THE *LESOTHO GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION* (2013): TEACHERS' READINESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

by

Johnson Mapoho Letsie

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the degree

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is original and entirely my own work, except where other sources have been acknowledged. I also certify that this dissertation has not previously been submitted at this or any other faculty or institution.

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JM Letsie
Bloemfontein
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SUMMARY

This study sought to explore teachers' perceptions of their readiness to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* (*LGCSE*) which was introduced in 2013. The *LGCSE* was adopted as a result of critique against the *Cambridge Overseas School Certificate* (*COSC*), and was perceived as more aligned with the needs of the country and her people. Couched in a constructivist paradigm, this study was premised on the assumption that individuals create meaning from their interactions in their lives and the experiences they gain from work. In alignment with a qualitative methodology, data was generated through a document analysis, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. In this study I undertook a document analysis of *Implementing the Curriculum with Cambridge: A Guide to School Leaders* (undated) and the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* (2009) (*CAP*). The analysis was used to highlight the differences between the *COSC* and the *LGCSE* curricula, and in particular, to indicate the similarties and differences between seleted syllabi. The research participants were purposively selected based on their experience in teaching towards both the *COSC* and the *LGCSE*. At two urban schools in Maseru city, two focus groups discussions were held with six participants from each school, and six semi-structured interviews were conducted, three at each school. The data generated through the focus group discussions was analysed by means of a constant comparison analysis. The findings revealed that the participants are aware of the differences between *COSC* and *LGCSE*, and they perceive the *LGCSE* as more accommodative in terms of the differentiation of learners' ability in Mathematics and Physical science. In addition, they perceive the *LGCSE* curriculum as more relevant to address the needs of the Basotho. However, the one-day workshop was regarded as insufficient to adequately prepare the teachers for the transition from the *COSC* curriculum to the *LGCSE* curriculum. These findings were in general corroborated by the data generated from the semi-structured interviews. The workshops held to train teachers were perceived as just a space for information dissemination, rather than an opportunity to gain information on the strategies and approaches of teaching the new syllabi content. In particular, the findings revealed that the training was insufficient in assisting teachers with the selection of learners to study the respective *core* and the *extended* syllabi. In addition, they also struggled with the content of the new topics as they were not dealt

with in detail during the one-day workshop. The findings indicated that the one-day training workshop did not enable the teachers to frame their teaching within an integrated approach as required by *CAP.* In general, the research participants indicated that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) did not sufficiently prepare them for the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum. The study concludes by suggesting that training workshops should be held on a regular basis with a focus on specific aspects of the curriculum in more detail, and also on *CAP* as a policy framework intended to guide education reform in Lesotho. It is also suggested that MOET contributes towards creating spaces for teachers to colloratively work together on the implementation of the *LGSCE* curriculum.

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Colonisation is a system of rules where one country imposes its will on another, leading to "a situation of dominance and dependence" (Oba & Eboh, 2011: 625; cf. also Ocheni & Nwanko, 2012). The most momentous example of colonialism was when Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands became the colonisers of several countries between the 1870s and early 1900s. This imperialist expansion was driven by the 18th century industrial revolution in Europe, the saturation of industrialised nations, and the subsequent search for the investment of their accrued capital and raw materials (Oba & Eboh, 2011: 625; Ocheni & Nwanko, 2012: 46). During what is referred to as the 'scramble for Africa', the mentioned countries divided the African continent amongst themselves and imposed overall domination over countries such as Algeria, South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe and Zambia (Aissat & Djafri, 2011: 1; Iweriebor, 2011; Hritulec, 2011: 1).

Colonialism had a negative impact on the colonised countries. In this regard, Settles (1996: 1) indicates that "[t]he imposition of colonialism on Africa altered its history forever. African modes of thought, patterns of cultural development, and ways of life were forever impacted by the change in political structure brought by colonialism". In addition, the colonialists perceived the African people, their religion and culture as inferior, and subsequently felt that it was their moral obligation to civilise the local population, hence their justification for the exploitation and subjugation of thousands of people (Mart, 2011: 191). One way of bringing what was assumed to be civilisation to the colonies, was the introduction of European formal education. In order to control Africans in the new economic order, existing African education systems were restructured to maintain underdevelopment and dependency. Education was crafted in such a way that it not only portrayed the white man as a saviour, but instilled European superiority and African inferiority (Aissat & Djafri, 2011: 7; Oba & Eboh, 2011: 628).

By implication, colonial education holds certain implications for the African way of life. According to Woolman (2001: 29), colonial education undermined the traditional society by introducing 'individualistic values' that were foreign to African communal

mores, and also by "isolating students from their communities". Ndura and Mokaba (in Saha, 2008: 65) also underscore how colonial education not only distorted the link between Africans and their culture, but caused double alienation by diminishing the value of traditional African education and imposing a foreign language as that of the educated. Needless to say, such education did not address the national needs of the colonised countries. Rather, colonial education was meant to service imperial and economic domination, which in turn led to economic inequality, cultural and intellectual servitude, social stratification, the devaluation of traditional culture, and irrelevant curricula to satisfy societal needs (Woolman, 2001: 29; cf. also Shizha, 2013: 4).

In the 1960s, when most African countries obtained their independence, various attempts were made to Africanise or indigenise their school curricula. For example, in Tanzania under the leadership of former president Julius Nyerere, attempts were made in 1967 to change educational programmes and development projects through education for self-reliance (Shizha, 2013: 10). A strong call emerged on the continent for the re-appropriation of those African indigenous educational traditions that were marginalised or dismantled under colonial rule (Kanu, 2007: 66). In support of this call, Woolman (2001: 32) points out that "[a]fter independence, African educational policies were refocused on the priority of national development which encompassed the goals of Africanisation, national unity and economic growth". Lesotho, which became a British protectorate in 1868 and gained independence in 1966, also joined the call to make education more relevant for its people (Mcube, Thaanyane & Mabunda, 2013: 67; Raselimo, 2010: 16). It is specifically Lesotho's response to this call that evoked my research interest.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

After independence in 1966, Lesotho made several attempts to localise its education content towards relevance for the Basotho. One of the important issues pertaining to localisation was its Ordinary level (O' level) examination which was written after 11 years of schooling to indicate the completion of secondary education (cf. Tse & Sahasrabudhe, 2010). This O' level examination was offered in the United Kingdom

(UK), but also in many Commonwealth countries, including Lesotho. O' level examinations came under discussion in the early 1960s when Lesotho encountered problems with the *Joint Matriculation Board* (JMB) of South Africa which managed the Lesotho O' level examinations. Raselimo and Mahao (2015: 3; cf. also Tlebere, 2005: 4) indicate that due to disagreements with the *JMB*, Lesotho joined the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* (*COSC*) in 1961. *COSC* now became the exit level examination and served as the admission to university in Lesotho (Sebatane, 1975: 3).

Discussions regarding the localisation of *COSC* continued when a working group was established in 1970 by the Lesotho government. This was joined by the *University of Botswana Lesotho and Swaziland Examination Council* (UBLSEC) (Tlebere, 2005: 4). Public gatherings (*lipitso*) in Lesotho were held from October 1977 to March 1978 with the aim to gather the views of the Basotho on the designing of a curriculum that would address the needs of the nation (Mosisili, 1981: 4). During the *National Dialogue in Education* in 1978 various problems associated with *COSC* were brought to the table, including issues related to its relevance and appropriateness for Lesotho's educational and developmental needs (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015: 3). In 1995 the Ministry of Education held a seminar where the localisation of *COSC* was articulated as "taking charge and control of activities and responsibilities over curriculum activities and assessment" (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015: 2). The localisation of *COSC* was triggered by the need to introduce an examination that would be relevant and appropriate to Lesotho's educational and developmental needs.

In 2013 Lesotho started phasing out *COSC,* and gradually introduced the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*[1] (*LGCSE*) curriculum. Several reasons were offered for the change from *COSC* to *LGCSE*. In 1986 the UK changed their *Ordinary Level Examinations* to a *General Certificate of Education* and offered the *International General Certificate of Secondary Education* to overseas countries. Lesotho, however, did not join this new curriculum as it opted for the localisation of O'

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[1] It should be noted from the onset that in Lesotho, there is no policy document named the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education.* The curriculum and assessment practices for the *LGSCE* are outlined in the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* of 2009. Reference to the *LGCSE* in this dissertation refers to the certificate on the one hand, but also, on the other hand, to the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* as the official policy document.

level curriculum, known as *COSC*. While Lesotho was the only country in Southern Africa still writing *COSC* examinations, the *Examination Council of Lesotho* started the localisation process in 1989 (Tlebere, 2005). Another reason that led to the change to *LGCSE* was the pressure placed on Lesotho in 2007 by the *COSC* governing body, namely the *Cambridge International Examination* (CIE), to localise its curriculum (*Lesotho Times*, 23 December 2013: 1; *Sunday Express*, 11 November, 2013: 2). In sum, the change from *COSC* to *LGCSE* was premised on the need for an education system that would suit local needs.

Secondary teachers in Lesotho have been involved in the *COSC* curriculum for many years, and the introduction of *LGCSE* subsequently implied that teachers needed to be trained to understand and implement the new curriculum. This need was underscored by a statement by the Irish Department of Education and Science (2002: 2 cf. also UNESCO, 2016) that "[e]ffective curriculum change and implementation requires personal interaction, in-service training and other forms of people based support". As teachers play a very important role in defining and implementing a curriculum, it can be agreed with Mcube *et al.* (2013: 69) that "[i]f teachers are to implement a curriculum successfully, it is essential that they have a thorough understanding of the principles and practices of the proposed change". As such, Lesotho teachers should be thoroughly prepared to effectively implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. While the phasing in of the *LGCSE* only started as recently as 2013, and since teachers are the key role-players in the implementation phase, my study is centred on the following research question:

> *To what extent have teachers been prepared to implement the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education curriculum?*

In an attempt to answer this research question, my study is directed by the following sub-questions:

1.2.1 Why did Lesotho shift from using the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate Curriculum* to the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*?

1.2.2 What are the key differences between the curricula for the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* and the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*?

1.2.3   What are teachers' perceptions of their own preparedness to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* curriculum?

1.2.4   What comments and suggestions can be made with regard to teachers' experiences of their own preparedness for the implementation of the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* curriculum?

1.3   RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

In alignment with the above-mentioned research question, the aim of this study was to determine the extent to which teachers have been prepared to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* curriculum. In order to answer this research question, my study was pursued in terms of various objectives, namely to:

1.3.1   explain why Lesotho changed from using the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* to the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*;

1.3.2   identify the key differences between the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* and the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*;

1.3.3   explore teachers' perceptions of their own preparedness to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* curriculum; and

1.3.4   comment and make suggestions on the preparedness of teachers to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* curriculum.

1.4   RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm guides the manner in which knowledge is studied and interpreted, and depicts the intent, motivation and expectation of a study (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006: 2). McGregor and Murnane (2010: 419) define a paradigm as "a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them". For Burton and Bartlett (2009: 18), the choice of a research paradigm reveals a general agreement on how the nature of the world is perceived, and how the perceived reality should be investigated. As such, a paradigm entails philosophical assumptions of ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological nature (Scotland, 2012: 9; Mertens, 2015: 76). While ontological assumptions consider what is real, epistemological assumptions pertain

to the nature and forms of knowledge. Methodological assumptions deal with the process of research, while axiology refers the researcher's assumptions about the role values should play in the research process (cf. Scotland, 2012: 9; Wahyuni, 2012: 69-70). A paradigm subsequently consists of philosophical assumptions pertaining to reality, the construction of knowledge, the relationship between the knower and the knowable, and values.

This study is informed by Constructivism which has been defined as a paradigm that perceives reality as social constructions of the mind (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006: 26; also Mouton, 2014: 46). In the absence of the existence of an objective reality, constructivists accept that there are as many realities as there are individuals. As a consequence, reality is mind-dependent and differs from person to person. Human beings are subsequently not mere recipients of knowledge through experience; rather, knowledge is actively constructed by individuals, groups and societies (cf. Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2004: 41). Creswell (2014: 8) confirms the active role in knowledge construction by indicating that:

> Constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed towards certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas.

Constructivists are therefore of the opinion that individuals generate meaning from their interactions in their lives and the experiences they gain from their work. By implication, different individuals develop different meanings towards particular issues. The role of the researcher is to look for different views of the topic under discussion.

Within the realm of research, Constructivism entails a close interaction between the researcher and the research participants. The researcher's objective depends on the researched views and the situation under study (Creswell, 2014: 8). In undertaking research, a constructivist enquirer should bear in mind that "the nature of the enquiry is interpretive and the purpose of the inquiry is to understand a particular phenomenon, not to generalise to a population" (Antwi & Hamza, 2015: 219). The

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understanding of phenomena is therefore formed through the individual's personal views. Individuals' understanding and meaning are shaped by social interactions with others and also by personal histories. Research is subsequently shaped "from the bottom up"; that is from the perspective of the individual to broad patterns, to broad understandings (Creswell & Clark, 2011: 40).

My decision to work with Constructivism was primarily informed by my interest to develop an understanding of how teachers construct their subjective understanding of how they were prepared to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. I was interested to find out how they constructed their own interpretation of issues related to their ability to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. In essence, how was this newly adopted curriculum introduced to teachers? In particular, I wanted to explore the teachers' views regarding their own preparedness. Given that the study was framed within the Constructivist paradigm, it was premised on the assumption that since reality is not objectively determined, multiple realities can be socially constructed by people (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012: 56). For the purpose of this study, I wanted to understand how teachers construct their own reality, in other words their own meaning in relation to their preparedness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. With regard to the latter I cannot make conclusions about the participants' actions; rather I wanted to understand their subjective meaning in order not to misinterpret their actions. Taking into account the views of Creswell (2014: 8) namely that the researcher should "rely on the participants' views of the situation being studied", it was important that I interact with the participants in order to understand how they construct meaning and also the context which influenced them to think about their own preparedness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum in a certain way. As such, I regard Constructivism as the most appropriate paradigm for this particular study.

1.5 RESEARCH PLAN

While a research paradigm consitutes a specially-designed lens a researcher uses to see the world in a certain way, it also serves as the intellectual structure which guides a study (Troudi, 2010: 319). Research methodology deals with the research process, in other words with assumptions pertaining to the relationship between the the researcher (the knower) and the research topic (the knowable). The overall

approach to research is directly linked to the research paradigm (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006: 5). Methodology is however not the same as research methods. The latter refers to "systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data" (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006: 5). In this study I adopted a qualitative methodology and used methods such as a literature review, document analysis, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion to generate data in order to realise my research aim.

1.5.1 Research methodology

McGregor and Murnane (2010: 420) define methodology as

> a branch of knowledge that deals with the general principle or axioms of the generation of new knowledge. It refers to the rationale and philosophical assumptions that underlie any natural, social or human science study whether articulated or not ... methodology refers to how each logic, reality, value and what counts as knowledge inform research.

Crotty in Scotland (2012: 9) sums up a methodology as a plan which influences the choice and use of particular methods - an approach to a study that deals with the "why, what, from where, when, and how data is collected and analysed".

Since this study is grounded in a constructivist paradigm, a qualitative approach was regarded as most appropriate. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3; also Creswell, 2014: 8) define qualitative research as "an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world", implying that in an attempt to make sense of the meaning people make of phenomena, things are studied in their natural settings. Leedy and Ormrod (2012: 94; cf. also Mertens, 2015: 78) corroborate this view when stating that "qualitative research is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view". By studying people in their natural setting, the qualitative researcher attempts to create a logical story as seen through the eyes of those who participate in the story. While multiple meanings are constructed by people through their personal experiences, the qualitative researcher examines such social meanings by observing and describing the people who lived the experiences. In essence, a qualitative researcher is concerned with understanding those

processes and cultural and social contexts which shape behaviour patterns (Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 126).

As I was interested in understanding how teachers construct their own meaning in relation to their preparedness to implement *LGCSE*, I created the opportunity for the participants in this study to share their views, feelings and experience regarding their readiness. As the study relates to their lived experience, it was therefore important for the participants to express their ideas and feelings in words. A qualitative methodology was subsequently considered as most appropriate in assisting me to uncover the meaning the participants attached to their perceptions regarding their readiness to work with the new curriculum. In addition, this methodology also enabled me to observe the participants and their interactions. By implication, I was able to attain an insider's view of the "world" as experienced by the participants in the study (cf. Tuli, 2010: 102).

1.5.2 Research methods

Methodology determines the choice of methods to be used in a study. While research methods are the scientific tools of investigation, methodology constitutes the principles that determine how such methods are deployed and interpreted (McGregor & Murnane, 2010: 420). This study employed document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. In Table 1.1 below is an exposition of the objectives of this study and the various methods used for attaining the objectives.

Table 1.1 Research objectives and concomitant research methods

Objective	Research method
To explain why Lesotho changed from using the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* to the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education.*	Literature review and document analysis
To identify the key differences between the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate*and the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education.*	Document analysis
To explore teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education.*	Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews
To comment on the preparedness of teachers to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education.*	A synthesis of the preceding chapters

1.5.2.1   Literature review

Babbie (2014: 463) defines a literature review as "the way we learn what's already known and not known". In a similar vein, Mouton (2014: 119) regards a literature review as a "map or maps" of research that has been done. In essence, a literature review is an interpretation of a selection of relevant material - published and unpublished - on a specific topic (Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 29). A literature review has many advantages and according to Kumar (2014: 48-49), it helps to bring clarity and focus to a research study. A review of the existing body of knowledge can further assist a researcher in two ways, namely to enhance the understanding of the research topic and to clearly conceptualise the research problem. As such, a literature review has the advantage of broadening a researcher's knowledge base. In addition, a review of research books by reputable academics can assist researchers to familiarise themselves with research paradigms and research methodologies. By reading widely in this regard, I was able to critically consider Constructivism and a qualitative approach as the most appropriate research paradigm and research methodology for my particular study.

With regard to my own research interest, namely the extent to which teachers have been prepared to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education,* I read various documents and literature sources to provide me with the

historical and theoretical background of education in Lesotho. I was particularly interested in Lesotho's journey from colonial education to the inception of her own O' level curriculum. However, I had to take heed of Creswell's caution (2009: 103-104) that as a researcher I should be critical when evaluating and selecting literature. In this regard I considered two important questions, namely *Is the source good and accurate?* and *Is the source relevant?* For example, I was cautious of articles that have not undergone a review from an editorial board. With this in mind, I consulted both primary and secondary sources. Creswell (2009: 92) refers primary sources as "literature reported by the individual(s) who actually conducted the research" and secondary sources as "literature that summarises primary sources". As a consequence, I reviewed documents such as *inter alia, A curriculum process: the Lesotho experience* (1981); *An Investigation of feedback to secondary schools from Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate (COSC) English Language in Lesotho* (2005)*,* and *Curriculum reform in Lesotho: exploring the interface between environments education and Geography in selected schools* (2010). My reading was also complimented by research articles such as, to mention a few, *The Lesotho curriculum and assessment policy: opportunities and threats* (2015) and the *Chronicling Teacher's Experience in the teaching of Business Education in three Secondary Schools in Lesotho* (2013). The review of the existing literature on education reform in Lesotho helped me to establish the links between my first research objective (cf. 1.3.1), namely to understand the shift from the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate Curriculum* to the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* and what has already been studied. As such, the review of the existing body of knowledge assisted me on two accounts, namely not to duplicate a study that has already been undertaken, and in the last instance, to integrate my own research findings into the existing body of knowledge. In this dissertation the focus of Chapter 2 is on an exposition of Lesotho's shift from using the *COSC* curriculum to the *LGCSE* curriculum. Chapter 2 is therefore primarily based on and informed by a literature review.

1.5.2.2   Document analysis

According to Bowen (2009: 27), document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents which can be either in printed or electronic

format. As in the case of any other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires the examination and interpretation of data in order to obtain meaning, to gain understanding, and to develop empirical knowledge. Wagner *et al.* (2012: 141) add that documents analysis entails an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure and technique for the identification and analysis of the relevance and meaning of documents. Mogalakwe (2006: 222-223) refers to two types of documents that are used in research, namely *primary documents* and *secondary documents.* While primary douments refer to eye-witness accounts produced by people who experienced a particular event, *secondary documents* are produced and compiled by people who have to rely on eye-witness accounts of a particular event. Documents are further classified into three categories, namely *public documents* such as acts of parliament, policy statements and ministerial or departmental annual reports; *private documents* that often emanate from civil society organisations such as minutes of meetings, and board resolutions; and *personal documents* such as diaries and personal letters (Mogalakwe, 2006: 223; Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 141).

Document analysis in a qualitative study entails analysing a limited number of documents and texts for a specific purpose. Samkange (2012: 614) notes several advantages of document analysis. As document analysis is based on existing documents, such documents are usually easily available, and the data is in permanent form. By implication, document analysis is unobtrusive as one can observe without being observed. The permanent nature of documents enables cross-checking, and existing documents can be used to corroborate evidence from other sources. For Bowen (2009: 29-30), the importance of a document lies with the extent to which it "can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insight relevant to the research problem". However, there are also some limitations to document analysis such as problems related to accessibility and the demand for high data management and analytical skills. Also, one should bear in mind that most documents have originally been written for other purposes than research. They are also usually case specific, so often insufficient details are produced and included (Samkange, 2012: 616; cf. also Bowen, 2009: 31).

As indicated before, I undertook a literature review to gain an understanding of the shift from the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* to the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education.* However*,* in order to strengthen my understanding and to contextualise this shift, I complimented the literature review with an analysis of various education-related documents.These included the *Report on the National Seminar in Lesotho Education Policy: Localisation of the O' level Curriculum* of 1995; the *Education Sector Survey: Report of the Task Force* of 1982; the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Education for Individual and Social Development* of 2009; and the *Kingdom of Lesotho Education Sector Strategic Plan: 2005-2015* of 2005. As these documents are official in the sense that they were formulated and endorsed by the Lesotho government, I regarded them as authentic and reliable sources for my study. As the analysis of these documents relate to my first research objective (cf. 1.3.1.), I also deemed it necessary to identify the key differences between the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* and the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* (cf. 1.3.2). While teachers are expected to implement the newly adopted *LGCSE*, they are most familiar with *COSC* which has been in place since 1961.The phasing in of the syllabi for the *LGCSE* curriculum only started in 2013 for six subjects, and in 2014 for all other subjects. In order to understand teachers' reality regarding policy implementation, I therefore undertook a document analysis of both the *COSC* and *LGCSE* curricula (*CAP 2009*). By means of a document analysis I wanted to contrast the curricula in order to highlight the key differences between the documents.

1.5.2.3   Focus group discussion

A focus group discussion is a discussion focussed on a particular topic in which a particular group of stakeholders takes part. During such a discussion, dialogue is encouraged and the group dynamics become an essential part of the procedure as the participants enter into a discussion with one another. In this regard Wagner *et al*. (2012: 135) note one of the advantages of a focus group discussion as the enabling of participants to build on one another's ideas in order to provide an in-depth view. A focus group would typically consist of five to 15 people who are brought together in a private environment where they can feel comfortable to engage in a guided discussion on a particular topic (Babbie, 2014: 329).

For my study I decided to utilise a focus group discussion primarily because of the advantage to obtain an in-depth view of the research topic which is generally not achievable from an individual or group interview (cf. Dilshad and Latif 2013: 196). I held two focus group discussions, one with the participants at each of the respective schools. I first created an open environment by asking a few general questions on their own readiness, thus their preparedness, to implement *LGCSE*. I encouraged the participants to interact with one another and not only to respond to me. As the discussion was encouraged among the participants, they not only constructed meaning among themselves, but a range and complicity of beliefs regarding their own preparedness emerged. As such I was able to collect rich qualitative data with reasonable speed since a focus group session requires only moderate time commitment from the both myself as the researcher and the participants. In addition, the focus group also offered me the opportunity to get immediate feedback or clarification on a viewpoint, albeit with the contribution of other group members (cf. Dilshad & Latif, 2013: 196). The interaction between myself and the participants, between the participants and their personal experiences, and how they constructed their own reality based on their experiences with *LGCSE* is typically associated with the interactive nature of qualitative research (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2007: 55). However, during the focus group discussions I took into consideration the limitations associated with this method of data generation. One such limitation is that as the researcher I am afforded less control than would typically be the case with an individual face-to-face interview (cf. Babbie, 2014: 330). I subsequently had to act as moderator in trying to ensure that one participant does not dominate the discussion. At times and due to the assemblage of different personalities, it was a challenge to control the dynamics within the group.

For the purpose of this study, the use of focus group discussions was suitable, specifically for two reasons. Firstly, it provided the opportunity and platform for the participants to express their different views and opinions on their readiness as they interacted with one another. As noted by Rossman and Rallis (2012: 189), a focus group discussion provides the opportunity for participants to react and respond to what the others have to say. Secondly, the data generated from the focus group discussions provided an overview of the participants' beliefs about their own

preparedness. This overview prompted me to adopt a different method to get further insight into the individual beliefs, hence the use of semi-structured interviews.

1.5.2.4   Semi-structured interviews

According to Babbie (2014: 281) the interview is a commonly used method of data generation in qualitative research and is typically characterised by the researcher asking questions orally and recording the participants' answers. Kumar (2014: 176) further adds that an interview is a person-to-person interaction which can either be face-to-face or between two or more individuals who have a specific purpose in mind. Edwards and Holland (2013: 2; also Denscombe, 2014: 186-187) classify interviews in three categories, namely *structured interviews*, *unstructured interviews* and *semi-structured interviews*. A *structured interview* is based on a pre-determined questionnaire which has a particular sequence of questions, all asked in the same order and in the same way to all the participants. The advantage of a structured interview is that the interviewer remains neutral and that comparable information from a large number of participants can be collected. However, structured interviews allow for very little flexibility as the interviewer has to stick to the pre-set questions during the interview (Edwards & Holland, 2013: 3). As opposed to the rigid approach in structured interviews, *unstructured interviews* are open-ended and allow for greater flexibility and freedom in terms of the organisation of the interview content and questions (Alshenqeeti, 2014: 40; Kumar, 2014: 176). Unstructured interviews, however, require a high level of skill from the researcher's side as the researcher discusses a number of topics with the interviewee rather than asking a question and waiting for a short response (Kumar, 2014: 177; also Oun & Bach, 2014: 254). During *semi-structured interviews*, the researcher uses an interview guide which consists of basic questions so as to direct the line of enquiry. One of the major advantages of semi-structured interviews is that it enables the interviewer to probe and explore deeper, and to support data by allowing the interviewees to expand on their responses (Alshenqeeti, 2014: 40). It was this advantage of semi-structured interviews that informed my decision to use this form of interview in my study.

Semi-structured interviews allowed me to cover various issues and learn more about the teachers' beliefs regarding the extent to which they were prepared to implement

the *LGCSE* curriculum. I was able to probe by asking follow-up questions to seek clarification on certain answers from the participants. In particular, I was able to get a glimpse into the world of the teachers and to learn how their opinions and attitudes were formed, and also how they were prepared and prepared themselves for the implementation of the curriculum (cf. Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima & Haider, 2011: 2082). As such, my interaction with the participants enabled an understanding of how they constructed their own reality in terms of the curriculum. Informed by a constructivism paradigm, I was able to describe the meaning the participants make of their own preparedness.

1.5.3 Participant selection

For the selection of participants in this study, I intentionally decided on a purposive selection. Babbie (2014: 200; cf. also Creswell, 2014: 189) defines purposive selection as "[a] type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones will be the most useful or representative". As a teacher, I subsequently relied on my own experience to find participants whom I regard as most appropriate to contribute towards obtaining my research aim (cf. Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 93). As my aim was to explore the extent to which teachers feel they have been prepared and are ready to implement the *LGCSE*, I only considered teachers who are involved in the implementation of the *LGCSE*. My assumption was that such participants are in a position to assist me in understanding how they constructed their own meaning regarding their preparedness. In addition to purposive selection, I also used several criteria to inform my participant selection. I decided to only work with teachers who had been previously involved in teaching the *COSC* curriculum. In this regard, I selected teachers who have taught the *COSC* curriculum at senior secondary level[2] (Form D and E which are the equivalent of grade 11 and 12 respectively) for over three years and were also involved with the *LGCSE* from the onset; thus from 2013. My contention was that such teachers would not only provide valuable insight into how they had to shift from one curriculum to another, but would shed light on the

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[2] Secondary education in Lesotho comprises three years of junior secondary in which the learners sit for junior certificate examinations, and two years of senior secondary school where the learners sit for *LGCSE* examinations.

extent they feel they have been sufficiently prepared to implement the newly adopted *LGCSE*.

I also considered the issue of convenience when I selected the participants. Participant selection based on convenience has been defined as a strategy to collect information from those participants who are accessible to the researcher (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015: 536). For the sake of convenience, and since I reside in Maseru, I selected participants in the Maseru city. As only teachers involved with the implementation of *LGCSE* could be selected as participants, it did not actually matter where they reside. I ultimately involved two schools in Maseru city and selected six participants per school who have four years of teaching experience with the *COSC* and have been involved with the *LGCSE* since 2013.

1.5.4 Data analysis

Babbie (2014: 208) defines the analysis of qualitative data as the analysis of all forms of data that were generated through the use of qualitative techniques. On a more practical level, Creswell and Clark (2011: 208) refer to data analysis as a process of coding, dividing of the text into small units by assigning a label to each unit, and grouping the codes into themes. Rossman and Rallis (2012: 262) associate data analysis with three concepts, namely *immersion*, *analysis* and *interpretation*. *Immersion* refers to the process of fully getting to know the data; *analysis* as the organisation of the data into chunks; and *interpretation* refers to bringing meaning to those chunks. I first used document analysis to compare *COSC* and *LGCSE*.

In order to analyse the data I generated, I first transcribed the audio-recordings I made during the focus group discussions. It was important to first work with this data as its analysis informed the interviews that followed from the focus group discussions. I systematically organised the material into salient patterns and themes in order to pick up on these during the interviews.

The interviews, informed by the data drawn from the focus group discussions, were also audio-recorded and transcribed. During the data analysis I continued to

systematically organise the material through a coding system which assisted me to highlight emerging themes. Although the data analysis enabled me to make meaning of themes in such a way that they can tell a coherent story, it should be noted that due to the open-ended nature of the semi-structured interviews, and since the participants expressed their responses in much detail, it was at times challenging to always extract similar themes or codes from the transcripts (cf. Oun & Bach, 2014: 254; Turner, 2010: 756). In addition, I also remained conscious of the fact that individuals construct subjective meanings of their own experiences (cf. Creswell, 2014: 8). As such, I also focused on the complexity of views instead of merely narrowing the meanings into categories. Also, working with a basic interview schedule assisted me and since I used two data sets, I was able to compare and crystallise the findings drawn from the analyses, in order to achieve quality in this study (cf. Polsa, 2013: 77; Ellingson, 2014: 444)

1.6   TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Integrity refers to honesty and trustworthiness while conducting qualitative research. It is accepted that all the activities of data generation and data analysis must be trustworthy. Characterised by openness on the part of the researcher, integrity can be understood as a type of 'forwardness' that rejects intentional duplication and deceit (Watts, 2008: 440). In order to legitimise knowledge production within an appropriate theoretical framework, a research study must ensure that the choice of methods is directly informed by integrity (Watts, 2008: 440). Lauckner, Paterson and Krupa (2012: 14) indicate that the trustworthiness of a study is based on the extent to which the research findings correctly capture the phenomenon under study. According to Anney (2014: 272), any qualitative research study must employ the necessary procedures to ensure the trustworthiness of its findings. In this regard, various authors (Kumar, 2014: 219; also Anney, 2014: 272; Merriam, 2009: 211; Wahyuni, 2012: 77) refer to *dependability*, *credibility*, *transferability* and *confirmability* as criteria to guarantee the authenticity of the research findings. In the following section I elucidate these criteria and indicate what steps I have taken to fulfil each criterion.

Dependability is concerned with showing that the findings are consistent and can be repeated (Kumar, 2014: 219). Dependability subsequently means that using the same methods in a similar context should yield similar results. In this particular study, I used peer examination when I discussed my research processes and findings with my colleagues, who are experienced in qualitative research. This helped me to achieve dependability as I had to be honest about my studies. The peers also contributed by reviewing my study and asked me questions to clarify the processes I undertook (cf. Kumar, 2014: 219; Anney, 2014: 278).

According to Kumar (2014: 219) "*credibility* [my emphasis] involves establishing that the results of a qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research". Anney (2014: 276) further adds that "[c]redibilty establishes whether or not the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' views". Credibility is subsequently concerned with confidence in the research findings. To ensure credibility, I undertook member checks when I gave summaries of findings to the participants. This was used to solicit feedback about the accuracy of the findings in reflecting the participants' experiences (cf. Creswell & Clark, 2011: 211; Guba and Lincoln in Anney, 2014: 278). In this regard I was able to eliminate any misinterpretations of the data. To ensure credibility, I was able to crystalise the data that was generated through multiple methods such as a literature review, document analysis, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews (cf. Marshall & Rossman, 2011: 40). The use of multiple methods enhanced credibility as I was able to cross-check on a continuous basis.

Transferability is concerned with showing the applicability of the research findings in other contexts (Merriam, 2009: 223). External validity is concerned with the extent to which the results obtained in one study can apply to another study (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013: 157). In this study I provide rich, detailed descriptions of the research context and give a comprehensive description of the structures, assumptions and processes used. By providing such detailed description, the reader can independently assess whether the reported findings are transferable to other settings or not (cf. Bhattacherjee, 2012: 11).

Confirmability refers to the extent to which research findings are shaped by the research participantss and not by the researcher's bias, motivation and interest (Anney, 2014: 279; Bhattacherjee, 2012: 110). All recordings of the interviews and the focus group discussions, as well as the transcriptions, are available for verification. I also kept record of all procedures followed in this study, including what I regard as the strengths and weaknesses of the entire research process. Keeping record of an audit trail can enable any observer to trace "the research step-by-step through the decisions made and procedures described" (Shenton, 2004: 72).

In addition to taking steps to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, it was also important to ensure that no harm is done to the participants during the data generation process and also in the reporting of the study. I subsequently took certain steps from the onset of the research. These steps are discussed as part of ethical considerations in the next section.

1.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in research are very important because they specify what is permissible and not when conducting research (Kalof, Dan & Dietz, 2008: 14). Suter (2006: 75) defines ethics as "established guidelines that encourage responsible research practices and assure the protection of human participants". By implication, ethics relate to the general agreements shared by researchers who engage in scientific enquiry about what is proper and improper in such an undertaking (Babbie, 2014: 63-64).

The basic concern with ethics in research is that the participants, regardless of whether they volunteered to participate in a study or not, should never be harmed, neither physically nor emotionally (Babbie, 2014: 65). With this in mind, I took several steps during this study to ensure that the participants are at no stage embarrassed or endangered. In the first instance, I accepted from the onset that the information I wanted from the participants are not sensitive in the sense that it would incur emotional trauma that would require counselling. Although the participants were required to reflect on their experiences and readiness regarding the implementation of a particular curriculum, it was important to guarantee their right to privacy. In this

regard it was important to obtain informed consent from the participants. I subsequently used a consent from (cf. Appendix C) which was drawn up in accordance with Brooks, Riece and Magure's three principles for informed consent (2014: 80). In the consent form I provided the prospective participants with adequate information about the aim of the study and their expected role. It was also explained that participation is voluntary and prospective participants could decline to participate or may withdraw any time without fear of being disadvantaged. Also included in the consent form were insurances as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), that all information provided during the focus group discussions and the interviews would be treated with confidentiality. Also, the assurance was given that no identities would be revealed in any research report, or otherwise be made public (cf. Babbie, 2014: 68).

In addition to taking the above-mentioned steps to address ethics, I also applied for and obtained ethical clearance from the Ethical Committee of the University of the Free State's Faculty of Education (cf. Appendix A, UFS-HSD 2018/0275). As my study was undertaken in Lesotho, I also applied for permission from the District Education Officer in Maseru to undertake this study (cf. Appendix B).

1.8 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

This study is demarcated within education as a scientific field of research and geographically in schools within Maseru city in Lesotho.

1.8.1 Scientific demarcation

As this study is focused on the extent to which teachers are prepared to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*, it could be accepted that this study can be demarcated to *Education* as a scientific field of investigation. However, in order to refine the demarcation, I would like to argue that this study can be located in education policy studies. Hartshorne (1999: 5) defines a policy (including an education policy) "as a course of action adopted by government, through legislation, ordinances, and regulations and pursued through administration and control, finance and inspection, with the assumption that it should benefit the country and its citizens". When considering this definition, it can be accepted that the

Curriculum and Assessment Policy (*CAP 2009*) in which the *LGCSE* is outlined, is an official document of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) adopted in 2009. This policy document was meant to be a basic document which underlied MOET's intention to align both curriculum and assessment practices with Lesotho's national aspirations and goals (Selepe, 2016: 4). This policy also necessitated the move from *COSC* to *LGCSE*. In addition, when taking the aim of the policy into consideration, namely "monitoring quality, relevance and efficiency of basic and secondary education and to propose a fully localised secondary education curriculum and assessment" (MOET, 2009: Section v), then it can be accepted that the enactment of *CAP* was indeed with the assumption that it would benefit Lesotho and her citizens. In particular, with regard to the latter, *CAP*, and thus the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education,* was developed by the *Examination Council of Lesotho* and the *National Curriculum Development Centre* to benefit Basotho as they realised that the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* was not suitable for Lesotho (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015: 3). Although the study appears to allude to Curriculum Studies, the focus is not on curriculum *per se,* but rather on the readiness of teachers to implement a particular curriculum policy. As the implementation of curriculum is reliant on policy directives, thus gounded in policy, this study is centred on a particular education policy. As such, this study is demarcated to education policy studies.

1.8.2 Geographical demarcation

This study was undertaken in Lesotho. As a neighbouring country of the Republic of South Africa, Lesotho is completely surrounded by South Africa and has ten administrative districts (cf. Figure 1; travel.nationalgeographic.com). The study was delimited to two schools in Maseru which is the capital city of Lesotho. The reason for selecting two schools based in Maseru was due to convenience as I live in Maseru and the schools were therefore easily accessible (cf. Palinkas *et al.*, 2013: 536). Given my close proximity, it was fairly easy to arrange the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews with the participants at their respective schools.

Figure 1: Map of Lesotho

1.9   OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In addition to this chapter in which the reader is orientated with regard to *inter alia*, the research questions, the research objectives and the research design, the study unfolds in five consecutive chapters:

The focus of Chapter 2 is on why Lesotho changed from teaching the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* curriculum to the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*. This explanation is informed by a literature review of the historical context of Lesotho education, with specific reference to Lesotho's journey in localising her O' level curriculum. The literature review was complemented by a document analysis of selected documents. This chapter not only provided me with the necessary understanding of the trajectory of educational change in Lesotho, but formed the basis for the next chapter.

In Chapter 3 the key differences between the curricula for the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* and the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* are

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identified. I used document analysis to compare the two curricula and specific syllabi. This comparison enabled me to highlight the key differences, and to anticipate some of the implications for teachers who had to shift from one curriculum to another.

Chapter 4 is empirical in nature and with the assistance of focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, data were generated regarding the *how* and the *what* of preparing teachers to work with the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education.* I used the focus group discussions to explore how teachers co-constructed meaning and a range of complex beliefs amongst themselves. The focus group discussions subsequently helped to explore the participants' experience in terms of *what* they think, *how* they think and *why* they think that way, albeit as a collective. Informed by the themes that emerged during the focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the participants' subjective perceptions of their own preparedness to implement the curriculum for the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*.

In Chapter 5 I comment on the preparedness or the readiness of the teachers to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* curriculum by drawing on all the preceding chapters. In particular, I comment in this chapter on the implications of the research findings for teachers teaching towards the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* and make some suggestions based on these implications.

1.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter I gave a general outline of the study in line with the aim, i.e. *to determine the extent to which teachers have been prepared to implement the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*. In alignment with this aim, I formulated various objectives, all of which constitute the respective chapters in this research report. I have also indicated that in order to realise the various research objectives, this study was undertaken with the assistance of a literature review, a document analysis and the generation of data through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. Grounded in Constructivism as my paradigmatic position, this study was informed by a qualitative approach.

In the next chapter the focus is placed on Lesotho's shift from the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* to the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*. This shift is explored through a literature review supplemented by a document analysis.

CHAPTER 2: FROM *COSC* TO *LGSCE*: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in the previous chapter (cf. 1.2), Lesotho started to phase out the *COSC* in 2013 when the phasing-in of the *LGCSE* commenced. However, the shift from the one certificate to the other followed from a long history of pressure towards a more relevant curriculum for national development in Lesotho (cf. Raselimo & Mahao, 2013:3 and also *Sunday Express,* 2013: 2). The objective of this chapter is to explore, with the help of a literature review, the reasons for this shift. By implication, this chapter highlights the historical and theoretical trajectory of Lesotho education by focusing on Lesotho's journey from pre-colonial education, the pleas for education reform after the country gained her freedom, to the inception of her own O' level curriculum. The review of existing literature on education in Lesotho, complemented by a document analysis of selected official documents, not only provided me with the historical and theoretical background of education in Lesotho, but highlighted the educational reforms by the Lesotho government that led to the change from *COSC* to *LGCSE.* The documents included in this chapter were specifically selected for their relevance to the introduction of the LGSCE. As such, the literature review and document analysis helped me to understand the journey that Lesotho took to localise her O' level curriculum in order to ensure that education addresses the needs of the Basotho.

2.2. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LESOTHO EDUCATION

Muzvidziwa and Seotsanyana (2002: 2) classify education in Lesotho into three categories, namely the pre-colonial period, the period of colonial education and post-colonial education. Under pre-colonial education I concisely discuss informal and formal indigenous education, as well as early missionary education. As for colonial education, the focus is placed on the role of the colonisers in missionary education, including the grant-in-aids offered to the missionaries to run the schools, and the unification of different curricula. With regard to post-colonial education, the emphasis is placed on the steps Lesotho took to localise the O' level curriculum that ultimately led to the introduction of *LGCSE.*

2.2.1 Pre-colonial education (1820 – 1868)

Traditional education was practiced by the Basotho since the formation of the nation in the 1820s and comprised informal and formal ways of imparting knowledge and skills to their children. The Basotho had their own indigenous education where boys learned from their fathers and girls from their mothers (Raselimo, 2010: 16; Tlebere, 2005: 1). As such, learning for Basotho children was spontaneous as they observed what happened in the family, the neighbourhood and through their interaction with the physical environment. The Basotho also identified themselves with individual clans. Each clan had an animal totem that not only guided them, but also defined the quality and characteristics of the clan members. As a consequence, important aspects that needed to be learned were knowledge of the clan. This was communicated and promoted through riddles and folktales told by grandmothers. Understanding these clans ensured that the Basotho celebrated the diversity of the nation and also provided the basis of respecting people for who they are and for the ways in which they can contribute to the community (Mathe, 2008).

Basotho children also learned formally through initiation schools where they were taught by doctors of medicine, local leaders and wise men (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002: 2; Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982: 1). While boys and girls were taught separately, they learned about personal and family responsibilities, cultural values, as well as duties to one's clan. Although the aim of Basotho indigenous education was to produce initiates who would pride themselves in traditional values, boys were trained to fight using sticks to protect their country from attacks, while the education of girls focused more on issues of respect and taking care of the family (Selepe, 2016: 2). Letseka (2013: 341-342; Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982: 1) notes that there were no drop-outs from this form of formal education, and examinations were conducted by means of the youth demonstrating their mastery of those skills and knowledge regarded as vital to the physical and cultural needs of the community. Formal and traditional education was free and compulsory and "[t]here was no shortage of teachers, for every competent adult served as a model and a teacher, and every elder was potentially a reference library" (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982: 1).

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In addition to indigenous education, missionary education was introduced to the Basotho by the Christian missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Mission Society (PEMS) in 1833, the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) in 1862 and the English Church Mission (ECM) in 1868 (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002: 2; Mats'ela, 2006: 2; Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982: 1). Missionary education gradually replaced the Basotho's traditional system of learning through precept and example, and became the standard form of education in Lesotho. Even after the country became a British protectorate in 1868, formal education was left under the administration of the missionaries (Mats'ela, 2006: 2; also Ministry of Education Sports and Culture, 1983: 1; Selepe, 2016: 2; Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002: 2).

Missionaries introduced a different type of education, and primarily focused on the promotion of Christian values and the development of a Christian character (Aissat & Djafri, 2011: 3). The missionaries played a leading role as the forerunners of European formal and colonial education in Lesotho. In this regard the aim of

> schools was the acquisition of literacy and the study of the bible, the spiritual values and the teachings of the church, including religious observance and participation in the Christian community. European cultural values were also emphasized, the adoption of a biblical name, the use of European clothing, eating and living habits (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002: 2; cf. also Frankema, 2012: 336).

By implication, missionary education was concerned with the spreading of the message of God and teaching the gospel to instill Christian values. Schools were seen as good places to spread Christian values and to develop the Christian character capable of reading the bible. By implication, teachers were required to propagate Christian values. The rationale for reading and writing was to enable people to read the bible (Muzvidiziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002: 2). As such, missionary schools were not concerned with offering relevant education for equipping the Basotho with skills for personal growth. Missionary education subsequently neglected the development of lifelong skills of the Basotho children, and the syllabi followed by the missionary schools were foreign to local conditions. Raselimo (2010: 17) notes that the weakness of missionary education was that its "central purpose was to develop a Christian character, not to offer vocational education".

Missionary education negatively affected Basotho cultural practices in the sense that the missionaries considered some of Basotho ways of living as pagan. For example, their education strongly opposed the Basotho cultural practices such as initiation and polygamous marriages, which were seen as against Christianity (Selepe, 2016: 2). Mokotso (2015: 153) concurs that the missionaries tried by all means to ensure that the converts were removed from their indigenous religion and cultural religiosity.

2.2.3 Colonial education (1868 – 1966)

Lesotho, formerly known as Basutoland, was never colonised by the British. After several wars with the neighbouring Boers, Moshoeshoe 1, the paramount chief at the time, appealed to Queen Victoria for protection. In1868 Basutoland became a British protectorate, and although the British managed to keep Basutoland out of hostile hands, administrative costs and military commitments were transferred to the British Cape Colony (today known as the Western Cape province of the Republic of South Africa) in 1871 (Eldredge, 2007: 25). The Basotho, however, were not satisfied with the Cape Colony's "pattern of administration", as taxation and disarmament were regarded as contrary to what they considered as their protected status provided through their agreement with Britain. After a series of setbacks leading to a military stalemate, the Cape Colony turned the administration of Basutoland back to Britain in 1884 (Rosenberg & Weisfelder, 2013: 5-6).

Prior to the return of Basutoland to Britain in 1884, the Cape Colony government provided grants to the missionary churches to establish and administer schools in the country. As a result, the PEMS, the RCM and the ECM became involved in missionary schools (cf. 2.2.1). Randall (2009: 9) notes that after the British imperial government replaced the Cape Colony government, the former continued with the already established relationship between the government and the missions. Tlebere (2005: 2; also Thelejani, 1990: 1), however, points out that the British government was not interested in improving the education of the Basotho nation. In this regard, Rosenberg and Weisfelder (2013: 97) highlight how the British did not see any need to invest in Basutoland as they viewed the country as a source of migrant labour for South African mines. While education was left in the hands of the missionaries, the goal of the colonial administration "was to secure labour for industry in South Africa,

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an effort that was made to keep education within highly restricted bounds" (Brutt-Griffler 2002: 211). Economic concerns guided the colonial educational philosophy towards the Basotho, and the quality education offered to the Basotho was inferior in comparison to those of their colonial counterparts. Muir (in Brutt-Griffler, 2002: 211) highlights the difference in educational standard when stating that

> education for the people of Basutoland was intended to make them 'far more useful to their white employers than they have ever been before'. Education, then, had to be different for the colonizers and the African worker. The education of each was, in the language of the colonial, to suit each for his or her environment.

The British colonial government showed little interest in providing the Basotho with an education that would give them useful skills to liberate them from poverty, over-dependence on migrant labour to South Africa and independence from colonial masters (Motaba, 1998: 3-4).

Although the education of the Basotho was the responsibility of the mission churches, the British government shared some of this responsibility with the churches. While the churches established schools, provided the curriculum and facilities, and paid and supported the teachers (Khau, 2016: 103), the British government funded the education system with the aim to establish a British administration in the country (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). With regard to the latter, there was a need for support staff in the form of literate police, interpreters in courts, clerks and translators of English, all of which was important to facilitate communication with the colonial population. The need to have appropriate staff to serve in the civil service led to the establishment of secondary schools. In 1939 the British administration established the Basutoland High School, which was meant to serve as an example of what to aim for in senior secondary education (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). Despite the extension of education to high school level, it was not "geared towards the betterment of the welfare of the Basotho nation" (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002: 4). The training of the Basotho was to a large extent directed towards a few available employment opportunities in government administration and in churches. Employability in administration and as teachers and catechists required a good knowledge of English and Arithmetic. Employment opportunities in trade and business, and in commercial agriculture were limited. The weakness of this

educational system, however, was its over-emphasis of examinations and negligence of the development of technical and commercial skills (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982: 3). In addition, education was not free and parents had to pay school fees for the tuition of their children (Ansell, 2002: 93; Thaanyane, 2010: 2; Motaba, 1998: 4).

Despite weak education, Muzvidziwa and Seotsanyana (2002: 2; also Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982: 2; Khau, 2016: 103-104) note the positive influence the colonial government made other than offering grants to the missionaries. The colonial government was the final arbiter in a single education system. To streamline the education system, a *central board of advice* was established in 1909 which consisted of a director of education and a representative of the government. In the same year the establishment of this central board was followed by the appointment of the *education secretariat* which had to function as a link between schools and the government. Two further developments of importance in 1909 were the enactment of the *Education Act* and the establishment of *central and district advisory committe*es. While the *Education Act* defined the roles and responsibilities of the government and the churches in the management of schools, the *central and district advisory committees* provided a forum for education stakeholders such as chiefs, churches and the government (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanayana, 2002; Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982). Based on the recommendations of the forum, uniform syllabi and a system of inspection were introduced in 1927. One of the consequences of uniform syllabi was the introduction of a standard examination for primary and post-primary schooling, and the subsequent use of a formal, standard qualification and credentials. Although these credentials were now used to obtain employment in the teaching profession and in the colonial civil service, Muzvidziwa and Seotsanayana (2002) note how most of the changes made to the educational system were cosmetic in nature as they were not primarily aimed at the improvement of the welfare of the Basotho nation.

The curricula and subject content taught in the former Basutoland schools were modeled on what was taught in the Cape Province of South Africa (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanayana, 2002). In 1953 South Africa introduced the *Bantu Education Act* which implied that the control of African education in South Africa was removed from the

churches and provincial authorities. Mission schools now had to register with the state and the centralisation of control under the Bantu Education Department was aimed at keeping African education separate and inferior (SAHO, 30 March 2010). This change in the South African education system compelled the Basutoland government to design their own syllabi for junior secondary classes. With regard to senior secondary education, the country remained a member of the South African *Joint Matriculation Board (*JMB*)* for the management of their O' level examinations. In 1961 the relationship with the JMB was discontinued and the *Cambridge Overseas School Certificate* was adopted as the official exit level examination and entrance to tertiary education (Basutoland Annual Report, 1951: 13; also Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002: 4; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015: 3).

2.3   EDUCATION SINCE INDEPENDENCE (1966 -)

The country gained independence from Britain in 1966 and the name Basutoland was replaced with Lesotho (Khau, 2016: 104). Since independence, Lesotho embarked on several attempts to make education more relevant for the economic needs of the country. In this section an exposition is given of the various attempts of the Lesotho government to restructure education in order to find a stronger alignment with the needs of the Basotho children. Also included in this section is an exposition of how Lesotho proceeded from *COSC* to *LGCSE*.

2.3.1 Attempts at restructuring education

Since independence, secondary education expanded dramatically in scale but changed very little in terms of character. As noted by Ansell (2002: 92), Lesotho continued to use colonial-style curricula which focused more on public examinations and did very little to fulfill the needs of the country. However, after independence, the Basotho people were determined to restructure the education system in order to make it more responsive to the training needs relevant to the country's economic development. Such determination was prompted by the weakness of the colonial education system that was not aimed at preparing the Basotho for managerial, commercial and technical positions. Due to the nature of education, the Basotho were not enabled to apply their knowledge and skills to improve the rural environment and to increase agricultural production (Ministry of Education, Sports

and Culture, 1982). Thelejani (1990: 3) points out that education at the time of independence was inadequate in scope, quantity and quality. The few individuals who received their education outside the country were treated as "first class" Basotho. In order to address the weaknesses of the education system, experts from outside the country were approached to assist with three five-year development plans (Thelejani, 1990). In this regard, donor agencies and United Nations (UN) systems supplied "experts" for curriculum development (Thelejani, 1990; Khau, 2016). However, Khau (2016: 104) indicates that Lesotho did not benefit from the interventions from outside the country as the identified programmes did not align with the needs of the Mosotho child in order to mature to its true potential. Rather, education became more focused on the education and training of workers who would supply the international markets with goods and services.

On home ground, the Ministry of Education announced in 1971 the *Education Policy for Development* as a response to the educational limitations inherited from the colonial administration. This policy not only recognised the central role of education in the achievement of economic growth (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015), but led in 1974 to the initiation of a curriculum diversification reform. The introduction of practical subjects such as agriculture, home economics and technical subjects was meant to achieve the goals of self-reliance, and it was also a response to the world of work. However, in 1993 when the evaluation report of the diversification was done, there was little achievement to report in terms of curriculum diversification (Raselimo, 2010). Muzvidziwa and Seotsanyana (2002) point out that the attempt was not successful because the secondary school curriculum was already loaded with many subjects. This subsequently left little room for the acquiring of education for lifelong learning. Also, the Ministry of Education (1993 in Raselimo, 2010: 26) posits that, "whilst pupils have a positive attitude towards practical subjects, diversification appears to have had very little impact on their career aspirations or their subject preferences". The possibility exists that many parents and learners might have viewed practical and technical subjects, which emphasised vocational skills, as inferior to the traditional academic school subjects.

From October 1977 until March 1978 the Basotho people were granted the opportunity to express their views regarding the design of a responsive curriculum at

fifty-one public gatherings in the ten districts of the country (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1978: 71; also Mosisili, 1981; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). Among the concerns that were raised was that academic education enjoyed greater prestige than technical or vocational education. It was noted that learners who went through the education system were either "'failures' (those who have been forced out of the system) or 'passes' (those who regurgitate undigested facts on the examination day to the satisfaction of the examiner)" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1978: 104). Mosisili (1981: 1) also criticised the education system at the time in that

> much content of the syllabuses and textbooks for History, Geography and English were foreign to the environment, interests and needs of children, that there was little relationship and coherence not only between the subjects taught but also between what the children learned in schools and the other learning which they were exposed outside the school.

The general feeling in Lesotho was that the type of education which the Basotho children received was alien and irrelevant to the context in which they lived.

As a follow-up to the public gatherings and in order to further consult with regard to Lesotho education, a *National Education Dialogue* was held in 1978. The dialogue was attended by representatives from social, political and administrative levels who were required to review the opinions expressed by the Basotho people through the public gatherings. The dialogue was also strengthened by the attendance of consultants from Kenya and Nigeria. These representatives presented the education models developed and tried in their countries. As the countries share similar colonial histories, the intention was for Lesotho to consider, adapt and integrate the relevant aspects of the models (Mosisili, 1981: 33). It was recommended that an education policy document should be prepared to guide the government in its planning of an education system that would be relevant to the development needs of Lesotho (Ministry of Education, 1982). The *Education Sector Survey Task Force* was established in 1982 which was mandated to concretise the views gathered from the dialogue, and to draw up the policy recommendations (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015).

Of particular importance for this study, is the reference made in *The Education Sector Survey: Report of the Task Force* of 1982 to the decline of quality in education. In particular, the decline was picked up through the performance in the

COSC examinations where 61% of the learners passed in 1970 as opposed to 21% in 1980 (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982). Poor performance, however, became an ongoing trend and Ansell (2002: 92) points out that the *COSC* pass rate varied between 26% and 38% from 1984 to 1994. The increase noted in Ansell's study (2002) is not significant, and while learners' performance was particularly bad in English and Mathematics, some sections of the society believed the poor performance was caused by learners taking foreign examinations. *COSC* was a foreign examination largely controlled by Cambridge University in Britain as it was "steeped in British traditions that are alien to teachers and students; [and] as such students struggle to cope with it" (Lekhetho, 2013: 392; also Raselimo, 2010). Also, as noted by Jackson (2009: 8), the final examinations papers were set and marked in Britain by examiners who had no idea of the Basotho culture. Principally, Basotho learners had dual challenges, namely to access the foreign curriculum on the one hand, and on the other hand, to use a foreign language (English) through which it was delivered (Tlebere, 2005; Lekhetho, 2013). As a consequence, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1982: 95) suggested that "Lesotho should abandon the *COSC* and devise a local examination, supervised by the university".

2.3.2 The localisation of COSC examinations

The need to localise the O' level examinations emanated from the various public gatherings, dialogues and reports concerning Lesotho's education. The decision to localise the O' level examinations was informed by the concern for a curriculum and examination system that would be relevant to the needs of the Basotho child. In addition, the decision was also prompted in 1988 when Britain phased out the O' level examinations and introduced the *General Certificate of Secondary Education* (*GCSE*). The *GCSE* was to be served by the *International General Certificate of Secondary Education* (*IGCSE*) (Tlebere, 2005; Ntoi, undated). Countries like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland had two options: either continue with *COSC,* but take responsibility for the examinations, albeit in alignment accordance with the University of Cambridge's standards; or join the *IGCSE*. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland decided to initiate the localising of O' level examinations with the help of the *University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate* (Tlebere, 2005; Ntoi, undated). The prerequisites for the localisation of the O' level examination was

competence in the constructing of examinations in order to maintain the same standards that preceded the localisation (Tlebere, 2005). It was subsequently important to train teachers in order to equip them with assessment skills and techniques to sufficiently carry out the marking of the examinations.

Lesotho took the first steps to localise the O' level examinations with the training of markers and the subsequent marking of *COSC* examinations scripts in 1989 (Pule, 1995; Ralise, 1995; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). Pule (2005: 24) notes that in 1995 when the localisation seminar was held in Lesotho, the country had already trained 364 markers in 18 subjects, 46 team leaders to supervise their teams, and over 63 question paper setters. However, there were concerns that even though the marking of examinations was done locally, the curriculum had not changed and the examinations were still set by Cambridge, which was counter to the Basotho's desire to attain full localisation (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). In 1995 Lesotho convened a national seminar on localisation and the latter was articulated in the *Report on the National Seminar in Lesotho Secondary Education Policy: Localisation of the O' Level curriculum* as "taking charge and control of all activities and responsibilities over curriculum development and assessment" (Ministry of Education, 1995: 18). In particular, the report expressed concerns about the irrelevance and inappropriateness of *COSC* to the educational and developmental needs of Lesotho and recommended that secondary education

1. should be geared towards equipping students with knowledge, attitudes and skills which would enable them to adapt to changing situations;
2. must instill and promote awareness, knowledge and understanding of the environment, its importance to mankind, interactions with environment, care, protection and conservation of the environment (Ministry of Education, 1995: 22).

The need for Lesotho to provide education relevant to the national developmental needs was also emphasised by the national seminar. This message rang strongly throughout the discussions and dialogues on education reform in Lesotho.

An implementation strategy followed in 1995 that was characterised by a comprehensive review of all subjects at Junior Certificate (JC) level with the purpose

of linking them with the O' level curriculum (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). To achieve the integration of the curriculum, a spiral approach was adopted to curriculum organisation, which entailed treating the same topic at different levels of complexity as learners progressed through the school system up to Form E (Raselimo, 2010: 30). Other recommendations for the O' level localisation included the training of examiners and the strengthening of the collaboration between the key curriculum stakeholders, namely the *Examination Council of Lesotho* (ECOL*)*, the *National Curriculum Development Centre* (NCDC), the inspectorate, and the teachers.

Lesotho conceptualised the O' level localisation in 1995, but never completed the process. The decision to phase out *COSC* was a result of the CIE*'s* pressure from 2007 on Lesotho to localise. The CIE made several changes to syllabi such as changes to the Food and Nutrition, and Agriculture syllibi - these changes would have necessitated the re-training of teachers. Also, in 2013 the CIE informed Lesotho that it would not continue with Geography and History for Southern Africa. Moreover, examination fees were increasing at an alarming rate every year. These changes subsequently made Lesotho realise that it was time to design and develop her own curriculum and assessment strategies (*Sunday Express*, 2013: 2).

2.3.3 Towards the introduction of LGCSE

Although the plans and strategies for the introduction of a localised O' level curriculum and examination were made, it took seventeen years for the actual implementation of the *LGCSE*. Concerns amongst the public and the educational fraternity about the delay included that the curriculum had only been reviewed up to JC-level, the old *COSC* syllabus and its supporting textbooks were still in use, and the O' level examinations were still controlled by the Cambridge University in Britain (Raselimo, 2010). For Nketekete (2001: iii), one of the restraining factors for the delay in implementation was a lack of coordination among the stakeholders involved in curriculum policy-making, implementation and evaluation. This lack was explained as the consequence of no clear vision to guide the whole process and subsequently no systematic timeline of curriculum development activities. The reform process was also hindered by a lack of common understanding between NCDC and ECOL regarding what exactly is meant by localisation of education in Lesotho. Although the

1995 *Report on the National Seminar in Lesotho Secondary Education Policy* articulated a general definition of localisation, it seems as if there was tension between the definition of quality in the localisation report and the NCDC and ECOL's conceptualisation of examination standards (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015).

In an attempt to bring a closer understanding between the NCDC and ECOL a two-day workshop on a common understanding of the localisation of senior secondary education was held in 2006. During the workshops the weaknesses of the previous definition of localisation was foregrounded as an emphasis on taking control of marking and administration, while neglecting "the redesigning of the entire curriculum and assessment packages in order to ensure alignment with the goals of education" (NCDC, 2006: 5). In response to this critique, an assessment policy framework was envisaged that would entail the restructuring of the educational system with the aim to review, monitor, coordinate and maintain consistency of what is taught, learnt and assessed in response to socio-economic development (NCDC, 2006). As such, the operational definition for the redesigning of the curriculum and assessment for senior secondary education was to be informed by

1 Bringing home something new (contextualise); and
2 Redesigning senior secondary education for socio-economic purposes (NCDC, 2006: 5).

In order to achieve the aims set out by the workshop, several strategies were explored. Lesotho considered the *IGCSE* model, the matriculation model of South Africa and the possibility to design an own model. After scrutinising the first two models for their relevance and suitability for Lesotho, the country decided on its own model, although based on principles comparable to other systems (NCDC, 2006). It was this decision that led to the enactment of the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* (*CAP*) in 2009. *CAP* was adopted as a policy framework to guide the transformation of teaching and learning, as well as the assessment of primary and secondary levels of education with "the purpose of making education at these levels accessible, relevant, efficient and of the best quality" (MOET, 2009: v). As such, *CAP* should be regarded as the basic document which not only underlines MOET's intention to reform both curriculum and assessment practices to align with Lesotho's goals and aspirations, but as the culmination of a long trajectory of public

gatherings, dialogues and seminars on education reform. In addition, *CAP* was also intended to guide the process of localisation by providing the principles that will guide the implementation of *LGCSE* (MOET, 2009).

Drawing on *CAP*, Lesotho began the localisation of the O' level curriculum in 2012 with the revision of syllabi, the development of sample question papers and sample marking memos for Mathematics, English Language, Physical Science, Geography, History and Development Studies (*Sunday Express*, 2013: 3; *ECOL,* undated). These subjects were first introduced in Form D in 2013 when the phasing out of *COSC* was set into motion. The gradual introduction of the *LGCSE* meant that the Sesotho, Religious Studies, Agriculture, Literature in English, Biology, Design and Technology, and Accounting syllabi were developed in 2013 and introduced in Form D in 2014. The first *LGCSE e*xaminations were written in 2014 (*Sunday Express*, 2013: 3; *Public Eye*, 2015: 8) and implementation was completed in 2016.

2.4   SUMMARY

In this chapter I dealt with the historical trajectory of Lesotho's shift from *COSC* to *LGCSE.* By means of a literature review, I gave a brief exposition of pre-colonial and colonial education in Lesotho. The focus of the chapter was, however, placed on Lesotho's response to the call to restructure her education in order to ensure that Basotho children get relevant and appropriate education that is responsive to the needs of the nation. The chapter concludes with the introduction of *CAP* in 2009 and the subsequent implication of the *LGCSE* in 2013.

In the next chapter the focus is placed on the differences between *COSC* and *LGCSE*.

CHAPTER 3:   *COSC* VERSUS *LGCSE*

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter a historical overview was given of Lesotho's trajectory towards the localisation of her O' level examinations in 2012 and the concomitant revision of syllabi (cf. 2.3.3). The objective of this chapter is to compare, by means of a document analysis, the curriculum that informed the *COSC* and the current curriculum that underpins the *LGCSE*. It is my contention that such a comparison is required to not only identify the key differences between the curricula, but, by implication, to anticipate the implications for those teachers who had to shift from using one curriculum to the other. This comparison is underpinned by my understanding of curriculum as the sum total of all experiences provided for students under the guidance of a school (Syomwene, 2013). I first undertook a document analysis of the two documents that inform the respective certificates, namely *Implementing the Curriculum with Cambridge: A Guide to School Leaders* (undated) and the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009.* The analysis of the two documents further served as the backdrop for the comparison of syllabi prescribed by *COSC* and *LGCSE* respectively. In drawing such a comparison, attention was given to English Language, Mathematics, Physical Science, Religious Studies and Accounting. I conclude this chapter by anticipating possible implications for teachers who had to move from one curriculum to the other.

3.2   CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

The introduction the *General Certification of Education* (*GCE*) replaced the *School Certificate and Higher School Certificate* in 1951 in the UK. Following this replacement, the *Cambridge International Examinations* (CIE) offered the *GCE* O' level examination, known as the *Cambridge Overseas School Certificate* (*COSC*) to certain African and Commonwealth countries. Lesotho adopted the *COSC* in 1961 when it no longer made use of the Joint Matriculation Board of South Africa (Tse & Sahasrabudhe, 2010; Isaacs, 2010; Raselimo, 2010; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). As an internationally recognised qualification, the Cambridge O' level examination was equivalent to the Cambridge *International General Certificate of Secondary*

Education (*IGCSE*) and the UK *GCE,* and later the *General Certificate of Secondary Education* (*GCSE*) which replaced the *GCE* in 1988.

Schools that wish to follow the Cambridge curriculum were required to be conversant with the document entitled *Implementing the Curriculum with Cambridge: A Guide for School Leaders* (undated). The document is divided into six sections, namely *Introduction*, *Curriculum planning: an overview*, *Developing the Cambridge learners attributes*, *Designing the school curriculum, Leadership*, *Curriculum evaluation and building school capacity,* and *Working with Cambridge*.

3.2.1 Introduction

In the *Introduction* the document is explained as a guide that will

> help school principals and others responsible for educational programmes
> in a school design, develop, implement and evaluate the curriculum where
> Cambridge programmes and qualifications are followed (CIE, undated: 1).

Although the document outlines fundamental principles for the design, implementation and evaluation of a curriculum, and practices that support these principles, it is further acknowledged that "schools are responsible for their own curriculum, and our [CIE] role is simply to support them in making informed decisions" (CIE, undated: 1). Thus, designed for an international audience, CIE remains sensitive to the needs of different countries as schools must develop and implement a curriculum

> which is suitable for their context, culture and ethos, and which is tailored
> to their students' needs (CIE, undated: Foreword).

3.2.2 Curriculum planning: an overview

In the second section of the document *Curriculum planning: an overview*, definitions are provided for key concepts such as *school curriculum*, *subject curriculum*, *co-curricullar curriculum* and *experienced curriculum* (CIE, undated: 2). These definitions are perceived as important as they enable a common understanding of the use of these concepts in the document. Of importance, however, is to understand that CIE leaves room for curriculum design, hence the exposition in this section of

various principles regarded as fundamental to successful curriculum design and implementation (CIE, undated: 5–9). Although a school can decide what is included in its curriculum, it is understood that while some schools will prefer to offer a curriculum made up entirely of combinations of Cambridge courses, combining these to form a programme of study, other schools will select individual subject syllabi and combine them with qualifications and educational programmes from other national or international providers (CIE, undated: 5).

Irrespective of a country's decision with regards to its curriculum, the principles for successful curriculum design listed by CIE are perceived as fundamental and therefore regarded as relevant for schools which follow Cambridge programmes and qualifications. These fundamental principles include expectations with regard to the *school curriculum* as "a broad balanced, coherent and consistent programme of learning" that supports "the development of learners and teachers who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged" and "recognise(s) the language background of learners" (CIE, undated: 5-6). With regards to each *subject curriculum,* it is expected that its design should

> provide learners and teachers with inspiring and relevant content and an appropriate breadth of subject knowledge and skill development appropriate for the learners' developmental stage (CIE, undated: 6).

In terms of *assessment*, expectations are indicated with regards to assessment for learning which should include feedback in support of the learning process, as well as summative assessment which should be aimed at determining a learner's level of performance. Clear and meaningful *education standards* are expected to "ensure measurement of progress and achievement and allow for international benchmarking and comparability" (CIE, undated: 7). *Quality teaching* is regarded as a critical factor in learner development, while *reflective practices* should be supported by professional development in order for teachers to improve student learning and performance. It is further expected that in order for students to achieve their maximum performance while using the Cambridge curricula and assessments, that a *pedagogy* based on active learning will be used (CIE, undated: 8). While *strong leadership* is perceived as a necessary condition for school improvement and

curriculum development, the latter is perceived as "an ongoing process of evidence gathering and evaluation" (CIE, undated: 9).

The above implies that even though schools may design their own curriculum, either based entirely on the Cambridge curriculum or a combination of Cambridge and national or other international providers, Cambridge has certain expectations that should be met. These expectations are regarded as fundamental principles for curriculum design. Even though CIE claims to be sensitive to the needs of different countries and gives them the right to exercise some choices regarding their curricula, it remains in control since it provides the fundamental principles that must be followed. For example, the principle that there should be clear and meaningful education standards "to ensure measurement of progress achieved and allow for benchmarking and international comparability" suggests that CIE wants to ensure that qualifications from different countries that use Cambridge syllabi, can be benchmarked to ensure adherence to and maintenance of standards. Lesotho, for instance, opted for a curriculum based entirely on the Cambridge curriculum.

3.2.3 Developing the Cambridge learner attributes

The third section, *Developing the Cambridge learner attributes*, is concerned with the attributes that inform the design of Cambridge curricula and assessment specifications which teachers are expected to support in their classrooms. As such, this section considers various approaches "that support the development of learners and teachers who are confident, reflective, innovative and engaged" (CIE, undated: 12). The CIE's introduction of learner and teacher attributes should be understood against the assumption that a meaningful curriculum is not simply a collection of different subjects; rather the desirable attributes should be actively pursued and supported through various teaching strategies (CIE, undated: 11-12).

3.2.4 Designing the school curriculum

The fourth section, *Designing the school curriculum*, places the focus on issues relevant for the designing and implementing of a school curriculum based on the Cambridge programmes and qualifications. Issues such as finding a *balance* between a school's mission, community values, educational aims and curriculum

load depends on designing a *coherent* curriculum that provides for "a wide range of different and complementary learning experiences that fit well together, particularly if the aim is to develop well-rounded citizens" (CIE, undated: 19). In addition, schools whose whole school curriculum is based on Cambridge courses and those that combine Cambridge courses with other national and international qualifications, had to organising *bilingual* and *multilingual* education which depends on individual contexts.

In Lesotho the curriculum was based entirely on Cambridge courses. Although it was indicated by the CIE (undated, 18) that there should be a balance between the mission of the school, community values and educational aims when designing the school curriculum, such a balance is difficult to find when a curriculum is designed and developed outside a specific country. This imbalance was obvious in Lesotho as the O' level curriculum was found not to be relevant to the needs of the Basotho. This led to numerous attempts to localise and restructure Lesotho's education (cf. 2.3.1). In addition, the organising of bilingual and multilingual education depending on the individual context was problematic in the case of Lesotho. Bilingual and multilingual education were ignored as

> *COSC* regards English as a passing subject, therefore candidates may not be awarded *COSC* qualifications without a pass in English, and rather they obtain the General Certificate of Education (*GCE*) (Ntoi, undated: 10).

3.2.5 Leadership, curriculum evaluation and building school capacity

In the fifth section, *Leadership, curriculum evaluation and building school capacity*, consideration is given to the

> important role played by leadership, evaluation of the curriculum, evaluation of teachers linked to professional development and the development of specific school policies and practices (CIE, undated: 35).

Leadership within the CIE context is seen as a collective responsibility and as a process rather than a position of authority. The role of strong leadership for the design and development of an effective curriculum is emphasised – it is assumed that the overall educational excellence in a school depends on strong leadership.

This section also refers to issues regarding curriculum planning and evaluation; teacher recruitment and evaluation; professional development; instructional leadership; the management of change; quality assurance; local community ivovlement; student admission and progress; and the administration of assessments (CIE, undated: 35-42).

In the case of Lesotho, Cambridge was responsible for the running of the *COSC* examination as it prescribed regulations for its administration. Prescribed regulations included the way in which question papers should be stored, how examinations should be run, and even the arrangement of desks in the examination halls (Ntoi, undated: 10; Lowe, 1999: 319). In essence, the CIE had the final say in how examinations were run and Lesotho's role was to adhere to regulations provided by the CIE. Although the CIE trained markers, team leaders and question paper setters in preparation for the localisation of the O' level examinations in 1989, the localisation of the marking of *COSC* was only formalised in 1996. Despite this localisation, "the setting of these examinations remains in the hands of external body - the *UCLES*" (Tlebere, 2005: 25).

3.2.6 Working with Cambridge

In the last section, *Working with Cambridge*, an exposition is given of the various services and resources the CIE offers to schools using Cambridge programmes. The three major areas of support include

- Curriculum materials and resources to support teachers in the delivery of subject curricula
- Professional development
- Local advisory and development services (CIE, undated: 43).

Lesotho's implementation of the Cambridge system was primarily supported by curricular material which the CIE delivered to teachers' centres and other resources that were available for teachers to download from the CIE website. In this regard, the CIE prided itself on the quality of its service in that it provided world-class support services for teachers and exams officers: "We (CIE) offer a wide range of teacher material, plus teacher training (online and face-to-face) and student support material"

(*UCLES,* 2008: 2). In addition, "[a]ssessment feedback was delivered from Cambridge in the United Kingdom to ECOL and down to the teachers in schools" (Tlebere, 2005: 19).

In the next section I undertake a document analysis of *CAP* with the aim to contrast the major differences between the two documents.

3.3   THE ROLE OF CONSTRCTIVISM IN CURRICULUM REFORM

Before I embark on an exposition of the *LGCSE* curriculum, I revisit the theoretical framework which informed this study, namely Constructivism (cf. 1.4). In alignment with the tenet of Constructivism to create and/or co-construct meaning, I consider the public gatherings held in Lesotho from 1977 to 1978 as incidences where Basotho started to co-construct their ideas and meanings around more relevant education for the country (cf. 2.3.1). The curriculum reforms undertaken in Lesotho followed from the initial gatherings and deepend the construction of education reform. In light of my understanding of Constructivism, the enactment of *CAP* in 2009 and my unpacking of the *LGCSE* curriculum in 3.4 should therefore be perceived as the outcome of how Basotho co-constructed their own reality in relation to the kind of education they want for their children.

3.4 *LGCSE* CURRICULUM

As indicated in the previous chapter (cf.2.3.2), the need to localise the O' level examinations emanated from various public gatherings, dialogues and reports concerning education. The decision to localise the O' level was informed by the need for a curriculum and examination system that are relevant to the needs of the Basotho. Although the decision to localise the O' level curriculum was made in 1995, it was only implemented in 2013. The implementation in 2013 was preceded by a two-day workshop in 2006 during which an assessment policy framework was envisaged for the restructuring of the educational system (cf. 2.3.3). The *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* 2009 (*CAP*) was adopted in 2009.

CAP is divided into 15 sections, namely *Foreword by the Minister*, *Acknowledgement*, *Executive summary*; *Introduction*; *Historical background current context*; *Rationale*; *Philosophy of education*; *Language policy; National goals of*

education; *Aims of basic education*; *Curriculum aims of basic education*; *Aims of secondary education*; *Curriculum and assessment*; and *Organization of school curriculum*. However, bearing in mind the objective of this chapter and in particular the aim to compare *CAP* with the CIE, I will only focus on selected sections and sub-sections from the document. I will firstly focus on the *Foreword* by the Minister of Education and Training to foreground the reasons for the introduction of *CAP* as a policy framework to guide education reform in Lesotho. Reference to the section on *curriculum and assessment* was also deemed relevant as it holds significance regarding what is to be taught, and how it should be taught and assessed in secondary schools. Given the need and vision to align education with the needs of the Basotho people (cf. 2.3.2), I address both the *curriculum aspects* and the *learning areas* which are sub-sections of *Curriculum and assessment*. While curriculum aspects deal with the competencies that Basotho learners should acquire in order to cope with the challenges of life, the learning areas are the modes and means through which life challenges are addressed. I considered the inclusion of the learning areas as important as it illustrates how the curriculum for secondary schools is organised. Lastly in this section, I also deal with *pedagogy* as it refers to a required shift by teachers from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach.

3.4.1 Foreword

In the foreword*,* the Minister of Education and Training explains the document as a reflection of

> the Government's commitment to provide quality and relevant education to
> the people of Lesotho as required by the legal and constitutional
> framework of the Kingdom (MOET, 2009: Foreword by the Minister).

While it is the legal responsibility of the government to ensure quality and relevant education, the latter is further qualified by *CAP* (MOET, 2009: Foreword by the Minister) as education geared towards "responding to the needs of the society – the needs of Basotho as a whole". As such, it can be assumed that curriculum content should not to be only aligned with the needs and aspirations of the Basotho, but should also assist the Basotho in addressing

> challenges posed by the HIV and AIDS pandemic and other
> communicable diseases, increasing poverty, climatic and environmental

degradation and other emerging needs brought about by globalisation (MOET, 2009: Foreword by the Minister).

It is, however, important that this call for quality and relevant education should be read along with a stipulation in the *Constitution of Lesotho* (1993: Section 28(a) according to which

> Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at ensuring that –
>
> (a) education is directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As a policy framework adopted to guide the transformation of teaching and learning, and assessment in the various levels of education (MOET, 2009: Foreword by the Minister), one could assume that *CAP* has the directive to ensure quality and relevant education that will be beneficial to every Mosotho child's full development, and to the country as a whole. In particular, this policy framework aims at providing the necessary guidelines for the process of a "fully localised secondary education curriculum and assessment" (MOET, 2009: Foreword by the Minister).

The difference between *CAP* and CIE lies in the responsiveness of the former to the needs of Lesotho, as opposed to CIE which is designed for an international audience. Although CIE expects countries to develop a curriculum suitable for their unique contexts and learners' needs (cf. 3.2.1), the curriculum used in Lesotho was criticised for its irrelevance (cf. 2.3.2). *CAP*, however, could be regarded as a response to the recommendation of the *National Education Dialogue* of 1978 to prepare an education policy document to guide the planning of an education system that is responsive to the needs of Lesotho (cf. 2.3.1). Grounded within this national imperative and informed by the *Constitution of Lesotho* (1993), *CAP* envisages "to transform the teaching and learning as well as assessment to be in line with the emerging needs of individuals and the nation" (MOET, 2009: Foreword by the Minister).

3.4.2 Curriculum and assessment

In order to provide quality and relevant education, *CAP* envisages a curriculum that

> [p]romotes the creation, acquisition and utilisation of knowledge and skills as well as development of attitudes and values necessary for participation in advancing personal and socio-economic development and participation in globalization (MOET, 2009: Curriculum and assessment).

Although the promotion and acquisition of skills has always been foregrounded in the Lesotho curriculum, it is important to highlight the differences between *CAP* and CIE with regards to the types of skills the two of them offer. Unlike *CAP* which aims to develop a person that will be able to participate in socio-economic development and globalisation, CIE advocated for a subject curriculum that offers skills appropriate for the learner's developmental stage (cf. 3.2.3). CIE subsequently did not aim to equip learners in the broader sense to participate in personal and socio-economic development to the benefit of Lesotho as a country. By implication, *CAP* is aligned with the constitutional vision of education for "the full development of the human personality" and guides, as a policy framework, the transformation of teaching and learning to be "accessible, relevant, efficient and of the best quality" (MOET, 2009: Executive summary).

In addition, it is important to note that the newly envisaged curriculum was perceived as an integrated curriculum, in other words a curriculum characterised by a

> holistic view and treatment of issues related to intelligence, maturity, personal and social development of the learner for survival purposes and economic development of the nation (MOET, 2009: Curriculum and assessment).

By implication, related issues of the curriculum must be placed together to prepare a learner holistically and to do away with traditional compartmentalised subject-based instruction. The notion of relevant education also comes into play within the context of an integrated curriculum - the argument is that since a learner is part of the community, learning should consider the learner's daily experiences. It is subsequently envisaged that both the lived experiences of the individual as well as school life should be integrated with community life (MOET, 2009: Curriculum and

assessment). In this regard, *CAP* (MOET, 2009: Curriculum and assessment) stipulates that the curriculum should

> strive to endow learners with skills, attitudes and values such as creativity, critical thinking, initiative, working with others, communication, problem-solving, scientific, technological, entrepreneurial, psycho-social and willingness to learn in order to promote personal and social development and to achieve an improved life.

An improved life, however, is also positioned within the ability of an integrated curriculum to equip learners to deal with challenges experienced within the broader societal context such as, *inter alia*, the "HIV and AIDS pandemic and other communicable diseases, … and other emerging issues brought about by globalization" (MOET, 2009: Foreword by the Minister). The framing of Lesotho's integrated curriculum within the lived experiences of the learner, school life and community life, differs substantially from the CIE's compartmentalised subject-based instruction which emphasised disciplinary knowledge. In contrast to a curriculum aimed at equipping learners with skills to address emerging issues of concern to the Basotho people, CIE supports a broad balanced and coherent programme of learning aimed at developing confident, responsible, innovative, reflective, and engaged learners (cf. 3.2.2).

Assessment, according to *CAP,* "will focus on the attainment of educational and curriculum aims at all levels" (MOET, 2009: Assessment). The methods of assessment include formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment which comprises of diagnostic and continuous assessment, will be carried out nationally to monitor the curriculum for the attainment of defined minimum competencies at the end of grades 4, 7, and 9. Summative assessment will be carried out for the selection and certification of learners at the end of grades 10 and 12 (MOET, 2009: Assessment). In terms of assessment, CIE only emphasises two methods, namely feedback to support the learning process, and summative assessment for determining learners' level of performance (cf. 3.2.2). With regards to formative assessment, *CAP* uses both diagnostic and continuous assessment while CIE uses only feedback. By implication, the use of these multi-methods of

assessments have the potential to not only enhance teaching and learning, but to also provide a more balanced picture of a learner's performance.

3.4.3 Curriculum aspects

CAP uses curriculum aspects and learning areas which are brought together to identify competencies to be promoted in different contexts. According to *CAP,* curriculum aspects "highlight the life challenges and contexts in which the learner is expected to function as an individual and a member of the society" (MOET, 2009; Executive summary; cf. also UNESCO, 2010). A learning area, on the other hand, is considered a "body of knowledge … a source of disciplined pool of knowledge which learners should acquire to fulfill expected roles in their lives and their society" (MOET, 2009: Learning areas). The relationship between curriculum aspects and learning areas seems to be constituted by the vision for an education system that is relevant for the needs of the learners, of the society, and of the country as a whole. In essence, it is envisaged that the learning areas, framed within the curriculum aspects, would address those issues of curriculum and examination that were deemed irrelevant to the needs of Lesotho (cf. 2.3.1 and 2.3.2), and which ultimately led to the adoption of the *LGCSE*.

Within the context of curriculum planning, *CAP* envisages five curriculum aspects which are intended to "act as a tool to assist in curriculum planning and organisation" (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects). These curriculum aspects form an integral part of education for equipping learners with what is perceived as the necessary skills, values and attitudes for life in Lesotho. The following curriculum aspects are indicated in *CAP*:

a) *Effective communication* refers to the fact that "the learner should have the ability to communicate effectively in words, symbols, colours, signs, sounds, media (print, electronic), and actions" (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects).

It can be assumed that in the process of ensuring effective communication, learners must be assisted in acquiring listening, speaking, writing and reading skills.

b) *Awareness of self and others* is focused on acquiring skills towards managing "emotional and sexual feelings and enjoyment of safe and responsible relationships. They should be aware of their rights and responsibilities, and respect the rights of others" (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects).

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This aspect in particular is aimed at assisting learners to understand and appreciate physiological and psychological developmental processes in order to better understand themselves and others. By implication, the awareness of the self and others also cultivates an awareness of difference; that is to be aware of how people differ in terms of ability, culture and beliefs (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects).

c) *Environmental adaptation and sustainable development* is a curriculum aspect that deals with the survival of learners in their own environments. According to *CAP* (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspect), such "survival can be achieved by utilising and maintaining available resources in such a way that the future generations can also enjoy them".

This curriculum aspect is subsequently intended to assist learners in developing "appropriate skills and positive attitudes to interact sustainably with the environment for socio-economic development" (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects).

d) *Health and healthy living* is a curriculum aspect which "provides understanding and appreciation of the physiological and psychological well-being of an individual in promoting healthy and safe lifestyles" (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects).

This aspect is subsequently aimed at equipping learners with positive attitudes and values in order to ensure that they maintain a good life and a high standard of living.

e) *Production and work-related competencies* is the fifth curriculum aspect that is aimed at preparing learners for the world of work. In particular, these competencies are aimed at equipping

the learner with knowledge and skills to participate in income-generating activities. Learners should develop entrepreneurial skills that will facilitate the creation of employment and the alleviation of poverty (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects).

The acquisition of production and work-related competencies is also aimed at assisting learners to apply the necessary knowledge and skills to use the natural resources in their environments in a sustainable and profitable manner.

The curriculum aspects are evident of the Lesotho government's commitment to ensure, through MOET, that Basotho children get quality and relevant education that will equip them with the skills, attitudes, values and competencies to cope with the challenges of life.

3.4.4 Learning areas

In addition to these curriculum aspects, *CAP* envisages a curriculum that is arranged in learning areas. As indicated, the curriculum aspects "spell out the ultimate intentions of education", while learning areas propose the means for addressing the curriculum aspects (MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects). *CAP* advocates for an integrated curriculum which is organised into learning areas which are "used as a filtering mechanism to select concepts and principles derived from subject areas that address real issues and challenges" (MOET, 2009: Learning areas). Learning areas subsequently represent a body of knowledge which is deemed necessary to equip learners with the necessary competencies to address life challenges. *CAP* identifies five learning areas, namely *Linguistic and Literary*, *Numerical and Mathematical*, *Personal, Spiritual and Social*, *Scientific and Technological*, and *Creativity and Entrepreneurial* (MOET, 2009: Learning areas). In Table 3.1 an exposition is given of the five learning areas and their associated core and compulsory subjects. Schools are required to draw their curriculum from the subjects in the five learning areas. However, schools must include the indicated five compulsory subjects in their curriculum. With regards to the Creativity and Entrepreneurial learning area, schools are required to include at least one core contributing subject. In addition to the five compulsory subjects and one optional subject from the Creativity and Entrepreneurial learning area, a learner has to choose another two core contributing subjects from any learning area (MOET, 2009: Curriculum for secondary school).

Table 3.1: Secondary curriculum with learning areas, core contributing subjects and compulsory subjects

Learning area	Core contributing subjects	Compulsory subjects
Linguistic and literary	Sesotho, English, Art & Craft, Drama, Music and other languages	Sesotho and English
Numerical and mathematical	Mathematics	Mathematics
Personal, spiritual and social	History, Religious education, Health and Physical education, Development studies, Life skills	Life Skills
Scientific and technological	Science, Geography, Agricultural science, Technical subjects	Science
Creativity and entrepreneurial	Business education, Clothing	Any subject

	and Textile, Food and Nutrition, Home Management, ICT, Accounting	

CIE did not prescribe certain subjects as compulsory as in the case with *CAP,* so schools enjoyed flexibility in drawing up their curriculum based on the balance between the school mission, community values and educational aims (cf. 3.2.4). Prior to the inception of the *LGCSE* curriculum, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1984: 14) recommended that *COSC* learners should take the following subjects: English Language, Mathematics, Science, Sesotho and one practical subject as compulsory subjects, and two other subjects from the following: a second Science, additional Mathematics, History, Geography, Literature in English, Development Studies, Bible Knowledge, Economics, Art, Music, Modern Languages and another practical subject.

Given the responsiveness of *CAP* to "the needs of Basotho as a whole", and bearing in mind the link between curriculum aspects and the learning areas, it can be assumed that the entire curriculum has been planned to fulfill the constitutional vision of the full development of the human personality. For Lesotho, such fulfilment will become a reality when learners are equipped with the skills, attitudes, values and competencies necessary to cope with the challenges of everyday life.

3.4.5 Pedagogy

With the newly envisaged curriculum, a pedagogical shift is anticipated which entails

a move from teaching to facilitating learning; from memorisation of information to analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application of information; from knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; from categorised knowledge (traditional subjects) to integrated knowledge (broader learning areas) (MOET, 2009: Executive summary).

By implication, the teacher is no longer regarded as the sole source of information, and the emphasis is placed on teaching and learning methods that "can further develop creativity, independence and survival skills of a learner" (MOET, 2009: Pedagogy). It is clear that *CAP* advocates for a learner-centered approach which emphasises the development of skills and attitudes to produce well-rounded learners

who will be able deal with whatever challenges they encounter in their everyday lives. As a policy framework for transformation, *CAP* encourages a learner-centered approach. A learner-centered approach not only aligns with the Lesotho government's undertaking to provide quality and relevant education (MOET, 2009: Foreword), but feeds into a type of education where

> [l]earners are to become more responsible for their own learning process thus should be able to identify, formulate and solve problems by themselves and evaluate their work (MOET, 2009: Pedagogy).

This shift in pedagogy indicates the commitment of MOET to produce a different type of learner, namely one what will be able to use knowledge and skills to solve his/her everyday challenges and problems. *CAP* emphasises attributes such as confidence, reflectiveness, innovation and engagement, which differs from CIE (cf. 3.2.3).

The comparison between CIE and *CAP* reveal interesting differences. As CIE was developed overseas for an international audience, the *COSC* curriculum which was used in Lesotho was divorced from the country's needs. *CAP* on the other hand, was developed with the country and its citizens in mind – it is custom-made to be relevant to the needs of Lesotho. While CIE emphasised disciplinary knowledge, *CAP* advocates for an integrated curriculum which introduces a shift from compartmentalised subject-based instruction to a holistic treatment of "issues related to intelligence, maturity, personal and social development for survival purposes and economic development" (MOET, 2009: Integrated curriculum organisation). CIE focused on the development of general skills such as responsibility, independence, reflectivity, innovation and engagement. *CAP*, is about a contextualised curriculum and assessment aimed at equipping learners with skills, attitudes, values and competencies required for coping with everyday life challenges. With these differences as background, my focus in the next section is on a comparison of the syllabi of English Language, Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting and Religious Studies as prescribed for teaching towards *COSC* and the *LGCSE* respectively.

3.5 COMPARISON OF *COSC* AND *LGCSE* SYLLABI

The *LGCSE* curriculum was introduced in phases over a period of four years from 2013 to 2016 (cf. Table 3.2). This means that the entire curriculum was not introduced at once, but rather in three successive stages. In 2013, the first group of *LGCSE* subjects was introduced in Form D and these subjects were taught alongside the last group of *COSC* subjects. This implies that the Form D learners were assessed in 2013 in subjects from both curricula. This group of Form D learners proceeded to Form E in 2014 where they were examined in both the *COSC* and *LGCSE* subjects they started in Form D in 2013. Meanwhile, still in 2014, the second group of *LGCSE* subjects was introduced to new Form D classes. This group of *LGCSE* subjects was taught concurrently with subjects under yet another curriculum, namely the *international General Certificate of Secondary education* (*IGCSE)*. It should be noted at this juncture that the *IGCSE* subjects were taught because the *LGCSE* curriculum had not yet developed syllabi for those subjects. By implication, this set of *LGCSE* and *IGCSE* subjects were examined in 2015 when the learners were in Form E. Still in 2015, the third and last group of *LGCSE* subjects was introduced to the Form D learners and they were examined in Form E in 2016. By 2016 the full implementation of *LGCSE* had therefore been realised (ECOL, undated).

Table 3.2: The phasing-in of *LGCSE* subjects

FORM D	2013		2014		2015
	COSC subjects	**LGCSE subjects**	**LGCSE subjects**	**IGCSE subjects**	**Full implementation of LGCSE**
	• Sesotho • *Religious Studies* • Principles of Accounts • *Literature in English Language* • Agriculture • *Biology* • Design and Technology	• English Language • *Mathematics* • Physical Science • *Geography* • History • *DevelopmentStudies*	• English Language • Mathematics • Physical Science • Geography • History • Development Studies • Sesotho • *Religious Studies* • Agriculture • *Literature in English* • Biology • *Design and Technology* • Accounting	• *Information and Communication Technology* • Business studies • *Economics* • Travel and Tourism	• *English Language* • *Mathematics* • *Physical Science* • *Geography* • *History* • *Development Studies* • *Sesotho* • *Religious Studies* • *Agriculture* • *Literature in English* • *Biology* • *Design and Technology* • *Accounting* • *Fashion and Textile* • *Food and Nutrition* • *Information and Communication Technology* • *Business Studies* • *Economics* • *Travel and Tourism*

FORM E	2014		2015		2016
	COSC subjects • Sesotho • *Religious Studies* • Principles of Accounts • *Literature in English* • Agriculture • *Biology* • Design and Technology	**LGCSE subjects** • English Language • *Mathematics* • Physical Science • *Geography* • History • *Development Studies*	**LGCSE subjects** • English Language • *Mathematics* • Physical Science • *Geography* • History • *Development Studies* • Sesotho • *Religious Studies* • Agriculture • *Literature in English* • Biology • *Design and Technology* • Accounting	**IGCSE SUBJECTS** *Information and Communication Technology* • *Business Studies* • Economics • *Travel and Tourism*	**Full implementation of LGCSE subjects** • *English Language* • Mathematics • *Physical Science* • Geography • *History* • Development Studies • *Sesotho* • Religious Studies • *Agriculture* • Literature in English • *Biology* • Design and Technology • *Accounting* • *Information and Communication Technology* • *Business Studies* • Economics • *Travel and Tourism* • Fashion and Textile • *Food and Nutrition*

In the following sub-sections, I highlight some interesting differences and similarities between the *COSC* and *LGCSE* curricula as evidenced by the syllabi for English Language, Mathematics and Physical Science, introduced in 2013, and Accounting and Religious Studies which were introduced in 2014. I deemed it important to compare some of the syllabi in order to draw attention to some implications for teachers who were required to shift from *COSC* to *LGCSE*. Also, it should be noted that my decision to work with these subjects was based on the learning areas - Linguistic and literary, Numerical and mathematical, Personal, Spiritual and Social, Scientific and Technological, and Creativity and Entrepreneurial - as depicted in *CAP* (cf. 3.3). I subsequently decided to work with one subject from each of the five learning areas. In the subsequent comparisons, I first refer to the *COSC* syllabus and then to the *LGCSE* syllabus for the respective subjects.

3.5.1 English Language

The aim of the *COSC English Language* 1123 syllabus is to demonstrate to universities and employers that candidates can communicate effectively in standard English through:

- **communicative competence**: the ability to communicate with clarity, relevance, accuracy and variety
- **creativity:** the ability to use language, experience and imagination to respond to new situations, create original ideas and make positive impact
- **critical skills**: the ability to scan, filter and analyse different forms of information
- **cross-cultural awareness**: the ability to engage with issues inside and outside own community, dealing with the familiar as well as the unfamiliar (*UCLES*, 2008: 6).

This syllabus consists of two components, namely writing and reading. The *writing* component entails two sections, one on directed writing in which "candidates are presented with a task, e.g. write a letter, speech, report, article, fit for purpose and relevant to the world of study, work or community" (*UCLES*, 2008: 9). To do this task, learners are expected to write 200-300 words in order to inform or persuade a

particular audience. The second section deals with directed writing where a learner is expected to "answer one question from a choice of 5 narrative/descriptive/argumentative essay titles and should write about 350-500 words" (*UCLES*, 2008: 9).

The *reading* component also comprises two sections and requires learners to read for ideas and meaning. Section 1 deals with reading for ideas where "[c]andidates scan a factual communication (or communications) of approximately 700 words - e.g. report(s), advertisement(s), email(s), letter(s)" (*UCLES*, 2008: 9). While learners are required to identify and note down required information, they are also expected to write a summary of 160 words. Section 2 of this component deals with reading for meaning which requires the learners to "read a narrative passage (e.g. report, article, story) of approximately 700 words" and to answer short answer questions which test their ability to understand the language (*UCLES*, 2008: 9-10).

The aim of *LGCSE English Language* 0175 is similar with regards to it expectations of learners' communicative abilities than that of *COSC English Language* 1123. A careful reading of the newly adopted syllabus indicates different wording, but the required abilities remain the same.

- Communicate effectively with clarity, relevance and accuracy using standard English.
- Use language, experience, imagination and creativity to respond to new situations relevantly, create original ideas and make a positive impact.
- Apply critical skills that that will afford opportunity to scan, infer and analyse different forms of information.
- Develop cross-cultural awareness by engaging with issues inside and outside their own communities (ECOL, 2012a).

The structure and content of the *LGCSE English Language* 0175 syllabus are also similar to that of *COSC English Language* 1123. For example, the syllabus has two components namely writing and reading. With regard to these components, the wording of the two documents is the same, for example.

- Candidates are presented with a task e.g. write a letter, speech, report, article, fit for purpose and relevant to the world of study, work or community.
- Candidates should write a 200-300 words to inform or persuade a particular audience (ECOL, 2012a: 4).

With regard to creative writing, the learners are expected to write an essay testing language and relevant content combined and to "answer one question from a choice of 5 narrative/descriptive/argumentative/informative essay tittles and should write strictly 350-500 words" (ECOL, 2012a: 4). The *LGCSE English Language* 0175 syllabus, however, differs from the *COSC English Language* 1123 syllabus as it includes a 3rd section which deals with language proficiency. In this section, the learners are expected to demonstrate language proficiency in parts of speech such as verb tenses, sentence structure and the use of prepositions (ECOL, 2012a: 5).

Based on the similarities between the two syllabi in terms of aim, structure and content, it can be deduced that the implications for teachers who shifted from teaching English Language as part of *COSC* to *LGCSE* are inconsequential.

3.5.2 Mathematics

The syllabi for both *COSC Mathematic* 4024 and *LGCSE Mathematics* 0178 have similar aims. For example, both require the learners to "increase intellectual curiosity, develop mathematical language as a means of communication and investigation and explore mathematical reasoning" (*UCLES*, 2010: 7; ECOL, 2012b: 3). The syllabi also cover similar topics. For example, the topic of *percentages* in *COSC Mathematics* 4024 reads:

- Calculate a given percentage of quantity;
- Express one quantity as a percentage of another, calculate percentage increase and decrease;
- Carry out calculations involving reverse percentage for example, finding the cost price given the selling price and the percentage profit (*UCLES*, 2010: 9).

The wording for the same topic is the same in the *LGCSE Mathematics* 0178, except for the omission of the following phrase in the last bullet: "finding the cost price given the selling price and the percentage profit".

The major difference between the two syllabi is that the *LGCSE,* unlike *COSC,* differentiates between learners in terms of ability. In *COSC Mathematics* 4024 all learners, irrespective of whether they want to study towards mathematically inclined careers or not, are required to study the same content. The *LGCSE* syllabus, however, follows a tiered curriculum that comprises of *core* and *extended* parts or components (Mojarane, 2014). Average learners only study the *core* part of the syllabus, while learners with a high ability in mathematics study both the *core* and *extended* parts of the syllabus. The *core* part is meant for learners with a low ability in Mathematics, for learners who show competence in the acquisition of low order assessment skills, and for those who will probably not pursue a challenging course in the field of Mathematics and Science.The *extended* syllabus on the other hand, is intended for learners who have a high ability in mathematics and for those who have an inclination towards mathematically and scientifically challenging careers (Mojarane, 2014).

Given the differences between the two syllabi, especially regarding the distinction between a *core* and *extended* part of *LGCSE Mathematics* 0178, one could assume that teachers who shifted from the one syllabus to the other would need to engage in diverse learner needs. By implication, it could imply that teachers involved in the teaching of Mathematics need to be trained to sufficiently work on a syllabus that accounts for differentiation in terms of learners' abilities.

3.5.3 Physical Science

The aims for the *COSC Science* 5124 and the *LGCSE Physical Science* 0181 syllabi are the same, except for a few changes in the wording. In Table 3.1, the aims of the two syllabi are placed next to one another for ease of comparison. It is interesting to note how the first aims of *LGCSE Physical Science* 0181 cohere with a statement in *CAP* that the Scientific and Technological learning area should promote the

"application of scientific and technological skills in solving everyday life challenges" (MOET, 2009: 20).

Table 3.3: Comparison of the aims of *COSC Science 5124* and *LGCSE Physical Science* 0181

COSC Science 5124	*LGSCE Physical Science* 0181
1. Provide, through well-designed studies and of experimental and practical science, a worthwhile experience for all students, whether or not they go on to study science beyond this level and, in particular, to enable them to acquire sufficient understanding and knowledge to: 1.1 become confident citizens in a technological world, able to take or develop an informed interest in matters of scientific import; 1.2 recognise the usefulness, and limitations, of scientific methods and to appreciate its applicability in other disciplines and in everyday life; 1.3 be suitably prepared for studies beyond *COSC* level in pure sciences, applied sciences or in science dependent vocational courses (*UCLES*, 2005:1).	1. To promote a worthwhile educational experience for all candidates, through a well-designed studies of experimental and practical science, whether or not they go on to study science beyond this level. 2. To enable candidates to acquire sufficient understanding and knowledge to • Become confident citizens in a technological world and to take and develop an informed interest in scientific matters • Recognise the usefulness, and limitations, of scientific methods and to appreciate its applicability in other disciplines and in everyday life • Be suitably prepared for studies beyond the *LGCSE* level in pure sciences and or science-dependent vocational courses (ECOL, 2012c:4).

The major difference between the two syllabi is the distinction between the *core* and *extended* (or supplement) parts in the *LGCSE Physical Science* 0181 syllabus. While all learners had to study the same content in *COSC Science* 5124, both the Chemistry and Physics sections of the *LGCSE* syllabus make provision for the differentiation between learners in terms of their ability. Similar to the Mathematics

syllabus, the average learner is expected to study the *core* part, while learners who excel in science, enter the *extended* route. By implication, learners who have a high ability in Physical Science will study both the *core* and the *extended* (or supplement) content– the *extended* route therefore includes the *core* (ECOL, 2012c: 9).

This exposition implies that the teachers shifting from the one syllabus to the other need sufficient training to implement a syllabus providing for different learner abilities. A Physical Science teacher is expected to teach both the *core* and *extended* learners in one class, even though the level of teaching and engagement will differ. It is in this respect that it is anticipated that teachers cannot simply move from one syllabus to another – sufficient training and personal empowerment are required for a successful transition from teaching the one syllabus to the other.

3.5.4 Accounting

With regards to the aims of both the *COSC Principles of Accounts* 7110 and *LGCSE Accounting* 0187, similarities and slight differences are detected in the wording (see Table 3.4). Although the aims for Accounting are modeled on the Principles of Accounts, the most notable difference is with last aim of the *LGCSE Accounting* syllabus, which requires learners to "develop knowledge, skills and attitude to establish businesses that are environmentally friendly" (ECOL, 2013a: 3). Of interest is to note how this aim aligns with *CAP's* recognition of the need to "inculcate appropriate attitudes and values for promoting creative and entrepreneurial culture" (MOET, 2009: 20). By implication, the issue of relevance is addressed in this case, as learners will acquire the skills to manage their own businesses and to possibly employ others. It can be anticipated that the acquisition of such skills could ultimately also assist in stemming the tide of unemployment in the country.

Table 3.4: Comparison between the aims of *COSC Principles of Accounts* 7110 and *LGCSE Accounting* 0187

***COSC Principles of Accounts* 7110**	***LGCSE Accounting* 0187**
• Develop an understanding of the role of accounting in providing an information system for monitoring progress and decision making • Develop an understanding of accounting concepts, principles, procedures and terminology • Develop skill in preparing and interpreting accounting information • Develop knowledge and understanding of the aims and activities of business and non-trading organisations, their accounting implications and the accounting techniques and procedures appropriate for them (*UCLES*, 2009:6).	• Develop an understanding of accounting principles, procedures and techniques and terminology • Develop skills in preparing and interpreting accounting information • Develop knowledge and understanding of the principles and purposes of accounting for individuals, businesses non-trading organisation and society as a whole' • Develop knowledge, skills and attitude to establish businesses that are environmentally friendly (ECOL, 2013a: 3).

When comparing the topic *ledger,* which is one of the topics in both syllabi, it becomes clear how the same subtopics are addressed. In Table 3.5 the contents of the same topic are placed next to one another to show the similarities, but also the minor differences regarding wording. The topic serves as an illustration of the similarities between *Principles of Accounts* 7110 and *Accounting* 0178. The two syllabi deal with the same topics throughout, with the exception of *VAT* in *Accounting* 0178.

Table 3.5: Comparison of the topics in *COSC* Principles of Accounts 711 and *LGCSE* Accounting 0187

COSC Principles of Accounts 7110	**LGCSE Accounting 0187**
• Prepare the ledger accounts using "T" accounts format • Post debit and credit entries to record transactions in the ledger account • Balance the ledger accounts as required, make transfers to final accounts • Interpret ledger accounts prepared in "T" accounts form and their balances • Explain and interpret ledger account using the running balance format (*UCLES*, 2009: 9).	• Prepare the ledger accounts in "T" format • Post transaction to the to the ledger account • Balance ledger accounts as required and make transfers to financial statements • Interpret the ledger accounts prepared using "T" format or running balance format (ECOL, 2013a: 3).

The above exposition shows that even though the two syllabi have the same topic *ledger*, there are minor differences between the wording. In the *LGCSE* content some words are omitted. For example, in bullet two the *COSC Principles of Accounts* syllabus expects the learner to "post debit and credit entries to record transaction in the ledger accounts", while the *LGCSE Accounting* syllabus substituted the words "debit and credit" with the word "transaction" (ECOL, 2013a: 3; *UCLES*, 20009: 6). Furthermore, some words have been changed, for example in bullet three the *COSC Principles of Accounts* syllabus expects the learner "to balance the ledger accounts as required, make transfers to final accounts". The difference is between "final accounts" and "financial statements" (*UCLES*, 2009, 9; ECOL, 2013a: 5). The only new topic that *Accounting* 0187 has which *Principles of Accounts* 7110 does not have is Value Added Tax (VAT).

As far as Accounting is concerned, there is no need to train the teachers as the aims of the syllabi and their contents are very similar. On face value, it appears as if teachers responsible for the teaching of Accounting will have little difficulty, if any at all, with shifting from the one syllabus to the other.

3.5.5 Religious Studies

The *COSC Religious Studies* 2048 syllabus focuses on

> Christians origins. It encourages learners to take a thoughtful approach to the study of the portrayal of the life and teachings of Jesus; it also considers the portrayal of the birth and development of the early church (*UCLES*, 2012a: 4).

In addition, the syllabus is also aimed at the development of "candidates' knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus and the development of the early church" (*UCLES,* 2012a: 8). It subsequently seems as if the *COSC* syllabus is concerned with the knowledge of the Bible and more especially with the teaching of Jesus and how the early church had developed. Furthermore, there in an expectation of the *COSC* Religious Studies that learners should know Biblical texts, remember what they read, and are not required to apply the knowledge of the Bible by putting them into practice.

The aim of *LGCSE Religious Studies* 0178 is, however, different from that of *COSC* Religious Studies as it seems to be more focused on skills and attitudes, namely to "[d]evelop a range of transferrable skills and attitudes" (MOET, 2009: 2) and to "[d]evelop positive attitudes to social behaviour and skills of coping with life challenges" (ECOL, 2013b: 2). It seems as if *LGCSE Religious Studies* 0178 aims at integrating what is learnt in the subject with the learners' everyday life. This aim corresponds with the statement in *CAP* that learning should "equip the learners with competencies necessary to address life challenges" (MOET, 2009: Integrated Curriculum organisation). For example, the syllabus focuses on "the teaching of the Christian religion as contained in the Luke's gospel and the Acts of the Apostles while at the same time exposing learners to religious diversity" (ECOL, 2013b: 2). It also promotes the application of the teachings of the Bible to emerging global issues such as respect for life, prejudice, issues of inequality, HIV/AIDS, human and substance abuse, divorce, poverty, unemployment, corruption and environmental issues (ECOL, 2013b: 2).

From the exposition of the syllabus it becomes clear that it is aimed at challenging learners and equipping them with the appropriate skills to lead constructive lives in

the modern world (ECOL, 2013b: 6). The connection between the content of the subject and pressing issues in society is illustrated throughout the syllabus. For example, "[t]he teacher must make use of the texts from Luke and Acts to address pressing issues of concern" (ECOL, 2013b: 6), while a topic such as religion in society deals with pressing issues of concern including crime and punishment, teenage pregnancy and discrimination. These topics are very relevant to Lesotho which has a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS (Wood, Ntaote & Theron, 2012: 428). The syllabus content subsequently has the potential to assist learners to study the Bible, but also to develop and acquire a critical approach in studying Biblical texts in order to be able to identify virtues and values to deal with pressing issues of concern in everyday life challenges. In this regard the syllabus is also strongly aligned with *CAP* which recognises the importance of education "in fostering relevant and positive social attitudes and civil values as a self-emancipation tool from the ever-threatening harness of poverty, needs and diseases" (MOET, 2009: 4).

When considering the main difference between the two syllabi, namely a shift from mere knowledge accumulation to the application of knowledge to mitigate everyday life concerns, then certain implications for teachers can be anticipated. It seems as if an entire mind shift might be required from teachers shifting from teaching *COSC* Religious Studies 2048 *COSC* to *LGCSE Religious Studies* 0178.

3.6   IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

With regards to curriculum implementation, Sargent (2011: 16) made an important observation:

> [o]ne of the identified prerequisite for successful implementation of the new curriculum reforms has been ample access to teacher professional development in order to raise teacher quality.

Teachers play a very important role in curriculum implementation and it can be accepted that certain skills and knowledge are required for the effective implementation of a new curriculum. With the phasing-out of the *COSC* curriculum since 2013, many Lesotho teachers had to shift from teaching the latter to teaching new syllabi aimed at preparing learners for the *LGCSE*. While the *LGCSE* is informed

by *CAP*, new syllabi were introduced for the different subjects. It can therefore be assumed that teachers must first and foremost become familiar with *CAP.* The importance of the latter is underscored by Raselimo and Mahao's comment (2015: 5) that:

> the new curriculum and assessment policy differs considerably from the previous model of curriculum organisation. Unlike the previous curriculum structure, which emphasised disciplinary knowledge, the new model envisages an integrated curriculum.

By implication, teachers do not only have to become familiar with new syllabi, but also with a model that advocates an integrated curriculum approach. MOET (2009: 15) defines integration as:

> the holistic view and treatment of issues related to intelligence, maturity, personal and social development of the learner for survival purposes and economic development of the nation as opposed to the compartmentalised subject form of instruction.

In order for teachers to successfully implement the *LGCSE* curriculum, they therefore need to not only understand the requirements of the new syllabi, but in particular the implications of an integrated curriculum approach for their own classroom teaching. As espoused by *CAP,* teachers must be able to engage with a pedagogy that has shifted more to teaching and learning methods that "can further develop creativity, independence and survival skills of a learner" (MOET, 2009: 22). In order to effectively implement the *LGCSE* curriculum, teachers who had to shift from the *COSC* curriculum therefore need to be empowered and placed in a position to infuse their teaching with learners' everyday experiences by continuously integrating the content of the syllabi with both school and community life. By implication, the main research question for this study is foregrounded, namely "*to what extend have teachers been prepared to implement the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*?"

3.7   SUMMARY

In this chapter a document analysis was undertaken of the *Implementing the Curriculum with Cambridge: A Guide to School Leaders* (undated) and the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* (2009). While the former document provides

guidelines for the Cambridge curriculum and the design of a curriculum within the Cambridge context, the latter lays the foundation for teaching towards the *LGCSE*. The analysis of the two documents enabled a highlighting of the differences between the overall approach and philosophy underpinning the two curricula. The comparison of various syllabi, namely English Language, Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting and Religious Studies, foregrounded differences with regard to the aims, content of and approach to specific subjects. This chapter is concluded by a brief indication of implications for teachers who had to shift from the one curriculum to the other. It is the uncertainty with regards to the extent to which teachers have been prepared for this shift that leads to the next chapter that deals with the empirical part of this study. In the next chapter the findings of data generated from teachers are discussed in order to shed light on their experiences with regards to their own readiness for the implementation of the new curriculum.

CHAPTER 4: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR READINESS FOR *LGCSE* IMPLEMENTATION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The objective of the previous chapter was to identify the key differences between the curricula for the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate* and the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* respectively. Various differences were identified and based on these differences, implications were drawn for teachers who had to shift from one curriculum to the other. Chapter 3 served as a guide for the compilation of the focus group discussion schedule and semi-structured interviews which I used to generate data. I used two focus group discussions to explore how teachers co-construct meaning and a range of complex beliefs amongst themselves. The focus group discussions were followed by semi-structured interviews during which the participants were encouraged to elaborate on their individual experiences. The two methods of data generation assisted me to explore teachers' experiences in terms of *what* they think, *how* they think, and *why* they think in a particular way about their readiness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. As such, the objective of this chapter was to explore how the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* and its subsequent curriculum were introduced to the teachers and how they perceive their own preparedness for implementation (cf. 1.3.3).

Before discussing the analysis of the findings, I will first position my study within a qualitative research approach. I will give a brief exposition of the qualitative methodology and the research methods employed in the undertaking of this study. Against this background, I will present my findings and the discussion of the data generated regarding the teachers' perceptions of their own preparedness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum.

4.2   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As indicated earlier (cf. 1.5.1), a research methodology refers to the general principles embedded in a research approach to generate new knowledge. Wahyuni (2012: 70) defines a methodology as "the underlying sets of beliefs that guide

researchers to choose one set of research methods over the other". In the case of this particular study, the latter was grounded in the constructivist paradigm (cf. 1.4), informed by a qualitative approach and undertaken by means of research methods typically associated with a qualitative approach, namely focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews (cf. 1.5.2.3, 1.5.2.4 and 4.4).

4.2.1 A qualitative approach

A qualitative study involves the study of things in their natural setting, specifically with the aim to make sense of the meanings people make of various phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 3; Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 129). By implication, the qualitative researcher examines social meaning by observing and describing the people who live in the social context. With regards to this particular study, I conducted focus group discussions and interviewed the participants in their place of work so as to create a coherent story as seen through their eyes, and to understand and represent their experiences regarding the implementation of a newly adopted curriculum (cf. Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 126). Also, as qualitative research seeks to develop explanations of social phenomena, this approach was most appropriate in assisting me to understand teachers' world of work and to uncover the meaning they attach to the extent to which they feel they have been prepared to work towards the *LGCSE*. I was also able to find out how their opinions and attitudes were formed and how they were affected by the implementation of the curriculum (cf. Joubish *et al.*, 2011: 2082). As a qualitative researcher, I had close contact with the participants over a period of time and this enabled me to build good rapport with them, which in turn gave me insight into their world and ensured that I collected rich and quality data.

Qualitative research uses various tools to collect data such as case studies, interviews, focus group discussions, observations, field notes, recording and filming (Antwi & Hamza, 2015: 222). For this particular study, I made use of two data generation methods, namely focus groups and semi-structured interviews. I decided to work with a focus group discussion as it created the opportunity to explore how teachers collectively co-construct feelings, attitudes, perceptions, and ideas about their readiness to teach the *LGCSE* curriculum. The focus group interview offered me the opportunity to provide a natural setting for the participants to influence one

another in a discussion. As a result, it enabled me to collect rich data about the participants' feelings, thoughts, impressions, and perceptions in their own words (cf. Dilshad & Latif, 2013: 192). In addition to a focus group discussion, I also conducted semi-structured interviews which enabled me to probe and explore support data by allowing the participants to expand on their responses (cf. Alshenqeeti, 2014: 40). This helped me gain a deeper understanding of the the participants' preparedness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum.

As indicated in 1.5.1, the choice of qualitative methodology was made in order to help me understand how teachers construct meaning in relation to their preparedness to implement *LGCSE*. Such understanding was enabled through the creation of the opportunity for the participants to express their perceptions, feelings, thoughts and experience regarding their readiness. In the next section I discuss the criteria for participant selection in this study.

4.2.1.1   Selection of participants

The selection of participants is very important for any study as a researcher needs to ensure that the participants must be qualified to provide the most credible information for the particular study (cf. Turner, 2010: 757). Since the aim of this study was to explore the extent to which teachers feel they have been prepared to implement *the LGCSE*, I intentionally decided to make use of a purposive participant selection. A purposive selection is aimed at selecting those participants who can best inform the research question and enhance the understanding of the research phenomenon (cf. Sargeant, 2012: 1; also Kumar, 2014: 244). In line with my research aim, I therefore selected teachers as my participants, as I consider them the most appropriate to contribute towards obtaining my research aim. However, in addition to purposive selection, I used several criteria to inform my participant selection. While I regarded teachers as most suitable, all the participants had to have been involved in teaching the *COSC* curriculum for a minimum of three years and must currently be involved in the teaching of the *LGCSE* curriculum. In other words, my participants must have experience in teaching both curricula as it was my contention that they should be able to provide valuable insight of their readiness to implement the newly adopted curriculum. By implication, the participants had to be involved in teaching Form D

and/or Form E. I further refined the criteria by opting for teachers involved in teaching Mathematics, Physical Science and Religious Studies since the syllabi for these subjects seem to hold certain implication for teachers. While the Mathematics and Physical Science syllabi make provision for differentiation between learners in terms of ability (cf. 3.4.2 and 3.4.3), the teaching of Religious Studies requires an entire mind shift from teachers (cf.3.4.5). As the *LGCSE* curriculum was phased in over a period of time (cf. Table 3.2), the participants' years of experience will differ depending on them teaching Form D or Form E (cf. Table 4.1).

It should also be noted that I took convenience into consideration when I selected the participants. As I reside in Maseru, it was important to work with participants who were accessible to me (cf. Palinkas *et al.*, 2013). In particular, it was easier for me to organise the two focus group discussions after school with the participants from two large urban co-educational high schools, namely one church school (School A) and one government school (School B). I wanted to get the general perception of the teachers with regard to their readiness to implement the curriculum. I selected two teachers per subject per school and subsequently conducted two focus group discussions of approximately 66 minutes with six participants from each school (cf. Table 4.1). In order to distinguish between the participants from the two schools, each participant was numbered with a reference to School A or School B. After the two focus group discussions, I conducted semi-structured interviews of approximately 30 minutes with three teachers per school (one teacher per subject), so six interviewees in total. My two data sets subsequently consisted of two focus group discussions and six semi-structured interviews.

Table 4.1: Exposition of selected participants

Participant	Subject	Form	Experience with COSC	Experience with LGCSE	Focus group discussion and/or interview
A1	Mathematics	D and E	9 years	5 years	Focus group and interview
A2	Physical Science	D and E	4 years	5 years	Focus group
A3	Religious Studies	D and E	5 years	4 years	Focus group and interview
A4	Physical Science	D and E	3 years	5 years	Focus group and interview
A5	Religious studies	D and E	7 years	4 years	Focus group
A6	Mathematics	D and E	7 years	5 years	Focus group
B1	Mathematics	D and E	20 years	5 years	Focus group and interview
B2	Physical Science	D and E	7 years	5 years	Focus group
B3	Mathematics	D and E	3 years	5 years	Focus group
B4	Physical Science	D and E	4 years	5 years	Focus group and interview
B5	Religious Studies	D and E	12 years	5 years	Focus group and interview
B6	Religious Studies	D and E	4 years	5 years	Focus group

4.2.1.2   Integrity of the study

Integrity refers to the *honesty* and *trustworthiness* when conducting qualitative research (Watts, 2008: 440). It is subsequently assumed that with regards to honesty, certain ethical considerations will be adhered to so as to ensure that all activities in a study are characterised by openness and wholeness. With regards to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, a researcher has to undertake certain steps to ensure the credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of the study (Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 243; Merriam, 2009: 211; Anney, 2014: 272; Shenton, 2004: 64; Moon *et al.*, 2016). In the subsequent sections I discuss the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the undertaking of this study, and also the various steps I took to ensure the trustworthiness of this study.

a) Ethical considerations

In order to encourage responsible research practices and assure the protection of my participants, I considered various guidelines for what is perceived as a proper research undertaking. In general, ethical guidelines deal with general agreements about what is permissible in a study, with the primary concern that the participants in a study should not be harmed, whether physical and/or emotional (Babbie, 2014: 65; also Kalof, Dan & Dietz, 2008; Suter, 2006: 75). It was important that the participants in this study were given adequate information so as to make an informed decision regarding participation. In order for the participants to make a decision, I stipulated certain guarantees. I first indicated that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time from the study. In alignment with Babbie's warning (2014: 65) that "[h]uman research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteer for the study", I ensured the protection of the participants' privacy by indicating that their contribution to the focus group discussions and the interviews would be treated as confidential. I specifically indicated that their identity would not be made known as they would be assigned a number which would be used in the research report (cf. Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 64). I subsequently got informed consent from the participants after they were provided with enough information to make such a decision.

b) Credibility

Credibility deals with the extent to which the findings of the study and the methods employed to generate such findings can be trusted (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 114; Anney, 2014: 276). As a secondary school teacher in Lesotho my observation of some shortcoming and frustrations of teachers with the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum encouraged me to undertake this study. In order to ensure credibility, I undertook member checks where I took the summaries of my findings back to the participants in the study and asked them whether these truly reflected their experiences (cf. Creswell & Clark, 2011: 211). Member checks used in this study was subsequently a means to solicit feedback from the participants on the emerging findings from the focus group discussions and interviews. The purpose of this was to ensure that I did not misrepresent the meanings of what the participants said.

c) Trustworthiness and confirmability

When someone reads a research study, she or he needs to be assured that the results are trustworthy (Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 243). According to Lauckner, Paterson and Krupa (2012: 14) the trustworthiness of a research study is based on the extent to which the findings are an accurate account of the phenomenon that was studied. To achieve trustworthiness a qualitative study must employ the necessary procedures to ensure its trustworthiness (Anney, 2014: 272). Confirmability, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the research findings are shaped by the participants and not by the researcher's bias (cf. Bhattacherjee, 2012: 110; Anney, 2014: 279; Moon *et a*l., 2016; Noble & Smith, 2015:34). In this study, I not only provide a detailed methodological description (cf. 1.5.1; 4.2.1), but kept record of all the processes followed in this research undertaking, including what I regarded as strengths and weaknesses of the entire research process. All the recordings and transcriptions of the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews are available for verification. By keeping a record of all procedures and undertakings, I am able to present an audit trail which can enable any observer to trace "the research step-by-step through the decisions made and procedures described" (Shenton, 2004: 72).

d) Transferability and dependability

As the researcher, I kept issues of transferability and dependability in mind to ensure the integrity of my study. Transferability of a study can be achieved by showing that its findings can be applied in other contexts (Moon *et al.*, 2016; Merriam, 2009: 223). In this study, I ensured thick description by providing a detailed description of the research process from the methodology, the methods used for data generation, and the production of the final report. This enables the reader to independently assess whether the findings of this study are transferable to another context (cf. Anney, 2014: 278). Dependability deals with the consistency and reliability of the findings and the degree to which the procedures have been documented (Moon *et al.*, 2016). In this study dependability was enhanced by a detailed coverage of the methodology (cf. 1.5.1) and the methods (cf. 1.5.3) employed in the study. I documented all the procedures undertaken from the implementation of the research design, including the

methodology and methods used for data generation. In this way the reader can assess the extent to which appropriate practices have been followed.

4.3   DATA GENERATION STRATEGY

As indicated, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were used as data generation strategies. I audio-recorded the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews with the permission of the participants. The discussions and the interviews were conducted in English. I listened to the audio-recordings and then transcribed the audio recordings verbatim. The focus group discussions were conducted in order to learn how teachers co-construct meaning among themselves with regard to their readiness to teach towards the *LGCSE*. The schedule for the focus group discussions included themes on the differences between *COSC* and *LGCSE*; the training of teachers to implement *LGCSE*; their familiarity with *CAP*; challenges with the shift from *COSC* to *LGCSE*; and teachers' opinions on how to improve the implementation of *LGCSE* (cf. Appendix D).The advantage of the focus group discussions was that it offered the opportunity for immediate feedback or clarification on a participant's viewpoint, albeit with the contribution of other group members. Also, the participants were granted the opportunity to express their views and opinions as they interacted amongst themselves. Based on the data generated from the focus group discussions, an interview schedule was drawn up for the semi-structured interviews (cf. Appendix D). These questions were more subject-specific and included the following main themes: the differences between *COSC* and *LGCSE*; training of teachers with regards to the shift from *COSC* to *LGCSE* in their respective subjects; teachers' opinions about the adequacy of training to implement changes in their subjects; adequacy of training to implement the integrated curriculum approach; challenges teachers experienced with the teaching of the *LGCSE* curriculum; and the relevance of the subjects towards Lesotho's needs. During the interviews I was able to probe and explore deeper by allowing the participants to expand on their responses. The use of the two data generation strategies enabled, on the one hand, a descriptive framework for thinking about the inter-subjective experiences of the participants, and, on the other hand, the semi-structured interviews assisted in deepening the understanding of the participants' subjective experiences regarding their own readiness to work with the *LGCSE* curriculum.

4.3.1 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis, according to Mathipa and Gumbo (2015: 131), involves the transformation of raw data into patterns, themes and categories. This is done by searching, evaluating, coding and mapping of the raw data with the aim to interpret and provide underlying meaning. In this study I first analysed the data generated from the focus group discussions and thereafter the data generated from the semi-structured interviews.

With regards to the analysis of the data generated through the focus group discussions, I first transcribed verbatim the audio-recordings that were made during the discussions. The transcribed data were then analysed using constant comparison analysis. In order to engage in constant comparison analysis, I first worked with the data generated during the first focus group and used the emerging themes as a basis for subsequent data analysis (cf. Wagner *et al.*, 2012: 231). I applied, as suggested by Onwuegbuzie, Dickson, Leech and Zoran (2009: 5-6), the three stages that characterise a constant comparison analysis. During the first stage I used open coding to segment the data into small chunks. This was done by attaching a code to each unit. During the second stage, I used axial coding to group the codes into categories and during the final stage, I used selective coding to develop themes that express the content of each focus group. The use of constant comparison analysis allowed me to assess the saturation of information in general, and also across the two data sets. By analysing one focus group at a time I was able to assess if the themes that emerged from one group also emerged in the other group, hence the use of constant comparison analysis. By implication, comparison analysis assisted me in reaching data saturation.

The analysis of the data generated through the semi-structured interviews followed from their transcriptions. I transcribed the interviews one at a time in order to provide me with hard copies with which to work. I read the transcriptions of the interviews several times to make sense of them and to identify the units of analysis which could be a word, a phrase, or a group of sentences (cf. Wahyuni, 2012: 75; Dilshad & Latif, 2013: 196). In the next step, I coded the data by labelling it with code words or phrases. As noted by Mathipa and Gumbo (2015: 136), the "coding process involves

the grouping and labelling of segments of data". I also followed Wagner *et al.*'s advice (2012) to mark the codes in the margins of the paper copy and to use different colours to correspond with different codes. I kept a list of the codes on a separate piece of paper and defined these codes in order to illustrate the appropriate entry for each. As I worked on coding the data from an interview, I compared each new piece of data with the previous codes and labelled it with a previously coded theme or if necessary, with a new code. By doing this, I created a coding scheme which assisted me in identifying the patterns in the data. I also used crystallisation, which Maree and Van der Westhuizen, (2010: 40) define as "the practice of 'validating' results by using multiple methods of data collection and analysis". I extended the participation of some participants from the focus group discussion to semi-structured interviews. This decision was based on my observation of the depth of their participation in the focus group discussions and their subsequent knowledge about the topic. The use of two methods of data generation enabled me to compare the data in an attempt to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings (cf*.* Steward & Hagwood, 2017: 4).

In the subsequent sections I first discuss the findings of the themes that emerged from the two focus group discussions (cf. 4.4), and after that the findings of the themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews (cf. 4.5).

4.4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

In the following sub-sections, I highlight the findings that were drawn from the data generated by the two focus group discussions. During the focus group discussions, the participants from the two schools were granted the opportunity to express their views as they interacted amongst themselves about their preparedness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. By means of a constant comparison analysis (cf. 4.3.1), I compared the findings related to the two focus group discussions in terms of three themes that emerged from the data. The three themes relate to the participants' perceived understanding of *the differences between COSC and the LGCSE*, their perceptions about their *training to implement the LGCSE*, and their experience of the *challenges with implementation and subsequent suggestions for implementation improvement.* In order not to create distance between the findings and their

interpretation, the presentation of the findings will immediately be followed by its discussion. While the presentation is centred on the way in which the participants co-constructed their understanding of the *LGCSE* and related issues pertaining to the preparation for implementation, the interpretation of the findings has been informed by the literature review (cf. 2.3) and the document analysis (cf. 3.3-3.5). I consider the infusion of the findings and discussions with the knowledge and understanding gained from the preceding chapters as important in exploring teachers' perceptions of their readiness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. As the focus group discussions centred on a co-construction by the participants, I was interested in how their perceptions and understandings are shaped by their social interaction with others and their personal histories (cf. Creswell & Clark, 2011). For the sake of clarity and in order to avoid confusion, I used the colour **green** for participants from School A and the colour **blue** to denote participants from School B.

4.4.1 Perceived differences between COSC and LGCSE

It was important to first determine the participants' general understanding of the differences between *COSC* and *LGCSE* (cf. Appendix D, 1a, 2a). By exploring the way in which the participants co-constructed their understanding of the differences between the two curricula, I wanted to understand the extent to which Lesotho's concern for a curriculum relevant to the needs of the Basotho translated into a curriculum different from a perceived irrelevant curriculum.

It seems from the data that the participants' co-constructing of their understanding of the difference between the *COSC* and the *LGCSE* mainly centred on drawing comparisons from the respective school subjects they teach. As the teaching of a specific subject relates to the participants' immediate teaching reality, it is understandable why they drew on what is known to them. For Participant A6, who teaches Mathematics and Physical Science, the main difference between the *COSC* and the *LGCSE* lies in the fact that "**in *COSC* the learners sat for a similar paper irrespective of their capability … *LGCSE* differentiates between learners in terms of ability**". Participant A1 corroborates this understanding when indicating that in the *LGCSE* "**they have acknowledged that the learners are not the same".** These observations are similar to the understanding of the participants in School B:

Participant B1: **teaching is more or less the same … except that the other part is extensive [*extended*] and the other is *core.***

Participant B2: **Physical Science differentiates learners in terms of ability ... the weak learners [study] the *core* (syllabus) while the more abled study the extended (syllabus).**

The way in which these participants understand the *LGCSE* aligns with the inclusion of a *core* and *extended* part to the syllabi of Mathematics and Physical Science (cf. 3.4.2 and 3.4.3). While the *COSC* syllabus did not make any differentiation between learners' abilities, the distinction between the *core* and *extended* parts in the *LGCSE* curriculum are aimed at accommodating "**learners in terms of ability that is, the average learners study *Core* syllabus while the more capable ones and those who intend to pursue careers in sciences study the *extended* syllabus**" (Participant A6). As those learners who intend to pursue careers in science-related subjects study the *extended* syllabus which is broader than the *core* syllabus, the average learners are given a chance to perform without having to compete with above average learners.

In addition to some participants drawing on their understanding of the difference between the two curricula based on Mathematics and Physical Science, others used Religious Studies as a point of reference to articulate their understanding of the relevance of the *LGCSE* curriculum. In School A, Participant A3 explains how the newly adopted syllabus includes a topic of religion in society which connects the subject with "**the learners' experience in their daily life situations**". In a similar vein, Participant A5 corroborates this by indicating that in Religious Studies we "**make them aware of what is happening around them and in their communities".** The significance and relevance of the inclusion of this topic is also supported by participants from School B:

Participant B4: **There is a big difference because the *LGCSE* syllabus particularly in Religious Studies, there is this aspect of religion in society. There is also this part of the values and the vices.**

Participant B5: *LGCSE* **on the other hand wants the learners to know the Biblical scriptures but apply that knowledge in real**

> **life situations. Again, the topic religion in society wants them to apply their everyday life experiences.**

The Religious Studies syllabus is perceived to be more relevant to the Lesotho context as it aims to equip the learners with the competencies necessary to address their daily life challenges and emerging issues of concern to the Basotho and their immediate societal context (cf. 3.4.6). In addition, by extending the syllabi as in the case of Mathematics and Physical Science to accommodate learners with different abilities, can also be regarded as a means to make the curriculum more relevant for the Basotho.

Participant A4 indirectly highlighted the relevance of the *LGCSE* by referring to the *COSC* curriculum as "**a foreign curriculum which is irrelevant to the needs of Basotho**"; an understanding that was supported by Participant A2 who felt that "***COSC* dealt with issues that are not local to our learners**" and Participant A1 who perceives the *COSC* as "**an obsolete syllabus that did not cater for the modern needs of Lesotho**". The conversation at School B followed a similar pattern with Participant B6 referring to the necessity to "**have a curriculum that addresses the needs of Basotho unlike the *COSC* curriculum that was irrelevant to the needs of the nation**", and Participant B4 providing support: "**what we were dealing with were based on Britain. Hence, they were not addressing the issues of Lesotho**". In addition to the participants' observation of the newly adopted curriculum being more relevant, some of them also commented on the difference between the teaching of the two curricula:

Participant A: **[with] *COSC* the learners were memorising [but] ... with *LGCSE* ... we make the learners aware of what is happening around them and their communities.**

Participant B6: **[with *COSC*] we prepared the learners to ... memorise and relate [the scriptures] in the examination ... *LGCSE* wants the learners to know the Biblical scriptures and apply them in real life situations.**

According to the participants, learning thus shifted away from memorising to application, and more specifically, to the application of knowledge to everyday lives. However, despite the participants' observations regarding the differences between

the two curricula, both in terms of relevance and learner learning, it is interesting to note how the teachers from School B indicated that the content is fairly similar:

Participant B1: **the teaching is almost the same because we are teaching more or less the same content ... [and] the preparation is the same.**

Participant B3: **most of the topics [that] we are teaching are similar to those of *COSC* ... they changed words and names here and there.**

Participant B2: **It [*LGCSE*] included the topics that were not there in the previous syllabus. Nonetheless, there are only a few topics that are added on it.**

Data generated from the focus group discussions reveals that the participants are aware of the differences between the *COSC* and *LGCSE*, especially with regards to the *LGCSE* curriculum being more accommodative in terms of differentiation in learner ability for Mathematics and Physical Science (cf. 3.4.2, 3.4.3). By implication, the participants perceive this difference as positive as learners are provided with appropriate content matching their abilities, which in turn is supportive of learner performance. The participants also perceive the *LGCSE* curriculum as a more relevant curriculum to address the needs of the Basotho, unlike the *COSC* which was criticised to be irrelevant to the needs of Lesotho. The participants' observation regarding the irrelevance of *COSC* aligns with the critique of the curriculum in the literature for its irrelevant content, which in turn, contributed to poor learner performance (cf. 2.3.1). As such, the newly adopted curriculum seems to be received as a curriculum designed to be more relevant to the developmental needs of the Basotho nation. The relevance was also shown in the Religious Studies syllabus in that some participants felt that it deals with emerging issues of concern to the Basotho nation (cf. 3.4.6). The connection of *religion in society* with learners' daily life experiences aligns with *CAP's* envisioning of a curriculum that incorporates learners' experiences with that of schools and communities (cf. 3.3.2). In this regard, *CAP* (MOET, 2009:14) advocates for a curriculum that "should reflect the interconnection of knowledge and ideas within the areas of learning, and the relevance of the areas of learning to each other and to the learners' everyday life individually and communally".

The data reveals that the participants are aware of the shift from memorising to application, especially as demonstrated in the Religious Studies syllabus. This observation is in alignment with the critique of the *COSC* curriculum as more examination oriented, forcing the learners to memorise for the sake of pursuing an examination and not to understand (cf. 2.3.1). As the *COSC* curriculum did not develop the Basotho learners to be critical thinkers and problem solvers, the participants perceived this shift as positive. Although the participants are not familiar, or insufficiently familiar, with *CAP*, their observation aligns with the envisaged pedagogical shift espoused in *CAP* from the acquisition of knowledge to the development of skills for personal and social development (cf. 3.3.5). Although no participants specifically referred to the issue of memorisation, one can assume that their observation of the distinction between the *core* and *extended* aspects of the Mathematics and Physical Science syllabi is by implication, supportive of "teaching and learning methods that can further develop creativity, independence and survival skills of the learners" (MOET, 2009: 22). By connecting a localised curriculum with learners' everyday life experiences and by attuning the curriculum to learner abilities, seem to feed into the localisation of a curriculum that aims at empowering learners with survival skills in their lives, and also in enabling them to participate in the development programmes of the country.

However, some participants felt that the two curricula are similar as reflected in the content of some subjects which is more or less the same except for slight changes in wording (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.4.5). Reference to similarity in teaching because of subject content that are almost the same for the *COSC* and the *LGCSE*, alludes to the possibility that the subject panels entrusted with the writing of the new syllabi relied too much on the *COSC* syllabi. The participants' observation also supports the fact that the content was in some cases taken as is and a few words and names were changed into Sesotho to make it seem more local. In some syllabi there are slight changes in the aims, while the content and more specifically the topics in the syllabi basically remained the same, albeit with minor differences regarding wording and a few additions to the content (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.4.5). The participants' observations subsequently substantiated the assumption that the similarity of the two curricula might be the consequence of a possible overhasty curriculum design due to exerted pressure on ECOL to localise the examinations (cf. 1.2).

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4.4.2 Perceptions about teacher preparation

I wanted to explore the participants' general perception about their training to implement *LGCSE* curriculum, as I assumed that such training would inform a sense of their own preparedness for curriculum implementation (cf. Appendix D, 3a, 4a, 5a). I also premised the importance of teacher training from the significance that the literature places on teacher training for effective curriculum implementation (cf. 1.2). By investigating the way in which the participants co-constructed their perceptions about training, I wanted to find out whether their experiences with training related to the differences between the *COSC* and *LGCSE* (cf.4.4.1). While the participants were granted the opportunity to share their experiences about their training, the discussion soon resulted in a session of complaints.

All the participants from School A agreed that workshops were held to train them to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum, but that the workshops were insufficient:

Participant A1: **We attended a one-day workshop which informed us about the shift from *COSC* to *LGCSE*.**

Participant A2: **We attended a one-day workshop which did not deal with the methods of how to teach the content.**

Participant A3: **We were just informed about this syllabus and [its] components ... [but the training did not go] deep into the content of the syllabus ... the approaches, the skills and the methods.**

Participant A4: **We were not formally prepared, we were just called for what I would call snapshot workshops where we were just made aware of the transition from *COSC* to *LGCSE*.**

The participants from School B shared similar sentiments as those of School A. While they acknowledged that workshops were held, some felt that the workshops served no purpose. Participant B1 opined that "**they [the workshops] were unnecessary as the teaching is more or less the same because we are teaching the same topics**", a sentiment that was shared by Participant B2: "**they were unnecessary … because teachers were going to teach what they were used to**

teach". From the focus group discussion, it also became clear that although workshops were offered, not all teachers were expected to attend the workshops:

> **the workshops were held for every subject and the schools were expected to send one teacher per subject. The expectation was that the teacher who attended the workshop will train the other teachers, but there was no time for that** [Participant B3].

The general perception of the participants was that their expectations were not met as the workshops only introduced the syllabi, but did not equip them with the methods and approaches of how to effectively handle and deliver the content. Rather, the perception of some participants that there is little difference between the two curricula (cf. 4.4.1) was strengthened ("**we were prepared since there isn't much difference between [*COSC* and *LGCSE*]**"– Participant B1). Although workshops were held, not all teachers attended them. While those who attended the workshops perceived the workshops to be insufficient or a waste of time, one could expect that those teachers who did not attend workshops either received insufficient information about the curriculum shift, or no information at all. The likelihood of the negative impact of insufficient training on curriculum implementation and by implication on learners' further choices, was implied by Participant A6:

> **... the training did not deal with the interpretation of the syllabus and the methodologies [of teaching it]. It only dealt with the differences between the *core* and the *extended* syllabi ... it did not even deal with how to select the learners to study the *core* and the *extended* syllabi.**

In considering the participants' perceptions about their training for curriculum implementation, it is quite possible that teachers had to simply rely on "**our professional training as teachers**" (Participant B5), while having very little understanding of the actual expectations of the new curriculum and in particular, of the shift from a compartmentalised subject-based instruction to a holistic approach of an integrated curriculum (cf. 3.3.5). *CAP* (2009) serves as a policy framework to guide education reform in Lesotho and makes specific reference to issues related to assessment, curriculum aspects, learning areas and pedagogy (cf. 3.3). Given the importance of this document in relation to curriculum implementation, one would expect that teacher training would also be informed by aspects related to *CAP*. However, the participants expressed a similar lack of familiarity with *CAP*:

Participant A1: **I have seen it [*CAP* document] and I know it but... we were not officially introduced to it**.

Participant A2: **I became aware of it when I was elected to become the panel member of Biology... I think the other teachers do not know about the policy**.

While Participants A3, A5 and A6 claim that they were not informed about *CAP*, only Participant A4 seemed to be familiar with *CAP* and its relationship with *LGCSE*:

... the Curriculum and Assessment Policy [was intended] to guide the introduction of *LGCSE* and also the standard of the assessment and to put together what to teach and what to examine.

The perception regarding the absence of *CAP* in the training of teachers was also expressed by the participants from School B, albeit in reference to their understanding of the document. Participant B2 claims that: "**in the syllabus there is somewhere, where it informs about the syllabus and how it should be done … I think we are familiar with it but not necessarily**". Participant B3 seems more conversant with the content of *CAP* ("**Yes, it entails the expectation about the assessment of a learner"**), while Participants B4 ("**I do not know that document but I think it only dealt with the issues that they are trying to address now of grade learners"**), B5 ("**Not really"**) and B6 ("**I have seen the document but I have not read it and I do not know what is all about**") are forthright about their ignorance. It subsequently seems that teachers' training did not include the foregrounding of the fundamental principles (cf. 3.3.2) on which the *LGCSE* is built and which should guide the actual implementation of the curriculum.

Since the participants were not specifically trained on *CAP,* their understanding of an intergrated curriculum and what it entails and implies for teachers is fairly scanty*.* Their understanding ranges from total ignorance ("**I have heard about it but I do not know about it**" - Participant A3; "**I have heard about it but I do not know about it**" - Participant B5) to some generic understanding of an integrated curriculum as a curriculum that treats related issue together:

Participant A4: **... it is a curriculum that combines related topics from different subjects together and they are treated as one.**

Particpant A6: **related topics in the curriculum are grouped together.**

Participant B3: **... I think the related topics in different subjects are grouped together.**

Participant B6: **It is a curriculum that groups together related issues from different subjects.**

Literature highlights the importance of teacher training for effective curriculum implementation, in particular in the context of a country like Lesotho where a new curriculum was the consequence of the desire to have a relevant curriculum that addressed the needs of the country (cf. 1.2, 3.5). The data reveal, however, that although teachers do receive training in the form of a one-day workshop, the participants regarded it as insufficient in adequately preparing them for the transition from the *COSC* curriculum to the *LGCSE* curriculum. As noted by the participants, the workshops were held only to inform teachers about the new curriculum but did not equip them with the necessary skills of how to handle the content. It seems as if the need of the participants extended beyond a one-day curriculum dissemination session where they were merely informed about the new curriculum so that they can understand and accept the innovation (cf. MacBeath, 1994). They were seemingly more in need of professional development aimed at improving their skills and competencies to produce good educational results (cf. Kagoda & Ezati, 2014). The perception of some participants that the content of the *LGCSE* curriculum is similar to that of the *COSC* subjects (cf. 4.4.1), alludes to insufficient training. Some participants are not aware that even though the two curricula may look similar, the pedagogy has shifted from mere teaching to teaching and learning (cf. 3.5). As the workshops did not include training on *CAP*, which is the guiding policy framework for the transformation of education in Lesotho, it can be assumed that teachers are most likely to teach the *LGCSE* in the same way that they taught the *COSC* curriculum. *CAP* is, however, strongly associated with an intergrated curriculum approach, and, by implication, the one-day training could not sufficiently prepare the teachers to frame their teaching within an intergrated curriculum. It is also important to note that the findings reveal that not all teachers attended the workshops since only one participant per subject per school was invited to attend. The inclusion of only a few teachers relates to the cascading model which is used in Lesotho to train a first group of teachers on a subject matter, with the intention that they will be proficient to train their colleagues (cf. Dichaba & Mokhele, 2012; Ngese, Khwaja & Iyer, 2018). One

could therefore assume that the possibility exists that those teachers who received inadequate training, will also relay insufficient information about the curriculum shift to their colleagues. While effective curriculum implementation requires sufficient professional development (cf. 3.5), inadequate training might hold certain implications for the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum, especially in light of the fact that the teaching of some *LGCSE* subjects requires a total mind shift from teachers (cf. 3.4.5).

4.4.3 Challenges with implementation of and suggestions for improved implementation

By exploring the way in which the participants co-constructed the challenges they experienced with curriculum implementation (cf. Appendix D, 11a, 12a), I wanted to understand whether their experiences coincided with their perceptions about their training (cf. 4.4.2). Also, since these participants are all involved in the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum, it was my contention that based on their experiences, they are in a favourable position to co-construct some ideas regarding the improvement of the implementation process.

The participants in both schools encountered a myriad of challenges with the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum. Participants in both schools seem to be frustrated by lack of resources:

Participant A1: **We do not have books and the necessary resources ... in Mathematics we are using books that do not cover the syllabus.**

Participant A3: **lack of material [is the greatest challenge] we still use the Cambridge material because there is lack of material prepared for this [curriculum].**

Participant B4: **there is lack of relevant material for the curriculum.**

Participant B3: **availability of question papers that are local ... they are not readily available … we are using the *COSC* based material.**

In addition to these challenges, School B highlighted challenges regarding a lack of parental involvement (**… in the choice of whether learners should study the *core***

or the *extended* **syllabi** – Participant B1) and misconceptions about the *core* and *extended* syllabi (**… learners do not want to study the *core* syllabus in Physical** Science**, they feel that if they study this syllabus they are belittled** – Participant B2).

In general, however, the participants attribute the challenges they experience to insufficient training, either directly or implicitly through their recommendations for the improvement of implementation. Participant A5's complaint about a "**lack of training especially when we have new topics that were not in the *COSC* syllabus**" was shared by Participant A2 (**lack of training**). While Participants B1 (**There has to be periodic training and feedbacks),** B5 (**There should be workshops**) and B6 (**MOET should ensure that the teachers get adequate training**) recommend regular workshops, Participants A2, A3 and A4 felt that there should be more collaboration between stakeholders. For Participant A2 such collaboration is required for the clarification of "**which grades they are going to consider in different courses [for access to higher education]**"**,** while Participant A4 referred to coordination between the NCDC and ECOL as "**the two confuse us as they give us different information**". Participant B3 did not clarify the need for stakeholder involvement. In the spirit of constant comparison analysis (cf. 4.3.1), reference is now made to the findings of School B. In School B, only Participant B6 referred to the lack of training as a challenge (**We were not adequately prepared to deal with the changes that came with the new syllabus**), while several others referred to the issue of regular training as a recommendation for improved implementation. Participants B3 (**MOET must hold workshops such that we as teachers can raise our problems**) and B4 (**… hold workshops for the teachers to try to get what are the real problems of this curriculum**) agreed that workshops should be held to serve as a platform for teachers to raise and discuss their problems regarding the curriculum. While Participants B5 (**a series of workshops so as to come up with different approaches**) and B6 (**… hold regular workshops for the teachers**) voiced the need for more regular workshops, Participants B1 (**the allocation of periods should be increased for the *extended* syllabus**) and B2 were more practical in their suggestion for "**more periods as the syllabus is more broad than the *core***". Frustrations due to lack of training not only corraborated perceptions by participants in both schools that the workshops were insufficient (cf. 4.4.2), but also feed into the recommendations made for improved implementation.

The findings reveal that the participants felt that one of the greatest challenges for the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum is the lack of relevant material. By implication, as teachers are challenged to prepare their lessons for a new curriculum, they have to rely on Cambridge resources as they are readily available. *COSC* textbooks, however, were criticised for being foreign to the learners' environment (cf. 2.3.1), specifically regarding the inclusion of local content. Given this critique and in light of the lack of adequate material and the continued use of old textbooks, it could be assumed that the teaching of a presumed more relevant curriculum (cf. 2.3.1, 2,3.2) by using irrelevant material must hold certain consequences for implementation. While it seems illogical to localise a curriculum and to not provide relevant resources, this state of affairs alludes to a potential premature implementation of the *LGCSE*. It subsequently seems as if ECOL and NCDC were pressured to introduce *LGCSE,* even though they had not yet developed all the relevant material for curriculum implementation. It could further be anticipated that the use of old textbooks and the unavailability of relevant textbooks can disadvantage learners who are supposed to take responsibility for their own learning. *CAP* advocates for "[l]earners... to become more responsible for their own learning process" (MOET, 2009: 22). Lack of relevant material will likely affect the taking up of such responsibility as learners might not have the relevant material. This in turn, will require them to rely on their teachers who feel that their training for the new curriculum was inadequate (cf. 4.4.2).

In alignment with my statements above, the findings also reveal that the participants felt that one of their challenges can be attributed to a lack of sufficient training. In this regard the findings indicate that the participants feel that one-day workshops are not adequate in preparing teachers to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for successful curriculum implementation. While some participants indicated this challenge explicitly, other did so indirectly by recommending regular workshops for teachers. By implication, the participants assume that the effective implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum relies on adequate training. Frustrations regarding uncertainties and misconceptions pertaining to the distinction between the *core* and *extended* syllabi, including the need for extended time to work on the *extended* syllabi, could, by implication, be addressed through regular workshops, but also through coordination between key stakeholders. The need for collaboration among

the different stakeholders, as the findings reveal, foregrounds a perceived absence of such collaboration. This perception is disconcerting in that one of the main factors that led to the delay of the implementation was a lack of collaboration between the key stakeholders, namely NCDC and ECOL (cf. 2.3.3). The need voiced for collaboration because teachers are often confused by different information supports the possibility of an overhasty curriculum design and a premature implementation of the *LGCSE*. It is implied that coordination among the key stakeholders will ensure a smooth implementation of the curriculum and a clear vision, which turn, will lead to less confusion.

The focus groups discussions highlighted that the participants perceive the *LGCSE* curriculum to be more accommodative than the *COSC* curriculum for Mathematics and Physical Science. The fact that the syllabi for these subjects now differentiate between the learners in terms of their ability is regarded as positive. Furthermore, *LGCSE* is more relevant to the needs of Lesotho specifically in Religious Studies as it addresses the emerging issues of concern to the Basotho nation. However, the training to prepare the teachers to transit from one curriculum to the other was insufficient as the participants felt that it did not equip them with the necessary skills to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. They were also frustrated by the lack of relevant material which was a hindrance to the successful implementation of the *LGCSE.* From the co-construction of the participants' perceptions regarding their readiness to implement the *LGCSE*, I learned that the training they received did not adequately prepare them to effectively implement the curriculum.

4.5   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE INTERVIEWS

The focus group discussions were conducted in order to learn how the participants co-constructed their understanding among themselves regarding their readiness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum (cf.1.5.2). The semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, allowed me to explore how the participants were trained to teach Mathematics, Physical Science and Religious Studies respectively. I interviewed Mathematics, Physical Science and Religious Studies teachers as the syllabi for these subjects hold certain implications for teachers (cf. 4.2.1.1). While the teaching of Mathematics and Physical Science requires teachers to make provision for the

differentiation between learners' ability by teaching the *core* and *extended* curricula (cf. 3.4.2 and 3.4.3), Religious Studies requires a total mind shift from teachers. The teaching of the new curriculum requires teachers to shift their teaching approach from mere knowledge transmission to the application of knowledge to everyday life concerns (cf. 3.4.5). In order to achieve trustworthiness (cf. 1.6), I crystallised the findings of the focus group with the findings generated from the interviews (cf. 1.5; 4.3.1). In the following sub-sections, I discuss three themes that emerged from the data generated from the interviews, namely *training to teach specific subjects, understanding of the informative role of CAP*, and *perceived readiness and own agency to teach towards the LGCSE*.

4.5.1 Training to teach specific subjects

I wanted to explore the participants' perceptions about their training to teach their respective subjects, because I assumed that their training would inform a sense of their own readiness to teach the *LGCSE* subjects (cf. Appendix D, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b).

The participants responsible for teaching Mathematics indicated that although they did attend a workshop during which the *LGCSE* Mathematics syllabus was introduced, they felt that it was inadequate to help them teach their subject competently. Participant A1, who has taught nine year *COSC* Mathematics and has been involved in *LGCSE* Mathematics for five years, was in a good position to reflect on the training in terms of the difference between the syllabi: "**... it was just a one-day training workshop where they were doing linear programming but it was not dealt with satisfactorily**". Even though the workshop dealt with new topics, the participant was particularly dissatisfied with the workshop as "**they just highlighted about them [the topics] and did not go deeper in such topics**". The participant felt that some of the teachers have never been exposed to some of these topics during their teacher training at the Lesotho College of Education, while others were introduced to them during their second year of teacher education at the National University of Lesotho. Yet, the lack of in-depth training was just brushed over with the comment that "**we are the mathematics teachers**". Participant B1 corroborates the fact that there was just a one-day training "**to introduce *LGCSE***". This teacher who

has 20 years teaching experience with *COSC* and five years with *LGCSE* Mathematics felt that

> **as far as I am concerned [the workshop] was not necessary as I am teaching the same content. The [*LGCSE*] content is similar with that of the [*COSC*] syllabus as far as Mathematics is concerned except for a few additions**.

This participant's view that the workshop was unnecessary can be attributed to the fact that she is familiar with the content as she was "**one of the members of the panel who wrote that [*LGCSE*] syllabus**". Another contributing factor for the perceived unnecessity might be that at her school the same teacher does not teach the *core* and *extended* learners in the same classroom. Rather, "**one teacher is teaching the *extended* syllabus, the other teacher is teaching the *core* curriculum at the same time**". It is, however, interesting to note that Participant B1, who felt that she did not need the training, thought that the workshop was insufficient in preparing teachers to assess learners: "**we did not know how we are going to assess the learners and how we are going to prepare them to sit for the examination**". While Participant B1 was more concerned about issues surrounding assessment, Participant A1 was concerned about the workshop leaving teachers incompetent: "**[w]hen it comes to teaching, we encountered a problem with the new topics because we had not taught them before so, it was a challenge**".

The Physical Science teachers agreed that they received training, but they were both dissatisfied with the quality of the one-day workshop. Participant A4, who has been teaching the *LGCSE* Physical Science syllabus for four years, felt that the training he received was as good as no training:

> **... it was not training as such, but we were told how the design of the syllabus is like, how it is going to be examined but we did not get into the core of the syllabus, how to interpret it and how to sort the learners and how we should teach those who are studying the *core* and ... the *extended* [syllabi]**.

Participant B4 corroborated the experience of Participant A4 in that the workshop was only focused on what *LGCSE* was about, but "**as far the content is concerned the training was not done … we did not know how far we should go with the syllabus and the interpretation**". Participant B4 also mentioned similar sentiments

to those of his Mathematics colleague, that at his school "**we do not teach the *core* and *extended* learners in the same class … the learners who study the *core* syllabus [have] their own class while those who study the *extended* [also have] their own class**". Participant A4's frustration with the workshop subsequently included uncertainty about the handling and sorting of the learners into the *core* and *extended* classes, while Participant B4's school overcame this problem by splitting the learners into separate classes.

In a similar manner as the participants who teach Mathematics and Physical Science, the two teachers who are responsible for teaching Religious Studies shared the opinion that the workshops were insufficient. Participant A3, who has a been involved with the *LGCSE* curriculum for four years, did not attend the workshop as only one teacher per school was required to attend with the expectation that the trainee will then assist other teachers at the school. However, the message that the participant got from the colleague was that "**the workshop only highlighted the syllabus, she was just informed that a new syllabus has been introduced but they were not trained on how to teach it. The workshop was only information dissemination**". Participant B5 also concurred that the training was inadequate as it "**did not deal with the approaches and strategies of teaching the changes in Religious Studies such as the values and vices [as well as] religion in society**". It can be derived from the data that the teachers expected more guidance regarding the actual teaching of the new syllabus.

The findings revealed that teachers only attended a one-day workshop which was supposed to prepare them to teach towards the *LGCSE* curriculum in their respective subjects. The significance of teachers' training in the implementation of a new curriculum cannot be underestimated as the literature accentuates how successful implementation is reliant on teachers acquiring the necessary skills to teach a new curriculum (cf. 1.2; 3.5). However, the data reveals that the participants perceived their one-day training as inadequate to prepare them to accommodate the changes made to the new syllabi of their respective subjects. The participants perceived the workshops more of a space for information dissemination than an opportunity to deal with the strategies and approaches of how to handle subject content. It seems if tteachers were more in need of professional development opportunities regarding the

new curriculum, than in mere curriculum dissemination. This perception was also foregrounded during the focus group discussions (cf. 4.4.2). On average, the participants felt that they were not sufficiently equipped with the necessary skills to handle the newly introduced subject matter. By implication this could mean that if teachers are not well equipped with strategies and approaches of how to deliver subject matter, they might struggle with the content, which in turn, might have a negative impact on content delivery and learner performance. Another disconcerting finding is that although five of the six participants attended the workshops, the assistance those teachers who did not attend the workshops will receive from these attendees will most probably be reflective of the inadequate training offered to the selected few. Although the cascading model for teacher training has the advantage of reaching many teachers within a short period of time, the participants experienced the shortcoming of the model to deliver effective training. The assumption of the cascading model that those teachers who have been trained will have sufficient time to train others is mistaken. As noted by Englebrecht, Ankiewils and De Swardt (2007), realities such as a full timetable and extramural activities often lead to trained teachers not having the time to attent to the training of their colleagues. Concerns regarding the training of Mathematics and Physical Science teachers centre on issues regarding the *core* and *extended* sections of the syllabi and the assessment of the subject content. While teaching the new Religious Studies syllabus requires a mind shift regarding the actual teaching of the subject (cf. 3.5), the dissatisfaction of these participants foreground, by implication, inadequacy in equipping teachers to transfer the values and skills to learners for application to everyday life challenges (cf. 3.4.5). These findings subsequently suggest that MOET did not succeed to adequately prepare teachers to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum.

4.5.2 Understanding the informative role of CAP

Given the informative role of *CAP* as a policy framework guiding the implementation of an intergrated curriculum and a learner-centred approach in Lesotho (cf. 3.3.2), it was important to determine whether the training of the participants adequately prepared them to frame their teaching within these approaches (cf. Appendix D, 7b, 8b, 9b).

The data generated from the focus group discussions indicated that the one-day workshops did not include any information on *CAP,* and the participants seemed to have very little understanding of the integrated curriculum (cf. 4.4.2). During the semi-structured interviews, the participants corroborated some generic understanding of what an integrated curriculum entails. Participant A1's understanding of an integrated curriculum refers to "**concepts from different subjects [which] are merged such that they show a link**", but has apparently not received "**any training on equipping us on the integrated curriculum**". The sentiments of Participant A1 were shared by the other interviewees who referred to their understanding of an integrated curriculum as a holistic approach through which "**some topics should be included in many subjects**" (Participant A2) and "**related issues are treated as one rather than treating them in different subjects**" (Particpant B1). In Participant B3's opinion, the integrated curriculum "**tries to do away with the different subjects as we have now**". All the participants indicated that they were not trained on how to teach their subjects as part of an integrated curriculum approach.

The transformative agenda of *CAP* centres on a pedagogical shift which requires the teachers to move away from a teacher-centred approach to the facilitation of learning as a learner-centred approach based on learners' own activities (cf. 3.3.5). There was no consensus between participants regarding their understanding and use of a learner-centred approach. Although they did not specifically reveal whether they used the approach, Participant A1 pointed out that "**the workshops did not focus on learner-centred approaches**", while Participant A3 was outright indicating "**I was not prepared ... MOET did not hold formal trainings ... even a lot of teachers do not understand what is meant by learner-centred approach**". The omission of the framing of *LGCSE* subjects within a learner-centred approach seems to stem from the possible assumption by MOET that teachers are conversant with the approach "**since learner-centred approaches were done in the previous syllabus**" (Participant A1). In this regard, Participant A4 mentioned that although he uses the approach, his knowledge thereof does not come from the one-day workshop, but "**because I was trained in college**". A learner-centred approach implies particular teaching methods that would enable the centring of the learner in the teaching and learning context. However, the workshops did not deal with teaching methods: **"[t]he**

workshop that introduced the *LGCSE* did not prepare us to use a learner-centred method ... I think the assumption is that we learned those methods at college" (Participant B2).

The participants' general understanding of an integrated curriculum as a curriculum that "treats related issues together'' is aligned with the literature on integrated curricula (cf. 3.3.2). *CAP* seeks to do away with compartmentalised subject instruction and aims to introduce a view on subjects as learning areas which "indicate a body of knowledge necessary to equip the learners with competencies necessary to address life challenges" (MOET, 2009:15). However, since the participants attended a one-day training workshop, their understanding of an integrated curriculum is rather more general than specific. By implication, the one-day workshop did not prepare teachers to frame their teaching within an integrated curriculum approach and context. Stemming from this is the possibility that teachers might continue to teach their subjects in the same traditional manner as they used to do with the previous syllabus, and not in alignment with *CAP*.

The data revealed that the training of teachers did not place an emphasis on a learner-centred approach. Although the participants framed their understanding of a learner-centred approach on prior training, the lack of focus on teaching techniques and methods regarding the new curriculum limited teachers' understanding of how to frame their respective subjects within a learner-centred approach. There is a possibility that due to inadequate training, some teachers do not use a learner-centred approach.

4.5.3 Perceived readiness and own agency to teach towards the LGCSE

Having discussed how the participants were prepared to teach their respective subjects, how they understand the integrated curriculum and how they were empowered to frame their teaching within a learner-centered approach, I wanted to establish how they perceived their own readiness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. In addition, I thought it important to also find out how the partipcants empowered themselves to teach their respective subjects in the new curriculum (cf.

Appendix D, 2b, 4b, 9b). I assumed that the training the participants received had some bearing on how they perceived their own readiness, and that such perceived readiness might also feed into the extent they exercised their own agency in order to implement the new curriculum.

From the data it became clear that on average the participants criticised the training they received from MOET as not being adequate in sufficiently preparing them for the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum. The hasty introduction of the *LGCSE* did not give teachers enough time to prepare themselves so they had "**to find our way with the changes and arrangement of the content since we did not have a chance to prepare for the syllabus**" (Participant A1). The participants highlighted different concerns with the training, albeit all related to a perception that they were not sufficiently trained. While Participant A2's observation centred on "**not given training on how to select the learners who are going to study the *core* and the *extended* syllabuses**", Participant A3 was more concerned with the fact that "**with LGCSE we were not prepared to teach the new syllabus because we did not have workshops or training on how to approach this curriculum**". Participant B1 highlighted the relationship between preparation and performance by indicating that "**we were not prepared for the shift, that is why the performance is poor in LGCSE due to lack of training**". Teachers' readiness to implement a curriculum is likely to have a direct impact on the learners' performance. In this regard, Participant A1 pointed out that "**there has been a sharp decline in the performance of learners, in the previous syllabus it was easy to prepare the learners for examination**". A similar opinion was voiced by other participants (Participants A1 and A4), and Participant B5 according to which "**the learners performed better in COSC than in LGCSE**". Participant A3 was more hopeful with his opinion that **"I think we will improve as time goes as we will be familiar with the syllabus**".

Since the participants did not perceive their training as sufficient for teaching their respective subjects, they took it upon themselves to make alternative arrangments to empower themselves. While Participant A1 indicated that "**we had to download material and teach ourselves and even with the question papers, we relied on those ones prepared by Cambridge**", Participants B4 and B5 referred to the fact that they "**did a lot of research**". Participant A3 enrolled for further studies as he

realised "**that it was going to be a challenge if I did not empower myself. I was going to struggle [since] Mathematics is poorly performed in at the current moment**". Teachers responsible for teaching Religious Studies "**decided to establish a Religious Studies association where we invited different resource persons to help us with this new syllabus**" (Participant B4). Thus, despite the perception that their training for the new curriculum was not satisfactory, the teachers did not allow for their agency to be depleted; rather, in an attempt to complement their insufficient training, they empowered themselves by means of *inter alia*, the undertaking of research and the formation of study groups.

The literature highlights the importance of teacher training for the implementation of a new curriculum (cf. 1.2, 3.5). When teachers are well-trained, the curriculum implementation process can follow a fairly smooth path. The data revealed, however, that as teachers were not well-trained, they had to "find their way with changes" in their respective subjects. Although it can be accepted that teachers should be life-long learners, their attempts to familiarise themselves with the curriculum changes might be attributed to an over-hasty introduction of the *LGCSE*. The problem in this regard is that teachers are not granted enough time to prepare themselves for a new curriculum. In the case of Lesotho, teachers are required to engage in an integrated curriculum approach and learner-centred teaching. With regards to the teaching of specific subjects, Mathematics and Physical Science teachers' biggest challenge was how to select the learners to study the *core* and the *extended* syllabuses as they were not trained to do this selection (cf. 4.4.2). The new syllabi also came with new topics that the teachers were not familiar with. The data revealed that the teachers complained that the training was insufficient to equip them with the necessary skills for teaching their different subjects (cf. 4.5.1). Insufficient training might be a contributing factor to the decline in learner performance in some subjects. If teachers are not well trained in the methods of how to teach their subjects (cf. 4.5.2), the possibility exists that the required shift to a learner-centred approach will not take place in a manner that will be to the advantage of the learners. If MOET fails to train teachers suffiently, the implemention of the *LGCSE* hampers, by implication, the vision of the *Constitution of Lesotho* (1993: Section 28(a)) for an education system "directed to the full development of the human personality". As such, it can be assumed that due to inadequate training, teachers may not use appropriate teaching

methods to teach their subjects towards the successful implementation of the new curriculum. However, the data revealed that teachers are not easily discouraged by insufficient training; rather, they are prepared to empower themselves in order to contribute towards the implementation of the newly adopted curriculum.

4.6   SUMMARY

In this chapter I discussed the findings of the data generated from the focus group discussions and the interviews. With regards to the focus group discussions, the findings were discussed in terms of three themes, namely *perceived differences between COSC and LGCSE, perception about teacher training,* and *challenges with implementation of and suggestions for further improved implementation.* From the co-construction of the participants, it emerged that they were aware of the differences between the *COSC* and *LGCSE,* especially regarding the *LGCSE* being more accommodative in terms of the differentiation between learner ability for Mathematics and Physical Science (cf. 4.4.1). They also perceived the new curriculum as more relevant to address the needs of the Basotho. However, the participants perceived the one-day training workshop as insufficient to adequately prepare them for the transition from the *COSC* to the *LGCSE* curriculum (cf. 4.4.2). They felt that the workshops did not equip them with the necessary skills for effectively handling the content. Furthermore, they encountered some challenges such as a lack of relevant material (cf. 4.4.3) and as a consequence, they still have to rely on the *COSC* textbooks which were criticised for being foreign to the Lesotho context (cf. 2.3.1). In general, the participants felt that they were not adequately prepared with the necessary skills and knowledge for successful curriculum implementation.

The findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews were discussed in terms of the following themes; *training to teach specific subjects, understanding the informative role of CAP* and *perceived readiness and own agency to teach towards LGCSE.* In general, the findings from the semi-stuctured interviews corroborated those drawn from the focus group discussions. The interviewees, similar to the focus group discussions, highlighted that the workshops were merely a space for information dissemination and not an opportunity to gain information on the strategies and approaches towards the teaching of content (cf. 4.5.1). They perceived the

training as insufficient as they had to struggle on their own with the selection of learners for the *core* and the *extended* syllabi (cf. 4.4.1). Teachers' generic understanding of what an integrated curriculum entails was also corroborated and it became clear that the one-day workshop did not enable them to frame their teaching within an integrated curriculum approach as required by *CAP* (cf. 4.5.2). Furthermore, the data revealed that as a result of insufficient training the participants were not ready to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum and that this might be a contributing factor in the decline in learners' performance in some subjects (cf. 4.5.3). The participants' intersubjective and subjective construction of their own understanding of the extent to which they have been prepared to implement the *LGSCE* curriculum, indicate that they perceive their preparation as insufficient. In the next chapter I present comments and suggestions regarding teachers' readiness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum.

CHAPTER 5: COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND REFLECTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to determine the extent to which teachers have been prepared to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* (cf. 1.3). This aim was inspired by Lesotho's shift in 2013 from the *Cambridge Overseas School Certificate* to the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education.* As a consequence of this shift, teachers teaching in Form D and E had to, over a period of four years, teach towards both the *COSC* and the *LGCSE*, depending on the subjects and Forms they taught. By implication, teachers were required to undergo some training to understand and implement the new curriculum. Teachers' preparation for the implementation of a curriculum is imperative as the success of curriculum implementation is reliant on teachers acquiring the necessary skills to teach the curriculum.

Framed within a Constructivist paradigm, and in my attempt to achieve the aim of the study, this qualitative study unfolded in consecutive chapters. In Chapter 2 I undertook a literature review to gain an in-depth understanding of the rationale for Lesotho's shift from the *COSC* curriculum to the *LGCSE* curriculum. In this regard, a historical overview of education in Lesotho revealed the country's journey in localising her O' level curriculum. The literature review and the complementary document analysis constituted the backdrop for the study and in particular for the foregrounding of the differences between the *COSC* and the *LGCSE* (cf. Chapter 3). By comparing the two curricula in general, and particularly regarding certain subjects, enabled the anticipation of implications for those teachers who had to shift from one curriculum to the other. These implications were perceived as important for exploring the perceptions of the participants regarding their readiness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. Various themes regarding such perceptions emerged from the analysis of the data generated by means of focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The discussion of the findings was informed by the literature review (cf. Chapter 2) and the document analysis (cf. Chapter 3). In this final chapter I draw on the findings and discussion of the data to comment on and make suggestions

regarding the extent to which teachers perceive themselves to be sufficiently ready to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*.

5.2 COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR READINESS

From the discussion of the data it became clear that, in general, teachers are dissatisfied with the training they received to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. The data revealed that the participants felt that the one-day training they received were insuffient to prepare them for the transition from the *COSC* curriculum to the *LGCSE* curriculum. Given the importance of teachers being capacitated for the implementation of a new curriculum, my comments and suggestions centre on teachers' training. In particular, I comment on the need for regular training, the infusion of such training with *CAP 2009,* and the creation of opportunities for teacher agency towards self-empowerment.

5.2.1 Regular workshops

The findings revealed that a one-day training workshop is perceived as inadequate to sufficiently prepare teachers to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum (cf. 4.4.2). While the workshop merely introduced the syllabi, they did not create a space for equipping teachers with the necessary skills of how to handle and deliver the content of the various subjects (cf. 4.4.2). With regards to subject specific training, the workshops did not meet the teachers' expectations (cf. 4.5.1). For instance, the Mathematics teachers were dissatisfied with the workshop because they felt that new topics were not sufficiently dealt with. A lack of depth in the introduction of new topics during the workshops led to teachers struggling with content to which they have never been exposed. The Physical Science teachers also corroborated the Mathematics teachers' experience that the workshops did not adequately address the content. Another shortcoming that was foregrounded by both the Mathematics and Physical Science teachers was that they were not trained on how to select the learners for the *core* and the *extended* syllabi. In a similar vein, the Religious Studies teachers also felt that their workshops were inadequate as it did not deal with the strategies and approaches of how to handle and deliver the content (cf. 4.5.1). The findings further revealed that not all teachers attended the workshops as only one teacher per

subject was invited (cf. 4.4.2; 4.5.1). The expectation was that those teachers who attended the workshops would share information and new knowledge with those who did not attend them at all (cf. 4.4.2).

The literature emphasises the importance of teacher training for the effective implementation of a new curriculum (cf. 1.2; 3.5). In Lesotho, the newly adopted *LGCSE* curriculum was the consequence of a desire to have a relevant curriculum that addressed the needs of the country (cf. 2.3.2; 3.3.1). However, teachers' dissatisfaction with the one-day workshops they attended for their respective subjects foregrounds issues related to quality (cf. 4.4.2; 4.5.1). The issue of insufficient training not only has a causal effect in that teachers are not sufficiently prepared for implementation, but those teachers who did not attend workshops are also disadvantaged. While the attendees of the workshops had to train colleagues who did not attend the workshops, their insufficient training subsequently led to their colleagues being equally unprepared for curriculum implementation (cf. 4.4.2; 4.5.1). Due to insufficient training some participants perceived the content of *COSC* to be similar to that of the *LGCSE* (cf. 4.4.1). Although the content of the syllabi is similar in many instances as indicated in their comparison (cf. 3.4), the pedagogy has shifted from mere teaching to teaching and learning (cf. 3.5).

Based on the perceived insufficiency of a once off one-day workshop, it is suggested that workshops should be held on a more regular basis, and more in the form of a series of workshops. In other words, a clear distinction should be made between curriculum dissemination sessions and professional development workshops. This suggestion also aligns with the participants' proposal that regular workshops must be held as they assume the implementation of *LGCSE* is depended on adequate training (cf. 4.4.3). While a series of workshops can focus on specific aspects of the curriculum in more detail, it can also overcome the shortcomings of the cascading model whereby only a small number of teachers receive training. As teachers expressed the need for training in methods and techniques related to their subjects, it would be for example more appropriate if these aspects are dealt with in depth in a workshop. It is suggested that such a series of workshops is offered on a rotation basis. The advantage of the rotation of workshops is that all teachers can get the opportunity to attend a workshop. As such, all teachers can experience the training

first-hand, and not merely be reliant on colleagues who have attended the workshops. In addition, regular workshops in the form of a series could serve as refresher opportunities for those teachers who have attended the initial workshops. The implementation of the curriculum started in 2013, and it seems as if after the one-day workshop, teachers were left to their own devices. Refresher workshops could in particular, serve as the opportune time for teachers to reflect on their shared experiences with curriculum implementation and to collectively work towards the streamlining of teaching their respective subjects. As such, MOET can be afforded the opportunity to take note of teachers' experiences and also their challenges with curriculum implementation. Regular workshops can become spaces where teachers, including newly appointed teachers, can establish collaborative relationships to work together. It is therefore suggested that a series of workshops, focusing on specific aspects of the *LGCSE* curriculum and offered on a regular basis, could enhance teachers' understanding of the curriculum in general and their subjects in particular. In addition, regular workshops can increase teachers' confidence to teach new topics and to be able to give informed advice regarding the the selection of learners for and the teaching of the *core* and *extended* syllabi. Regular workshops can also counteract the seemingly hasty introduction of the *LGCSE* curriculum and the perceived unpreparedness of teachers to find their way with curriculum changes. As regular workshops have the potential to increase the quality of teaching, it can also have a positive effect on learner performance and, by implication, assist in transforming teaching and learning "to be in line with the emerging needs of individuals and the nation" (MOET, 2009: Foreword by the Minister).

5.2.2 Grounding teacher training in CAP

From the research findings it became clear that the participants have little or no understanding of the guiding role of *CAP* in the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum. Most of the teachers were not familiar with *CAP,* while some have not seen the document, and others have only heard about it. Some teachers have not yet been officially introduced to the document (cf. 4.4.2). For those who displayed some understanding of the integrated curriculum, this understanding was generic rather than specific. Since the workshops did not deal with information on *CAP,* critical aspects such as the curriculum aspects which highlight life challenges and the

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context in which the learners are to function, were not addressed (cf. 3.3.3). Also, the learning areas which are regarded as the body of knowledge which the learners must acquire to fulfil their expected roles in the society, were not dealt with (cf. 3.3.4). The one-day training workshops did not sufficiently indicate the importance of *CAP* for teaching, nor did it prepare the teachers to frame their teaching within an integrated curriculum approach (cf. 4.5.2). It also emanated from the findings that no emphasis was placed on the importance of a learner-centred approach in the teaching of the *LGCSE* curriculum (cf. 4.4.2). Athough some teachers had been introduced to this approach during their teacher education, the workshops did not capacitate the attendees to grasp the change in pedagogy and to sufficiently apply a learner-centred approach in their teaching of the *LGCSE* curriculum.

The document analysis emphasised the importance of *CAP* as a policy framework to guide education reform in Lesotho. It is therefore imperative for teachers to be trained on the fundamental guidelines that underpin the *LGCSE* curriculum (cf. 3.3). An understanding of the foundational principles stands in direct relation to the effective implementation of *the LGCSE* curriculum. As a policy framework adopted to guide the transformation of learning, including assessment at various levels (cf. 3.3.1), the directive role of *CAP* in ensuring relevant education that will benefit Basotho children cannot be underestimated. However, as indicated, the findings reveal that the one-day training did not include any information on *CAP* and therefore it can be anticipated that teachers will experience certain challenges in their understanding of how the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum should contribute towards transformed education in Lesotho. A particular link is established between the curriculum aspects and the learning areas in *CAP* – while the curriculum aspects foreground the context of life challenges in which the learners are expected to function as individuals and members of society, the learning areas deal with the content in which the skills espoused in the curriculum aspects should be cultivated (cf. 3.3.3; 3.3.4). It could therefore be anticipated that if teachers are not aware of this link, it might be possible that they will not teach towards the competencies spelt out in the curriculum aspects and will, by implication, not produce the kind of learner that is envisaged by *CAP*. *CAP* also evisages a pedagogical shift which entails a move away from traditional teaching which places the emphasis on memorisation, to the facilitation of teaching through a learner-centred approach (cf. 3.3.5). Such a learner-

cerntred approach emphasises skills and attitude development to produce learners who will be able to deal with everyday challenges. However, as it emerged from the data that the one-day workshop did not place any emphasis on a learner-centred approach, teachers' readiness to produce well-rounded learners in alignment with the curriculum aspects and learning areas is under suspicion.

In drawing on the above findings of this study, it is suggested that the series of regular workshops for the teachers should first deal with *CAP* as the policy framework for the transformation of teaching, learning and assessment in Lesotho (cf. 3.3.1). It is imperative that teachers are first thoroughly introduced to the fundamental principles that inform the curriculum before they deal with subject-specific components. In particular, it is important to introduce teachers to the curriculum aspects, the learning aspects and the link between these aspects. It is imperative that teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the skills and competencies embedded in the curriculum aspects. Such an understanding would empower them to infuse their own teaching with the necessary skills, values and attitudes for life in Lesotho. By implication, teachers will be capacitated to position their teaching of the *LGCSE* curriculum in alignment with the needs of Lesotho. It is therefore suggested that specific attention is given during the first workshop to enabling teachers to gain a conceptual understanding of how the curriculum aspects articulate the intentions of education (cf. MOET, 2009: Curriculum aspects). However, the curriculum aspects should be complemented with the way in which the learning areas must be used as "a filtering mechanism to select concepts and principles derived from subject areas that address real issues and challenges" (MOET, 2009: Learning areas). It is anticipated that if attention is given to the relationship between the curriculum aspects and the learning areas, Lesotho teachers will be better equipped to not simply teach the content of the respective syllabi, but to frame their teaching within a learning-centred approach aimed at equipping the learners with the skills and attitudes to deal with life challenges. By implication, the the effective implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum, and teachers' readiness to contribute towards such implementation, is reliant on the extent to which teachers' workshops strengthen teachers' understanding of a pedagogy underpinned by the integrated curriculum and a learner-centered approach, as advocated by *CAP*.

5.2.3 Teacher empowerment

Although the findings revealed that the participants perceive their training to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum as insufficient to teach their respective subjects (cf. 4.4.2; 4.5.1), they displayed agency in that they complemented their training with self-study and research in their own time (cf. 4.5.3). Some teachers downloaded material from the internet to teach themselves, and teachers responsible for Religious Studies established an association to assist each other with the new syllabus. Teachers' agency subsequently emerged from the findings as a theme related to teachers' personal empowerment towards curriculum implementation. Since teachers are life-long learners, they regard it as important to take responsibility for the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum.

The notion of teacher agency and the fact that teachers do not allow insufficient training to deplete their agency, is positive and has the potential to contribute towards teachers' empowerment and by implication, towards the effective implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum. It can be accepted that teachers do not solely rely on the training provided by MOET. It is in this regard that it is suggested that spaces are created for teachers to organise subject associations where they can share ideas and confront similar challenges regarding the teaching of their respective subjects. Although it can be accepted that such associations as the Religious Studies association, might already exist, it is suggested that MOET takes on a more formal role in the organisation, liaise and support of subject associations. Subject associations could be organised in the districts and could meet on a regular basis. This would create the ideal space for teachers to share best practices, to deliberate subject-specific issues and to collectively work on challenges relating to a pedagogy that requires the facilitation of skills and values that stretches beyond the mere transmission of subject knowledge (cf. 3.3.5). By implication, subject associations could be advantageous for teachers to collectively position and frame their teaching within the policy framework provided by *CAP*. Associations can also invite experts in their fields to complement the training offered by MOET. In addition, subject associations could assist in inducting new teachers who have just joined the profession, and in assisting those teachers who have not had the opportunity to attend a traning workshop. Support from MOET can be strengthened by allocating

specific discussion time during the regular workshops on subject specific components, for feedback by subject associations. In this manner MOET could gain an understanding of the challenges experienced by teachers regarding the approaches and techniques of delivering their respective subject content. MOET in turn, could use such information to strengthen their workshops by including discussions on the challenges experienced on implementation level in the school context.

The comments and suggestions made on the perceived readiness of teachers to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum are premised on my understanding that teacher training is pivotal to the successful implementation of a newly adopted curriculum. As teachers must understand the policy framework in which the curriculum is grounded, it is suggested that in-depth training on the policy framework and concomitant guiding principles for implementation is offered on a regular basis. Established and new teachers must have the opportunity to attend these workshops as they are perceived as necessary. In addition, it is suggested that regular workshops should also include subject-specific training on teaching methodologies and content delivery. Teachers exhibit agency in empowering themselves to teach a new curriculum, and this quality should be strengthened to the benefit of curriculum implementation in general, and teachers' confidence regarding their own readiness, by creating the space during workshops to share best practices and deliberate common challenges.

5.3   IN REFLECTION

In this section I reflect on the strengths and the challenges of the study. While this was a study on a master's level, I worked with a limited scope. However, it is my contention that limitations due to the scope of a study on this level, provide opportunities for further and related research opportunities. I conclude this section by reflecting on the personal and academic growth that resulted from the undertaking of this study.

5.3.1 Strenghts and challenges

The study comes two years after the full implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum and as a result it sheds light on issues related to its implementation. Limited research

has been done to date on this topic due to the recency of implementation. I therefore regard the perspective and voice of the teachers involved in the implementation as a strength of this study. The study foregrounds how teachers perceive themselves as insufficiently prepared to teach towards the *LGCSE* and highlight how the one-day workshop provided by MOET played a contributing role in this perceived insufficiency. While this study can provide MOET with information on teachers' experience with curriculum implementation in the school context, it also reflects on the quality of training provided to teachers. If it takes note of this study, MOET can use the opportunity to reflect on issues relating to curriculum implementation, and to address shortcomings in teacher training as highlighted by the research participants.

Another strength of this study relates to the fact that it foregrounds information on the perceived absence of teachers' understanding of *CAP* as the policy framework informing the transformation of Lesotho education. This study highlights the relationship between the *LGCSE* curriculum and *CAP* as its underpinning policy framework, and provides important information that could be utilised by MOET towards the strengthening of curriculum implementation. MOET should not only take note of the perceived gap between *CAP* on paper and *CAP* in practice, but should reconsider the content of their training workshops.

During the undertaking of this study I encountered various challenges. The first of these was to obtain the relevant information on the new *LGCSE* curriculum. Almost no literature is available on this relatively new curriculum and I could not obtain the relevant documents from MOET. I was redirected numerous times to different individuals to assist me with documents. This was a very frustrating experience. Another challenge was with the timing of the focus group discussions and the interviews. This was problematic in the sense that they had to be fit in during the two weeks before the schools closed for the winter break. Those two weeks came at a particularly challenging time as the learners were writing the winter examinations and teachers were involved in the grading of papers. Although the appointments with the respective participants were made in advance, many teachers were not available due to their commitments in invigilation and marking. It was therefore not easy to assemble the focus groups at the two participating schools. I had to reschedule the focus group discussions in School A two days later than the initial arrangment, and in

School B, a week later. The rescheduling was because of the busy time at schools and my need to have their full attention. I also experienced that some of the participants were uncomfortable with the recording of the focus group discussions and the face-to-face interviews. In order to address their discomfort, I had to assure them that the information they provided would only be used for research purposes. In alignment with the written consent they gave, I once again reiterated that their identities would not be revealed as no personal information would be disclosed in the research report. I assured them that I would use numbers to refer to the different participants in the research report, and that no real names would be revealed.

5.3.2 Limitations and opportunities

Although my study closes the gap on the availability of literature on curriculum implementation on a very small scale, it opens possibilites for further research.

This study was confined to two schools only due to time and financial constraints. As a consequence of the limited scope of the study, I was not able to foreground trends within teachers' experiences regarding their own readiness to implement the new curriculum. Due to the scope of the study, I was only able to draw on similarities between the two schools. My study was conducted in two urban schools in Maseru and no suburban or rural schools were included. Schools in deep rural areas are often not easily accessible and they do not have the same opportunities of schools in urban areas and those within the vicinity of MOET. It is therefore quite possible that teachers' experiences in rural schools might be different from those in urban areas. Although the aim was not to generalise the findings to all teachers in Lesotho, an empirical study with a broader reach might yield interesting findings regarding trends in teachers' experiences. Also, my study was qualitiative in nature, but if coupled with a quantitative approach, the use of a survey can also be useful in involving more participants.

Although my study did not elaborate on the alignment between the curriculum aspects and the learning areas, it did foreground a lack of teachers' knowledge thereof. Further research could include the exploration of the manifestation of this alignment in teachers' classroom practices. A study on the extent to which the

expectations of *CAP* find realisation in classroom practices could be useful in reflecting on the extent to which MOET's vision for a transformed education system finds expression in classroom spaces.

5.3.3 Personal and scholarly growth

On a personal level, I realised my own deficiencies in terms of how I was implementing the *LGCSE* curriculum. I am one of the teachers who did not attend the one-day workshop that introduced the curriculum and as a result I also received insufficient information from my colleagues. It was interesting to see that my experience was not unique, but is shared by collegueas from other schools. My own lack of knowledge about *CAP* and how it informs curriculum implementation was reflective of the research participants' experience. In this regard, I realised that although we have to teach a new curriculum, the reason why my teaching style and perhaps also that of the participants have not really changed, might be attributed to a lack of knowledge about the policy framework. However, my perception about how I should teach the *LGCSE* curriculum changed after I started to work on this study as I gained more understanding of how *CAP* envisages curriculum and assessment. I subsequently started to reflect on my teaching and realised that I was still teaching in the same way as I was doing with the *COSC* curriculum. I am now more aware of the pedagogical shift and I try to frame my lessons within the integrated curriculum and a learner-centered approach as required by *CAP*. I frame my lessons in consideration with *CAP* as far as the curriculum aspects are concerned to equip the learners with the skills, values and attitudes that will make them rounded citizens who will be able to deal with the challenges of life. In general I am a better equipped teacher in terms of the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum than I was before I undertook the study.

As a scholar, I learned to be patient with a participant when conducting an interview. Although not having conducted interviews for research purposes before, I soon realised that I had to create a rapport with the participants so that they could feel at ease to share information. I also acquired the skill to probe in order to get information from those participants who were less vocal about their experiences. With regards to the focus group discussions, I learned that as a moderator I had to manage group

dynamics to ensure that the discussion remains focused on the topic. I also had to ensure that the participants engage in a discussion with one another so that they build on one anothers' ideas. Again, the study was an eye-opener as I gained insight into the teachers' perceptions about their training to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. In general, I have gained valuable information of the research process, and I have become more of a critical thinker in terms of providing support for the statements I make.

5.4   CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Framed within a Constructivst paradigm, this study was aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions of their own readiness to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum. As such, the focus of this chapter was to comment on my main reseach question and to make suggestions based on the research findings, albeit informed by the literature review and document analysis. However, in order to get to the point where I could gain a better understanding of the main research question, I first had to address several subsidiary questions. The answer to my first research question - *Why did* Lesotho shift from using the *Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate Curriculum to Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*? - was informed by a literature review and a complementary document analysis. By means of a literature review, the historical context of Lesotho education was foregrounded with specific reference to Lesotho's journey in shifting from one curriculum to another. The second research question - *What are the key differences between the curricula for the Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate and the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education?* – was important because it enabled a comparison between the *COSC* and the *LGCSE* curricula. A document analysis of the two main documents that respectively inform the *COSC* and the *LGCSE* curricula highlighted the different expectations for curriculum implementation. A brief comparison of selected syllabi also foregrounded smilarities and key differences which hold certain implications for teachers teaching Mathematics, Physical Science and Religious Studies. The third question - *What are the key differences between the curricula for the Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate and the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education?* – served as the empirical part of the study. The data revealed that in

general, the participants felt that their training of a one-day workshop was insufficient in adequately preparing them to implement the *LGCSE* curriculum.

This study highlights that there is a need to offer training workshops on a more regular basis. In particular, the study foregrounds the lack of understanding of the policy framework and the subsequent guiding principles of the curriculum, and teachers' need to be trained in subject-specific content and teaching methodologies. MOET should take note that the one-day workshops are perceived as insufficient in preparing teachers for curriculum implementation. In recognition of Lesotho's long journey in localising her O' level curriculum, it becomes imperative that cognisance is taken of teachers' experiences and challenges with the implementation of the *LGCSE* curriculum. As the latter is aimed at the transformation of Lesotho education towards a more holistic education aligned with the needs of the Basotho, MOET has an obligation to assist teachers in successful curiculum implementation. One way of doing this is by means of more regular workshops, offered on a rotation basis, which would include aspects related to the policy framework, the guiding principles for curriculum implementation, subject-specific content and methodologies, and support for teacher agency. It is my contention that when teachers are equipped to frame their teaching within a learner-centred approach, they will be able to assist learners to acquire the necessary skills and the attitudes to deal with everyday life challenges.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE, UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS·UV
EDUCATION
OPVOEDKUNDE

Faculty of Education

10-Jun-2018

Dear **Mr Johnson Letsie**

Ethics Clearance: **THE LESOTHO GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (2013): TEACHERS' READINESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION.**

Principal Investigator: **Mr Johnson Letsie**

Department: **School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)**

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to you application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2018/0275**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Prof. MM Mokhele Makgalwa
Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee
Office of the Dean: Education
T: +27 (0)51 401 3777| F: +27 (0)86 546 1113 | E: MokheleML@ufs.ac.za
Winkie Direko Building | P.O. Box/Posbus 339 | Bloemfontein 9300 | South Africa
www.ufs.ac.za

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION - DISTRICT EDUCATION MANAGER

Approved

THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MASERU DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE
P.O. BOX 47.   MASERU 100.
28810000/1 / 22 322 755

09/07/2018

The Principal

_____

Maseru 100

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: RESEARCH

**"The Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education
(2013) Teachers Readiness for Implementation"**

Mr. Johnson Letsie is a student who is conducting a research on
the above stated topic. He therefore wishes to carry out a research
at Lesotho Secondary Schools (Maseru City).

You are kindly requested to provide him with the information that
he may require.

Thanking you in advance for your usual support.

Yours Faithfully

MASERU DISTRICT
EDUCATION OFFICE

0 9 JUL 2018

P.O. BOX 47, MASERU - LESOTHO
TEL.: 22322755/22313709

LEPEKOLA RALIBAKHA (MR)
DISTIRCT EDUCATION MANAGER - MASERU

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

University of the Free State

Informed Consent Form

Research title: The *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* (2013): Teachers' readiness for implementation

Supervisor: Dr A le Roux.

Student names: Johnson MapohoLetsie

Student number: 2002053490

Contacts particulars: +26663206135 or johnsonletsie@yahoo.com.

I_____the participant and undersigned (Id Number_____address_____) confirm herewith that Mr Johnson Letsiehas asked for my consent to participate in this studyon the perceptions of Lesotho teachers regarding their readiness to teach for the LGCSE. He has explained the nature, procedure, the lack of material benefits and the anticipated inconvenience of participation in this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without penalty or having to explain my reasons for doing so.

I am aware of and agree to the audio recording that will be made during the focus group discussion and the semi-structured interview. I am also aware of and agree to the transcriptions that will be done after the focus group discussion and the interview. I understand that the information provided by me will be treated as confidential. In addition, I understand that the presentation of the findings of this study, whether it be in the research report, published in a journal and/or used in conference proceedings, will be done in such a manner that no school or individual will be identifiable.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions during the information session and I hereby voluntarily agree to participate in the focus group discussion and the interview conducted by Mr Letsie for the purpose of this study. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Signature_____Date_____

Full name of researcher_____

Signature _____Date_____

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Schedules for the focus group discussion and the interviews

Title: The *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education* (2013): Teachers' readiness for Implementation

Research question: To what extent have teachers been prepared to implement the *Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education*?

The questions below serve as a rough guide for the focus group discussion for the initial exploration of the participants' shared sense-making regarding the implementation of the LGCSE. As the interview questions will be informed by the information transpired from the focus group discussion, the interview schedule serves as a rough guide and will remain open for change and refinement. Given the flexible nature of a semi-structured interviews, the schedule will not necessary be followed in the specific order as presented below. Rather, I will remain open throughout the entire data gathering process to any relevant information that might emerging during the focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews.

Schedule for the focus group discussion

1a   You all were involved in the teaching for both COSC and LGCSE, do you think it was necessary for Lesotho to shift from COSC to LGCSE? Explain.

2a   Given your involvement and experience, what would say is the biggest difference in teaching towards these examinations?

3a   How were you as teachers prepared to teach towards the LGSCE? Explain.

4a   Do you think you were adequately prepared to teach towards the LGCSE?

5a   Are you familiar with the CAP document and how do you understand the role of this document within the bigger context of the LGSCE?

6a   What is your understanding of a learner-centred approach to teaching and how do you implement it in your teaching?

7a   How do you incorporate the curriculum aspects in your subjects?

8a   What is your understanding of the integrated curriculum?

9a   How you empowered to infuse learners' everyday experiences in your teaching by integrating the content in the syllabus of your subject with both school and community life?

10a   According to CAP, teachers are expected to integrate the core competencies in their subjects. Do you find it possible to integrate the core competencies in your subject?

11a   What challenges have you experienced with the shift from COSC to LGCSE, specifically with regard to your teaching towards the LGCSE?

12a   What do you think should be done to improve the implementation of the LGCSE?

Interview schedule

1b   Given your experience with both COSC and LGCSE, what would you say are the differences between the two respective curricula?

2b   How did you experience the shift from the COSC curriculum to the LGCSE curriculum with regards to your specific subject?

3b   Did you receive any training with regards to teaching for the new curriculum? Explain.

4b   In addition to any official training, how did you prepare yourself to teach your subject since the inception of LGCSE?

5b   Do you think the training you underwent sufficiently prepared you to implement the changes in your subject?

6b   Since implementation is a process, do you receive any support from MOET and your school for the successful teaching of your subject?

7b   What is your understanding of the integrated curriculum?

8b   Do you think you have been sufficiently prepared to frame your teaching within an integrated curriculum approach and to integrate your teaching with the various curriculum aspects? Explain.

9b   According to CAP, teaching methods should be learner-centred based more on learners' own activities. How were to you prepared to implement learner-centred methods in your subject?

10b   What challenges have you experienced with teaching for the LGSCE curriculum?

11b   What do you think can be done to improve the implementation of LGCSE?

12b   Since the introduction of LGCSE, what have you observed about the performance of the learners in your subject in comparison to the previous performance in COSC?

13b   As far as your subject is concerned, do you think that it addresses the educational needs of Basotho?

APPENDIX E: LANGUAGE EDITING

To whom it may concern

This is to state that the dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for theMasters in Education degree by Johnson Mapoho Letsie titled **The Lesotho** *General Certificate of Secondary Education* **(2013): teachers' readiness for implementation** has been language edited by me, according to the tenets of academic discourse.

Annamarie du Preez

B.Bibl.; B.A. Hons. (English)

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