot be fulfilled unless there is scope for direct participation in significant aspects of the curriculum. Sharon Conley and her American colleagues (1988) underscore this point in their reference to the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1982. They observed that as a result of teachers not being involved in the formulation of recommendations contained in the report, they (the teachers) felt that "their role as professional partners in the educational enterprise was slighted". This led to a call from the National Governors' Association for "giving teachers a real voice in decision-making and for developing school-site management that respects the professional judgement of teachers" (Ibid:259). Stressing the importance of teacher participation in decision-making, Conley et al point out that teachers are the only ones with direct and sustained contact with their systems' primary clients (pupils) and, as such, enhancing teacher participation can only help improve the quality of decisions made at school level.

Numerous studies (Sergiovanni : 1967; Duke & Showers : 1980; Berliner : 1981; Conley et al : 1988) confirm that since teachers are the only school employees with ongoing contact with pupils, one of the greatest strengths of teacher participation in decision-making, as a managerial strategy, is that it tends to build consensus on a school's goals and agreement on its priorities. This decreases the need for unnecessary supervision of teachers' work. Studies also show that by allowing teachers to participate in decision-making the benefits to individual teachers and to schools as organizations are enormous.

With particular reference to the benefits teachers are likely to derive from shared decision-making, Duke and Showers (1980:93-106) state that there are, inter alia, three important benefits resulting from this, viz.

- \* Feelings of self-efficacy : which refers to the satisfaction people derive from accomplishing something which they consider important. For example, when a teacher's recommendations are accepted by a curriculum committee looking at innovative teaching strategies, he will be inclined to feel that he has made a positive and acceptable contribution to the decision-making process.
- \* Ownership : when a teacher is allowed to participate in the decision-making process, he has the feeling of being part of a collective enterprise and of one who has a stake in the future of an enterprise.
- \* Workplace democracy : The notion of workplace democracy comes about when a teacher feels that his basic right to participate in decisions which affect him, his teaching and his pupils is respected.

Having stressed the importance of teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making, it is essential to understand that any discussion on this topic must of necessity hinge on certain conditions which should be present to ensure full teacher-involvement in decision-making. Morgan and Turner (1976) identify the following conditions which need to be satisfied:

- \* Teachers should feel that they have a stake in the matter concerned and they should want to be involved.
- \* Teachers should have something of value to contribute.
- \* The matter under discussion should be within the teachers' area of legitimate concern and power.
- \* Teacher-participation should be part of the managerial sphere of activity in a school.

## 2.5.2 Facets in which teachers participate / can participate in curriculum decision-making

Based on the premise that the term "curriculum" is an all-embracing concept which includes not only the individual subjects taught in a school (subject curricula), but also the total educational programme of a school (broad curriculum), teacher participation in curriculum decision-making is conceived of in the following contexts by, amongst others, Beeby (1966), Harlen (1977), Berliner (1981), Skilbeck (1982), Nicholls (1983) and Nisbet (1983):

- \* teachers as managers of instructional variables
- \* teachers as implementors
- \* teachers as members of project teams
- \* teachers as innovators in a school-based context
- \* teachers as decision-makers in the management of innovations
- \* teachers as partners in curriculum innovation / reform / renewal / development.

### 2.5.2.1 Teachers as managers of instructional variables ✓✓

In the context of teachers as managers of instructional variables, one could speak of a teacher's decision-making function in respect of his specialist teaching subject in relation to all the other subjects / opportunities for learning provided in a school. David Berliner (1981:17-25), in his discussion of the classroom teacher as a "decision-maker" and "problem-solver", lists the following instructional variables which require decision-making before, during and even after instruction:

- ✓ \* Content Choice: There ought to be a high congruence between what is taught and what is tested. Decision-making centres around the choice of topics/content in relation to learning outcomes to be tested.

- \* Pacing: As in the case of "content choice", this is also a pre-instructional variable. Decision-making concerns content coverage, that is the pace at which content should be taught taking into account the ability of pupils as well as the instructional time available.
- \* Allocation of Time: The amount of time to be spent on various curriculum areas entails an important facet of the decision-making function of a teacher.
- \* Activity Structure: This refers to the form of instruction a teacher decides upon for a particular lesson / lesson segment. Such decisions revolve around didactic procedures adopted by a teacher.
- \* Engaged Time: This refers to the actual amount of time a pupil needs to spend receiving instruction in a particular subject. Engaged time may range between 50 and 90 percent of the actual time allocated for instruction in a particular subject.
- \* Transition Time: Of importance here is the time lost between instructional periods on the time-table as well as at the start or end of an activity.

The variables of "testing", "questioning", "monitoring", etc can be added to the above list. While it may appear that decisions of this nature focus merely on academic activities and the achievement of academic goals, such an academic orientation is not entirely incompatible with a pleasant interpersonal climate which a teacher can create for the total development of pupils.

### **2.5.2.2 Teachers as implementers**

In the context of teachers as implementers, decision-making is essentially in respect of certain instructional variables. Teachers are required to react to a ready-made curriculum

package or to act in accordance with the prescriptions of detailed core syllabuses and didactic guidelines.

Very often teachers have no say in curriculum research and curriculum design. As Rogers and Shoemaker (1971:299-315) suggest, teachers are regarded as members of a "subordinate group" and "are chiefly concerned with implementing decisions made by a higher status group". Hence, the decision-making function of the teacher is limited to a reactive role, rather than a proactive one.

### **2.5.2.3 Teachers as members of project teams**

Teachers who are members of curriculum work groups (project teams) have greater scope for curriculum decision-making. They play a strong development or research role. They play an active part in deciding the aims and directions of curriculum projects. Teachers determine and develop curriculum content, write materials, plan resources, consider alternative teaching approaches, etc. They are party to all facets of curriculum research, design, development and implementation. They exert a fundamental influence on the development of the curriculum. Scope for curriculum decision-making in the context of teachers as members of project teams exists in centralised, decentralised as well as in mixed systems of education. Most of the projects of the Schools Council in England, for example, involved teachers in curriculum decision-making as members of project teams. In many countries of the world there are independent curriculum projects which are initiated by universities which provide the infrastructure of support needed. Participation in such projects allows "for freedom of original ideas, for imaginative unconventional and creative approaches, and it avoids the dead hand of bureaucratic control" (Nisbet: 1983:158). There are also national curriculum development units which enlist the participation of teachers as curriculum experts, developers, graphic designers, evaluators, etc. Apart from teachers who are actively engaged in curriculum decision-making as members of project teams, as described above, teachers may also participate in trial groups. However, it can be argued that since they do not actively participate in decision-making crucial to curriculum development, and act merely as implementors of trial packages, they "are involved only in a superficial manner" (Harlen: 1977: 21).

### **2.5.2.4 Teachers as innovators in a school-based curriculum development context**

Eggleston (1980) defines school-based curriculum development as a process in which the detailed strategies for a curriculum suitable to the needs of individual children in a

particular school, or even in a specific unit of a school, are developed on the basis of co-operation in respect of discussion, planning, trial and evaluation. Whilst such a definition of school-based curriculum development may presuppose freedom for teachers to define relevant learning experiences for pupils, Skilbeck (1982:23) points out that it "does not presuppose systems anarchy" since "it is in no way a negation of national policy-making including the setting of national goals". He explains further, that the proponents of school-based curriculum development "do not minimise the need for local, regional and national support structures" (Ibid:23). Accordingly, it is dominated by a process which involves more complex roles for teachers who need to collaborate with their colleagues as professionals in order to interpret general curricular assumptions into a specific curriculum practice suitable for their particular school / class / unit. Teachers, as innovators or curriculum decision-makers in a school-based context are, therefore, expected to concern themselves not only with the visible manifestation of curriculum practice, but also with the fundamental principles underlying it. Ample scope exists for school-based curriculum development in centralised, decentralised and mixed systems of education. However, in a centrally-directed education system characterised by bureaucratic control the decision-making function of teachers may be reduced to those functions pertinent to the final implementation stage of curriculum practice only. The extent to which teachers are allowed to participate as innovators in a school-based context depends, then, on the differing politico-educational frameworks within which they operate.

#### **2.5.2.5 Teachers as decision-makers in the management of innovations and as partners in curriculum innovation / reform / renewal / development**

According to Nisbet (1983), in most countries teacher participation in curriculum decision-making in the above-mentioned contexts arose out of teacher dissatisfaction with top-down models of curriculum development. In America, for example, and even in Europe, curriculum projects were largely unco-ordinated up to the mid 1960s. Hence, their impact on curriculum innovation was slight and it was found that when the independent project teams disbanded, the innovations launched were hardly sustained because of a lack of teacher commitment on the one hand, and a lack of official sanction on the other. In the 1970s, countries like England, the USA, Sweden and Scotland began creating and financing curriculum development organisations to introduce new imaginative proposals to meet the demands of changing societies. This gave rise to the injection of large sums of money into educational research and development which, in turn, gave rise to new syllabuses, new methods, new materials, etc being available to teachers. However, it was found that

despite large sums of money being spent in efforts of this nature, the actual "take-up" of the curriculum innovations in schools by teachers had been limited. The lack of "grass-roots" teacher participation in the curriculum renewal process meant that they (teachers) were often presented with curriculum packages which they were expected to use. In some countries controls and the powers to prescribe curricula made it possible to keep a check on the implementation of pre-packaged curricula. However, as Harlen (1977), Nicholls (1983) and Nisbet (1983) point out, autonomous curriculum institutions that operated independently of the central administration were often regarded as fringe bodies, and, hence, their impact on implementation was limited. This is clearly evident in, for example, the Schools Council's (England) declared aim in 1975 "to make available a wide range of materials and suggestions which schools might adopt or adapt as they felt to be desirable" (Harlen:1977:27). Evidently the efforts of the 1960s and 1970s focused more on the curriculum product, rather than on the process which includes the teacher's input. The importance of teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making is captured in some of the slogans of the past, viz.

Curriculum development is teacher development

The success of curriculum development depends more on the readiness of the teacher than the quality of the product/curriculum package.

The process is more important than the product.  
(Nisbet: 1983:165)

At a time writers on curriculum reform / renewal saw change as a process of mutual adaptation between the needs of users and the ideas of designers (Nisbet:1973). It has been found that the best way of enlisting a teacher's commitment to curriculum innovation is to implicate him in the process. In any event, teachers today are better prepared and better qualified and are, therefore, likely to expect and demand involvement in curriculum decisions.

### **2.5.3 Constraints on their curriculum decision-making function and hence on their professional development**

While studies confirm that participation by teachers in curriculum decision-making has the potential to contribute to the professional development of teachers, researchers also point out that there are several factors that militate against this - these factors may range from

the attitudes of teachers themselves to a host of variables that impact on curriculum and professional practice at schools.

Harlen (1977:21) reiterates that there are various kinds of roles which teachers can take in curriculum development, and hence there are various kinds of teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making. However, there are various circumstances which tend to restrict the roles which teachers can play. Harlen argues that even if teachers had the opportunity to participate and the expertise which is crucial to curriculum decision-making, they would be involved only in a superficial manner if they lacked the time, incentive and outside support to apply their expertise fully. It must be remembered, as Nicholls (1983) points out, that participation in curriculum decision-making brings in work in addition to the normal teaching duties of teachers, and if teachers are not allowed time to manage this extra workload, they are likely to reject it - despite the fact that they may feel that participation is stimulating and exciting. Of course, there are teachers who will accept the extra workload for various reasons, including intrinsic and extrinsic rewards or sheer commitment to the curriculum development enterprise.

In addition to increased time demands which militate against the willingness of teachers to participate in curriculum decision-making, Duke & Showers (1980:93-106) found that teachers cite several other reasons for not wishing to participate in decision-making. Based on the premise that curriculum decision-making is one of the many areas of shared decision-making in schools in which teachers may be involved, Duke and Showers list the following reasons for teachers not wanting to get involved in decision-making on a shared basis:

- \* Loss of autonomy: Teachers feel that they would be compromising their traditional authority over what happens in their classrooms if they were to engage in a process of shared decision-making with colleagues as well as non-teachers.
  
- \* Risk of collegial disfavour: Teachers identifying too closely with the school management/authority structure may be viewed with suspicion by other colleagues.

- \* Subversion of collective bargaining: Once teachers become party to decisions made, this could undermine the collective bargaining power of teacher organisations.
  
- \* Threats to career advancement: Some teachers prefer to avoid situations that are likely to lead to problems and hence jeopardize their promotion opportunities. This is not surprising when one considers Nisbet's (1983:172) reference to the 4 basic laws (of curriculum innovation) formulated by a mythical Irishman called Murphy : "It will take longer than you think. It will be harder than you expect. It will cost more than you estimate. and if anything can go wrong, it probably will"!

The perception of teachers of their professional role also has a bearing on their participation in curriculum decision-making. There is evidence (Hoyle : 1982 and Broadfoot : 1987) to suggest that many teachers derive intrinsic interest predominantly from the activity of teaching and, as such, they would in the short-term not find much satisfaction in the non-teaching activities which extended professionalism and curriculum development involve. Hoyle (1982) explains that the movement from "restricted" to "extended" professionalism would be considerable for many teachers, not only because of their perceptions of their professional role, but also because of the type of pre-service and in-service training they have undergone and the patterns of professionalism they have become accustomed to. The teaching profession is not the easiest of professions to be in - expectations and tasks vary. Brezinka (1987:229) puts this point succinctly as follows:

The teaching profession comprises many different, complex and difficult tasks. In no other profession is there such a wide gap between the professional tasks on the one hand and the limited feasibility of the conditions for professional success on the other.

Several studies, including those based on international comparisons of teachers' perceptions of their professional responsibility, support the above. Broadfoot et al (1987) in their comparative study of how French and English teachers working in different

education systems conceive and carry out their professional tasks, found that while French teachers felt that their work is strongly influenced by persons / factors outside the school, English teachers appeared to feel that their work is strongly influenced by the institutional context in which they work. These findings are meaningful against the background of the two educational systems involved, namely a centralised system in France and, at that time, a decentralised system in England. However, this study revealed that neither of the two education systems could be regarded as the ideal system in terms of teacher participation in curriculum decision-making. It was found that the French teacher was tied to a traditional curriculum which may have little or no relevance or appeal for pupils, and that he (French teacher) did not have the right or skill to change it because he saw himself as one who is "more overtly concerned with the imparting of knowledge" rather than one who is also concerned with the relevance of the knowledge being imparted. On the other hand, it was found that "English teachers experience a certain amount of conflict, holding fast to a belief in professional freedom but simultaneously conscious of pressures which erode this autonomy ... (which) suggests they may be torn between a child-centred professional rhetoric and a wider public concern with standards" (*Ibid* : 292). This study highlights the fact that despite the system of education in which teachers operate, there are often constraints which tend to place teachers' classroom practice in direct conflict with their professed beliefs. The influence of national, regional, institutional and personal factors on teachers' practice is very much a reality. The study by Broadfoot *et al* (1987) shows how these influences impact on teachers' conceptions of their professional responsibility - some teachers simply feel it is fruitless getting involved in curriculum decision-making in the wider context of the school. Research into the control of the curriculum as perceived by teachers shows that there are competing influences on curriculum decisions. Researchers such as Zahoric (1975), Young (1979) and Goodlad (1984) have found that teachers are "ambivalent" about their desire to determine the content of the curriculum for example. Buss *et al* (1988) cite two studies, one conducted by Doherty and Travers (1984) in England and the other conducted by Buss and his colleagues in America, which show that although teachers in both countries agree that they should have some freedom to determine the content of what they teach in the classroom, they perceive certain "external-professional factors" (England) and "external regulatory and policy-making agencies" (America) as the most important sources of control over the content of curricula.

## 2.6 CURRICULUM PRACTICE AND TEACHER-PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the South African context, curriculum practice and the professionalism of teachers cannot be divorced from the direct or indirect effects of the policy of apartheid which has been firmly entrenched in various legislative acts passed by parliament. A highly centralised bureaucratic system of control over subject curricula and what is taught in schools, and the creation of ethnically-based departments of education to maintain the political status quo in the country, are products of the legacy of apartheid in the country. In theory, the various ethnically-based education departments in the country may reflect certain structural similarities, but in reality the provision and standard of education are not the same for all the race groups. Although the National Policy for General Education Affairs Act (Act 76 of 1984) empowers the Minister of National Education to determine general policy in respect of norms and standards for syllabuses and examination, and for certification of qualifications, major discrepancies in the provision of education for the various race groups in the country lead one to believe that what official policies purport to achieve, and what actually takes place in reality, are different. Curriculum practice and teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making need to be seen against the background of the economic, political and social contexts in which education takes place in South Africa.

Administrative decentralisation of education by way of the creation of ethnically-based "own-affairs" departments of education in South Africa has not meant a wider scope for flexibility and freedom in policy matters pertaining to curriculum content. South Africa follows a subject-centred approach to curriculum design, and a rigid bureaucracy is set up to ensure that syllabuses are developed at a macro level for implementation in schools. In terms of existing legislation "the Committee of Heads of Education is responsible for the approval of primary and secondary school syllabuses and the Network Committee for Curriculation administers and co-ordinates the syllabus revision programme on behalf of the Committee of Heads of Education. The Joint Matriculation Board is responsible for determining university admission requirements and as a result is also involved in the syllabus revision process" (JMB:1989). It is noted that the Committee of Heads of Education refers to the heads of "white" provincial education departments in the country, and that the so-called "non-white" education departments have observer status only on the various curriculum committees co-ordinated by the Network Committee mentioned above. Furthermore, research projects on syllabus revision are currently assigned to the various "white" education departments only. On completion of a draft revised syllabus for a particular subject, the comments of the "other" education departments are sought before

the document is submitted for approval to the Joint Matriculation Board. So, the actual involvement of education departments (especially the "non-white" departments), let alone the involvement of teachers, in the compilation of "core" syllabuses for the various subjects is minimal. However, once the approved core syllabuses are made available to the education departments for implementation, individual education departments set up their own mechanisms to "flesh-out" these syllabuses for use in their respective schools. The Department of Education and Culture of the Administration: House of Delegates, for example, has established "subject committees" which attend to the matter of preparing syllabuses (based on the core syllabus provided) for use in its schools. Teachers also serve on these subject committees which also attend to orientation courses for teachers, preparation of teaching guidelines and the provision of resource back-up for the implementation of revised syllabuses.

The above-mentioned subject-centred (syllabus-centred) approach to curriculum design and practice is very "technicist" in its orientation and places constraints on teachers at grassroots levels. Taking cognisance of the "technical" approach to curriculum practice as discussed in paragraph 2.4.1.1 above, the teacher is seen as one who needs to have mechanistic skills to be productive in ways envisaged by the designers of the curriculum. In order to ensure that teachers are effective in their circumscribed reproductive work, they are subjected to close supervision and scrutiny by inspectors/superintendents. An effective teacher is one who is able to "deliver the goods" in accordance with objectives and specifications determined by significant others who are also responsible for their ratings for merit recognition and promotion. It would appear that the "technicist" approach to curriculum design and curriculum practice in South Africa has contributed to a "war" between "professionals" and "bureaucrats" in the education scenario. Dissatisfaction with the methods of evaluating teachers and of supervising the work of teachers has been well documented and highlighted in the media. Viewed from a political perspective, calls for "teacher empowerment" and "people's education" are seen as reactions to centrally-imposed prescriptions on the work of teachers, and also to the mode of reasoning which treats the curriculum as something "out there", separate from the socio-political context and historical process. Buckland (1982:171-172) explains that contrary to the narrow view of the curriculum held by certain policy-makers in this country, "a more sophisticated concept of curriculum ... rests on an understanding that curriculum process operates at all levels of education policy from the Minister and his team of experts to the teachers in the classroom, and that the particular selection from the culture which each individual child encounters in the school is determined not simply by some committee of experts ... but by a complex

historical dialectic between the pupil, the teacher and their political, social and historical context".

With reference to Eggleston's (1977) description of variables that come into operation when people make curriculum decisions, Tunmer (1981) states that South African curriculum, syllabus and methodological practices flow from decisions which can be located in the following four variables:

\* Traditional as opposed to Futuristic:

In South Africa, there is a preoccupation with the "retention of long-established curriculum patterns and, therefore, there is lack of desire to break away from uniformity and move towards adaptability, inventiveness and changing interpretations of relevance.

\* Determined as opposed to Innovatory:

In South Africa, the "determined" patterns of curriculum decisions are reflected in the emphasis on traditional subject divisions. Integrative approaches towards knowledge are played down.

\* Commitment-based curriculum as opposed to a contract-based curriculum:

In South Africa, pupils are seen as accepting without question a view of knowledge to which they must aspire through appropriate instruction and initiation. A contract-based curriculum which allows both teachers and pupils to negotiate a view of knowledge is discouraged.

\* Consequential decisions as opposed to Causal decisions:

In South Africa, consequential decisions about the curriculum are made on the assumption that the curriculum as designed by a select group of people, reflects the views of society as a whole. Causal decisions are based on the premise that schooling can change the social structure. This is obviously rejected by the South African authorities.

From the above, it can be concluded that South Africa's education system is essentially a "product-oriented" one which has serious implications for the professionalism of teachers. Tunmer (1981:38) explains that "when a product-orientated education purpose is selected, when the role of education is seen as "moulding" or "forming", and when the teacher's role is seen mainly as that of transmitting knowledge ..., the curriculum and syllabus become overcrowded as there is a perpetual struggle to meet "product-control" demands ... and the range of methods and strategies that the teacher employs is limited".

Behr (1981:68-72) in his research on how students on entry to a course of teacher training (in South Africa) perceive their professional role as teachers, found that "students at the outset of their training see their role as essentially task-centred rather than person-centred". Behr ascribes such perceptions to teacher training itself which is a "process of professional socialisation" during which a student acquires "values, attitudes and ways of behaving" by watching qualified teachers in action and also through the theories of learning he is exposed to.

Having cursorily sketched the socio-political background to education and curriculum practice in South Africa, it is essential to note that in recent years much thought has been given to education renewal in this country. One of the most significant moves in this direction has been the Government's "White Paper on the Provision of Education in the RSA" which was published in 1983 following the findings and recommendations of the De Lange Commission of Inquiry into the provision of education in South Africa. Although separate education departments still exist in the country, the 11 principles for the provision of education in the RSA adopted by the Government stress, inter alia, that the State shall endeavour to provide equal opportunities for education for all, irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex, and that the professional status of the teacher shall be recognized (RSA:1983:3). More importantly, the need to accord "users of the curriculum" the right to have a significant say in curriculum design, and the need for a "central curriculum service" are highlighted in the White Paper (Ibid: 11). Not much has been achieved by way of curriculum renewal or the creation of a single education department for all in this country. In fact, the HSRC's "Guidelines for Curriculum Development" (1986) acknowledges that the recommendations made in the HSRC's Report on Curriculum Development (1981) and in the White Paper (1983) have not materialised. This is understandable since education and curriculum practice can only be reformed if constitutional reform takes place first. The State President's epoch-making speech to Parliament on 2 February 1990 has raised expectations that overall reform of the country's laws, policies and practices is to become a reality soon.

Curriculum reform in the RSA will undoubtedly have implications for the role of teachers in curriculum decision-making. If anything, teachers will be expected to perform an enhanced function with regard to curriculum development, not only at the micro level (classroom/school), but also at the meso level (local authority / regional authority) and the macro level (policy making level). Researchers agree that without teacher-participation in curriculum development, there is little chance of successful curriculum innovation and implementation (HSRC : 1981). However, in the South African context, little research has been done with regard to teachers' views on participation in curriculum decision-making / development. In one of the most notable pieces of research in this regard, Carl (1987) found that at present teachers in South Africa are mainly involved in curriculum activities pertaining to micro curriculum development (in the classroom). Carl's research shows that not only is the physical participation of teachers in curriculum development low but their level of knowledge pertaining to curriculum development is also low. Carl concludes from his research that although teachers desire greater participation in curriculum development, there are serious shortcomings presently and that "a high degree of teacher participation in curriculum development cannot be construed as a fact" (*Ibid* : 113-123).

Research such as that conducted by Carl shows that it is not sufficient merely to ask for a greater say for teachers in curriculum development. There is need to establish whether our teachers are prepared to take on an enhanced professional role as curriculum decision-makers in the future, whether they have the necessary expertise to do so, whether they have been adequately trained to do so, and whether they currently involve themselves in curriculum decision-making (even though on a limited scale, given the system of education in the RSA), and whether there are factors that prevent them from playing a more active role in curriculum development wherever scope exists for same. As explained earlier, not much research has been conducted in this country to determine the above.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

Overall, there is very little by way of books dedicated exclusively to the subject of the professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers. In countries overseas, this entire enterprise is subsumed in the voluminous literature on curriculum development. In South Africa, curriculum development practices are way behind that of countries such as the United States of America, England, Netherlands, Germany and Israel, and, as the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC:1986:56) points out, local literature

on the topic of "curriculating" / curriculum development is limited to the works of about three writers and a "couple of articles in journals".

The literature survey contained in this chapter, however, points to one very important consideration, namely that the professionalism of teachers and teacher participation in curriculum decision-making is embedded deeply in the political and ideological contexts in which teachers operate. The present context of centralised bureaucratic control of education in South Africa is more in keeping with a "technicist" orientation as explored in this Chapter. With continued emphasis on "scientific curriculating", the HSRC notes in this regard that "in the true sense of the word" curriculum development is not practised in South Africa; rather, we have "syllabus compilation" which is sometimes interpreted as curriculum development (HSRC: 1986:56).

The need for the country to break out of the present political and ideological mould that informs our professional and curriculum practices is paramount. Pre-occupation with control and manipulation of the teaching-learning process is not desirable if we are to be moving towards a situation which affords teachers opportunities to develop fully as curriculum decision-makers, albeit as influential and equal partners in the curriculum decision-making process at the local, regional and national levels.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

South African education, according to Steinberg (1982:127), is based on a five-fold historical foundation:

This comprises the established administrative structure directed towards regional and racial compartmentalization, the pervading tradition of centralisation, the special characteristics of the economic and manpower situation, the pressures for drastic social reform in its widest terms, and the quest for equality in education and equality of opportunity.

Looked at from the perspective of curriculum decision-making by teachers, the education system in South Africa is one in which syllabus creation, educational resources, evaluation, examinations and policy directives are manipulated by a central bureaucracy. The claimed divisions of the provision of education in the country in accordance with the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1983 (Act 110 of 1983), have resulted in the creation of four self-contained, ethnically-based education departments for Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. The Department of National Education which is responsible for such matters as norms and standards for syllabuses and professional registration of teachers, is, in the absence of a single ministry of education for all South Africans, seen as the guardian of apartheid education. This makes the need for socio-political and educational reforms in South Africa axiomatic.

Since the publication of the Government's White Paper on the Provision of Education in the Republic of South Africa in 1983, hopes and expectations of the democratisation of education have been raised. Many of the non-racial, non-credal and non-sexist principles espoused in the White Paper have found expression in publications of the Department of National Education including its policy document entitled Educational Programmes for Pre-tertiary Education in South Africa (NATED 02-124:88/06).

Although the two very important considerations pertinent to this study, namely that there should be democratisation of decision-making on education / curriculum matters and that

teachers as professionals should be part of the decision-making process, do not emerge clearly from the abovementioned publications, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in its guidelines for curriculum development in the RSA acknowledges the need for teachers to be accommodated in democratic structures that would be concerned with curriculum decision-making. In fact, the HSRC warns that if there is no democratisation of decision-making with regard to curriculum development, the entire process is likely to revert to the bureaucratic/mechanistic mode of "curriculum" as it exists presently (HSRC:1986:25). These considerations augur well for a more meaningful participation in curriculum decision-making by teachers in the future since they tend to convey universally-accepted notions of affording people at grassroots levels greater autonomy and a right to influence decisions taken.

### **3.2 AIM OF THE STUDY**

Against the background of the envisaged enhancement of the professional status of teachers in South Africa in the future, the aim of this research study was to investigate constraints on the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers.

Such constraints may relate to the attitudes and perceptions of teachers themselves with regard to their participation in curriculum decision-making, their skills, their competence, the leadership styles of management staff at schools, the impact of the curriculum policy of the Department, time, resources and the prescriptions made by the superintendents of education. It is the writer's contention that the identification and removal of these constraints is vital if teachers are to participate meaningfully and as professionals in curriculum decision-making, not only at the micro-level of the school, but also at the meso (regional / departmental) and macro (national) levels.

### **3.3 NATURE OF THE METHODOLOGY**

Consistent with the aim of this study, the focus of attention was on existing constraints on the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers. Accordingly, it was decided that descriptive survey research would be used for the purposes of this study. The survey, according to Behr (1973:10) "is one of the most widely used types of descriptive research" for obtaining essential knowledge about the nature of persons,

events and objects. Lovell and Lawson (1970) underscore this viewpoint by stating that descriptive survey research focuses on prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, attitudes, processes and emerging trends. Good (1963), in his discussion on the purposes of descriptive survey investigations, states that such studies / methods enable the researcher to secure evidence concerning an existing situation with a view to determining how to take the next step, that is, only after we have determined where we are can we decide where we wish to go to. It follows that, despite possible limitations of descriptive survey research, such studies are extremely "helpful in contributing to other types of investigations" (Good : 1963:245). Most certainly, since survey investigations of present conditions are concerned essentially with history in the making, critics of the descriptive research method who maintain that such a method is superficial and not a forward-looking approach are provided with an answer when adequate survey data are used with insight "for forward-looking purposes" (Ibid).

### **3.4 SAMPLING DESIGN**

#### **3.4.1 Unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis in this study was teachers. Taking into account the need to limit costs associated with this study at an affordable level and thereby maintain a manageable size of the study, and also access to schools by the writer and the writer's personal knowledge of Indian secondary schools, the target population of teachers included only those teachers at Indian secondary schools in the Greater Durban Area, administered by the Department of Education and Culture (Administration : House of Delegates). The decision to focus on teachers in the Greater Durban Area was prompted, further, by the fact that in accordance with the geographical distribution of Indians in South Africa the greatest concentration of Indians in the country is in the Greater Durban Area which has almost 50% of the total number of Indian secondary schools countrywide. Accordingly, the Greater Durban Area has almost 50% of the secondary school teachers employed by the Indian (House of Delegates) Department of Education and Culture throughout the country.

### 3.4.2 Sample

The population of teachers sampled was a heterogeneous one comprising 3 sub-populations or strata, namely

- \* Level 3 Teachers: Principals / Senior Deputy Principals / Deputy Principals
- \* Level 2 Teachers: Heads of Departments
- \* Level 1 Teachers: Teachers (Classroom practitioners not holding promotion posts in schools.)

On the basis of staff returns submitted by the 60 Indian secondary schools in the Greater Durban Area, the Department of Education and Culture made available a sampling frame representing the size of each of the homogeneous strata described above as well as the size of the total target population:

- \* Level 3 : 147 members (5,53%)
- \* Level 2 : 469 members (17,65%)
- \* Level 1 : 2042 members (76,82%)

Total : 2658 members (100%)

The professional position the writer holds in the Department of Education and Culture enabled him to have prior knowledge of the composition of the population and to decide on the use of the stratified random sample technique to draw a sample representative of the population. Furthermore, since there were fewer Level 3 teachers than Level 2 teachers, and fewer Level 2 teachers than Level 1 teachers in the population, it was decided that a stratified random sample determined on a proportional basis would more accurately reflect the population.

Writers such as Kish (1965) and Fowler (1984) explain that several factors can influence the size of the sample used in educational research and that although it is generally accepted that the larger the sample size the more precise the statistics, it is difficult to set an exact sample size in survey research. Fowler (1984:40) maintains that the vast majority of survey samples involve very small fractions of populations and that "small increments in the fraction of the population included in a sample will have no effect on the ability of a

researcher to generalise from a sample to a population". He goes on to say that "a sample of 150 people will describe a population of 15 000 or 15 million with virtually the same degree of accuracy, assuming all other aspects of the sample design and sampling procedures were the same" (op.cit:41).

Stoker (1983:34) states that the basic reason for using stratification in the case of a heterogeneous population is that "the same precision of estimates can be obtained with a much smaller sample by using stratified random sampling rather than simple random sampling". He adds that other factors such as "administrative convenience" and the "cost of the survey" are also important considerations when deciding on sample size.

Taking into account the fact that stratification is "a very powerful tool in obtaining a representative sample" (op.cit:35), and that a large sample would not necessarily yield profoundly different findings in survey research, it was decided that a sample size of 7% of the total population would be used. Seven percent of the total population amounted to a total sample size of 186 teachers, a manageable number to work with. The total sample size of 186 (7% of 2658) yielded the following proportionally determined sub-samples:

- \* Level 3 : 5,53% of 186 = 10,29 out of 147 = 10 members
- \* Level 2 : 17,65% of 186 = 32,83 out of 469 = 33 members
- \* Level 1 : 76,82% of 186 = 142,88 out of 2042 = 143 members

When the total sample of 186 members was drawn, it emerged that the sample included teachers from 58 of the 60 Indian secondary schools in the Greater Durban Area.

### **3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

Since the objective of this study was to gather data on teachers' perceptions of constraints on their professional development as curriculum decision-makers, it was decided that surveying the opinions of teachers themselves on this issue would be the best way of obtaining the necessary information. Accordingly, it was determined that a mailed questionnaire would be the most suitable instrument to be employed for this purpose.

Time and cost constraints, which affect all aspects of survey research, imposed limits on the mode of administration of the questionnaire. The mode of self-administration was preferred and it was decided that the mail survey technique would be employed.

Researchers feel that mail surveys sometimes produce more valid responses to certain types of questions where the presence of an interviewer may be inhibiting (Rossi et al :1983; Fowler : 1984). Rossi et al (1983:198) state that apart from the fact that low cost makes the mailed questionnaire an obvious choice, it is most definitely a good means of collecting data from members of professional organizations.

In order to compare responses, an identical questionnaire was designed and administered to all 3 sub-samples in the study (See Appendix 1). The actual generation of questions was preceded by a literature survey to determine factors relevant to the problem. Admittedly, there is a dearth of literature, on the topic being researched, in this country. However, local publications were supplemented by overseas research findings as well as the writer's exploratory conversations with teachers and experts on the subject.

The various items in the questionnaire focused on teacher participation in curriculum decision-making with reference to the following:

- \* ✓ Knowledge/awareness of the issues involved. *Can issues*
- \* ✓ Respondents' interest in the matter as well as their concern about it.
- \* ✓ Respondents' attitudes towards the matter. *air pollution*
- \* ✓ Reasons for respondents' feeling the way they do about the matter.
- \* ✓ How strongly respondents felt about the matter.
- \* ✓ Respondents' expectations for the future with regard to curriculum decision-making.
- \* ✓ Respondents' perceptions of the attitudes of significant others on the matter.
- \* ✓ Respondents' competence to become involved in the matter.

Of the 41 items in the questionnaire, 5 included open-ended response types. It was accepted that some open-ended questions were necessary since such questions would allow respondents to answer in their own frames of reference. However, the actual number of open-ended questions was limited since it was also accepted that such questions invariably elicit a great deal of repetition and irrelevant material which takes a long time to sift through. The use of mostly closed questions, including those with specified 3 and 5 point scales, was preferred. This facilitated the coding of respondents in terms of response categories.

The sequence of items in the questionnaire was such that one question led logically and naturally to another. To prevent respondents from becoming disconcerted by shifting from

one topic to the next and back, questions on various areas of the topic were grouped together.

The vocabulary used in the questionnaire attempted to be simple and a broad definition of the term "curriculum" was provided since the term "curriculum" is used variously to describe different notions of what it embraces. Care was taken to ensure that questions and alternatives were not loaded so as to prevent one-sided arguments being presented.

### **3.6 PROCEDURE**

The questionnaire was pre-tested to reveal any major difficulties or weaknesses in the instrument. The pre-test sample of eight teachers was not chosen at random but selected, by a principal of a school known to the writer, from outside the survey sample. The teachers in the pre-test sample represented all 3 sub-samples used in the survey. The pre-test did not reveal the necessity for revision of the instrument and the final version of the questionnaire was thus prepared.

The questionnaire was posted individually to each of the teachers in the sample together with a covering letter (Appendix 1) which set out the purpose of the survey and the time allocated for returns. The confidentiality of information provided by respondents was assured. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was also provided to each member in the sample. The principals of each of the 58 schools were informed simultaneously in writing (Appendix 2) of the research being undertaken and a copy of the letter of authorisation from the Department to conduct the research (Appendix 3) was also provided. Principals were advised that they were not expected to assist by way of collecting completed questionnaires as teachers in the sample would be returning these directly to the writer using the stamped, self-addressed envelopes provided. The reason for doing this was to ensure that respondents would not be inhibited by the fact the principals would have access to the type of data provided by individual teachers on the staff of schools.

### **3.7 RESPONSE**

Initially, only 61 completed questionnaires were returned to the writer. As this represented just 32,79% of the respondents in the sample, a follow-up letter (Appendix 4) was sent to all teachers in the sample. This was followed by a telephonic request to the principals of each of the 58 schools to enquire whether there were teachers on their staff who required

additional time to complete the questionnaire. It should be noted that the telephonic conversation with principals of schools was in no way intended to put pressure on the respondents or to influence their responses. In fact, an appeal was made to them not to intimidate teachers who had not responded. The follow-up methods used resulted in an additional 53 completed questionnaires being returned to the writer, thereby bringing up the total number of respondents to 114. This figure represented a response rate of 61,29% which was distributed as follows in terms of the 3 sub-samples:

- \* Level 3 : 10 respondents (100% of sub-sample)
- \* Level 2 : 23 respondents (69,70% of sub-sample)
- \* Level 1 : 81 respondents (56,64% of sub-sample)

Total : 114 respondents (61,29% of total sample)

In addition to the above, 10 "uncompleted questionnaires" were returned marked "addressee unknown". It was subsequently established that the sampling frame (computer print-out of the names of teachers in the Greater Durban Area) provided by the Department of Education and Culture had still to be updated in terms of teachers seeking transfers to other schools during the course of the year. Furthermore, from the figures presented above it was clear that unlike the level 3 and level 2 teachers, almost 43% of the level 1 teachers in the sample did not respond. The possible reasons for this could have been the pressure of work on teachers, apathy on the part of some teachers and even the timing of the questionnaire. The writer did establish subsequently that in some cases teachers in the sample were heavily committed to tasks pertaining to their pupils' year-end examinations and that at that stage answering the questionnaire was low down in their list of priorities. It is also possible that some of teachers in the sample did not respond because they were on leave at the time preparing for university examinations.

It is accepted that a response rate of more than 61,29% would have enhanced the acceptability of the findings of the study. However, the point of view taken here is that a response rate of 61,29% is sufficient to enable the writer to draw tentative conclusions about the topic being researched and to make proposals in this regard.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In keeping with the stratified random sample used in this study, data in respect of the various items in the questionnaire were analysed in terms of each of the three groups of respondents (Levels 1,2 and 3) as well as their collective responses in respect of their perceptions of the scope for, nature of, and constraints on participation by teachers in curriculum decision-making.

The analysis of the data and the findings were categorised, in the main, in terms of teacher-participation in decision-making with reference to the "broad curriculum" and "subject curricula". The term "curriculum", as used in this study, is defined in Chapter 1 whereas decision-making with reference to the "broad curriculum" and "subject curricula" is discussed in Chapter 3.

Being essentially a descriptive study, frequency tables were used to reflect the responses to the various items in the questionnaire. Where possible, the findings were corroborated by evidence emanating from other research studies conducted locally and / or abroad. Where necessary, also, explanations were rendered in respect of certain findings which had a direct bearing on the Department of Education and Culture's policy in respect of curriculum decision-making.

#### 4.2 PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF RESPONDENTS

Tables 1-4 below provide data in respect of the respondents in terms of the variables: rank, sex, teaching experience and qualifications.

**TABLE 1: Total number of respondents in terms of rank / post-level (Item 1 of the Questionnaire)**

Rank / Post-Level	N=114	No.	%
Level 3 : Principal / Senior Deputy Principal / Deputy Principal		10	8,77
Level 2: Head of Department		23	20,18
Level 1: Teacher		81	71,05
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>114</b>	<b>100,00</b>

**TABLE 2 : Sex distribution for the 3 groups of respondents (Item 2 of the Questionnaire)**

Sex	Post-Level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	9	90,00	18	78,26	35	43,21	62	54,39
Female	1	10,00	5	21,74	46	56,79	52	45,61
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100,00</b>

**TABLE 3: Total number of years of teaching experience of the 3 groups of respondents (Item 3 of the Questionnaire)**

Teaching Experience	Post-Level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
01-05 years	-	-	-	-	29	35,80	29	25,43
06-10 years	-	-	-	-	23	28,40	23	20,18
11-15 years	-	-	1	4,35	17	20,99	18	15,79
16-20 years	-	-	14	60,87	9	11,11	23	20,18
20+ years	10	100,00	8	34,78	3	3,70	21	18,42
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

**TABLE 4: Qualifications of the 3 groups of respondents (Item 4 of the Questionnaire)**

Qualifications	Post-Level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teaching Diploma(s) only	-	-	1	4,35	36	44,44	37	32,46
Degree(s) + Teaching Diploma(s)	10	100,00	22	95,65	30	37,04	62	54,38
Degree(s) only	-	-	-	-	15	18,52	15	13,16
None of the above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

The representativeness of the respondents in terms of post-level / rank, sex, teaching experience and qualifications is highlighted in the 4 tables above.

#### **4.3 PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING IN RESPECT OF THE "BROAD CURRICULUM" OF SCHOOLS (ITEMS 5-15 OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE)**

Hawes (1972:13) explains that the "broad curriculum is generally understood to mean all the learning which is planned and provided for children at schools". He states further that curriculum development embodying forms of curriculum decision-making comprises the process whereby "what" schools teach and "how" they teach it is decided. However, classical bureaucratic theory maintains that schools have a well-defined hierarchy of authority over curriculum decision-making, that is, power is centralised in the hands of superintendents / inspectors whose chain of command proceeds downwards to principals, to heads of departments, and, then, to teachers (Parsons:1964). Such a theory obviously disregards the effects of the existence of teacher professionalism and different leadership styles on the process of decision-making in schools. Lortie (1964) points out that, because of the interplay of bureaucratisation and professionalism in schools, the process of decision-making in schools cannot be perceived of as residing in the hands of the upper echelons of the school management and authority structure only.

Given the bureaucratic orientation towards curriculum design, development and implementation in South Africa, future recognition of the professionalism of teachers and allowing them to participate in curriculum decision-making will undoubtedly depend on the management styles of principals of schools and that of departments of education. Table 5 below indicates how the respondents perceived the present centralisation / distribution of authority in respect of curriculum decision-making in schools:

**TABLE 5 : Centralisation / distribution of authority in respect of curriculum decision-making in schools (Item 5 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The Principal alone	1	10,00	2	8,69	4	4,94	7	6,14
The Principal and his management team	4	40,00	10	43,48	58	71,60	72	63,16
The Management Staff in consultation with teachers	5	50,00	11	47,83	19	23,46	35	30,70
The teachers themselves (excluding management staff)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

Almost two-thirds (63,16%) of the respondents expressed the view that the principal and his management team (that is, the senior deputy principal, deputy principal and heads of departments) made most of the decisions concerning the "broad curriculum" of the school. Only 6,14% of the respondents seemed to indicate that an autocratic management style prevailed in schools, by stating that the principal alone took all the curriculum decisions in schools. Whilst none of the respondents indicated that teachers (Level 1) themselves were responsible for decision-making regarding the "broad curriculum" of schools, 30,70% did concede that the management staff of schools consulted teachers on such matters. From the above, it can be inferred that respondents felt that authority in respect of curriculum decision-making in schools was centralised and essentially in the hands of principals and their management staff.

Limited or no consultation with Level 1 teachers on decision-making with regard to the "broad curriculum" was also borne out by the data in Table 6 below.

**TABLE 6 : Opportunities for teacher participation in curriculum decision-making in schools.  
(Item 9 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	7	70,00	12	52,17	19	23,46	38	33,34
Not sure	2	20,00	6	26,09	41	50,62	49	42,98
No	1	10,00	5	21,74	21	25,92	27	23,68
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

In Table 5 it was observed that only 30,70% of the respondents felt that the management staff of schools consulted teachers on curriculum matters before decisions were made. Table 6 corroborates this evidence - only 33,34% of the respondents felt that opportunities existed in schools for teacher participation in curriculum decision-making. It was noted, further, that although 50% of the respondents who were of the view that opportunities existed for teacher participation in curriculum decision-making in schools were Level 1 teachers, they represented only 23,46% of the total number of Level 1 respondents. As opposed to this view, the majority of the respondents (66,66% : "Not sure" and "No" responses combined) could not state in the affirmative that their schools afforded teachers opportunities to participate in curriculum decision-making. Of these, 76,54% of the respondents were Level 1 teachers. The data in Table 6 also revealed that whilst the majority of the Level 3 respondents (70%) seemed to think that schools provided teachers with opportunities to participate in decision-making, almost 50% of the Level 2 respondents (Heads of Departments) seemed to agree with the majority of the Level 1 respondents (classroom practitioners) that opportunities for such participation did not exist. It is understandable that the 70% Level 3 respondents (mainly principals of schools) would want to state that their schools provided opportunities for teacher participation in curriculum decision-making. If they did not do so, it would be a serious indictment on them as principals, especially in view of the fact that they stated in response to item 7 of the questionnaire that teachers should have a say in decisions relating to the curriculum of the school.

In their open-ended responses (Item 10 of the Questionnaire) those respondents (33,34%) who felt that opportunities did exist at schools for teacher participation in curriculum decision-making, provided the following most frequently cited examples:

- \* Teachers are requested to come up with new ideas regarding the "broad curriculum" and to explain these at staff meetings.
- \* Staff meetings are such that they encourage open discussion on curriculum matters.
- \* Teachers make inputs on such matters as time-tables, examinations, field trips and grading of pupils.
- \* Teachers enjoy a degree of autonomy in the classroom and participate in decision-making regarding subject curricula.

The above-mentioned findings in respect of the centralisation / distribution of authority in respect of decision-making pertaining to the broad curriculum of schools can be crystallised as follows:

The majority of the respondents felt that decision-making was in the hands of principals and their management teams. Only around 30% of the respondents expressed the view that there was some consultation with Level 1 teachers on decisions regarding curriculum matters. Those respondents (33,34%) who tended to think that opportunities existed for teachers to participate in curriculum decision-making cited inputs at staff meetings and on time-tabling, scheduling of examinations, etc as examples of such opportunities. Possibly, more of the respondents would have cited these examples as well if they were convinced that their inputs on such matters actually influenced decisions taken. It is, therefore, not surprising that only 23,46% of the Level 1 respondents seemed to think that teacher-participation in decision-making existed in schools.

#### **4.4 DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING (ITEM 6 OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE)**

All the respondents (100%) indicated that they wished to be involved in curriculum decision-making in schools. This is a significant finding in the South African context -

teachers wish to become involved not only out of concern for the type of education provided for pupils, but also in the interest of their own professional development. Carl (1987) in his investigation involving 63 schools in the Cape Province also found that the great majority of the respondents in his study had indicated that they would prefer greater participation in curriculum development than they actually enjoyed in reality.

A 100% positive response was also registered in respect of the notion that teachers should have a say in decisions relating to the curriculum of their school (Item 7 of the Questionnaire). The most frequently cited reasons gleaned from their open-ended responses (Item 8 of the Questionnaire) in support of this view were:

- \* Teachers are in direct contact with pupils and they are, therefore, in the best position to assess the needs of pupils.
- \* The views of professionals at the grassroots level need to be taken into account when curriculum decisions are made.
- \* Teachers are responsible for the operationalisation of the curriculum. They should, therefore, have a say in the "what" and the "how" of the curriculum.
- \* Participation in curriculum decision-making can serve as a basis for further professional training.
- \* Teachers (Level 1) are an integral part of the school management corps.
- \* Classroom practice will improve and teachers will become more committed to their jobs if they share responsibility for the curriculum decisions made.

All the respondents (100%) either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement that "involvement in curriculum decision-making will contribute to the professional development of teachers" (Item 12 of the Questionnaire). In this regard, the respondents were quite certain about who should be responsible for curriculum decision-making in a school (Item 15 of the Questionnaire). Whereas only one respondent (Level 3) was of the view that the principal and his management staff should be responsible for this, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (97,37%) stated that this should be a joint effort

involving the entire staff, including the principal, other management staff members and all the Level 1 teachers. There were two respondents, however, who felt that this should be the responsibility of Level 1 teachers alone.

To summarise, the respondents were unanimous in their view that participation in curriculum decision-making would contribute to the professional development of teachers. They had no doubts about their desire to become involved in curriculum decision-making, and stressed that curriculum decision-making should be a joint effort involving the entire staff at a school. It is ironical that although 100% of the respondents felt strongly that participation in curriculum decision-making would contribute to the professional development of teachers, only 33,34% stated that opportunities existed in their schools for such participation. Surely, if principals feel strongly about the need for teachers to participate in curriculum decision-making, then as heads of schools they should be in a position to create opportunities for such participation in their schools. One can infer from this mismatch between what is "desired" and that which "exists" that there are factors that militate against teachers participating in curriculum decision making.

#### 4.5 PERCEPTION OF ATTITUDES OF SIGNIFICANT OTHERS TOWARDS TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING.

Tables 7 and 8 show how the respondents perceived the attitudes of management staff at schools and of the Department of Education and Culture towards teacher participation in curriculum decision-making.

**TABLE 7: Attitude of management staff of schools towards teacher participation in curriculum decision-making (Item 13 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3 No.	%	Level 2 No.	%	Level 1 No.	%	TOTAL No.	%
Very positive	5	50,00	9	39,13	5	6,17	19	16,67
Positive	5	50,00	9	30,13	36	44,45	50	43,86
Not very positive	-	-	5	21,74	40	49,38	45	39,47
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	-	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

**TABLE 8 : Attitude of the Department towards teacher participation in curriculum decision-making (Item 14 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very positive	4	40,00	13	56,52	4	4,94	21	18,42
Positive	4	40,00	6	29,09	44	54,32	54	47,37
Not very positive	2	20,00	4	17,39	33	40,74	39	34,21
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

Interestingly, in each instance the majority of the respondents expressed the view that management staff at schools as well as the Department adopted either a "very positive" or "positive" attitude towards teacher participation in curriculum decision-making. However, 5,26% more respondents indicated that the Department was either "very positive" or "positive" in this regard. Notwithstanding the above, 39.47% of the respondents perceived school management staff as being "not very positive" towards teacher participation in curriculum decision-making. Looked at from the perspective of Level 1 teachers, 49,38% of them were of this view. They seemed to enjoy support from 21,74% of the Level 2 respondents whereas all the Level 3 respondents (principals / senior deputy principals / deputy principals) indicated that school management staff were "positive" on this issue. The 34.21% of the respondents who did not perceive the Department as being very positive towards teacher participation in curriculum decision-making, comprised respondents mainly from Level 1, but also from Levels 2 and 3.

From the above it was clear that although the majority of the respondents (from all 3 strata) perceived both the management staff at schools and the Department as being supportive of teacher participation in curriculum decision-making, over a third of the respondents stated quite categorically that they did not perceive them as such. In addition to possible differences in perception among respondents of what constitutes teacher participation in curriculum decision-making, two reasons could be advanced for this, namely, that a participative management style was lacking in some schools and the

Department's standpoint on the matter was not clearly communicated to schools. It is noted that schools are unaware of the Department's existing policy on the matter of teacher participation in curriculum decision-making. However, during their visits to schools superintendents do interpret policies of the Department in respect of various matters. Possibly, a clear, written policy statement on this issue is needed.

#### **4.6 PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING WITH REGARD TO SUBJECT CURRICULA**

From the writer's own experience as a secondary school teacher and also as a curriculum planner in the Department of Education and Culture, it is observed that, unlike the primary schools, secondary schools make greater use of "specialist" teachers. As can be expected, the majority of the respondents in this study (67,54%) demonstrated that they were teaching subjects that they were suitably qualified to teach. In this regard, it is noted that the Department has not issued a policy statement regarding the creation of substantive teaching posts at schools. It is, therefore, accepted that some schools, on account of their time-tabling and staffing problems, allocate so-called "filler" subjects to specialist teachers in order to make up their teaching load, but the fact that almost one third of the respondents indicated that they were teaching subjects they were not suitably qualified to teach, is disturbing. These respondents were not referring to the so-called "filler" subjects, but to subjects that made up the bulk of their teaching load. From the respondents' written inputs in this regard, it was easy to compare the subjects they had listed under the headings "qualified to teach" and "actually teaching" (Items 16.1 and 16.2 of the Questionnaire).

Notwithstanding the concern expressed above, it was encouraging to note that 75,68% of the respondents who indicated that they were teaching subjects they were not qualified to teach, were actually consulted on the subjects they were allocated (Item 17 of the Questionnaire).

On the question of whether respondents felt that teachers should be allowed to select the subjects / standards they would like to teach, their responses revealed the following:

**TABLE 9 : Desire to select subject / standards taught  
(Item 20 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	7	70,00	18	78,26	64	79,01	89	78,07
Not sure	1	10,00	1	4,35	11	13,58	13	11,40
No	2	20,00	4	17,39	6	7,41	12	10,53
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

The majority of the respondents (78,07%) expressed the view that teachers should be allowed to select the subjects/standards they would like to teach. This finding was in keeping with an earlier finding, namely, the expressed desire of 100% of the respondents to become involved in decision-making pertaining to the broad curriculum of the school. However, although 62,28% of the respondents indicated that they were given the opportunity to teach the standards of their choice, the Level 1 respondents were clearly divided on this issue (Item 19 of the Questionnaire).

Focusing specifically on the subject which contributed to the greatest portion of their teaching load, respondents indicated whether they had a say in the matters listed in Table 10 below:

**TABLE 10: Say in matters pertaining to specialist subject  
(Item 21 of the Questionnaire)**

Response		Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The content of the syllabuses:	Yes	5	50,00	9	39,13	16	19,75	30	26,3
	No	5	50,00	14	60,87	65	80,25	84	73,6
The schemes of work for the year:	Yes	9	90,00	20	86,96	47	58,02	76	66,6
	No	1	10,00	3	13,04	34	41,98	38	33,3
The selection of textbooks:	Yes	4	40,00	11	47,83	29	35,80	44	38,6
	No	6	60,00	12	52,17	52	64,20	70	61,4
Selection of other curriculum materials:	Yes	7	70,00	15	65,22	28	34,57	50	43,8
	No	3	30,00	8	34,78	53	65,43	64	56,1
Teaching guidelines for the subject:	Yes	6	60,00	15	65,22	36	44,44	57	50,0
	No	4	40,00	8	34,78	45	55,56	57	50,0
Approach(es) to the teaching of the subject:	Yes	9	90,00	19	82,61	57	70,37	85	74,5
	No	1	10,00	4	17,39	24	29,63	29	25,4
The testing programme for the year:	Yes	8	80,00	19	82,61	45	55,56	72	63,1
	No	2	20,00	4	17,39	36	44,44	42	36,8
The use of periods allocated to the subject:	Yes	6	60,00	11	47,83	29	35,80	46	40,1
	No	4	40,00	12	52,17	52	64,20	68	59,6

With reference to the first item in Table 10, namely a say in the content of syllabuses, it is not surprising that the majority of the respondents (73,68%) indicated that they had no say in this regard. In the South African context, not just in schools under the control of the Department of Education and Culture (Administration : House of Delegates), the content of syllabuses is centrally determined. Schools enjoy only the flexibility of determining the schemes of work for the year, that is how and when the prescribed content may be taught during the course of the academic year. So-called "core" syllabuses are prepared by the Department of Education and Culture (Administration : House of Assembly), and other education departments are not allowed to omit any aspect of the content of these syllabuses. The 26,32% of the respondents who indicated that they had a say in the content of syllabuses, were all members (as per their response to Item 34 of the Questionnaire) of the Department's subject committees which are entrusted with the task of preparing / elaborating upon syllabuses prepared by the House of Assembly's Department of Education and Culture. The fact that 33,33% of the respondents (including one Level 3 respondent and three Level 2 respondents) indicated that they did not have a say in the schemes of work for the year, once again highlighted the fact that the autocratic management style of principals of some schools tended to be reflected in responses of this nature.

Apart from reference and library books, schools are not at liberty to prescribe textbooks of their choice. This function is performed by the Department which maintains a Catalogue of Textbooks for "control" purposes. The 38,60% of the respondents who indicated that they had a say in the selection of textbooks seemed to express the view that they were free to choose from among the alternative titles prescribed in the Department's Catalogue of Textbooks. It would appear that the majority of the respondents did not enjoy this privilege at their schools. Also worthy of note in this regard is the fact that respondents who were members of the Department's subject committees would have had a say in the selection of textbooks as this is one of the functions of these subject committees.

On the matter of selection of curriculum materials, it appeared that while the majority of the Level 3 and Level 2 respondents, 70% and 65,22% respectively, seemed to think that teachers had a say in this regard, the majority of the Level 1 respondents (65,43%) did not believe that this was so. Overall, 56,14% of the respondents stated that they did not have a say in this matter.

With regard to the preparation of teaching guidelines for specialist subjects, respondents were divided on whether they had a say or not. An examination of the responses of the respondents from each of the three strata individually, revealed that more Level 3 and Level 2 respondents than Level 1 respondents had a say in this regard.

74,56% of the respondents indicated that they had a say in the approach(es) to the teaching of their specialist subject. The fact that 25,44% of the respondents did not share this view implies that there was a degree of prescription on this matter from some internal or extraneous source. Had time been available for follow-up interviews, this matter would have been pursued further. It is important to note that some of these respondents were heads of departments, deputy principals and senior deputy principals.

Clearly, the majority of the respondents were of the view that they did not have a say in most matters pertaining to the subject which contributed to the greatest portion of their teaching load. Not surprisingly, more Level 1 respondents than Level 3 and Level 2 respondents seemed to share this view. Whilst it is accepted that in a centralised bureaucratic education system, such as the one prevalent in the South African context, one can expect a high degree of prescription from the top to the bottom, prescription in respect of the items raised above seems to be totally unnecessary if we are moving towards a situation where the professional status and autonomy of the teacher are recognized.

To assess how the respondents themselves felt about teachers having a say in these matters, they were asked to indicate on a 3-point scale, using "yes", "not sure" and "no" response categories, whether teachers should have a say in the items listed in Table 10. The majority of the respondents were convinced that teachers should have a say in these matters and this was demonstrated in the percentage "yes" responses to the items listed below (Item 22 of the Questionnaire):

* The content of syllabuses	:	88,60%
* Schemes of work for the year	:	96,49%
* Selection of textbooks	:	93,86%
* Teaching guidelines for the subject	:	90,35%
* Testing programme for the year	:	100,00%
* Use of periods allocated	:	94,74%

As in the case of participation in decision-making concerning the "broad curriculum" of the school, it was found that, overall, the respondents were given less opportunities for participation in subject curriculum decision-making than they desired. With the possible exception of "the content of syllabuses" and the "selection of textbooks", which are presently subject to prescriptions made by the Department, it is inconceivable why all teachers are not given a say in the matters listed above. The further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers will not be possible if teachers are denied opportunities to decide on these basic matters which impact on what goes on in the classroom.

#### 4.7 PERCEPTIONS OF THE ADEQUACY OF PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Data in respect of the respondents' perceptions on the adequacy of pre-service and in-service education programmes in focusing attention on the need for teachers to become involved in curriculum decision-making, is captured in Tables 11 and 12 respectively.

**TABLE 11: Perceptions of respondents regarding the adequacy of pre-service education (teacher training) programmes. (Item 23 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	-	-	2	8,70	13	16,05	15	13,16
Not sure	5	50,00	6	26,09	27	33,33	38	33,33
No	5	50,00	15	65,21	41	50,62	61	53,51
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

With reference to Table 11, only 13,16% of the respondents were able to state categorically that pre-service education programmes provided teachers with the necessary training to involve themselves in curriculum decision-making. Overall, there seemed to be unanimity among all three categories of respondents that pre-service education programmes did not

focus adequately on teacher involvement in curriculum decision-making. Also, it was noted that the 33,33% of the respondents who were "not sure" about the nature of pre-service education programmes in this regard, were possibly reluctant to commit themselves to a simple "yes" or "no" response because of a lack of on-going contact with institutions that provide pre-service education programmes - much could have changed since the time they were teacher-trainees at these institutions. It is acknowledged, however, that this explanation is based on the assumption made by the writer that all the respondents concerned had a clear understanding of what was meant by "curriculum decision-making" as used in the context of Item 23 of the Questionnaire.

**TABLE 12: Perceptions of respondents regarding the adequacy of in-service education programmes of the Department (Item 28 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	3	30,00	4	17,39	13	16,05	20	17,54
Not sure	3	30,00	13	56,52	48	59,26	64	56,14
No	4	40,00	6	26,09	20	24,69	30	26,32
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

With regard to Table 12, it was interesting to observe that the majority of the respondents (56,14%) were "not sure" whether the Department's in-service education programmes focused attention on the need for teacher involvement in curriculum decision-making. Several interpretations could be given to this: For example, these 56,14% of the respondents were possibly never present at any of the Department's in-service education programmes and were, therefore, not in a position to provide a simple "yes" or "no" response in this regard. Alternatively, they could have been present at one or any number of the Department's in-service education programmes but were not sure whether the presenters of these programmes (Superintendents) perceived teacher involvement in curriculum decision-making in the same way as they did. Respondents (Item 29 of the Questionnaire) who were able to state quite categorically that the Department's in-service education programmes were not designed taking into account the needs of teachers,

perceived the following bases on which the Department designed its in-service education programmes for teachers (Item 30 of the Questionnaire):

- \* The needs of the Department and, more particularly, the needs of certain officials were paramount. The need to maintain the status quo was important and in-service education programmes served as a vehicle to reinforce this.
- \* The need to perpetuate a "national policy" and to ensure that certain norms and standards are maintained.
- \* To update teachers' knowledge base as well as their teaching methods and use of audio-visual aids.
- \* The need to orientate teachers with regard to revised syllabuses and policy changes.
- \* To burden teachers further and to ensure that they conform.

With reference to Item 31 of the Questionnaire, this study also showed that 76,32% of the respondents ("not sure" and "no" responses combined) could not state categorically that the staff development programmes at their schools stressed the need for teachers to become involved in curriculum decision-making. While the majority of the Level 3 respondents (mainly principals) seemed to feel that their staff development programmes were in fact addressing this need, the Level 1 and Level 2 respondents were clearly not convinced that this was in fact the case at their schools. Possibly, the nature of teacher involvement in curriculum decision-making was interpreted differently by the respondents. Table 13 below shows the responses elicited in this regard.

**TABLE 13: Focus of staff development programmes of schools on curriculum decision-making**

Response	Post-Level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	6	60,00	8	34,78	13	16,05	27	23,68
Not sure	3	30,00	7	30,44	33	40,74	43	37,72
No	1	10,00	8	34,78	35	43,21	44	38,60
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	34,78	35	41,21	114	100,00

#### 4.8 COMPETENCE TO PARTICIPATE IN CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

The data collected in Table 14 below indicates that the majority of the respondents in all three categories were of the view that they were competent enough to engage in curriculum decision-making. However, 25,44% of the respondents were "not sure" whether they had the necessary expertise to engage in curriculum decision-making (Item 24 of the Questionnaire). Admittedly, their "not sure" responses could have been as a result of ambiguity concerning the nature and extent of participation in curriculum decision-making which were not defined fully in the preamble to the Questionnaire.

**TABLE 14: Competence to become involved in curriculum decision-making**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	9	90,00	21	91,30	53	65,43	83	72,81
Not sure	1	10,00	2	8,70	26	32,10	29	25,44
No	-	-	-	-	2	2,47	2	1,75
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

Table 15 below shows the respondents' knowledge of various curriculum related matters.

**TABLE 15: Knowledge of curriculum related matters  
(Item 25 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. National curriculum policy of the RSA:								
Yes	2	20,00	8	34,78	18	22,22	28	24,56
No	8	80,00	15	65,22	63	77,78	86	75,44
2. Curriculum policy of the Department:								
Yes	6	60,00	11	47,83	22	27,16	39	34,21
No	4	40,00	12	52,17	59	72,84	75	65,79
3. Curriculum policy of the school:								
Yes	10	100,00	22	95,65	38	46,92	70	61,40
No	-	-	1	4,35	43	53,08	44	38,60
4. Role of the Joint Matriculation Board:								
Yes	8	80,00	14	60,87	33	40,74	55	48,25
No	2	20,00	9	39,13	48	59,26	59	51,75
5. Department's role in syllabus development:								
Yes	7	70,00	10	43,48	23	28,40	40	35,09
No	3	30,00	13	56,52	58	71,60	74	64,91
6. Role of Departmental Subject Committees:								
Yes	9	90,00	20	86,96	41	50,62	70	61,40
No	1	10,00	3	13,04	40	49,38	44	38,60
7. Role of Teachers' Centres:								
Yes	10	100,00	19	82,61	59	72,84	88	77,19
No	-	-	4	17,39	22	27,16	26	22,81
8. How core syllabuses are revised:								
Yes	6	60,00	6	26,09	15	18,52	27	23,68
No	4	40,00	17	73,91	66	81,48	87	76,32

Overall, the majority of the respondents indicated that they had a sound knowledge of three of the curriculum-related matters, namely the curriculum policy of their schools, the role of Departmental Subject Committees, and the role of Teachers' Centres. However, 53.08% of the Level 1 respondents revealed that they did not have a sound knowledge of the curriculum policy of the schools. Surprisingly, one Level 2 respondent (member of the management staff of a school) made a similar revelation.

Although the majority of the Level 3 and Level 2 respondents, 80% and 60,87% respectively, stated that they had a sound knowledge of the role of the Joint Matriculation Board, overall this item elicited only a 48,25% positive response since the majority of the Level 1 respondents (59,26%) indicated that they did not have a sound knowledge of the role of this body in curriculum / syllabus matters.

The majority of the respondents, including Level 3 and Level 2 respondents, indicated that they did not have a sound knowledge of the curriculum policy of the RSA. On the matter of a sound knowledge of the curriculum policy of the Department and of the Department's role in syllabus development, a negative response was elicited from the majority of the respondents. Responses of this nature seem to highlight possible shortcomings in the Department's communication strategies on the one hand, and the need for pre-service and in-service education programmes to address these issues on the other hand.

The data in Tables 14 and 15 above revealed, in the main, that although the majority of the respondents were of the view that they were competent enough to become involved in curriculum decision-making, they did not have a sound knowledge of curriculum policies and the role of the Department and the Joint Matriculation Board in curriculum-related matters. This is alarming since one expects that at least all management personnel at schools would have a thorough knowledge of these matters. Table 16 below, on the other hand, shows that 84,21% of the respondents admitted that they did not have any formal training in curriculum development.

**TABLE 16: Formal training in curriculum development  
(Item 27 of the Questionnaire)**

Response	Post-level / Rank						N = 114	
	Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	4	40,00	3	13,04	11	13,58	18	15,79
No	6	60,00	20	86,96	70	86,42	96	84,21
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100,00	23	100,00	81	100,00	114	100,00

In addition to not having any formal training in curriculum development, the majority of the respondents (percentage responses given in brackets) indicated that with regard to their specialist subject(s), they were not involved in the following:

- \* Further studies : (62,28%)
- \* Writing of articles for journals, etc : (77,19%)
- \* Action research at school level : (55,26%)
- \* Curriculum development : (64,04%)
- \* Preparation of guides for beginning teachers : (66,67%)

It is interesting that, by implication, 44,74% of the respondents claimed that they were actually involved in action research, given the limited extent to which teachers are allowed to participate in curriculum decision-making in schools.

Also, the majority of the respondents (percentage responses given in brackets) stated that with reference to their specialist subject(s), they were involved in the following:

- \* Reading of journals, research material, etc : (92,98%)
- \* Organization of workshops for teachers : (62,28%)
- \* Organization of excursions for pupils : (79,82%)

With reference to items 32, 33 and 34 of the questionnaire respectively, 83,33% of the

respondents indicated that they were members of a professional body whereas only 41,22% stated that they were members of a subject society of such a professional body, and just 26,32% indicated that they were members of Departmental subject committees. It was observed that the number of teachers serving on the Department's subject committees was restricted. However, those who did serve as members were afforded the opportunity to participate in decision-making pertaining to a variety of curriculum matters.

In response to items 35 and 36 of the questionnaire, 40,35% of the respondents indicated that they had made suggestions to the Department / Departmental officials on how subject curricula could be improved upon. However, only 56,52% of these respondents believed that the Department / Departmental officials responded to their suggestions in a positive way. Given the perception of respondents regarding the Department's / Departmental officials' response to suggestions made by teachers, it is not surprising that only 15,79% of the total number of respondents seemed to think that, overall, the Department was amenable to suggestions from teachers regarding curriculum matters (Item 37 of the Questionnaire). The majority of the respondents (54,39%) did state, however, that they were "not sure" whether the Department was amenable to curriculum proposals made by teachers.

In order to establish whether teachers in the survey were, in fact, behaving like "extended" professionals (as discussed in Chapter 2), despite the fact that they may or may not be supported in this regard by the Department, they were asked to indicate whether teachers at their school met either on a formal basis or informal basis to discuss how subject curricula or the curriculum of the school as a whole could be improved upon (Item 38 of the Questionnaire). Only 8,78% of the respondents stated that teachers at their school met "often" in this regard, whereas the majority of the respondents (64,04%) stated that they "met occasionally". Although 100% of the respondents had indicated that they wished to become involved in curriculum decision-making in schools, 27,18% of them admitted that teachers at their schools did not meet at all, either formally or informally, to discuss ways of improving the curriculum. As opposed to this response, 50% of the respondents stated that they met regularly with teachers of other schools to exchange ideas on curriculum matters (Item 39 of the Questionnaire).

In their open-ended responses, the respondents cited the following as factors which prevent teachers from taking an active part in curriculum decision-making in schools (Item 40 of the Questionnaire):

- \* Time / Teaching load / Pressure of work.
- \* Protocol: hostile relationship between Level 1 teachers and management staff at schools.
- \* The management style of principals.
- \* Lack of consultation.
- \* Centralised control of the curriculum / prescriptive policies of the Department, including prescriptive syllabuses.
- \* Professional jealousy / red-tape.
- \* Lack of confidence / experience.
- \* Lack of opportunities.
- \* Fear of voicing opinions : victimisation.
- \* Principals not heeding the advice / suggestions of teachers.

In their comments on how participation by teachers in curriculum decision-making could be enhanced (Item 41 of the Questionnaire), the majority of the respondents seemed to think that the following points were important:

- \* Principals should take the initiative by creating opportunities for teachers to become involved.
- \* The Department should reconsider its somewhat passive stance on this issue.
- \* There should be wider consultation with teachers on all curriculum matters, including syllabuses.
- \* Teachers need to be given time-off from their normal duties to engage in curriculum development.
- \* Teachers need to be accorded professional recognition.
- \* The matter of teaching experience / expertise is crucial to this issue.
- \* The need for education reform in the country.



## 4.9 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

- 4.9.1** Whilst some 30% of the respondents seemed to think that management staff of schools consulted Level 1 teachers on decisions regarding the "broad curriculum" of schools, over 60% of the respondents indicated that curriculum decision-making in schools was centralised in the hands of principals and their management staff. Just over 6% of the respondents felt that an autocratic management style prevailed in their schools whereby the principal alone took all the decisions concerning the "broad curriculum".
- 4.9.2** Only a third of the respondents felt that opportunities existed in their schools for teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making. Over 75% of the Level 1 respondents did not share this view.
- 4.9.3** All the respondents (100%) expressed a desire to become involved in curriculum decision-making in schools.
- 4.9.4** All the respondents (100%) agreed that involvement in curriculum decision-making would contribute to the professional development of teachers.
- 4.9.5** Over 97% of the respondents expressed the view that curriculum decision-making in schools should be a joint effort involving the entire staff, including the principals, other management staff members and all the Level 1 teachers.
- 4.9.6** Over a third of the respondents (mainly from Level 1) did not perceive their school management staff and / or the Department as being very positive / supportive towards teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making.
- 4.9.7** Over 30% of the respondents indicated that they were teaching subjects that they were not suitably qualified to teach.
- 4.9.8** As can be expected, the majority of the respondents, with the exception of 26% of the respondents who were members of the Department's subject committees, expressed the view that they had no say in the content of syllabuses. In fact, the majority of the respondents were of the view that they did not have a say in most matters pertaining to the subject which contributed to the greatest portion of their teaching load.



- 4.9.9** As with participation in decision-making pertaining to the "broad curriculum" of the school, the respondents indicated strongly that they were given less opportunities for participation in decision-making in respect of subject curricula than they actually desired.
- 4.9.10** The majority of the respondents did not perceive pre-service education programmes as being such that teachers are trained to involve themselves in curriculum decision-making.
- 4.9.11** The majority of the respondents could not state categorically that the in-service education programmes of the Department were designed taking into account the needs of teachers. The fact that over 56% of them were "not sure" on what basis the aims and objectives of in-service education programmes were formulated, seems to indicate a possible break in communication between the Department and teachers.
- 4.9.12** The majority of the respondents could also not state categorically that staff development programmes at their schools stressed the need for teachers to become involved in curriculum decision-making.
- 4.9.13** Over 70% of the respondents felt that they were competent enough to engage in curriculum decision-making. However, the majority of the respondents, mainly Level 1 respondents, indicated that they did not have a sound knowledge of the curriculum policies of their schools, the Department and the RSA.
- 4.9.14** Over 80% of the respondents indicated that they had no formal training in curriculum development. However, a fair percentage of the respondents indicated that they were involved in the following:
- \* Further studies
  - \* Action research at school level
  - \* Writing of articles for journals, etc.
  - \* Curriculum development
  - \* Preparation of guides for beginning teachers.

More than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they were involved in the following as well:

- \* Reading of journals, reading materials, etc. pertaining to their specialist subjects
- \* Organizing of workshops for teachers
- \* Organizing of excursions for pupils

**4.9.15** The majority of the respondents were "not sure" whether the Department was amenable to curriculum proposals made by teachers.

**4.9.16** Only a small percentage of the respondents indicated that teachers at their schools met "often" either on a formal or informal basis to discuss how subject curricula or the curriculum of the school as a whole could be improved upon. However, 50% of the respondents stated that they met regularly with teachers of other schools to exchange ideas on curriculum matters.

**4.9.17** Apart from listing school-related constraints that prevented teachers from becoming involved in curriculum decision-making, the respondents felt that the Department needed to reconsider its somewhat passive stance on this matter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 GENERAL REMARKS

From the findings discussed in Chapter 4, it is evident that the study succeeded in identifying a number of constraints upon the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers. However, it must be acknowledged that this does not represent an exhaustive analysis. In fact, one of the possible limitations of this study was the inability of the writer to pursue certain findings more vigorously. Time and cost constraints militated against the employment of follow-up interviews and a fuller exploration of such findings. While this does not invalidate those findings, it does make it difficult to make conclusive statements about some of the constraints perceived. A case in point is the "not sure" responses to a few items in the questionnaire which could be interpreted variously in certain contexts. On the other hand, certain findings that have emerged illustrate clearly that unless the constraints concerned are removed the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers will not be possible. The study attempted to identify constraints upon this form of professional development, in keeping with the notions of "restricted" and "extended" professionalism explored in Chapter 2. It is from this perspective that the following conclusions, albeit tentative in some instances, are drawn and recommendations are made.

#### 5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Given the background of apartheid education in South Africa, and its technicist orientation towards curriculum practice, one can fully appreciate the desire among teachers to have a greater say in a variety of forms of curriculum decision-making, including decisions about subject curricula as well as other activities and experiences that constitute the "broad" curriculum of a school. The fact that 100% of the respondents in this study demonstrated their overwhelming desire to become involved in decision-making pertaining to the curriculum in its broadest sense, is important in that it points to a "consciousness" among teachers that could facilitate a move towards a form of "extended" professionalism in a future South Africa. It is also heartening to note that despite the constraints imposed on

them, some teachers are already engaging in activities that are in keeping with the role of "extended" professionals as discussed in Chapter 2. Whilst this is a positive sign, there ought to be some concern on the part of the authorities who control curriculum practices in schools that if they are not alive to the changing scenario and do not actively encourage the desire for a broader concept of teacher professionalism, then they are likely to become alienated by those who represent the progressive mood in support of educational reform in this country. Indeed, Corwin (1973:165) states that

... the professionally oriented person .. sometimes must be disobedient toward his supervisors precisely in order to improve his proficiency and to maintain standards of client welfare - especially if there are practices that jeopardize the best interests of students.

This study has provided evidence that suggests that there is already a breakdown in communication between the Department of Education and Culture of the House of Delegates and its teachers. If teachers are "not sure" about the policies of the Department regarding certain curriculum-related matters, as has been inferred from this study, then the lack of effective communication between the Department and teachers must be seen as a major constraining factor that is likely to lead to conflict situations developing in the near future.

Having concluded in Chapter 4 that the mismatch between teachers' desire to participate in curriculum decision-making and their actual participation in curriculum decision-making is exacerbated by a lack of effective communication of Departmental curriculum policies to teachers, it can be further concluded that the Department, the management staff of schools and the Level 1 teachers themselves make up the "troika" that, wittingly or unwittingly, impose constraints on the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers.

The lack of opportunities, at some schools, for teacher participation in curriculum decision making is clearly an indictment of the management styles of certain principals and their management staff. It is a case of irony in the extreme that although all the respondents (including principals) in this study expressed the view that teachers should be involved in curriculum decision-making, actual opportunities for such participation do not exist at some schools. One could argue, perhaps, that some principals preach a participatory / collegial / consultative type of leadership but in reality practise an authoritarian/bureaucratic leadership style. Alternatively, one could conclude that for as

long as the Department does not issue a clearly enunciated policy statement on the matter of teacher participation in curriculum decision-making, it (the Department) would be seen as imposing constraints on the free will of principals to involve their teachers in curriculum decision-making. However, the following remarks made by Nicholls (1983:59) with regard to the role of principals, albeit in another context, is also pertinent to this discussion:

Responsibility for running a school rests with the headteacher and it is for him to decide whether he wishes to share his responsibility with his colleagues and, if so, to determine the bases for sharing.

Allied to be above-mentioned point, is the matter of assisting teachers to acquire confidence and develop competence to engage in curriculum decision-making. It can be concluded from this study that pre-service education programmes, school-based staff development programmes and the Department's in-service education programmes do not adequately address this need. One can infer from the responses elicited in this study that this is so because such programmes are not designed on the basis of inputs made by the teachers themselves. This seems to be a world-wide problem. Referring to some 180 studies involving staff development and in-service education, Daresh (1987:10) asks the following question which may be of significance to the situation in our country:

How many more studies need to be conducted, for example, to convince us that teachers tend to like it when others ask them for their opinions concerning their choices for in-service topics?

It is indeed unfortunate that although there is a willingness on the part of teachers to become involved in curriculum decision-making, no provision is made for them to undergo formal training in curriculum development. In fact, the majority of the respondents in this study admitted that although they felt competent enough to engage in curriculum decision-making, they lacked a sound knowledge of the curriculum policies of their schools, of the Department and of the country as a whole. One can conclude from this, that the authorities have been neglecting their training functions in matters of this nature. Carl (1987:113), in his study of teacher participation in curriculum development, makes a similar observation regarding teachers and departments of education in South Africa generally, but it should be noted that the nature of inputs from teachers that Carl focuses on is slightly different to that which is implied in this study:

It is presumed teachers are not fully aware of, or sensitive enough to, their responsibilities and functions towards curriculum development. The various departments of education, and training institutions, have an important training function to prepare teachers to fulfil their responsibilities in this regard.

This study has shown, overall, that whilst teachers value professional autonomy, such autonomy is not absolute. It is accepted (Morris : 1977) that the various socio-political and economic factors that impact on education management and administration, have a profound effect on the autonomy of teachers as professionals. However, when unnecessary constraints are imposed on the exercise of professional autonomy of teachers in respect of crucial aspects pertaining to their task, those teachers are likely to become demotivated with the result that this can affect their further professional development. What has emerged from this study is the feeling that a large number of teachers are not engaging in activities that can be associated with those of "extended" professionals because of the constraints referred to above as well as a variety of prescriptions emanating from within and without the school. One must assume that constraints of this nature will have an adverse effect on the quality of "professional" interaction among teachers which, in turn, will affect the quality of education in schools. The following conclusion by Judith Little (1982:73) substantiates this assumption:

School improvement is most surely and thoroughly achieved when : teachers engage in frequent, continuous and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice (as distinct from (talk about) teacher characteristics and failings, the social lives of teachers, the foibles and failures of students and their families, and the unfortunate demands of society on the school).

Only 8,78% of the respondents felt that teachers at their schools meet, either formally or informally, to discuss how subject curricula and the curriculum of the school as a whole can be improved upon. This does not augur well either for the further professional development of teachers or for school improvement as a whole.

There are clearly signs within the Department of Education and Culture of a desire to break away from "paternalistic" notions of teacher supervision and assessment. One gets the impression that this new thinking and new mode of superintendent behaviour is not filtering through to management staff of schools, let alone Level 1 teachers. One can, therefore, assume that this is one of the reasons for teachers not being sure whether the

Department is amenable to suggestions regarding the curriculum. The "us" and "them" syndrome still tends to persist.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above-mentioned conclusions regarding constraints on the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers, the following recommendations are made:

- \* The Department of Education and Culture (House of Delegates) should give urgent attention to a communication strategy that will effectively convey to teachers its policies / new ways of thinking about the following:
  - \*\* The policy of the Department in respect of the school curriculum and teacher participation in curriculum decision-making.
  - \*\* The scope for school-based curriculum decision-making within the broad parameters of Departmental guidelines, that is the extent to which schools may make adjustments to the curriculum structures and time allocations for the various subjects in order to meet the demands of local circumstances. Also, the extent to which schools may devise their own curriculum packages to meet the special needs of their pupils.
  - \*\* The changing role of superintendents of education.
  - \*\* The curriculum responsibilities of principals, heads of departments and Level 1 teachers.
  - \*\* The Department's perceptions of curriculum change and teacher professionalism in the emerging "new" South Africa.
- \* The Department should also review the basis on which in-service education programmes are organized for teachers. Teachers should have a say in the planning and presentation of in-service education programmes for them.

- \* If the Department shares the view that teacher participation in all facets of curriculum decision-making is vital for quality education in the future, then it needs to work more closely with its teacher training institutions to ensure that pre-service teachers are adequately prepared to fulfil their professional responsibilities in this regard.
- \* The fact that many teachers at secondary schools are not teaching subjects that they are actually qualified to teach, means that the Department will have to give attention to the following in consultation with school-based personnel:
  - \*\* Redeployment of teachers where necessary
  - \*\* Re-training of teachers to meet the demand for teachers in certain specialist subjects for which there is an insufficient supply of teachers.

It must be noted that meaningful teacher-participation in decision-making regarding subject curricula (such as drawing up schemes of work, selection of curriculum materials, choice of teaching methods, and strategies for evaluating the performance of pupils) will not be possible if teachers are teaching subjects in which they lack the necessary competence and skills.

- \* As a matter of course the Department should ensure that, where possible, it is not imposing constraints on the further professional development of teachers as curriculum decision-makers. It is accepted that under the present political dispensation the Department itself is constrained by prescriptions regarding "core" syllabuses, etc. However, unnecessary prescriptions, from the Department itself, regarding teaching approaches, selection of textbooks and other curriculum materials, etc can be removed.
- \* One must accept that the legacy of apartheid, and the concomittant orientation towards a particular conception of curriculum practice and teacher professionalism in this country, has made people grow accustomed to being told what to do and how to do it. Breaking away from this mould will entail attitudinal changes not only on the part of teachers, who for so long have been told what and how to do things, but also on the part of management staff at schools as well as officials of the Department whose function it has been to ensure that teachers do what they are told to do. The Department, therefore, needs to vigorously encourage democratic, participatory

leadership styles at schools that will make it possible for teachers to want to behave as "extended" professionals. Also, in order to boost the morale of teachers, the Department should help develop their competence and skills in curriculum development by instituting accredited courses in the preparation of teachers as curriculum developers. The majority of the respondents in this study indicated that they had no formal training in curriculum development and perceived themselves as implementers of a curriculum designed by some extraneous source.

- \* Since the responsibility for the running of a school is that of the principal, it is recommended that the principal should also take the initiative in creating opportunities for teachers to participate in decision-making concerning not only the broad curriculum of the school, but also subject curricula. An autocratic leadership style that denies teachers a say in their professional functions is most certainly a constraining factor on the further professional development of teachers. The constraints of time, teaching loads, etc. are matters which fall under the purview of the principal of a school - he should be able to resolve these in a creative way.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

Although these recommendations have been formulated taking into account opinions and experiences of teachers at schools under the Department of Education and Culture in the House of Delegates, most of them are likely to be applicable to other existing departments of education in the country, as well as to the proposed single ministry of education for all South Africans which, it is hoped, will instill confidence in teachers to act as "extended" professionals seeking to build a new and democratic South Africa.

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APPENDIX 1 : Covering Letter and Questionnaire

116 Hendry Road  
SPRINGFIELD  
Durban  
4091

25 October 1988

Dear Colleague

I am currently engaged in research on the professional development of teachers with particular reference to their participation in curriculum decision-making. Your assistance in this regard will be greatly valued.

Would you please take a few minutes to complete each item on the attached questionnaire and then return it to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope by 25 November 1988. I wish to assure you that I have obtained the necessary clearance from the Department to administer this questionnaire.

You are also assured of complete confidentiality.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely



G.H.Maharaj

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS  
AS CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKERS

Confidential

I WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD ASSIST ME BY COMPLETING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE.

SECTION A : PERSONAL INFORMATION

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) AND/OR ENTER YOUR RESPONSES IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACES.

Kindly indicate your:

1. PRESENT RANK:

- 1.1 Teacher
- 1.2 Head of Department : \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. Languages)
- 1.3 Deputy Principal/Senior Deputy Principal/Principal

2. SEX:

- 2.1 Male
- 2.2 Female

3. TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

- 3.1 1 - 5 years
- 3.2 6 - 10 years
- 3.3 11 - 15 years
- 3.4 16 - 20 years
- 3.5 20+ years

4. QUALIFICATIONS:

- 4.1 Teaching Diploma(s) only
- 4.2 Degree(s) plus Teaching Diploma(s)
- 4.3 Degree(s) only
- 4.4 None of the above

SECTION B : VIEWS ON CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

(Please note that for the purposes of the questions in this Section the term "curriculum" is used broadly to refer to all the learning experiences planned by the school for pupils. However, wherever reference is made to the curriculum of a subject, it is indicated as such.)

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) AND/OR ENTER YOUR RESPONSES IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACES.

5. Who would you say makes most of the decisions concerning the curriculum in your school ? ✓

5.1 The Principal alone

5.2 The Principal and his management team

5.3 The management staff in consultation with the teachers

5.4 The teachers themselves (excluding management staff)

6. Do you wish to be involved in curriculum decision-making in your school ?

6.1 Yes

6.2 No

7. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement. ✓

*To what extent*

"Teachers should have a say in the decisions relating to the curriculum of their school."

7.1 Strongly agree

7.2 Agree

7.3 Neither agree nor disagree

7.4 Disagree

7.5 Strongly disagree

8. Please explain very briefly why you feel teachers should or should not have a say in the curriculum decisions of a school. ✓

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9. Would you say that opportunities exist in your school for participation by teachers in curriculum decision-making? ✓

- 9.1 Yes
- 9.2 Not sure
- 9.3 No

10. If your response to 9 above is "yes", please describe briefly the type of opportunities that exist for curriculum decision-making in your school. ✓

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11. Does the management staff of your school consult the rest of the staff before decisions regarding the curriculum are made? *interfere or teachers decide solely*

- 11.1 Often
- 11.2 Seldom
- 11.3 Never

12. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement.

"Involvement in curriculum decision-making will contribute to the professional development of teachers."

- 12.1 Strongly agree
- 12.2 Agree
- 12.3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 12.4 Disagree
- 12.5 Strongly Disagree

13. How would you describe the attitude of management staff in your school towards teacher participation in curriculum decision-making ?

- 13.1 Very positive
- 13.2 Positive
- 13.3 Not very positive

14. In your opinion, which of the following best describes the Department's attitude towards greater teacher-participation in curriculum decision-making ?

- 14.1 Supportive
- 14.2 Neutral
- 14.5 Not supportive

15. Who in your opinion should be responsible for curriculum decision-making in a school ?

- 15.1 It should be left to the Principal.
- 15.2 It should be left to the Principal and his management team.
- 15.3 It should be left to the teachers.
- 15.4 It should be a joint effort involving the entire staff, including the Principal, other management staff members and all the teachers.

16. Kindly indicate:

16.1 The subject(s) you are suitably qualified to teach.

(a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_

16.2 The subjects you are actually teaching this year.

(a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_

17. If you are presently NOT teaching the subject(s) for which you are suitably qualified, would you say that you were consulted before these "other" subjects were allocated to you ?

17.1 Yes

17.2 No

18. Were you given the opportunity to teach the standards of your choice this year ?

18.1 Yes

18.2 No

19. If you were NOT given the opportunity to select the subject(s)/standard(s) you are teaching at present, who would you say took these decisions ?

19.1 The Principal

19.2 The Principal and his management team

19.3 The Head of Department

19.4 The time-table committee

19.5 Member(s) of the Inspectorate

19.6 Do not know

19.7 Not applicable

20. Do you think teachers should be allowed to select the subjects/standards they would like to teach?

- 20.1 Yes
- 20.2 Not sure
- 20.3 No

21. With regard to the subject which contributes to the greatest portion of your teaching load, indicate whether you had a say in the following matters.

- |  | YES                      | NO                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 21.1 The content of the syllabuses               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21.2 The schemes of work for the year            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21.3 The selection of textbooks                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21.4 The selection of other curriculum materials | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21.5 Teaching guidelines for the subject         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21.6 Approach(es) to the teaching of the subject | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21.7 The testing programme for the year          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21.8 The use of periods allocated to the subject | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

22. Do you think teachers should have a say in the following matters involving the subject(s) that they teach.

- |  | YES                      | NOT SURE                 | NO                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 22.1 The content of syllabuses               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22.2 Schemes of work for the year            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22.3 Selection of textbooks                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22.4 Selection of other curriculum materials | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22.5 Teaching guidelines for the subject     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22.6 Teaching approach(es)                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22.7 Testing programme for the year          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22.8 Use of periods allocated                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

23. Do you think that our pre-service education programmes (i.e. the initial teacher training programmes) provide teachers with the necessary training to involve themselves in curriculum decision-making?

- 23.1 Yes
- 23.2 Not sure
- 23.3 No

24. Would you consider yourself competent enough to engage in curriculum decision-making ?

- 24.1 Yes
- 24.2 Not Sure
- 24.3 No

25. Kindly indicate whether you have a sound knowledge of the following.

- |  | YES                      | NO                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 25.1 The National curriculum policy of the RSA     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25.2 The curriculum policy of the Department       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25.3 The curriculum policy of your school          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25.4 The role of the Joint Matriculation Board     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25.5 The Department's role in syllabus development | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25.6 The role of Departmental Subject Committees   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25.7 The role of Teachers' Centres                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25.8 How core syllabuses are revised               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

26. With reference to your specialist subject(s), kindly indicate whether you are involved in the following.

	YES	NO
26.1 Further studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.2 Reading of journals, research material, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.3 Writing of articles for journals, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.4 Action research at school level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.5 Curriculum development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.6 Organization of workshops for teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.7 Organization of excursions for pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.8 Preparation of guides for beginning teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. Have you had any formal training in curriculum development ?

27.1 Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.2 No	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. Would you say that the in-service education programmes of the Department focus attention on the need for teacher involvement in curriculum decision-making ?

28.1 Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.2 Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.3 No	<input type="checkbox"/>

29. Do you think that the Department's in-service education programmes are designed taking into account the needs of teachers ?

29.1 Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.2 Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.3 No	<input type="checkbox"/>

30. If your response to item 29 above is "No", on what basis, would you say, are inservice education programmes designed?

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31. Would you say that staff development programmes in your school stress the need for teachers to become involved in curriculum decision-making ?

- 31.1 Yes
- 31.2 Not sure
- 31.3 No

32. Are you a member of a professional teachers body ?

- 32.1 Yes
- 32.2 No

33. Are you a member of a subject society of such a professional body ?

- 33.1 Yes
- 33.2 No

34. Are you a member of a Departmental subject committee?

- 34.1 Yes
- 34.2 No

35. Have you ever made suggestions to the Department / Departmental officials on how subject curricula could be improved upon ?
- 35.1 Yes
- 35.2 No
36. If your response to item 35 is "Yes", would you say that the Department / Departmental officials have responded in a positive way to your suggestions ?
- 36.1 Yes
- 36.2 No
- 36.3 Not Applicable
37. Overall, would you say that the Department is amenable to suggestions from teachers regarding curriculum matters ?
- 37.1 Yes
- 37.2 Not sure
- 37.3 No
38. Do teachers in your school meet either on a formal basis or informal basis to discuss how subject curricula or the curriculum of the school as a whole can be improved upon ?
- 38.1 Often
- 38.2 Occasionally
- 38.3 Never
39. Do you meet regularly with teachers of other schools to exchange ideas on curriculum matters ?
- 39.1 Yes
- 39.2 No

40. Kindly list all those factors which in your opinion prevent teachers from taking an active part in curriculum decision-making in school.

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41. Are there any comments you would like to add on the participation of teachers in curriculum decision-making ?

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Thank you for your time and co-operation.

G. H. Maharaj

G. H. Maharaj

APPENDIX 2 : Letter to principals of schools

116 Hendry Road  
Springfield  
DURBAN  
4091

24 October 1988

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently engaged in research on the professional development of teachers with particular reference to their participation in curriculum decision-making. The Department has kindly authorised my administering a questionnaire for this purpose to a sample of secondary school educators in the Greater Durban Area.

I am pleased to advise that certain educators on your staff have been randomly selected to participate in this research. The above-mentioned questionnaire will be despatched directly to them, and it is hoped that they will complete same and return it to me by 25 November 1988 in the self-addressed envelope which will be provided.

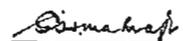
All educators participating in this research are assured of complete confidentiality.

Attached, please find a copy of the Department's letter of authorisation to administer the questionnaire to a sample of secondary school educators in the Greater Durban Area.

I would welcome any inputs you may personally wish to make regarding the topic being researched.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

  
G.H. MAHARAJ  
(Education Planner  
Department of Education and Culture)

Department of Education and Culture  
Departement van Onderwys en Kultuur

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Mr G.H. Maharaj  
Professional Planning Services  
Department of Education and Culture  
Administration : House of Delegates

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. Permission is hereby granted to you to :
  - 1.1 administer a questionnaire in respect of your research (M.Ed. degree) to a sample of educators in secondary schools in the Greater Durban area;
  - 1.2 refer to Departmental circulars/documents in respect of in-service and pre-service education as well as to other Departmental circulars/guidelines that are relevant to your research; and
  - 1.3 use the 1988 Staff Returns to draw a stratified random sample of educators; provided that :
    - (a) participation in the research is on a voluntary basis;
    - (b) completion of questionnaires is done outside normal teaching time; and
    - (c) all information obtained from educators is treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.
2. Kindly attach a copy of this letter when corresponding with schools.
3. The Department wishes you well in your research and looks forward to receiving a copy of the findings.

*M.H. Buckus*

for CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

APPENDIX 4 : Follow-up letter

116 Hendry Road  
Springfield  
DURBAN  
4091

23 November 1988

Dear Colleague

QUESTIONNAIRE : PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

I do appreciate that this is a very demanding period for educators, and I sincerely thank you for finding the time to assist me with my research.

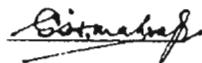
The response from educators in my sample has, thusfar, been encouraging - completed questionnaires have been arriving daily since 14 November 1988. I hope to receive all completed questionnaires before the end of the current school year.

As we are fast approaching the end of the school year, I take this opportunity to appeal to you to return your completed questionnaire to me. Kindly disregard this appeal if you have already responded.

I thank you for your co-operation, and extend my good wishes for the festive season ahead.

God bless.

Yours sincerely



G.H. MAHARAJ