

**THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA CENTRES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCE**

by

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UITTREKSEL

Hierdie navorsing ondersoek die redes waarom Mediasentrums in primêre skole noodsaaklik is. Inligting in verband met hierdie navorsingsprobleem is ingewin deur middel van kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodes, soos onderhoudvoering, waarneming en besinning. Geldigheid en betroubaarheid van data is verkry deur deelnemende observasie, analise en interpretasie van data oor die verskillende relevante aspekte van die ondersoek, en deur die versameling en bestudering van dokumente en pamflette, soos uitnodigings, jaarlikse algemene vergaderings, verslae en beleidstukke van nie-regeringsorganisasies (NGO's) rakende Mediasentrums in primêre skole.

Die belangrikheid van Mediasentrums (waarby ingesluit skoolbiblioteke) binne die konteks van politieke, sosiale en ekonomiese veranderinge in Suid Afrika kan nie oorbeklemtoon word nie. Die implikasies vir die totstandkoming van sodanige fasiliteite beklemtoon ook 'n verskuiwing van die tradisionele metode na die meer proses-georiënteerde, en bron-gebaseerde benadering. 'n Grondige studie van die probleme waarmee skole worstel is noodsaaklik alvorens die probleem van die afwesigheid van Mediasentrums bevredigend aangepak en opgelos kan word.

JOHANNESBURG

Die nasionale direkteur van READ (Read Educate and Develop) het die volgende strategieë vir Mediasentrums beklemtoon tydens die jongste Algemene Jaarvergadering:

- Stigting van “sentrum vir uitnemendheid” in skole;
- Implementering van 'n hele skool benadering, insluitende indiensopleiding vir hoofde en opvoeders, met toenemende betrokkenheid van die ouers;
- Besikbaarheid van indiensopleiding in vennootskap met die staat, die gemeenskap en die privaatsektor;
- Indiensopleiding van spanleier-opvoeders en hoofde om programme te bevorder en uit te brei.

Genoemde voorgestelde vier strategieë stem ooreen met wat in die literatuur en metodologiese resultate van hierdie navorsing gevind is. So ook word bevestig dat 'n vak soos Mediagebruikersleiding of –vaardighede, asook die instelling van Mediasentrums 'n absolute noodsaaklikheid is. Die redes waarom dit tot nou nog onsuksesvol was, is geleë in probleme soos die hoë mate van ongeletterdheid, gebrek aan 'n gemeenskaplike begeerte tot nasiebou en derhalwe 'n donker prentjie vir die burgers van Suid Afrika. Die regering van nasionale eenheid het die instelling van die Heropbou en Rekonstruksie Programme (Jan 1994), en sy edele, die vorige president, Mnr Mandela self, het beklemtoon dat die probleem van onvoldoende hulpmiddels in skole aangespreek sal moet word. Die verslag oor Mediasentrums sal daarby ingesluit word.

Ten slotte word deurgaans in hierdie studie beklemtoon dat die probleem van die gebrek aan Mediasentrums dringend aandag moet kry. Hopelik sal die owerhede in die nuwe onderwysbedeling kennis neem van die aanbevelings van hierdie verslag, waarvan die bevindinge ook deur die literatuur bevestig word. 'n Beroep word ook gedoen op die aanvaarding van die verantwoordelikheid vir die drieledige vennootskap tussen ouers, onderwysers en leerlinge, asook tussen onderwysowerhede, privaatsktor en nie-regerings- instansies om die herlewing van 'n leerkultuur in Suid-Afrika te bevorder. Dit is onder andere deur Mediasentrums in die skole dat die probleme van die hoë mate van ongeletterdheid en werkloosheid in Suid-Afrika beredder kan word.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to all individuals who wish to uplift the rate of literacy in South Africa by utilising media-centres as their points of departure.



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ABBREVIATIONS

ALA	: AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
ALASA	: AFRICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA
ANC	: AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA
CIN	: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SKILLS
CO	: CRITICAL OUTCOME
DET	: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
DO	: DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES
DOE	: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
IFLA	: INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS
ICT	: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
INSET	: IN-SERVICE TRAINING
LA	: LEARNING AREA
LIASA	: LIBRARY AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA
LIS	: LIBRARY INFORMATION SERVICES
ME	: MEDIA EDUCATION
MUS	: MEDIA USER SKILLS
NECC	: NATIONAL EDUCATION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
NSLPF	: NATIONAL SCHOOL LIBRARY POLICY FRAMEWORK
NGO	: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
NQF	: NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK
NEP	: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY
NCS	: NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT
OBE	: OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION
PTSA	: PARENT/TEACHER/STUDENT ASSOCIATION
RBL	: RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING
RDP	: RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
READ	: READ EDUCATE AND DEVELOP

RNCS	: REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT
SA	: SOUTH AFRICA
SASA	: SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT
SADTU	: SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TEACHERS UNION
SAQA	: SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
SLM	: SCHOOL LIBRARY MODELS
SRC	: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
TL	: TEACHER LIBRARIAN



GLOSSARY OF KEY CONCEPTS

Access the curriculum: teach and/or learn that which is included in the curriculum

Access to library-based resources: to have physical proximity for borrowing and using resources which belong to a library collection

Community: people in the local neighbourhood and/or the general public

Competencies: abilities and skills

Critical thinking: thinking which exercises logic, judgment and independent decision-making

Curriculum: content on course of study

Dysfunctional libraries: libraries which are no longer operational

Educator: teacher, instructor, facilitator, etc.

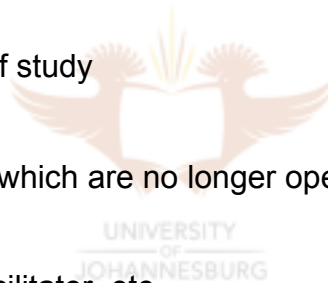
Essential outcomes: generic, cross curricular learning outcomes

Generic standards: standards applicable to all e.g. School libraries

Information: items of knowledge, e.g. facts and accounts of events

Information literacy: skills and techniques related to sourcing, accessing, manipulating and utilising information in various media and/or form of storage

In-service education and training: educator development which occurs during the educator's appointment period



Item: a single copy of a book, worksheet, video or other form of media or documentation

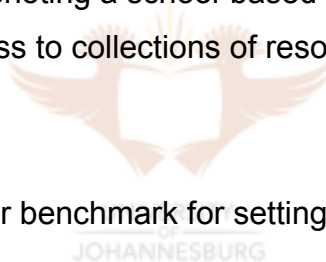
Life-long learning: an open and inclusive approach to learning which is neither restricted to formal and/or informal learning; not the years of schooling

Outcomes-based approach: an approach to education which is based on the achievement of learning, e.g. Outcomes of skills, competencies, knowledge and understanding

Region: a sub-provincial administrative delimitation of an area; may also be termed a district and further subdivided into circuits

School library: a generic term denoting a school-based system devised to provide learners and teachers with access to collections of resources in print, visual, electronic and other media

Standard: a measure, criterion or benchmark for setting conformity requirements



CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

Outcomes-Based Education forms the foundation of the curriculum in South Africa. It strives to enable all learners to achieve their maximum ability. This is done by setting the outcomes to be achieved at the end of the learning process. The outcomes encourage a learner-centred and activity-based approach to education.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) builds its learning outcomes for the General Education and Training Band for Grades R-9 (for schools) and the National Curriculum Statement, Grades 10-12 (schools) on the critical and the developmental outcomes that were inspired by the Constitution and developed in a democratic process. The Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (schools) is aimed at promoting commitment as well as competence among teachers, who will be responsible for the development of their own learning programmes.

The former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal (Asmal, 2000) states that the curriculum recommends that “particular attention be paid to the development of (an) information literacy and skills associated with the use of information, and that these be integrated into the curriculum at all levels of education, including teacher education. Information literacy is at the core of all learning, and therefore central to the education process, whether formal or informal.

These guidelines have been developed to facilitate the implementation of Information Literacy Education in the schools. It aims to illustrate how some of the critical and developmental outcomes in the curriculum and various learning outcomes in the eight learning areas, as well as of the assessment standards are, in actual fact, Information Literacy, Learning Outcomes, and assessment standards.

In compiling these guidelines, several international Information Skills Process Models were analysed and compared. A framework of the Information Handling Process was then developed, being a synthesis of the various Information Skills Process Models studied. Six stages were identified in the information handling process, that is Preparing, Finding, Processing, Creating, Communicating and Reflecting. The framework is designed to have a broader application than just facilitating the research process in schools. It attempts to assist educators to understand the applicability of Information Literacy as an information handling process in day-to-day teaching and learning. Next the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9(schools) was analysed to identify the learning outcomes and assessment standards in the curriculum relating to the stages and activities of the information handling process.

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide educators with a tool to understand the relationship between Information Literacy Education and the Critical and Developmental Outcomes in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (schools) and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (schools), particularly:

CRITICAL OUTCOMES

- CRITICAL OUTCOME 1 (CO1): Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
- CRITICAL OUTCOME 4 (CO 4): Collect, Analyse, Organise and critically evaluate information,
- CRITICAL OUTCOME 5 (CO5): Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and /or language skills in various modes.

DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

- Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively.
- Promote an understanding of how to apply Information Literacy Education in a cross-curricular context and develop meaningful learning programmes integrating information handling activities.

- Assist with developing a whole–school approach to Information Literacy Education showing integration in all learning areas of the curriculum including extra–curricular activities progression through all the school grades
- Facilitate collaboration between teacher-librarians and other educators.
- Facilitate the in-service training of educators, teacher-librarians and principals to implement Information Literacy Education at their schools.

1.2 RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research is done because, as a multimedia educator, the researcher realised that most, if not all schools, do not realise how important Media centres are. Most primary school learners depend only on their educators for information, and their educators also use the Media Centre very seldom. I find it very amazing and would like to find out why? And why they do not encourage their learners to use the Media Centreas it can even reduce their work load. I would like the following points to be of importance after my research have been conducted. Educators should know the following, and make their learners aware of the purposes of the Media Centre. They are the following:

- A Media Centrenot only contains books, but also non-book material such as periodicals and newspapers, as well as audio-visual material.
- Libraries provide information regardless of the form or medium in which it is presented. Computers, slides, TV, film, video's and records are all part of the stock of a modern library.

Other terms, such as “resource centre” or “media centre”, are sometimes used instead of the term “library” to indicate the great variety of material included in stock. The main objectives of Media Centres are to satisfy the information needs of students and staff in their study, teaching and research activities.

In an ever changing world independent study is essential. Those who want to progress must keep up to date with new developments. They should therefore learn at an early stage how to use a library and find information as effectively as possible.

The purpose of a school library or Media Centre is to support the educational work of the school. This purpose is achieved in two ways: by providing the children with means of finding whatever information they need; and by encouraging them in the habit of using books, both for information and for pleasure. Everything in the library, and everything about the way it is organised, must be planned so as to help the children. Sometimes this help is given to the children directly, sometimes through their teachers. If the school library is to serve its purpose, it must be recognised as an essential part of the school's work, and the teaching programme of the school needs to be planned so that the library plays a central part. The library, for its part, must be organised so that the teachers can rely on it to support the children's learning.

Pupils need information to help them with the subjects they learn in schools. The textbooks they use, and the notes they take in class, can be an excellent foundation. These may also be sufficient for revision purposes. But they are not enough to enable learners to write good essays of their own or to carry out group projects. Other sources of information are therefore needed. If the school library can provide this information, it can become the main learning centre of the school. If it cannot, the learners may not have anywhere else to turn for the information they need, and their learning will suffer. Learners also need information on subjects not taught in school. There are many things in the encyclopaedia which learners need to know about. The school library should therefore be a centre where learners can find information to help them with their school studies and their personal development.

1.3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Research has shown that people learn best when they play an active part in the learning process. When people merely sit and are told something, they learn it less effectively than when they find out the information for themselves. This is the reason why many schools encourage teachers to plan their work so that their learners make use of books to find information. When this happens, the library becomes the most important learning

centre in the school. One of the most important tasks of a school librarian is to organise the library so as to provide this service and to train the learners to make good use of it. The provision of this service in no way lessens the importance of the educator in the classroom. What it does instead is to place increased emphasis on the teacher's role in planning the discovery of knowledge. It also helps to widen the range of knowledge and ideas each learner receives.

When young people grow up and leave school they should be aware of the need to continue their education and feel confident in their ability to do so. If their school library has helped them to find information, they will be encouraged to go on using libraries in later life to find out facts and ideas for themselves. The provision of a well organised library and of training in its use are among the most valuable contributions that a school can make in preparing its learners to continue learning after their formal education comes to an end.

As a way of using leisure time, reading offers opportunities through-out life. These may be missed if people do not develop the habit of reading for pleasure when they are young. A school library should therefore be able to provide learners with the means of reading for pure enjoyment. This is particularly important in areas where there are few public library services to provide reading material for children. Stories for children are of value because they allow readers to enjoy adventures which they cannot have themselves and to imagine the emotions and relationships which the characters in the stories experience. In this way they help children to develop their own ideas and imaginations in situations they have not yet met. Stories written about the part of the world in which the readers live are likely to be of particular interest. But others are needed too, especially traditional legends and folklore, and books by authors which have a world-wide appeal to the young.

Learning to read does not end when pupils are deciphering print. It is a skill which grows with practice and it will decay if it is not used. Learners who are reading an exiting story, or finding out where petroleum comes from, or looking up the rules of a

game, are also, without realising it, developing their reading skill. By providing books for information, recreation and entertainment, and encouraging learners to read them, a school library can play a big part in helping the pupils to improve their reading skills and fluency.

Cultural awareness is as important as factual information in the development of a mature adult. It is easy to assume that learners know about the culture in which they are growing up and the traditions and history which have formed it. But often they do not. Books are one of the resources which can provide this awareness. However, they are seldom articles sufficient to reflect the national tradition fully. Newspaper clippings, stories and articles from magazines, pictures, sound recordings and examples of art and craft are all important and the school library should endeavour to collect them.

1.4 AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH

The main aim of this research endeavour is to investigate why libraries/media centres, where existent in primary schools, are not fully operative and functioning in such a way that educators and learners can benefit from that.

In order to achieve that, the more specific objectives are:

- 1.4.1 To find out why educators in primary schools do not use libraries?
- 1.4.2 To establish why libraries/media centres, where existent in primary schools, are not fully operative?
- 1.4.3 To come up with recommendations to assist Media Centre educators to take up the challenge to get the media centres working.
- 1.4.4 To formulate guidelines for Media Centre educators to develop programmes to offer Media User Skills as a subject in primary schools.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research will be conducted in schools in the North-West Province, in the Bojanala Region: three schools in Tlhabane, a Black township, three in schools in Phokeng (a semi-rural village) and three schools in Rustenburg (a multi-racial township). Three learners will represent each grade in the school and three educators from each school represent the teaching staff. The interviewees will be assured of confidentiality and anonymity: No information will be disclosed if they do not want it to be disclosed; no person will be forced to talk, their views will be respected in compliance with the requirements of the university's ethical standards.

The study will be done qualitatively through interviews. The researcher chose the method of face to face interviewing or telephone interactions to collect data. One of the most important aspects about this method is that after collecting the data, it will be taken to the relevant stakeholders (in this case the Chief-Director of region), to be scrutinised by the relevant committee. Conclusions will be drawn, and each school in our region will get a copy of a final document to be able to implement the contents.

1.6 METHODS OF RESEARCH

1.6.1 Interviewing as qualitative research

In this study the researcher chose the method of face to face interviewing or telephone interaction to collect data. One of the most important aspects about this method lies in its flexibility to observe. The interviewer is given an opportunity to observe the subject in a more direct manner. Personal contact with the interviewee increases the rate of completion of the interview, and the possibilities to acquire the desired information are great. The researcher, during interview session, will make use of open-ended questions ranging to close ones, which would enable her to get free responses from the subject. Probing would also feature to acquire more desired answers (Ary et al, 1990: 418-419).

1.6.2 Purpose

Interviewing provides a powerful way to gain insight into educational issues through understanding the experiences of the individuals whose lives constitutes education

(Siedman, 1991:7). The researcher in this light can afford to put the respondent's feelings, actions and ideas into context to facilitate a better understanding of their experiences during this phase.

1.6.3 Length of interviews

Due to financial and time constraints only three interviewees were chosen through random sampling to represent the primary schools in rural, semi-rural and urban schools. Interviewees were prepared a week in advance. A span of one month was used to conduct the interviews at 30 minutes per interview. Spacing was provided between interviews to enable the researcher to conduct follow-ups.

1.6.4 Data analysis

The researcher intends analysing the data by transcribing the interview material of each respondent. (An example is in appendix D). Ideas will be sorted out into areas of commonality. Differences will also be clustered to form subheading. Interest categories representing the views of respondents will be used as subheadings for interpretation of results (Botha & Engelbrecht, 1992:56-65).

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher will make sure that the interviewees, both teachers and learners, are respected. They will not be forced to talk, they do have a right to their privacy, their religions will be respected, their views and their time will also be respected and taken into consideration. No information will be disclosed if they do not want it to be, no recorder if they do not want it. The final document will be shown to educators who want to see it. Nothing will be done against their will.

1.8 CONCEPT CLARIFICATIONS

According to good research procedures, concept clarification is necessary to ensure that no misunderstandings in interpretations take place.

1.8.1 Library, Media Centres and Resource Centres

The three concepts mentioned above complement each other. Traditionally library relates to a room accommodating book materials such as magazines, newspapers, fiction and non-fiction books. Now in the new dispensation libraries have become more than just mere book rooms, because they include all modern technology equipments, both visual and audio-visual.

Fiction books imply all story books in the library, and

Non-fiction books denote information on hard or actual facts.

1.8.2 School Library

Traditionally school libraries are regarded, by virtue of their operating systems, as discrete units within a school (sometimes even an institution within the school) However, as early as 1945 the American Library Association cast the school library as a teaching method. Although this perspective was formulated more than 50 years ago, it is surprisingly and refreshingly relevant to the outcomes-based curriculum being introduced in South African schools, where learners are expected to look for their own information, and not only listen to what the educator has to say the educator is only there to guide learners.

1.8.3 Teacher-Librarian

Traditionally, the term teacher is used to refer to the person responsible for the planned learning context within schools. In other educational contexts, the person responsible for planned learning may be called an instructor, lecturer, leader, facilitator, professor. The term "Educator" refers to a person responsible for planned teaching and learning regardless of whether this occurs within early childhood, general education, further education, adult basic education, skills development or higher education.

A teacher working in the traditional school library is called a "teacher-librarian" and a teacher working in the Media Centre is called a "media educator".

1.8.4 Outcomes-based education

Outcomes-based education

- Is developmental, it encompasses both what learners learn and are able to do at the end of the learning process.
- Emphasises high expectations of what all learners can achieve.
- Is a learner-centred education process.
- Through its outcomes at the end of the learning process shapes, the learning process itself, the process of learning is thus considered as important as what is learned.
- Is an activity-based approach to education, designed to promote problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

1.8.5 Critical and Developmental Outcomes

Critical Outcomes and Developmental Outcomes are long term outcomes that are inspired by the constitution .They describe the kind of citizen the education and training system should try to produce.



1.8.6 Information Skills

Skills concerned with the acquiring of knowledge from a variety of sources, and the ability to assess and apply the information gained.

1.8.7 Learner-Centredness

Curriculum development, especially the development of learning programmes and material, should put learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs .Curriculum development processes and delivery of learning content should take account of the general characteristics, development and otherwise, of different groups of learners.

1.9 SUMMARY

In this first chapter the introduction to the research was explained, the theoretical background and rationale to the study were given, the problem was stated, the aims put

forward, and the research method was discussed. Some concepts were clarified and the ethical considerations were taken care of.

In the following chapters the researcher will do a thorough literature review (chapter 2), discuss the research methodology in detail (chapter 3), analyse the data and discuss the findings (chapter 4), and come up with conclusions, recommendations and hopefully some guidelines on the utilisation of media/resource centres in primary schools (chapter 5).



CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A growing Black consciousness in education emerged since the events following the 1976 uprising in the entire South Africa. Coutts (1992:3) confirmed that black politicians and educationists had since realised the bad fruits of sectional interests forced upon Black educationists in the past, did not provide effective learning for the Black child.

Important changes came up in the 1990's when the image of education in South Africa underwent transformation. Children of all colours were allowed to be part of White schooling. To the researcher this marked an important era for the primary school learner. As OBE was introduced, media centres or libraries were the places that can help them to achieve their goals, hence they had to be established in all primary schools for the educator to achieve her /his outcomes. This marked a victory for those who had been campaigning for equal access to education for all (Harmer, 1993:99).

It was in the light of the changes above that the researcher pursued to find out why primary school educators do not use libraries or encourage their learners to use them and to show them how libraries can help them and to help to establish them in schools that does not have them.

The vision of a new South Africa entails a country which is united, democratic and internationally competitive. This presupposes literate, creative, flexible and critical citizens. The realisation of this vision requires an attitude of continuous education and training throughout one's lifetime and social development which empower people, both young and old, to participate effectively in all the processes of a democratic society.

The new education and training policy pronounced in the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995) is in line with this vision. It promotes an education and training system which is just and equitable, of high quality, and accessible to all learners,

irrespective of race, colour, gender, age, religion, ability or language. Further, in order to achieve our national objectives of social reconstruction and development growth within a committed society to support lifelong learning and development for all people.

To foster this notion of lifelong learning, the Department of Education has introduced a new curriculum with an outcomes-based approach to learning and teaching and a National Qualification Framework (NQF) to coherently articulate the various education phases and sectors. The curriculum will hopefully transform the education system and bring South Africa in line with international trends of multi-skilling and globalisation.

This approach to globalisation aims to:

- Simulate independent learning so that students acquire the ability to become life-long learners;
- Make the most appropriate media available for use by teachers and learners to suit individual capabilities and to enrich teaching-learning experiences;
- Develop information skills in learners so that they know how to plan a project, and how to locate and assess information critically;
- Recognise individual differences providing access to a great variety of media and creating learning experiences which will actively involve individual pupils in a way that suits their abilities and interest;
- Provide a variety of opportunities for individuals so that they can learn how to deal with the complexities of their future lives (Job, 1993:36).

Libraries inherently promote the use of information resources for critical thinking. This is done by bringing together a range of resources which express different ideas, different experiences of life, different understandings of knowledge and different presentations of the topic. By sifting through the various perspectives and weighing up the viewpoint of one resource against another, the learner begins to think critically and development skills of judgement and problem-solving.

In the past teacher-librarians and school advisors may not have been pro-active in this way or explicitly articulated this as the role of school library collection. Nevertheless, it does not diminish the fact that school libraries are an integral part of effective and quality teaching and learning and central to assessing and curriculum.

2.2 PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW CURRICULUM

Some of the information of the outcomes-based curriculum has an impact on the school library and the provision of learning resources. These are

- Learner-centredness

According to this principle, the development of learning programmes and materials should put learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experiences, and responding to their needs. This implies different learning styles and rates of learning and teaching to accommodate all types of learning.

The school library can play an important role in this regard by providing learning resources for different phases and levels to meet the pace and needs of each learner. Educators have to be familiar with such learning resources and how they can be used in the learning environment.

- Relevance

The curriculum must be relevant and appropriate to the current and anticipated needs of the individual, society, commerce and industry, equipping individuals with skills which are in line with national and international developments, for example being informationally and technologically literate. This is contingent on individuals having skills to source, access, understand and manipulate information. To support this, the school library has been found to be a suitable vehicle to provide resources for learners to acquire these skills.

- Integration

An integrated approach to education and training implies breaking down the walls between the traditional divisions of theory and practice. This is contingent on new methods of learning and teaching.

- Redress and learner support

Provision has to be made to accommodate learners' special needs, especially considering the way in which the majority of learners were disadvantaged in the past. This provision can be in the form of a school where learners can work at their own pace using material relevant to their individual abilities. The school library can be a depository for learning resources, such as distance education materials and mixed-media productions, designed to accelerate the learning of the previously disadvantaged.

- Critical and creative thinking

This principle, that education must promote logical and analytical thinking, acknowledges the changing nature of knowledge and the need to accommodate all thoughts and interests of the learner. There are strong implications for the school library regarding the selection of learning resources and material which will accommodate diverse schools of thought, which has not always been the case in the past. It also implies that school libraries are essential to effective teaching and learning. Material and learning resources in libraries have to reflect the shift in the goals of education.

There are also implications for the educator in that if learners are to be critical and creative thinkers, educators must play a facilitating role in the learning process by engaging learners actively in the learning environment. It implies that they have to be innovative and use methods which enable the learner to practise thinking critically.

2.3 AN OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH TO LEARNING

The new curriculum is an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning. It involves the process of identifying intended outcomes of learning as the starting point.

In brief, the curriculum will:

- Focus on what the learner will do;
- Describe the results of learning;
- Emphasise how learning is used, especially when applied to new areas and
- Require a flexible allocation of time (DoE, 1997:18).

The selection of outcomes is determined by the broad educational goals to be served, including the national goal of social transformation. These outcomes are divided into two categories: essential and specific outcomes.

Essential outcomes express the intended end results of education and the specific outcomes are context linked and based on learning outcomes of the individual areas of learning. For example, an essential outcome would be the ability to collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information. In the learning area of Communication, Literacy and Language, which includes Information Literacy, the specific outcome would be an information literate individual/learner. Essential outcomes are reflected in the specific outcomes. They direct teaching, education and training practices and the development of learning programmes and material (DoE, 1996c:24).

As a result, curriculum development begins with the formulation of these essential outcomes. The following Critical Cross-field Outcomes (Essential Outcomes) are designed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and apply to all learning areas. Learners should be able to successfully demonstrate their ability to:

- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and /or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation;
- Identify and solve problems by using creative and critical thinking;
- Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;

- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
- Work effectively with others in a group, team, organisation and community;
- Understand that the world is a set of related systems .This means that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation;
- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health;
- Show awareness of the importance of the effective learning strategies, responsible citizenship, cultural sensitivity, education and career opportunities and entrepreneurial abilities (DoE, 1997:16).

These essential outcomes signal that for the first time South African curriculum developers show an awareness and understanding of the essential role of learning resources .To access the curriculum and achieve the essential and specific outcomes, educators and learners will have to interact with learning resources. Thus, teacher-librarians have an important role to promote the school libraries as institutional support structures for the achievement of these outcomes in learners.

2.4 THE SCHOOL LIBRARY AND RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING

The significant curricular role of library-based resources demands that education planners and administrators cannot regard the school library as a separate optional support structure in the teaching and learning process.

It can no longer be thought of as an appendage to what is going on in schools, as a place for browsing in the lunch-hour, as a place for “library training”. Essentially it is integral and related to the on-going knowing process of the educational programme (Hawkins, 1988:4).

The emphasis on the learner, the inter-disciplinary nature of knowledge, the experiential and resource-based method of teaching and learning as characterised by the new outcomes-based approach, means that educators and learners will be using greater

numbers of (learning) resources and a wider range than would have been necessary with previous curricular.

According to the Library Association Guidelines for School Libraries a resource is any material which makes a positive contribution to the learning process (Kinnell, 1992:37). Using this definition; resources would include printed documents, collections of interactive video disks and lists of special resources, resource people, on-line data banks, CD-ROMS, journals, portfolios, observational checklists and reprographic and technical support. In general, the centralised library collection is the only place in the school where this whole range of material may be found.

The relationship between teaching and learning and library-based resources (Henri, 1988:6-7) is illustrated in the following table which compares a teacher-orientated pedagogy with resource-based learning.

Figure 2.1 Comparison between teacher-orientated and resource-based learning

Teacher-oriented Learning	Resource-based Learning
Resources are selected according to a body of subject matter	Resources are selected on potential to achieve specific learning outcomes
Resources are regarded as 'aids to teaching only' and are a supplement to the classroom teacher	Resources are regarded as 'mediated learning materials' and assume the responsibility of achieving certain outcomes
Resources are primarily group based and heavily print oriented	Resources are designed for either individual or group learning and utilise a number of modalities
Resources utilise a one way instructional mode	Resources utilise an interactive mode
Resources are largely of commercial origin	Resources are frequently adapted or produced by schools to meet particular needs

Resources enter the curriculum process at the implementation level	Resources enter the curriculum process at the development or planning level
Resources are largely invalidated	Where possible, resources which have evidence of validity are sought
There is little need for the teacher and the teacher-librarian to be cooperatively involved in curriculum decisions	It is essential that the teacher and the teacher-librarian be cooperatively involved in curricular decisions
The management and use of learning resources are designed to support a teaching programme	The management and use of learning resources are designed to facilitate learning

From the many types of learning resources, it is evident that resources for the support of the curriculum include a variety of media. Collaboration between the educator and the teacher-librarian in achieving maximum and successful use of the learning resources is important.

The shift in education philosophy in South Africa also implies that the selection policies of school libraries must reflect the focus towards the outcomes-based curriculum. Learning resources in the school library must cover such aspects as learning skills, learning outcomes, appropriateness, differentiation and bias (Kinnell, 1992:39).

School librarians in South Africa have not always selected their resources according to a criterion of relevance to the curriculum. This is possibly because there has never been a national policy linking school libraries directly to the curriculum.

2.5 INFORMATION LITERACY

Information literacy has been defined as: The ability to recognise the need for information; to find, organise, evaluate and use such information for effective decision-

making or problem solving; and, to apply these skills to independent lifelong learning (Cheek et al, 1995:2).

Information skills are information-based rather than library-based. They are broad, and draw on all levels of cognitive and affective processes. They are the skills which underpin a learner's ability to define the purpose of an information task, locate resources of data, select, interpret and use information to complete a task (Henri, 1988:21).

If information skills draw on all levels of a learner's learning processes, they cannot be taught effectively without being integrated across the curriculum. By focusing on information skills across the curriculum, the need for an integrated approach to information literacy is highlighted.

This is the argument that was made by the school library sector during the formulation of curriculum for Learning Area and Learning Outcomes. Information literacy runs across the curriculum. It belongs to all learning areas. One of the proposed essential outcomes in the new curriculum for South Africa is stated as: The ability to collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluates information (DoE, 1997:16).

The shift in educational focus is from teacher-content-centred learning to learner-process-centred learning. This is concomitant with the shift in the role of the library from being a storehouse of the resources, to being a dynamic, learner-oriented resource-based learning centre in which learners play an active role in resourcing their own learning. This obliges the teacher-librarian, through the school library and the collection of resources, to foster an environment where learners are actively involved with information. It requires education and information to be integrated as one entity.

The school library should also be the focus for the development of the school's information skills curriculum so that learners are taught the skills of analysing and critically evaluating information for lifelong development. Even the President, Mr Thebe Mbeki, has reiterated the importance of being information literate (1996:2, 15):

The ability to use information effectively is now the single most important factor in deciding the competitiveness of countries. Information literate individuals and communities are able to take advantage of the educational, work and communication possibilities.

Global trends are also emphasising the attainment of information skills as a basic requirement in an individual's life. This is accelerated by the rapid explosion of sources of information and the development of technology for the storage and retrieval of data. Learners need to be taught at an early stage how to retrieve and use information effectively. Since information skills are not innate but acquired, one environment in which this can occur is structured learning at school through the use of the school's resources.

It is important for every school to plan for the teaching of information skills within the curriculum of every grade. The teaching of these skills will not only benefit the learners by becoming information literate for the duration of their lives, but it will also enhance the quality of those around them.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, all ideas mentioned in the literature to this study emphasise the role that media centres have to play in uplifting the quality of education in South Africa. All stakeholders mentioned are concerned in their active role in the media centres and effective running of libraries in primary schools. The main reason remains to be the proper utilisation by well trained personnel. Educationists jointly have to consider the important role media centres can play in sorting out the educational problems facing South Africa currently.

CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the description and discussion of the methods of data gathering and the scientific procedures accompanying the process in order to ensure validity and reliability. The researcher's objectives (see paragraph 1.4.8) were basically focused on the research question (mentioned in paragraph 1.2.5), why educators do not use libraries and media centres, or even encourage their learners to use it.

3.2 PROCEDURE (PROTOCOL)

The research strategy chosen for this study is a qualitative one. Qualitative methods such as observation, interviews recording and reporting will be used.

Experts knowledgeable about the theme of this study were approached. Records of different informants were kept including invitations to schools' library workshops. The researcher's objectives were basically focused on the research question mentioned in paragraph 1.2 of the study: Why educators do not use libraries or encourage their learners to use it.

The researcher will visit educators at schools and tell them about her research. She will ask those who want to be interviewed to write down their names and send them to her. The code of conduct will be read and explained to them, and their confidentiality assured. The learners will be chosen randomly and will be told why they are chosen.

The researcher will use qualitative methods because the situation calls for qualitative research. Qualitative research falls into four classifications: observation, interviews, documents, and research instruments of various kinds (such as questionnaires, surveys, and personality, attitude, and cognitive tests).

The researcher will be able to observe the educators and learners of a specific school and can determine how often they talk of the Media Centre or use it. Learners and educators who have shown interest to be interviewed can later be called and be interviewed. Notes can afterwards be made from the informal interviews. A tape recorder will be used because it will be helpful to preserve and cross-check information.

3.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA

To ensure that methods of data collected for the study are valid and reliable, the researcher aligned with utterances by Botha & Engelbrecht (1992:59) who reiterated that the most reliable method is the personal interview, which also requires minimum note-taking. The latter served the purpose of extracting points of interest from interviewees in order to pursue the theme further. Secondly, the researcher made sure not to influence the respondents in their responses, by way of eliciting a desired reply. This may prove to be the disadvantage of this method (Botha & Engelbrecht 1992:59).

The researcher further cites from Mphahlele (1993:69) who drew on Jary & Jary's (1991:527) responses on data reliability. They emphasise that for data to be reliable it has to be consistent and dependable. A reliable measure is one which gives the same results with the same individuals measured on more than one occasion (Ibid, 1991:527). Hence, a follow-up study was one method incorporated by the researcher for another week on the same respondents to ensure data reliability and validity.

3.4 INTERVIEWS

The tape-recorder will be used as an aid to interviewing. The permission of respondents was sought prior to taping. Ary et al (1990:413) emphasise flexibility as one of the prerequisites a researcher should adopt when interviewing.

Hence the researcher had the opportunity to repeat questions where points of misunderstanding arose during interviewing sessions. Personal contact in the form of

face to face or "two person conversation" (Cohen & Manion, 1980:58) will be used to gain a better position to control the order in which the questions will be asked. Ary et al (1990) considered that one of the advantages of face to face interviewing is that it is useful to take on- the- spot notes. Although some disadvantages also feature here, the method can be costly, lengthy and time consuming, for instance, some expense will be encountered by the researcher when a tape-recorder had to be secured.

Botha & Engelbrecht (1992:58-59) mentioned the following about telephone interviews, which will be an alternative method used by the researcher on other respondents. The telephone interview has the advantage of allowing respondents to be interviewed within a short space of time. Several disadvantages are there, one being that the method will exclude most people who had no telephones, therefore either under-representing or over-representing certain parts of the population (Botha & Engelbrecht, 1992:58).

Questions used will be open-ended in nature and simply require the interviewer to read questions which will be prepared in advance on cards. These cards enable the interviewer to record responses verbatim. Secondly, this kind of questioning will afford the respondent greater freedom of expression and more open responses will be expected by the researcher.

The researcher will use probing were necessary to deduce more tangible responses from respondents. In the case where the researcher wishes to find out if the media centres are operational or not, more closed questions will be posed for a positive or a negative response. Varying ways which will be used by the researcher will cover what Mouton & Marais (1990:90) termed "compensation for one method may bias or distort the researchers `s picture regarding the theme under investigation". The length of the interview phase of the research will be about three and a half (3 ½) weeks. The researcher will initiate this period by sending a covering displayed in Appendix A of this study from the university course leader or supervisor. Key personalities ranging from the headmaster to pupils will be selected through random sampling. The time frame for each interview will be about thirty (30) to thirty five (35) minutes. Due to money and time

constraints, the researcher will use one of the offices which will be asked from the headmaster to conduct interviews individually.

The researcher will align herself with what Micher (1886:14-15) had termed a “friendly” conversation, where open-ended questions will be used in a very conventional manner to allow respondents in their own situation to reconstruct their experiences. Interviews will include probing where respondent’s experiences, misunderstandings and notes will be taken to supplement what they say. Examples of questions that will be asked are:

Educators’ questions:

Is there a library or Media Centre in your school?

Is there a post for a librarian or media educator?

Are there books and furniture in your centre?

How often do you use your centre?

How does the Department of Education help?

Is there any NGO intervention?

Are you affiliated to any library association?



Learners’ questions:

Is there a library in your school?

How often do you use your library?

Do you know how to look for material in the library?

Is there a full-time librarian?

Are the books in your library, books that you can use for subjects in your school?

Is the audio visual equipment in your library?

What else can you tell me about your library?

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter gave a general view of how data will be gathered, and the procedures accompanying the process, the next chapter will provide the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4 - RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will basically furnish the reader with a clear picture of how the themes pointed out in figures 4.1 and 4.2 came out. This will incorporate the various impressions by interviews in the interpretations of various themes. The researcher's voice will also be heard in the interpretations of the responses.

4.2 INTERVIEW: IMPRESSIONS

Within two days the researcher had conducted a group orientation of all respondents. The first five respondents incorporated represented learners, educators and headmasters respectively. These were chosen to represent a Black township, some Village schools and the multiracial school. Lastly, the researcher selected a representative from the Department of Education and Training, and the Media Centre co-ordinator of the North West Province. As mentioned, all respondents were tape-recorded, some had to answer on cards with the exception of the headmaster of one school, who had some problems and was later interviewed telephonically.

Generally speaking, the interviews were conducted with great courtesy and interest. The researcher ensured that questions be responded to with complete frankness and honesty. It appeared that all questions tabulated in figure 4.2 were interesting to all respondents with the exception of interviewee 1 who seemed a bit hesitant when it came to the exact role that should be played by the librarian.

Under the circumstances prevailing in the schools one would really not blame respondents for not furnishing the interviewer with fully fledged answers in some instances. Reasons being that from the outset they were not familiarised with some of the happenings that took place in the schools. The following paragraphs will briefly

discuss the impressions found in individual interviewees about the absence of operative media centres in the primary schools and to hear about their importance or not.

All respondents appeared to share the same view about the existence of media centres in the primary schools which are not always functioning at satisfactory levels of performance.

The following tabular representation reveals the themes or ideas that emerged as areas of concern from the different transcriptions. These were grouped according to areas of commonality or differences, questions posed covered the following themes:

TABLE 4.1: TABULAR REPRESENTATIONS OF INTERVIEW THEMES

RESPONDENTS	THEMES COVERED IN QUESTIONS
Inters 1-6	Physical nature of Media Centres in Primary Schools
Inters 1-6	Media User Skills as a school subject.
Inters 6	The issue of a full-time librarian & library stock
Inters 2,3,4,7,5	Role played by Media Centre committees & subject committees.
Inters 2	Role played by the Media Centre & Media Centre educator.
Inters 2 and 5	Media Centre skills as part of the subject curriculum.
Inters 2-6	Media Centre policy & lack of liaison between provincial government educators and teacher-librarians
All interviewees	Recommendation

TABLE 4.2: TABULAR REPRESENTATIONS OF QUESTIONS ASKED

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES
Existence of MC books arranged on shelves Organisation of MC availability of furniture	Physical Appearance
Existence of full time librarian Shortage of staff and Shortage of grants Information technology subjects	Full-time librarian

MC as a need Need location of school Absence of operative MC Inter-loan system Role of subject educators	Role of MC
DoE concern Teacher impression Role by teacher in curriculum Designing	MC Part of school Curriculum
Question of MC policy Implementation of policies Role of DoE and the Private sector	Lack of policy and liaison by DoE and NGO's

4.2.1 The physical nature of the library

Discussion: Interviewee 1 “There exists a room in the school known as the library, but it is haphazardly arranged with some books on the shelves in boxes”. To the researcher it appeared that there are libraries in some schools, but are not used.

The picture in Appendix B reflects the kind of library that they set up that was given by Interviewee 1, where there is a library but NO librarian. Interviewee 1 feels that there are too many learners and very few educators, this makes it impossible to send any teacher to the library, because of the load of work they have. Interviewee 2 commended that “The school that we visited over at Rustenburg had an impressive library, well organised with furniture, books well organised on shelves, and multi-media equipment like radios, TVs and computers.” (See picture in Appendix C). The impression is given by Interviewee 2 that there are operative libraries in some schools. The picture given by the two respondents above had proven clearly the differences regarding resources available in Government Schools and Private Schools. The literature given in the study supports the ideas by most respondents. Masterman (1985:17) emphasised that: “To

be convinced of the importance of and need for media education is one thing; to develop a successful media education practice is quite another”.

Masterman (1985:17) goes on to say “can Media be studied as systematic, as intellectually rigorous ...as more established subject?” This statement to the researcher concurs with 1.4.4 of this study which highlights one of the proposed recommendations to be offering of Media User Skills as a school subject.

Findings: The researcher found that, in most of the schools, the library is used as a staff-room or store-room. Books are in boxes, some are full of dust, the principal is the one who sign for them, and does not allow educators to use them. Where there are libraries with books packed, they are packed haphazardly and subject teachers go in and take their prescribed books, there after it is locked again.

4.2.2 The issue of the teacher/full-time librarian

Discussion: Paragraph 1.4.1 (chapter 1) questioned why educators in primary schools do not use libraries. The impression given by respondents of one school was positive about the presence of a teacher-librarian, but queries why she was not operating on a full-time basis. Interviewee 6 furnished these reasons: “There is a shortage of staffing existing in the schools and as a result, teacher librarians were also required to alleviate this problem by offering other academic subject”. “There was also a shortage of grants in the Department of Education.” Another reason was, with the new system of education (OBE) individual attention is needed, an educator is expected to have a record for each learner, and assess the learners daily. The number of learners in the class makes it impossible for an educator to give the learners the individual attention that is expected from him or her and run the library at the same time or there after.

The comment above by Interviewee 6 provided no solution whatsoever regarding the theme under discussion. The researcher believes in the utterances of literature used in a study where Pring (1989:108) questioned the right of subjects like Information

Technology as a tool for reading and writing which facilitates learning in the school, **and yet** not being part of the curriculum (bold letters are those of the researcher).

It is also important to highlight literature by Ribbins (1992:203) who drew on Gipps (1990) who described the achievement of standards as “the level of basic skills such as reading or maths, or levels of attainment in a much wider range of school activities talking about standards of provision, e.g. the number of teachers and learners per book.”

In the light of the quotation above, the impression given by one respondent tallied exactly with the “standards” as described by Gipps (1990) above. Interviewee 4, a senior educator in the department of English in one school, said it was imperative that a full-time librarian exists in every primary school. She went on to say it is impossible for lessons to continue effectively in the OBE way without a fully functional library. Learners and educators are forced to use the library daily so that they can develop and acquire skills that would be needed in the future skills like, preparedness for life-long learning, teamwork, creativity, problem solving, leadership, quality thinking, service minded, willingness to cooperate, changed working methods and good ability.

Finding: The researcher found that there are no full-time librarians in most schools; most of them are known only by the name “librarian”. They are given classes like all the other educators. Library education is taken as an extra-curricular subject, so if one does not have the main subjects of the school curriculum, one would be declared to be in access, meaning deployment to other schools that have few educators. Where libraries are fully functional, the educator is paid by the governing body and not the government.

4.2.3 The issue of teacher organisations

Discussion: Interviewee 3, an affiliate of the teacher’s organisation (SADTU) pointed out the following suggestion regarding the theme of libraries:

That there should exist inter-library facilities in the schools and also stressed that there be interactions between the different races of South Africa rightfully a single Education Department should be established!

To quite an extent Interviewee 3 mentioned hard facts that have to be brought to the knowledge of education authorities especially during this period of change in South Africa. Masterman (1985:7) emphasised these words “If educators fail to take up the challenges of uplifting the standard of their education, to benefit the coming generation, who else will? He thus says that it was necessary for them to persuade and argue for the need of media user skills in the learning situation.

Findings: Educators are part of unions and most of them do not know any other organisations except their own unions. To be in library organisations one needs to be working in the library and attend meetings where they can meet with other librarians, and can share about all that they know, Professional support teams, LIASA and any other organisation that might help them as librarians.

4.2.4 The role of the Media Centre in the school

Discussion: Interviewee 2 said “Media centres are in need as informational centres, my interests are shattered by their absence or uncooperativeness in the schools. I still have enthusiasm to become a full-time librarian, if given a chance”. Interviewee 5 mentioned to this effect the new location of a school and the existence of a newly built school, where hopefully the librarian would be full-time in a well-built, well-arranged and organised media centre. The Media Centre is very important because, books that are not prescribed and have information that learners need, can be found in the there, learners can look at films and listen to stories from cassettes .Interviewee 4 mentioned that public libraries and school libraries should engage in inter-loan exchange of books with each other, so that learners should get used to looking for information themselves, and not depend on the educator to get information for them.

Findings: In some schools there are media centres but these are used as staff-rooms or store-rooms because of the shortage of rooms in the schools.

4.2.5 Media Education as part of the school curriculum

Discussion: Interviewee 3 commented in the following way regarding this matter: “The Department of Education and Training takes little interest in allowing teachers to participate in activities like being part of curriculum design. For how long has this issue existed?” The impression that the researcher observed here was that the educators were aware that they were practitioners inside the classroom and therefore knew the role they were to play as far as curriculum designing was concerned.

Findings: Educators are not part of curriculum design. Curriculum is developed and designed by somebody somewhere and given to educators to teach. This makes it difficult for the librarian to be able to implement media skills at an early stage in the school.



4.2.6 Lack of Media Centre policy and lack of liaison between DoE and NGOs

Discussion: The impression given by Interviewee 3 here tallies the absence of media centres with the negligence shown by the Department of Education authorities regarding this matter. In his own words: “In my experience as an educator, I have never heard a single person mention Media Centre policies, and I hardly know the look of the document. “To quite an extent this is true; because some policies have existed belonging to other subjects in the schools. Interviewee 6 to that effect said: “Policies have been handed to some teacher-librarian, although not all, as it depends on the librarian that was able to attend the Media Centre courses arranged during the course of the year.” The impression perceived here was that as trained personnel, teacher-librarians could have been part of the arranged courses if they initially were given a chance to man libraries in the schools. By now they should have been familiar to library policies and their implementation.

Findings: There is no policy that binds educators to teach Library Skills. The government took out policies, but said nothing about libraries or media centres. If policies are there, nothing is done to endorse them. The educators does not know that there are NGO's like READ which can help them to equip their libraries or media centres with books, and can run work-shops to help them to run their libraries.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter gave a general overview of what the situation in Primary Schools is regarding media centres. A general concern reflected lack of interest in Media Education. Secondly, total negligence by the Department of Education had been noticed. All respondents appeared quite optimistic about the role of media centres in the education of Primary School learners in particular. On the whole it appeared that immediate recognition of this subject by relevant authorities could bring about great changes in the education of learners.

The next chapter will provide a conclusion and reflect on some recommendations regarding the issue of Primary School Media Centres and their role in Education.

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at investigating the reasons behind the absence of media centres in the Primary Schools, and if they are present why the educators do not use them, or even encourage the learners to use them. Where they are in existence, the researcher evaluated the extent to which they are operative. As stated in paragraph 1.3, the aims of this research were

- To find out why educators in primary schools do not use libraries?
- To establish why librarians/media centres where existent in primary schools, are not fully operative?
- To come up with recommendations to assist Media Centre educators to take up the challenge to get the media centres working.
- To formulate guidelines for Media Centre educators to develop programmes to offer Media User Skills as a subject in primary schools.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 Lack of proper participation and usage

There is a definite lack of participation in the domain of media centres in Primary Schools. It is a problem that has to be addressed by educational authorities with immediate effect. Active and independent learning and the information skills place the school library at the centre of the curriculum and makes it the most important place in the school. Outcomes-Based Education emphasises that learners must be actively involved in the learning. Active learning does not happen in a classroom where the educator and the textbook are the only sources of information. It requires that learners must interact with a wide range of learning resources when preparing their information tasks. On the other hand educators also need to interact with a wide range of learning

resources when preparing their lessons or learning programmes and set problem solving tasks, which will require learners with a wide range of resources.

5.2.2 Lack of representation

Related to the past, educators were excluded from participating in matters related to their curriculum, for example contribution towards the designing of subjects in the curriculum of their own choice. Today OBE allows educators to design their own programme organisers and those programme organisers should address their problems in their own environment. The Department provides Phase Organisers only. This is frustrating because educators are not represented to choose those Phase Organisers; they had no representation whatsoever, hence the absence of facilities such as media centres in the Primary Schools.

5.2.3 Lack of participation by parents

Lack of participation by parents in the educational needs of their children exacerbated this problem. In actuality, parental bodies were expected to have been part of the triangular relationship consisting of educators, parents and learners. An extension of the chain would have been possible if the triangular relationship had initiated to address the problem of media centres. Thus, non-governmental organisations would have been in a position to have strengthened the establishment of this facility.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

According to literature (paragraph 2.4) the school library should not be regarded as a separate optional support structure in the teaching and learning process, but should be regarded as part of the school. Educators should be encouraged to facilitate to learners the importance of the library and give them work that would make them to go to the library. They should be equipped to find more information for themselves so that they can establish the necessary abilities. It is the duty of the Department through the help of

the principals to make this possible. The researcher recommends that there should be a policy that links the library directly to the curriculum. Librarians should work with the subject educators to know which Program Organisers are treated for that week or month, prepare headings or topics with pictures or actual objects and display them in the Media Centre so that learners can link the library to their classrooms and not as a different room. An example can be if the Program Organiser treated for that week is water, to have pictures of a river, a picture of boiling water, and a picture of ice cubes or bring them to the Media Centre to be displayed so that learners can see water in all its forms. There should be a video available that could be watched. The librarian should reserve the books that deal with the topic and also display other books that have information that deals with the topic and are not prescribed books. The librarian can do this with all the other Program Organisers with the help of the subject educators.

5.3.1 Re-establishment of Media Centres

In the establishment of media centres the issues addressed and highlighted in the literature overview (paragraph 2.3) as designed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), apply to all learning areas equally importantly. One of the proposed essential outcomes in the new curriculum for South Africa is stated as:

The ability to

- Collect
- Analyse
- Organise
- And critically evaluate information.

School libraries are also necessary:

- to implement the objectives and intensions of the curriculum
- to raise the quality of instruction
- to give learners tools for life-long learning, because
- they reach out to all learners
- they are available all day in direct connection with the instruction

- to give the pupils an opportunity to use new technology in meaningful situations
- to be cultural and social centres in the schools

5.3.2 Establishment of an umbrella body

In this regard the establishment of an umbrella body like LIASA must have a say in how libraries should be run. Their active participation could bring about the changes that are needed in the effective running of libraries in Primary Schools. The umbrella body would also help in talking to the government to employ a full-time librarian in each Media Centre for the effective running of the centre.

5.3.3 In-service workshops

In the whole this research exposed the factor of the importance of in-service training workshops as a basic necessity for educators, especially teacher-librarians. Harmer (1993) highlights and recommends the following regarding in-service training:

- (i) Workshops to be held over one day, week-ends or consecutive afternoons;
- (ii) Needs of the school have to be ascertained;
- (iii) Planning in connection with timetables needs to be thorough, as well as venue, equipment and material;
- (iv) Presentations must be practical and relevant with group participation;
- (v) Evaluation of programmes and improvements can be done.

The ideas highlighted above are in alignment with the recommendation anticipated by the researcher with regards to future workshops for teacher – librarians by educational authorities.

5.3.4 Policy-making

Policy-makers in media education are to learn from the factors that emerged from the absence of media centres in schools. The utmost participation of all representatives highlighted in this study has to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Their participative role is therefore intrinsically inseparable from each other.

5.3.5 Matter of urgency

The need for the establishment of media centres in Primary Schools has to be treated as a matter of urgency. Hopefully the recommendations put forward by this study will be taken into cognisance by the education authorities concerned. Emphasis throughout the major triangular partnership which involves parents, teachers, and learners, should also be of importance and be considered. The extension thereof which incorporates other communities like non-governmental sectors will then follow suit.

5.4 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The following suggestions are put forward:

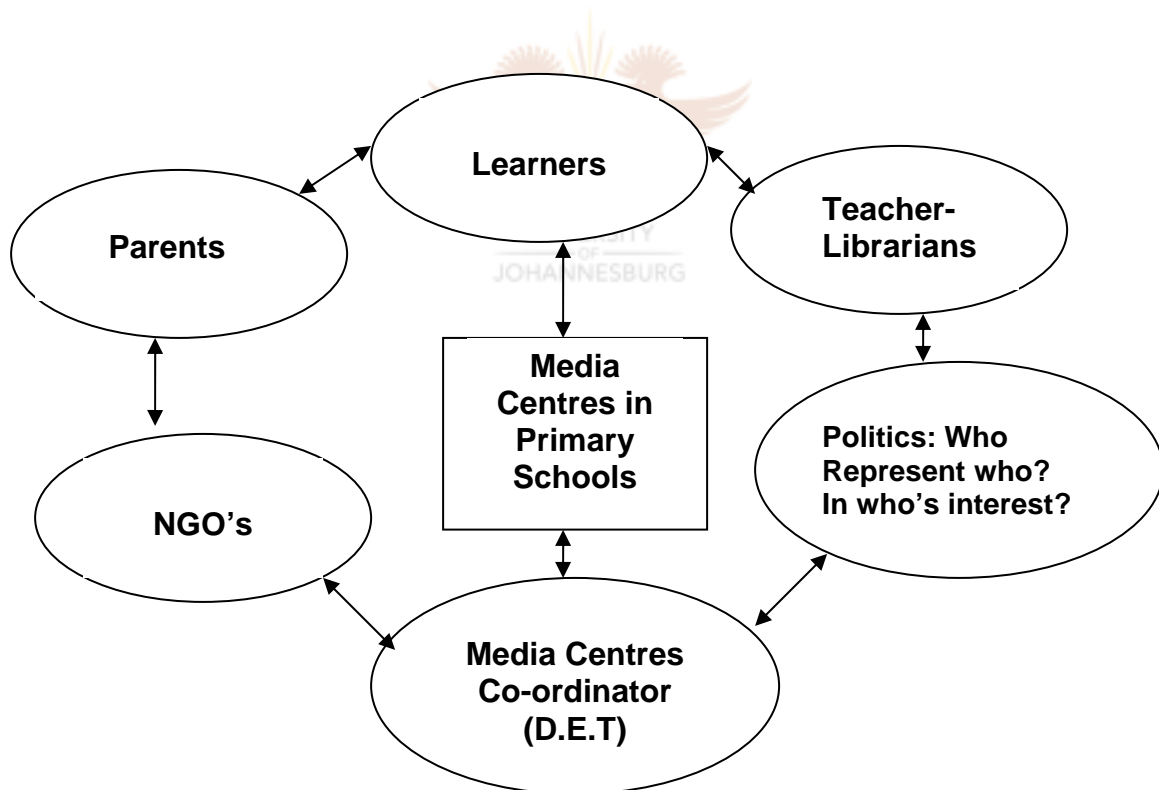
- i. The future designation of Media Centre policies should meet library standards mentioned in Chapter 4 (paragraph 4.2.2).
- ii. Librarians must work closely with subject teachers, they too like educators, must be skilled in subject matter and educational processes.
- iii. Primary School librarians must cover a wider range of subjects and should have conference rooms or library clubs for holding group study sessions.
- iv. Primary School librarians should be part of bodies like LIASA.
- v. The formation of relationship structures is the highlight of this study and has to be maintained for the important role of media centres.
- vi. The librarian should not be given classes to teach other subjects and should run the library on a full-time basis.
- vii. There should be multi-media advisors to make sure each school has a library and media skills are taught from the lowest class or grade.
- viii. Policies should be made by the Provincial Government and should be binding.

School libraries and teacher-librarians have an important role to play in the process of teaching and learning. It is difficult to imagine how the school curriculum can be effectively delivered unless teachers and learners have easy access to library-based

resources. However, the idea of a library in every South African school will not be affordable for many decades to come.

The state is facing the challenge to provide schools with a minimum level of resources for effective teaching and learning. There must be incentives that drive school communities to improve and upgrade their school libraries so that there is a continuous increase in the resources and library support available to educators and learners. Schools cannot achieve this on their own. The impetus needs to be initiated by governing bodies, with education departments setting up regional or district level offices that support and advise schools.

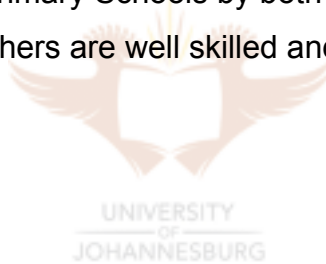
Fig 5.1: Relationship Structure: Highlighting participation towards the role of the Media Centre in Primary Schools



5.5 SUMMARY

Hopefully this research will help to motivate parents, teachers and learners to realise the importance of media centres in Primary Schools. Effectively conducted libraries and media centres will possibly produce learners who acknowledge that learning is life-long, accept that information is multi-purpose: personal, cultural, recreational, and vocational. Learners, who continuously add to their core knowledge and extract new meaning from information, know their information needs and actively engage in the world of ideas.

The role of media centres in Primary Schools is therefore a crucial issue that has to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The importance of their role in the education of the primary school child cannot be over emphasised, especially during this period when OBE is introduced. This study finally intends paying attention to the factor that media centres are used effectively in Primary Schools by both learners and educators and ensuring that Media Centre teachers are well skilled and fully operative in the centres.



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APPENDICES

A: Covering letter of interviews

B: An example of a dysfunctional library

C: An example of a functional library

D: Transcript of an interview

E: An example of a program at a library annual meeting

F: An annual report given at a LIASA conference



APPENDIX: D

AN INTERVIEW GUIDE TRANSCRIPT

Researcher: Good day Madam, How are you?

Interviewee: Good day, I am fine, thanks.

Researcher: Do you have a library at your school?

Interviewee: Yes, we do.

Researcher: Are you working in the library?

Interviewee: Yes I do work in the library.

Researcher: Are you working part time, and offer other subject, or are you working in the library full-time?



Interviewee: I am working in the library after my classes in the morning

Researcher: Do you have enough material in the library?

Interviewee: Not really enough, we do have books, TV and video, computers with internet, and reference work.

Researcher: What role do you play as a librarian?

Interviewee: I liaise with educators to make sure which programme organisers they teach that week, I then reserve the books that will be used. I display all teaching and

learning aids that can be used. I book videos that can help the educator. Display new material, and ensure that educators give learners tasks that will force them to the library.

Researcher: Are all these things bought by the school itself?

Interviewee: Not all, there is a budget for the library. We also raise funds, and fine those who bring books later than the due date. With that money, we buy what we need.

Researcher: How does the department help?

Interviewee: They did send us stationary to process books, sometimes books, and the internet is also paid by the government, and they do offer a lot.

Researcher: What about NGO's?

Interviewee: READ people do come to the school and donate books, work-shop us on story telling and dramatisation, and the mines donate money if we ask.

Researcher: Are there any library associations you are affiliated to?

Interviewee: Yes, Our school is a member of LIASA. It is a library body that helps all librarians in running the library; we also meet for workshops, and talk among ourselves as librarians on a lot of issues related to the library.

Researcher: Do you work with other libraries?

Interviewee: Yes, I sometimes do book loans at the public library in town, and with the nearby schools.

Researcher: Thank you for your time and keep up the good work.

Interviewee: Thank you.