

**STRUCTURING OF A POWERFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR  
THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY IN THE FURTHER  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND IN FREE STATE SCHOOLS**

**By**

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**JUNE 2009**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work which is submitted here is a result of my independent investigation and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete bibliography. I further declare that this work is submitted for the first time at this university towards the Philosophae Doctor degree in Curriculum Studies and that it has never been submitted to any other university/faculty for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

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Boitumelo Benjamin Moreeng

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Date

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late parents, Mothusiemang and Ngakaemang Paipai 'Tshetshebe' Moreeng.

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## **SUMMARY**

The primary aim of the research was to identify different aspects that need to be taken into account when structuring a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET Band. In doing so the researcher focused on and adopted the Flemish notion of 'Powerful Learning Environment' as espoused by amongst others De Corte and Masui (2004), and Donovan and Bransford (2005).

History teaching in South African schools has faced challenges and was subject to change throughout the ages. Some of these challenges included the way in which history was taught in schools, the nature of its content and the impact that these had on people's perception of history as a school subject (Kapp, 1994, Pandor, 1994, De Villiers, 1998, Van Eeden, 1999, Twala, 2003, Asmal, 2003).

The researcher focused on two challenges, namely to determine history teachers' and learners' perception of the teaching and learning of history as well as determining the current status of the teaching and learning of history in the FET Band of schools with the Free State province. Findings from these two aspects were used to create guidelines for the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history.

The study further proposes that history teachers require a thorough understanding of Outcomes-based education in South Africa, historical developments in the teaching of history in South Africa and internationally, learning and developmental theories and knowledge about learning environments so that they can structure powerful learning environments.

The research design involved a quantitative method and the data was collected by means of a five point Lickert scale questionnaire. The questionnaires included statements about perception of history teaching and also sought to determine the current status of history teaching and learning by focusing on the teaching and learning strategies employed. The sample consisted of 96 teachers and 697 learners throughout the Free State province who participated in the study. The data for the research was analyzed by means of the SPSS at the University of Free State.

The research findings suggest that both learners and teachers of history have a positive attitude towards History as a school subject. With regard to the approaches that are used during history lessons, the research revealed that there was a need to improve on the following three characteristics of learning environment, namely community-centred learning

environment, learner-centred learning environment and assessment-centred learning environment.

History teachers therefore need to be empowered to use constructivist teaching methodologies that will not only ensure the development of appropriate historical skills and the acquisition of historical content, but will also improve interaction within the class and enhance the nature of assessment.

## Opsomming

Die primêre doel van die navorsing was om verskillende aspekte te identifiseer wat in ag geneem moet word in die strukturering van 'n kragtige leeromgewing vir die onderrig en leer van geskiedenis in die VOO-fase. Die navorser het gefokus op 'n kragtige leeromgewing soos voorgestaan deur onder andere De Corte en Masui (2004), asook Donovan en Bransford (2005).

Geskiedenisonderrig in Suid-Afrika het al baie uitdagings ervaar en is deur die eeue heen aan verandering onderwerp. Sommige van dié uitdagings sluit in: die wyse waarop dit in skole onderrig is, die aard van die inhoud en die impak wat dit op mense se persepsie van geskiedenis as skoolvak gehad het (Kapp, 1994, Pandor, 1994, De Villiers, 1988, Van Eeden, 1999, Twala 2003, Asmal, 2003).

Die navorser het op twee sake gefokus, naamlik geskiedenisonderwysers en –leerders se persepsies van die leer van geskiedenis, asook die huidige status van die onderrig en leer van geskiedenis in die VOO-fase in Vrystaatse skole. Bevindinge in verband met bogenoemde twee aspekte is gebruik om riglyne op te stel vir die strukturering van 'n kragtige leeromgewing vir die onderrig en leer van geskiedenis.

Die studie stel voor dat geskiedenisonderwysers grondige begrip van uitkomsgebaseerde onderrig in Suid-Afrika, asook van historiese ontwikkelings in die onderrig van geskiedenis in Suid-Afrika en internasionaal, moet ontwikkel. Daarbenewens moet hulle oor begrip van leer- en ontwikkelingsteorieë oor leeromgewings beskik en kennis van leeromgewings hê, sodat hulle kragtige leeromgewings kan skep.

'n Kwantitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is gebruik en data is deur middel van 'n vyfpunt Lickert-skaalvraelys versamel. Die vraelys het stellings ingesluit oor persepsie van geskiedenisonderrig en –leer deur te fokus op die onderrig en leerstrategieë wat aangewend is. Die steekproef het bestaan uit 96 onderwysers en 697 leerders van dwarsoor die Vrystaat wat aan die studie deelgeneem het. Die data vir die navorsing is aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat deur middel van die SPSS-pakket geanaliseer.

Die navorsingsresultate toon dat beide leerders en onderwysers van geskiedenis 'n positiewe houding teenoor geskiedenis as skoolvak het. Wat betref die benaderings wat gedurende geskiedenislesse gebruik word, toon die navorsing dat daar 'n behoefte is aan die verbetering van die volgende drie eienskappe van 'n leeromgewing: gemeenskapgesentreerde leeromgewing, leerdergesentreerde leeromgewing en assesseringsgesentreerde leeromgewing.

Geskiedenisonderwysers moet dus bemagtig word om konstruktivistiese onderrigmetodes te gebruik wat nie net die ontwikkeling van gepaste geskiedkundevaardighede en die verkryging van historiese inhoud sal verseker nie, maar ook die interaksie met die klas en die aard van die assessering sal verbeter.



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- Appendix B. Copy of a letter from the FSDoE granting permission to conduct research in schools
- Appendix C. Copy of a letter sent by the researcher to schools requesting permission to conduct research
- Appendix D. Copy of learners' questionnaire used in the study
- Appendix E. Copy of teachers' questionnaire used in the study

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
CEM	Council of Ministers
DoE	Department of Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FET	Further Education and Training
FSDoE	Free State Department of Education
GET	General Education and Training
HASA	History Association of South Africa
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NRF	National Research Foundation
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADET	South African Democracy Education Trust
SAHP	South African History Project
SASHT	South African Society for History Teaching
SCHP	School Council History Project
USA	United States of America
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

# **STRUCTURING OF A POWERFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND IN FREE STATE SCHOOLS**

1

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 ORIENTATION**

During the 1990s South Africa went through the changes that affected it in all spheres. The movement from an apartheid system to a democratic system brought with it new way of thinking and doing things. The passing of the new South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights brought about the need for a more inclusive, diverse and transformative society. It also provided the impetus to rethink the entire education system (Goduka, 1999: 23).

During the early nineties Jansen (1990: 332) pronounced that the nature of teaching and learning in an oppressive society such as South Africa would have to change. A system where teachers teach and learners are taught, where teachers know everything and do all the thinking, talking, disciplining and choosing of the programme content, would have to end in this new era.

It was arguments like these of Jansen (1990) that paved the way for Jacobs (1999: 117) to refer to the period of 1990 to 2000 as the stormiest period of reform in the history of the South African curriculum. During that period, the education system underwent tremendous changes. Different policies and structures were put in place with the aim of overhauling the system and the need to break away from the legacy of apartheid. Education had to be changed from being a racialised system into a non-racial one that would be based on equity, providing for central and local organisation (Van Wyk & Mothata, 1998: 1).

The White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1997) articulated the need for transformation and change. Subsequently various commissions and committees were established to initiate this process. The kind of education system that was envisaged was the one that rejected the rigid divisions between academic and applied, theory and practice, knowledge and skills in the education system of the past. The White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1997) therefore viewed education and training as spheres where the learning of skills, knowledge and generic abilities such as communication and problem-solving could be acquired. This proposition by the White Paper had an impact on the move towards an outcomes-based approach in South Africa. In 1997, the Minister of Education took a decision to replace apartheid education by an outcomes-based approach (DoE, 2003b: 2).

The broader changes in education were therefore influenced by the above-mentioned factors. Individual subjects also underwent their own metamorphosis informed by the broader general principles. It is within this light that the debate around the transformation of history as a school subject should be understood.

In order to address the needs of the individual subjects, a curriculum technical sub-committee was formed in 1994 to address the issue of curriculum. A history committee was formed to attend to the issues that related to history as a school subject. After a long and tedious process the history sub-committee presented the recommendations that dealt with the changes in the history syllabus and the development of criteria around which textbooks could be evaluated (Van Eeden, 1997: 105). This was an attempt to address one of the problems that had characterised history for a long time, namely the content of the history syllabus taught in schools.

Prior to 1994 most African people viewed history as being Eurocentric, Afrikaner-orientated and not addressing the history of the Africans. History was seen to be justifying the status quo (Twala, 2003: 1). Unfortunately, after 1994, the changes that were made to the history syllabus still did not avoid creating a negative perception. In most of the white schools, history was viewed as becoming an embarrassment because of the way it was mobilised to accuse, to condemn, to reject and to promote anti-white, anti-European, anti-Afrikaans and anti-established settlements feelings (Kapp, 1994a: 3).



In addition to the problem about the content of history and the attitudes that different people had towards the subject, history had other problems to battle with. The most conspicuous problem was the constant drop in the number of learners taking the subject at secondary school level and the general apathy towards the subject (Allen, 1998: 1).

Van der Merwe (1992: 29) maintains that the factors that affect the standing of history as a subject can be classified into two, namely the external and internal factors. Some of the external factors included the impact of globalisation and its influence on materialism, the emphasis on the physical sciences, and the technological needs of our lifetime. Some of the internal factors included the nature of history, the teaching-learning strategies employed, as well as the specific format of examining history.

Public debates about the relevance of history to the present situation were also held. This drive for reinterpretation, innovation and revitalisation of the history syllabi gave rise to numerous discussions and new structures. There is also a need to integrate and merge education and training. History should additionally provide learners with the skill of questioning that will be useful and help learners to manage outside the school (Van Eeden, 1997: 98).

From the above discussion it is clear that history teachers are currently faced with a number of challenges that they need to address. These include:

- History teachers have to present their lessons in a manner that caters for the current changes in education, for example allowing for a more learner-centred, flexible and skills-based approach.
- Teachers have to display an understanding of the different theories and perspectives that influence their current classroom practice.
- Teachers also have to be able to structure an environment that will ensure the effective teaching and learning of history.
- Teachers have to be aware of the influence that perceptions about history as a school subject are having with regard to effective teaching and learning of the subject.
- Teachers also have to be aware of the way in which the teaching of history has changed over the years and the impact that this has on the teaching of the subject.

The above-mentioned challenges make the study of this nature important, relevant and necessary as they will be seeking to address one of the internal problems identified in the previous paragraphs which concern the teaching and learning approaches. The researcher seeks to address this problem by providing guidelines that could be used for the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the further education and training (FET) band.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In defining the changes that have taken place in South African education, Lubisi, Wedekind, Parker and Gultig (1997: v) maintain that the current move in South African education may be viewed as a paradigm shift. This view of a paradigm shift is supported by the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1997: 6) and Naicker (1999: 67,93) when maintaining that outcomes-based education

(OBE) requires a move from one way of looking at things to a new mind set, a new attitude and a new way of thinking. A paradigm shift calls for a change in practice. Therefore it comes as no surprise that many people are perplexed by the changes they have had to deal with.

History as a subject taught in South African schools face many challenges and has undergone numerous changes. The various problems related to teaching history in South Africa fall into two main categories. Firstly there is the issue of content. Then there are the issues related to teaching methodologies. In the past some of the content related problems included the ideological struggle between British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the formalisation of apartheid as a policy in 1948. This resulted in the teaching of history being dominated by Afrikaner historiography seeking to legitimise apartheid policies (Van Eeden, 1999: 10). Subsequently history, based on a white-centred syllabus, continued to be a divisive factor. The content of the history being taught was not representative of all learners' realities neither did it bear any relevance nor was it in any real sense related to the history of the rest of the world. (Asmal, 2001: 3; Twala, 2003: 1).

The other problem that history teaching experienced was the way in which the content was selected. The selection of history content impacted on people's perceptions of history. Whereas prior to 1994, many black people felt that their history was not included in what was being taught in schools, after the democratic elections in 1994 there has been a growing perception amongst whites that their history is now being marginalised in favour of the "people's history". In some white schools history is perceived as an embarrassment because it is seen to be mobilized to accuse, condemn, reject and to promote anti-white, anti-European, anti-Afrikaner and anti-establishment sentiments. This has resulted in indifference and even antagonism towards the subject (Kapp, 1994:3).

The other problem of history is the way in which the subject is taught. The teaching and learning of history focuses mainly on the memorisation of facts, dates and places. There is an over-reliance on the use of textbooks and drilling methods. Teachers use the lecture method and assessment focuses entirely on the recalling of facts. The focus is on mastering the content and little is done to develop skills. This approach compromises the integrity and value of history as a subject and its economical value in the job market, is questioned. As a result of these factors, the number of learners enrolling for history has dwindled (Asmal, 2001: 3; Kapp, 1994: 3; Pandor, 1994: 3). Young people also see history as being out of touch with technology and also as losing the battle against commerce and science (Twala, 2003: 1). To learners who are not English speakers but whose medium of instruction is English, learning history as a literary subject, poses a challenge. Influenced by racial and ethnic stereotypes, historical events are sometimes distorted (Twala, 2003: 30).

The challenges mentioned above have an impact on the teaching and learning of history in schools. History teachers need to change from using an approach that seeks to deliver content in the form of dates and stories to be committed to memory to an approach that facilitates the development of skills, attitudes, knowledge and values (DoE, 2003a: 2-3). This calls for teachers to be knowledgeable and properly skilled. Teachers will also have to adopt new ways of teaching and develop new perception towards the teaching and learning of history.

It is therefore the view of the researcher that most history teachers are not yet conversant with the new approaches to teaching and learning history since the advent of the National

Curriculum Statement (NCS), the challenges that it brought and the kind of environment it requires in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning of history. The researcher therefore supports Asmal's (2001: 3) who asserts that teachers were not able to teach history effectively, as they were trained prior to the adoption of OBE approach in South African schools. Neither did their training acknowledge the changes with regard to the teaching and learning of history that were taking place on a global scale.

The author of this study agrees with the above views, because between 1992 and 1998 he was a student at a teacher-training college and subsequently studied to obtain a junior degree at university. His major subject was History. The main focus of both courses was on the accumulation of facts and the memorisation of events. The system therefore did very little to prepare the author and many of his colleagues currently teaching history in the schools throughout the Free State province to teach history in a manner conducive to the achievement of the anticipated critical and development outcomes.

There is evidence of efforts by the Department of Education (DoE), the higher education institutions and other stakeholders to bring teachers up to date with current changes in education. The quality and the extent of these interventions need to be constantly improved and supplemented, in particular by the application of research findings and recommendations such as the ones contained in this document.

From these problem statements the following questions arise:

- What is the perception of teachers and learners towards the teaching and learning of history?
- What is the current status of the teaching and learning of history in the FET band in schools within the Free State Province?
- What guidelines need to be considered in order to structure a powerful teaching and learning environment for history?

### **1.3 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Deriving from the statement of the problem, the central aim of this study will be to provide guidelines that should be considered in order to structure a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET band.

The specific objectives of this study will therefore be the following:

- To determine the perception that teachers and learners have towards the teaching and learning of history.
- To determine the current status of the teaching and learning of history in the FET band of the schools within the Free State province.
- To identify the different aspects that will ensure the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history.

### **1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research is defined as a process of systematically collecting and logically analysing information for a particular purpose (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:4). According to Goddard and Melville (2001:2) the aim of conducting a research is to find reality about the topic under investigation. In order to arrive at the reality, the researcher has to use a specific method. A research method is defined as an approach to address a research question or problem. In defining research methodology, Anderson (1998: 85-86) identifies the following aspects that need to be considered, namely the general approach and/or procedures, the research framework, research questions, sources of data, the instruments used to collect data and the procedures used in the analysis of data.

Research methodology serves a specific purpose. According to Thyer (2001: 32), research methodology serves to provide the researcher with the rules for communication with other investigators, with the rules for reasoning and with the rules for determining objectivity and inter-subjectivity.

There are different types of research, which are mainly influenced by the objectives that the set research wants to accomplish. Fouché and De Vos (2005: 106-109) identify the following types: exploratory research, descriptive research, explanatory research, correlation research, evaluative research, and intervention research. Garbers (1996:181) identifies two types of research, namely applied research and strategic or basic research.

The type of research followed in this study can be described as both applied and exploratory. Fouché and De Vos (2005: 106) describe exploratory research as the one that is used to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual. The need for such a study could rise out of basic information in a new area of interest. It is mainly used to respond to a 'what' question. Exploratory research is relevant for this study, as it explores a new area of interest such as the new approaches that need to be used in the teaching and learning of history. Throughout this study, the researcher will attempt to answer the question: "What are the characteristics of a learning environment that is conducive for the teaching and learning of history?"

Applied research on the other hand is concerned with the application and development of research-based knowledge about a given field. Fouché and Delport (2005: 108-109), views applied research as mostly a scientific planning of induced change in a troublesome situation. Both explanations are relevant to this study, as the researcher's ultimate aim is to formulate guidelines for the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the further education and training (FET) band. Therefore knowledge that will be acquired through the different data collection strategies will enable the researcher to provide the envisaged guidelines.

#### **1.4.1 Literature study**

A study of appropriate primary and secondary sources composed of books, journals, newspapers, research reports and relevant departmental legislations was conducted in order to gather relevant information on the following:

- The curriculum transformation issues in South Africa.
- International trends in the teaching and learning of history.

- The impact of the different learning theories in creating a powerful learning environment.
- Different aspects that impact on the creation of powerful classroom environment.

#### **1.4.2 Method of investigation**

In order to reach the aims mentioned in paragraph 1.3, the researcher chose to use a quantitative method of research. Quantitative research is a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a population to generalise the findings to the population that is being studied (Maree & Pietersen, 2007: 145). A quantitative approach is based on the positivism which takes scientific explanation to be based on universal laws. The main objectives of a quantitative approach are to objectively measure the social world, to test hypotheses and to predict and control human behaviour. The universal proposition characteristics of quantitative research are the collection of data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses and theories. Concepts are placed in the form of distinct variables. The presentation of data is done by means of standardised statistical procedures (Swanepoel, 2000: 98).

According to Garbers (1996: 282), a quantitative approach is used because it is aimed at determining the facts, to conduct statistical analysis, to demonstrate the relationship between variables, and to make predictions. The aspects of a quantitative research were employed to gather data to be able to scientifically establish the extent to which history is effectively taught within the FET band and also to identify aspects that play an important role in the structuring of a powerful learning environment.

#### **1.4.3 Data collection techniques**

After an intensive literature review, the researcher designed questionnaires to collect data for this study. A questionnaire to be completed by history teachers in grade 10 and grade 11 was used to collect data in the targeted schools. Some of the aspects that were included in the questionnaire included teachers' perceptions about the teaching and learning of history and the teaching strategies used and preferred by the teachers. The teachers' knowledge

and orientation of the trends in the teaching of history were also established. Additionally, another questionnaire to be completed by history learners (Grades 10 and 11) was designed. The main focus of this was to establish the perception that learners had about the subject, and also to establish the learners' preferred ways of learning and aspects that relate to the classroom environment. The researcher personally delivered 59.5% of the questionnaires to the targeted schools, the rest (40.4%) were mailed.

#### **1.4.4 Sampling procedure**

A sample is defined as the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study (Strydom in De Vos, 2005: 193). The purpose of studying the sample is to gain an understanding of the population from which it comes.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used purposeful sampling (see 5.5) so as to obtain more representative elements relevant to this study. Representativeness in terms of diversity, background, location and resources of the different areas and schools were considered (see 5.5). All schools offering history throughout the Free State province were identified. This spread was necessary, as the different districts have their own unique conditions that might add value to the study. The Xhariep district has many Afrikaans-medium schools. The Thabo Mofutsanyana district was declared a nodal point due to poverty and other social problems. Most of the schools in the Motheo district were in Bloemfontein which, as the capital of the province, might have an advantage over others.

#### **1.4.5 Data analysis and interpretation**

Data collected through the technique mentioned in 1.4.3 were analysed and interpreted. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001: 192) define data analysis as an ongoing process that is aimed at organising, accounting for and providing explanations of data so that some kind of sense may be made of them.



A quantitative data analysis uses syntax of mathematical operations to investigate the properties of data (Walliman, 2001: 253, 259). Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001: 216) present four levels within which quantitative data analysis can be made. These are descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, simple interrelationship and multivariate analysis. For the purpose of this research, descriptive statistics and the T-Test were used to analyse data. Descriptive statistics are relevant for processing the nominal ordinal data that deal with proportions, percentages and ratios. The main focus of the research was to establish the frequency of aspects that relate to the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history. The researcher later presented his own interpretation on the data that had been collected and analysed in the form of an interpretation.

## **1.5 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The main focus of this study is on the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET band. As indicated in the sampling procedure, the researcher focused on 84 schools (see table 5.9) within the Free State province. Even though representativity, validity, and reliability were strived after, the findings of this research would therefore be of a limited nature and can thus not be applied without some shortcomings.

## **1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.6.1 Learning environment**

A learning environment can be defined as an environment that fosters learning, is purposeful, task-orientated, relaxed, warm and supportive. The learning environment is further conceptualised as the learning contexts that encourage the development of task orientation in learners by developing their motivation to learn. Powerful learning environments are seen as places where curriculum, instruction and learning contexts come together to challenge, engage and to stimulate learners (Kruger & Adams, 1998: 145; Finnan, Schnepel & Anderson, 2003: 392).

## **1.6.2 FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND (FET)**

The FET band is one of the three bands provided for by the National Qualifications Framework. Mothata (1998:22) views the FET band as the most complex of the three bands. FET is provided by different providers that can be categorised into the following: the secondary schools, public funded colleges, private education and training, and enterprise education and training. The main aims of the FET band are to prepare learners for higher education careers, vocational education or self-employment. Standards and curricula are coordinated to cater for the integration of education and training. The focus of this study will be on the services provided by the secondary schools.

## **1.6.3 Teaching**

Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997: 286), define teaching as an interpersonal, purposeful, interactive activity involving communication in order to help another person to learn or change the way in which they can or want to behave. Teaching is something teachers do to learners in the classroom, but there are complex interactions between teachers, learners, and the classroom tasks.

## **1.6.4 History**

History as a subject falls within the Learning Field of Human and Social Sciences (DoE, 2003a: 6). History is defined as a systematic study of the past, which is based on evidence and a selection of facts that are arranged, interpreted and explained. Thus history in addition to its content is also a mode of enquiry and a way of investigating the past, which requires the acquisition and use of skills. History is further seen as the study of change and development in society over time and space, which also draws from archaeology, palaeontology, genetics and oral history to interrogate the past (DoE, 2003a: 1; Van Eeden, 1999: 1).

## **1.7 EXPOSITION OF THE STUDY**

In order to be able to finally produce guidelines that will be used in the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history, the researcher will have to address a variety of concepts and factors.

This study will be divided into different chapters. Chapter 1 addressed the introduction, problem statement, the research method, a definition of concepts, and the limitation of the study, thereby laying the groundwork that will be covered.

Chapter 2 will address curriculum change and transformation in South Africa by looking at Curriculum 2005 and the NCS. History as a school subject, its uses and values will also be investigated. The way in which the teaching of history has changed through the ages will additionally be addressed.

The focus in Chapter 3 is to conceptualise learning and development by looking at the different learning and development theories. The focus of Chapter 4 is the conceptualisation of effective learning and its influence on the structuring of a powerful learning environment. The different characteristics and aspects that impact on the structuring of the learning environment will be further examined. Cognitive apprenticeship as an example of an approach that encapsulates aspects of powerful learning environment will also be looked at.

In Chapter 5 the focus is to address the research methodology that was employed in this study. In Chapter 6 the findings of the research are presented, analysed and interpreted. In Chapter 7 the findings and the recommendations of the research are provided.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided evidence that there is a need to embark on this kind of study, as it will add value to the understanding of a powerful learning environment and thereby improve

on the classroom practice. The focus of the next chapter is on the curriculum transformation in South Africa and its impact on how history should be taught.

# THE INTRODUCTION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND THE IMPACT ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In an effort to improve the quality of education offered by different countries, curriculum change and/or curriculum transformation is/are usually undertaken. These usually have an impact on the process used to select the content and method of instruction for the various subjects taught at schools. In some instances the changes in curriculum and subsequently the subject, has an impact on how people perceive the subject.

The focus of chapter two is therefore on the introduction of outcomes-based education in South Africa and the impact it has on the teaching and learning of history. Another area of importance in this chapter is that of history as a school subject and how its teaching has evolved over time both in South Africa and internationally. The researcher seeks to align the changes that have occurred in the teaching of history with the introduction of the requirements of outcomes-based education. This will enable the researcher to identify principles to be applied in the structuring of a powerful learning environment. This anticipated structure will address current issues in the teaching and learning of history in South African schools.

## 2.2 CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 2.2.1 Curriculum: An introduction

The word “curriculum” has a variety of meanings to different people hence Connelly and Lantz (1991:15) maintain that there is no way of specifically defining curriculum outside the content of a particular study, paper, presentation or policy document under discussion. When grappling with curriculum matters, some authors design a working definition, while others define the term by implication in what they say and do. Definitions therefore flow from the concept in use.

The most frequently used definition of curriculum is the one that seeks to relate the term to its original Latin form which is *carrera*, meaning a racing chariot, from which is derived a racetrack or a course to be run and from this a course of study (Beane, Toeffler & Alessi, 1986, 28; Connelly & Lantz, 1991: 15; Jacobs, Gawe & Vakalisa, 2000: 92; Ross, 2000: 8).

In trying to enhance the understanding of what curriculum is, Gultig (1997: 82) postulates that curriculum can be defined narrowly as a plan, or it can be understood broadly to include all aspects of teaching and learning. This dichotomy is supported by other authors such as Connelly and Lantz (1991:15) who refer to the narrow perspective as specific and prescriptive, implying a plan of action or written document which has the beginning and the end, and the process of achieving the end. In this instance curriculum is taken as a blueprint which has to be followed to the latter. It is not expected that the teacher’s actions will change the curriculum, or that the teacher has a right to be involved in the discussions about the making of the plan, or the purposes and values behind the plan. The teacher is therefore taken as an unquestioning technician whose job it is to carry out the instructions of the plans (Gultig, 1997: 83).

The conceptualisation of curriculum as broad and general understand curriculum to be dealing with experiences of learners and teachers and covers almost anything in school and outside that is planned (Connelly & Lantz, 1991: 15). This approach to defining the curriculum

seems to be supported by Gultig (1997: 80) who defines curriculum as everything planned by teachers which will help develop the learner, including the physical resources, work programmes, assessment criteria and the extramural programmes.

The broad conceptualisation of curriculum acknowledges the input that is made by teachers and learners in the interpretation and realisation of the curriculum. It also makes reference to systems of learning by emphasising the relationship between the different aspects of teaching and learning. It is the combination of these relationships between the different components of education that is sometimes referred to as the learning environment (Gultig, 1997: 79). This broader conception of curriculum is important and relevant to this study, as the main object of this study is to structure a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET band of the schools within the Free State (see 1.3) and is also relevant to the conceptualisation of the learning environment arrived at in 4.2.2.

### **2.2.2 Factors informing curriculum change**

Curriculum change does not happen in a vacuum or without reasons. In the following paragraphs, different factors that influence curriculum change will be addressed. The approach followed in this study will therefore be to look at factors that influence curriculum transformation globally and also to look at factors specific to South Africa.

Different authors such as Erikson (1998: 1), Taylor (1993: 2-3), Timmins, Vernon and Kinealy (2005: 1) and Pretorius and Lemmer (1998: viii), acknowledge economic, social and political factors as influencing curriculum transformation. Other factors such as philosophy and an understanding of the nature of knowledge are also regarded as having an impact on curriculum transformation and curriculum change.

Erikson (1998: 1) and Taylor (1993: 2-3) maintain that, due to the changes in the education systems worldwide, different countries were forced to review their systems and curricula. One of the forces that impacted on the world and thus on curriculum transformation is globalisation. The development of technology, transformation and communication changed

the face of business, and the national economy became a global enterprise. According to Timmins, Vernon and Kinealy (2005: 1), the corporate world realised that workers needed a higher level of technological, academic and work skills in order to compete globally. The emphasis of the different countries would therefore be on changing their curricula so as to meet the demands of the labour market in the form of skills and competencies.

Worldwide, countries such as the USA, Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand and Japan recognised the need to undergo educational changes. Other countries such as Hong Kong, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt and Malawi, also engaged in curriculum transformation (Pretorius & Lemmer, 1998: viii). The educational changes and renewal processes were highly motivated by global economics, technological inventions and the organisation of the work (Naicker, 1999: 90; Pretorius & Lemmer, 1998: viii; Spady & Schlebusch, 1999: 16).

Another dominant factor that influenced curriculum change is the development with what is regarded as knowledge at that point in time. According to Taylor (1993: 5) and Erikson (1998: 7), knowledge has changed from been seen as focusing on lower cognitive level centred around topics and related to facts towards focusing on the teaching of deeper conceptual understanding. Knowledge is also seen as something that is not fixed and firm and absolutely true for all time, but it is always filtered by the mental framework of values, language and understanding that all of us use in making sense of the world. These frameworks are never purely individual ways of seeing, but are largely shaped by the society and culture in which people grow up (Gultig, 1997: 8). Addressing the skills agenda has therefore become an important area of focus in the new curriculum framework (Timmins, Vernon & Kinealy, 2005: 1). This conceptualisation of knowledge is therefore associated with the constructivist approach to learning (see 3.2.3.2; 4.4.2).

The issue of what knowledge is at a given point in time also had an influence on how history is conceptualised and taught in schools (see 2.3.3; 2.3.4; 2.3.5.1; 2.3.5.3).

Kros and Vadi (1993: 94) maintain that curriculum reconceptualisation does not take place in a social vacuum. It must take account of and respond to the pressures for change coming from diverse education constituencies and interest groups as well as the social, economic,



political and cultural realities of the country or a nation. Curriculum change is therefore a response to the changes taking place in the society. Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997: 266) and Tanner and Tanner (1995: 252) believe that the education systems usually respond to the type of society present and anticipated.

The other influential phenomenon on the transformation of the curriculum has been philosophy. According to Doll (1996:40), that includes the beliefs of the perennialists, the idealists, the realists, the pragmatists, the reconstructionists and the existentialists.

The idealists and the realists believe that the curriculum has to promote a more teacher-centred approach. Both approaches view the role of the teacher as being to gather, to organise and to systematise knowledge before presenting it to learners as a complete package. Learners are therefore exposed to a fact-orientated knowledge of subjects. This approach to the curriculum is value-based and religious-orientated (Doll, 1996: 41, 42).

The pragmatists view knowledge as not at all immutable. They also relate what they teach to the surroundings and experiences of individual children. The main focus here is to teach children how to think rather than what to think. Subject matter must encourage the development of insight, understanding and appropriate skills to be acquired in creative setting. For the pragmatist, the curriculum should be child-centred. This is closely related to the reconstructionists who believe in avoiding indoctrinating children and believe in rational discussions and critical analyses of issues. They also believe in the use of multiple teaching materials and consider subject matter to be useful chiefly in serving their central cause. Cooperative learning and group work are valued by this philosophy (Doll, 1996: 43).

The different philosophies of the curriculum should not be seen to be competing against one another, but curriculum planners should rather draw eclectically upon more than one philosophy as there are “good” aspects in each of the philosophies from a curriculum perspective that needs to be taken notice of.

Politics is another factor that has an influence on curriculum transformation. Morris and Marsh (1991: 3) point out that schools are frequently used to support and promote the political ideology of those persons in power. This view is supported by Tanner and Tanner (1995: 257), who maintain that the education system must reflect what the political community wants it to do. Gultig (1997: 57) highlights that the apartheid system in South Africa has denied many people access to opportunities to gain the information, skills and experiences necessary to develop the people of South Africa. The Christian education system and the Bantu education system did not promote analytical thinking creativity and critical thinking. Curriculum transformation in South Africa has therefore to ensure the equalisation of education provision (Taylor, 1993: 3).

According to Jansen (1993: 60), the symbolic value of the curriculum is particularly powerful in newly independent states where the state places a high premium on uprooting the ideologies and values of the colonial class. Zimbabwe after independence moved for the process of indigenisation of the former Cambridge-dominated curriculum, also indicates another dimension to curriculum transformation. This move is that of bringing in local knowledge or content. Taylor (1993: 5) maintains that the move towards the localisation of the curriculum can take place at three distinct levels, namely the thick level, the thin level and the cheap level. The thick level advocates the fostering of a strong set of national values and common culture. The thin level is pushed by the post-modern conditions that have destroyed any basis for citizenship. The third approach, the cheap level, calls for negotiating across the differences in an attempt to reach consensus. This approach seeks to mediate the cultural differences and therefore happens to be the most favoured around the world.

For South Africa, the dawn of democracy in 1994 necessitated innovations in education (Schoeman & Manyane, 2002: 175). Goduka (1999: 23) quantifies this statement by asserting that the movement from an apartheid system to a democratic one brought with it the new ways of thinking and doing things. The passing of the new South African constitution and the Bill of Rights, brought about the need for a more inclusive, diverse and transformative society. It also provided the impetus to rethink the entire education system.

Kramer (1999: v) asserts that curriculum change is not only needed because of what happened in South Africa in the past, but because through change, South Africans have the opportunity not only to heal their crippled system but also to simultaneously catch up with the world. The DoE (2003a: 1) supports the above view by maintaining that the adoption of the

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provided the basis for curriculum transformation and development of South Africa. The preamble states that the aims of the constitution are to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights, improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person, lay the foundation for a democratic and open society in which the government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by the law and to build a united South Africa.

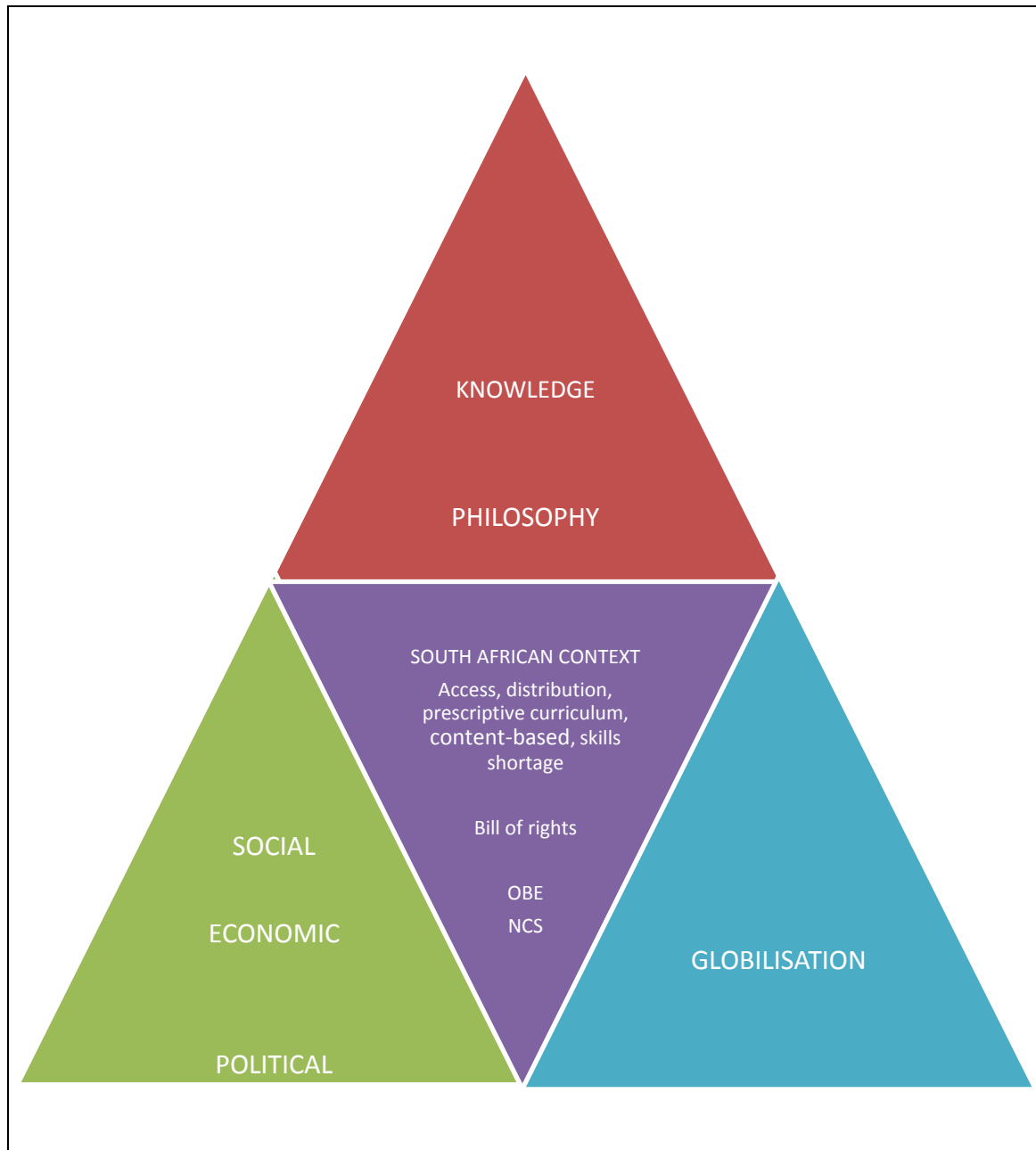
Fleish (2002: 1) points out that the government led by the ANC developed a wide ranging plan to fundamentally alter the formal organisation of teaching and learning. The plan had four objectives, namely administrative restructuring, equity and redress, governance and curriculum reform.

Besides the political changes that happened in the country in 1994, there were other factors that influenced the changing of the curriculum in South Africa. Curriculum change in South Africa was further influenced by other problems that were unique to South African education. These problems included the following:

- The curriculum was too prescriptive and not easily adaptable with little room for initiative. The focus of education was mainly on academic education, while skills education remained behind.
- The curriculum was content-based, with the educator instructing and learners memorising. The education process was more teacher-centred than learner-centred.
- Learners' achievement was compared to that of other learners hence there was an excessive and unfair competition amongst learners.
- Racism, poverty and the negative school climate (Lemmer, 1999:117).

Figure 2.1 on the next page is a structural representation of the different factors that have had an influence on curriculum change in South Africa. These factors should not be seen as isolated entities, but rather as interconnected factors that influenced and shaped curriculum change in South Africa. The triangle in the centre represents factors unique to South Africa. The influence of the universal factors addressed in the other triangles is accommodated, but had to fit into the South African situation. Curriculum change in South Africa has been driven by the need for improved access, to change the content-based approach to curriculum and

to address the shortage of skills. Consideration of these factors resulted in the adoption of an outcomes-based education system in South Africa and its subsequent National Curriculum Statements.



**Figure 2.1 Factors that led to curriculum change in South Africa.**

Having considered most of the factors discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the South African Government took a decision on 26 February 1997 to replace apartheid education by the OBE approach. The decision envisaged the phasing in of the new curriculum in both the General Education and Training Band (GET) and the Further Education and Training Band (FET) by 2005. Hence the brand name Curriculum 2005 (DoE, 2003b: 2). The introduction of OBE is therefore seen as a watershed in the education history of South Africa, as its outcomes-based approach represented a new paradigm in education (Pretorius, 1998: v).

### **2.2.3 Outcomes-based education in South Africa**

In defining outcomes-based education, Jacobs (in Lemmer, 1999: 118) traces its origin from the competency-based teaching and mastery learning. Its roots from the behavioural theorists are also acknowledged. Elen and De Corte (1999: 89-90) state that there has been a gradual paradigm shift from a behaviourist approach in teaching towards a constructivist-cognitive approach in teaching. The influence of behaviourism on OBE is further acknowledged by Malcolm-Smith (1997) and Spady (1997) (in Du Toit & Du Toit, 2004: 4) when they assert that OBE can be placed on a continuum with the behaviourists at the one end and the constructivists at the other end. The influence of reconstructionism is further acknowledged by Steyn and Wilkinson (1998: 204) as having a greater influence on OBE than constructivism. It can therefore be concluded that the philosophy of the reconstructionists (see Doll in 2.2.2) influenced the development of the outcomes-based curriculum in South Africa.

Competency-based learning focuses on improving career paths by developing transferable skills. Clear statements of education and training outcomes, based on relevant and useful competencies, become the basis of flexible and integrated instruction and assessment. Competency-based learning aims to prepare learners for success in fulfilling various life roles. Mastery learning on the other hand focuses on the need to create favourable learning conditions with regard to time, teaching strategies and learning success (Kramer, 1999: 1-2).

According to Spady (1994: 1), OBE means focusing and organising everything in an education system around what is essential for all learners to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. Outcomes include the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. It therefore means starting with a clear picture of what is essential of learners to be able to do, then organising curriculum instruction and assessment to make sure that learning ultimately happens.

The above assertion is supported by Fleisch (2002:117) when mentioning that the OBE approach is aimed at shifting the focus of school teaching away from the objectives derived from the syllabi content to structuring learning experiences around what learners should know by the time they exit the formal education system. OBE also seeks to prepare the learners for the dictates of the new flexible workplace. Learners are to be provided with knowledge, competencies and qualities needed to succeed and to also establish a success-orientated way of operating. OBE also seeks to encourage flexibility with regard to styles and techniques. OBE education is learner responsible, learner-centred, socially and activity based (Claasen, 1998: 75; Jacobs, 1999: 118; Naicker, 1999: 87; Spady & Schlebusch, 1999: 26; Spady, 1994: xi).

The critical and developmental outcomes are the cornerstones upon which the South African version of the OBE is based. The critical outcomes require learners to be able to solve problems, to communicate effectively, to process information, organise and manage oneself, to use science and technology responsibly, to understand relatedness, and work effectively with others. The critical outcomes seek to prepare learners for active and productive participation in the global economics and interactions. The developmental outcomes require learners to be able to reflect on and explore a variety of learning strategies, to be responsible citizens, be culturally sensitive, explore education and career opportunities, and to develop entrepreneurial opportunities. The developmental outcomes are specific to the South African context (DoE, 2003a: 2).

When Curriculum 2005 was first implemented, it was done so in an environment characterised by enormous infrastructural backlogs, resource limitations, an inadequate supply of quality learning support material and the absence of common national standards for learning and assessment. After a listening campaign, the then Minister of Education,

Kader Asmal, set up a committee to review the implementation of Curriculum 2005. This culminated in the streamlined and strengthened National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for grade R-9. The developments in the GET have impacted on the FET band curriculum process. The Council of Ministers (CEM) called for the development of the National Curriculum Statements for the FET band by March 2003 (DoE, 2003b: 2-3).

According to the DoE (2003a:1-4), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades 10-12 is based on the principles of social transformation, OBE, high knowledge and high skills, integration and applied competence, progression, articulation and portability, human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice, valuing indigenous knowledge systems and finally, credibility, quality and efficiency.

One of the unique characteristics of OBE is that the teaching and learning process is informed and directed by the learning outcomes. History teaching and learning in Grades 10-12 is aimed at the attainment of four learning outcomes, namely:

- The development of the enquiry skills.
- The use of historical concepts in order to analyse the past.
- Developing the ability to construct and communicate historical knowledge and understanding.
- Enabling learners to engage critically with issues concerning heritage (DoE, 2003a: 11-14).

The first three learning outcomes are directed at reflecting the process by which the historian and learners investigate the past. In this new approach, content is used to address and to achieve the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes, on the other hand, are focused on the attainment of the critical outcomes. The NCS therefore encouraged the use of meaningful content and the use of local contexts. The other important measure evident in the history NCS is the use of key questions. Key questions serve to provide clarity on what is to be covered and the extent to which it is supposed to be covered. Two overall key questions are used to guide history content within the FET band, namely:

- How do we understand our world today?
- What legacies of the past shape the present?

The content approach as suggested by the NCS is thematic or chronological with the grade 10 learners focusing on the mid-fifteenth century up to 1850, the grade 11 cohort focusing on the period 1850 – 1950, and the grade 12s covering the period 1950 – 1994 (DoE, 2003a: 24-27).

Looking at the NCS principles (DoE, 2003a: 1-4), it is evident that history as a school subject is better placed to drive the achievement of most of the NCS principles. The teaching and learning of history in an effective way will enable learners to explore the dynamics of change in the context of power relations in societies, providing the opportunity to develop enquiry skills, conceptual knowledge and understanding which enable the learners to engage critically with the past and the world around them in constructing their own understanding, while the focus on local history will also promote the valuing of the indigenous knowledge systems.

The above-mentioned aspects require teachers to display the ability to structure a powerful learning environment that will ensure effective teaching and learning of the history.

Now that the current state of curriculum transformation in South Africa has been put into perspective, it is important to look at the development of History as a subject to be taught and learned at school, the value of history and the philosophy of history. This approach will help in tracing the important developments in the teaching and learning of history and the different forces that have had an influence on the way in which history is being taught today. The acknowledgement of these aspects will ensure that the anticipated learning environment reflects the developments that have been taking place in the teaching of history.



## **2.3 HISTORY AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT**

### **2.3.1 Definition of history**

Throughout the decades different authors have provided their definitions of what history is. This resulted in a myriad of definitions that are not very diametrically opposed. According to Oosthuizen (1989: 2) and Wilson (1999: 9), the word history is derived from the Greek concept “historia”, which literally denotes knowledge acquired through investigation. History is further credited to the famous Greek historian, Herodotus, who composed a narrative after his interviews with various people and began to emphasise distinctly rational explanations. Hence Herodotus earned himself the honour of being called the father of history.

The above definition is supported by Van Eeden (1999:1), who took it further and asserted that history involves the study of known actions and decisions of people within their society, especially those actions and decisions that are of some significance to the society. The latter definition espouses a very important element of history, which is that a historian as an investigator narrates only a fraction of the past which is being investigated.

The DoE conceptualised history as a systematic study of the past, which is based on evidence and a selection of facts that are arranged, interpreted and explained. Thus history in addition to its content is also a mode of enquiry, a way of investigating the past which requires the acquisition and use of skills. This definition was later changed. History then became defined as the study of change and development in society over time and space, which also draws from archaeology, palaeontology, genetics and oral history to interrogate the past (DoE, 2003a: 9). For Black and MacRaild (1997: 4) history is seen as a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past. The past is often a contested ground, perceived differently by competing groups and ideologies.

Some authors in defining the concept of history adopted an approach of explaining what history is not and some even went to an extent of juxtaposing what they do not regard as

history to what they think history is. This approach further illuminates the understanding of what history is. Brooks, Aris and Perry (1993: 4) regard history as not being a subject concerned only with the acquisition of knowledge and information about age remote from our own and whose teaching is restricted to dictated notes, copying from the textbook, and rote learning.

History is also seen as not an unchanging body of knowledge for learners to memorise, but rather as something that enables the learners to find out the reasons for people's actions and what material circumstances surrounded the people. For this reason the notion of causation in history is an important one. History is also not defined as what happened in the past, but rather as an interpretation of what happened (Matthews, Moodley, Rheeder & Wilkinson, 1992: 3; Mulholland & Ludlow, 1992: 1).

Even though different writers define history in a variety of ways, there is one common element in their definitions:

- History is presented as an action-packed subject.

History is presented as a discipline that deals with creating an understanding of the past. In order to achieve understanding, learners need to systematically study and interrogate the evidence from the past. A selection of facts and events from the past is done. These are later arranged, interpreted, analysed and explained logically without concession to feelings or beliefs. In the process an understanding of the concepts such as change, development, causation, bias and multiple interpretations is attained.

History is therefore a subject which promotes constructivism, learner-centredness, interaction and active participation. This relates to the definition and principles of OBE (see 2.2), the characteristics of effective teaching and learning (4.2.1), and the learning outcomes for history (see 2.2.3).

### **2.3.2 The value of history**

South Africa's past is a sensitive and complicated matter. Colonialism, imperialism and apartheid have all left their mark. South Africa is known for her multiracial and multicultural population. One of the aims of the new government has been to build a non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminating society. Education is a sector which can be used to achieve this aim. When creating a national curriculum with the purpose of achieving unity and equality, care has to be taken to include subjects/learning areas that will enhance the government's national vision. The definition of history (see 2.3.1) indicates its potential to develop skills crucial in creating a new South African nation. The following paragraphs will address the value and uses of history.

According to Schoeman ( 2003: 218 – 219 ) the formal study of history can assist in the formation of a historical consciousness which has an essential role to play in building dignity into human values within an informed awareness of the legacy and meaning of the past. Promoting a study of the past is a particular educational imperative in a country like South Africa which is consciously remaking its current history. The study of history will also provide answers to a lot of critical questions about issues such as race, class and gender, and the impact that these have on our daily lives. The current situation of these issues can be continually understood and judged within the powerful context of a past which has bequeathed a legacy of colonialism and apartheid.

History, if properly taught, should challenge the minds of South Africans, touch the heart, spark debates and enlighten people about the courage, determination and creativity of ordinary people. This is what the proper teaching of concepts such as apartheid, the holocaust and xenophobia can do to learners. History serves as society's memory. Without its memory, society will drift about aimlessly. History offers an indispensable, albeit imperfect means of entering into an experience that will enable and empower us to solve at least some of the problems that are rife in our country. For this we need a sound knowledge of the past (Tosh, 2000: 19). The past will help us understand the motives behind the actions and the effects that it had on society. Hence, Schoeman (2003: 219) asserts that unless one knows something about the past, one has no informed criteria by which to assess and judge the present.

South Africa had a very violent past. A new culture of doing things needed to be established. In this regard History is important because it shapes people's perspectives and keeps their instinctive and persuasive parochialism of both time and space in check - a parochialism which is moral, social or political. History also broadens the learners' views of what it means to be humane because it forges connections and explores differences. Through the study of history learners come to realise that there is more than one way of looking at a situation. History provides learners with the knowledge of how various elements have merged to create a society or to build a nation. History learners should be able to make informed decisions as history helps in shaping qualities such as imagination, sensitivity, balance, accuracy and discernment (Tosh, 2000: 23, Asmal, 2001: 1-2).

This train of thought is supported by Van Eeden (1999: 20) who asserts that, without history, a racial group will suffer from collective amnesia, which makes it vulnerable to the imposition of dubious stereotypes. History will therefore bring about more rational decisions about actions to be taken or policies to be pursued.

Asmal (2001: 4) explains the relevance of history in a country such as South Africa appropriately by stating that history has the power to puncture the preconceptions and prejudices which bedevil a society still deeply divided by race, class, culture, gender and language. History is further seen as a distinctive vehicle for conveying values such as reconciliation and mutual respect and for strengthening a South African culture based on tolerance and a sense of community in which rights and duties are shared equally.

History can prepare the youth for a future that is and will be forever changing. Through history young people can learn how to accept, respect and live alongside those from different cultures. It can provide learners with a vivid realisation of the existence of different ideas, different ideals and different beliefs, values and attitudes. History can therefore play an important role in a multicultural society such as South Africa (Carl, 1988: ii, Phillips, 1990: 19) by preparing learners to become better citizens. Through the study of history learners also gain an understanding of the contemporary world (Brooks et al. 1993: 14).

Haydon, Arthur & Hunt (1997: 15) made a very important comment on the value of history as a school subject. They maintain that history in schools is not taught as a preparation for the study of history at university as many learners will not go to university or will study other subjects beside history. History is therefore taught because it develops a wide range of educational and personal skills. In the following paragraphs some of these educational and personal skills will be elucidated.

History learners do not see the process of European expansion merely as an expression of narrative flair and technical superiority. They link it to economic structures, patterns of consumptions and international relations. Events, issues and concepts are conceptualised. History therefore develops lateral thinking (Tosh, 2000: 28).

History seeks to produce rational, autonomous and critical human beings. It does not change society but it changes the individual. It changes what they see in the world and how they see it (Haydon et al. 1997: 16). Through history learners are able to understand the present in the context of the past, have an interest in the past, and develop a sense of identity and understanding of their cultural roots and those of others (Van Eeden, 1999: 20).

History develops critical thinking. Through history learners are trained to detect bias and not to accept things at face value. Learners are taught to identify sources of information, to make informed decisions, to criticise, to analyse, to interpret, to evaluate, to extrapolate, to synthesise and to present their findings in a concise and logical way. Conclusions are compared and questioned. History also develops communication skills such as the acquisition and use of language, as well as literacy, numeric and graphic skills. Through history learners' inner curiosity and emotional needs are satisfied. Learners also learn to become empathetic with the past (Van Eeden, 1999: 20; Bryant, 2005: 755; Schoeman, 2003: 215; Tosh, 2000: 29).

From the paragraphs above it is clear that history as a school subject has the potential to play an important part in contributing towards the development of the critical outcomes. These are made evident by the fact that history encourages critical thinking, information processing, communication, problem solving, organising and managing oneself,

understanding relatedness and using resources responsibly. With regard to the developmental outcomes, history will expose learners to a variety of learning strategies, and make them culturally sensitive and responsible citizens. Through history, learners can enter into different education and career opportunities, and can even explore entrepreneurial opportunities (see 2.2)

### **2.3.3 The philosophy of history**

In trying to develop a thorough understanding of what history is and what it is concerned with it is imperative to look at some of the philosophical perspectives contextualising history. The categories that will emerge here are neither fixed nor final, but are simply aimed at illuminating the multifaceted nature of historical understanding. In 2.2.2 possible philosophical forces influencing the curriculum in general were discussed. In this section, philosophical forces directly influencing the history curriculum will be discussed.

Philosophy is an activity, prompted by a distinctive form of curiosity, which may be carried on in relation to a variety of subject matters such as morality, science, art, religion, history, etc. but remains fundamental throughout (Atkinson, 1978: 4). When applied to the study of history, the philosophy of history is seen as an explanation not only of the most important causes of specific events, but of the broadest developments in human affairs. It explains the forces of history, what moves them and in what direction they are headed. The dominant philosophy of the history of a particular age is that which most closely reflects the beliefs and values of that age (Benjamin, 1998: 15). The choice of content and the approaches being used in school during a particular period in history, as indicated as one of the problems of history teaching (see 2.3.5.2) is influenced by the reigning philosophy in curriculum transformation (see 2.2.2). The current trends in curriculum transformation have embraced constructivism as the reigning philosophy hence everything that happens in class has to be informed by it.

### **2.3.3.1 *Speculative philosophy of history***

According to Stanford (1998: 5), the term “philosophy of history” seems to have changed with the times. Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century the term “philosophy of history” referred to speculations about the whole course of events. This might be described as theories of all the known facts. This approach to history was referred to as the substantive or speculative philosophy of history. The main focus of the speculative philosophy of history was to arrive at a comprehensive view of the whole historical process and interpreting the past in terms of progress, cycles and other grand scale theories in order to explain the overall meaning of history.

### **2.3.3.2 *Analytical/critical philosophy of history***

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century both philosophers and historians rejected these grand schemes for the good reason that the evidence is insufficient to justify such ambitious pretensions. Instead, philosophers turned to the second-order activity of questioning and criticising the ways in which historians work. This is philosophy of history with the facts left out. It is concerned not with what actually happened, but with how we think, talk, and write about what happened. This is analytical or critical philosophy of history and it is what is currently generally meant by the philosophy of history. The critical philosophy of history tends to focus upon four problem areas, namely historical explanation, understanding of historical knowledge, objectivity and values, and finally on the ideas of causation in history (Stanford, 1998: 5). Historical explanation and the understanding of historical knowledge currently form part of the four learning outcomes of history (see 2.2), which is indicative of the influence of this sphere of philosophy of history.

### **2.3.3.3 *Cyclical philosophy of history***

Benjamin (1998: 15) offers a perspective of the philosophy of history which sees the oldest philosophy of history as the cyclical school. According to this view events recur periodically, which manifested the belief that history repeats itself. The essential forces of nature and of

human nature are changeless, causing past patterns of events to repeat themselves endlessly. This view of history was dominant from ancient times until the rise of Christianity. This view and categorisation is supported by Evans (1997: 15) who maintains that, during the medieval and early modern times, many historians saw their function as chronicling the working out of God's purposes in the world. Medieval writers believed that things ultimately happened because God willed them to happen; human history was therefore seen as the playground of supernatural forces of good and evil. Marwick (1989: 31) maintains that the medieval historians often found it difficult to distinguish clearly between sacred and profane matters. Events were from time to time expressed as judgements of God and miracles were accepted.

According to Van Eeden (1999: 4), the cyclical conception of history points to a very specific goal and an eventual eternal return. The observation that many civilisations had originated, flourished, declined and disappeared led to the notion that the western civilisation was one of the many civilisations. This led to a break with the European-centred view to history. Despite criticism, the cyclical conception was without doubt indeed one of the greatest spiritual achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### ***2.3.3.4 The linear approach to history***

Another approach or conception of history is the linear approach. This approach acknowledges that the biblical conception of history had an extensive influence on the historical self-consciousness of western European nations from the early middle ages. The Theologian, Augustine, refined the biblical conception of history to a Christian conception of history. History was therefore seen to be non-recurrent, non-reversible and universal. The Theo-centric conception of history was mainly supported up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since then technological progress and general revival of knowledge, accompanied by the awareness of the existence of other civilised nations besides just those in Europe, gave rise to doubt and uncertainty regarding the universal and absolute values of Christianity. The idea of human reason and progress became a new Christian conception regarding civilisations. From the ideas of human reason and progress many linear conceptions of history such as the rationalists, the positivists, the naturalists, the idealists, the Marxists and the nihilists developed (Van Eeden, 1999: 2).



#### **2.3.3.4.1 *The rationalists***

The rationalists are seen as the ones that carried through the formal destruction of the theological base of historical writing which had persisted through the Renaissance and had in some ways been revived by the reformation and counter-reformation (Marwick, 1989: 34). The rationalists further see history as the activity of man whose roots are European-centred. The rationalists were regarded as aggressive, practical and propagandistic right from the start (Van Eeden, 1999: 12).

#### **2.3.3.4.2 *The positivists***

Positivism is the name given to the philosophy of knowledge which expresses this approach in its classic, 19<sup>th</sup> century form. Its applications for the study of history are clear. The historians' first duty is to accumulate factual knowledge about the past facts that are verified by applying the critical method to the primary sources. Those facts will in turn determine how the past should be explained or interpreted. In this process the views and beliefs of the historians are irrelevant, the sole concern in which the facts and the generalisation to which they logically lead (Marwick, 1989: 47; Tosh, 2000: 109). This philosophical stance influenced how history is defined (see 2.3.1) and the in which it is supposed way of teaching history (2.3.5.4).

#### **2.3.3.4.3 *The naturalists***

The naturalists use mathematics causality to explain the history of mankind. In this approach man is seen as a product of evolution and its history as the continuation of biology (Van Eeden, 1999: 2).

#### **2.3.3.4.4 *The idealists***

The idealists reject the fundamental assumption of the positivists. Human events must be carefully distinguished from the natural events because the identity between the enquirer and his/her subject matters opens the way to a fuller understanding of anything that the natural scientist can aspire to. The reality of past events must instead be apprehended by an imaginative identification with the people of the past which depends on intuition and empathy, qualities that have no place in the classical view of scientific method. According to idealists, historical knowledge is inherently subjective and the truth that it uncovers is more akin to truth in the artists' sense than the scientists'. Furthermore, historians are concerned with the individual and the individually unique events (Tosh, 2000: 110; Van Eeden, 1999: 3).

#### **2.3.3.4.5 *The Marxists***

The Marxists see history as a class war that is derived from the economy, industry and technology. This approach wants to change and not to interpret the past. The Marxists believe that change is achieved by revolution which is characterised by the creation of a classless society and an abolition of state supremacy. Marxism has been important in revealing the importance of economic history, social classes and technology (Marwick, 1989: 47; Van Eeden, 1999: 3).

#### **2.3.3.4.6 *The Nihilists***

The Nihilists are characterised as the supporters of a cyclical conception. They believe that the weaker man is replaced by the superior man who acts as his own god until man again finds himself in a pagan state (Van Eeden, 1999: 3).

The different philosophies of history over the years sought to move closer to the prevailing philosophy that influenced curriculum change during a specific period. The different views of

philosophy explained in these paragraphs demonstrate that, through the ages, there has been a constant move towards the understanding of history as a subject that encourages active construction of knowledge. It also encouraged interpretation of evidence and the questioning of the truth. Social construction of knowledge has also been acknowledged by the different philosophical perspectives (see 2.3.3.4.1; 2.3.3.4.2). Consideration of the different philosophies of history enables a better understanding of the current status of history teaching and learning in South Africa. This is also in line with the views of Malcolm-Smith (1997), Spady (1994), Steyn and Wilkinson (1998: 204) and Elen and De Corte (1999: 89-90) as was mentioned in 2.2.3.

#### **2.3.4 The different schools of thought in the development of historical studies**

One of the factors that influenced how history was written and taught overtime are the different schools of thoughts in the development of historical studies. The following paragraphs will seek to address some of the important schools of thought that influenced history writing and teaching. An understanding of the different schools of thought in historical studies will help in understanding the changes that have happened and that are currently happening within history teaching. The structuring of a powerful learning for the teaching and learning of history will have to acknowledge these influences if it is to address the current challenges in history teaching and learning.

A school of thought can be contextualised as a group of historians who works within certain paradigms, perspectives and frames of reference, resulting in a common approach to historical enquiry which can be labelled as a school of thought (McGill, 1992: 20). The prevailing philosophy in curriculum change (see 2.2.2) and the philosophies governing history at a given moment (see 2.3.3) play a significant role in influencing the stance of the different schools of thought in history.

The focus of this section will be on the role of Ranke, the American New history, the French Annale School and different schools of thought unique to the South African context in informing the changes in history

#### 2.3.4.1 Leopold Van Ranke

Historians from the Romantic era repudiated the historical explanation which was based on human forces. They viewed the past as exciting because it was different. The purpose of history was seen not in providing examples for some abstract philosophical doctrine or principle, but simply in finding out about the past as something to cherish and preserve, as the only proper foundation for an understanding and appreciation of the institutions of the state and society in the present (Evans, 1997: 16).

History in the time of Gibbon and Voltaire had three fundamental weaknesses. Firstly, being concerned with the universal principles of human behaviour, it was remarkably naive and lacked any sense of human development and change. Secondly, although important scholarly work continued side by side to the great interpretative works, there was little contact between them. Thirdly, history in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was not efficiently taught as an intellectual discipline. It was from the combined attack on these weaknesses that history as an academic discipline was born. The leader in the change of direction was provided by the German historian, Leopold van Ranke (De Villiers, 1998: 3).

Ranke was converted to history by the shock discovery that Scott's novel, *Quentin Durward*, was historically inaccurate. He was determined to apply the methods he had learned as a philologist to the study of historical texts in order to avoid such inaccuracies of occurring in the future. Ranke's contribution to historical scholarship was threefold;

- Firstly, he was able to establish history as a separate discipline.
- Secondly, he liberated the past from being judged according to the standards of the present.
- Thirdly, Ranke introduced to the study of modern history the methods that had recently been developed by the philologists in the study of ancient and medieval literature to determine whether a text was true or tainted by later interpolations, whether it was written by the author it was supposed to have been written by and which of the available versions proved to be the most reliable (Evans, 1997: 17).

For Timmins, Vernon & Kinealy (2005: 12) Ranke contributed a lot in modernising history as an academic discipline by approaching it scientifically. The natural science methods were adapted to the study of the human past through rigorous and detached empirical study of original documents with the aim of showing things as they were, unencumbered by literacy or moralising overtones.

Ranke maintained that historians had to root out forgeries and falsifications from the record. They had to test the document on the basis of their internal consistency with other documents originating at the same period. They had to stick to the primary sources, eyewitness reports and what Ranke called the purest, most immediate documents which could be shown to have originated at the time under investigation and avoid reliance on secondary sources such as memoirs or history generated after the event. Only then, by gathering, criticising and verifying all the available sources, could they put themselves in the position to reconstruct the past accurately (Evans, 1997: 18).

Some of the criticisms levelled at Ranke's approach were that he placed too much emphasis on diplomacy and politics at the expense of more fundamental facts of economic and social history. Even though Ranke and his followers saw their kind of history as 'scientific', in the sense of it being systematic and based on critical techniques, there were others who wished to make history scientific in the sense of having general laws. Ranke was also accused of having a pietistic bias in favour of a providential theory of history and undue enthusiasm for Luther, the Hohenzollen and Prussia (Marwick, 1989: 4).

Ranke's work gained plausibility even before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the new techniques and discoveries in archaeology began to open up a whole new area of knowledge. Historians began to look away from the narrow confines of the history and antecedents of the nation-state towards economic history, social history, cultural history and subsequently other branches of historical enquiries as well. Ranke's contributions to the historical method and teaching had a strong influence upon the later development of historiography. The progress since his time has consisted primarily in the further refinement of critical methods and their general dissemination away from a continually growing body of historical scholars (Evans, 1997: 21)

### **2.3.4.2 The American Progressive History**

In reaction to Rankean objective history, there followed in the USA an age of historical relativism. The new history was deliberately present minded in that it sought to use history when dealing with the social problems of the day. This approach was informed by liberal-reformist sentiments. One of the American historians, E.P. Cheyney formulated a series of six general laws, which in fact were no more than a mix of traditional assumptions with a rather extreme expression of the attitudes of the New and Progressive historians. The six laws are: the law of continuity, the law of impermanence, the law of interdependence, the law of democracy, the law of necessity for free consent and the law of moral progress (Marwick, 1989: 76).

The main characteristic of the progressive school of thought was that it used history to explain the present. The problem with this approach was the danger that history could be used for ideological purposes and that its result might be viewed with extreme scepticism and relativism (Marwick, 1989: 77).

### **2.3.4.3 The Annales historians**

In 1929 two historians, Marc Bloch and Lucien Febre founded a historical journal called *Annales d'histoire sociale et economique*, simply known as Annales. The Annales believes in a structural approach to history. They worked for a total, holistic type of history based upon a broad, deep understanding of the past. Total history to them did not mean world history, but an interrogation of all kinds, methods and aspects of history (Tosh, 2000: 79-80).

The Annales also believed in using a serial approach to history. This allowed them to survey the same phenomenon over a long period of time using available statistics. These historians also called for the integration of history with the social sciences. The Annales attempted to avoid what they regarded as Rankean's objectivity and American progressive history's scepticism and relativism. In order to explain the past, semi-permanent structures and patterns had to be looked for. The interpretation and approach regarding structures was to

be free of dogmatism. A new approach, calling for the examination of primary sources and many new techniques, were used in examining history. This science-based, balanced view on history has been able to influence historians throughout the world (Stanford, 1998: 3, Tosh, 2000: 88).

#### **2.3.4.4 The Marxist historians**

The Marxist approach to history is credited to Karl Marx. According to Marx, the driving force behind history was the struggle by human societies to meet their material needs, hence this theory is known as historical materialism. Marx interpreted human history as a progression from lower to higher forms of product. The highest form was industrial capitalism, but this was destined to give way to socialism, at which point human need would be satisfied abundantly and equitably (Tosh, 2000: 17-18). This school of thought clearly acknowledges the role of society in influencing curriculum change (see 2.2.2).

Van Eeden (1999: 3) maintains that the Marxist historians wanted to change and not interpret the past. Tosh (2000: 144) acknowledges that one of the best known features of Marx's thought was his division of history into ancient society, feudal society and capitalist society. Marxism was also seen as a humanistic approach that examined the development of class consciousness within a given society. This new insight into history focused to the common man.

Marxist ideas did influence a number of historians in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century who placed a lot of emphasis on economic factors. Marxism has also been instrumental in revealing the importance of the economic history of social classes, of technology, of work and of the work place. Through its postulation of the relationship between structure and super-structure, attention was directed towards wider cultural history and towards interdisciplinary study in which the relationship between different areas was sought. Approaches derived from Marx were used as useful correctives to the nominalism which sometimes resulted from unimaginative application of the Rankean mode (Marwick, 1989: 50). According to Tosh (2000: 146) Marxism has had a great influence on the writing of history over the past fifty years, but as a theory of socio-economic change rather than as a history of human destiny.

Some of the implications of Marx's theories for the actual writing of history include the fact that Marx was emphatic that his theory was a guide to study, not a substitute for it. Another implication was that Marx did not reject the historical study as such, but was against the method employed by the leading historians of his day. Finally, Marx did not develop a clear methodology of history. Therefore, there remain ambiguities in his conception for both the forces and the relations of production, as well as the connection between base and super-structure. So historians working with Marxist tradition have had plenty of interpretative work to do (Tosh, 2000: 147).

The greatest argument against Marx was that his philosophy ran the risk of oversimplifying the historical process and there tended to be the danger of a law- like explanation based on economics that would be used to explain the present and the past. History could therefore be manipulated.

#### **2.3.4.5 The Afrikaans academic historian, the English liberal school and the Neo-Marxist**

During the apartheid era, different schools of thought existed in South Africa. There were the Afrikaans academic historians, the English liberal school of thought and the Neo-Marxist radicals. The Afrikaans historians were mostly conservative, Eurocentric and still loyal to the Rankean tradition. They believed that objectivity greatly influenced the view that the 'right and correct' history had to be transmitted to learners. The English liberals on the other hand existed alongside the Afrikaner school, but were not completely white-centred and were also concerned with social and economic issues. The liberals did not focus a lot on nation building and were also critical of the narrow parameters in which history was taught and learned in schools. The Neo-Marxist radicals of the 1970's and 1980's criticised the English liberals for having an inadequate conceptual framework in order to explain the past, whilst the Afrikaner academics were criticised for presenting a version of history that was legitimising the economic and political status-quo in South Africa ( Van Eeden, 1999: 12).

Of the different schools of thought discussed above, the Afrikaner school of thought was dominant because of its allegiance to National party policies. The Liberals and the Neo-



Marxist radicals continued to propagate their views albeit in vain. It was later during the 1980's and 1990's that their voices began to be heard. This was due to the changes that the South African political system was undergoing in the 1980's with the introduction of a tri-cameral parliament and when in 1994, the black majority took over the government of the country (Van Eeden, 1997: 101, Van Eeden, 1999: 12).

Table 2.1 below is a structural representation of the different schools of thoughts in the development of historical studies.

**Table 2.1: The different schools of thought in the development of historical studies**

School of thought	Characteristics/Principles
Rankean school of thought	<p>Ranke reacted to the weaknesses inherent in the Romantic era history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was innocent of human behaviour.</li> <li>- There was little contact between scholarly work and interpretative works.</li> <li>- History was not efficiently taught as an intellectual discipline.</li> </ul> <p>Ranke was able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish history as a separate discipline;</li> <li>- cause the past not to be judged by the standards of the present;</li> <li>- encourage thorough interrogation of sources</li> <li>- encourage the use of primary sources</li> </ul>
American Progressive	<p>America followed an age of historical relativism.</p> <p>Used history to deal with current social problems.</p> <p>Used history to explain the present.</p>
Annales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encouraged a structural approach to history.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interrogation of all kinds, methods and aspects of history.</li> <li>- Holistic type of history based upon a broad, deep understanding of the past.</li> <li>- Used a serial approach to history.</li> <li>- Called for the integration of history with social sciences.</li> <li>- Examination of primary sources.</li> <li>- A science-based approach to history.</li> </ul>
Marxism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Struggle by human societies to meet their material needs seen as the driving force of history</li> <li>- Wanted to change and not interpret history.</li> <li>- Periodisation of history.</li> <li>- Focused on the development of the class consciousness.</li> <li>- Highly interpretative.</li> </ul>
<b>South African context</b>	
Afrikaans academic historians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mostly conservative and loyal to Rankean tradition.</li> <li>- Believed objectivity influenced the way history is to be transmitted to the learners.</li> <li>- History used for nation building.</li> <li>- Dominated because of its allegiance to the National Party.</li> </ul>
English liberal school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not completely white-centred.</li> <li>- Also concerned with the social and economic issues.</li> <li>- Critical of the narrow parameters in which history was taught and learned in schools.</li> </ul>
Neo-Marxists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wanted to apply the Marxist principles to the South African context.</li> </ul>

According to Van Eeden (1997: 98-99), the developments in western historiography during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see 2.3.5.3) had an impact on the practising of history in South Africa. History as taught in schools was also influenced by those developments.

- First, there was a striving towards the recalling or recreation of the past along a specific ideological line, such as the settler school, the Afrikaner Nationalists and the Black Consciousness Movement writers. A change in focus occurred from the liberal historians to the radical school, which further paved the way for new ideas such as the History Workshop Group of the Witwatersrand University and the People's history.
- Second, in the 1980s the practising of mainly political history was gradually "pushed" aside by comparative, socio-cultural and social historiography. The People's history as an outcome of social historiography was in certain circles regarded as more representative of the history of man and countries of the political elite. However, its association with the political struggle in South Africa gave rise to criticism from several quarters.
- Third, the use of an analytical or a problem-oriented approach abroad to analyse underlying structures of modern society, also gained supporters in the field of history.
- Fourth, the global historiographical approach also gained support amongst the historians in South Africa.
- Fifth, the Liberals and the Neo-Marxist radicals continued to propagate their views, albeit in vain. It was later in the 1980s and 1990s that their voices began to be heard. This was due to the changes that the South African political system had undergone in the 1980s by the creation of the tri-cameral parliament and in 1994, when the black majority took over the government.

Phillips (2004: 215) saw history teaching as a mechanism to acknowledge the importance of national history in the current era of globalisation, when global history is both touted as the only paradigm which is seriously used to understand modern processes and events. The use of national history was therefore not to be superseded by global history.

From these different schools of thought, there are some important implications with regard to how history has to be learned and taught. Most of these aspects addressed aspects that relate to the OBE and the NCS (see 2.2.3). The NCS sought to avoid narrow conceptions of

the past by stressing South Africa's position in wider regional, continental and global contexts (Phillips, 2004: 220).

The Rankean school of thought took history to the level of an intellectual discipline, which implied that history has to be presented in a challenging, stimulating and interesting way. Learners also have to be actively involved in interrogating and interpreting the past. In addition, they also have to process and organise information in a manner that will make sense (see 2.2 and 3.4). Other schools of thought, especially the American progressive movement, emphasise the development of problem-solving skills (see 2.3 and 3.3). Learners should be taught in such a manner that their understanding is enhanced. Rote learning is therefore discouraged. Learners are also exposed to a variety of sources to make them aware that there are various interpretations to the same source and that different conclusion can be reached. The important aspect here is to be able to respect other people's views and opinions. This is in line with the view of constructivism (see 3.2.3.2) where it is expected that learners will construct their own meaning and where the importance of learner-centredness is emphasised.

### **2.3.5 The history of history teaching**

The teaching of history can be seen as one of the oldest subjects that was introduced a few centuries ago and developed throughout the ages until it reached its current status. The focus of the following paragraphs will be to trace the origin of history teaching and its development through time. History as a subject will also be viewed from an international as well as a South African perspective. This knowledge will enhance the quality of the learning environment that is envisaged as it will be informed by the developments that have happened within history teaching.

### 2.3.5.1 The origins of history teaching

The following table will provide a summary of the main changes that happened in the way history was taught through the ages as presented by De Villiers (1998: 2), Van Eeden (1999:6) and Wilson (1999: 9-10; 14-15).

**Table 2.2: Changes in how history was taught through the ages**

Period	Characteristics/Methods used
Pre-historic period	<p>Myths, legends, sagas and folktales.</p> <p>Word of mouth by soothsayers and priests.</p> <p>Combination of facts, fiction and mythical explanation.</p>
Palaeolithic period	<p>Invention of writing.</p> <p>Herodotus and Thucydides encouraged first-hand enquiry.</p>
Later Classical period	<p>Rhetoric and fine oratory embodied in the theological and juridical studies.</p> <p>History given a didactical quality.</p>
Renaissance and Reformation	<p>Christian teleology de-emphasised.</p> <p>More history textbooks printed.</p> <p>History taught in order to develop patriotism.</p> <p>Increase in rationality and enlightenment.</p> <p>Comenius advocated for the inclusion of history in the curriculum.</p>
19 <sup>th</sup> century period	<p>Leopold von Ranke presented the foundation for modern history by encouraging the understanding of the past for what it was.</p> <p>Historicist form of thinking, hermeneutic and broad knowledge scope replaced the theologically-orientated narrow use.</p>

Table 2.2 illustrates that history was originally taught by word of mouth in the form of myths, legends, sagas and folktales. These stories combined factual and fictional elements and contributed a lot in creating a sense of identity, community, morality and purpose. The work was highly moralistic and offered mythical explanations based on divine action (Wilson, 1999: 9). This situation improved after the invention of writing and the role played by the Greek historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. They emphasised the importance of first hand enquiry in an effort to impose narrative patterns on wars and major political events (De Villiers, 1998: 2). During the latter part of the classical period history attained a didactic quality and was no longer intended to teach moral lessons. A historian was supposed to strive for and produce true stories (Wilson, 1999: 10).

History received a renewed interest during the Renaissance and Reformation. Christian teleology was increasingly discarded in favour of a move towards providing history in the form of distinct historical periods. Numerous history books were printed. A didactician, Comenius, advocated for the inclusion of history in the curriculum. The dominant historical approach at the time was to modify the teleological notion of history into a non-teleological fashion that suggested a secular progress in history (Wilson, 1999: 14-15).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a further revolution in historical thought led to a championing of historicist form of thinking and knowledge. Historicism is the belief that the goal of history is to uncover the specificity. For Gottfried von Herder the past cannot be compared to the present. Hegel denied the existence of static essences because everything in the world had evolved. The absence of static essences means that everything must be understood historically. Leopold von Ranke finally presented a basis for modern history. Ranke denied teleology any role in history and argued that the ultimate goal of history was to understand the past as it really was. The approach to history now became hermeneutic, historicist and broad in scope (Wilson, 1999: 14-15; Van Eeden, 1999:6).

It was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the teaching of history was introduced to South Africa. History as a school subject was introduced by the Dutch settlers through the tradition of religious education. This was further continued by the British after annexing the Cape in 1806. When the British took over and promoted an Anglo dominated content, a conflict arose between the two groups which lasted several decades (Van Eeden, 1999: 7-10).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century History had been accepted as a school subject. It was during this period that most countries had to revisit their curriculum so as to be in line with global economics, technological inventions and the organisation of work (see 2.2.2). The onslaught of the technological age highlighted the inadequacy of the content-based approach to the teaching of history and demanded a methodology in which skills, concepts and attitudes played a dominant role. There was also a need to change as the realisation of the demise of the subject grew. The real concern was that the subject could be subsumed into the field of the humanities in general (see 2.3.5.2).

In South Africa during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the system of apartheid, although dominant, was also greatly challenged. The content of history taught in schools during the apartheid era was white-centred, Eurocentric and largely dominated by the Afrikaner view in which the past was idealised. As a curriculum is at the heart of an education system, after the first democratic elections in 1994, the Department of education embarked on a process of curriculum revision. (Schoeman & Mothata, 2002: 176).

In addressing the needs of individual subjects, a technical curriculum committee was formed in 1994 with the purpose of addressing the issues of curriculum. Later that same year, an interim structure, the National Education and Training Forum, was established. The history sub-committee focused on 'cleansing' the history content from its discriminating and incriminating content. Some of the aspects that received attention, included the issue of biased and ideologically distorted history textbooks that perpetuated a restricted, narrow-minded Afrikaner Nationalist, Eurocentric view of the past. It was also noted that the curriculum practise in South African schools was determined by the historical interpretation found in the textbooks. Another concern was the issue of the methodologies that were employed during the teaching and learning process (see 2.3.5.2). The sub-committee also re-emphasised the importance of history in the development of values such as non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy, mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, defence of rights and academic freedom (see 2.3.2). Nzimande (1998: 7-9) further recommended an analysis of South Africa's needs to advance the goals of reconstruction and development and to understand South Africa's place in the current global conjuncture.

The debates around the transformation of history continued within the structures organised within the department of education and also within independent professional structures. In January 1996, the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA) and the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT) held a joint conference and proposed that the syllabi had to make provision for a national perspective as well as a regional component (Van Eeden, 1997: 106; Van Eeden, 1999: 13). The South African Historical Society shared this concern (Sieborger, 1999: 7-10).

From these arguments by various individuals and professional structures, it became evident that the overall curriculum changes were well received and appropriate efforts were made to afford history its proper place within the new curriculum.

By establishing the History/Archaeology panel, the former minister of education, Professor Kader Asmal, acknowledged the importance of history in a developing and transforming country such as South Africa. The main function of the panel was to advise the minister on how best to strengthen the teaching of history in South African schools. This move was prompted by the working group on values in education titled 'Values, Education and Democracy' (Department of Education, 2000: 1).

The values in the education report had underlined the importance of promoting good and imaginative history teaching as a key element in education for a newly democratic order, emphasising its power to puncture the preconceptions and prejudices which bedevils a society still deeply divided by race, class, culture, gender and language. History was also identified as a distinctive vehicle for driving the values of reconciliation, mutual respect and of strengthening a South African culture based on tolerance and a sense of community where rights and duties are shared equally (Asmal, 2001: 3-4; Dispatch Online, Monday, December 18, 2000:1).

In response to the recommendations by the History and Archaeology panel, the South African History Project (SAHP) was formed by a twelve member ministerial committee comprising of academics, historians and educators. The main aim of the SAHP was to promote and enhance the conditions and status of the learning and teaching of history in the



South African schooling system, with the purpose of restoring its material position and intellectual purchase in the classroom. Collective strategic forums for teachers, scholars and training specialists were created to devise means of improving and strengthening history teaching. The SAHP was also created to engage with the processes of curriculum development in the form of developing the National Curriculum Statement. The project also directed its energy towards the review, revision and rewriting of history textbooks. Finally the SAHP concerned itself with instituting activities to resurrect general interest in the study of history by younger people (Asmal, 2001: 5-7; Twala, 2003: 35).

In another attempt to strengthen the position of history within society, President Thabo Mbeki also initiated the establishment of the South African Democratic Trust (SADET). SADET was formed after the president had expressed his concern about the paucity of the historical records chronicling the arduous and complex road to South Africa's peaceful political settlement after 1994 (Twala, 2003: 35). These initiatives by the government were seen by some historians as giving a new lease of life to history (Tempelhoff, 2003: 5) and also providing an emphasis on the acquisition of broader skills ( Oelofse & DuBryn, 2004: 160).

SAHP and SADET played an important role in trying to resurrect the status of history and history teaching in the South African education system. This study is therefore not an attempt to replace the efforts of said structures, but rather an attempt to supplement these efforts by striving to keep history alive in the classrooms.

Table 2.3 below provides a summarised version of the changes in history teaching in South Africa.

**Table 2.3: Changes in how history was taught in South Africa between the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 2008**

Period	Characteristics/Methods used
19 <sup>th</sup> century	<p>History introduced by Dutch settlers through religious education.</p> <p>British Annexation resulted in Anglo dominated curriculum.</p> <p>Struggle for content between the British and the Afrikaners.</p> <p>Teacher-centred approach.</p>
1948 – 1994	<p>White-centred, Eurocentric and Afrikaner view.</p> <p>Content used to legitimise apartheid system.</p> <p>Teacher-centred.</p> <p>Textbook orientated.</p> <p>Dictated notes.</p> <p>Passive learners.</p> <p>Memorisation of facts, dates and names of places.</p>
1994 – 2008	<p>Debates around curriculum change.</p> <p>Move towards OBE inclined methodologies and approach.</p> <p>Debates and changes in history content.</p> <p>Involvement of different structures in the change process – Historical Association of South Africa (HASA) History/Archaeology Panel, South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT), South African History Project (SAHP), South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET).</p> <p>Content used for nation building and reconciliation.</p> <p>Textbook rewriting process.</p> <p>Skills- and content-based approach.</p>

	Curriculum review and the NCS.
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### **2.3.5.2 History teaching in Britain and the USA**

In the following paragraphs, the focus will be on the changes in the way history was taught in Britain and the USA. The two countries were selected because the author believes that their multiracial and multicultural setup might be of help to the South African situation. South Africa is going through a transition which seeks to accommodate all the races and cultures. The reasons provided in paragraph 2.2.2 for curriculum transformation globally, also apply to South Africa. Therefore, what happened and is still happening in other countries can be of help to South Africa.

#### **History teaching in Britain**

According to Brown (1995: 1) and Sylvester (1994:9), history teaching in England and to a certain extent in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland - had been dominated by what might be called “a great tradition” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its main features were fixed by 1900 and they remained unchanged for at least 70 years. This tradition of history teaching was clearcut in its aims and methodology. The history teacher’s role was didactically active; it was to give learners the facts of historical knowledge and to ensure through repeated short tests that they had learned them. The learners’ role was passive; history was a received subject. The body of knowledge to be taught was also clearly defined. It was mainly political history with some social and economic aspects.

The methodology of teaching history remained the same through the years. Teachers gave oral accounts of the main events, putting notes on the chalkboard for learners to copy or expand on. Textbooks were often read aloud around the class to secure main factual lines and subsequently used by learners to make their own notes. Dictated notes on the number of causes for a particular event were a regular feature of the work. Often this was followed by learners writing prose accounts or essays. Even though changes to the methodology

were suggested, little effort was made before the 1970s (Brown, 1995: 1; Sylvester, 1994: 12).

Besides the methodology which was very teacher-centred, the other problem was the content of the history taught in the British schools. The content of the history curriculum was overtly politicised and mainly British dominated. In this manner the glory and story that was Britain was conveyed to generations of school learners at the expense of others (Van Eeden, 1999: 7). This approach was condemned by even the League of Nations for promoting nationalistic bias. The league appealed for a more global approach to be followed (Van Eeden, 1999: 7). The dominance of the British content in history was challenged in the 1960s and the subsequent debate over the proper character of the history curriculum and how it should best be taught in schools had been long and, in many respects, remarkably inconclusive (Brown, 1995: 1; Husbands, Kitson & Pendry, 2003: 8).

As a result of these debates and the educators' dissatisfaction with the traditional way of teaching history, concerns of its erosion and the end of its position within the secondary school, the School Council History Project (SCHP) emerged in the 1970s. This was seen as the most significant initiative, as it led to a radical shift away from the great tradition of history as a received subject that had dominated teaching for much of the century towards one in which learners were to do history, not merely to receive it. The SCHP also widened the content of history by including contemporary and local dimensions (Brown, 1995: 2; Van Eeden, 1999: 7).

According to Haydn et al. (2001:20) the objectives of the SCHP were to examine the role of history in an era of curriculum change, to revitalise history teaching in schools through institutionalised support and current practices, to encourage learner participation in learning, and finally to investigate the ways of assessing understanding rather than learning. The project was designed to encourage understanding of the nature of history and its fundamental concepts.

The SCHP was also an attempt to show learners the different kinds of activity in which historians engage. Learners study a patch intensively and explain it from the inside. They

stand outside events and analyse their flow and flux from a distance. They look critically at the recent past and try to illuminate contemporary events and also the history around us. The project also sought to establish in learners the grasp of some of the concepts fundamental to the understanding of the nature of history (Haydn et al., 2001: 20).

Owing to the SChP, history in the British schools was introduced as a form of knowledge having its own logic, methods and perspectives. It is intended to serve as a model for enquiry-based, problem-solving pedagogy. History was also supposed to be presented as a humane study concerned with people, their actions and perceptions of events. Learners were therefore introduced to the idea of reconstruction from evidence, to the reality of different sorts of evidence which have to be used in different ways from which different sorts of things can be deduced and to the problems of reconstruction in the face of biased, incomplete and contradictory evidence. History in schools also attempted to address the question of historical explanation in the form of causal analysis and delineation of motives (Husbands, Kitson & Pendry, 2003: 10).

Haydn et al. (2001: 27) saw the SChP as focusing mainly on the concepts such as evidence, empathy and cause-effect. The project additionally emphasised the use of primary sources as evidence in a learner-centred approach. The reaction of other authors such as Brown (1995: 2) was that of approval. The SChP was seen as the most significant and beneficial influence on the learning of history to emerge in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The project was also seen as a tool to give young people not merely knowledge, but also tools to reflect on, to critically evaluate, and to apply the acquired knowledge.

The SChP was not without criticism. In some circles it was believed that, even though the project had liberated history from the transmission of corpus information in a linear and chronological framework, it was also true that a sense of chronology had been sacrificed and that this was something that the traditional history did much better. The other concern involved the price to be paid in terms of the breath of content which could be covered if time was also to be given to providing learners with more insight into the nature of historical knowledge and in terms of coherence continuity and focus. The SChP was also seen as corrosive and morally relativist. There was also a concern that facts no longer held anymore, since empathy, evidence and imagination were to take on greater importance, as the

learners themselves were asked to analyse and interpret the past. Others saw the demand for relevance in history as reducing history to current affairs (Haydn et al. 2001: 21).

In order to assess the implementability and effectiveness of the SChP recommendations, an observation was conducted during 1975-1980. Through that study it was discovered that the new history did not gain ground mainly due to lack of skills. The emphasis was still on the usage of textbooks, dictated notes and the learning of facts. School history remained essentially content-based, politically-orientated, formal in learning methods but limited in resources and also deficient in attention to both the objectives and their evaluation (Brown, 1995: 3). It became evident that the debate around the transformation of history had achieved very little. The discussions that had begun as a defence of history against charges of irrelevance and threats of integration, developed into a critique of the new history in the mid-1970s and emerged in the 1980s as the need to justify history's place in the secondary curriculum as a response to numerical pressures exerted. The issue had already been politicised by its nature changed irrevocably with the shift in the discussion of the history curriculum as an internal pedagogical issue to one where initiative moved towards central prescription (Brown, 1995: 4).

During the 1980s a renewed debate ensued around history teaching in schools. The debate was around the attempt to create a national curriculum under central political direction. In the late 1980s the New Right Tory government appointed a history working group. The working committee proposed a scheme that sought to build on the work of the SChP. New syllabi were devised that emphasised more the active and engaging skills involved in actually doing history using primary sources, as well as the uncertainty of historical evidence and the need to consider varying viewpoints. A national history curriculum that emphasised critical and analytical approaches and the existence of alternative interpretations, however, was not what the Thatcher government required. There was noticeable political intervention in the deliberations surrounding the national history curriculum (Haydn et al. 2001: 21-23; Timmins et al. 2005: 23-25).

The national curriculum for England and Wales was a product of the Education Reform Act of 1988 which was first taught in schools in 1991. The national curriculum for history had two versions, the 1995 and 1999 versions. The original stipulation that the study of political

history should end 20 years before the present moment was quietly discarded in the first revision, which also significantly slimmed down the content which had to be studied, and attempted to simplify assessment arrangements. Significantly, the 1995 revision made the study of history optional after the age of 14. There is a substantial amount of continuity between the 1995 and the 2000 history curricula (Haydn et al. 2001: 24).

## **History teaching in the USA**

In the USA the debate about the teaching of history schools gained much momentum in the 1890s. The main crux of the matter was around the status of social studies as a school subject, whether or not history was part of social studies or vice versa, the curricula proposals to realise the promise of democratic citizenship, and the questions about the role of ideology in curriculum construction and content (Van Eeden, 1999: 11).

The debates in the USA should not be understood to be dealing with history as an isolated subject, but as part of a wider educational undertaking concerning the establishment of the national standards for the curriculum of the USA. Alarmed by the perceived decline in educational achievements, the Bush Senior's administration launched a project to devise national frameworks for a range of subjects. The academic historians in the USA also shared many of the concerns that arose as schools replaced or incorporated seemingly old-fashioned history with apparently more relevant social studies (Timmins *et al.*, 2005: 22).

In 1912 James H. Robinson published his "New History" work, which attempted a much broader and all-inclusive approach to the study of past societies in order to be useful to progressive reformers. Adherents of the New History such as Becker, Beard, Turner and Barnes attached themselves to social sciences and supported the use of social studies (De Villiers, 1998: 4). The USA adopted a new trend in the teaching of history by introducing social studies in 1916, the purpose of which was to combine subjects such as history, geography, economics, sociology and civics. Academic bodies in the USA, amongst them the American Historical Association and the Organisation of American Historians, mobilised in defence of their subject. Some felt the new approach focused on the contemporary issues

and the immediate environment to the detriment of the vital historical principles such as chronology and continuity (De Villiers, 1998: 4).

To make recommendations on what the standards should entail, a wide ranging survey and consultation exercises were conducted, involving large numbers of higher education and school history teachers. There were internal disagreements among the panel members, which reflected the wider debates taking place in the discipline in the early 1990s. Some of the issues that caused tensions revolved around the extent to which the school curriculum should present a more diverse, multiculturalistic perspective, or an assimilationist, shared heritage view. The other issue regarded retaining the Eurocentric, western civilisation approach or aim for a wider ranging, properly global history. Despite all these issues that created a concern, the participants in these debates agreed that the teaching of history should encourage intelligent interpretation, analysis and critical judgement. In order to pin down these skills, a framework of five standards of historical thinking was drawn. These were chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research capabilities and lastly, historical issue-analysis and decision-making (Husbands, Kitson & Pendry, 2003: 27, Timmins et al. 2005: 23).

Warren (2007: 249) also supports the above statement by asserting that teachers need to improve on how they teach history so that it can become authentic by moving towards 'doing' history.

In the USA the transformation of history as a school subject was driven mainly by multiculturalism. The Americans were worried as to whether too much emphasis was placed on the differences and diversity foster factionalism, sectarianism and social discord. These debates around the content and structure of the subject is indicative of the fact that it is an ongoing process which will last for many years to come ( Timmins *et al.* 2005: 25; Van Eeden, 1999: 11).

Table 2.4 provides a summarised version of how history content and history teaching transformed through the ages. The changes in the last era (1994 – to date in South Africa) are indicated so as to show the anticipated ways of teaching history and are not in any way



to suggest that the implementation is as anticipated, hence the need for this study as it is aimed at identifying aspects that needs to be done to structure a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning in the FET band.

**Table 2.4: Summary of how history teaching evolved in Britain, the United States of America and South Africa**

<b>Britain</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
<p><b>1900s – 1970s</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- overtly politicised</li> <li>- British dominated</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- oral accounts of main events</li> <li>- dictated notes</li> <li>- textbook-orientated</li> <li>- teacher-centred</li> <li>- passive learners</li> </ul>	<p><b>1890s – 1912</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- history part of social studies</li> <li>- driven by the need for democratic citizenship</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teacher-centred</li> <li>- rote learning</li> <li>- passive learners</li> </ul>	<p><b>19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> century</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- religious dominated</li> <li>-Anglo dominated content</li> <li>-Struggle between Afrikaners and English</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teacher-centred</li> <li>- dictated notes</li> <li>- textbook-orientated</li> <li>- passive learners</li> </ul>
<p><b>1970s – 1980s</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Widened to include contemporary and local dimensions</li> <li>- National curriculum under central political direction</li> </ul>	<p><b>1912 – 1990</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- immediate environment</li> <li>- contemporary issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active learner participation</li> </ul>	<p><b>1948 – 1994</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-white-centred, Eurocentric, Afrikaner view dominated</li> <li>-content used to legitimise apartheid policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology</b></p>

<p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge construction</li> <li>- active learner participation</li> <li>- use of primary sources</li> <li>- reconstruction of evidence</li> <li>- skills-orientated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge construction</li> <li>- use of primary sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teacher-centred</li> <li>- lecture method</li> <li>- dictated notes</li> <li>- textbook-orientated</li> <li>- passive learners</li> <li>- memorisation of facts, dates and names of places</li> </ul>
<p><b>1990s – 2000s</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- political history to end 20 yrs before the present</li> <li>- national history-focused</li> <li>- learning of a variety of historical situations</li> <li>- assessment requirements simplified</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge construction</li> <li>- active learner participation</li> <li>- use of primary sources</li> <li>- reconstruction of evidence</li> <li>- skills-orientated</li> </ul>	<p><b>1990 – to date</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more diverse, multicultural perspectives</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teaching directed by the five national standards of historical thinking:</li> <li>- skills-based approach</li> <li>- learner-centred</li> <li>- activity-based</li> </ul>	<p><b>1994 – to date</b></p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- content “cleansing” from all the discriminating and incriminating content</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more learner-centred approaches</li> <li>- interrogation of sources</li> <li>- knowledge construction</li> <li>- active learner participation</li> <li>- activity-based</li> </ul>

### **2.3.5.3 Issues identified from the changes that happened in history teaching**

From the previous paragraphs and Table 2.4, it became evident that history teaching and learning has undergone a great deal of transformation throughout the world. The original approach of studying and learning history was mainly through story-telling and teacher dominant approaches. The teacher had to display a high level of subject knowledge. Learners were generally passive. Learners were taught through rote learning and drilling. They were not exposed to a variety of sources and had to learn the facts presented by heart. They never had a chance to question issues. Textbook information was taken as the supreme knowledge. Learners also had to deal with racially dominated interpretations. There was a need to have history at schools being able to address the demands of the changing world (see 2.3.5.2; 2.3.5.3).

In the countries presented here, it is evident that efforts were made to change the way history was taught and learned. The main focus was moving towards a constructivist approach which aimed at having learners “doing history”. The part of “doing history” responds well to the influence of the different philosophies in curriculum design (see 2.2.2) and the philosophical influences regarding the study of history (see 2.3.3.4.1; 2.3.3.4.2).

The approach of doing history became encouraging and promoted active learner participation. History learning also moved towards being challenging as learners began to engage in enquiry-based approaches to learning and problem-solving activities. Learners engaged and interacted with a variety of sources, especially primary sources in creating knowledge to be communicated to the teacher and/or other learners. The emphasis was also placed on the development of the different skills, such as analysis, comprehension, interpretation of sources, communication of findings, application of knowledge, and critical judgement. This new approach places a premium on teachers’ ability to manage learners’ learning activities (see 2.3.5.3). These aspects relate to the principles of OBE (see 2.2) and the characteristics of effective learning (see 4.2.1).

The other important factor that was included as part of the transformation of history was the issue of the content. Many countries had focused mainly on their own political history,

thereby neglecting making the learners part of the global world. As part of the changes in the subject, both Britain and the USA structured their content so as to meet the needs of the changing world. The USA, because of its multicultural nature, embraced a multi-culturalistic perspective to cater for the different groups. Due to this change in focus, most of the learning became contextualised. The focus also moved towards using non-discriminative content and promoting racial and ethnic divisions (see 2.3.5.2).

The above views are supported by De Corte and Masui (2004: 365) who maintain that the changes in society during the 20<sup>th</sup> century have induced a growing need for the acquisition by all citizens of aspects of high literacy, such as thinking critically, solving complex problems, regulating one's own learning and developing communication skills.

## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

The main focus of Chapter 2 was on the ability to present a detailed study of the curriculum and factors that influenced curriculum change. History as a subject in schools was discussed and conceptualised around the changing of curriculum within South Africa. Most importantly, Chapter 2 focused on various issues such as a definition of history, the value of history, and the history of the teaching of history within the changing context of OBE. Some of the important points that emanated from the study were that history can be regarded as a systematic study and an interrogation of evidence (see 2.1), which has the potential of developing educational and personal skills and values such as critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making (see 2.2). Through the study of the teaching of history in post-apartheid South Africa (see 2.3.5.2), the OBE approach seems to be the way forward. The importance of critical and developmental outcomes in informing the arrangement of the history lesson was emphasised.

From this chapter it also became clear that history has to be presented in a manner that seeks to acknowledge the changes that have been brought about by curriculum transformation in South Africa and also the developments that occurred within history teaching abroad. In addition to this history has to face the challenges posed by technological advances and the preparation of learners for the world of work. This challenges educators to review their teaching methodologies and strategies so as to be able to structure a learning environment that will address most, if not all of the challenges mentioned above.



## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to structure a learning environment that inspires learners to engage in the learning tasks and to develop the expected values and skills, knowledge about history is not enough to guarantee successful learning. According to Vakalisa (1998: 179), an understanding of what learning is and how human beings learn is important. Good and Brophy (1995: xxi) maintain that it is also imperative to have a fundamental understanding of how learners develop so as to apply that knowledge in the structuring a powerful learning environment for history learners.

The main focus of Chapter 3 is to contextualise the FET band learner through the use of educational psychology concepts. This approach is necessary, as it will assist the researcher to have an understanding of the kind of learner for which the learning environment is to be created. The study of educational and developmental psychology provides a way of formulating hypotheses about effective classroom strategies, but is also not disputing the fact that each human is unique and yet is like some other humans in some ways (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1990: 8). The study of developmental psychology will assist in the planning of an effective educational system and the selection of the appropriate syllabi (Meyer, 1998: 38).

### 3.2 LEARNING

In order to be able to structure a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history, it is imperative to have an understanding of what the concept learning is. In developing an understanding of what learning is, focus will be put on looking at how learning was conceptualised through a period of time and by also looking at the different learning theories that inform the current thinking about learning.

### 3.2.1 Early notions about learning

Most of the early notions about learning were informed by the branch of philosophy called epistemology. This branch of philosophy was concerned with the nature of knowledge. Epistemology refers to the study of the origin, nature, limits and methods of knowledge (Schunk, 1996: 20). The epistemologists ask questions such as: "What is knowledge?" "What can we know?" "What are the origins of knowledge?" "What does it mean to know?" These kinds of questions go back at least as far as the early Greeks when views concerning the nature of learning set philosophical trends that have persisted until this day. The debate that has ensued since the times of the early Greeks is about the issue of whether knowledge is inherited and therefore part of the human mind or that knowledge was derived from sensory experiences (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 31; Greeno, Collins & Resnick, 1996: 15; Schunk, 1996: 20).

As a result of these debates, numerous viewpoints concerning the learning process exist today. Some of these views can be identified among modern theories of learning. One such a view is the functionalistic view which reflects the influence of Darwinism which stresses the relationship between learning and adjustment to the environment (Greeno *et al.*, 1996: 15). This view is acknowledging the importance of the environment in the learning process which further legitimises the need for this study.

The associationistic view or empiricist view also developed as a result of the debates. The main focus of this view is that it studies the learning process in terms of the laws of association which had originated with Aristotle and was perpetuated by Locke, Bekeley and Hume (Greeno *et al.*, 1996: 15; Hergenhahn & Olson 1993: 51). Based on this view it therefore implies that correct resources and approaches in the classroom could enhance the achievement of the expected outcomes (see 4.2.2).

According to Schunk (1996: 28) and Hergenhahn and Olson (1993: 51), some theorists developed a view which became known as a cognitive view because it stresses the cognitive nature of learning which influences the need to develop the different cognitive skills during the teaching and learning process.

The neuro-physiological view is different from those mentioned above, as it attempts to isolate the neuro-physiological correlates of such things as learning, perception and intelligence. This paradigm represents a current manifestation of a line of investigation that sought the separation of the mind and the body (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 51).

In an attempt to avoid unfair judgement of the different views presented above, Hergenhahn & Olson (1993: 51) maintain that these views should be seen as crude categories, since it is difficult to find any categorisation of learning that fits unambiguously into any one of them. A viewpoint is placed in a particular paradigm because of its major emphasis. However, within almost every view, certain aspects of other paradigms can be identified.

### **3.2.2 Learning theories**

Based on the above-mentioned notions of learning, different theories of learning developed. The focus of the following paragraphs will be on discussing the different theories of learning in an attempt to illuminate on the understanding of what learning really means, how it relates to what is expected of the FET history learners, and how the learning environment should be structured.

A theory is a set of related statements used to explain and summarise particular facts or observations. The purposes of theories are therefore to:

- simplify and to organise observations;
- discover new facts;
- suggest which facts are the most important, summarise and interrelate facts; and also to
- explain facts or observations (Hamilton & Ghatala, 1994: 5; Lefrancois, 2000: 6).

Therefore a learning theory needs to do the following:

- It should enable us to make sense out of the facts about learning.
- It should also lead logically to suggestions for arranging experiences in such a way that behaviour will change in desired ways.
- It should propose which facts are most significant.



- Learning theories should also enable us to understand what is going on in the process of learning.
- It should help us understand how people interact within a pedagogic environment (Child, 2004: 122; Hamilton & Ghatala, 1994: 5).

One would therefore want to believe that this exercise of focusing on the learning theories, an understanding of what learning is, will be developed from the different perspectives. This understanding is very important as it will help in the conceptualisation of what different components of powerful learning environments should look like, and how it relates to history as a school subject.

### **3.2.3 Approaches to learning**

Paragraph 3.1.1 illustrated how the different views to learning developed. These views later developed into theories of learning. The views remained different and diverse, but could be broadly categorised into two major approaches to learning, namely, behaviourism and cognitivism (Child, 2004: 123). Authors like Hergenhahn and Olson (1993: 52) include a third category, which is neuro-physiological. The focus in the following paragraphs will be on the discussion of the two main approaches to learning, which are behaviourism and cognitivism and some of the concepts of neuro-physiological discourse.

#### **3.2.3.1 Behaviourism**

Behaviourism originated as a response to structuralism and functionalism approaches, which focused on the conscious experience. Some proponents of behaviourism such as Watson and Thorndike regarded the study of the conscious experience as the dead end method of introspection, which was non-scientific. According to the behaviourists, the proper subject matter of psychology is activity rather than structures (Child, 2004: 124; Hamilton & Ghatala, 1994: 13). This therefore promotes active learner participation (see 2.2; 3.2; 3.3.6) in the learning process.

Hergenhahn and Olson (1993:52), differentiate between functionalistic and associationistic behaviourists to illustrate that there are different behavioural theorists. The focus of this work will be on the following theories, namely classical conditioning, operant conditioning and connectionism, as they address attributes that inform the structuring of a powerful learning environment.

### **3.2.3.1.1 *Classical conditioning***

According to Gage and Berliner (1991: 226) classical conditioning emphasises the role of environment in facilitating and enhancing learning. The creation of conducive environments is encouraged, as they will elicit responses that enhance learning. The implications for a history teacher are such that he will have to provide learning resources, relevant historical sources and information that allow for enquiry and interrogation. This deliberate structuring of the environment promotes the NCS requirements (see 2.2.3) which provide for the development of the different learning outcomes. These learning outcomes (see 2.2.3) will be achieved in an environment which is rich in resources, both human and physical.

The main aim of the behavioural theory is to ensure that the behaviour of the learners will change from their original one. This change in behaviour signified learning (Mwamwenda, 1995: 185). The third learning outcome in history (see 2.3) expects learners to create a new understanding by using historical sources and knowledge which serve as stimuli that warrant a response. In this case, history learners might display the same or a variety of responses. This will be demonstrating that a change has taken place from their original state of mind. Therefore learning will have taken place (see 3.2).

Kruger and Adams (1998: 50) identify stimulus generalisation as another principle of classical conditioning that implies the ability to use the acquired knowledge to respond to a new situation. Effective history teaching and learning requires learners to be equipped with a variety of cognitive skills (see 2.2). Therefore, the focus of teaching should be to use the acquired skill to deal with new problem situations and challenges. Classical conditioning is important to the learning and teaching of history because it encourages generalisation,

which is the basis for concept formation. Concept formation is one of the learning outcomes for history (see 2.2). Application of knowledge and skills (see 2.2) is therefore of importance.

Learning which has the characteristics of classical conditioning becomes enjoyable to learners as they:

- are actively involved in the learning process;
- receive immediate feedback;
- move along at their own pace, as the emphasis is on the production of successful experiences;
- become motivated during the learning process; and
- learn to construct and demonstrate their knowledge.

The above characteristics make classical conditioning an important contributor towards the structuring of a learning environment. These aspects are in line with the characteristics of the OBE approach (see 2.2), the changes that happened in history teaching (see 2.3.5), and the characteristics of effective learning (see 4.2.1).

### **3.2.3.1.2 Operant conditioning**

Hamilton and Ghatala (1994: 17), Mwamwenda (2004: 175) and Woolfolk (2004: 202-203) maintain that operant conditioning holds a notion that learning consists of the association between the response and reinforcement, not the connection between the stimulus and the response. Therefore the stimulus variables that precede the response play a lesser role in the explanation of behaviour than do the consequences that follow the responses. The behaviour of interest appears spontaneous without being elicited. Learners' deliberate efforts and intentions to learn are acknowledged. Teachers therefore need to have an optimistic expectation about learners' perception to learning.

Houghton and Lapen(1995: 42) acknowledge that individuals are different, but do not relate this to the differences in the brain. Operant conditioning believes that there has never been a clear correlation between behavioural property and a neurological one. The only difference that turns up in the work and teaching seems to be the difference in the speed with which people can acquire new behaviour and how well they can hold it. History teachers need to

acknowledge that learners are different with regard to skills, knowledge and potential (see 4.4.1).

Learning as conceptualised by operant conditioning encourages:

- Active participation of learners in the learning process.
- The use of a stimulating and conducive learning environment to enable the creation of knowledge.
- The use of challenging tasks to serve as reinforcement and encouragement to the learners.
- The use of immediate rewards and reinforcement.
- The use of stimulus discrimination.

### **3.2.3.1.3 Connectionism**

According to Hergenhahn and Olson (1993: 59, 61-62, 65-68) and Mwamwenda, 2004: 198), connectionism is based on different theoretical notions, namely:

- The recognition of the complexity of the learning environment and the conclusion that people respond selectively to aspects thereof.
- The association between sense impressions and impulses which marked an attempt to link sensory events to behaviour.
- Learning is seen as the establishment of links or bonds between two or more events.
- Learning is said to have taken place when people are able to associate or connect things.
- Rewards or punishment is seen to be playing an important role during the learning.
- Selecting and connecting or trial and error learning is also acknowledged as a key notion of connectionism.
- Connectionism sees learning as incremental, not insightful. Learning is expected to occur in small systematic steps rather than in huge jumps.
- Learning is taken to be direct and not mediated by thinking or reason.
- Experience is very important for learning to take place.

The above notions of connectionism have an impact on how history is supposed to be taught in schools. History teaching and learning is supposed to be done in a manner that allows learners to develop understanding of the different historical concepts (see 2.3) and to establish the relationship between concepts. History learners have to be taught in a manner that will enable them to relate to what is presented to them and be able to make sense of it. The teacher has to have knowledge of learners, their potential and abilities. The language used, activities provided and the level of difficulty have to be adjusted to accommodate learners during the lesson. This will lead towards a learner-centred approach (see 4.4.1) which will enhance the quality of the learning environment (see 4.2).

History teaching has to focus on the development of different cognitive skills and the achievement of the critical and developmental outcomes (see 2.2.3). History learners have to select information and to use information to solve problems. Therefore making mistakes is allowed and acceptable in class. Mistakes are seen as part of the learning process, as learners are encouraged to explore, interrogate, compare, assess and verify until they reach the correct or appropriate responses (see 2.3).

Learners' ability to select the correct and appropriate facts is also influenced by the kind of knowledge they possess. Therefore the quality of content knowledge that learners possess is important, hence the role of teaching in enhancing learners' knowledge is acknowledged (see 4.4.2). The history teacher also has to provide the content and activities in a manner that acknowledges their level of development (see 3.4).

### **3.2.3.2 Cognitive theories**

According to Hamilton and Ghatala (1994: 18) and Child (2004:125), cognitivism arose from a negative reaction to behaviourism. The cognitivists were against the behaviourists' approach of analysing behaviour into molecular/elementary units. They saw this as being too simplistic to provide adequate explanations of complex human behaviour.

Cognitive psychology has increased understanding of the nature of competent performance and the principles of knowledge organisation that underlie people's abilities to solve problems in a wide variety of areas (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 4). An understanding of the different principles governing the cognitive approach to learning will assist the history teacher tremendously, because history seeks to develop different cognitive skills. These skills include problem-solving skills, essay writing skills and the creation of coherent argument (see 2.3).

Louw, Van Ede and Louw (1998: 70-71) explain cognition as:

- referring to the processes of our minds;
- referring to how people represent and transform such information as knowledge; and
- explaining how we store, retrieve and use that knowledge to direct our behaviour.

Cognitive theorists believe the following:

- Human actions are taken to be purposive and goal-directed.
- The focus is on the learner and his drives and motives.
- The focus is also on the learner's self-perception and his global approach.
- Learning is seen as a change in perception and understanding rather than behaviour.
- Learners are not passive recipients of the information but are capable of controlling their learning activity, organising their field of operation and also having an inherent capacity to learn (Mwamwenda, 2004: 192; Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1993: 138; Woolfolk, 2004: 236).

These cognitive views to learning are in line with the principles of OBE approach (see 2.2.3), the approach to history teaching (see 2.3.5.4) and the characteristics of effective learning (see 4.2.1). A teacher who is able to encapsulate these in his classroom will be enhancing the learning of history.

As cognitivism contains numerous theories, it is not easy to cover all of them in this study. The focus will therefore be on the Gestalt theories and Vygotsky's social constructivism theory.

## **Gestalt views**

According to Child (2004: 51), Schunk (1996: 53) and Woolfolk, 2004: 240), “Gestalt” is a German word for pattern or form. The theory emphasises our ability to perceive patterns as wholes. Gestalt psychologists were primarily field theorists who were interested in perceptual phenomena, hence they focused on learning as a special problem in perception. They assumed that when an organism is confronted with a problem, a state of cognitive disequilibrium is set up and combines until the problem is solved. This area of attention for the Gestalt psychologists acknowledges the important role that is placed by the environment on learning. History teaching needs to be facilitated within an environment that has a variety of resources so as to challenge learners to think and to lead towards the creation of new knowledge (4.4.2) and perception (4.6).

Whilst the behaviourists saw problem-solving as a result of trial and error, the Gestaltists saw it as a process which involved insight. Insightful learning is defined as a sudden solution to the problem which can be readily repeated during a similar event in the future and which has some transfer to the new situation. Insightful learning is characterised by the transition from pre-solution to solution, and by performance based on a solution gained by insight is usually smooth and free of errors. The retention span from insightful learning lasts for a considerable time (Child, 1996: 99; Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 258).

Based on the principle of insightful learning, the activities that history learners are to be exposed to, should seek to assess their ability to use the acquired skills and knowledge to new situations. This is in line with the what is pronounced by classical conditioning (see 3.2.3.1.1 ), the expectations of what learners need to acquire in the form of learning outcomes (see 2.2), and it is also one of the characteristics of effective learning (see 4.2.1). The role of the teacher in terms of leading the process and guiding learners (see 4.3) is also emphasised.

The other important postulate of the Gestalts is that of emphasising the importance of making learning meaningful to the learners. Learning will become meaningful to the extent at which it is:

- in line with learners' level of development (see 3.5);
- learner-centred (see 3.3.4; 4.4.1);
- directed towards a particular objective;
- contextualised; and
- addressing aspects that learners can relate to (Child, 2004: 52-53; Mwamwenda, 2004: 228).

## **Constructivism**

As the cognitive revolution continues to unfold, educational psychologists are increasingly depicting learning not as just the cognitive mediation of knowledge acquisition, but as a constructive process in which learners proceed in their own ways to build unique representations of the content (Good & Brophy, 1995: 190).

Eggen and Kauchak (1999: 280), Schunk (1996: 208) and Good and Brophy (1995: 180) view constructivism as:

- a psychological and philosophical perspective contending that individuals form or construct much of what they learn and understand;
- emphasising learners' development of new knowledge through active construction processes that link new knowledge to prior knowledge;
- learning that is facilitated by social interaction;
- learning that requires the use of authentic learning tasks;
- a process that leads to meaningful learning by making new learning their own by paraphrasing it into their own words and considering its meanings and implications.

There are different theorists that subscribe to the concept of constructivism. Most theorists differ with regard to the nature of knowledge and the importance of the different elements in knowledge construction. The different theories are the following:

- Empiricist-oriented constructivists or exogenous constructivism believes that knowledge is anchored in the external environment. The strong influence of the external world informed of experiences, teaching and exposure to models is acknowledged.



- Radical constructivism or endogenous constructivism, which believes that knowledge resides only in the construction of the learners. It emphasises the coordination of cognitive actions. Mental structures are created out of earlier situations, not directly from the environment. Therefore knowledge is a mirror of the external world acquired through experiences, teaching or social interaction. Knowledge develops through the cognitive activity of abstraction and follows a generally predictable sequence.
- Dialectical constructivism holds that knowledge is derived from interactions between persons and their environments. Constructions are not only invariably bound to the external world nor are they wholly the result of the workings of the mind, rather they reflect the outcomes of mental contradictions that result from one's interactions with the environment (Good & Brophy, 1995: 180; Schunk, 1996: 210).

Whatever their underlying philosophical views, all constructivists emphasise that teachers need to go beyond information transmission models and move towards knowledge construction models of teaching and learning.

Constructivism has two main assumptions, namely situated cognition and implicit theories. Situated cognition refers to the idea that thinking is situated in the physical and social contexts. Cognitive processes, including thinking and learning, should be considered as involving relations between a person and a situation, rather than an activity that solely resides in a person's mind. It also emphasises the construction of knowledge by people as they interact in situations and not as a process that only happens in the mind. Through interaction learners' knowledge will be refined and developed. Situated cognition addresses the intuitive notion that many processes interact to produce learning (Eggen & Kauchak, 1999: 280; Schunk, 1996: 211; Woolfolk, 2004: 326). The notion of situated cognition implies that learners will need to learn such things as inquiry, critical thinking and problem-solving by engaging in them under realistic conditions (see 2.3.2).

Paragraph 2.2 of this study addressed the principles of the OBE approach. It became evident that this is the reigning philosophy in South African education. It also became clear in paragraph 2.3 that the way in which history was taught in the past in South Africa and abroad, changed through the ages to accommodate a constructivist approach to learning. Therefore history lessons need to include aspects of constructivism. Learners have to be allowed to create knowledge, whilst teachers have the responsibility of providing relevant

and necessary resources. All the activities in the class have to be learner-centred in acknowledgement of the fact that learners are different and might have differing perceptions. The development of different skills is the main focus of a constructivist classroom. These include problem-solving skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills and other cognitive skills. In the context of South Africa, the critical and developmental outcomes (see 2.2) and the learning outcomes (see 2.2) remain the focus on which history lessons should be planned in order to ensure that the principles of constructivism are upheld.

### **3.2.3.3 *Neuro-physiological approach***

The neuro-physiological approach attempts to isolate the neuro-physiological correlates of such things as learning, perception, thinking and intelligence. This paradigm represents a current manifestation of a line of investigation that started with the separation of the mind and the body. One of the most influential neuro-physiological psychologists is Donald Olding Hebb (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 51).

Based on Hebb's experiences, he came up with some conclusions about intelligence. The most important conclusion is that experiences in childhood normally develop concepts modes of thought and ways of perceiving that constitutes intelligence. The conclusion was reached based on the observation that the brain does not act as a simple switchboard, as the behaviourists and the associationist had assumed. The other observation was that intelligence comes from experience and is not genetically determined. The third observation was that childhood experiences are more important in determining than adult experience. Therefore for Hebb, intelligence, perception and even emotions are learned from experience and are therefore not inherited as the nativists claim (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 53).

The other theoretical concept addresses what Hebb calls sensory deprivation. According to this theoretical concept, restricting the early sensory experience of an organism retards its perceptual, intellectual and emotional development. Curtailed sensory experience limits the organism's capacity to develop cell assemblies and phase sequences, which are the building blocks of cognitive activity. The need for the normal stimulation of a varied environment is

fundamental. Without it, mental functioning and personality deteriorate (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 395).

The final theoretical concept that Hebb postulates deals with enriched environments. Hebb acknowledges the effects of different kinds of rearing conditions on intellectual development and concluded that the enriched environments result in faster learners. The greater sensory diversity provided by the enriched environment allowed the individuals to build up a larger number of cell assemblies and more complex sequences. Once developed, these neural circuits could be utilised in new learning.

The most important implication of this view for history teaching and learning is that perceptions that learners and teachers are having can be changed by exposing them to positive stimulants (see 4.6). The impact of the environment in ensuring the success of the learning process is also emphasised. The kind of resources and activities that learners are exposed to, go a long way in influencing their perception about the learning process and history as a school subject.

### **3.3 IMPLICATIONS THAT LEARNING THEORIES HAVE FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY IN SCHOOLS**

The different behavioural and cognitive theories discussed in paragraphs 3.2.3.1 to 3.2.3.3 have a variety of implications for teachers and the creation of a powerful learning environment. The implications derived from the different theories are that they encourage the use of a learner-centred approach, the use of challenging tasks, encouraging active participation, providing learners with challenging tasks, the creation of enriching the environment, and moving from the known to the unknown. In the following paragraphs these different implications will be elaborated upon.

### **3.3.1 The role of reinforcement and motivation**

The role of reinforcement and motivation in promoting learning is emphasised especially by the behavioural theorists (see 3.2.3.1). In a history class there should be a constant use of extrinsic reinforcement. This can be in the form of high marks, acceptance, encouragement, praise and similar rewards which have positive effects on the learner. A quick response to the learners' appropriate behaviour is encouraged. Reinforcement lessens with time. The use of punishment is avoided. According to the Skinnerians, behaviour problems in schools are the result of poor educational planning, such as failing to provide self-pacing and failing to use appropriate reinforcement (Elliot, Kratochwill, Littlefield and Travers, 1996: 215). For the cognitive theorists it is important to present lessons in such a manner that learners will keep learners interested in their work.

### **3.3.2 The importance of assessment and feedback**

The importance of cueing and the provision of feedback is also encouraged during the lesson and after any assessment activity. The kind of feedback that is provided should be clear, informative and also be able to shape the desired behaviour (Eggen & Kauchak, 1999: 215). According to Thorndike the emphasis is on bringing about correct responses to certain stimuli. Incorrect responses are to be corrected rapidly so that they are not practised. Assessment is therefore important, as it provides the teachers and the learner with feedback concerning the learning process (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 432). Assessment is also in line with one of the principles of OBE which calls for expanded opportunities (see 2.2). History teachers and learners need to constantly engage in fruitful activities that are aimed at the attainment of the set learning outcomes for history (see 2.2).

### **3.3.3 The outcomes-based approach**

Behaviourists emphasise the value of achieving the set outcomes (see 3.2.3.1). It is therefore important for the teacher to know exactly what learners have to do so as to be sure that appropriate behaviours are rewarded (Elliot *et al.*, 1996: 215). In the case of the NCS,

teachers should be directed by the stipulated learning outcomes and assessment standards (see 2.2). Learners should be engaged in activities that allow for knowledge construction such as enquiry-based learning and problem-solving. These activities should be within the learners' response capabilities. Objectives should be divided into manageable units so that the teacher can apply a satisfying state of affairs when learners make appropriate responses. Skinner was more interested in starting with the responses, since they occur naturally or if they do not occur naturally, shaping them into existence (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 432). This principle is covered as the different assessment standards (DoE, 2003a: 16-23) that learners need to demonstrate their acquisition of the learning outcomes.

### **3.3.4 Learner-centred approach**

Using a learner-centred approach implies using an approach that recognises the skills, knowledge, confidence and the pace that learners have. From paragraphs 3.2.3.1 to 3.2.3.3, it has become clear that learners have different levels of cognitive development. The tasks that are given to the learners need to be appropriate to their level of cognitive development. In the words of Piaget, any information given to the learners need to allow for adaptation. Piaget also went further to provide different levels of cognitive development from the sensory motor stage to the formal operations stage. Each stage has its own characteristics and therefore requires a specific approach (see 3.4.2.1). For Vygotsky (see 3.4.3) each learner has his/her own level of development, referred to as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Each learner's ZPD needs to be considered when designing a learning environment.

A learner-centred approach allows for differentiation. Differentiation allows learners to engage in the areas of interest they like most and later providing the opportunities for the presentations in class. The constructivist approach to learning emphasises the use of the learning activities that are child-determined and discovery-oriented (see 3.2.3.2). The use of the lecture method will be minimised, as it does not show when learning has taken place. Attending to learners individually through self-pacing approaches such as teaching machines or specifically constructed workbooks is encouraged (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1993: 432-435).

### **3.3.5 The use of challenging tasks**

For learning to be effective, the activities that are given to the learners have to challenge learners to work towards appropriately higher goals that appraise the learners' cognitive strengths and weaknesses, as well as their current knowledge and skills. Failure to provide for the challenge will result in learners becoming demotivated and lacking interest in the learning process (De Corte, 1996: 37; Mayer, 2003: 13).

The importance of using challenging tasks is addressed by Piaget in the concepts adaptation, organisation, assimilation and accommodation (see 3.4.2). The information that is provided to learners need to stimulate, refine and also challenge what the learner already know. The ultimate aim of learning should be the attainment of equilibration (see 3.4.2).

According to Vygotsky, learners need to be provided with activities that are within their zone of proximal development, but should rather challenge the way learners view their knowledge (see paragraph 3.4.3). The use of social interaction is also seen as challenging learners' thinking, because their ways of thinking will be questioned and tested by other learners.

### **3.3.6 Active participation**

Learners should also be actively involved in the process as demonstrated in the trial and error principle. After learning a new skill, attempts should be made to reinforce the conceptualisation of the new skill. If many steps are supposed to be mastered, learners should be encouraged to take one step at a time. Learners should be provided with ample practice time to enable the learners to conceptualise the new behaviour and to be able to use it properly (Elliot *et al.*, 1996: 203). History teaching should be directed towards the development of different cognitive skills (see 2.2). This requires learners to be actively engaged in the process.

Active participation is valued by both the behaviourists and the cognitive theorists who view the learner as an active participant capable of controlling his/her learning activity (see 3.2.3.1; 3.2.3.2). Constructivism is solely dependent on active participation of the learner. The learner interacts with the environment in an attempt to create a new meaning or internally constructs an alternative knowledge (see 3.2.3.2). Therefore, a history class which does not allow learners' active participation will not be addressing the principles of OBE (see 2.2) and the skills that history needs to develop (see 2.3.2).

### **3.3.7 The role of association**

Stimulus response theories value the role of association in learning. Eggen and Kauchak, 1999: 215) identified association as one of the elements of the learning process. The use of comparison to enhance generalisation and discrimination is also encouraged. By so doing learners will be able to create associations and apply discrimination.

In order to make learning meaningful, it has to move from what learners already know and move to what learners do not know (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 9). This move is supporting what is entailed in Piaget's (see 3.4.2) and Vygotsky's (see 3.4.3) theories which encourage increasing learners' knowledge with every learning activity. One of the requirements of the NCS is that whatever learners do in class should be contextualised so that it becomes meaningful to them (see 2.2).

### **3.3.8 Transfer of knowledge**

The focus of the change in the way history was taught previously (see 2.3.5) has been to enable learners to acquire knowledge and skills that will be easily transferred to new situations. Transfer refers to knowledge being applied in new ways, with new content or in situations different from where it was acquired. Transfer also covers situations in which prior learning facilitates or hinders new learning.

Behavioural theorists stress that transfer is a function of identical elements or similar features between situations. Behaviour transfers to the extent that situations share common elements. Behaviourists believe that increased similarities between the real environment and the classroom environment will enhance transfer of learning (see 3.2.3.1).

Cognitivists postulate that transfer depends on how information is stored in memory. Transfer occurs when learners understand how to apply knowledge in different settings. The uses of knowledge are stored along with the knowledge itself or can be easily accessed from another memory storage location. Situations need not share common elements. Rather learners must understand the uses of knowledge and believe that the knowledge is important. Cognitivists believe that transfer of principles plays an important part (Greeno et al. 1996: 21)

History should therefore be directed towards assisting learners to be able to transfer the acquired skills and knowledge to new situations. This will enable the acquisition of the critical and developmental outcomes (see 2.2), allow the implementation of the OBE principles (see 2.1), and the value of history (see 2.3.2).

### **3.3.9 Enriched environment**

Behaviourists and cognitive theorists agree that differences among learners and the environment can affect learning. Behaviourists stress the role of the environment, especially how stimuli are arranged and presented, and how responses are reinforced. Two learner variables that behavioural theories do consider are prior reinforcement and the development status. Thus, mental limitations will hinder learning of complex skills, while physical disabilities will preclude acquisition of motor behaviours (Schunk, 1996: 12).

Cognitivists acknowledge the role of environmental factors as facilitators of learning. Teachers' explanations and demonstration of concepts serve as environmental inputs for learners. Learners' practise of skills combined with corrective feedback as needed, promotes learning. Instructional factors alone do not fully account for learners' learning. What learners



do with the information, how they attend to, rehearse, transform, code, store and retrieve it, is critically important. Cognitive theories emphasise the role of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and values (Schunk, 1996: 13).

It is therefore clear from the above that the need to create an environment that will enhance learning is valued by the different theories of learning covered in this work. The stimulus-response theories emphasise the need for the creation of a conducive environment in order to achieve learning (see 3.2.3.1.1) Eggan and Kauchak, 1999: 201) maintain that a safe and warm environment that promotes positive emotions should be provided. The kind of activities and questions that are posed should also be aimed at producing positive outcomes. This can be achieved through the use of programmed learning which propagates starting with the simple and proceed to the complex. Information should also be given in small digestible chunks to allow for proper internalisation.

Most constructivist theorists believe that learning is situated. By this assumption they believe that learning is actually located and enhanced by the kind of environment that learners are exposed to (see 3.2.3.2). This view is also shared by Hebb's neuro-physiological theory which maintains that learners in enriched environments learn faster and more effectively (see 3.2.3.3).

The other important implication that the behavioural theories have on the teaching and learning process is that it emphasises the creation of a learning situation that resembles the real world as much as possible (see 3.2.3.1). Learners need to be taught in a manner that will enable them to transfer what they have learnt in class to the environment outside the classroom. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher to create an environment that will be powerful enough (see 4.2.2) to ensure effective learning and teaching of history in the FET band.

The juxtaposed approach to the learning theories provided in the previous paragraph has served to illuminate understanding around important aspects of learning. This knowledge was used to formulate educational implications from the approaches to learning presented above. This was done by focusing on the characteristics of each approach to enable proper

conceptualisation of the concept learning and to be able to relate it to the creation of a powerful learning environment. The focus of the following paragraphs will still be on aspects related to psychology with the attention on developmental psychology. This approach is necessary, as it will assist the researcher in developing an understanding of the learners in the FET band.

### **3.4 DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY CONCEPTS THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE FET BAND LEARNER**

The South African National Qualifications Framework consists of eight qualification levels accommodated within three bands. These are the GET band (grade R – 9), the FET band (grades 10 – 12) and the higher education band (Mothata in Pretorius, 1998: 21). In the South African schooling system, learners usually begin schooling at the age of five or six years. By the time they reach grade 10, they will generally be between the ages of 15 and 20. This age group falls within the developmental phase in the human life cycle that intervenes between childhood and adulthood (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 3). This categorisation will therefore set a basis in as far as the application of theories towards this study. The focus will therefore be on the stages that follow childhood.

The word “development” as used in psychology, implies the orderly, durable changes in a learner resulting from a combination of learning, experience and maturation (Woolfolk, 2004: 24; Eggan & Kauchak, 1999: 27). Development should be seen as a continuous process rather than a discrete one with one stage forming the basis for another (Eggan & Kauchak, 1999: 34). According to Elliot *et al.* (1996: 80), development includes physical development which is an increase in size and physical abilities.

Developmental psychology is the study of human development over the entire life span, from conception to death. The developmental psychologist is particularly interested in the changes that are relatively permanent in nature, related to other important changes that fit into one or more developmental patterns. Theories of development include more than just a description of an individual’s development. It should rather be seen as an attempt to describe and explain the development of human beings on a particular view of human-kind

(Van Ede & Meyer, 1998: 41). Different areas of development include physical, cognitive, personality and social development (Meyer, 1998:41). The main focus of this study will be on cognitive development.

### **3.4.1 Cognitive development**

Developmental psychologists study the various cognitive processes and products as individuals grow older. Furthermore, they describe the characteristics of these cognitive processes and products at various stages in development. They also explain why these changes occur and identify the factors that play a role in the development of cognition (Meyer, 1998; 10).

According to Borich and Tombari (1997: 38), Gouws and Kruger (1994: 46) and Mwamwenda (2004: 84) cognitive development concerns the following:

- All that has to do with knowing, including perception, conceptualisation, insight, knowledge, imagination and intuition. It is closely allied to experience and intentionality.
- The continuous and cumulative development of the intellect, which proceeds at the individual's own tempo.
- The development of a person's mental capacity to engage in thinking, reasoning, interpretation, understanding, knowledge acquisition, remembering, organising information, analysis and problem-solving.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher will use some of the above-mentioned cognitive approaches as a starting point for the research. This conceptual framework is important, as it will create the basis for understanding the cognitive development of the FET band learner and thereby create an understanding of the kind of environment that needs to be created to cater for the needs of such learners. Different theories as postulated by Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner will be discussed in the following paragraphs to create a theoretical framework of the cognitive abilities and potential of the FET band learner.

### 3.4.2 Jean Piaget

Piaget's work was based on a variety of concepts which were aimed at illuminating his views on the way in which children developed cognitively. Some of these concepts included what he called equilibrium, disequilibrium, schema, adaptation and assimilation (Borich & Tombari, 1997: 39, Child, 2004: 64, Eggen & Kauchak, 1999: 27; Woolfolk, 2004: 30-31).

Piaget believed that learners are actively involved in the creation of knowledge, as they have the schemata upon which they create new knowledge. Active learner participation (see 2.2; 3.2.3.2; 3.3.6) is therefore the crux of Piaget's conceptualisation. He believed that learners are constantly constructing and modifying their schemata through the processes of adaptation and assimilation (Borich & Tombari, 1997: 40; Elliot *et al.*, 1996: 84). The concepts, equilibrium and disequilibrium, link perfectly with the concept of meaningful learning and the creation of connections between the new knowledge presented to the learners and what learners already know (see 3.2.3.1; 3.2.3.2).

In providing a summary of the views espoused by Piaget, Child (2004: 68) maintained that conceptual growth occurs because the child, while actively attempting to adapt to the environment, organises actions into schemata through the processes of assimilation and accommodation. For Cawelti (2003: 20), Piaget's work gave rise to the recognition that children construct knowledge through the ways in which they adapt to their environment. Lefrancois (2000: 227) maintains that, as a theory of learning, Piaget's views can be simplified and reduced to the following set of statements:

- The acquisition of knowledge is a gradual developmental process made possible through the interaction of the child and the environment.
- The sophistication of children's representation of the world is a function of their stage of development defined by the thought structures they then possess.
- Maturation, active experience, equilibration and social interaction are the forces that shape learning.

The above views by Piaget further emphasise and support the views raised in the previous paragraphs. History learners need to be provided with challenging tasks so as to allow them

to engage with them and to create new knowledge. These tasks need to be provided within an environment that will enhance knowledge construction (see 4.4.2).

#### **3.4.2.1 Piaget's four stages of cognitive development**

After examining the thinking patterns that children use from birth to adolescence, Piaget began to find consistent systems within certain broad-age ranges. The four stages of cognitive development are sensory motor stage, 0-2 years; the pre-operational stage, 2-7 years; the concrete operational stage, 7-11 years; and the formal operation stage, 11 years onwards (Child, 2004: 69; Elliot *et al.*, 1996: 86; Mwamwenda, 1996: 89).

Since the focus of this study is around the FET band learners who range from 14 years onwards, attention will be focused on the final stage of development, namely the formal operations stage. The researcher is doing this in an attempt to properly conceptualise and understand learners' cognitive traits so as to be able to design a powerful learning environment that will address the qualities/needs/traits that learners possess.

The formal operational stage is the stage where learners can examine abstract problems systematically and generalise about the results. Learners in this stage are:

- capable of dealing with concepts involving such things as weight, number, area, distance and temperature;
- capable of abstract thought, of dealing with abstract concepts and of understanding abstract relationships;
- able to concentrate their thoughts on things that have no existence except in their own minds;
- able to display a sensitive approach to or even question the rationales, intentions and behaviours of other people;
- also having an advanced spatio-temporal mobility;
- capable of engaging in propositional reasoning;
- capable of investigating, formulating hypotheses and making deductions which signify the analytical nature of the learners;
- able to use different alternative problem-solving methods

- using language as a tool to engage in the process of interacting with the human or physical resources, especially the written ones;
- able to pose hypotheses and to draw conclusions from observations; and
- able to test for logical consistencies and of identifying inconsistencies between statements (Borich & Tombari, 1997: 50; Child, 2004: 75; Child, 1996: 200; Eggan & Kauchak, 1999: 42; Elliot *et al.*, 1996: 95, 96; Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 48 – 49, 51; Mwamwenda, 2004: 91).

### **Implications for history teaching and learning**

History teachers are therefore supposed to provide learners with resources such as books and artefacts in order to enhance their understanding and to broaden their conceptual understanding. This is very important as it will help in the development of learning outcome two, which seeks to address conceptual understanding.

Provision of relevant and appropriate historical sources and resources will enable the learner to confidently engage in reasoning out his thinking. As the learners' reasoning is no longer restricted on the here and now but is capable of going beyond concrete evidence, deeper understanding provided by enriched environments is important.

History learners need to be engaged in authentic tasks that require problem-solving debates and hypothesis testing. This is made possible by the fact that most adolescents like to question and examine the social, political and religious systems. During adolescence learners are capable of engaging logically and objectively with issues. This will enable learners to be able to cope with activities that are directed at the development of most of the learning outcomes included in the history policy document (see 2.2.3).

The ability of adolescents to use propositional thought implies that they are substituting verbal statements for objects. The importance of language for formal-operational thought can hardly be overestimated. Learners have to be encouraged to express their views and knowledge verbally and/or in a written form as often as possible. The acquisition of language

also has important implications with regard to assessment, as it also encourages a variety of assessment techniques, including those that allow learners to make oral presentations.

Adolescents' ability to evaluate statements is very important, as it will help them to deal with historical sources by interpreting and analysing information in the source. Learners will also be able to identify bias and prejudice in the sources. Teachers need to expose learners to activities that will enable them to enhance this innate ability.

These cognitive potentials of the learners at this stage allow them to be able to be taught in a manner that incorporates the principles of OBE (see 2.2), the new way of teaching history as demonstrated in Britain and the USA (see 2.3.5.3), the values and the skills that history aspires to develop (see 2.3.2), and to address most of the shortcomings that history teaching had in the past (see 2.3.5.2).

In order to shed more light on the role of culture on cognitive development, the focus of the next paragraphs will be on the socio-cultural theory of Lev Vygotsky.

### **3.4.3 Lev Vygotsky**

According to Stepanova (2003: 75), Vygotsky's theory of development pronounces that development is not exhaustibly accounted for by the schema, but rather it is characterised in particular by the presence of qualitative new formations. The principle of development is seen as the principle of metamorphosis, the qualitative conversion of one form into another form, and he compares the child's development to the transformation of a caterpillar into a cocoon into a butterfly.

Lev Vygotsky presented an alternative view of cognitive development to Piaget's view. Piaget maintained that cognitive development resulted from the child's ability to use adaptation and organisation in creating new schemata. In this approach the child is constructing new knowledge in his/her mind aided by what is already known. Vygotsky, on the other hand, believes in the importance of language and social and cultural interaction in human development. He also focuses on what learners and adults (or peers) do together to

promote learning and development (Eggen and Kauchak, 1999: 47; Borich & Tombari, 1997: 52). Piaget was interested in the structural side of concept growth, while Vygotsky concentrated more on function than structure (Child, 2004: 205, Woolfolk, 2004: 49-50). According to Thurber (2003:1), Piaget focused on the mistakes that learners made, whilst Vygotsky focused on what learners could accomplish with the assistance of others.

The Vygotskian theory is based on the following assumptions as espoused by different authors [Arievitch & Stetsenko (2000: 20, 69); Borich & Tombari (1997: 54); Child (1996: 205); Leong & Bodrova (2001: 1); Woolfolk (2004: 45)]:

- Learners acquire knowledge about their culture and history from their encounters with adults, peers, books and media. This cultural knowledge includes shared beliefs, ways of viewing the world, patterns of interacting with people and language.
- Throughout their lives learners are surrounded by parents, siblings, friends, teachers and fellow learners. They communicate with one another and learn from one another.
- The more knowledgeable and skilled partner helps in enhancing learners' development through reading, explaining and conversing with them. In some cases they will demonstrate new ideas and practices.
- Therefore for Vygotsky, cognitive development is a child's increasing mastery over the culturally determined developmental tasks imposed by social agents.
- Instruction plays a key part in cognitive development by providing culturally evolved cognitive tools which once internalised by the child, mediate and advance the child's cognitive functioning.
- To interact, tools such as language, numbers or art are seen as the means by which a culture would conceptualise, organise and transmit thinking.

In supporting and emphasising the importance of language in the teaching and learning process and to the enhancement of the cognitive development, Elliot et al. (1996: 82), Eggen & Kauchak (1999:48) and Thurber (2003: 3), identify the importance of language in the following manner:

- It allows people to learn from others.
- It provides access to knowledge that others already have.
- It provides learners with cognitive tools that allow them to think about the world and to solve problems.



- Language allows learners to interact with other people and begins the process of cultural exchange.
- Language also serves a role of providing people with the means to reflect on and regulate their own thinking.
- Through language, learners are able to express themselves and also to solicit help from others.

Based on the assumptions provided above, the role of the history teacher is that of structuring the learning environment in a manner that will allow learners to engage in activities that will allow them to interact with resources, either human or physical. Learners need to be actively involved in the creation of new knowledge. History learners are to be exposed to the different forms of media that might impact positively on the learning process. As language plays an important role in the learning process, history learners need to be involved in activities that allow them to demonstrate their knowledge in either the written or spoken form. History as a literary subject expects learners to engage with sources and provide feedback on what has been learned. This will lead to the development and enhancement of the different history learning outcomes (see 2.2.3).

In describing the process of cognitive development, Piaget used the metaphor of balance (equilibrium) which is attained through the processes of assimilation and accommodation (see 3.4.2). For Vygotsky the area in which cognitive development takes place is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). In the words of Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. There is a different ZPD for each task that learners have to perform. Learners also differ in terms of their individual ZPDs (Child, 2004: 82; Eggan & Kauchak, 1999: 49). Vygotsky's pronouncement also encourages the use of individualised approach which acknowledges learners' differences and abilities to the teaching of history in the FET.

Learners are engaged in activities which, in turn, develop their ZPD. Like most of the theories, Vygotsky's work had its own followers and critics who provided a further elaborative and experimental analysis. Vygotsky himself did not specify how the particular content of instruction is related to development and, in particular, how specific qualities of the cognitive tools acquired by the child affect development. This became one of the major issues in the

Russian branch of post-Vygotskian development and instructional psychology (Eggen & Kauchak, 1999: 73).

#### **3.4.4 Jerome Bruner**

According to Child (2004: 101) and Mwamwenda (2004: 98), Jerome Bruner developed a theory of cognitive development that espoused the notion of cognitive imbalance or dissonance. What Piaget referred to as equilibration (see 3.4.2), Bruner called mismatch. Bruner referred to a mismatch when a learner is exposed to information that he cannot relate to or conceptualise. Bruner's theory is based on his belief that intellectual development is innately sequential, moving from one mode of representation to another.

The three modes of representation as conceptualised by Bruner are the enactive mode, the iconic mode and the symbolic mode (Elliot *et al.*, 1996: 406; Mwamwenda, 2004: 99; Child, 2004: 101).

- The enactive mode is characterised by being motoric or action-based. Through the enactive mode, repeated motor responses are internalised so that they become habitual.
- The iconic representation is characterised by learners being able to build up a picture of the environment, using mental images.
- The symbolic mode of representation is characterised by the use of symbols, ideas, thoughts and concepts. Learners at this stage are also able to use rules, logic and proposition.

In order to address the iconic mode of representation, history learners need to be actively involved in the learning process by interrogating the sources. This can be done by looking at the sources and touching artefacts such as weapons and utensils from the past. Role-playing and re-enacting some of the events from the past will help history learners to have understanding and to enjoy the study of history. Historical understanding will therefore be enhanced.

The iconic mode of representation supports the fact that history learners need to engage in conceptual understanding. It also affirms the fact that learners will have the potential to deal with these concepts when they are faced with them. Teachers should therefore make sure that learners' conceptual understanding is developed.

The symbolic mode of thinking requires history learners to engage in a wide range of information gathering activities, including the construction of hypotheses, the use of metaphoric and conditional propositions, problem-solving and logical reasoning. History uses much language. Teachers should therefore incorporate aspects that cover the acquisition of language, the use of language to construct an argument and develop a line of argument based on the evidence at hand. This stage of development agrees with the skills that history wants to develop within learners (see 2.3.2).

Bruner's theory was able to clarify the concept of cognitive development by categorising it into three distinct levels discussed above. This information is helpful, as it sheds light on the aspects that need to be considered in the design of a powerful learning environment that will be cognitively appropriate to the learner.

In order to be able to properly conceptualise learning from the different theories provided here, it is important to focus on the important characteristics of each approach. This exercise is important, as it will enhance the understanding and aid in the creation of a powerful learning environment.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

In Chapter 3 the focus was mainly on learning and the development theories. The main focus was on the proper conceptualisation of learning (see 3.2), as well as the approaches to learning (see 3.2.3). What emerges as being important from these paragraphs is the educational implications generated by the different learning theories, namely that learning should be learner-centred, challenging, encourage active participation, move from the known to the unknown, encourage self-regulation techniques, be collaborative and goal-directed

(see 3.3). Paragraph 3.4 also made an important contribution by clarifying aspects that learners within the FET band are capable of doing. These include their ability to think abstractly, to hypothesise, to verify results, to review their own reasoning processes, to solve problems, to engage in hypothetico-deductive thinking and to detect logical inconsistencies. It also emphasised the importance of experience with the physical world and social experience.

A powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history therefore needs to be based on what the different learning theories require as indicated in the previous paragraph. Activities and the level of history lesson presentations should also be executed in a manner that acknowledges learners' levels of cognitive development.

# **A POWERFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY**

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## **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

From the previous chapters it has become evident that in structuring a powerful learning environment, the following aspects have to be addressed: the definition of history as a subject, adherence to the OBE philosophy and enhancing the acquisition of the critical and the developmental outcomes. The learning environment also has to be influenced by the learning and development theories. The main focus of Chapter 4 will therefore be on identifying the necessary criteria, categories and assumptions that are to be taken into consideration when structuring a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET band. Particular attention will be paid to defining what a learning environment is and what its characteristics are. Other important variables that impact on the structuring of the learning environment such as learners' and teachers' perception of history will also be explored.

## **4.2 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

### **4.2.1 Effective learning**

In trying to conceptualise what a powerful learning environment is, it is important to start by defining and conceptualising what learning is in the context of the current development in the study of educational psychology. De Corte (1996: 106) and De Corte and Masui (2004: 367) conceptualise effective learning as being:

- constructive;

- self-regulated;
- active;
- cumulative;
- goal-directed;
- situated;
- collaborative; and
- an individualised process of knowledge building and meaning construction.

In defining what learning currently means, Bransford, Brown and Locking (2000: 12) and Konings, Brand-Gruwel and Van Merriënboer (2005: 645) presented what they referred to as the aims of modern education. In their postulation, modern learning has the following characteristics:

- Constructivism holds a central position.
- Learning is seen as an active process of interpreting and constructing individual knowledge.
- Learners are supposed to process information actively and to construct knowledge through experience. Active knowledge construction in context contributes to advanced thinking and learning activities.
- It is aimed at developing problem-solving skills.
- It develops among learners the ability to transfer knowledge and skills that have been learned to new situations.
- It assists learners in finding their way through most information that is available. This is done mostly through the ability to select, process and organise information.
- They should also acquire a self-directed way of learning through regulating their learning processes, being able to work without the help of others and learning in an experiential way.

De Corte (1996: 107-108) and Schelfhout, Dochy and Janssens (2004: 178) maintain that current teaching in schools is still not addressing most of the above-mentioned characteristics of effective learning. Instead, learning in schools is:

- more or less implicitly based on the idea that learning consists mainly in the transmission and rather passive absorption of knowledge;
- providing inert knowledge;

- paying too little attention to skills such as organising, communicating, cooperation, problem-solving and using information technology;
- learners work on their own and in collaboration;
- memorisation is encouraged, while learners complain about having to absorb huge amounts of information with minimal relevance for later practice; and
- decontextualised knowledge and skills are mostly acquired and exercised independently of the social and physical context from which they derive their meaning and usefulness.

These observations by De Corte (1996: 107-108) and Schelfhout, Dochy and Janssens (2004: 178) on the problems of attaining effective teaching relate well to some of the factors that informed curriculum change (2.2.2), reasons for the introduction of OBE in South Africa (2.2.3) and the problems of history teaching in South Africa and abroad (see 2.3.5.2; 2.3.5.3). The teaching and learning of history should therefore strive to attain the characteristics of effective learning as espoused above. The South African society requires experts who are capable of communicating, working in teams, sharing knowledge, working with colleagues in pursuit of a common goal and capable of effectively resolving complex problems as identified in the critical and the learning outcomes of the curriculum (see 2.2).

#### **4.2.2 Powerful learning environment**

In defining the learning environment, a variety of authors present vast but complementary definitions to the concept. Kyriacou (1991: 10) views learning environment as an environment that fosters learning. It is purposeful, task-orientated, relaxed, warm, supportive, and has a sense of order. This kind of environment will make learners feel welcomed and free to participate in class. Purkey and Novak (1996: 25) support this view by maintaining that self-concept of learners is heavily influenced by those who treat them as able, valuable and responsible.

Eggen and Kauchek (1999: 451) maintain that learning environments should be orderly and focused on learning. Fraser and Walberg (1991: x) view a learning environment as the social-psychological contexts or determinants of learning. Learners, curricula and other internal and external factors as well as the teachers are seen to be affecting the

environment. Muthukrishna (1998: 145) conceptualises the learning environment as the learning contexts that encourage the development of task orientation in learners by developing their motivation to learn. Motivated learners will easily develop a culture of working on their own, taking ownership of their work and also setting their own pace.

In relating learning environments to the aims of modern education, De Corte and Masui (2004: 365) define a powerful learning environment as the one that elicit in learners the learning processes that facilitate the acquisition of productive knowledge and competent learning and thinking skills. It has to create appropriate instructional conditions to evoke in learners learning activities and processes that facilitate the transition from the initial state towards the disposition to productive learning and problem-solving.

Noting that learning is considered effective if it is authentic, interactive, learner-centred, inclusive and continuous, powerful learning environments are therefore places where the curriculum, instruction and the learning contexts come together to challenge, engage and stimulate learners (Finnan, Schnepel & Anderson, 2003: 392).

From the above definitions of learning environment, it is evident that a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in schools will be the one that:

- allows for the thriving of constructivist views of learning (see 2.2; 3.2.3; 3.3; 3.4);
- works towards the realisation of what history is (see 2.3.1) and what it aims to achieve in terms of skills and knowledge (see 2.3.2);
- addresses the problem of history teaching and learning (2.3.5.2);
- accommodates and promotes the definition of effective learning (see 4.1);
- seeks to promote the attainment of the aims of education, and in the context of South Africa, leads to the achievement of the subject-specific learning outcomes, the critical outcomes and the developmental outcomes (see 2.2).



### **4.3 LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

In the previous chapter, a theoretical perspective of learning was provided. This was done by looking at the behavioural and cognitive perspectives of learning. It is therefore proper for one to look at the learning environment from these perspectives and to determine the perspective that will benefit the definition of a powerful learning environment as presented above.

#### **4.3.1 The behavioural/empiricist view**

Behaviourists recognise the need for learning to be active, to actively practise the bonds and associations laid out by the experts. The behaviourists emphasise the role of the environment in the learning process. To the behaviourists transfer of knowledge occurs to the extent that the situations share common elements. The increased similarities between the real environment and the classroom environment will enhance the transfer of knowledge (see 3.2.3.1).

Learning environments organised from a behavioural perspective are organised with the goal of learners acquiring a maximum accumulation of organised information and procedural knowledge. These will be used to formulate an argument in the form of a paragraph or extended writing pieces. They are designed to support interactions in which information can be efficiently transmitted to learners by teachers, textbooks and other information sources. Reading, attending to teachers' presentations, listening to the radio, watching television, films, or videotapes, are all forms of learning activity in environments that are organised to transmit information efficiently. They are also organised to support acquisition of routine skills. Correct procedures are displayed and opportunities are provided for rehearsal and practice. The assumption that learning is the acquisition of associations, supports arranging interactions in which components of information or procedures are presented systematically taking into account what learners already know and monitoring closely whether learners have acquired the intended components before going ahead (Greeno, Collins & Resnick 1996: 28).

### **Implications for history teaching and learning process**

From the preceding paragraphs behaviourism seems to be re-emphasising the important role played by the teacher during the teaching and learning process by asserting that the history teacher has to:

- design and schedule appropriate activities for learners' practice;
- choose the materials learners will use;
- recommend the use of appropriate rewards for practising and learning;
- use a variety of approaches that will accommodate different learners' interests and knowledge thus becoming learner-centred; and
- use interactive approaches allowing learners to interact with all the resources provided by the teachers to enhance specific skills that are needed in history.

#### **4.3.2 Cognitivist perspectives**

Constructivists learning environments are designed to provide learners with the opportunities to construct conceptual understandings and abilities in activities of problem-solving and reasoning. These activities of constructing understanding have two main aspects. First is the interaction with material systems and concepts in the domain such as concrete manipulation of materials that exemplifies real concepts. Second are social interactions in which learners discuss their understanding of those systems and concepts. To be successful, a learning environment must be productive in both of these aspects, as well as in the material aspects such as concrete exemplifications, symbols, demonstrations and diagrams, and social aspects (Greeno, Collins & Resnick, 1996: 28).

### **Implications for history teaching and learning process**

When applied to the teaching and learning of history, cognitive approaches require learners to:

- be exposed to the concrete materials in the form of artefacts and other objects of historical value;

- visit historical sites, heritage sites, museums and archives;
- engage in group work or working in pairs; and
- the use of parents and knowledgeable people from the community to ensure social interaction.

### **4.3.3 The situative/pragmatist perspectives**

The basic premise of the situative/pragmatist view is to encourage participation in social practices of inquiry and sense-making. Learners adapt to school learning positively or negatively. Those learners who become engaged participants learn to participate in the activities that constitute their schools' practices of learning. Learners acquire practices of learning by participating in classroom and homework activities, but the practices they acquire may not be those that are intended or valued by the teacher, the school or the society. Practices are learned as individuals participate in activities of the community. They are not uniform, but significant aspects of activity that are recognised and valued in a community. They are taught by individuals as they interact with others, learning to coordinate what they do with others. Efforts are made to develop and understand the learning environment in which learners' participation results in their learning to be more active in social processes of constructing understanding. Activities that learners can learn to participate in include formulating and evaluating questions, problem hypotheses, conjectures and explanation, proposing and evaluating evidence, examples and arguments (Greeno, Collins & Resnick, 1996: 28).

### **Implications for history teaching and learning**

The situative/pragmatic perspective is also relevant to the teaching and learning of history because:

- it encourages active learner participation in the creation of knowledge; and
- it encourages the teacher to expose learners to a variety of sources and resources that will enhance historical enquiry.

From the discussion of the three different perspectives of the learning environment, it becomes clear that all perspectives have important contributions to make towards the design of a powerful learning environment. Some elements of the behavioural perspective, such as the role played by the teacher during the learning process, are important for the creation of a powerful learning environment. The situation wherein teachers control the resources and activities towards the attainment of the expected outcomes is useful, especially for learners who do not have well-developed meta-cognitive skills.

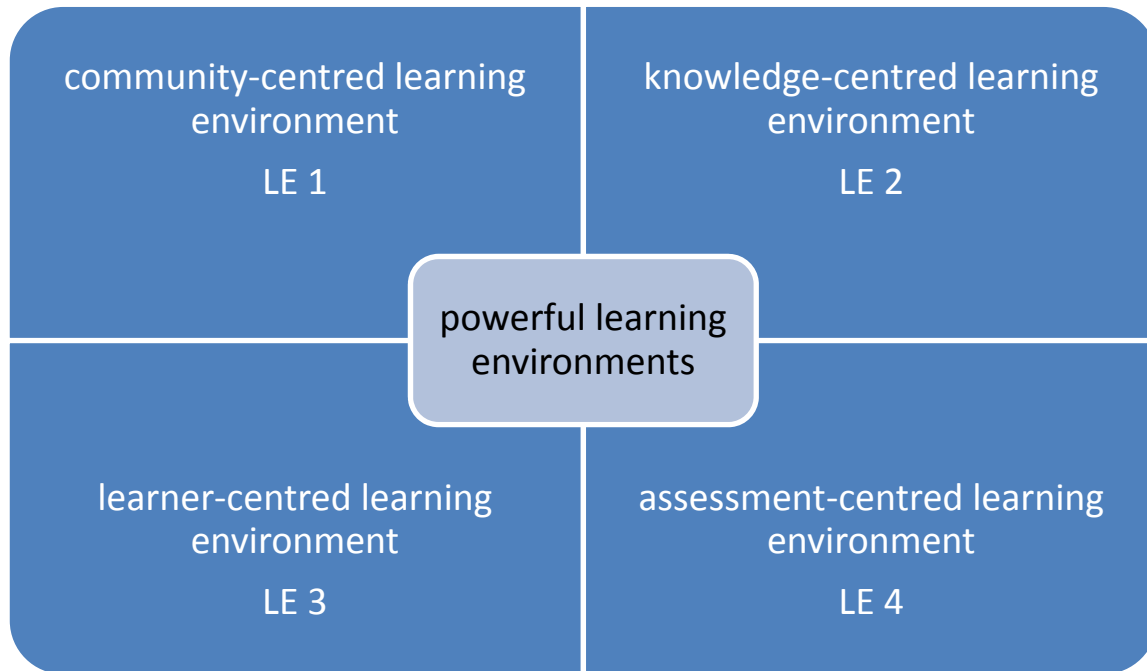
The behavioural perspective will also be useful to learners with less potential, as it will ensure the accumulation of the needed knowledge and skills that will later be used in other approaches that require independent learner activity. The behavioural approach to the classroom environment is therefore seen as the basis towards the acquisition of skills that will be applied later during the learning process. This approach might still be needed within the South African context where teachers believe that the OBE requires learners to do most of the work on their own. The current results in history indicate that most of the history learners are lacking most of the skills that are assessed by the grade 12 question papers. Teachers therefore need to play a much more important role to ensure that learners develop the required skills.

The contribution of the cognitive and the pragmatist perspectives is also significant, as they are both perpetuate approaches that will enhance the attainment of the definition of a powerful learning environment (see 4.2.2), the development of the skills (see 2.3.2), the way in which history has to be taught (see 2.3.4), and the principles of OBE (see 2.2.3). A combination of the different perspectives will therefore be useful for the teaching and learning of history in the FET.

#### **4.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF POWERFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

Every phenomenon has basic features and characteristics that comprise it. In order to design a powerful learning environment, four interconnected basic characteristics are involved. These are that a powerful learning environment has to be learner-centred, knowledge-centred, assessment-centred and community-centred (De Corte & Masui, 2004:

367; Donovan & Bransford, 2005: 12). These characteristics are presented in the figure below and subsequently discussed in the following paragraphs.



**Fig. 4.1 Characteristics of the powerful learning environments**

In the following paragraphs each of these learning environments will be discussed and related to the teaching and learning of history in the FET band.

#### **4.4.1 Learner-centred learning environment**

This feature aims to ensure that any activity in the classroom begins with a close attention to learners' ideas, knowledge, skills and attitudes, which provide the foundation on which new learning begins (Donovan & Bransford, 2005: 12). This also involves the preconceptions that learners have regarding the subject matter (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 23). Learners' expertise, age and cognitive abilities are important (Paas & Kester, 2006: 282). Konings, Brand-Gruwel and Van Merriënboer (2005: 647) view being learner-centred as aligning the instructional design with the cognitive architecture, especially the limited

processing capacity of the human mind, which is a prerequisite for being able to effectively construct own knowledge.

Learners in any class differ in how much they have been encouraged to observe, think about or talk about things. The differences may be larger still when the subject is social rather than a natural phenomenon because the experiences themselves, as well as the norms regarding reflections, expressions and interactions, differ for children from different families, communities and cultures. Being learner-centred then, involves paying attention to learners' backgrounds and cultural values as well as their abilities (Donovan & Bransford, 2005: 13). De Corte and Masui (2004: 367) view the learner-centred approach as the one that helps learners construct their own knowledge and skills building with regard to the understandings, beliefs and cultural practices that they bring to school. These cultural differences are viewed by as having an effect on learners' comfort level in working collaboratively and individually, and they are reflected in the background knowledge learners bring to the learning situation.

Teachers in a learner-centred classroom pay close attention to the individual progress of each learner and devise tasks that are appropriate. Learners are presented with manageable difficulties that are challenging enough to maintain engagement (see 3.3), but not so difficult as to lead to discouragement. Hence knowledge of learners' knowledge, skills levels and interests is important (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 23; De Corte & Masui, 2004: 367).

Konings, Brand-Gruwel and Van Merriënboer (2005: 647) maintain that learning tasks should be complex, realistic and challenging to elicit active and constructive learning processes in learners (see 3.3.5). Learners' prior knowledge and experiences need to be activated in order to build new knowledge on pre-existing knowledge (see 3.3.4).

The other most important practice of a learner-centred classroom is the promotion of self-regulation strategies. According to Schelfhout, Dochy and Janssens (2004: 179), the learning environment should create a climate and a culture that induce in learners the explicitation of and reflection on their learning activities and problem-solving strategies. It should allow for a flexible adaptation of the instructional support, especially the balance

between self-regulation and external regulation in order to take into account the individual differences. The support that is provided to learners should be gradually removed (see 3.4.3; 4.5). De Corte (1996:108) maintains that the learning environment should initiate and support constructive and self-regulated processes in all learners, including the more passive learners. Learning should evoke in learners learning activities and processes that facilitate the transition from their initial state towards the disposition to productive learning, thinking and problem-solving (see 3.4.2). This is easily enhanced by taking into account the individual's learning styles.

Some of the strategies that can be used during the history lessons to cater for the learner-centred approach include the use of model-making, story-telling, music, artefacts, oral history and making objects that have a historical value. The use of most of these strategies will be good for multicultural groups, as it will seek to appreciate different cultural contributions from the past and also caters for learners with low abilities. The above-mentioned strategies are used to acknowledge learners as individuals. Working with physical historical objects is also useful in developing skills of asking questions and using evidence. It also helps in the development of concepts such as chronology, change, continuity and progress, development and understanding of materials and design, understanding the society that developed them, and finally to promote the ideas of heritage, collection, preservation and conservation. As learners ask themselves what the material is made of, they will develop an understanding of science and technology of the set period. When learners ask questions about what the object was used for, an understanding of the culture and the way of life of the set period will be established (Brooks, Aris & Perry, 1993: 111-151; Brown, 1995:37; Tosh, 2000: 38-39).

The reference to issues of heritage in the previous paragraph is important for the teaching and learning of history in the FET, as it enhances the development of learning outcome four, which aims to have learners who are able to engage critically with issues regarding heritage. The principles of the NCS such as integration with other subjects and valuing an indigenous knowledge system will be promoted as learners debate around issues such as how objects were made and what their functions were (DoE, 2003a: 3, 22).

#### **4.4.2 Knowledge-centred learning environment**

The other important feature in the design of powerful learning environment is that learning environment needs to be knowledge-centred. In this kind of environment, attention is given to what is taught (information, subject matter), why it is taught (understanding) and how knowledge should be organised to support the development of expertise, as well as what competence or mastery looks like (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 25). Knowledge should also not be taken as a list of facts and formulas that are relevant to their domain. Instead their knowledge is organised around core concepts or big ideas that guide thinking (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 16).

Different authors of history and history teaching have also spelled out the kind of knowledge that should be addressed in history and therefore have an impact on how the subject is taught. Phillips (2004: 214) maintains that historical knowledge includes historical imagination, historical literacy and the knowledge of finding information independently and the capacity to turn this information into an exciting and challenging piece.

Learning outcome three deals with the construction and communication of knowledge (DoE, 2003a: 20). Therefore a knowledge-centred classroom will mainly be focused at assisting learners to construct appropriate knowledge. The role of the teacher will consequently be to expose learners to situations that will enable them to create knowledge. This is one of the aspects that are encouraged by the different theories of learning (see 3.3). One of the ways in which it could be done is by providing learners with a variety of resources that comes from differing perspectives. The use of a multi-perspective approach is supported by De Wet (2000: 183), because it serves to guide the learners towards critical thought, accommodating others' views, being tolerant and responsible. This is very important, especially in a multi-cultural country like South Africa, as it will address the need for critical thinking and responsible citizenship (see 2.2).

Resources are used in history so as to ensure that learning becomes an active activity where learners engage with the sources. Sources serve the purpose of developing skills of asking questions, exposing learners to concepts of chronology, change and continuity, and



giving information to the society under study. This is done to enable learners to find information, to enable them to make judgements, to share ideas and to assess their progress. In the process learners will extract, classify, sort and assess the information they receive (Husbands, Kitson & Pendry, 2003: 79; Phillips, 2004: 214). From the above it is clear that when learners work with sources, they are going to develop the skills of analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis and communication.

The sources in history can be divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are defined as first-hand sources that are contemporary or near contemporary with the period being studied. These documents were written by the participants or people at or near the time. Some of the examples of primary sources include artefacts, buildings and structures, photographs, archive film footage and earlier radio broadcast. Secondary sources on the other hand are seen as the interpretations of the past produced at a later date and written with hindsight. Some examples of these include the writings of the historians, textbooks and historical fiction (Brooks, Aris & Petty, 1993: 98-99; Tosh, 2000: 36-38; Van Eeden, 1999: 211). Most of these sources can be kept in a resource box for easy access by learners. The use of sources in history can be taken back to the time of Ranke who valued the importance of archival research and ultimately contributed the use of critical approach to the study of history (see 2.3.4).

When adopting the knowledge-centred approach, it is important to establish the content and the skills that learners should know and demonstrate (Donovan & Bransford, 2005: 12) and also on the understanding that learning involves interpretation of new knowledge guided by existing frames of reference (Jacobs, Gawe & Vakalisa 2002: 4). A knowledge-centred classroom aims at developing expertise. The teacher will therefore have to ascertain that the knowledge that learners are exposed to, is well organised and supports understanding and the belief that learning with understanding is important for the development of expertise, because it makes new learning easier, since it supports transfer (Mayer, 2003: 19). A knowledge-centred environment provides the necessary depth of the study, assessing learner understanding rather than factual memory. It incorporates the teaching of meta-cognitive strategies that further facilitate future learning (De Corte & Masui, 2004: 367).

For Donovan and Bransford (2005: 14), the need to emphasise connected knowledge that is organised around the foundational ideas of a discipline is very important. The curriculum of a subject should be determined by the most fundamental understanding that can be achieved of underlying principles that give structure to a subject. Teaching specific topics or skills without making clear their context in the broader fundamental structure of field of knowledge is uneconomical. An understanding of fundamental principles and ideas appears to be the main road to adequate transfer of training. Transfer of knowledge is seen as one of the characteristics of effective learning (see 4.2.1) and will also enable learners to be good problem-solvers (see 2.2).

A knowledge-centred environment also looks beyond engagement as the primary index of successful teaching. Learners' interest or engagement in a task is important, but does not guarantee that learners will acquire the kind of knowledge that will support new learning. There is a difference between tasks and projects that encourage hands-on doing and those that encourage doing with understanding (see 4.3.2; 4.3.3). A knowledge-centred environment should emphasise the latter (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 23).

History is an enquiry-based subject (see 2.3.1). In order to develop in the area inquiry, learners must be provided with a deep foundation of factual knowledge. Learners further need to be assisted to understand the facts and the ideas in the context of a conceptual framework, and also to organise knowledge in ways that facilitate retrieval and application. Learners with adequate factual knowledge will be able to plan the task, to notice patterns, and to generate reasonable arguments and explanations, to draw analogies to other problems. These are important skills that are anticipated as products of curriculum transformation in South Africa (see 2.2).

Knowledge-centred and learners-centred intersect when teachers take seriously the idea that learners must be supported (see 4.6) to develop expertise over time. It is not simply sufficient to provide them with expert models and expect them to learn (Donovan & Bransford, 2005: 15). This supports the role of the teacher during the learning process as mentioned in 4.3.3. History teachers require an in-depth study of the subject before developing powerful pedagogical tools. They must be familiar with the process of inquiry and the forms of discovery in the discipline as well as understand the relationship between

information and the concepts that organise information in the discipline. They also have to teach the subject in an in-depth manner by providing many examples using the same concept and providing a firm foundation of factual knowledge (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 16).

In some instances teachers might have the required knowledge without being in a position to present it properly. Different authors such as Newton (2000: 51) and Riding, Grimley, Dahraci and Banner (2003: 166) provide some guidelines on presenting knowledge in a meaningful manner. These include the following:

- Avoiding presenting incomplete explanations, as they might result in the rise of problematic gaps.
- Providing learners with adequate background knowledge.
- Avoiding the use of ambiguous, distant or indirect references.
- Presenting knowledge in a manner that activates the appropriate context.
- Presenting information in a manner that creates clear connections between events.
- Avoiding the use of high density of concepts.
- Making the presentation of knowledge more meaningful by reducing the information processing load of the learners through the use of external representation such as concise notes available for ready retrieval.
- The pace of the presentation can also be slowed down to enhance better understanding.
- Using a variety of resources in the classroom. This does not only prepare learners to be independent, but also improves the quality of the learning environment.

One of the responsibilities of history teaching is the development of concepts. Learning outcome two of history aims to develop among history learners the ability to use historical concepts in order to analyse the past (DoE, 2003a: 18). One of the strategies of enhancing the development of concepts is through what Brooks, Aris and Perry (1993: 38-39) call spiral curriculum approach. This approach entails revisiting the key concepts regularly, though often under the guise of new content. Revisiting the concepts will enhance learners' understanding and also lead them to a higher level of historical understanding.

Content knowledge has to be differentiated from pedagogical content knowledge that underlies effective teaching. The latter includes information about typical difficulties that learners encounter as they attempt to learn about a set of topics, typical paths learners must transverse in order to achieve understanding and a set of potential strategies for helping learners overcome the difficulties that they encounter. Pedagogical content knowledge is not equivalent to knowledge of a content domain plus a generic set of teaching strategies. Instead teaching strategies differ across the disciplines. Teachers need both pedagogic content knowledge and content knowledge. In the absence of pedagogical content knowledge, teachers often rely on textbook publishers for decisions about how to organise the subject for learners. They therefore rely on prescripts of absentee curriculum developers who know nothing about the particular learners in each teacher's classroom. Pedagogical knowledge is an extremely important part of what teachers need to learn to be more effective (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 44).

#### **4.4.3 Community-centred learning environment**

This feature basically deals with the management of the classroom. It requires the development of norms for the classroom, as well as the connections to the outside world that support core learning values. Learning is influenced in fundamental ways by the context in which it takes place. Every classroom operates with a set of norms/cultures explicit or implicit that influences interactions among individuals. This culture in turn mediates learning (Donovan & Bransford, 2005: 12; De Corte & Masui, 2004: 367). The norms that are established in the classroom have strong effects on achievement. These norms may support students to reveal their preconceptions about a subject matter, their questions and their progress towards understanding (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 25).

A focus on learners' thinking requires classroom norms that encourage the expression of ideas, tentative and certain, partially and fully formed, as well as risk-taking. It requires that mistakes be viewed not as revelations of inadequacy, but as helpful contributions in the search for understanding. Learning activities in a community-centred approach seek to develop a sense of community, where learners might help one another to solve problems by building on one another's knowledge, asking questions and suggesting answers (Kerry & Wilding, 2004: 54).

The above view is supported by Konings *et al.* (2005: 647) who assert that the learning environment should be problem-based, with learners involved in solving real-world problems. This helps in stimulating active knowledge construction and the acquisition of problem-solving skills. Small group collaborative work and ample opportunities for interaction, communication and cooperation should also be used (see 3.2.3.2; 4.3.2; 4.3.3). Konings *et al.* (2005: 647) credit the idea of interaction and communication to Socrates who stressed the importance of dialogue and discussion for knowledge construction. By a process of interaction and negotiation, learners have an active and constructive role in the learning process. The processes of articulation and reflection play a very important role in this regard. Articulation helps learners to spell out and make explicit their knowledge and problem-solving procedures (see 2.2; 2.3.2). Reflection on the other hand leads learners to compare their cognitive strategies and solution processes with those of experts or other learners. The importance of the cognitive apprenticeship approach (see 4.5, 4.5.1) is therefore acknowledged in this argument.

De Corte and Masui (2004: 370) and De Corte (1996: 108) maintain that learners need to engage in real life situations that have personal meaning, that offer ample opportunities for distributed learning through social interaction, and that are representative of the tasks and problems to which learners will have to apply their knowledge and skills in the future. Provision should be made for the acquisition of general learning and thinking skills embedded in the subject matter (see 2.2; 4.3.3). Schelfhout, Dochy and Janssens (2004: 179) also emphasise the need and the importance of providing learners with enough resources and learning materials.

The other important component of a community-centred learning environment is its insistence on a self-directed and an independent way of learning and thinking (see 2.2). This can be stimulated by gradually transferring the responsibilities for the learning process from the instructional agent to the learners themselves. Starting with explicit external regulation and support, the teaching process is directed to teach learners how they can obtain control over their own learning process. As they acquire self-directed learning skills, external support is gradually withdrawn. Teaching methods gradually change dependent on and complementary to the growing competencies of the learners, defined as process-oriented teaching (Konings *et al.*, 2005: 648).

Donovan and Bransford (2005: 17) maintain that effective approaches to teaching meta-cognitively rely on initial teacher modelling of the monitoring process, with a gradual shift to learners. Through asking questions of other learners, skills at monitoring understanding are honed, while through answering the questions of fellow learners, understanding of what one has communicated effectively is strengthened. To this end, classroom norms that encourage questioning and allow learners to try the role of questioner are important. Added to this is learners' ability to debate ideas, make predictions, design plans, collect and analyse data, draw conclusions, communicate their ideas and findings to others, and also create artefacts.

Haydn, Arthur and Hunt (2001: 15) explain that questioning is an important aspect of history teaching because they believe that history should insist on critical evaluation of evidence and also encourage the analysis of the problems and the communication of ideas. Bransford, Brown and Locking (2000: 25) agree with the above argument and add that learners' questioning can develop a model of creating new ideas that build on the contributions of individual members. De Corte and Masui (2004: 370) also support the use of modelling, coaching and scaffolding by teachers, peers and the educational media (see 4.5).

The most important factor that seems to be dominating the discussion about community-centred learning environments is the ability to communicate and to interact with others. Language will therefore play a very important part in enhancing community-centred learning environments. History in itself is a language loaded subject. Learners will have to interact with written sources and thereafter be able to communicate their ideas in a clear and coherent manner. The limited understanding often experienced by learners in history lessons suggests that the learning of history makes considerable linguistic demands on learners. The learning environment in which history teaching and learning takes place have therefore to empower learners to be able to communicate well, either verbally or in a written form. The use of learners' home language can be allowed, especially if learners are taught in a language other than their first language (Bourdillon, 1994: 113, Haydn, Arthur & Hunt, 1997: 59)

From the discussion about the community-centred approach it is clear that a well-designed learning environment must allow for deductive approaches, implying the study of general information to learning. It must also support both inquisitional approaches, mainly through

discovery and asking questions, and expository approaches through processing pre-structural information to learning. The role of systematic instruction and guidance is also encouraged.

#### **4.4.4 Assessment-centred learning environment**

Assessment is a central feature of both the learner-centred and knowledge-centred classroom. According to Glasgow and Hicks (2003: 89), one of the challenges in the classrooms is the absence of a direct link between instructional goals and assessment. Teachers tend to see assessment as separate from the teaching and learning processes. Assessment should therefore be used as a teaching and learning opportunity to improve learning rather solely to evaluate learners.

Assessment is defined as the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders to determine learners' progress in learning and to make judgement about a learner's performance (DoE, 2005: 5).

Assessment has the potential of making a great contribution to history teaching and learning, namely the following:

- Assessment permits the teacher to grasp learners' pre-conception, which is critical to working with and building on those notions.
- Assessment is required to monitor learners' progress in mastering concepts as well as factual information to formal thinking.
- Designing instruction that is responsive to learners' progress.
- Assessment is also aimed at ensuring ongoing assessment to make learners' thinking visible to both the teachers and the learners.
- Enhancing the teaching and learning process (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 25; De Corte & Masui, 2004: 367; Donovan & Bransford, 2005: 16; MacMillan, 2006: 7-8).

Assessment as it happens in the history classroom should be reliable, practicable, authentic, sufficient, manageable, transparent, valid, open and integrated (MacMillan, 2006: 16). Aiming to uphold these assessment principles will also enhance and strengthen other characteristics of the powerful learning environments discussed in the previous paragraphs. The principle of openness calls for learners to contribute to assessment planning and collecting evidence. Assessment should also be geared towards the promotion of the four defining principles of outcomes-based education.

The first principle, clarity of focus, requires that all assessment tasks should be clearly linked to learning outcomes and assessment standards. Second, the design down principle requires teachers to start with the purpose of assessment and what they want to find out about the learners' knowledge, skills, values or attitudes. Third, the high expectations principle challenges learners to do their best. The fourth principle, which is expanded opportunities, maintains that all learners can succeed if they are given time and more than one opportunity to show what they know and can do (MacMillan, 2006: 17; Spady, 1994: 9).

Black and MacRaild (1997: 85) view history as a source-based subject which begins with the interrogation of sources of evidence. This assertion agrees with the definition of history provided in paragraph 2.3.1. The DoE (2007: 7) took the definition further by adding that the study of history should lead to the writing of history. The implication of the definition is that, as learners are confronted with sources, they immediately have to display certain skills as they deal with them to develop understanding. Assessment in history should therefore be part of every lesson.

Kotze (2002: 76) asserts that the focus of assessment changed with the advent of outcomes based approach. Learners are no longer required to acquire knowledge alone, but are also expected to demonstrate skills and values. The emphasis has now shifted towards application, activity and development of contemporary education in South Africa. The assessment guidelines for history (DoE, 2007: 1) require history assessment to:

- develop learners' knowledge, skills and values;
- assess learners' strength and weaknesses;
- provide additional support to learners;
- revisit or revise certain sections of the curriculum; and



- motivate and encourage learners.

History assessment in FET is to take the form of continuous assessment. Continuous assessment is defined as assessment activities that are undertaken throughout the year, using various kinds of assessment forms, methods, and tools. In Grades 10 -12 continuous assessment comprises two different but related activities, informal daily assessment, and a formal programme of assessment (DoE, 2007: 2).

The daily assessment tasks are planned teaching and learning activities that take place in the subject classroom. This may be done through observations, discussions, learner-teacher conferences and informal classroom interactions. Informal assessment should be developmental, monitor learner progress, be used to provide feedback to the learners, serve as scaffolding to learners' knowledge and, most importantly, it should help to improve teaching. Self, peer and teacher assessment that promote cooperative learning, feature prominently during informal assessment. A programme of assessment will consist of tasks that will be undertaken during the school year. These tasks include projects, oral presentations, demonstrations, tests, examinations, assignments, and so forth (DoE, 2007:2; MacMillan, 2006: 11).

The need for self-evaluation and self-monitoring is encouraged, as it assists learners to regulate and manage their learning. In trying to aid learners to assess their performance, Glasgow and Hicks (2003: 100) recommend the use of error analysis. Error analysis is defined as a systematic approach for using feedback meta-cognitively to improve one's future performance. It involves obtaining strategic meta-cognitive knowledge about one's mistakes and recycling that knowledge for self-improvement. Some of the potential benefits of error analysis include giving the learners the second opportunity to master important material, developing meta-cognition and helping them in internalising their own attributions so that they recognise that their educational outcomes are a result of their own efforts, actions and strategies within their control. Error analysis also helps in improving critical thinking abilities of self-evaluation.

Assessment-centred classroom environments develop an assessment learner-friendly environment, which does not rank learners by encouraging competition. Rather assessment provides learners with the opportunity to revise and improve their thinking, helps learners

see their own progress over the course of weeks or months, and also helps teachers to identify problems that need to be remedied. The focus of assessment in history should therefore be on measuring the process of learning as much as the end results (Bransford, Brown & Locking, 2000: 24).

For De Corte and Masui (2004: 367) the assessment-centred environment provides opportunities for feedback. The benefits of providing feedback to learners when they have engaged in an activity are summarised by Glasgow and Hicks (2003: 95) when they assert that feedback:

- helps learners to assess their mastery of course material;
- assesses their use of thinking and learning strategies;
- helps connect their efforts and strategies to their academic outcomes;
- identifies errors of knowledge and understanding and the assistance with correcting those errors;
- yields relevant information for improving teachers' instruction and learners' learning; and
- helps learners develop skills of self-assessment.

Two of the most common types of questions that are frequently used in the history classes are extended writing pieces and source-based. Writing is one of the important skills that allow learners' knowledge and understanding to be assessed in history. Most of the learners find it difficult to classify information, organise information, deploy it for a specified purpose, argue and analyse, support their arguments with appropriate detail, and distinguish between general and particular. The key obstacle to learners' proficiency in extended writing is a lack of awareness that they are confronting an organisational problem. The task of the teacher is therefore to assist learners in the self-conscious organisation, deployment of information and ideas (Haydn, Arthur & Hunt, 1997: 76).

Extended writing pieces usually assess learners' ability to use accurate and adequate historical information, assess learners' ability to comprehend and to analyse, to select relevant and appropriate information, to synthesise, and to organise information and ideas into coherent pieces. Learners experiencing problems with this skill should be assisted in developing writing frames and using clever starters. This acknowledges the concept of

scaffolding as explained in paragraph 3.4.3. Learners' attainment can also be enhanced by providing them with clear instructions and processes that need to be followed (Black & Macrailld, 1997: 177; Haydn, Arthur & Hunt, 1997: 76). Learners should also be assisted on how to interrogate the different types of sources. There are specific approaches that should be used to interrogated documents, pictorial sources, artists' work and artefacts. Learners should also be assisted in understanding the different instruction words that are used in history. Words such as "analyse", "synthesise", "compare", "extract", "evaluate", "extrapolate", "contrast", "inferring" and so forth should be explained to learners (Brook, Aris & Perry, 1993: 86-87).

Assessment plays a very important role in the implementation of the NCS, because it enables the teacher to establish whether the assessment standards, learning outcomes, and the critical and developmental outcomes have been attained (see 2.2). Assessment is not seen as a separate activity, but is rather integrated into the teaching and learning process. This implies that, as teachers are attempting to ensure that learners develop the necessary knowledge (see 4.4.2), they should also be engaging in assessment. For assessment to be meaningful, it also has to be learner-centred and to use a variety of instruments and methods. The different forms of assessment used should be appropriate to the age and the developmental level of the learners in the phase (see 4.4.1). A mixture of individual, paired or group work should be used, as it also helps in the attainment of some of the critical outcomes (see 2.2). It also has to be aimed at the development and attainment of the history learning outcomes and assessment standards (see 2.2). This approach will ensure that the skills that history purports to be developing (see 2.3.2) are indeed achieved.

The focus of paragraph 4.4 was on the identification of the different factors that lead to the structuring of a powerful learning environment. It has become clear that a powerful learning environment should initiate and support constructive and self-regulated acquisition processes. The different characteristics of a powerful learning environment as presented above, illustrate their interrelatedness and interdependence. They should therefore not be taken as separate entities. Learners need to be grounded in constructive acquisition processes in authentic, real life social interaction and cooperation. In so doing, learner-centred learning environment, knowledge-centred learning environment, community-centred learning environment and assessment-centred learning environment will be addressed.

The models for the design of the powerful learning environment that agrees with the above-mentioned principles include cognitive apprenticeship. The focus of the next paragraphs will be on the cognitive apprenticeship principles that are relevant to the teaching and learning of history.

#### **4.5 COGNITIVE APPRENTICESHIP**

Learning is a natural process that often occurs with the assistance of another individual or an artefact created by another individual. The way in which we learn outside the school is often very different from the way learners are expected to learn in school. School learning is largely an individual effort, with each learner being evaluated almost exclusively on his/her own performance. School learning is typically on activities that require pure thought, memorisation and the manipulation of symbols. School learning stresses general widely used skills and theoretical principles (see 2.2).

Outside school, learning is likely to become a team effort with contributions from each member of the group. The focus is on the use of tools rather than pure thought. It involves contextualised reasoning and is mainly situation specific learning. Most of these relate to the aspects of OBE (see 2.2), the new ways of teaching and learning history (see 2.3.5.4), a cognitivist learning environment (see 4.3.2), and the situative learning environment (see 4.3.3).

A cognitive apprenticeship is based on the latter principles because it seeks to present learning in its natural form, through engaging in authentic tasks (see 4.4.3). This is the way in which learning was accomplished in ancient times. It is the way in which children were taught how to speak, to grow crops and craft cabinets by showing them and by helping them to do it. Apprenticeship was the vehicle for transmitting the knowledge required for expert practice through a symmetrical relationship of co-participation in a community of practice. For some apprenticeship refers to the asymmetrical relationship between the one who has mastered a specialisation and the one who has not (Gamble, 2002: 63).

According to Mayer (2003: 432), Reimann and Spada (1995: 178), as well as Shuell (1995: 752), the following are seen as the teaching methods that are used to ensure the implementation of cognitive apprenticeship in the class, modelling, coaching and scaffolding.

- Modelling occurs when a teacher describes his/her cognitive processes in the course of carrying out a task.
- Coaching occurs when the teacher offers hints, comments and critiques to learners who are carrying the tasks.
- Scaffolding occurs when learners work on a task that they are not yet able to successfully manage each part without some kind of support. During scaffolding the teacher performs those parts of a task that learners are not able to accomplish unaided. The teacher diagnoses when learners need support and knows when to gradually remove support.

Modelling, coaching and scaffolding are designed to help learners acquire an integrated set of processes of observation and of guided and supported practice. These methods enhance the implementation of the constructivist approach to learning (see 3.4.3).

#### **4.5.1 The application of cognitive apprenticeship principles to the teaching and learning of history in the FET band**

The NCS is grounded on the premise that learners have to achieve certain outcomes at the end of his/her schooling period (see 2.2). The attainment of these outcomes is further dissected into specific subjects' learning outcomes. In order to achieve the set outcomes, the teaching and learning process has to be directed towards the attainment of the different assessment standards identified under each learning outcome (DoE, 2003a: 16-23).

According to the NCS, everything that the teacher and learners are engaged in should lead to the attainment of the assessment standards and therefore the learning outcomes in the specific subject. The assessment standards are mainly the knowledge, skills and values that learners need to demonstrate to show that learning has taken place. Much criticism has been directed towards the approach, which even led to its review until its current form and structure (2.2.3). Most important is the view that teachers have about the OBE. According to

Moll (2002: 17) and Jansen (2001: 243), the way in which constructivism is interpreted by the DoE has created a confusion which impacts on the proper implementation of the OBE approach. This is evident in the notion that teachers have to be facilitators, while learners are to be free-ranging problem-solvers who construct their own learning pathways. The issue of cooperative interaction between the teacher and the learners as purported by both Piaget and Vygotsky in the theories (see 3.4.2; 3.4.3) is compromised. The role of the teacher has therefore to be that of an active organiser of the frameworks of knowledge, in the form of situations and construct, which will be useful to the learners. The teacher also has to provide counter-examples that compel reflection and reconsideration over hasty solutions (Moll, 2002: 18).

Some of the skills that are envisaged by the NCS and are expected from the learners are not readily available from the learners (DoE, 2003a: 5-23). These include the formulation of questions, identifying and selecting sources, extracting information, categorisation, analysis, evaluation, interpretation, comparison and contrast, examination, synthesising and, finally, communicating knowledge and understanding. Most - if not all of these skills - have also been identified as the processes that should be involved in the teaching and learning of history in schools (see 2.3.1). Therefore the focus of the teaching and learning process in history in the FET should be focused on those skills.

The two main kinds of activities used in history are the use of source-based activities and the extended writing pieces. The cognitive apprenticeship procedure in the teaching and learning of history will begin with learners engaging in an authentic and challenging task (see 3.3.5; 4.2.2; 4.3.3) as far as they can accomplish in their present state of mind. Teachers have to use artefacts and other primary sources so as to cater for a variety of abilities (see 4.4.1; 4.4.2). The teacher will then provide support to learners by modelling the desired performance. During this process the teacher will be verbalising his/her cognitive processes as he/she carries out the task. The teacher is able to show learners how skills should be executed (Mayer, 2003: 432). This will serve as an advanced organiser for learners' attempt to execute a complex task. A conceptual model will provide an interpretative structure of making sense of the feedback, hints and corrections that will be provided in the process.

Learners cannot be expected to analyse if the teacher was not able to take them through the process. To encourage analysis of evidence, learners must be shown how to weigh up the sources which may contradict one another. Gaps in evidence need to be acknowledged and not ignored. Learners' responses need to be expressed in appropriate terminology and be based on historical insight, not simply on an emotion. This will enable the attainment of the different skills that history is aiming to develop (see 2.3.2), the way in which history is supposed to be taught (see 2.3.5.4). The different learning outcomes (LO 1, LO 2 and LO 3) of history will also be addressed in the process.

As learners engage in the activity, the teacher has to constantly provide coaching in the form of hints, questioning, feedback, further modelling, constant reminders and motivation (Schelfhout, Dochy & Janssens, 2004: 180).

Questions used by the teacher should be varied, address different levels and be in line with the different taxonomies of questions (Husbands, Kiston & Pendry, 2003: 64). This social interaction between the teacher and the learner, or among the learners themselves, is very important. The entire process that the learner goes through in analysing should be scrutinised and dissected so as to address problems before they become internalised. Feedback in this case will be provided by the teacher or by other learners (3.3.2; 3.4.3; 4.3.3; 4.4.4). In the same breath the teacher should also allow enough room for a real sense of exploration and problem-solving. Learners should also reflect on their performance and compare it with that of others. Coaching involves the most instructional work of any of the cognitive apprenticeship methods. Cooperative learning and small group learning methods can help to provide learning support for individual performance (3.4.3; 4.2.1).

Conceptual scaffolding is provided as the teacher and the learner work together on the task with the explicit understanding that the learner is to assume as much of the task as possible and the teacher is to gradually fade the external support as the learner gains proficiency (Mayer, 2003: 431). This collaborative interaction between the teacher and the learner is important (4.4.3; 4.3.3; 4.3.1).

One of the strategies that can be used by the teachers is communication. The importance of constant communication between the teacher and the learners and among learners themselves has been emphasised by the different authors. According to Haydn, Arthur and Hunt (1997: 33), learners need to develop language and information technology skills so as to enhance their communication skills. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher to provide situations that will enhance these skills. Learners need to be assisted to become better communicators so as to ensure the attainment of the set developmental outcomes (see 2.2) and the assessment standards (DoE, 2003a: 13).

Learners should be provided with the opportunity to articulate their knowledge, understanding and reasoning of the material being learned. This will make them active participants in the learning process (4.4.2; 4.3.3; 3.3.6). Through articulation, learners will be able to think about their actions and give reasons for their decisions and strategies. Learners will therefore be making their tacit knowledge more explicit through the think aloud protocol (Shuell, 1995: 752). The aspect of feedback and assessment will therefore be addressed in this process (see 4.4.4), while learners will also be engaged in the process of knowledge construction (see 4.4.2). This relates generally to the aspects of communication mentioned in the previous paragraph, but deals more specifically with how learners present their thoughts and ideas. In addition to the spoken language, learners' articulation will mainly be in the form of written language. Learning outcome three deals with learners' ability to construct and to communicate historical knowledge and understanding (DoE, 2003a: 13).

According to Haydn, Arthur and Hunt (1997: 76), writing is one of the most important and at the same time the least popular among learners. Many learners find it difficult to classify and to organise information, to use it for a specified purpose, to argue and to analyse, to support their arguments with appropriate detail, and to distinguish between the general and the specific. It is the responsibility of the teacher to assist learners in improving their writing skills so as to enable them to articulate their ideas well and with confidence. The teacher has to assist learners to be able to differentiate the different forms of writing applicable to history such as the descriptive, the expressive, imaginative, analytical, evaluative and synthesis writing.



Some of the strategies that could be used to improve learners' writing abilities can be summarised as gathering information, shaping ideas and producing an account. In the beginning the task should be clarified and the relevant data should be identified. Data will then have to be interpreted, refined and edited. Finally learners have to arrive at a conclusion based on evidence to justify the judgements. The use of the writing frame is also encouraged, as it allows learners to be able to structure their line of argument (Husbands, Kitson & Pendry, 2003: 53). Learners should also be encouraged to have structured essays that have introductions, bodies and conclusions. They should further be assisted to write proper paragraphs before they can be expected to write an essay ( Shuell, 1995: 752).

Another approach which is aimed at improving learners' writing abilities is presented by Mayer (2003: 450). In this approach the teacher has to frequently model their thinking processes. The teacher produces a thinking aloud description of how he/she decided on the goal of the essay, how he/she figured out ways to elaborate and improve on what he/she had. Group discussions are held to critique the process. In the process the teacher provides direct instruction on how to write reflectively, using the strategies of expert writers. The role of the teacher in assisting learners to develop the required skills is therefore emphasised as it was done by the behavioural theorists (see 4.3.1). Later learners are asked to do the same while standing in front of the group and still later to engage in writing the essay individually. According to Reimann and Spada (1995: 172), important principles here include the fact that novice writers are taken along through guided participation and social interaction, in a supportive structuring of novices' efforts and transfer of responsibility for handling skills of novices. Learners serve as resources to another by exploring the new domain, helping and challenging one another (see 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.2.1).

The other important step in cognitive apprenticeship is the process of reflection. In this process learners need to be given the opportunity to reflect on their understanding and reasoning in the domain being studied by, among others, comparing their problem-solving processes with those of an expert or another learner through collaborative interactions in groups or pairs and, ultimately, their own cognitive model of expertise in the subject matter area (Husbands,Kitson & Pendry, 2003: 79).

Reflection will also foster the induction of more general and abstract concepts/schema. This has been identified as the important abilities that learners in the FET band possess and that have to be utilised or stimulated (see 3.4.2.1; 3.4.4). In addition, the communication exchange provides the opportunity for the learner to get to know the concepts, strategies, beliefs of the experts and also other learners that are advanced in some respect. The levels of reflection can vary from imitation, replay, abstracted replay and spatial reflection. Reflection and articulation will help provide meaning to activities that might otherwise be more rote and procedural. Learners will also be empowered to focus on expert problem-solving and gain conscious access to and control of their own problem-solving strategies (Reimann & Spada, 1995:178; Shuell, 1995: 752). Reflection will also lead to the development of self-regulation techniques that is an important characteristic of effective learning and one of the aims of education (see 4.2.1), as well as one of the objectives of the learner-centred learning environment (see 4.4.1).

The other important step is that of exploration. This step is aimed at encouraging learner autonomy, not only in carrying out expert problem-solving processes, but also in defining or formulating the problems to be solved. Learners are encouraged to come up with different strategies, hypotheses and to observe their efforts. According to Piaget and Bruner, learners in the FET band have the potential to engage in these activities (see 3.4.2.1; 3.4.4). Exploration will also enable the setting of achievable goals and to manage the pursuit of these goals. This will enhance the learners' meta-cognitive knowledge and transfer (see 3.3.8; 4.2.1).

Sequencing of instruction is another step in the cognitive apprenticeship approach. In this step it is expected that the learning experience should be sequenced with regard to increasing complexity and diversity, so that more and more concepts and skills involved in expert performance are required by the instructional task. The use of diversified skills and strategies during the instructional task will enable learners to tell the conditions under which the skills and strategies do and do not work (De Corte, 1996: 39; Shuell, 1995: 752).

## 4.6 TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS

In addition to the characteristics of powerful learning environments presented in the previous paragraph, perceptions that teachers and learners have about the learning environment are important. These perceptions have an influence on whether the learning environment will have an influence on whether the learning environment will have a positive or a negative influence on the learning process. In the following paragraphs attention will be focused on the perceptions that learners and teachers have about the learning environment and the impact that they make on the creation of a powerful learning environment.

Conceptions are inherent in human beings, because they attach meanings to their surrounding world. Conceptions can be seen as lenses through which people perceive and interpret the world. In addition, conceptions influence the way in which people act and react to their environment, which is in accordance with their perceptions. Konings, Brand-Gruwel and Merrienboer (2005: 649) believe that humans have a tendency to develop individual theories as a frame of reference for describing, categorising, explaining and anticipating everyday phenomena and the literature on learning conceptions, epistemological beliefs and goal orientations.

Louw and Edwards (1993: 117) define perception as the processes that accompany the stimulation of one or more sense organs and which allow one to receive and process information from the environment. It refers to those processes through which we give meaning to the information our senses receive from the environment. It involves selecting, organisation and interpretation of stimuli. When people see something, they do not only use their eyes but also memory, recognition and decision-making processes. Therefore perception without the brain is seen as impossible and hence perception is seen as mainly a cognitive process (Louw & Edwards, 1993: 117)

Purkey and Novak (1996: 23) view perceptions as the result of myriad encounters with the world, particularly those with significant others. People develop certain fundamental perceptions that serve as organising filters for making sense of the world. Perceptions are important because they serve as a reference point for behaviour. They influence the

memories people use to understand the present and to anticipate the future. Perceptions also affect the possibilities that people can imagine and the goals that they are willing to work for.

Konings *et al.* (2005: 656) define perceptions as the result of the interaction of the learner with his/her learning related characteristics and the learning environment. Purkey and Novak (1996: 22) further define perception as the differentiation a person is able to make in his/her personal world of experience. Each person's perceptual field can be continually enriched, expanded and modified. They went further to maintain that behaviour of people is based on perception. The perceptual tradition seeks to explain why people do the things they do by postulating that human behaviour is determined by and pertinent to the phenomenal field of experience of the person at the moment of acting. In other words, each individual behaves according to how the world appears at that instant. From the presented definitions it is clear that perception is an internal and personal process that is influenced by the information that is gathered from the environment.

The other important aspect of perception is that it is not always an accurate representation of reality. Whatever is considered to be a reality is itself a product of our senses. Perceptions can be learned and can therefore be manipulated (Louw & Edwards, 1993: 117; Newton, 2000: 141). Bouffard and Vezeau (2003: 172) view perception as not innate, but rather the result of development and construction through learning experiences over time. This therefore implies that learners' and teachers' perceptions can be manipulated towards embracing the principles of a powerful learning environment.

In the preceding chapters of this work, the influence of perception in the teaching and learning of history was highlighted. The perceptions that teachers, learners and the public had about history such as, perceptions about the history's job related value, perceptions about the relationship between history and technology and, history losing battle against commerce and science fields (see 1.1; 2.3.5.2) were identified.

Osborne, Simon & Collins (2003: 1054) maintain that the first stumbling block for research into attitude/perception towards a subject is that such attitudes/perceptions do not consist of a single unitary construct, but rather consist of a large number of subcontracts all of which contribute in varying ways towards an individual's attitude towards the subject. The following subcontracts were therefore identified as some that can be focused upon:

- Attitude towards the subject.
- Anxiety towards the subject.
- Value of the subject.
- Self-esteem at the subject.
- Motivation and enjoyment.
- Parents' attitude for the subject.
- Nature of the classroom environment.
- Achievement in the subject.
- Fear of failure.

In clarifying aspects of the learning environments, Newton (2000: 128) uses the concept of total mental environment. This consists of learners', teachers' and situation characteristics. While these bear directly upon the learning, the effect is also mediated by the participants' perceptions of them. In the previous paragraphs attention was given to the situation factors. The focus of the following paragraphs will be to address the perceptions that learners and teachers have and how perceptions impact on the structuring of a powerful learning environment.

#### **4.6.1 Teachers' perceptions about teaching and learning**

For teachers, a considerable part of their surrounding world is the teaching and learning context and they have formed a specific conception of learning and teaching. Teachers perceive the learning environment through the lenses of their own conceptions and will act and react accordingly. In the following paragraphs different ways in which teachers conceptualise their role will be presented.

In order to understand the different perceptions about teaching, the works of Piotr Gal'perin and Kember will subsequently be presented and analysed.

#### **4.6.1.1 Piotr Gal'perin conceptualisation of teaching**

Gal'perin conceptualised teaching into three perspectives, namely traditional instruction perspective, systemic-empirical perspective, and systemic theoretical perspective (Arievitch & Stetsenko, 2000: 70).

##### **Traditional instruction perspective**

This perspective reveals the following characteristics:

- It is characterised by the empirical character of teaching and learning, which is predominately teacher-centred.
- It is based on the teachers' presentation of general rules of problem-solving, the explanation of those rules using a typical example, the learners' memorisation of those rules, and finally practice in solving typical problems.
- The deficit of tools and conditions for adequate orientation in the task, negatively affects the quality of the learners' actions. These actions often remain unstable, poorly generalised, limited to familiar tasks with no or little transfer, and are dependent on incidental variations in the instructional situation. This inevitably results in large interindividual differences in learners' performance.
- Genuine concept-formation is practically impossible to trace their sources and their relation to instruction (Arievitch & Stetsenko, 2000: 75).

Most of the characteristics of the traditional instruction perspective dominated the teaching of history through the ages until recently (see 2.3.5) and led to the curriculum transformation in South Africa and abroad (see 2.2.2; 2.3.5).

### **Systematic-empirical instruction**

Systematic-empirical instruction is another perspective of teaching espoused by Gal'perin. Some its common features include the following:

- It is the presentation of all the necessary conditions and criteria for effective performance to learners as an interrelated meaningful system from the very beginning.
- Learners are provided with all the necessary conditions to adequately perform the task. The child is therefore enabled to use the system in its fullness, from the very beginning, as a new cognitive tool providing an orientation basis to handle certain classes of tasks within a given subject domain.
- Learners engage with the activities in order to solve a set of tasks and problems. The application undergoes a series of transformations and is finally internalised, thus becoming a part of the child's cognitive functioning.
- It leads to transfer of knowledge.
- It provides the basis for the learners' reflective performance, guiding transformation of the learners' action relevant to the task from its material form into an internalised mental form (Arievitch & Stetsenko, 2000: 75).

Learners are therefore focusing on the attainment of the set outcomes (see 2.2). Aspects of cognitive apprenticeship (see 4.5.1) are covered in this perspective.

### **Systematic-theoretical perspective**

The third perspective of teaching is referred to as the systematic-theoretical instruction. The essence of this view can be explained as follows:

- Providing learners with the means of theoretical generalisation which allows them to orient themselves in a systemic way in the studied subject.
- Allowing learners to distinguish essential characteristics of different objects and phenomena to form theoretical concepts on the basis and use them as cognitive tools in further problem-solving.

- Allowing learners to discriminate among different properties of the object or phenomena, establishing the basic unit of analysis of a particular property and revealing to the learner the general rules of how those units are combined into concrete phenomena.
- Encouraging learners to engage in active exploration of the studied subject under guidance of the teacher.
- Making an extensive use of symbolic and graphic models to represent basic relations between different properties of the object and the order of their systemic analysis (Arievitch & Stetsenko, 2000: 75).

The third perspective will ensure that the different aspects of modern education and effective learning (see 4.2.1) promote the principles of constructivism (see 3.4.3; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.2.2; 4.4.2). Teachers with the second perspective acknowledge the role that teachers have to play in arranging the learning environment to enable learners to acquire the relevant skills and outcomes. The influence of the first perspective should therefore not dominate the perception that teachers have about their role. Teachers should rather have a combination of the second and the third perspectives. This approach will enhance the principles and the requirements of the NCS. Through these two teachers will still have a role to play in assisting learners to develop the required learning outcomes and assessment standards.

#### **4.6.1.2 Kember's conceptualisation of teachers' perceptions**

According to Kember's conceptualisation of teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning is postulated as saying that all perceptions about teaching can be placed on a continuum between a teacher-centred/content-oriented pole, and a learner-centred/learning-oriented pole linked by an intermediate conception (Konings et al., 2005: 649)

Kember's synthetic model contains five conceptions of teaching:

- First, teaching is seen as presenting information to learners who only have to passively receive the information. The focus is on the teacher and his/her knowledge which is transmitted by lecturing.



- Second, teaching is perceived as the transmission of structured knowledge. In this instance the focus is still on the transmission of knowledge, but there is more attention to the learner. The information is presented in such a manner that it affords learners the opportunity to receive it (Konings et al. 2005: 649)

The first and the second views about teaching presented here are what led to the curriculum change in South Africa and abroad (see 2.2) and also with the way history was taught through the ages (see 2.3.5).

- Third, teaching is perceived as the intermediate conception and forms the transition between teacher-centred/content-oriented orientation, and the learner-centred/learning-oriented orientation. Interaction is seen as important because of the recognition that learners' understanding and discovery are essential.
- Fourth, teaching is perceived as facilitating understanding. Teachers with the learner-centred conception see teaching as a process of helping learners to learn and develop deep understanding. Desirable learning outcomes are no longer limited to the intake of information, but include understanding and the ability to apply the acquired knowledge.
- Last, teaching is perceived as a process that has to enhance conceptual change and intellectual development. Here the learning environment focuses on learners' prior knowledge and tries to change pre-existing conceptions by arguing, applying ideas and focusing on conflict between conceptions in a sympathetic and supportive environment (Konings et al. 2005: 649).

Teaching that is perceived as having to promote interaction, enhance understanding and facilitate conceptual change will then add value in the structuring of a powerful teaching and learning environment (see 4.2.1; 4.2.2).

Other authors such as Muthukrishna (1998: 149) believe that teachers should perceive their role as facilitators who are focused on fostering thinking and helping learners to accept personal responsibilities through prompting and explaining. Teachers should also guide and sustain communication in groups and with individuals. Perceiving teachers' roles as facilitators enables teachers to encapsulate constructivist approaches (see 2.2; 3.4.2; 3.4.3; 4.3.2; 4.3.3) and to enhance the attainment of the effective learning (see 4.2.1), and to teach history in a manner that shows a change in approach (2.3.5).

Purkey and Novak (1996: 40) believe that the way in which teachers perceive themselves, others and education is important. A positive perception by teachers is therefore needed. Positive perceptions mean viewing learners as able, valuable and responsible, as well as seeing oneself and education as essentially valuable ways. When teachers have positive views of learners' abilities, learners are more likely to respond in positive ways. Viewing learners as valuable contribute to their mental health.

Haydn, James and Hunt (1997:1) maintain that a teacher has an impact on how learners experience the learning of history. In some instances, school history can be seen as desiccating and stultifying subject of dubious relevance and little clear purpose. In others it can seem inspirational and immensely rewarding. This depends on how the history teacher perceives himself. The way in which learning is the learning process also plays an important part in how the history classes are approached. Brooks, Aris and Perry (1993: 1-2) maintain a history teacher should perceive himself as a person who should elicit clearly the moral messages to be gleaned from studying the lives of the great and the good. The history teacher should also see himself as a publicist and a salesperson for the subject.

Kapp (1994:3) and Van Eeden (1999:171) identify politics as one of the factors that have contributed to a lack of interest in history, as history was overtly politicised to the extent that certain race groups became alienated. History teachers consciously or unconsciously contributed to this state. Van Eeden (1999: 171) further maintains that history should not be used as a gateway to act as a political device for defusing conflict.

The influence of race and ethnicity in the teaching of history is also recognised by Twala (2005: 19) as compromising the process that takes place between the historian and that part of the past that remains, namely the document, relics and other sources of information that have to be interpreted. It is therefore important for history teachers to separate history teaching from politics, racial orientation and ethnic background, as these have a tendency of introducing subjectivity and bias (Timmins, Vernon & Kinealy, 2005: 16). The values of such an approach have been identified as promoting academic excellence, balance and justice, acknowledging the existence of multi-ethnic societies, promoting mutual understanding, confidence and tolerance, exposing learners to immense complexity of societies, and also to

broaden learners' outlook on the reality and aims of myths and stereotyping (Van Eeden, 1999: 171).

Twala (2005: 19) is also clear on the role that the history teacher is supposed to play in teaching history in the current dispensation. History classrooms should be places where the initial burden of shaping transformation emerges and where history teachers have a key role to play in enabling the new South Africa to deal with its past in a positive and appropriate way.

From the different paragraphs the following points can therefore be identified as the ones that can be used in assessing the perception that teachers have towards the teaching of history:

- Teachers' ability to communicate clearly about their expectations in class.
- Teachers ability to set clear goals for learning.
- Teachers ability to help learners to contextualise content.
- The extent to which learners are allowed to have inputs in goal and agenda setting for the lessons.
- The ability of the teacher to create a supportive social context.
- The ability to use multiple approaches during lessons.
- The ability to create an enabling environment for learners.
- The ability to display both pedagogic and content knowledge.
- The extent to which the teacher believe in effective learning principles.
- The extent to which the teacher sees his/her role as that of a facilitator and organiser of the teaching and learning environment.
- The ability to view learners as able, valuable and responsible.

#### 4.6.2 Learners' perceptions of learning

The other important variable that impacts on the learning environment is the perception that learners have about the learning environment. According to Konings *et al.* (2005: 650), in practice it is not the concrete learning environment that influences the learning process. Learners' perceptions of the learning environment are, however, important. It is the perceptions of the learning environment that affect learners' approaches to learning and the quality of the learning outcomes. Learners' perceptions of the learning environment determine their subsequent learning and learning outcomes. The characteristics of the learning environment by themselves do not have a direct influence on learners' learning. This view is supported by Lyuten, Lowyck and Tuerlinckx (2001: 204) and Slaats, Lodewijks and Van der Sanden (1999: 476), who maintain that the learning results are not a mere function of the instructional environment, since each learner operates as a filter for the possible influence of the environment. For this reason learners' perceptions should have a central position when structuring powerful learning environments.

Newton (2000: 128) maintains that what learners do about their learning depends on many factors and their interaction. The concept of learners' prior knowledge should be seen to be including far more than just subject-related matter (see 4.4.1). Among other things, learners' development and conceptions or misconceptions about learning objectives is worthwhile. The other important point to consider is how learners perceive the process of learning. It is important for learners to perceive learning as a process which has to enhance understanding through constructivist approaches, is self-regulated, and involves and promotes social interactions (see 4.2.1). Based on these perspectives, learners' perceptions can therefore be conceptualised as the interaction of the learner with his/her learning-related characteristics and the learning environment.

In trying to enhance proper understanding of learners' perception, especially of a constructivist learning environment, Konings *et al.* (2005: 656) provides the following argument:

1. Learners' perceptions of a learning environment can be seen as the result of the interaction between the learners with the related learning characteristics and the learning environment. These conceptions play a central role in perceiving and interpreting the environment and the way of reacting to it. Learners have conceptions about the way in which instructional features may help or hinder them to learn or to realise instructional or learning tasks. This meta-cognitive instructional knowledge is learners' knowledge about learning, conception about the self with respect to learning, motivational strategies, control strategies and conceptions about cognitive strategies, influencing learners' perceptions.

2. Regulation of the learning process is also encouraged. In this context regulation includes meta-cognitive strategies such as planning, orienting, steering and testing, and effort management strategies that reflect learners' persistence of difficult and boring tasks and working diligently. Learners differ in their locus of control, external regulation or self-regulation. Externally regulated learners largely depend on the teacher and the learning environment for the regulation of their learning processes. The environment determines what must be learned and how it must be done. On the contrary, self-regulated learners take the initiative for learning in their own hands. They are able to regulate the learning process themselves and are even actively involved in the choice of the learning content. Self-regulation is one of the aims of modern education and a characteristic of effective learning (see 4.2.1).

3. The use of learners' cognitive processing strategies is acknowledged. This maintains that learners differ in their cognitive processing activities and describes the following important activities:

- Learners' thinking activities can be directed to, relating to and structuring the learning materials. This can be done by linking new knowledge to prior knowledge and by structuring parts of knowledge into organisational wholes.
- Other learners engage in critical processing aspects. This is achieved by examining facts, arguments and conclusions, rather than just accepting any information that is presented.
- Other learners use a memorisation and rehearsing strategy. This strategy does not perform deep processing activities as in the former strategies. Learners just memorise and rehearse the subject matter in order to be able to reproduce it.

- Other learners use a concrete strategy in an effort to form tangible images of the subject matter by thinking of examples and relating them to their personal experiences (Konings et al., 2005: 656).

Taken together, these cognitive processing strategies are intended to influence how learners perceive a powerful learning environment. The perception of a learning environment is shown to be central in determining the effects of a learning environment on learners' learning. The expectations that learners have about the environment are also important. It is based on the information they receive about main activities and the goal of the learning environment. Therefore, relating the features of a learning environment with learners' own characteristics (see 4.4.1) will convince them that they can or cannot successfully exercise the learning behaviour that is required to reach the goals of the learning environment.

Konings et al. (2005:655) maintain that designers and teachers do not have a direct influence on learners' learning. Ellen and Lowyck (1999: 205) add that learners do not react to the objective or nominal instructional stimuli as constructed by the designer, but through perception they transform the nominal environmental stimuli. It is learners' perception of the learning environment that influences how a learner does not necessarily learn the context in itself. Therefore, learners' perceptions of a learning environment do influence their learning and the quality of learning outcomes, as well as whether the goals of a powerful learning environment will be reached or not. In order to create optimal congruence between designers and teachers, and learners on the other hand, learners' perceptions should serve as input or feedback for both teachers and designers. If the differences are identified, the system should be adopted by moving closer to the users' needs. The users can also bridge the gap by creating plans of action, sequences and interpretations, moving their goals and intentions closer to the description of the system. In order to optimise powerful learning environments, a reciprocal relationship among designers, teachers and learners is supposed to be enhanced.

The above views are supported by Schelfhout, Dochy and Janssens (2004: 179), who maintain that learners have to initiate, direct and regulate the aimed-at-learning processes as much as possible by themselves. This can be in activating a learner-controlled learning environment. Learners, on the other hand, need coaching, and sometimes even external

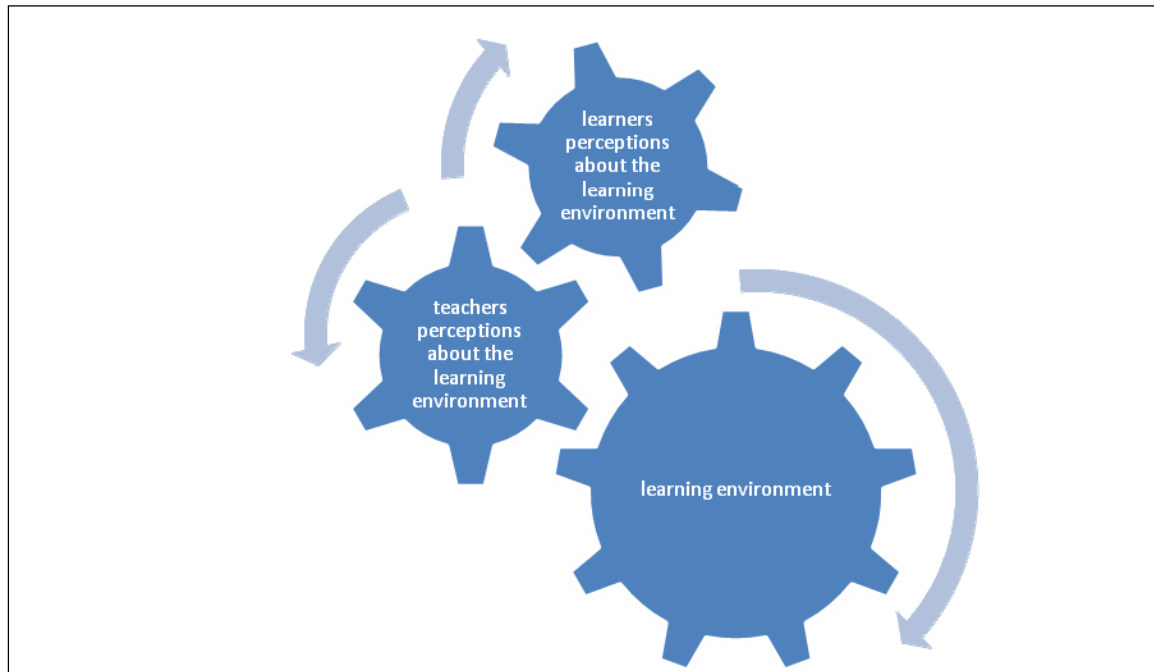
steering in these learning processes. A certain degree of teacher control will have to be built into the learning environment.

From the different paragraphs the following points can therefore be identified as the ones that can be used in assessing the perception that learners have towards the teaching of history:

- Reasons for choosing history as a subject.
- The extent to which learners accept and develop self-regulation (actively involved in choosing tasks, takes initiatives and regulate the learning environment).
- The extent to which learners demonstrate understanding of the role of meta-cognition (working diligently and showing persistence).
- The extent to which learners are motivated, demonstrate self-directedness, take responsibility for their actions and show self-understanding.
- The extent to which learners display positive learning strategies (linking new knowledge to what is already known, engage in critical thinking, relating what is learnt to the real world).
- Learners' demonstration of self-knowledge (knowledge about own learning strategy, potential and limitations).
- The extent of positive expectation about the environment and the teacher.
- The extent to which the environment is experienced as warm, relaxed and non-intimidating.
- The extent to which the teacher is seen as approachable, sympathetic and able to listen.
- The extent to which learners embrace the characteristics of effective learning (active, collaborative, constructive, self-regulated, goal-directed, situated, cumulative and individualised).
- The extent to which learners' believe in the value of the subject.

Learners are usually neglected in the design of the learning environment. Learners and teachers do not always experience a learning environment in the way it was intended by the designers. The way in which learners perceive the learning environment determines how much they will learn and how effective the learning environment will be. Learners' perception and interpretation of a learning environment is influenced by their conception about learning, tasks and environment. Therefore it is proposed that teachers and learners be involved in

the design of the learning environment (Konings *et al.*, 2005: 645), as has an impact on the kind of environment that will be created. The involvement of teachers and learners in the creation of the learning environment will also contribute in helping to shape the perception that they have about the learning environment.



**Figure 4.2. The influence of perception in the structuring of powerful learning environments**

In figure 4.2 a diagrammatic representation of the mutual influence of the teachers' and learners' perception on the structuring of the learning environment and on how the learning environment in turn influences teachers' and learners' perception is provided. Learners and teachers also influences each other perception as it was identified earlier that if teachers perceive their role in a way that seeks to make learners feel unwelcomed, learners will have a negative perception about history lessons. From this figure it is evident that the process of forming perception is a continuous one and therefore supports the notion that perceptions can be influenced (see 4.6). History teaching and learning should therefore constantly strive to ensure that teachers and learners have positive perception about history as this will add to the quality of the learning environment that will be created.



## 4.7 CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study is to identify the criteria, categories and assumptions that need to be considered in the structuring of a powerful teaching and learning environment for the learning of history in the FET. Chapter 4 focused on the identification of these aspects by conceptualising effective learning because it has an impact on the structuring of a powerful learning environment. Emphasis was also put on the identification of the different characteristics of a powerful learning environment. It was therefore identified that powerful learning environments have to be knowledge-centred, learner-centred, community-centred and assessment-centred.

Aspects that were identified led to the adoption of the cognitive apprenticeship approach as a vehicle that encapsulates most of the principles of a powerful learning environment as identified in this study. Finally, some of the important variables that impact on the structuring of a powerful learning environment such as the perceptions of teachers and learners were also addressed. Acknowledging the perceptions that both teachers and learners have about the teaching and learning of history is very important, but even more important is the fact that the way the learning environment is structured should aim at the development of positive perception about history teaching and learning.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters a literature study of the different aspects that may impact on the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history, was conducted. Different aspects identified throughout the literature study process were used to design tools for the quantitative research that was conducted. This and other aspects of the research methodology used for the purpose of the study will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

Walliman (2001: 7) defines research as a systematic investigation into the study of materials sources in order to establish facts and to reach new conclusions. It is also an endeavour to discover new or collate old facts by the scientific study of a subject or by a course of critical investigation. Research methodology as a component of research is seen by Mouton and Muller (1998: 2) as the logic of social enquiry. According to Mouton (2001: 55), research methodology should address the research methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their prescriptions and consequences. The kind of research approach followed by this study as indicated in paragraph 1.4,2 is quantitative in nature. In addition, the researcher will also discuss the data collection strategy used in the research, sampling procedures and, finally, explain how data analysis and interpretation will be conducted.

### 5.2 THE AIM OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical study conducted was aimed at obtaining information in response to questions raised in 1.2 which are:

- What perception do teachers and learners have towards history as a subject?

- What are the current teaching and learning approaches that are used during history lessons?

The findings to these two questions enabled the researcher to identify aspects that need to be considered in structuring a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET.

### **5.3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES**

The main task of the educational researcher is to describe, explain, generalise and interpret educational phenomena based on empirical evidence. Brown and Dowling (1998:7) define an empirical research as an enquiry that should in part justify any claims that it makes in terms of reference to experience of the field to which these claims relate.

The kind of research method used in this study is quantitative. A quantitative approach is a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a population to generalise the findings to the universe being studied (Maree, 2007: 145; Walliman, 2001: 7). According to Kistan (2000: 51), Leedy (1997: 104) and Yegidis and Weinbach (2002: 16) the main objectives of quantitative approach are to:

- objectively measure the social world;
- collect data in order to assess preconceived models, hypotheses and theories;
- make an objective description of a limited set of phenomena;
- predict and control human behaviour; and
- test predictive and cause effect hypothesis.

In applying the above objectives to this study, the researcher sought to:

- describe and measure the kind of perspectives/attitudes that history teachers and learners have towards history as a subject; and
- describe and explain the current teaching and learning approaches that are used during history lessons.

Babbie (2001: 52), Cherry (2000: 77), Leedy (1997: 189), Neumann (2003: 145), Thyer (2001: 25) and Yegidis and Weinbach (2002: 16), identify the following characteristics as inherent in quantitative research:

- Concepts are placed in the form of distinct variables.
- The presentation of results appears in numeric form and is eventually reported in statistical language.
- Data analysis is done by means of standardised statistical procedures.
- Use descriptive and/or inferential statistical analysis.
- Quantitative approach involves experiments, surveys, quasi-experiments and questionnaires that make use of numerical comparisons.
- Concepts are converted into operational definitions.
- Quantitative researchers use a deductive form of reasoning and will thus begin with hypotheses or abstract generalisations and move towards proving these.
- It is concerned about the individual's point of view.

In applying the above characteristics to this study, the researcher's methods of history teaching and learning used the information gathered during the literature study to compile questionnaires for history teachers and learners. The main objective of the questions was to solicit responses to the two questions which formed the aim of this study (see 1.2; 5.2). The questions and statements used in the questionnaires were aimed at collecting participants' own points of view with no interference from the researcher.

The presentation of data collected from history teachers and learners was done in numeric form in figures, tables and graphs (see 6.2 and 6.3). The researcher's use of descriptive statistics in this study is mainly to aid understanding, to identify common characteristics, concerns and issues pertaining to the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET band of schools in the Free State. Emphasis is therefore placed on the objective description of the existing nature of history teaching and learning in schools in the Free State province and not to be judgemental of the prevailing situation (Anderson, 1998: 100; Yegidis & Weinbach, 2002: 9). Data analysis in this study was done by means of standardised statistical procedures (see 6.2 and 6.3).

## **5.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The definition of research presented in paragraph 5.1 suggests that the researcher had to investigate certain phenomena so as to obtain information for the research. The information obtained is termed “data”. Data are defined as ordinary bits and pieces of information found from the environment and can be in concrete form and measurable. The interest and perspective of the investigator are usually the determining factors in categorising information as data. In a quantitative approach, data will be in the form of numbers computed from data received (Merriam, 1998: 69). The main focus of the following section will be to explain the data collection method employed in this study.

Bell (2005: 115) explains that the choice of the method for data collection depends on different factors such as the nature of the variable under study, the nature of the target population and the resources available, as well as the research methods employed. Anderson (1998: 164-168) further asserts that data collection methods in a quantitative research will take the form of reports, tests, questionnaires, scales, observation schedules and videos. It seems that for the purposes of this research, the most appropriate research instrument was the questionnaire.

### **5.4.1 Questionnaire as a research instrument**

A questionnaire is usually a self-reporting instrument that can be used to obtain specific information regarding variables that are investigated by the researcher. Delport (2005: 166) and Wolf (1997: 422) maintain that surveys are used in educational research to describe attitudes, beliefs, opinions and other forms of information. It consists of a number of questions or items on paper that respondents read and answer. The basic objective is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from people who are informed on a particular topic. Information gathered in this way is then converted into data.

Two different questionnaires were distributed in this study to obtain information from history teachers and history learners in the Free State FET schools. In this case it was history

teachers and history learners who were engaged with history teaching and learning on a daily basis.

The questionnaire was chosen as a data collecting instrument because of the advantages that it posed especially for this study as Gall, Borg and Gall (1996: 246) maintain that the choice of a measurement instrument in a quantitative research is influenced by the purpose of the study. According to Maree (2007: 157), a questionnaire is able to preserve the anonymity of the respondents and therefore allows the respondents to respond freely to the items on the questionnaire. The statements included in both learners' and teachers' questionnaires required the respondents to reflect on their perception towards history and their experiences of history. In this instance the questionnaire would minimise fear and embarrassment that result from direct contact. A questionnaire is also useful because it can be distributed to many people simultaneously. A study of this nature that covers the entire Free State province will need responses from all the districts of the province. The questionnaire therefore has the potential to solicit substantial responses from the five targeted districts in a much more efficient and economical manner.

In designing the questionnaires, various aspects raised in Chapters 2 to 4 of this study that sort to respond to the research questions in paragraphs 1.2 and 5.2 were noted. These aspects are the following:

- Curriculum transformation in South Africa (see 2.2).
- The value of history as a school subject (see 2.3.2).
- Changes in the teaching of history (see 2.3.5).
- Approaches to learning (see 3.2.3).
- The implications that learning theories have for teaching and learning of history in schools (see 3.3).
- Cognitive development (see 3.4.2.1; 3.4.3; 3.4.4).
- Effective learning (see 4.2.1).
- Powerful learning environments (see 4.2.2; 4.4).

It took several revisions and checking to come up with the different questions to address all the main aspects of this study (see 5.4.2). Care was taken to make sure that the questions used in this study corresponded to the categories of questions identified by Gillham (2000:

26) when maintaining that questions used should cover those dealing with fact, behaviour and last opinions, beliefs and judgements/attitudes.

According to Bell (2005: 138) and Maree (2007:161), questions used in the questionnaire can be open-ended or closed kinds of questions. Closed questions can also be distinguished into list, ranking, category, quantity, grid and scale type of questions. The learners' questionnaire was made up of closed questions, whilst the teachers' questionnaire was a combination of open-ended and closed questions (see Appendices D and E). The questions in both learners' and teachers' questionnaires required the respondents to choose the appropriate response from a list of possible answers and also to indicate their responses by choosing answers from the Lickert scale.

The larger parts of the questionnaires were in the form of the Lickert scale. In its most popular form the respondent is presented with a sentence and is asked to agree or disagree on a four- to a seven-point scale (Maree, 2007: 167). In this study respondents were requested to respond to a five-point scale. A clear statement was made and the respondent was required to indicate whether the statement reflected his/her views. A five-point scale is seen by Anderson (1998: 174-175) as the most practical and easy to respond to, straightforward to analyse, and sufficient unto most needs. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 248) and Maree (2007: 161, 163-164) maintain that the use of the closed questions in the questionnaires has a high user-value, because they are easy to complete, takes little time, keep the respondents focused on the topic, appear relatively objective and are easy to table and analyse.

#### **5.4.2 Pilot study**

There is a need to field test the questionnaires before being used for actual research. The pilot study is usually performed on a number of respondents from the population who do not form part of the sample. Anderson (1998: 179), Leedy (1997: 179) and Strydom (2005a: 205-215) view a pilot study as important, as it safeguards data from being biased. The pilot study is also conducted to ensure that respondents will understand the directions provided as well as the questions posed. Pilot studies are also conducted to determine whether the

responses given are clear and easy to use and if there are other technical changes that need to be made. Pilot studies are also conducted to ensure the highest degree of reliability and validity of results.

For the purposes of this study the teachers' questionnaire was piloted with five history teachers, 10 history learners and five history subject advisors from the Free State province. Four of the teachers were from the Motheo district and one from the Xhariep district. The selection of teachers was based on their availability but, most importantly, on making sure that they become representative in terms of gender and geographic location. As a result, teachers from both rural and urban areas were used in the study. The five teachers who participated in the pilot study were willing respondents and available for the study. Participants in the pilot study did not form the sample of the main study.

The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires to the respondents for completion. Respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire and in the process:

- record how long it took them to complete the questionnaire;
- establish whether the instructions were clear enough;
- detect ambiguous questions; and
- indicate aspects that might be missing and/or not well addressed (Bell, 2005: 138-141).

The learners' pilot study was conducted with five learners in grade 10 and five in grade 11. Learners came from Motheo (5) and the Lejweleputswa districts (5). The researcher personally administered the completion of the learners' questionnaires and in the process established the following:

- Instructions that were not clear to learners.
- Words that learners did not understand.
- Questions that were giving learners problems.
- The time learners spent in completing the questionnaire.

Both teachers' and learners' questionnaires were also given to five other history subject specialists in the Free State province for further scrutiny and comments. Some of the subject



advisors have been monitoring and supporting history teachers on the proper implementation of the curriculum for over 10 years. From this exercise comments on the ways questions were asked and the aspects which the questionnaires addressed were made. To conduct a pilot study among colleagues with relevant experience is supported by Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990: 428) and Strydom (2005a: 207), who maintain that it is worthwhile to present the questionnaire to colleagues or experts with knowledge in the field of study.

The comments from the teachers, learners and history subject advisors were taken into consideration when changes and amendments were made to the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was later presented to the study leader for final approval. The completed learners' and teachers' questionnaires were presented to the Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) as part of the application to conduct the study in schools. The questionnaire was accepted by the departmental officials and later prepared for distribution.

Prior to sending out the questionnaires to participants, a covering letter was designed in the form of requesting permission from the principals of schools to conduct research in their schools. In this letter aspects such as the purpose of the study, appeal for cooperation, and the protection of respondents with regard to confidentiality were dealt with (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 50). Copies of letters received from the study leader, the permission provided by the DoE to conduct research and the researcher's request for permission to conduct the research are attached in Appendices A ,B, C and F.

Most of the questionnaires were hand delivered to targeted schools throughout the province. On arrival at the schools the researcher had a meeting with the teachers and the learners concerned, explaining the purpose of the study and how the questionnaires were supposed to be completed. In some cases, due to time constraints, schools opted to complete the questionnaires on their own and later submit the questionnaires as arranged.

### 5.4.3 Structure of the questionnaires

#### 5.4.3.1 Learners' questionnaire (Appendix D)

##### 5.4.3.1.1 Section A: Demographic particulars

In this section the purpose was to collect data with regard to the gender, home language, the medium of instruction at school, the age, the language of instruction and the grade of the learner.

##### 5.4.3.1.2 Section B: Reasons for choosing history as a subject

In this section, the researcher wanted to establish different reasons why learners chose history as a subject. The reasons for choosing history as a subject were categorised into “pushing” and “pulling” factors.

**Table 5.1 Reasons for choosing history as a school subject**

Category	Description	Question numbers
“Pushing factors”	Provided learners with a limited choice or no choice at all.	6, 7, 8
“Pulling factors”	Attracted learners to the subject.	9, 10, 11

Learners' responses were later related to the category of attitude/feeling (see 5.4.3.1.4) in the final analysis of result.

#### 5.4.3.1.3 Section C: Awareness of the value of history

The purpose of this section was to establish the extent to which learners were aware of the value of history with regard to the different skills that history can impart on the learners (see 2.3.2)

**Table 5.2: Awareness of the value of history**

Category	Definition	Question numbers
Value of history	The value and skills that learners can acquire through the study of history	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

#### 5.4.3.1.4 Section D: Experience towards history as a subject

In this section, the researcher aimed to establish the kind of experience that learners are having towards history as a subject and the influence that this has on their perception towards history learning. A list of the different aspects that could be used to assess learners perception towards history as a subject (see 4.6.2) were categorised as presented below.

**Table 5.3: Categories of questions over the experience of learners towards history as a subject**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Question numbers</b>
Study attitude	Feelings and attitude towards history as a subject	24, 28, 32, 39, 40, 48, 49,57
Anxiety	Anxiety and fear	27, 31, 33, 36, 44
Study habits	Effective study habits	29, 38, 45, 50, 54, 55
Cognitive and metacognitive behaviour	Self-monitoring, self-regulation and decision-making	25, 30, 34, 35, 37, 41, 42, 46, 47, 51, 52, 53, 56
Study milieu	Study environment	43

*5.4.3.1.5 Section E: Individualised Learning Environment*

The purpose of this section was to establish the kind of environment that learners experience within the teaching and learning context. The categories were structured from different learning environments as discussed in 4.4.

**Table 5.4 Categories of the questions on learning environments**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Question numbers</b>
Community-centred learning environment	Classroom culture	58, 62, 68, 71, 75, 76, 78, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90
Knowledge-centred learning environment	Responds to questions such as what is taught, how knowledge is presented, and why it is taught.	59, 60, 64, 67, 72, 77, 82
Learner-centred learning environment	Learner-focused processes	61, 65, 69, 70, 73, 74
Assessment-centred learning environment	Assessment-focused environment	63, 66, 79, 80, 81, 89

#### **5.4.3.2 Teachers' questionnaire (Appendix E)**

##### *5.4.3.2.1 Section A: Teachers' qualifications and experiences*

This section was aimed at collecting demographic data of history teachers within the Free State Province.

**Table 5.5: Categorisation of the teachers' demographic details and experience**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Question numbers</b>
Demographic data	Gender, grades taught, experience, other subjects taught, medium of instruction, qualifications	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
History learners' numbers	Number of history learners and factors impacting on the numbers	11, 12

Since question 12 was an open-ended question, the responses from teachers were later categorised and coded as follows:

- Learners discouraged from taking history.
- Learners focused more on physical and natural sciences.
- Implementation of the new curriculum.
- Other reasons (see 6.3.2.2).

#### *5.4.3.2.2 Section B: Teachers' perception about history teaching*

The focus of this section was to gain an understanding of how history teachers perceived the subject. A list of aspects that should be looked at in establishing teachers' perception as identified in 4.6.1 was used.

**Table 5.6: Teachers' perceptions about history as a school subject**

Category	Definition	Question Numbers
Perceptions about history teaching	Establish the extent to which history teachers have a positive perception about history teaching.	16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30

*5.4.3.2.3 Sections C and D: Teaching methodologies, approaches and strategies*

The purpose of this section was to establish the kind of methodologies, approaches and strategies that history teachers used throughout the province in order to determine the extent to which the characteristics of the different learning environments are implemented. The researcher further wanted to establish the impact that learner involvement had on implementing the different learning environments as addressed in section D of teachers questionnaire. Teachers' responses will be categorised to respond to the categories of the learning environments discussed in 4.4.

**Table 5.7: Teaching methodologies, approaches and strategies used by history teachers**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Question numbers</b>
Community-centred learning environment	Classroom culture	38,42,45,47,53,54,55,56,57,58,62,65,68,69,72
Knowledge-centred learning environment	Responds to questions such as what is taught, how knowledge is presented, and why it is taught.	33,34,35,36,37,39,40,43,44,48,49,50,59,67
Learner-centred learning environment	Learner-focused processes	31,32,46,60,63,71
Assessment-centred learning environment	Assessment-focused environment	41,51,52,61,64,66,70

#### *5.4.3.2.4 Section E: NCS competency*

This section was intended to establish areas of the history National Curriculum Statement (see 2.2) that teachers are comfortable with and those that they need to be assisted with.

## **5.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

A population is described as a large group of individuals, objects, organisational units or events identified by the researcher on the basis of selected traits, attributes and characteristics related to the research problem (McBurney, 2001: 248). For the purposes of this study, the population consists of all the public schools that offer history in grades 10-12 in the Free State province. The Education and Management Information System (EMIS)



section of the FSDoE provided the researcher with a list of schools that present history as a subject. This information was verified with the different history subject advisors in the different districts within the province. The number of schools that offer history per district within the province is presented in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: Schools per education district offering history as part of their curriculum in 2007**

<b>Education District</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>
Thabo Mofutsanyana	50
Motheo	49
Fezile Dabi	38
Lejweleputswa	48
Xhariep	14
Total	199

The ideal sample would be all history teachers and history learners throughout the Free State Province. For the purposes of this research each school that offers history received a questionnaire to be completed by one history teacher from each school. Therefore a total of 199 teacher questionnaires were distributed to schools. With regard to learner questionnaires, only learners taking the subject were selected to participate in the research. The focus for learners was also among learners in grades 10 and 11, as by 2007 they were the ones exposed to the NCS. This move was prompted by Gall, Borg and Gall (1996: 226), who maintain that the largest possible sample should be used in quantitative research, but financial and time constraints should be kept in mind. Lawson (1997: 131-132) further asserts that the use of a smaller sampler should not be seen as being less valuable. A sample for this study was therefore selected from a pool of learners who took history as a subject in the FET band throughout the Free State province.

A sample is defined as the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. The purpose of studying the sample is an attempt to understand the population from which the sample comes with the hope of learning something that can be inferred to the population (McBurney, 2001: 248; Yegidis & Weinmach, 2002: 179).

The kind of sampling used in this research was purposeful sampling. Anderson (1998: 124) maintains that purposive samples can be differentiated using three categories, namely:

- A convenience sample which is quick and easy to pick.
- A typical sample which seeks to represent people who fit the expected norm.
- A criterion sample which represents people or cases which meet a set of predetermined conditions.
- A deviant sample which represents people who knowingly go against the norm.

The researcher used criterion sampling because the respondents had to be history teachers and history learners, as they would be in a position to respond to questions relating to their subject. Cohen, Manion and Marrison (2000: 99) and Yegidis and Weinbach (2002: 190) support the above view when maintaining that purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select participants who were rich in information with respect to the purpose of the study.

In selecting learners who would participate in this study, researcher created the following criteria:

- Relying on the statistics provided by the EMIS section which indicated the performance of each school in grade 12 per subject. From these, schools were selected based on their performance in history over the past five years. This was done to ensure that both performing and non-performing schools in history were included in the study.
- The other criterion that was used was to ensure that learners in all the five districts were proportionally represented in the study.
- Learners from rural, township and schools in town were also used.
- Both the English- and Afrikaans-medium schools were used. This was not used to compare responses, but to ensure that adequate responses were solicited.

Using the above criteria, schools that provided learners for the purposes of this study were as follows: In Xhariep 7 schools were selected, in Motheo 25 schools were selected, in Fezile Dabi 10 schools were selected, in Lejweleputswa 15 schools were selected, and in Thabo Mofutsanyana another 15 schools were used in the study. Therefore learners from a total of 84 schools in the Free State participated in the study. This translated into 42.2% of the sample from the population of 199. For authors such as Strydom (2005b: 194-195), the sample from a population of 1000 can be as small as 14%.

The respondents from the target population were therefore a homogenous group having the following common characteristics:

- They were all in grades 10 and 11. The research was conducted in 2007 when the NCS was being implemented in grades 10 and 11.
- They took history as a subject.
- They were willing participants.
- They remained anonymous in the research (as directed by the Department, see Appendix B).
- They were able to read English.

**Table 5.9: Learners' questionnaires distributed and received**

<b>District</b>	<b>No. of schools offering history</b>	<b>No. of schools that participated in this research</b>	<b>No. of learner questionnaires distributed per district</b>	<b>No. of learner questionnaires received</b>
Motheo	49	25	280	246
Xhariep	14	10	60	55
Lejweleputswa	48	15	200	170
Fezile Dabi	38	19	100	96
Thabo Mofutsanyana	50	15	160	130
Total	199	84(42.2% of history offering schools)	800	697 of the 800 issued (87.1% return rate)

**Table 5.10: Teachers' questionnaires distributed and received**

District	No. of schools offering history	No. of schools that participated	No. of history teachers per district	Questionnaires issued/no. of participants	No. of questionnaires received
Motheo	49	25	85	35	28
Xhariep	14	10	16	12	11
Lejweleputswa	48	15	56	18	17
Fezile Dabi	38	19	44	23	21
Thabo Mofutsanyana	50	15	82	21	19
	199	84	283	109 (38.5% of the FS history teachers)	96 = 88% return rate

The researcher ensured that both teachers' and learners' questionnaires were received from the same school so as to enable comparison of the teachers' and the learners' responses. In some cases schools had up to two history teachers. In such cases both teachers were given questionnaires to complete. Hence, the number of questionnaires delivered to schools was 109, whilst there were 84 participating schools in the study.

## 5.6 RELIABILITY

An important requirement for research is to ensure that the results of the research are reliable. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 117) define reliability as the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions. Silverman (2000: 188) supports the above definition by asserting that reliability is the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same

observer on different occasions. Reliability therefore implies the absence of random errors in the product. The primary concern is not with what is being measured, but with how well it is being measured.

Reliability can be classified into internal and external reliability. Internal reliability refers to reliability during the research. Different measures can be used to facilitate reliability. These include triangulation (see 5.8), cross-examination, member check, consensus, mechanisation, and auditing (Neumann, 2000: 28; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 1190). Reliability in this research was enhanced by a pilot study (see 5.4.2), providing multiple choice items (see Appendices D and E), providing spaces for free expression of the opinions if necessary and providing carefully designed instructions to the respondents (see Appendix D and E). In an attempt to increase the reliability of this research, the researcher also provided a description of the concepts that had been used and the research methods (see 1.4 and 1.6).

## **5.7 VALIDITY**

Henning (2004: 147) stipulates that validity seeks to ask the question whether the instrument used in the research is measuring what it is supposed to measure. De Vos (2005: 160) maintains that the definition of validity has two parts, namely that the instrument actually measures the concept in question and that the concept is measured accurately. In order to ensure validity in this study, the following aspects were considered:

- Content covered by the questionnaire was representative of the different aspects of the teaching and learning of history and the powerful learning environments discussed in Chapters 2 to 4.
- Furthermore, section D of the learner questionnaire was adapted from Maree and other researchers. It was tested and standardised by the National Research Foundation (NRF) (NRF 1997; Van Rijswijk & Vermunt, s.a).
- A pilot study was conducted prior to conducting the actual research (see 5.4.2).
- The questionnaires were presented to the history subject advisors in the Free State province and the study leader for comments and suggestions.
- A large sample of respondents was selected so as to be representative of the total targeted population.

## 5.8 TRIANGULATION

Stake (1995: 109) maintains that researchers have an ethical responsibility to minimise inaccuracy in observation and misrepresentation in the interpretation of data. The researcher needs to observe and interpret data and phenomena from different perspectives in order to guard against an unbalanced or one-dimensional view. Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 105) stipulate that triangulation is conducted with the hope that all techniques employed will converge to support a particular hypothesis or theory.

Triangulation is the process of incorporating multiple viewpoints of the phenomenon so as to provide greater validity to the research endeavour. It also provides additional evidence that we are observing what we really think we are observing. The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth and depth to any investigation. Triangulation also helps to encounter all threats to trustworthiness. Data from different sources enhance triangulation (Anderson, 1998: 131; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 288; Thyer, 2001: 477).

Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 113) Neumann (2003: 138) and Stake (1995: 112), describe four different protocols which can be used for triangulation, namely:

- data source triangulation;
- investigator triangulation;
- theory triangulation; and
- methodological triangulation.

In this research the researcher employed data source triangulation by using both history teachers and learners as respondents and sources of data in the form of intensive literature study. Teachers' and learners' questionnaires sought to establish the ways in which history was perceived and taught in the Free State schools. The main objective here was to triangulate the information from history teachers and learners. A T-test was also used to compare responses from teachers and learners.

In addition to the four protocols mentioned above, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 113) include time triangulation which requires that data should be gathered at the same time, and space triangulation which encourages the accommodation of cross-cultural issues in the research. Data for this research were collected during the months of August and September 2007. The time scale of two months is therefore not spread far apart to allow to be affected by social changes. Care was taken to have responses from teachers and learners that are representative of the Free State teachers' and learners' population, namely Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians.

## 5.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Raw data collected in the form of questionnaires is not instantly useful unless it can put in a meaningful manner that seeks to address the research question. Data analysis is the process that can be used to arrive at this meaning. Blaxter *et al.* (2001: 206), Kruger, De Vos, Fouché and Venter (2005: 218) and Walliman (2001: 253) maintain that data analysis is conducted in order to:

- search for explanation and understanding;
- discover and examine relationships among phenomena;
- advance, consider and develop concepts and theories;
- reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems can be studied, tested and conclusions drawn;
- make assumptions about phenomena under study;
- test hypotheses based on the study; and
- measure the presence and extent of influence of various phenomena and variables.

Kruger, De Vos, Fouché and Venter :218) warn that data analysis does not in itself provide answers to research questions but that answers are found by way of interpreting data and the results.

In analysing data for this study, the researcher was driven by the need to find answers to the two research questions (see 1.2 and 5.2) and always kept this in mind throughout the process. Raw data were computed by the Department of Computer Services – Statistical



Analysis Division, at the University of the Free State. The statistical package for their Social Sciences Primer (SPSS) was used to do the computation.

Data analysis in this study used both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used in order to quantify the characteristics of the data, to establish where their centre is, how broadly they are spread and how one aspect of the data relates to another of the same data (Blaxter *et al.*, 2001: 216; Pietersen & Maree, 2007: 183; Walliman, 2001: 255). The responses in the form of raw data were processed as follows:

- Frequencies with respect to all the questions in the questionnaire were calculated and expressed in percentages.
- The mean for various combinations of raw data was calculated and formed the basis for the computation.
- Measure of dispersion was done using standard deviation (see 6.2 and 6.3).

In employing inferential statistics, the researcher believed that there was a need to go beyond describing the characteristics of data. In order to move beyond the descriptive level, the researcher used the following procedures:

- The Levene's test was used to determine the  $F$  value, that is the ratio of the two group variance in relation to the different learning environments.
- The  $t$ -value will be determined with the purpose to identify a significant difference between the views of how teachers and learners experienced the different learning environments. Inferences and conclusions were drawn about the population (see 6.3.7; 7.3). The hypotheses will therefore be accepted or rejected on the significant level of 5% (Pietersen & Maree, 2007: 226-229).
- The following hypotheses were formulated regarding the different learning environments:

$H_0$ : Null hypothesis

$H_a$ : Alternative hypothesis

$H_{0(a1)}$ : There is no difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the community-centred learning environment.

$H_{a1}$ : There is a difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the community-centred learning environment.

H<sub>0(a2)</sub>: There is no difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the knowledge-centred learning environment.

H<sub>a2</sub>: There is a difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the knowledge-centred learning environment.

H<sub>0(a3)</sub>: There is no difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the learner-centred learning environment.

H<sub>a3</sub>: There is a difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the learner-centred learning environment.

H<sub>0(a4)</sub>: There is no difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the assessment-centred learning environment.

H<sub>a4</sub>: There is a difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the assessment-centred learning environment.

The “t” in the table will indicate the likelihood of a change that can occur on the 5% level of significance that will provide the evidence that the hypotheses will be rejected or accepted.

## **5.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Strydom (2005c: 57) defines ethics as a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or a group and is widely accepted. Ethics offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards respondents. In conducting the research the researcher is also obliged to follow and abide by a set of principles that ensures proper ethical conduct. The following procedures as stipulated by Cohen et al. (2000: 49-71), Maree (2007: 41) and Strydom (2005c: 57-64) were implemented by the researcher to ensure proper ethical conduct:

- The researcher requested permission from the FSDoE to conduct research in the schools of the province (see Appendix A). The purpose of the research, participants to be used, estimated timeframes and the examples of the questionnaires to be used in the research were included in the application.
- The response from the DOE granting permission to the researcher was received (see Appendix B).
- After receiving permission from the FSDoE, letters were sent to schools to request permission to conduct research (see Appendix C). Schools were assured that the names of the schools, teachers and learners would not be identified in the research and that they were not obliged to participate in the research.
- On arrival at the different schools who had indicated their willingness to participate in the study, the researcher had meetings with the principals, history teachers and history learners. The purpose of such meetings was to explain the purpose of the research and the procedures that would be followed in completing the questionnaires. The meetings also served as opportunities to allow respondents to ask questions and make comments about the study. The researchers re-emphasised the issues of confidentiality and willingness to participate in the study. During the meetings the researcher tried to conduct the research in a manner that did not contradict the schools' customs and traditions. In some of the schools the principals requested members of the school's governing body to be present during the meetings so as to understand how the research was going to be conducted. Some of the schools even insisted that letters should be sent to the parents of learners who would be participating in the study to obtain their consent.
- On receiving the completed questionnaires from the schools, the researcher thanked the teachers and learners for their participation in the study.
- The participating schools were also assured that the results, findings and recommendations of the study would be made available to the FSDoE on completion of the study.

## **5.11 CONCLUSION**

The focus of Chapter 5 was on discussing the goals of empirical research and the research methodology employed in this study. The use and choice of quantitative research methodology were presented and explained. The rationale behind the use of different research procedures such as sampling, the use of questionnaires as the data collection

instrument, the use of pilot study, data analysis, reliability, and validity were provided. The researcher also indicated how research ethics were considered throughout the research process.

The focus of Chapter 6 will be on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

## **PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The objectives of this research as indicated in paragraph 1.3 were to obtain data about teachers' and learners' perspectives about the teaching and learning of history and to establish the current status of teaching and learning of history in the FET Band of the schools in the Free State. Finally, the researcher sought to identify the different aspects that will ensure the structuring of a dynamic learning environment for the teaching and learning of history.

The main focus of this chapter will therefore be the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the research findings. The findings will be categorised according to the responses gathered from learners and teachers. Later a correlation between the two sets of responses will be provided (see 6.3.6)

## 6.2 RESPONSES FROM LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

The responses on the questionnaire were obtained from 697 learners who participated in the research from 199 schools.

### 6.2.1 Learners' demographic particulars

**Table 6.1: Learners' demographic particulars** **N=697**

		N	%		N	%		N	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	325	46.8%	Female	369	53.2			
<b>Grade</b>	Grade 10	389	56.1	Grade 11	303	43.7			
<b>Age</b>	14yrs	01	0.1	15yrs	34	4.9	16yrs	92	13.3
	17yrs	164	23.6	18yrs +	403	58.1			
<b>Home language</b>	Sesotho	319	46.0	Setswana	169	24.4	Isixhosa	83	12.0
	Afrikaans	97	14.0	Isizulu	5	0.7	English	6	0.9
	Other languages	15	2.1						

According to the information gathered on the demographic data of the participants, it is evident that 53.2% of the learners who responded were females. 46.0% of the 697 learners used Sesotho as their home language. The results also revealed that 58.1% of the learners

taking history as a subject were over the age of 18. The responses received from learners indicated that 56.1% of the responses came from grade 10 learners, whilst 43.7% came from grade 11 learners.

### 6.2.2 Reasons for choosing history as a school subject

In this section the aim was to obtain data on why learners choose history as a subject.

**Table 6.2: Pushing factors in the choice of history as a subject**

	1		2		3		4		5	
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Q.6	340	49	124	17.9	74	10.7	85	12.2	68	9.8
Q.7	397	57.2	137	19.7	53	7.6	59	8.5	45	6.5
Q.8	375	54	153	22	75	10.8	48	6.9	35	5

Responses to questions 6, 7 and 8 indicate that 66.9%, 76.9% and 76% respectively of the learners responded that they either strongly disagreed/disagreed that “pushing factors” such as choosing history because there were no other choices at school (question 6), that the Mathematics and Science classes were full (question 7), and that parents influenced them to choose history (question 8) had an influence in learners’ choosing history as a subject.

**Table 6.3: Pulling factors in the choice of history as a subject**

	1		2		3		4		5	
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Q. 9	234	33.7	125	18	131	18.9	106	15.3	91	13.1
Q.10	45	6.5	25	3.6	74	10.7	177	25.5	370	53.3
Q.11	94	13.5	85	12.2	151	21.8	179	25.8	183	26.4

Pulling factors such as learners choosing history because they like the history teacher (question 9), enjoy history as a subject (question 10) and believe that history is an easy subject (question 11), were identified as factors that had an influence in the learners' choice of history. Responses to question 9 indicated that only 28.4% of the respondents had chosen the subject because they liked their history teacher. Responses to question 10 show that the 78, 8% of the respondents strongly agreed/agreed that they enjoyed history as a subject. Responses to question 11 indicate that 52.2% of the respondents believed that history was an easy subject.

Data displayed in tables 6.2 and 6.3 indicate that learners choose history voluntarily and because they liked and enjoyed it. Pushing factors as indicated in table 6.2 did not play an important role in the choice of history as a subject. It therefore can be concluded that learners have a positive perception regarding history as a subject.

### 6.2.3 Awareness of the value of history

In the following section the aim was to establish the extent to which learners were aware of the value of history as a subject on a Lickert scale continuum of five.



**Table 6.4: Learners' awareness of the value of history**

	1		2		3		4		5	
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Q.12	48	6.9	53	7.6	143	20.6	166	23.9	281	40.5
Q.13	45	6.5	52	7.5	94	13.5	271	39	230	33.1
Q.14	32	4.6	55	7.9	76	11	267	38.5	257	37
Q.15	25	3.6	13	1.9	28	4	189	27.2	436	62.8
Q.16	186	26.8	102	14.7	173	24.9	166	23.9	64	9.2
Q.17	16	2.3	44	6.3	83	12	305	43.9	243	35
Q.18	27	3.9	37	5.3	135	19.5	253	36.5	240	34.6
Q.19	15	2.2	33	4.8	104	15	273	39.3	268	38.6
Q.20	36	5.2	49	7.1	98	14.1	253	36.5	258	37.2
Q.21	33	4.8	49	7.1	125	18	256	36.9	231	33.3
Q.22	11	1.6	26	3.7	53	7.6	248	35.7	355	51.2
Q.23	13	1.9	17	2.4	35	5	218	31.4	410	59.1

The responses received for this section indicated that learners were aware of the value of history as a subject.

Responses (64.4%) to question 12 indicated that the learners believed that history prepared them for the careers that they wanted to follow, whilst 14.5% did not agree with the statement. Responses (72.1%) to question 13 indicate that the learners believed that history was aimed at teaching them to memorise the facts and 14.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed/disagreed.

Responses (75.5%) to question 14 indicated that the respondents strongly agreed/agreed that history is challenging, whilst 12.5% do not agree with the statement. In responding to question 15, 90% of the respondents strongly agreed/agreed that history can make them understand their country and the world.

In responding to question 16, 41.5% strongly disagreed/disagreed that history was not relevant, 24.9% were not sure, whilst 33.1% strongly agreed/ agreed that history was not relevant. Since the question was negatively phrased, 41.5% of respondents disagreeing with the statement indicate a positive awareness of the value of history as a subject.

Responses (78.9%) to question 17 show that of the respondents strongly agreed/agreed that history enabled them to tolerate and respect different views, whilst 8.6% disagreed with the statement. Responding to question 18, 71.1% of the learners believed that history would enable them to make coherent arguments, while 9.2% disagreed with the assertion.

Responses (77.9%) to question 19 show that the majority of learners strongly agreed/agreed that history allowed them to make conclusion based on facts, while 7% of the respondents disagreed and 15% were uncertain. Responses to question 20 show that 73.7% of the learners strongly agreed/agreed that history was not making them accept things at face value, but to question them until the answers were found. In addressing question 21, 70.2% of the learners believed that history was going to allow them to solve problems within their communities.

In responding to questions 22, 86.9% of the respondents strongly agreed/agreed that history enabled them to learn about the past, how it impacts on the present and even allows them to anticipate the future. In addressing question 23, 90.5% of the learners strongly agreed/agreed that history was making them aware of their heritage and how to preserve it.

The responses received for this section indicated that learners were aware of the value of the history as a subject.

## 6.2.4 Experience towards history as a subject

The following aspects namely study attitude, anxiety, study habits, cognitive and meta-cognitive skills as well as the study milieu were categorised to demonstrate learners' experience towards history.

### 6.2.4.1 Study attitude

In the following section the aim was to establish the study attitude adopted by history learners towards history as a subject using a Lickert scale continuum of five.

**Table 6.5: Learners' study attitude**

	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	SD
	Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Usually		Almost always			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Q. 24	27	3.9	167	24.1	63	9.1	156	22.5	279	40.2	3.71	1.315
Q. 28	38	5.5	80	11.5	80	11.5	183	26.4	311	44.8	3.94	1.233
Q.32	225	32.4	241	34.7	62	8.9	87	12.5	78	11.2	2.35	1.344
Q.39	176	25.4	226	32.6	54	7.8	117	16.9	119	17.1	2.68	1.449
Q. 40	30	4.3	133	19.2	81	11.7	143	20.6	304	43.8	3.81	1.297
Q. 48	209	30.1	248	35.7	83	12	82	11.8	70	10.1	2.36	1.296
Q. 49	81	11.7	230	33.1	85	12.2	128	18.4	169	24.4	3.11	1.397
Q. 57	172	24.8	159	22.9	81	11.7	137	19.7	143	20.6	2.88	1.496

Learners' responses to questions 24 (62,7%), 28 (71,2%) and 40 (64.4%) indicated that they usually/almost always enjoy history as a subject, believe that they can do well in history and pay attention during history lessons. These responses indicated a positive study attitude towards history.

Learners' responses to questions 32(67.1%) and 48(65.8%) indicated that learners rarely/sometimes postpone their history homework to do something they enjoy more and also rarely/sometimes view history as more difficult than other subject. These responses even though they rate rarely/sometimes also indicated that learners had a positive study attitude towards history.

Learners' responses to questions 39(58%), and 57(47.7%), indicated that learners rarely/sometimes ask their teachers for help with assignments that are not clear and also rarely/sometimes talk to their history teachers, parents and friends about the problems they encounter in history. The responses to questions 39 and 57 indicated a negative study attitude because learners are expected to interact with their teachers and peers in order to enhance their learning.

The other responses representing negative experiences towards the subjects were found in question 49 where 44,8% of the learners rarely/sometimes ask questions and take part in class discussion in contrast with 42.8% of the learners who almost always/usually asked questions and took part in discussions.

#### **6.2.4.2 Learners' experience of anxiety**

In the following section the aim was to establish the extent to which learners were exposed to anxiety provoking situations during history lessons using a Lickert scale continuum of five.

**Table 6. 6: Learners' experience of anxiety**

	1 Rarely		2 Sometimes		3 Frequently		4 Usually		5 Almost always		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Q. 27	127	18.3	319	46	86	12.4	76	11	81	11.7	2.51	1.244
Q. 31	138	19.9	297	42.8	102	14.7	87	12.5	70	10.1	2.50	1.227
Q. 33	161	23.2	253	36.5	80	11.5	124	17.9	69	9.9	2.54	1.297
Q. 36	277	39.9	192	27.7	58	8.4	82	11.8	81	11.7	2.27	1.395
Q. 44	147	21.2	261	37.6	89	12.8	120	17.3	76	11	2.59	1.293

The responses to questions 27 (64,5%), 31 (62,7%), 33 (59,7%), 36 (67,7%) and 44 (58,8%) respectively indicated that learners were rarely/sometimes exposed to situations that made them anxious during history lessons. This is supported by the mean which is smaller than three in all the cases (2.27-2.59) with a SD, ranging between 1.227-1.395 that indicates that most of the respondents rarely/sometimes were experienced:

- The use of words that are not understandable (question 27)
- Learners not being able to speak clearly when suddenly have to answer questions during history lessons (question 31)
- Loosing of marks during history tests and exams because of rushing (question 33)
- Being frightened to ask the teacher questions (question 36)
- Loosing marks because of working too slowly (question 44)

#### **6.2.4.3 Learners' study habits**

In the following section the aim was to establish the kind of habits that history learners adopt in the learning of history using a Lickert scale continuum of five.

**Table 6.7: Learners' study habits**

	1 Rarely		2 Sometimes		3 Frequently		4 Usually		5 Almost always		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Q. 29	85	12.2	237	34.1	104	15	143	20.6	120	17.3	2.97	1.320
Q. 38	36	5.2	190	27.4	70	10.1	177	25.5	217	31.3	3.51	1.321
Q. 45	191	27.5	263	37.9	77	11.1	103	14.8	58	8.4	2.38	1.262
Q. 50	67	9.7	180	25.9	98	14.1	178	25.6	170	24.5	3.29	1.342
Q. 54	55	7.9	217	31.3	111	16	184	26.5	126	18.2	2.32	1.387
Q. 55	172	24.8	159	22.9	81	11.7	137	19.7	143	20.6	2.88	1.496

Responses to questions 29 (47,9%), 38 (56,8%) 50 ( 50.1%) and 54 (44.7%) indicated of learners respectively, indicates that learners usually/ almost always assessed themselves (question 29), kept their history work up to date (question 38), knew how to manage their time in preparation for examinations (question 50) and wrote extra essays on their own (question 54). For question 45 (65.4%), learners indicated that they rarely/sometimes postponed their history homework in order to do something else. Learners therefore displayed positive study habits towards history.

Responses to question 55 indicated that 47.7% of learners rarely/sometimes made their own notes about what was done in class to enhance their understanding as opposed to 40.3% who indicated that they usually/almost always did.

The SD from the mean reflects an uncertainty towards study habits. The responses of the learners vary from 40% to 56,8 % with a mean ranging from 2.32 to 3.51, that does not

indicate a majority or minority to either rarely/sometimes to usually/almost always, therefore one can conclude that they do not have very positive or negative study habits.

#### 6.2.4.4 Learners' use of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills

In the following section the aim was to establish the extent to which learners employ cognitive and meta-cognitive skills in the learning of history using a Likert scale continuum scale of five.

**Table 6.8: Learners' use of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills**

	1 Rarely		2 Sometimes		3 Frequently		4 Usually		5 Almost always		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%		
Q. 25	59	8.5	270	38.9	98	14.1	162	23.3	102	14.7	2.97	1.248
Q. 30	73	10.5	221	31.8	121	17.4	176	25.4	98	14.1	3.01	1.253
Q. 34	56	8.1	185	26.7	94	13.5	173	24.9	186	26.8	3.36	1.336
Q. 35	70	10.1	160	23.1	136	19.6	170	24.5	156	22.5	3.26	1.310
Q. 37	65	9.4	216	31.1	120	17.3	165	23.8	121	17.4	3.09	1.278
Q. 41	43	6.2	148	21.3	85	12.2	185	26.7	229	33	3.59	1.308
Q. 42	82	11.8	207	29.8	103	14.8	148	21.3	151	21.8	1.84	1.361
Q. 46	113	16.3	236	34	72	10.4	147	21.2	124	17.9	2.90	1.384
Q. 47	56	8.1	174	25.1	88	12.7	184	26.5	190	27.4	3.40	1.334
Q. 51	77	11.1	208	30	118	17	171	24.6	118	17	3.07	1.293
Q. 52	92	13.3	226	32.6	114	16.4	131	18.9	128	18.4	2.97	1.339
Q. 53	55	7.9	217	31.3	111	16	184	26.5	126	18.2	3.16	1.265
Q. 56	87	12.5	166	23.9	87	12.5	160	23.1	192	27.7	3.29	1.414

Responses to questions 25 (47,4%), 30 (42,3%), 46 (50,3%) and 52 (45,9%) respectively indicate that learners rarely/sometimes caught up regarding lost work (question 25), could relate history to what was happening in the world (question 30), often stopped during their writing processes to make sure that they understood the work (question 46) and developed their own structures to enhance the writing of better extended writing pieces (question 52)..

Responses to questions 37 (41,2%), 42 (43,1%) and 51 (41,6%) reflected a balance response between rarely/sometimes and usually/almost always. For question 37 the responses were 40.5 and 41.2; for question 42, 41.6 and 43.1 and for question 51, 41.1 and 41.6 respectively. The above questions addressed the following statements, learners knew what to do when requested to analyse events in history (question 37), they found it easy to say what they wanted to say during history tests and examinations (question 42), and knew which subsections of history they did not understand (question 51).

Responses to questions 34 (51.7%), 35 (47.0%),41 (59,9% ), 47 (53,9%), 53 (44,7% ) and 56 (50.8%) indicated that learners usually/almost always repeatedly read through an extended writing piece to fully understand what was required (question 34); tried to find connections among the different sections of history (question 35); find out which concepts they did not understand (question 41); believed that the understanding of concepts is more important than memorisation (question 47); were able to identify what the main ideas in what they read from the history textbook (question 53) and memorised all the facts in the notebook when preparing for the test (question 56).

It can be concluded that the development of the respondents' cognitive and meta-cognitive skills need attention.



### 6.2.4.5 Learners' experience of the study milieu

In the following section the aim was to establish the extent to which learners blame their parents and teachers when they do not perform well in history using a Lickert scale continuum of five.

**Table 6.9: Learners' experience of the study milieu**

	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	SD
	Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Usually		Almost always			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%		
Q 43	409	58.9	121	17.4	58	8.4	65	9.4	36	5.2	1.84	1.225

In addressing the aspect of study milieu, responses indicated the majority (76.3%) of history learners rarely/sometimes put the blame for not working hard on their teachers and parents as opposed to 14.6% who almost always/usually blamed their parents and teachers for their poor performance. This is confirmed by the small mean of 1.84 and the SD that indicates that the majority rarely/sometimes agrees.

From the results presented in 6.2.4 on learners experience towards history as a subject it can be concluded that they have a positive study attitude towards history (6.2.4.1). The majority also indicated that they rarely/sometimes are exposed to anxiety promoting situations (6.2.4.2). Learners responded that they are usually/almost always exposed to most of the aspects representing a positive study attitude (6.2.4.3). Most of the aspects in the section of cognitive and meta-cognitive, indicated areas that need to receive attention in order to ensure that learners will usually/almost always be exposed to them (6.2.4.4). Learners also indicated that they take responsibility of their performance by not blaming their parents and/or teachers for non-performance (6.2.4.5).

## 6.2.5 Personal learning environment

### 6.2.5.1 Learners' responses towards community-centred environment

The aim of this section was to establish the extent to which learners were exposed to community-centred learning environment.

**Table 6.10: Learners' responses towards community-centred learning environment**

	1 Rarely		2 Sometimes		3 Frequently		4 Usually		5 Almost always		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%		
Q. 58	35	5	117	16.9	43	6.2	119	17.1	376	54.2	3.99	1.321
Q. 62	62	8.9	126	18.2	59	8.5	135	19.5	309	44.5	3.73	1.414
Q. 68	84	12.1	102	14.7	54	7.8	151	21.8	302	43.5	3.70	1.451
Q. 71	49	7.1	126	18.2	55	7.9	213	30.7	249	35.9	3.70	1.311
Q. 75	221	31.8	115	16.6	68	9.8	111	16	174	25.1	2.86	1.614
Q. 76	376	54.6	102	14.7	54	7.8	80	11.5	76	11	2.09	1.440
Q. 78	313	45.1	117	16.9	59	8.5	55	7.9	146	21	2.43	1.608
Q. 83	125	18	262	37.8	73	10.5	117	16.1	112	16.1	2.75	1.366
Q. 84	118	17	273	39.3	58	8.4	125	18	112	16.1	2.77	1.367
Q. 85	68	9.8	197	28.4	75	10.8	176	25.4	173	24.9	3.27	1.367
Q. 86	92	13.3	217	31.3	76	11	155	22.3	149	21.5	3.08	1.391
Q. 87	42	6.1	194	28	68	9.8	193	27.8	190	27.4	3.43	1.316
Q. 88	141	20.3	259	37.3	64	9.2	95	13.7	128	18.4	2.72	1.417
Q. 90	112	16.1	182	26.2	67	9.7	120	17.3	209	30.1	3.19	1.505

Responses to questions 58(71.3%), 62(64%), 68(65.3%), 71(66.6%), 85(50.3%), 87(55.2%) and 90(47.4%) indicate that learners usually/almost always view their teachers as being patient, courteous and respectful (question 58); feel free to ask their teachers questions in and out of class(question 62); believe that their teachers makes use of information from the library, newspapers, the computer and other people (question 68); agree that their teachers walk around in class to provide guidance to them (question 71); discuss ideas with their friends (question 85), are willing to listen to their classmates' advice (question 87) and are allowed to share resources and books with other learners (question 90).

A mean ranging from 3.19 to 3.99 together with the SD of 1.311-1.505 indicate that the majority of learners were usually/almost always exposed to the above aspects of the community-centred learning environment.

Responses to question 86 reflected a balance response between rarely/sometimes and usually/almost always. 44.6% and 43.8% of the responses indicated that they respectively rarely/sometimes and usually/almost always give their opinions during class discussions.

In contrast, responses to questions 75(48.4%), 76(69.3%), 78(62%), 83(55.8%), 84(56.3%) and 88(57.6%) indicate that learners were rarely/sometimes exposed to these aspects of the community-centred learning environment.

It can therefore be concluded that the following aspects of the community-centred learning environment needs to be addressed in order to enhance the learning environment:

- Make books, dictionaries and other resources available for learners to use (question 75)
- Bring artefacts to class for learners to touch, feel and smell (question 76)
- Visit historical places (question 78)
- Allow learners to help one another in class (question 83)
- Encourage learners to discuss their ideas with friends (question 84)
- Allow learners to participate during class discussions (question 86)
- Allow learners to work in groups (question 88)
- Encourage learners to share and exchange resources (question 90)

### 6.2.5.2 *Learners' responses towards knowledge-centred learning environment*

The aim of this section was to establish the extent to which learners were exposed to the knowledge-centred learning environment.

**Table 6.11: Learners' responses towards knowledge-centred learning environment**

	1 Rarely		2 Sometimes		3 Frequently		4 Usually		5 Almost always		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%		
Q. 59	23	3.3	63	9.1	61	8.8	178	25.6	367	52.9	4.16	1.122
Q. 60	30	4.3	90	13	67	9.7	220	31.7	283	40.8	3.92	1.190
Q. 64	31	4.5	56	8.1	70	10.1	215	31	320	46.1	4.07	1.135
Q. 67	33	4.8	62	8.9	64	9.2	179	25.8	354	51	4.10	1.177
Q. 72	80	11.5	189	27.2	82	11.8	165	23.8	176	25.4	3.24	1.391
Q. 77	77	11.1	131	18.9	73	10.5	174	25.1	232	33.4	3.51	1.408
Q. 82	92	13.3	228	32.9	114	16.4	152	21.9	99	14.3	2.91	1.290

Responses received for this category indicated that learners were exposed to most of the aspects of the knowledge-centred learning environment. A mean value that ranges from 3, 24 to 4, 16 and an SD that ranges from 1,122 -1,177 for questions 59-77, indicates that the majority of the learners were usually or almost always exposed to the knowledge-centred learning environment to a large extent. The responses from questions 59 (78.5%), 60 (72,5%), 64 (77,1%), 67 (76,8%), 72 (49.2), 77 (58.5) strengthens the above statement.

The responses from questions 59 (78.5%), 60 (72,5%), 64 (77,1%), 67 (76,8%), 72 (49.2), 77 (58.5) indicated that learners usually/almost always receives clear directions and

explanations with regard to their work (question 59); receives help from their teachers to organise information and to understand the relationships among various topics (question 60); observes as the teacher demonstrate how tasks are supposed to be done (question 64); is encouraged to come up with different answers to the questions (question 67); is allowed to work individually on activities done by the group (question 72) and receives a demonstration of how the sources should be analysed (question 77).

Responses to question 82 (46, 2%) indicated that learners rarely/sometimes use different sources to create their own definition of concepts.

It can therefore be concluded that the following aspects of the knowledge-centred learning environment needs to be addressed in order to enhance the learning environment:

- Allowing learners to work individually on the activities that were performed as a group (question 72).
- Teachers should demonstrate how a new source should be analysed when it brought to class for the first time (question 77).
- Learners should be encouraged to use different sources in order create their own definition of concepts (question 82).

### 6.2.5.3 *Learners' responses towards learner-centred learning environment*

The aim of this section was to establish the extent to which learners were exposed to learner-centred learning environments.

**Table 6.12: Learners' responses towards learner-centred learning environment**

	1 Rarely		2 Sometimes		3 Frequently		4 Usually		5 Almost always		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%		
Q. 61	40	5.8	94	13.5	67	9.7	187	26.9	304	43.8	3.90	1.262
Q. 65	35	5	109	15.7	65	9.4	148	21.3	336	48.4	3.92	1.288
Q. 69	91	13.1	122	17.6	37	5.3	154	22.2	289	41.6	3.62	1.488
Q. 70	41	5.9	90	13	53	7.6	189	27.2	319	46	3.95	1.261
Q.73	35	5	104	15	68	9.8	212	30.5	273	39.3	3.84	1.236
Q.74	76	11	140	20.2	71	10.2	159	22.9	246	35.4	3.52	1.424

The responses to this category of questions 61 (70,7%), 65 (69,5%), 69 (63,8%), 70(73.2%), 73 (69.8%) and 74 (58.3%) indicate that learners are exposed to a learner-centred learning environment. Responses for all the questions in this section reflected a mean above three that indicates that learners were usually or almost always exposed to a learner-centred learning environment during history lessons. A SD that varies between 1.236 to 1.488 indicates that there is a fare agreement in terms of usually or almost always being exposed to a learner-centred learning environment.

The responses to this category of questions 61 (70,7%), 65 (69,5%), 69 (63,8%), 70(73.2%), 73 (69.8%) and 74 (58.3%) indicate that learners usually/almost always receives explanation of difficult material/ideas from their teachers (question 61); receives attention from their teachers when they do not understand (question 65); receives explanation of

concepts and terminologies in their own languages (question 69); experience their teacher pausing during the lesson to check if learners are still following (question 70); receives an indication that their teachers are interested in the responses provided by learners (question 73); and relate what is happening in class with what is happening in their communities (question 74).

#### 6.2.5.4 *Learners' responses towards assessment-centred learning environment*

The aim of this section was to establish the extent to which learners were exposed to an assessment-centred learning environment.

**Table 6.13: Learners' responses towards assessment-centred learning environment**

	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	SD
	Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Usually		Almost always			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%		
Q. 63	41	5.9	94	13.5	57	8.2	213	30.7	284	40.9	3.88	1.250
Q. 66	20	2.9	64	9.2	63	9.1	177	25.5	367	52.9	4.17	1.108
Q. 79	278	40.1	180	25.9	65	9.4	83	12	83	12	2.29	1.407
Q. 80	209	30.1	167	24.1	57	8.2	114	16.4	143	20.6	2.73	1.543
Q. 81	136	19.6	220	31.7	65	9.4	138	19.9	127	18.3	2.85	1.427
Q. 89	295	42.5	204	29.4	59	8.5	70	10.1	62	8.9	2.13	1.309

In responding to the questions in this category, learners indicated that they were not always exposed to an assessment-centred learning environment. Responses to questions 79(66%), 80(54.2%), 81(51.3%) and 89(71.9%) reflected a mean less than three ranging from 2.13 to 2.85. This indicate that learners are rarely/sometimes exposed to the aspects of an

assessment-centred learning environment such as, being allowed to choose the topic that they want for assignments and projects (question 79), being allowed to mark their own work (question 80), allowing other learners to mark the work (81), and the teacher helping learners to choose topics that they want for assignments and projects (question 89). These aspects will therefore require attention in order to enhance learners' exposure to an assessment-centred learning environment.

Responses to questions 63(71.6%) and 66(78.4)% indicate that learners are usually/almost always exposed to regular feedback after engaging in an activity and are asked questions by the teacher to establish how much they know about the topic.

It can be concluded from the data obtained on the different learning environments that learners are exposed to a great extent to a learner-centred learning environment. There is a need to improve learners' exposure to community-centred learning environment, knowledge-centred learning environment and the assessment centred learning environment.

### **6.3 TEACHERS' RESPONSES**

In this section data received from 96 history teachers will be presented and analysed.

#### **6.3.1 Teachers' qualifications and experience**

The aim of this section was to establish teachers' biographical details, teaching experience and qualifications.



**Table 6.14: Teachers' qualifications and experience**

**N =96**

		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	71	74%	Female	25	26%			
<b>History teaching experience</b>	0-3	11	11.5%	3-6	16	16.7%	6-9	28	29.2%
	9yrs and more	41	42.7%						
<b>Medium of instruction</b>	English	73	76%	Afrikaans	14	14.6%	Dual medium	6	6.3%
	Parallel medium	3	3.1%						
<b>Qualifications</b>	M+2	1	1%	M+3	14	14.6%	M+4	41	42.7%
	M+5	36	37.5%	M+6	4	4.2%			
<b>Level of history major</b>	M+1	1	1%	M+2	2	2.1%	M+3	33	34.4%
	M+4	51	53.1%	M+5	6	6.3%	M+6	3	3.1%
<b>Field of further study</b>	History teaching	7	7.3%	Curriculum	7	7.3%	History courses	10	10.4%
	Management	22	22.9%	Non-	48	50%			

				education					
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Most of the history teachers (74%) were males. 42.7% of the history teachers had nine and more than nine years' teaching experience. 76% of the history teachers used English as a medium of instruction, whilst 14.6% used Afrikaans. 6.3% of history teachers operated within a dual medium as opposed to the 3.1% who worked in a parallel medium environment.

Teachers' responses to the level of qualifications indicated out of the total of 96 teachers:

- 14 respondents indicated that they have matric + diploma (M + 3)
- 41 respondents indicated that they have matric + junior degree (M + 4)
- 36 respondents indicated that they have matric + honours degree (M + 5)
- 4 respondents indicated that they have matric + a masters degree (M + 6)

Responses to the statement that sought to establish the extent to which history teachers in the Free State province have majored in history indicated that out of a total of 96 teachers:

- 33 majored in history up to a diploma level (M + 3)
- 51 majored in history up to a junior degree level (M + 4)
- 6 majored in history up to honours degree level (M + 5)
- 3 majored in history up to a masters degree level (M + 6)

From the above, it can therefore be concluded that most of the history teachers are qualified to teach history as 95 out of 96 history teachers indicated that they have the minimum qualification to teach and that 93 out of 96 respondents indicated that they have majored in history at different qualification levels.

Even-though teachers are said to be qualified, there is a need to get teachers to improve their qualifications especially the extent to which they major in history. Responses to the question about field of further study also support this need by indicating that only 7.3% of teachers were pursuing history teaching related courses as opposed to the 72,9% of history teachers pursuing further studies in other fields except curriculum and history.

### 6.3.2 Numbers of history learners in Free State schools (2003-2007)

**Table 6.15: Fluctuation, increase and decrease of the number of history learners in Free State schools (2003-2007)**

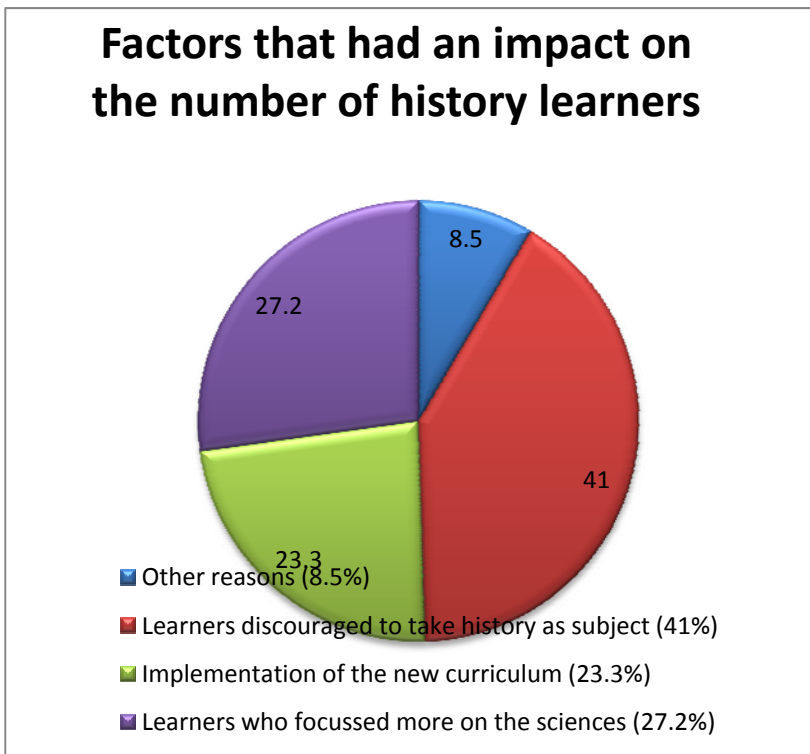
**N = 96**

	No of respondents	%
Decreased	49	51%
Fluctuated	25	26%
Increased	22	23%

The responses from teachers indicated that the number of history learners in the Free State schools was not stable. The number of teachers who indicated that they had experienced a decrease is 51%, whilst 26% of teachers experienced an increase in the number of learners. Teachers who experienced fluctuating numbers of learners made up 23% of the sample. Factors that contributed to the unstable intake of history learners will be presented in figure 6.7.

#### 6.3.2.1 *Factors impacting on the number of history learners*

The pie chart below portrays the impact of different factors on the number of history learners in the Free State province in the last 5 years.



**Figure 6.1: The impact of different factors on the number of history learners in schools in the Free State**

Responses to question 12 were categorised and coded by using the above categories. Most of the teachers, 41%, believed that learners were discouraged from taking history as a subject. Some of the responses from teachers included:

- *“as it was seen to be less attractive and economically unviable”.*
- *“other teachers who tell learners false information about history careers”*
- *“lack of bursaries for history”*
- *“allocation in schools is such that the so-called brightest learners are encouraged not to do history”*
- *“Schools not allocating money for history resources and projects”.*

The emphasis that was placed on mathematics, science and technology within the South African context to address the need for, for example engineers was seen by 27.2% of history teachers as an impact on the decrease in the number of history learners. The following are responses provided:

- *“maths and science learners receive a lot of bursaries”*
- *“there is a perception that learners doing maths and science will be secured of better paying jobs”*
- *“maths and science is receiving national coverage and attention more than history”*
- *“maths and science learners perceived to be more intelligent”*

The number of teachers (23,3 %) believe that the introduction of the new curriculum in South Africa contributed to decrease in the number of learners taking history. A variety of subjects in the different learning field were introduced to choose from that appeared more attractive than history.

From the data gathered 8.5% of respondents cited other reasons such as, *“lack of interest from learners”, “rigid subject groupings in some schools”, “demotivated teachers and learners”, “history teachers not receiving support from the school and the perception that history is a failing subject”*.

### **6.3.3 Teachers’ perception about history as school subject**

This section intended to obtain data on teachers’ perceptions of how they viewed history as a subject.

**Table 6.16: Teachers' perceptions about history as school subject**

**N = 96**

	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	SD
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%		
Q. 16	---	---	1	1	1	1	41	42.7	52	54.2	4.52	.581
Q. 17	46	47.9	37	38.5	2	2.1	9	9.4	2	2.1	1.79	1.015
Q. 18	1	1	7	7.3	9	9.4	27	28.1	52	54.2	4.27	.978
Q. 19	17	17.7	38	39.6	6	6.3	13	13.5	22	22.9	2.84	1.468
Q. 20	17	17.7	22	22.9	6	6.3	31	32.3	20	20.8	3.16	1.446
Q. 21	1	1	2	2.1	8	8.3	44	45.8	41	42.7	4.27	.788
Q. 22	---	---	---	---	---	---	25	26	71	74	4.74	.441
Q. 23	---	---	---	---	13	13.5	29	30.2	53	55.2	4.42	.723
Q. 24	---	---	1	1	6	6.3	47	49	42	43.8	4.35	.649
Q. 25	7	7.3	22	22.9	23	24	31	32.3	12	12.5	3.20	1.154
Q. 26	25	26	26	27.1	11	11.5	22	22.9	12	12.5	2.69	1.402
Q. 27	---	---	2	2.1	5	5.2	49	51	39	40.6	4.32	.673
Q. 28	4	4.2	6	6.3	5	5.2	25	26	56	58.3	4.28	1.093
Q. 29	27	28.1	49	51	13	13.5	4	4.2	3	3.1	2.03	.934
Q. 30	1	1	8	8.3	2	2.1	51	53.1	34	35.4	4.14	.890

Responses to questions 16(96.9%), 18(82.3%), 21(88.5%), 22(100%), 23(85.4%), 24(92.8%), 25(44.8%), 27(91.6%), 28(84.3%) and 30(88.5%) reflected a mean above 3

ranging from 3.16 to 4.74. This indicates that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the questions posed. Respondents agreed/strongly agreed that:

- They enjoy teaching history (question 16)
- History should be made a compulsory subject(question 18)
- Learners have the potential of mastering history (question 21)
- History can play an important role in the current transformation of South Africa (question 22)
- The NCS history content is more progressive than the previous content frameworks (question 23)
- History teaching should reflect the processes that historians use when writing history (question 24)
- Learners enjoy history (question 25)
- Critical outcomes can be attained through the study of history (question 27)
- Learners laziness is the main cause for their lack of achievement (question 29)
- The number of periods allocated for history is enough (question 30)

Responses to questions 17(86.4%) and 19(57.3%) indicate that teachers strongly disagreed/disagreed that history is a difficult subject and that it is perceived as a failing subject in their schools. These responses add to the positive perception that teachers have about history as school subject.

Responses to questions 26(53.1%) and 29(79.1%) reflected a mean below 3 and a SD ranging between .934 and 1.0 that indicates that the majority of the respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that:

- Their school management teams are supportive towards the needs of history
- History was the first choice subject for their learners

Responses to question 20 indicate that 53.1% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that history is a political subject. This respond can be seen as negative because the nature of history is compromised by such assertions.

### 6.3.4 Teaching methodologies, approaches and strategies

The aim of this section was to establish the different teaching methodologies, approaches and strategies used by history teachers and to relate it to the different aspects of the learning environments mentioned.

#### 6.3.4.1 Teachers' responses towards community-centred learning environment

The aim of this section was to establish the extent to which teachers exposed their learners to a community-centred learning environment.

**Table 6.17: Teachers' responses towards community-centred learning environment**

**N = 96**

	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	SD
	Rarely		Some-times		Frequently		Usually		Almost always			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Q. 38	25	26	23	24	16	16.7	18	18.8	14	14.6	2.72	1.412
Q. 42	51	53.1	18	18.8	12	12.5	12	12.5	3	3.1	1.94	1.204
Q. 45	---	---	2	2.1	13	13.5	31	32.3	50	52.1	4.34	.792
Q. 47	---	---	---	---	6	6.3	34	35.4	56	58.3	4.52	.615
Q. 53	1	1	2	2.1	3	3.1	38	39.6	52	54.2	4.44	.751
Q. 54	65	67.7	10	10.4	13	13.5	3	3.1	5	5.2	1.68	1.147
Q. 55	14	14.6	35	36.5	23	24	11	11.5	13	13.5	2.73	1.244
Q. 56	23	24	30	31.3	16	16.7	14	14.6	13	13.5	2.63	1.355
Q. 57	58	60.4	14	14.6	7	7.3	11	11.5	6	6.3	1.89	1.305



Q. 58	52	54.2	8	8.3	11	11.5	11	11.5	14	14.6	2.24	1.547
Q. 62	27	28.1	23	24	9	9.4	13	13.5	24	25	2.83	1.583
Q. 65	9	9.4	6	6.3	6	6.3	31	32.3	44	45.8	3.99	1.277
Q. 68	55	57.3	17	17.7	10	10.4	8	8.3	6	6.3	1.89	1.255
Q. 69	51	53.1	14	14.6	11	11.5	11	11.5	9	9.4	2.09	1.400
Q. 72	53	55.2	12	12.5	10	10.4	9	9.4	11	11.5	2.08	1.449

The responses reflected that teachers were not doing enough to expose learners to a community-centred environment.

The data analysis of this section revealed that responses to questions 45(84.4%), 47(93.7%), 53(93.8%) and 65(78.1%) obtained a mean of 4.34, 4.52, 4.44 and 3.99 respectively, and a SD from .615 to .792 indicated that teachers usually/almost always exposed learners to community-centred learning environment. Responses indicate that teachers usually/almost always:

- Allows open communication to dominate during lessons (question 45)
- Value and emphasise respect, acceptance and tolerance during lessons (question 47)
- Encourage questioning by learners (question 53)
- Design class rules in consultation with learners (question 65)

The responses for questions 38(50%), 42(71.9%), 54(78.1%), 55(51.1%), 56(55.3%), 57(75%), 58(62.5%), 62(52.1%), 68(75%), 69(67.7%) and 72(67.7%), indicate that a large number of respondents rarely/sometimes exposed learners to community-centred learning environment. Teachers rarely/sometime:

- Address and refer to issues raised by local history during history lessons (question 38)
- Bring along artefacts to class to enhance the teaching process(question 42)
- Visit heritage sites, museums and historical sites (question 54)
- Use group work (question 55)

- Allow learners to help each other with certain tasks (question 56)
- Enable learners to watch and listen to history related programmes on TV and radio (question 57)
- Invite other teachers to class to present concepts that are not clear him/her (question 58)
- Allow learners to have a say on how seating is arranged in class(question 62)
- Allow learners to have a say in the kind of used resources that are used in school (question 68).
- Encourage learners to bring artefacts and other primary sources to class to enhance learning (question 69).
- Make learners aware of the appeal procedures if they are not happy with the decision of the teacher (question 72).

#### **6.3.4.2      *Teachers' responses towards knowledge-centred learning environment***

The aim of this section was to establish the extent to which teachers exposed learners to a knowledge-centred learning environment.

**Table 6.18: Teachers' responses towards knowledge-centred learning environment**

**N = 96**

	1 Rarely		2 Sometimes		3 Frequently		4 Usually		5 Almost always		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Q. 33	6	6.3	25	26	15	15.6	31	32.3	19	19.8	3.33	1.237
Q. 34	3	3.1	22	22.9	14	14.6	37	38.5	20	20.8	3.51	1.152
Q. 35	18	18.8	26	27.1	11	11.5	22	22.9	19	19.8	2.98	1.436
Q. 36	2	2.1	22	22.9	8	8.3	40	41.7	24	25	3.65	1.151
Q. 37	3	3.1	17	17.7	13	13.5	41	42.7	21	21.9	3.63	1.111
Q. 39	8	8.3	26	27.1	20	20.8	26	27.1	15	15.6	3.15	1.229
Q. 40	1	1	19	19.8	22	22.9	27	28.1	27	28.1	3.63	1.126
Q. 43	14	14.6	38	39.6	12	12.5	20	20.8	12	12.5	2.77	1.285
Q. 44	11	11.5	24	25	19	19.8	24	25	18	18.8	3.15	1.306
Q. 48	---	---	6	6.3	12	12.5	53	55.2	25	26	4.01	.801
Q. 49	---	---	4	4.2	13	13.5	40	41.7	39	40.6	4.19	.825
Q. 50	6	6.3	17	17.7	12	12.5	11	11.5	50	52.1	3.85	1.384
Q. 59	10	10.4	17	17.7	12	12.5	20	20.8	37	38.5	3.59	1.419
Q. 67	50	52.1	12	12.5	9	9.4	16	16.7	9	9.4	2.19	1.453

Responses to questions 33(52.1%), 34(59.3%), 36(66.7%), 37(64.9%), 40(56.2%), 48(81.2%), 49(82.3%), 50(63.6%) and 59(59.3%) indicate that teachers usually/almost always exposed learners to the following aspects of knowledge-centred learning environment:

- History lesson focus on a process of knowledge construction that involves learners (question 33)
- Always expose learners to various perspectives of the same concepts (question 34)
- Encourage learners to develop their own views based on evidence (question 36)
- History lessons focus on the interrogation of evidence to create an understanding of the past (question 37)
- History lessons are focused on the development of skill and the acquisition of content (question 40)
- Constantly provide feedback, hints, reminders and corrections as learners are engaged in an activity (question 48)
- Provide and organise necessary resources for learners (question 49)
- Make notes for learners (question 50)
- Lessons follow activities as they appear in the textbook (question 59)

Responses to questions 39(42.7%) and 44(43.8%) respectively indicates the need for more teachers to address issues of propaganda, bias and prejudice during history lessons, and also to demonstrate the skills and techniques that teachers want learners to develop during history lessons. The SD calculated for question 48 and 49 indicated that the majority of teachers usually/almost always implement the aspect:

- Constantly provide feedback, hints, reminders and corrections as learners are engaged in an activity (question 48)
- Provide and organise necessary resources for learners (question 49)

The mean below 3 for questions 35(45.9%), 43(54.2%) and 67(64.6%) ranging between 2.19 and 2.98 indicate that teachers rarely/sometimes attempt to expose learners to different textbooks, expose learners to authentic tasks that allow for the transfer of skills and knowledge, and to ensure that learners are aware of the history learning outcomes and assessment standards.

### 6.3.4.3 *Teachers' responses towards learner-centred learning environment*

The aim of this section was to establish the extent to which teachers expose learners to learner-centred learning environment.

**Table 6.19: Teachers responses towards a learner-centred learning environment**

**N=96**

	1 Rarely		2 Sometimes		3 Frequently		4 Usually		5 Almost always		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Q. 31	1	1	33	34.4	22	22.9	29	30.2	11	11.5	3.17	1.063
Q. 32	32	33.3	35	36.5	13	13.5	10	10.4	6	6.3	2.20	1.193
Q. 46	29	30.2	29	30.2	9	9.4	10	10.4	19	19.8	2.59	1.505
Q. 60	59	61.5	20	20.8	8	8.3	7	7.3	2	2.1	1.68	1.041
Q. 63	54	56.3	16	16.7	7	7.3	10	10.4	9	9.4	2.00	1.384
Q. 71	25	26	34	35.4	8	8.3	10	10.4	18	18.8	2.60	1.462

From the table it is reflected that history teachers are not doing enough to ensure exposure to a learner-centred approach. From the six questions that were posed, only responses to question 31(41.7%) reflected a mean of 3.17. That indicate that few respondents usually/almost always acknowledge the knowledge that learners bring to class, 35.4% of respondents indicate that they rarely/sometimes acknowledge it, whilst 22.9% frequently acknowledge it.

Responses to questions 32(69.8%), 46(60.4%), 60(82.3%), 63(73%) and 71(61.4%) reflected a mean that ranged between 1.68 and 2.60 that indicates that majority of teachers rarely/sometimes focus on individuals' success (question 32), encourage to use their own

language where they do not understand concepts and terminologies (question 46), allow learners to choose the kind of activities that they want to do in class (question 60), allow learners to have a say in the kind of historical places that are visited (question 63) and allow learners to use their own language to ask where they do not understand (question 71).

#### 6.3.4.4 *Teachers responses towards assessment-centred learning environment*

Responses to this category of questions were aimed to establish the extent to which history teachers expose learners to an assessment-centred learning environment.

**Table 6.20: Teachers' responses towards assessment-centred learning environment**

**N=96**

	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	SD
	Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Usually		Almost always			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Q. 41	10	10.4	16	16.7	6	6.3	22	22.9	42	43.8	3.73	1.433
Q. 51	22	22.9	41	42.7	13	13.5	7	7.3	13	13.5	2.46	1.297
Q. 52	24	25	34	35.4	15	15.6	16	16.7	7	7.3	2.46	1.239
Q. 61	70	72.9	16	16.7	5	5.2	3	3.1	2	2.1	1.45	.893
Q. 64	47	49	22	22.9	12	12.5	9	9.4	6	6.3	2.01	1.252
Q. 66	42	43.8	11	11.5	19	19.8	15	15.6	9	9.4	2.35	1.414
Q. 70	52	54.2	14	14.6	12	12.5	8	8.3	10	10.4	2.06	1.398

From the seven questions that were posed, only responses to question 41 reflected a mean above three, whilst the rest reflected means below three. Responses to question 41(66.7%)

reflected a mean of 3.73. This indicates that most respondents usually/almost always view assessment as part of the teaching and learning process and not as a separate process.

Responses to questions 51(65.6%), 52(60.4%), 61(89.6%), 64(71.9%), 66(55.3%) and 70(68.8%) reflected a mean below three ranging from 1.45 to 2.46. This indicate that most respondents rarely/sometimes exposed learners to copies of good essays written by other learners (question 51), allow learners to mark their own work (question 52), have a say in the design of the assessment plan (question 61), have a choice on how they want to demonstrate their knowledge in class (question 64), assess the work of other learners (question 66) and have an understanding of the different assessment tools (question 70).

From the data presented above (table 6.20) it can be concluded that history teachers are not doing enough to ensure that learners are adequately exposed to the different aspects of the assessment-centred learning approach.

### **6.3.5 History teachers' NCS competency**

This section of the questionnaire was compiled to identify areas of the NCS that teachers are conversant with.

#### **6.3.5.1 Attendance of NCS training workshops**

It was the aim of this question to establish if teachers have been exposed to training of the NCS as well as the number of workshops attended.

**Table 6.21: Teachers' attendance of NCS training**

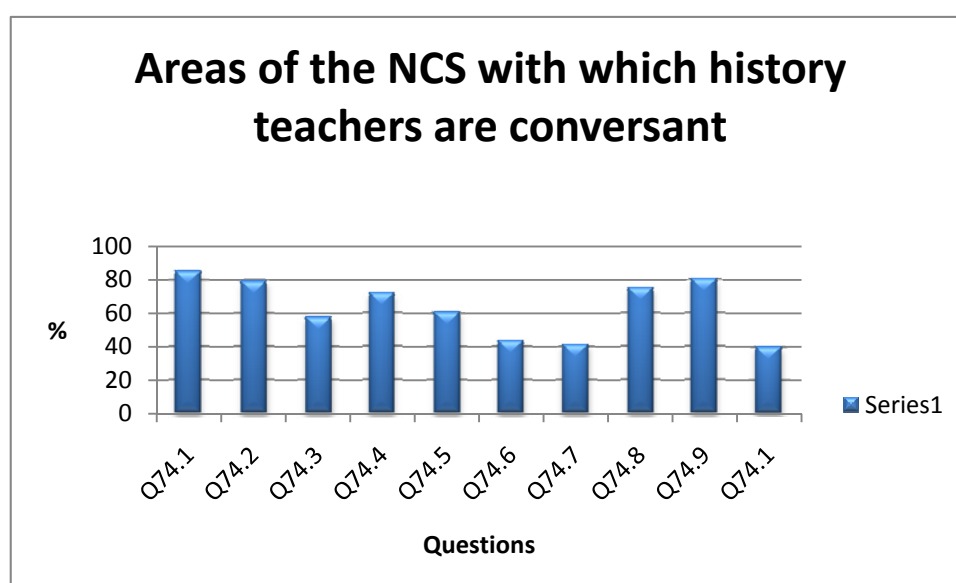
**N=96**

No. of NCS trainings attended	1		2		3		4	
	Once		Twice		More than twice		Never Attended	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Q. 73	11	11.5	36	37.5	46	47.9	2	2.1

The above table (6.20), indicate that almost all the respondents (96.9%) have been trained in the NCS. 47.9% of the teachers attended trainings/workshops more than twice, 37.5% twice, 11.5% once and 2.1% of the teachers had never been trained.

### 6.3.5.2 Areas of the NCS with which teachers are conversant

The purpose of this section was to allow teachers to identify areas of the NCS with which they need assistance.



**Figure 6.2: Areas of the NCS with which history teachers are conversant**



The analysis of the data indicates that teachers are conversant with the following questions:

- Question 74.1, interpreting FET history learning outcomes (85.4%);
- Question 74.2, the history assessment standards (79.1%);
- Question 74.4, designing appropriate history lesson plan (71.7%)
- Question 74.5, identifying good resource material that can be used during history lessons (60.9%)
- Question 74.8, the marking of extended writing pieces (75%);
- Question 74.9 understanding of history content framework for the FET band (80.2%)

Responses to questions 74.3, designing activities that address history learning outcomes and assessment standards (57.6%), 74.6 setting of history test and examination papers that are in line with the NCS (43.5%), 74.7, designing appropriate rubrics to assess history activities (41.3%) and 74.10 applying constructivist teaching methodologies during history lessons (40.2%) indicate that a lesser number of teachers are conversant these aspects.

### 6.3.5.3 Areas of the NCS with which history teachers need assistance

The purpose of this section was to request history teachers to identify areas of the NCS in which they need to be empowered.

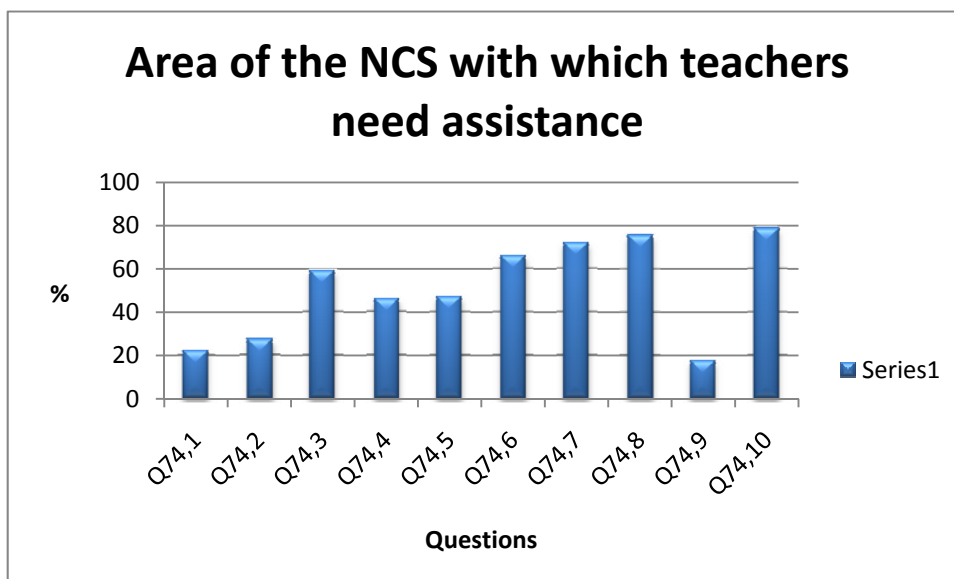


Figure 6.3: Areas of the NCS with which teachers need assistance

The analysis of the data indicate that teachers need assistance in a more or less extend to the following questions, 75.3 designing activities that address history learning outcomes and assessment standards(58.8%), 75.4 designing appropriate history lesson plan(45.9%), 75.5 identifying good resource materials that can be used during history lessons(47.1%), 75.6 setting of history test and examination papers that are in line with the NCS(65.9%), 75.7 designing appropriate rubrics to assess history activities(71.8%), 75.10 applying constructivist teaching methodologies during history lessons(78.8%).

From the data presented and the analysis conducted it became evident that there is a correlation in the results provided in 6.3.5.2 and 6.3.5.3. The respondents indicated questions 74.3, designing activities that address history learning outcomes and assessment standards(57.6%), 74.6 setting of history test and examination papers that are in line with the NCS (43.5%), 74.7, designing appropriate rubrics to assess history activities(41.3%) and 74.10 applying constructivist teaching methodologies during history lessons(40.2%) as the ones they are less conversant in. The same questions were identified by teachers as the ones they needed to be capacitated in.

### **6.3.6 Group statistics**

This refers to the data that was collected and represent the responses of the specific groups. In the case of this study, the two focus groups that were focused at included undergraduate teachers and postgraduate teachers.

#### **6.3.6.1 *Undergraduate's and postgraduates' perception on history***

The purpose was to establish whether there was a difference between how the undergraduates (see question 8 in the questionnaire) and the postgraduate's teachers perceive history as a subject. The results obtained are presented in the table 6.22. Questions 16-30 were grouped together and interpreted in terms of the perceptions of teachers with undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications.

**Table 6.22: Undergraduate and postgraduate history teachers' perceptions of history teaching**

**N= 96**

	<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Section B</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	56	55.0893	3.92788
	<b>Postgraduate</b>	40	54.5	4.72853

From Table 6.22 one can deduce that there is no significant difference on the perceptions of postgraduates and undergraduate teachers offering history as a subject. The difference of 0.5893 between 55.0893 (undergraduate) and 54.5 (postgraduate) mean is minimal. Based on these findings there is no difference in how history teaching is perceived between teachers with postgraduate qualifications and teachers with undergraduate qualification.

**6.3.6.2 History teachers' level of history major: postgraduates and undergraduates**

The purpose of this analysis was to establish whether there was a significant difference on how teachers (see question 9 in the questionnaire) with a postgraduate qualification in history perceived history teaching (questions 16-30 in section B were grouped) as opposed to teachers with an undergraduate qualification in history.

**Table 6.23: Postgraduate and undergraduate history major teachers' perception of history**

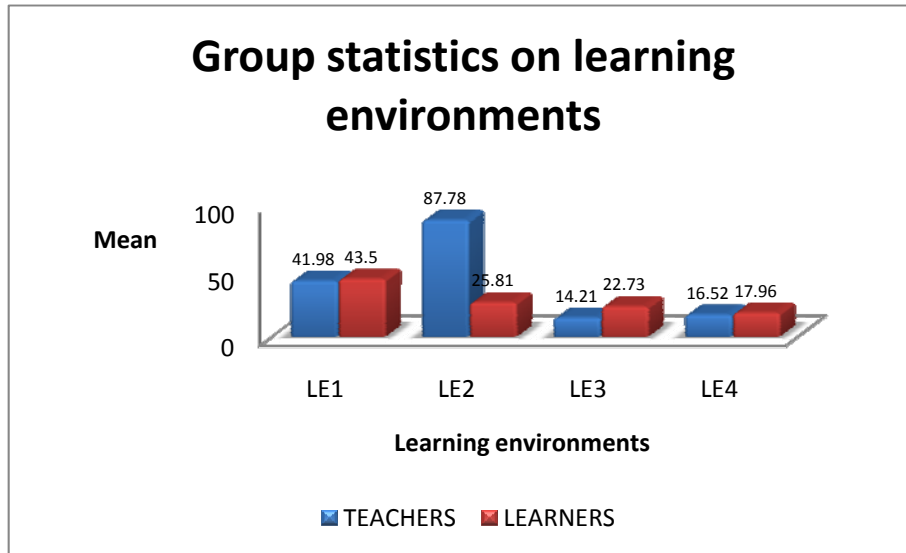
**N=96**

	<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Section B</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	87	54.7586	4.28889
	<b>Postgraduate</b>	9	55.6667	4.1833

The table above reflects a slight difference on how history is perceived by teachers with a postgraduate qualification in history and those with an undergraduate qualification. The mean for teachers with a postgraduate qualification is at 55.6667 as opposed to the 54.7586 of the undergraduate group. The two groups seem to have almost the same standard deviation from their means, 4.18 and 4.29 respectively that indicates that the group with a postgraduate qualification in history and the group with an undergraduate qualification more or less perceive history teaching in the same manner.

The researcher however anticipated that a significant difference would have been detected between teachers with a postgraduate and undergraduate qualification which was not the case. It can be concluded from the data in tables 6.22 and 6.23 that qualifications at postgraduate level and undergraduate level does not have an influence how the teachers perceive history as a subject.

**6.3.6.3 Comparison between teachers' and learners' responses towards the different learning environments**



**Figure 6.4: Comparison between teachers' and learners' responses towards the different learning environments**

The data displayed in the graph that reflects the community-centred learning environment (LE1) for learners with a mean (41,98) and for teachers (43,50) indicates a response of no significant difference between the experience of the two groups. From the data provided by the mean value in the graph it is evident that teachers' experience (87,78) of the knowledge centred learning environment (LE2) is considerably different from those of the learners (25,81). The mean of the learner centred environment (LE3) indicates that there is more agreement between the teachers' views (14,21) and the learners' views (22,73) regarding a learner centred learning environment. The assessment-centred learning environment (LE4) with a mean of 16,52 indicating the experience of the teachers and 17,96 for the learners show no significant difference between the two groups.

To infer the findings to the population the researcher made use of the t-test which is presented in table 6.24.

### 6.3.7 Interpretation of the t-value of the different learning environments

In this section the t-value was used to be determined with the purpose to identify a significant difference between the views of how teachers and learners experienced the different learning environments. The hypotheses will therefore be accepted or rejected on the significant level of 5% (Pietersen & Maree, 2007: 226-229).

**Table 6.24: Independent samples test**

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	Dt	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
LE1									
Equal variances assumed	2.658	.103	-1.453	787	.147	-1.517	1.044	-3.567	.532
Equal variances not assumed			-1.337	117.083	.184	-1.517	1.135	-3.765	.730
LE2									
Equal variances assumed	63.303	.000	101.630	787	.000	61.975	.610	60.778	63.172
Equal variances not assumed			68.586	104.101	.000	61.975	.904	60.183	63.766
LE3									
Equal variances assumed	3.165	.076	-15.451	787	.000	-8.519	.551	-9.601	-7.437
Equal variances not assumed			-14.406	117.920	.000	-8.519	.591	-9.690	-7.348
LE4									
Equal variances assumed	74.509	.000	-2.837	787	.005	-1.437	.507	-2.432	-.443
Equal variances not assumed			-1.975	105.007	.051	-1.437	.728	-2.880	.005

The Levene's test was used to determine the  $F$  value, that is the ratio of the two group variance. The large  $F$  values in the case of LE2 and LE4 are an indication that the variances in these two instances will be more dissimilar. It is an indication of the difference between the views of the teachers and the learners in terms of their experience of the above mentioned learning environments. The significance level of the Levene statistics determined which line of the  $t$ -test output was used.

- LE1: Community-centred learning environment

The test for variance equality ( $p=.103$ ) shows that the variances can be assumed to be equal. This implies that the appropriate  $t$ -test is given in the top row. The probability ( $p=.147$ ) of this  $t$ -test indicates that there is no significant difference on the 5% level ( $p\text{-value} > 0,05$ ) between the experiences of the teachers and learners regarding this specific learning environment. The null hypothesis is thus accepted, namely:

$H_{0(a1)}$ : There is no difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the community-centred learning environment.

- LE2: Knowledge-centred learning environment

The test for variance equality ( $p=.000$ ) shows that the variances cannot be assumed to be equal. This implies that the appropriate  $t$ -test is given in the bottom row. The probability ( $p=.000$ ) of this  $t$ -test indicates that there is a significant difference on the 5% level ( $p\text{-value} < 0,05$ ) between the experiences of the teachers and learners regarding this specific learning environment. The null hypothesis is thus rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted, namely:

$H_{a2}$ : There is a difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the knowledge-centred learning environment.

- LE3: Learner-centred learning environment

The test for variance equality ( $p=.076$ ) shows that the variances can be assumed to be equal. This implies that the appropriate  $t$ -test is given in the top row. The probability ( $p=.000$ ) of this  $t$ -test indicates that there is a significant difference on the

5% level ( $p$ -value  $> 0,05$ ) between the experiences of the teachers and learners regarding this specific learning environment. The null hypothesis is thus rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted, namely:

$H_{a3}$ : There is a difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the learner-centred learning environment.

- LE4: Assessment-centred learning environment

The test for variance equality ( $p=.000$ ) shows that the variances cannot be assumed to be equal. This implies that the appropriate  $t$ -test is given in the bottom row. The probability ( $p=.051$ ) of this  $t$ -test indicates that there is no significant difference on the 5% level ( $p$ -value  $> 0,05$ ) between the experiences of the teachers and learners regarding this specific learning environment. The null hypothesis is thus accepted, namely:

$H_{o(a4)}$ : There is no difference between the views of the teachers and learners concerning the assessment-centred learning environment.

The findings from the  $t$ -test therefore conclude that there is a difference in how teachers and learners view a learner-centred learning environment as well as a knowledge-centred learning environment.

## 6.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the aims of the empirical research were described. The statistical results were then noted in the frequency tables, represented in an orderly fashion and described. The  $t$ -test was applied on group statistics to determine if the two groups, teachers and learners, viewed the various learning environments in the same way.

In Chapter 7 the findings, research conclusion and recommendations will be provided.



## **FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The main focus of Chapter 7 is the presentation of the research findings and making appropriate recommendations in order to provide guidelines for the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET schools.

### **7.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **7.2.1 Achieving the aim and objectives of Chapter 1**

An in-depth literature review was conducted and reported on in Chapters 2 to 4 of this work. It provided the background around which the data collection strategy was designed (see 5.4). The data collection strategy used in this study was the questionnaires. There was a questionnaire for teachers (Appendix E) and another one for learners (Appendix D). Data from these sources were presented and analysed, as indicated in Chapter 6.

Related literature on curriculum transformation in South Africa, the development of history as a subject, learning and developmental theories, and learning environments was investigated in the literature review. This literature review together with the empirical investigation was conducted with the intention of accomplishing the following objectives, namely:

- To determine the perception that teachers and learners have towards the teaching and learning of history.

- To determine the current status of the teaching and learning of history in the FET band of the schools within the Free State province.
- To identify the different aspects that will ensure the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history.

Based on these objectives the central aim of this study is to provide guidelines that should be considered in order to structure a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET band.

### **7.2.2 Quantitative research**

Quantitative research methods were used in conducting this research (see 1.4.3; 5.3). 96 history teachers and 697 history learners formed part of the sample for this research. Relevant information about the data collection strategy employed in this research was presented (see 1.4.3; 5.4; 5.4.1).

## **7.3 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY AND THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

### **7.3.1 Teachers' and learners' perceptions about the teaching and learning of history**

Perception is one of the important variables that impact on the learning environment. From the literature study, the role of perception in enhancing the learning process was explained and emphasised. Perception is seen as an internal and personal process that is influenced by the information that is gathered from the environment. Perceptions are important because they serve as a reference point for behaviour. Perceptions have an influence on whether the learning environments have a positive or a negative influence on the learning process (see 4.6; 4.6.1, 4.6.2).

### **7.3.1.1 Learners' perception**

Establishing the perception that learners have towards the subject is very important, as the learning results are not a mere function of the instructional environment, since each learner operates as a filter for the possible influence of the environment (see 4.6.2). It is due to this reason that, when designing a powerful learning environment, learners' perception should be taken into consideration.

In responding to the question on learner perception towards history as a subject, sections B, C and D were used. Responses from section B wanted to establish the reasons that caused learners to choose history as a subject. For all six the questions learners provided what can be viewed as positive responses, since they strongly disagreed/strongly agreed with statements that sought to establish reasons for choosing the subject. Learners disagreed with the statements that:

- they chose history because there were no other choices in their school;
- they chose history because the Mathematics and Science classes were full;
- they chose history because their parents wanted them to do it; and
- they chose history because they liked their history teacher.

Learners strongly agreed/agreed with the following statements:

- I choose history because I enjoy it.
- I choose history because it is easy.

The responses provided indicate that learners had a positive perception about history because they depicted learners as having freely chosen history as a subject. This kind of perception should be maintained or enhanced, as it is believed by Purkey and Novak (1996:22) that each person's perceptual field can be continually enriched, expanded and modified.

Section C of the learners' questionnaire wanted to establish the extent to which learners are aware of the value of history as a subject. This awareness of the value of history as a

subject impacts on the kind of perception that history learners have about the subject. The statements used in this section of the questionnaire were informed by the aspects addressed in paragraph 2.3.2 which focused on the value of history as a subject.

Responses received for this section reflect that learners were aware of the value of history as a subject because in most of the responses, above 70% of the responses strongly agreed with the statement provided with the exception of 64.4% given for question 12. This positive feedback on the value on the subject has an impact on the kind of perception that learners have towards the subject because they form part of the information from the environment that influence learners' perceptions (see 4.6.2). Learners seemed to be in disagreement in their responses to question 16, which sought to establish the relevancy of the subject to today's youth. The spread in the way they responded to the question indicated that they viewed the question differently.

Section D of learners' questionnaire sought to establish the kind of experiences that learners have towards history as a subject, as this will impact on the perception that they have about the subject. Learners' experience towards history as a subject was evaluated using the following categories, namely study attitude, anxiety, study habits, cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, and the study milieu (see 5.4.3.1.4; 6.2.4)

From paragraph 6.2.4 it became evident that learners had a positive experience towards history as a subject as most of the aspects received positive responses except for learners ability to use cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. The following areas were identified as the ones needing attention in order to enhance learners' exposure to different aspects that might entrench the positive perception that they have towards history:

### **Study attitude**

- Learners postponing history homework to do something they enjoy more (q 32).
- Learners asking teachers for help with history assignments that are not clear (q 39).
- Learners believing that history is more difficult than other subjects (q 48).

### **Cognitive and meta-cognitive**

- Learners catch up on lost work in history (q 25).
- Learners' ability to think of examples which relate history to what is happening outside the class (q 30).
- Learners' attempt to find connections between the different sections of history (q 35).
- Learners' ability to analyse factors that lead to an event in history (q 37);
- Learners' ability to respond well to questions in the history tests and examinations (q 42).
- Learners' ability to reflect during the writing process (q 46).
- Learners' ability to identify areas and subsections of history that are not clear to them (q 51).
- Learners' ability to develop structures that assist them in writing the extended pieces (q 52).
- Learners' strategies to be used by learners when preparing for the history test and/or examinations (q 56).

### **Study habits**

- Learners' ability to write extra history essays on their own and later request teachers/parents and/or friends to look at them (q 54).
- Learners' ability to make notes of what is done during the history lessons (q 55).

#### **7.3.1.2 Teachers' perception**

Paragraph 7.3.1 presented perceptions as an internal and a personal process that is influenced by the information gathered from the environment, whilst perceptions are also seen as a results of myriad encounters with the world (see 4.6). Therefore teachers' experience, medium of instruction, qualifications, level of history major and the field of further study can be seen as aspects of the environment that impact on the perception adopted by teachers.

From 6.3.1 it is evident that most history teachers have experience spanning over six years. This reflects a very experienced teaching corps, but also indicates that the subject has

numerous teachers trained in the traditional ways of teaching (2.3.5.2), which therefore re-emphasises the need for retraining and re-skilling. The impact of this is also explicit in how teachers responded to some of the questions in the questionnaire, especially in the sections dealing with teaching methodologies, approaches and strategies, and learner involvement in the creation of the learning environment (see 6.3.4).

The extent to which teachers majored in history and the field for further studies can also be seen as environmental factors impacting on the perception that teachers have towards history. The number of history teachers with postgraduate qualifications in history is satisfactory, but the number of teachers pursuing history teaching, curriculum and history related courses is not satisfactory as compared to those who are pursuing management related courses and non-education courses (see 6.3.1).

The majority of the teachers experienced a constant decline in the number of learners taking history as a subject and mostly believed that learners were discouraged from taking the subject due to the way it is portrayed in the society and the competition the subject is getting from other learning fields (see 6.3.2).

Teachers' perception about the teaching of history is also grounded on three different but related perspectives, namely the traditional instruction perspective, the systematic-empirical perspective, and the systemic theoretical perspective (see 4.6.1).

The responses for section B of the teachers' questionnaire indicated that teachers generally had a positive perception about the teaching of history. Out of the 15 points that they had to respond to, 10 illustrated a positive experience and therefore a positive perception about history as a subject (see 6.3.3).

From the teachers' responses, the following areas that needed attention were identified:

- Teachers' believe that history is a political subject (q 20). Responses to this question indicated that 53% of the teachers believed that history was a political subject. By conceptualisation history as a political subject, the struggle among the different schools of thought is perpetuated as it appeared during the 1980s and 1990s. The fact is also illustrated that the history content taught in school is still not addressing other forms of history such as economic history (see 2.3.5.2).
- Responses to question 25 indicated that only 44.8% of the teachers agreed that their learners enjoyed the subject as compared to the 32.2% who disagreed. Learners' inability to enjoy history lessons should be seen as a challenge for teachers to reflect on how to enhance their teaching. This is what informed the problem statement mentioned in 1.2, namely identifying the need for teachers to change the way in which they are conducting the lessons so as to capture learners' interest.
- Responses to question 26 also indicate a need attention, as it reflects that only 35.4% of the teachers felt that their schools' management teams were very supportive towards the needs of history, whilst 53.1% felt they did not receive enough support from their schools' management teams. This kind of support towards teachers is very important, as it impacts on the perception that teachers might develop towards their work and history teaching in particular (see 4.6; 4.6.1).

### **7.3.2 Approaches currently used by teachers and learners during the teaching and learning of history**

South Africa's curriculum transformation adopted outcomes-based education as one of the principles for the country's education system. The critical and developmental outcomes thus became the cornerstones upon which the South African version of OBE was based. This move had an impact on how the teaching and the learning processes were to be conducted. Learning is therefore supposed to be more learner-centred and directed towards the development of specific skills (see 2.2.3).

The changes in how history is conceptualised and taught in schools changed over time towards a constructivist approach that sought to expose learners to "doing history". This

approach was grounded on the fact that learners have to be actively involved in the learning process, working with sources to create their own knowledge and to communicate this new knowledge in different forms. The other important attribute of this change on how history is taught is the emphasis on the development of the self-regulation skills within history learners (2.3.5; 2.3.5.4).

Some of the implications that the different learning theories have on how history is supposed to be taught allude to the use of reinforcement and motivation, the importance of assessment and feedback, outcomes-based approach, learner-centred approach, the use of challenging tasks, transfer of knowledge and the creation of enriched environments (see 3.3). Paragraph 3.4 also contributes to how history should be taught by illuminating the characteristics inherent in the learners within the FET band. This includes learners' ability to think abstractly, to hypothesise, to verify results, to review their own reasoning processes, to solve problems, to engage in hypothetical-deductive thinking and to detect logical inconsistencies. The importance of experiencing with the physical world and engaging in social experiences were also emphasised (see 3.4).

In order to determine the approaches that teachers and learners are exposed to in class section E of the learners' questionnaire and sections C and D of the teachers, questionnaire were used. The different responses were measured against the different characteristics of the powerful learning environments. Powerful learning environments are said to be learner-centred, knowledge-centred, community-centred and assessment-centred (see 4.4.1; 4.4.2; 4.4.3; 4.4.4).

### **7.3.2.1 Learners' exposure to the different characteristics of a powerful learning environment**

The purpose of this section in the learners' questionnaire was to determine the extent to which learners were exposed to the four different characteristics of a powerful learning environment, namely:

- Community-centred environment ( LE 1 )



- Knowledge-centred environment (LE 2)
- Learner-centred environment (LE 3 )
- Assessment-centred environment (LE 4 )

From the results provided in 6.2.5.1; 6.2.5.2; 6.2.5.3 and 6.2.5.4, it became evident that history learners were exposed to the different aspects of learning environment albeit at different extent. Learners responded very positively to all aspects of a learner-centred learning environment (6.2.5.3). There is need to improve on the extent to which learners are exposed to community-centred learning environment (6.2.5.1), knowledge-centred learning environment (6.2.5.2) and assessment-centred learning environment 6.2.5.4).

### **7.3.2.2 Teaching strategies being used and the extent of learner**

#### **involvement**

To determine the strategies used by teachers during history lessons, sections C and D of the questionnaire were used. Teachers' responses were categorised to respond to the following different characteristics of learning environment (see 5.4.3.2.3; 5.4.3.2.4), namely:

- Community-centred learning environment ( LE 1)
- Knowledge-centred learning environment (LE 2)
- Learner-centred learning environment ( LE 3)
- Assessment-centred learning environment (LE 4).

The responses reflected that teachers tended to focus more on the knowledge-centred environment and to a lesser extent on the other three characteristics of powerful learning environment (see 6.3.4.1; 6.3.4.2; 6.3.4.3 and 6.3.4.4). There is therefore a need to improve on the extent to which teachers address aspects of assessment-centred, learners-centred, and community-centred learning environments.

The responses from teachers and learners agreed that both community-centred learning environment and assessment-centred learning environment were not given adequate attention. The two groups differed on the extent to which knowledge-centred learning

environment and learner-centred learning environment were addressed during history lessons.

The following aspects of learner-centred learning environment need to be improved upon:

- Acknowledging and building on learners' prior knowledge.
- Ensuring a more individualised approach to teaching.
- Where possible, use learners' own language to explain concepts that might be giving them problems.
- Engage learners more on how they want to demonstrate their knowledge and in the design of the assessment plan (see 4.4.1).

The following aspects of knowledge-centred learning environment need to be improved upon:

- Encourage knowledge construction.
- Historical concepts should be used to enhance knowledge construction.
- History lessons should focus on the acquisition of content and skills.
- Learners should be engaged in authentic tasks that enhance understanding.
- Individual work should be used to be to enhance the internalisation process of the aspects learnt during group activities.
- Teachers should demonstrate where necessary how certain tasks are supposed to be addressed during history lessons
- Learners should be exposed to different sources in order to assist them during knowledge construction process.
- History learners should be made aware of the learning outcomes and assessment standards that guide history teaching and learning (see 4.4.2).

The following aspects of community-centred learning environment need to be improved upon:

- Encourage the use of local history.
- Visits to the heritage sites and museums.
- Encourage the use artefacts.
- Engage learners in group work.

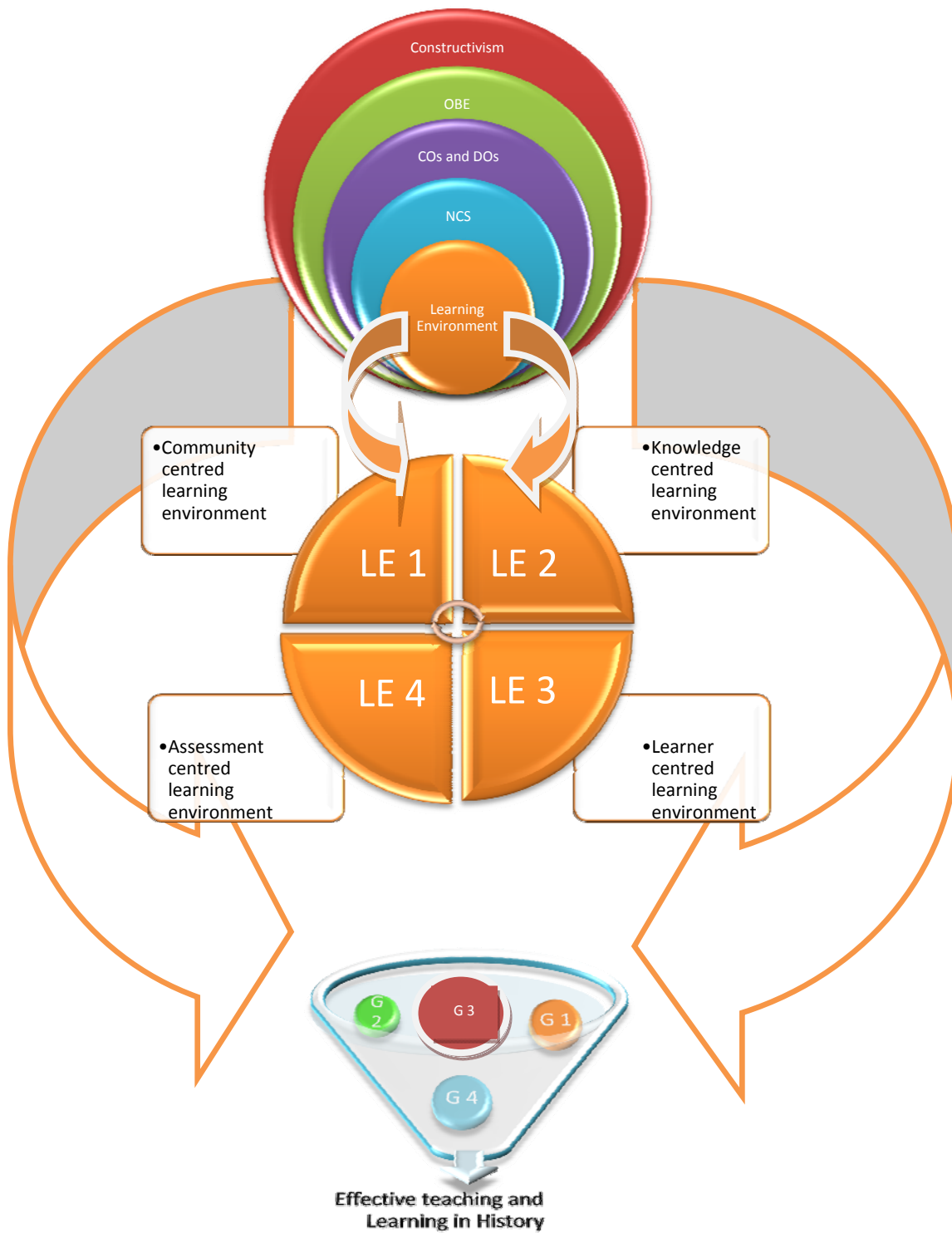
- Engage learners in co-operative learning activities.
- A variety of teaching and learning resources and media should be used during history lessons.
- The use of electronic media devices such as television, radio and the internet
- Invite other teachers to present certain topics or themes related to their area of expertise.
- Involvement of learners in decision making (see 4.4.3).

The following aspects of assessment-centred learning environment need to be improved upon:

- Exposing learners to copies of good essays.
- Allowing learners to choose the topics that want to address for history assignments and projects.
- Allowing learners to engage in self and peer-assessment activities.
- To ensure that learners are familiar with the assessment tools used in history (see 4.4.4).

### **7.3.3 Guidelines to be implemented in the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in schools**

Figure 7.1 below represents the coherence amongst the aspects that impact in the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in the FET band.



**FIGURE 7.1 POWERFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR HISTORY LEARNING IN THE FET PHASE**

Constructivism is acknowledged by Steyn and Wilkinson (1998: 204) and Doll (1996: 43) as the theory that influenced the development of the South African version of the outcomes-based curriculum. This was in response to the previously teacher-centred and content-orientated curriculum that were once the defining features of South Africa's education system. Hence the outer cycle of figure 7.1 is constructivism and is presented as the umbrella theory that seeks to drive all the activities taking place within the school system in South Africa.

The critical and developmental outcomes are the corner stones upon which the South African version of outcomes-based education is based. These outcomes specifies and informs the different skills, values and attitudes that South African learners need to acquire and display throughout the learning process (see 2.2.3). The process of curriculum review and transformation after the initial implementation of Curriculum 2005 in South Africa, culminated in the development of the NCS which sought to clarify the learning outcomes and assessment standards for history (see 2.2.3) and other subjects. The history learning outcomes and assessment standards are informed by the critical and developmental outcomes.

Therefore all the activities designed for history learners are influenced by the above theories and policies. In trying to ensure adherence to the theories and policies informing South Africa's curriculum implementation, the researcher proposes the structuring of a learning environment constituted by four different but interrelated learning environments, LE1, LE2, LE3 and LE4 (see table 5.4 and figure 4.1).

The four learning environment structure a platform for the implementation of the NCS and the development and attainment of the critical and developmental outcomes through the use of a constructivist approach. Implementation will further more be enhanced by the use of the guidelines provided for by the research findings namely, awareness of the South Africa's curriculum demands (7.3.3.1), awareness of the role that history can play in South Africa's social transformation (7.3.3.2), addressing the problems of history teaching (7.3.3.4) and an understanding of the role of the history teacher during the teaching and learning process (see 7.3.3.4).

### **7.3.3.1 Awareness of what the curriculum demands from teachers**

The history teacher needs to be aware of what the curriculum in South Africa seeks to achieve. This will help the teacher to be able to structure the lessons in a manner that enhances the overall aims of the curriculum in the country. South African curriculum changes are aimed at responding to the needs of the labour market which requires learners to demonstrate certain skills, expertise, values and attitudes. Most of these required principles and values are enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. A good history teacher will therefore demonstrate awareness of them, as they will impact on how the learning environment is going to be structured (see 2.2.2; 2.2.3).

The South African curriculum transformation resulted in the adoption of OBE as the approach to be followed in education. This philosophy seeks to provide learners with knowledge, competencies and qualities. OBE inclined teachers will demonstrate flexibility in their approaches, use activity-based strategies that are learner-centred and learner responsible. The cornerstones of the South African version of OBE are the critical outcomes and the developmental outcomes. At subject level, history is aimed at attaining different subject specific learning outcomes and the assessment standards. This therefore implies that anything that happens during the history lessons should be geared towards the development and enhancement of the anticipated broad and specific outcomes (see 2.2.2; 2.2.3).

### **7.3.3.2 Awareness of the role of history in the current South African education system**

History teaching in South Africa had its own unique problems transcending through the previous decades. The problems covered content used, philosophies followed, wanting to perpetuate racial inequalities, and the way in which the subject was taught (2.3.5.2).

In trying to enhance the quality of the learning environment, history teachers have to present history in a manner that seeks to develop values such as non-racialism, non-sexism,

democracy, mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, reconciliation and also to foster reconstruction and development (2.3.5.2). History teachers should guard against the subject being used to accuse, to condemn, to reject and to promote racist tendencies. History teaching should also be separated from politics, racial orientation and ethnic backgrounds as these have a tendency of introducing subjectivity and bias from teachers. The quality of the learning environment will also be enhanced when teachers acknowledge racial and ethnic diversities within the classroom (see 4.6.1). History lessons should therefore use learners' own history, local history and oral and heritage projects that seek to transcend ethnicity and racism.

### **7.3.3.3 Awareness of history teaching that is line with current curriculum transformation, changes in history teaching and addressing the problems of history**

History teaching should expose learners to the processes that historians employ when writing history. Activities that learners will be engaged with should allow them to create an understanding of the past by selecting facts and events, arranging, interpreting, analysing and explaining them logically. Understanding of concepts such as change, development, causation, bias and multiple interpretation, as well as perspectives should feature predominantly during the lesson (2.3.1).

History teaching is seen as an intellectual discipline that is challenging, stimulating and interesting, and should be presented as such. Learners should be actively involved in creating and organising knowledge accordingly (see 2.3.4). Learners need to be taught history through the use of a variety of sources as they will be exposed to how historians write history. History learners need to be guided through the different steps of dealing with historical sources.

History should be presented in a manner that seeks to promote the value of history by addressing and promoting historical consciousness, critical thinking, sparking debates, serving as the memory of society and multiple perspectives (2.3.2). The themes as indicated in the History Subject Policy Statement (Department of education, 2003a: 24-27), requires

teachers to address key questions that guide specific themes. Therefore, focus on isolated topics is not encouraged as it might compromise the multiple perspective approach.

History teachers should also ensure that they equip learners with skills that can be applied outside the classroom setup. It is therefore important for learners' writing, communication and thinking skills to be constantly developed during history lessons. Asking and answering of questions should feature prominently during history lessons.

Learners' interest in the subject will be further stimulated when technological devices such as computers and the internet are introduced. Different programmes and websites can be accessed to address the different themes and activities that will enhance the quality of the learning environment (2.3.5.2).

#### ***7.3.3.4 Awareness of the role of the history teacher***

In order for history teachers to be able to present quality lessons to learners, they must have acquired sufficient, relevant and current knowledge of history. Teachers need to be grounded in both pedagogical and content knowledge (see 2.3.5.4; 4.4.2), as this will enable them to present lessons with integrity and consideration. History teachers who are able to assist learners with problems related to what is required in history such as essay writing, dealing with sources, conducting research assignments, conducting oral history projects, conducting heritage assignment and the general skills used in learning history, are better equipped than the one with only history content knowledge.

The level of teachers' qualifications and the extent to which they majored in history is very important, as this will enhance the manner in which teachers do the work. The value of attending workshops, subject meetings, conferences, in-service training sessions, and studying further in the field of history is seen as paramount.



In addition to the knowledge acquired by history teachers, there are certain skills, values and attributes that are also necessary and have an impact on the quality of the learning environment created. Teachers should value and respect learners so that they, in return, are made to feel welcome during the history lessons. Warm, understanding, listening and caring teachers enhance learners' active participation as learners feel free to express themselves and to make attempts knowing that they will be supported and encouraged in their efforts. In addition to these attributes, teachers need to establish norms, standards and values for the history class that will seek to promote universal values of tolerance and respect (see 4.4.3).

Teachers need to focus on the development of skills and content. The manner in which knowledge is presented to learners should be organised and connected around the foundational ideas of history as a discipline and the main concepts that guide thinking so as to promote easy transfer of knowledge. Teachers need to be guided by the use of key questions in organising their lessons. Historical knowledge includes historical imagination and historical literacy. The latter point seeks to address the knowledge that learners will use in order to find and to manage information. The main aim of this exercise will be to ensure that learners are exposed to meaningful presentation of knowledge. Learners should also be provided with deep foundation of factual knowledge (see 2.2.3; 4.4.1; 4.4.3).

In trying to enhance the acquisition of skills teachers should be able to use approaches that will allow them to demonstrate the skills envisaged and required in history. Skills such as interpretation, analysis, summarising, comparing, contrasting, and extrapolation are important in history. Therefore strategies that allow teachers to provide modelling, coaching and scaffolding will be useful during the history lessons. The teacher can provide modelling by demonstrating to learners through verbalising his/her cognitive processes as he/she carries out the task. In order to enhance learners' ability to deal with historical sources, history teachers should go through the process of interrogating the different types of sources with learners so as to guide learners through the process. In providing coaching, history teachers should provide hints to learners as they engage in an activity to ensure that they are on the right track. Scaffolding will be provided in the form of supporting learners with the tasks that they are not yet capable of performing (see 4.5)

History teachers should be able to identify, plan and organise learners' activities to ensure that their participation is enhanced. The activities organised should ensure that learners are able to interact with historical sources, resources, other learners, historical places, museums, archives and other relevant structures and organisations (4.3.2).

The history teacher should use a learner-centred approach by acknowledging learners' prior knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. This approach should aim at building on the learners' understanding, beliefs and cultural practices. Learner-centred approach can also be enhanced by starting from what the learner know moving to what is new. Learners' different learning styles should also be accommodated as much as possible (4.4.1).

History teachers should have a positive perception about their role as history teachers and the role of history as a subject. Teachers should perceive themselves as facilitators who seek to foster learners' thinking and helping learners to take personal responsibility for their work (4.6.1).

Powerful learning environments in history will require the availability and use of historical sources and resources. It is the history teachers' role to identify, select, evaluate and use these historical sources and resources. Teachers also have to ensure that learners are exposed to a variety of historical sources and educational resources. Careful consideration should be done in order to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of such sources and resources to learners. Most importantly, learners need to be assisted on how to use such sources and resources to build on to their historical knowledge and to enhance understanding. Care should be taken to ensure that history textbooks are not overly relied upon to inform what should be happening in the classroom (2.3.5.2; 3.4.3; 4.4.4; 4.3.1).

The history teacher is also expected to be an assessor. It is therefore the duty of the teacher to ensure an assessment friendly environment that is developmental, encouraging and building. History assessment requires the teacher to assess learners' understanding of what is being done in class in order to enhance learning and to improve teaching (2.3.5.3; 4.4.4). Assessment should be infused in the learning process and not be seen as a separate activity. Different levels of questions and skills should be assessed. Both OBE and

assessment principles should be upheld throughout the assessment process. Addressing the subject specific learning outcomes and assessment standards should always be the focus for all assessment activities. History teachers should also provide constant, immediate and informed feedback on the performance of the learners (3.3.2; 3.3.5).

History teachers should be able to initiate, spark and sustain conversation between and among teachers and learners, the learners themselves, and learners and other members of the community impacting on their learning. This process will allow learners to use the spoken language to develop and to demonstrate understanding and knowledge. History teachers should therefore allow learners to use their own languages where possible (2.3.5.2; 3.4.2; 3.4.3; 4.4.3).

#### **7.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The aim and objectives of the research (see 1.3) based on the questions raised by the problem statement in section 1.2 were achieved.

Structuring a powerful learning environment requires a concerted effort especially from the teacher who has to intentionally bring into the classroom certain skills, values, expertise, characteristics, qualities, procedures and resources.

#### **7.5 CONCLUSION**

From the above findings, **the researcher came to the conclusion that teachers and learners have a positive perception about history as a subject.** Learners displayed a positive perception towards history and demonstrated an understanding of the value of history. Learners also had a positive experience of history as a subject (7.3.1.1). Teachers' experience and qualifications are satisfactory and add to the positive perception that teachers have towards the subject. Teachers responded positively to the aspects used to establish their perception on history (7.3.1.2).

With regard to the approaches that teachers constantly use during history lessons, it is **concluded that the teaching methodologies, approaches and strategies used during history lessons need to be improved upon to meet the current demands of history teaching and outcomes-based approach.** The envisaged improvement will result in the enhancement of the quality of the learning environment for the teaching and learning of history. Three characteristics of the learning environment, the community-centred learning environment, the learner-centred learning environment and the assessment-centred learning environment (7.3.2.2) need to be improved upon.

In order to enhance teachers and learners positive perception about history as a subject and to ensure that teachers are able to expose learners to the different characteristics of the learning environment, the following recommendations are made.

## **7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The other aim of this research as mentioned in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 was to provide recommendations in order to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning of history in the FET band.

### **7.6.1 Recommendations to enhance the structuring of the powerful learning environment**

#### **7.6.1.1 *Areas in which teachers need to be trained***

Areas in which teachers need to be trained are the following:

- Teaching methodologies required by the development in history teaching and the OBE (see 2.2.2; 2.2.3; 2.3.5.2; 6.3.3; 6.3.5).
- How to develop the writing skills of learners to improve on their quality of extended writing pieces (see 4.4.4).

- How to address source-based activities in class to enhance the quality of the learning environment (see 4.4.4; 4.4.2).
- How to develop history-specific skills such as interpretation, analysis, synthesis and extrapolation, as they feature prominently in the history examination (see 2.3.5.2; 4.4.1; 4.4.2; 3.2.3.1.1).
- In assisting learners to develop appropriate meta-cognitive skills for the learning of history (see 4.2.1; 4.4.1).
- Teachers' knowledge of dealing with learners who experience learning problems and of acknowledging diversity needs to be improved so that they can be able to ensure a more learner-centred approach during their lessons (see 4.4.1).
- History teachers need to be empowered with regard to the setting/designing of assessment activities to respond to the learning outcomes and assessment standards (see 4.4.4).
- Teachers' need to be constantly empowered with regard to the principles, types, forms and methods of assessment. Assessment tools such as marking guidelines, rubrics and matrix should also be constantly addressed (see 4.4.4).
- Teachers need to be capacitated with regard to the selection of relevant, varied and appropriate teaching and learning resources for history. Teachers should also be capacitated on how to use resources effectively and efficiently during the lessons (see 3.2.3.1.2; 4.4.2; 6.3.5).
- Teachers need to acknowledge the use modelling, coaching and scaffolding by either themselves, learners, peers or even educational media during their lessons to enhance the quality of the learning environment (see 4.4.1).

***7.6.1.2 Initiatives to be implemented in order to enhance positive teachers' and learners' perception about history teaching and learning***

These initiatives are the following:

- Bursaries need to be awarded for history teachers to upgrade their qualifications in history and history teaching-related qualifications (see 2.2.2; 2.2.3; 6.3.1).
- Regular in-service training by properly qualified and skilled individuals or institutions to empower teachers on the latest educational and subject-related matters and to ensure these are taught in a manner that will enable the transmission of the anticipated values (2.3.2; 2.3.5.2; 2.3.5.3).

- The use of ICT during the teaching and learning process will enable learners to access a variety of sources and also to develop learners' ICT skills (see 2.3.5.2; 4.4.2).
- History teachers should be encouraged to liaise with other departments, institutions and organisations such as the museums, archives, historical sites, department of arts and culture, heritage organisations, municipalities, tribal authorities, NGOs and churches - to name but a few - that might have an impact on history teaching. Individuals from these structures can be invited to deliver presentations on different topics and projects related to history (see 4.4.1; 4.4.2 4.4.3).
- Interaction between and among history teachers in the same school, cluster, district or province is very important, as it can help teachers in lesson planning, designing activities and setting of assessment tasks (see 4.4.3).
- History teachers should be encouraged to join professional structures and associations such as the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA), the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT), and the Oral History Association of South Africa. This will allow teachers to stay abreast of the developments taking place in the subject, thereby enhancing the way in which they teach the subject (see 4.4.3).
- Different history-related competitions such as debates and oral history competitions are usually arranged from national office, whilst schools do little to arrange these kinds of activities within classrooms. These activities - if done well - will enhance the development of the different learning outcomes, assessment standards, as well as addressing some negative perceptions about history (see 4.4.2; 4.4.3; 6.3.2.1; 6.3.2.2).
- Learners need to be engaged in activities that take them out of class, making them have a sense of making history (see 4.4.2; 4.4.3).

## **7.7 DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

It is concluded that the research addressed the problem that was identified in the beginning of the study (see 1.2). The problem was further broken down into objectives that sought to establish the kind of perception that history teachers and learners have towards history as a school subject and to establish the kind of approaches that are used during the teaching and learning of history.

From the study, the most important areas to be followed up are:

- Investigating ways of equipping learners with the different history related skills.
- Identifying ways to enhance assessment in history in order to ensure its quality, validity and reliability.
- Investigating ways of empowering history teachers with skills of integrating the use of ICT devices in the teaching and learning of history.
- Since history subject advisors are tasked with the responsibility of providing support to history teachers, the ways and scope of how this should be done need to be explained to ensure informed intervention that will enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

## **7.8 GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The quality of teaching and learning has to be a major concern in a developing country such as South Africa, because it can go a long way to assisting the social and economic transformation.

The main focus of this study was the structuring of a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history in schools in an attempt to address the need to enhance the way in which history is taught in the FET band. In addition, during the course of the study, it has become necessary to contextualise curriculum transformation that happened in South Africa and the impact it had on the teaching and learning process. Learning and developmental theories were also investigated to also create a point of departure that guided the research. Finally, a consolidation of the different literature study chapters culminated in the identification of the characteristics of powerful learning environment.

The most important challenge that is currently experienced by most of the teachers is the ability to structure a powerful learning environment to meet the requirements of OBE and the NCS with limited knowledge and exposure to the strategies and approaches needed currently which they have not been adequately trained in. As the responsibility of delivering quality education rests on all the stakeholders in education, schools need to be encouraged to do their best under the circumstances.

Finally, it is believed that this study has been able to shed light on how history teachers can structure a powerful learning environment for the teaching and learning of history. Even though the researcher came to the conclusion that there was evidence of a positive experience towards the history as a subject throughout the Free State province, there is still much room for improvement.



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## APPENDIX D

### SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMPLETION BY HISTORY LEARNERS

1. You are kindly requested to respond to the following questionnaire honestly and in detail.
2. You are further assured that the information you give will be treated as highly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PARTICULARS

Circle (0) around the number of the statement of your choice

Example

I like soccer	(1)
I like netball	2

#### 1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

#### 2. Home language

Sesotho	1
Setswana	2
Isixhosa	3
Isizulu	4
English	5
Afrikaans	6
Other (write it down)	7

#### 3. At school I am taught in

English	
Afrikaans	

4. Age (in years)

14	1
15	2
16	3
17	4
18 and older	5

5. In which grade are you in 2007?

Grade 10	1
Grade 11	2

**SECTION B: REASONS FOR CHOOSING HISTORY AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT.**

The purpose of this section is to establish the reasons why you choose history as a subject. There are no wrong or right answers. Answer the questions about why you choose history as honestly as possible. Use the scale below to answer the question.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Not sure 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

6	I choose history because there were no other choices in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I choose history because the Mathematics and Science class was full.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I choose history because my parents want me to do it.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I choose history because I like my history teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I choose history because I enjoy it.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I choose history because it is easy.	1	2	3	4	5



## SECTION C: AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF HISTORY

The following section is focused on the value and the different skills that history seeks to develop. Read the statements carefully and then circle the appropriate number. Remember there is no right or wrong answer. Use the scale provided below to respond to the statements

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree. 3. Not sure 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

12	History is preparing me for the career that I want to follow	1	2	3	4	5
13	History teaches me to memorise facts	1	2	3	4	5
14	I enjoy history because it is challenging	1	2	3	4	5
15	History can make me understand my place, my country and the world	1	2	3	4	5
16	I believe history is not relevant for today's learners	1	2	3	4	5
17	I believe history can make me tolerate and respect different views	1	2	3	4	5
18	I believe history can enable me to make coherent arguments	1	2	3	4	5
19	History allows me to make conclusions based on facts from evidence about events and people.	1	2	3	4	5
20	History makes me not to accept things at face value, but to question them until I have the answers that are needed	1	2	3	4	5
21	History is going to allow me to solve problems within my community	1	2	3	4	5
22	Through the study of history I learn about the past and how it impacts on the present, and allows me to anticipate the future.	1	2	3	4	5
23	History is making me aware of my heritage and how to preserve it	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION D: EXPERIENCE TOWARDS HISTORY AS A SUBJECT

The purpose of this section of the questionnaire is to examine various aspects concerning your experience of history and to determine if there are any obstacles that prevent you from doing your best. Choose one of the five possible answers. Rarely, sometimes, frequently, usually or almost always. Remember no answer is right or wrong.

1. Rarely	2. Sometimes	3. Frequently	4. Usually	5. Almost always
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24	I enjoy history as a subject.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I catch up lost work in history.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I explain history to my friends, parents or other persons.	1	2	3	4	5
27	My teacher uses words that I do not know and that confuse me in the history class.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I believe that I can do well in history.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I test myself in writing and orally on history when I learn.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I can think of examples where I can relate history outside the class.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I cannot speak clearly when suddenly have to answer a question in history in class.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I postpone my history homework and do something I enjoy more.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I lose marks in history tests and exams because I rush through the questions.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I repeatedly read through an extended writing piece question until I fully understand what it requires from me.	1	2	3	4	5
35	I try to find connections between the different sections of history.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I am too frightened of my history teacher to ask questions about history.	1	2	3	4	5
37	I know what to do when I am requested to analyse factors that lead to an event in history.	1	2	3	4	5
38	I keep my history work up to date by completing every day's work properly.	1	2	3	4	5
39	I ask my teacher to help me with my history assignments that are not	1	2	3	4	5

	clear to me.					
40	During the history lesson I pay attention to the work.	1	2	3	4	5
41	While I am doing my history homework it is important to me to find out which concepts I do not understand.	1	2	3	4	5
42	I find it easy to say what I want to say in my history test and exams.	1	2	3	4	5
43	It is my parent's and teacher's fault that I do not work hard at history.	1	2	3	4	5
44	I often lose marks in history because I work too quickly or too slowly.	1	2	3	4	5
45	I postpone my history homework by doing something else first.	1	2	3	4	5
46	While doing my work I often stop in the middle of a paragraph to make sure I understand the work.	1	2	3	4	5
47	In History the understanding of concepts is more important than memorization.	1	2	3	4	5
48	History is more difficult than other subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
49	I ask questions and take part in discussions during the history lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
50	I make sure that I know how much time I need for revision before a history test or exams and I plan accordingly.	1	2	3	4	5
51	I know which subsections of history I do not understand.	1	2	3	4	5
52	When studying history I develop my own structures to assist me with the extended writing questions.	1	2	3	4	5
53	I am able to identify what the main ideas are in what I read from the history textbooks.	1	2	3	4	5
54	I always write extra history essays on my own and later request my teacher/ my parents and/or my friends to look at them.	1	2	3	4	5
55	I make notes of what is done during the history lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
56	When preparing for the test, I memorise all the facts in my notebook.	1	2	3	4	5
57	When I have a problem with my history work I talk to my history teacher, my parents and my friends.	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION E: INDIVIDUALISED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The purpose of this section is to establish the kind of environment that learners are exposed to on a regular basis in the classrooms. Circle the most appropriate answer.

Use the scale: 1 Rarely 2. Sometimes 3. Frequently 4. Usually 5. Almost always

58	My teacher is patient, courteous and respects me.	1	2	3	4	5
59	My teacher provides me with clear directions and explanations with regard to my work.	1	2	3	4	5
60	My teacher helps me to organize information and to understand the relationships among various topics.	1	2	3	4	5
61	My teacher explains difficult material/ideas to me.	1	2	3	4	5
62	I am free to ask my teacher questions in and outside the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
63	My teacher gives us feedback after engaging in an exercise/activity.	1	2	3	4	5
64	My teacher demonstrates how tasks are supposed to be done.	1	2	3	4	5
65	My teacher gives me attention when I do not understand.	1	2	3	4	5
66	My teacher asks us questions to establish how much we know about the new topic.	1	2	3	4	5
67	My teacher allows us to come up with different answers to the question.	1	2	3	4	5
68	My teacher makes us use information from the library, newspapers, the computer and other people.	1	2	3	4	5
69	My teacher explains concepts and terminologies in my own language.	1	2	3	4	5
70	My teacher pauses during the lesson to check whether we are still following him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
71	When given an activity to do in class, my teacher walks around the class to provide guidance to the learners.	1	2	3	4	5
72	After engaging in a group activity, my teacher allows us to work on the same work individually.	1	2	3	4	5
73	My teacher is interested in the responses that we give to him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
74	My teacher relates what we do in class with what is happening in my township, town or village.	1	2	3	4	5

75	My teacher has made books, dictionaries and other resources available for us to use in class.	1	2	3	4	5
76	My teacher brings artifacts (things used in the past) to class for us to touch, feel and smell.	1	2	3	4	5
77	When a new source is brought to class for the first time, my teacher demonstrate how the source should be analysed.	1	2	3	4	5
78	My teacher takes us to places where we can see things that were used in the past and to the historical places.	1	2	3	4	5
79	I able to chose the topic that I want for my history assignments and projects.	1	2	3	4	5
80	I get the oppportunity to mark my own work in class.	1	2	3	4	5
81	My classmates have the chance to mark some of my work in class.	1	2	3	4	5
82	I use different sources to create my own definition of concepts.	1	2	3	4	5
83	I help other learners with their work.	1	2	3	4	5
84	I receive help form other learners to do my work.	1	2	3	4	5
85	I discuss my ideas with my friends before writing an assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
86	I give my opinions during class discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
87	I am willing to listen to my classmate's advice.	1	2	3	4	5
88	During history lessons we work in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
89	My teacher allows us to choose the topics that we want for our assignments and projects.	1	2	3	4	5
90	I am allowed to share my resources and books with other learners.	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX E

### QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY HISTORY TEACHERS

#### SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMPLETION BY HISTORY TEACHERS

1. You are kindly requested to respond to the following questionnaire honestly and in detail
2. You are further assured that the information you give, will be treated as highly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

#### SECTION A: TEACHER'S QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

##### 1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

##### 2. Which grades are you teaching?

Grade 10	1
Grade 11	2
Grade 12	3
Grade 10 and 11	4
Grade 11 and 12	5
Grade 10 to 12	6

##### 3. History teaching experience (in years)

0 – 3	1
3 - 6	2
6 – 9	3
9 and over	4

4. Besides History, what other subject/s do you teach?

Languages	1
Life Orientation	2
Geography	3
Mathematics / Physical Science	4
Tourism / Business Economics /Accounting /Economics	5
No other subject	6
Other subjects	7

5. The medium of instruction at your school is

English	1
Afrikaans	2
Dual medium	3
Parallel medium	4

6. Learner components in your history class is

Black	
White	
Coloured	
Indians	

7. The dominating gender of learners in your history class is

Male	
Female	

8. Your current qualification level

M + 1( Matric + PTC)	1
M + 2 (Matric + PTC + SEC)	2
M + 3 (Matric + PTC/STD/UDE)	3
M + 4 (Matric + UDE + FED.Etc)	4
M + 5 (Matric + B.Ed.Hons)	5
M + 6 (Matric + Masters)	6
M + 7( Matric + Phd)	7

9. How far have you majored in History?

M + 1(Matric + PTC)	1
M + 2(Matric + PTC + SEC)	2
M + 3 (Matric + PTC/STD/UDE)	3
M + 4 (Matric + UDE + FED. Etc)	4
M + 5 (Matric + B.Ed. Hons)	5
M + 6 (Matric + Masters)	6
M + 7 (Matric + Phd)	7



10. Field of further study

History teaching related courses	1
Curriculum related courses	2
History related courses	3
Management related courses	4
Other non-education related courses	5

11. The number of History learners in your school in the past five years has

Increased	1
Decreased	2
Fluctuated	3
Remained the same	4

12. What do you think are the factors that are contributing to the situation in no. 11?

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13. What average did your school obtain in the grade 12 History examination in the past three years?

80 – 100	1
60 – 79	2
40 – 59	3
Less than 40	4

14. What average did your school obtain in the 2006 History Grade common examination?

80 – 100	1
60 – 79	2
40 – 59	3
Less than 40	4

15. With which areas do you think learners experience problems during assessment?

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## SECTION B: TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS ABOUT HISTORY TEACHING

The purpose of this section is to establish the perceptions that teachers have towards history as a school subject. There is no right or wrong answer. Use the scale below to answer the questions, find the number between 1 and 5 that best describes your view of history.

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
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16	I enjoy teaching history.	1	2	3	4	5
17	History is a difficult subject.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I believe history should be made a compulsory subject.	1	2	3	4	5
19	History is perceived as a failing subject in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
20	History is a political subject.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Learners have the potential of mastering history.	1	2	3	4	5
22	History can play an important role in the current transformation of South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5
23	The NCS history content is more progressive than the previous content framework.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I believe history teaching should reflect the processes that historians use when writing history.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Learners enjoy history.	1	2	3	4	5
26	The school management team is very supportive towards the needs of history.	1	2	3	4	5
27	The critical outcomes can be attained through the study of history.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Learners' laziness is the main cause for their lack of achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
29	History is the first choice subject for the learners.	1	2	3	4	5
30	The number of periods given to history is enough.	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION C: TEACHING METHODOLOGIES, APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

The purpose of this section is to examine the various teaching methodologies, approaches and strategies used during the history lessons. Use the provided scale to identify the most appropriate response to the given statement. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer.

1. Rarely	2. Sometimes	3. Frequently	4. Usually	5. Almost always
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31	My lessons acknowledge the knowledge that my learners bring into the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I focus on the success of individual learners rather than the group.	1	2	3	4	5
33	My lessons are much a process of knowledge construction that involves learners.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I always expose my learners to various perspectives of the same concept.	1	2	3	4	5
35	Learners are exposed to different textbooks and resources.	1	2	3	4	5
36	Learners are encouraged to develop their own views as long as it based on evidence.	1	2	3	4	5
37	The purpose of my lessons is the interrogation of evidence to create understanding of the past.	1	2	3	4	5
38	Issues raised by local history are referred to and addressed during my history lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Issues of propaganda, bias and prejudice are addressed during my lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
40	My lessons are focused on the development of skills and acquisition of content.	1	2	3	4	5
41	Assessment is viewed as part of the teaching and learning process not as a separate process.	1	2	3	4	5
42	I bring along artifacts to class to enhance my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
43	I expose my learners to authentic tasks that allows for the transfer of skills and knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
44	I demonstrate the skills and techniques that I want my learners to acquire.	1	2	3	4	5

45	Open communication dominates my lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
46	Learners are allowed to use their own language where they do not understand concepts and terminologies.	1	2	3	4	5
47	Respect, acceptance and tolerance are valued and emphasised during my lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
48	I constantly provide feedback, hints, reminders and corrections to my learners as they engage in an activity.	1	2	3	4	5
49	I take it as my duty to provide and to organize the necessary resources for my learners.	1	2	3	4	5
50	I make notes for my learners.	1	2	3	4	5
51	I expose my learners to copies good essays written by other learners.	1	2	3	4	5
52	I give my learners the chance to mark their work and that of their class-mates.	1	2	3	4	5
53	Questioning by learners is encouraged.	1	2	3	4	5
54	Visits to the Heritage sites, museum and historical sites feature prominently during my lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
55	Group work features predominantly in my lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
56	My learners help each other with tasks in class.	1	2	3	4	5
57	My learners have the opportunity to watch and to listen to the history related programmes on TV and radio.	1	2	3	4	5
58	Other teachers are invited to my class to present concepts which I experience problems with.	1	2	3	4	5
59	My lessons follow activities as they appear in the textbook.	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION D: LEARNER INVOLVEMENT IN THE CREATION OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The purpose of this section is to examine the various ways in which the role of learners is acknowledged during the history lessons. Use the provided scale to identify the most appropriate answer. Remember there is no right or wrong answers.

1. Rarely	2. Sometimes	3. Frequently	4. Usually	5. Almost always
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60	My learners have a choice in the kind of activities that we do in class.	1	2	3	4	5
61	My learners have a say in the design of the assessment plan.	1	2	3	4	5
62	My learners have a say in how we structure the seating arrangement in the history class.	1	2	3	4	5
63	My learners have a say in the kind of historical places that we intent to visit.	1	2	3	4	5
64	My learners have a choice on how they want to demonstrate their knowledge in class.	1	2	3	4	5
65	The class rules are designed by me and my learners.	1	2	3	4	5
66	My learners are involved in assessing their own work and that of their friends.	1	2	3	4	5
67	My learners know the different learning outcomes and assessment standards that need to be attained and developed in History.	1	2	3	4	5
68	My learners have a say in the kind of resources that we use in class.	1	2	3	4	5
69	My learners are encouraged to bring along artifacts and other primary sources to class to enhance their learning.	1	2	3	4	5
70	My learners have knowledge and understanding of the different assessment tools.	1	2	3	4	5
71	Learners are allowed to use their own language to ask where they do not understand.	1	2	3	4	5
72	Learners are aware of the appeal procedures where they are not satisfied with the decisions of the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION E: NCS COMPETENCY.

The purpose of this section is to establish areas of the NCS that you are conversant with and those that you need assistance in.

73. How often have you attended the NCS related workshops?

Once	1
Twice	2
More than twice	3
Never	4

In responding to question 74 and 75, teachers are requested to read through the different statements pertaining to NCS implementation and to tick appropriate responses in the boxes provided opposite the responses.

74. I am conversant with the following areas of the NCS

74.1	Interpreting the Learning Outcomes.	
74.2	Interpreting the Assessment Standards.	
74.3	Designing activities that address the learning outcomes and assessment standards.	
74.4	Designing NCS appropriate lesson plan.	
74.5	Identifying good resource material that can be used in history.	
74.6	Setting test and examination question papers that are in line with the NCS.	
74.7	Designing my own rubrics.	
74.8	Marking extended writing pieces.	
74.9	The content framework of history.	
74.10	Applying constructivists teaching methodologies during my lessons.	

75. I need to be assisted in the following areas of the NCS

75.1	Interpreting the Learning Outcomes.	
75.2	Interpreting the Assessment Standards.	
75.3	Designing activities that that address the learning outcomes and assessment standards.	
75.4	Designing NCS appropriate lesson plan.	
75.5	Identifying good resource material that can be used in history.	
75.6	Setting test and examination question papers that are in line with the NCS.	
75.7	Designing my own rubrics.	
75.8	Marking extended writing pieces.	
75.9	The content framework of history.	
75.10	Applying constructivists teaching methodologies during my lessons.	