CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE MLA PROJECT

1.1 Introduction
This survey was the implementation of several pilot studies that were undertaken during the past year. The aim of this project is to generate indicators for use in the education system. A system based on appropriate data and indicators can:

- indicate the strengths and weaknesses of a schooling system;
- serve as a baseline to measure future achievements;
- assist in the assessment of provincial, district and school level performances;
- inform policy evaluation and development.

Two projects were implemented simultaneously, namely the Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) and the Education for All.

This report must be seen as a statistical analysis of the results of the MLA project and possible impact of conditions in education in South Africa.

1.2 Organisation of the Report

Chapter 2 of this report will give the background on the measuring instruments and the methodology used for data collection and computation of the results. Chapter 3 will give the results of the three tasks, namely the literacy, numeracy and life skills tasks on provincial as well as national level.

In Chapter 4, the context and socio-economic background will be given according to information captured from the questionnaires completed by learners, educators, principals and parents.

Chapter 5 will give a look at the different inputs into education. Chapter 6 discusses the processes taking place in education. Aspects that will feature are the participation of parents in school activities, the contributions of learners and educators, the management role of the principal and school governance.
CHAPTER 2
MONITORING LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT

2.1 Measuring Instruments
For the purpose of collecting data for this project, the following measuring instruments were developed:

2.1.1 Numeracy, Literacy and Life skills tasks.
The spade work for these instruments was done in Harare during 1998 where a number of Southern African countries have developed measuring instruments according to guidelines supplied by UNESCO. These instruments were piloted in a number of schools in Southern African countries and evaluated by researchers of the HSRC (Human Sciences Research Council). The final measuring instruments for each discipline were then compiled (using the original two instruments) and contextualised for the South African environment.

2.1.2 The principal, educator and learner questionnaires
These necessary instruments were the final products of previously tested questionnaires. They were constructed in such a way that the participant could choose from a number of possible answers, rather than to formulate his own answer.

2.2 Sampling procedures
For the purpose of this project, 400 schools have been involved. From each school 30 Grade 4 learners, their parents, the principal and their educator took part in the survey. These schools were selected in the following way:

In selecting the schools in the 9 provinces, the following method to find the sample was followed:
- All the schools in the RSA that have Grade 4 were considered.
- All the schools that do not have at least 30 learners in Grade 4 were eliminated.
- The total number of schools to be selected from, was then calculated by province.
- The 400 schools to be selected were divided proportionally amongst the provinces according to the number of schools in each province.
- The identified schools were arranged alphabetically according to educational region, educational district and name of school. To select the appropriate number for each province, every nth school was selected where n = total number of schools in province / number of schools to be surveyed.
- Alternative schools were proportionally selected as "reserve" schools should the schools selected not be accessible.

Eighty-four schools in Kwazulu-Natal were selected according to the above sampling method.

To limit the interruptions at the schools to a minimum, it was decided by provincial co-ordinators that a specific Grade 4 class in a school would be selected at random on condition that the class was not selected according to the abilities of the learners. In cases where there were more than 30 learners in a class, they were selected by arranging their names alphabetically, choosing every second name until 30 names had been selected. If a class did not have 30 learners, additional learners from other Grade 4 classes had to be selected randomly.

2.3 Training of administrators
Administrators executed the data collecting process. A core team of administrators from eight provinces was trained during a two-day workshop in Pretoria, while the administrators of the Western Cape were trained in a one-day workshop. For the purpose of this training, a manual was prepared by the research agency and refined in the workshops with contributions from the participants of the workshops.

The team of core administrators who attended the workshops cascaded the training to the other administrators in the provinces.

Data collection took place during the first two weeks of August 1999.
2.4 Data-capturing and processing

The data of this exercise were captured on a prepared Excel worksheet. Quality control of the data was done in two ways: Numbers that had to be entered in most cases ranged from 1 to 4. Any response larger than 4 (or in some cases 6) could be detected immediately. Apart from this check, 20% of the questionnaires were randomly selected and checked against the entered data.

The data were processed and the results given as percentages in tabular form. Some calculations were done by using Microsoft Access.

2.5 Final numbers

The final number of participants for the three tasks is given in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Unidentified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td>1017</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table indicates the number of questionnaires that were completed by the different target groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KZN</td>
<td>2233</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (RSA)</td>
<td>10201</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>10087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Technical notes

The different tasks as well as the questionnaires for the parents were translated in all eleven official languages to facilitate all the interviewees. The questionnaires for the educators, principals and learners were only in English. In the training sessions and in the training manual it was emphasised that assistance should be rendered to learners to complete the questionnaire. Comments by the administrators indicate that this procedure took more than the anticipated time and that learners became tired while completing the questionnaire.

According to Table 2.1 it becomes evident that less than the original number of the learners completed the tasks. Reasons for this decreased sample are the following:
- All the completed instruments were not returned for capturing;
- Not all the grade 4 classes had 30 learners;
- Some of the learners were absent on the second day;
- Some of the measuring instruments were not copied correctly and were rejected for the purpose of the tasks;
- Identification of some completed measuring instruments was lacking and could not be processed;
- A number of literacy tasks were rejected because they were all completed in exactly the same way;
- Questionnaires, especially those of learners in which the responses were marked according to a pattern, were rejected;
• A number of questionnaires from parents were not completed because they could not read or write and did not have assistance to complete the questionnaire.

It is the belief of the researcher that, although not all the measuring instruments could be processed, the results are a good reflection of the survey. A reason for this can be found in the fact that after 75% of the data was captured; the tendency and average mark did not change dramatically.

2.7 Conclusion

Despite the fact that not all the measuring instruments could be processed and that language could have played a role in the answering of the questions, there is evidence in the comments from the administrators that the survey was a success.

In the next chapter the results of the three tasks will be given and discussed.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS OF THE MLA TASKS

1. Introduction
The three tasks in this survey include literacy, numeracy and life skills exercises. In compiling the measuring instruments for these tasks, different domains were identified and questions were developed accordingly and pilot tested.

2. MLA tasks
1. Literacy task
The literacy task consists of thirty items focussed on assessing competencies in the following domains: word recognition, understanding of detail content, writing skills, spelling and grammar, retrieving information and providing information.

3.2.2 Numeracy task
The numeracy task intends to focus on four domains: numeracy and numeration, measurement, geometry of shapes and everyday statistics. In the numeracy and numeration domain items were included to see if learners can count, write numbers in words and figures, do the four operations, reform operations to solve word problems, recognise fractions and decimals. In the measurement domain questions were put on the reading on a scale, reading time and a calendar, estimating length, knowing the units of measurement. The recognition of figures and shapes and their elements and line symmetry were included in the geometry of shapes domain. To be competent in everyday statistics, the collecting and reading of data from tables and graphs is a requirement.

3.2.3 Life skills
The life skills task was designed to assess basic competencies in five (5) domains:
• Health, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene. The items in this domain aim at measuring children's awareness and knowledge of basic hygiene, nutrition and sanitation issues affecting their general health.
• Civic sense, protection of the environment, community development. The items in this domain are designed to test children's knowledge and experiences of social and natural environment. The items also seek to find out whether children have been empowered to act on some issues that affect their daily lives.
• Pre-vocational skills. These skills tested the children's possession of those pre-vocational skills, knowledge and background experiences that are essential to be equipped for the world of work.
• HIV / AIDS. Items in this domain were targeted at:
  • Spread of HIV/AIDS: tapping the ability of children to think critically, to make decisions and to solve problems in situations which otherwise result in the contracting of HIV/AIDS.
  • Learners' perceiving of dangerous situations that could lead to contracting HIV/AIDS.
  • Learners' knowledge of caring for HIV/AIDS infected persons.
• Science and technology. Basic skills in science and technology are necessary for Grade 4 children to enable them to make informed decisions. The acquisition of such skills will result in increased productivity of basic necessities. The test items were designed to assess the extent to which children have acquired and can use basic science and technology skills.

1. outcomes of the mla tasks
1. Literacy Task
The largest group of Grade 4 learners in Kwazulu-Natal (42,17%) obtained scores for the literacy task that range between 25 and 50 per cent (see Figure 3.1). A relatively small proportion of learners demonstrated a high level of competency in the literacy task, with 19,84% of learners obtaining 75 per cent or higher. This percentage is higher than the national percentage for learners (12,82%) scoring 75% and higher. Nearly twelve per cent (11,83) of the learners achieved very low levels of performance (i.e., scoring less than 25 per cent). On average, learners obtained 51,40% in the literacy task. (Indicated by í on the columns.)

There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, according to Figure 3.1. On average, girls outperformed the boys by less than 1%. The performance of Kwazulu-Natal learners in the Literacy task is higher than the national mean (compare Table 3.1). At national level boys had an average score of 47,8% and girls 49,4% in the literacy task.
3.3.2 Numeracy task
Numeracy level is another indicator of learning achievement. In the numeracy assessment almost half of the learners obtained scores between 25 and 50 per cent, while more than 40 per cent scored below 25 per cent. 9.54 per cent of the boys and 8.69 per cent of the girls obtained scores between 50 and 75 per cent. The average mark obtained in the province as well as the national mark is lower than the performance in the Literacy task (compare Tables 3.1 and 3.3). The average marks of the boys and girls are almost the same. A few learners in Kwazulu-Natal could score above 75%, an indication that the level of the task can be matched. At national level boys had an average score of 30.1% and girls 30.2% in the numeracy task.

3.3.3 Life Skills tasks
About 45 per cent (44.42%) obtained scores that are between 25 and 50 per cent for the life skills task, while a small proportion (7.93%) obtained a score of 75 per cent or more. The national average of 47.1 per cent is lower than the provincial average (Table 3.4). The level of performance of Kwazulu-Natal Grade 4 learners in the life skills task (50.5%) is slightly lower than that of the literacy task (51.4% - Table 3.1), both being significantly higher than the performance in the numeracy task (31 per cent - Table 3.3). At national level boys had an average score of 46.9% and girls 47.2% in the life skills task.

3.4 Outcomes of the mla task domains

3.4.1 Literacy task domains

Table 3.1 gives the national results for the literacy task and also a breakdown into the different identified domains. In the row starting with literacy (total), the results of all learners that completed the literacy task were taken into account and given a mean (average) score of 48.1%. The standard deviation (S.D.) of 21% indicates the range of scores of the individual learners. (Almost 66% of the scores of the learners will fall in a range of 42%, double the SD.) Individual learners achieve the maximum and minimum scores in this row. The results for the different domains of the tasks are, for a group of questions, addressing that domain and not the scores of individual learners, e.g. the mean score for all the questions assessing word recognition is 67.7%. The maximum score (84.6%) indicates the average result for a question from that domain (word recognition) that was answered the best. The minimum score (56.4%) represents the average score for a question in that domain that was answered the poorest.

Table 3.1: Analysis of the literacy task at national level and in KwaZulu-Natal according to the different domains, MLA 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Analysis</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result of Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Number of cases (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competencies and domain</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy (Total)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word recognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling and grammar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The two domains of the literacy task in which all learners nationally performed the best, were word recognition (67.7%) and providing information (65.5%) while performances in writing skills were lacking behind, according to Table 3.1. In the second part of the table the scores of the literacy task of Kwazulu-Natal are given. The sample from Kwazulu-Natal represents 8.6 per cent of the total sample. There is a wide spread of scores (SD = 23.4) with a maximum of 100 per cent and a minimum of 3.3%. This high score indicates that there are learners that can perform at the level set in the literacy task. The domains that answered the best by learners in Kwazulu-Natal were word recognition (69.5%) and providing of information (64.4%), while writing skills were lacking behind. This tendency is also in accordance with the national one.

The following table gives the location of the surveyed schools in Kwazulu-Natal. The performance will also be compared with these locations.

**Table 3.2: Location of participating schools in KWAZULU-NATAL, MLA 1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Remote Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>19.74</td>
<td>14.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>59.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nationally, learners in urban school performed the best in all the different tasks. They are followed by semi-urban, rural and remote rural schools. Urban schools in Kwazulu-Natal also performed the best in the literacy task, followed by semi-urban and remote rural schools.
### 3.4.2 Numeracy task domains

Table 3.3 reflects the results of the numeracy task at national and provincial level according to the different domains. There is, unlike the literacy task, not a big difference between the average performances of the different domains nationally and provincially. Because of the low overall average (30%) for this task, there is also not a large variation in the scores of the different domains. The highest standard deviation is in the geometry of shapes domain, indicating that a number of learners, on the one hand, obtained good scores while a number, on the other hand, did not perform well.

At provincial level the domain on geometry/shapes shows the highest score followed by number and numeration and measurement. Everyday statistics scored the lowest in Kwazulu-Natal. The performance in the number and numeration domain can influence performances in the other domains, because if the four arithmetic operations are not executed well, it can hamper calculations in the other domains.

#### Table 3.3: Analysis of the numeracy task at national level and in Kwazulu-Natal according to the different domains, MLA 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Analysis</th>
<th>Descriptive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Analysis</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result of Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies and domain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy (Total)</strong></td>
<td>Number of cases (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and numeration</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>28,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry/shapes</td>
<td>32,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday stats</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kwazulu-Natal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result of Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies and domain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy (Total)</strong></td>
<td>Number of cases (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and numeration</td>
<td>21,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>30,9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this province the urban schools performed better than semi-urban schools with the remote rural schools in the third spot.

### 3.4.3 Life skills domains

The national performance of learners in the five domains of the life skills task reflects fairly large differences. The science and technology domain has the lowest average and the pre-vocational skills the highest. The health and nutrition domain shows the largest variation. Learners answered less than 50% of the questions on HIV/AIDS correctly. This lack of knowledge of some of the learners can have a permanent influence on their health; therefore multi-sectoral interventions should be welcomed.

Table 3.4: Analysis of the LIFE SKILLS task at national level and in Kwazulu-Natal according to the different domains, MLA 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies and domain</th>
<th>Result of Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of cases (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Skills (Total)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and nutrition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic sense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-vocational skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kwazulu-Natal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result of Analysis</th>
<th>Number of cases (%)</th>
<th>Mean Score (%)</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Max (%)</th>
<th>Min (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Analysis</th>
<th>Descriptive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Analysis</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result of Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 3.5:** Performance in the NUMERACY task according to the location of schools in KWAZULU-NATAL, MLA 1999
Learners in Kwazulu-Natal performed the best in the pre-vocational skills (70%) and civic sense (55%) domain. The highest score for the HIV/AIDS domain is less than 60%, indicating that learners are not very knowledgeable about the disease. Kwazulu-Natal's highest score is, however, higher than the national one. The relatively low S.D. and a highest score of less than 60% indicate that most of the learners could answer only a limited number of questions on HIV/AIDS matters correctly. According to Figure 3.6 urban schools achieved the best results in life skills, followed closely by semi-urban and then remote rural schools. The urban schools performed the best in all three the tasks.

3.5 Conclusion

Various reasons can be suggested for the low scores in all the above mentioned tasks. Factors that could have played a role in the performance of learners are the socio-economic background of the learners, education levels of the parent, the input from the department of education, teaching practices, the assessment of learners, completion of the curriculum, school management, communication and the morale and attitude of educators. In the next two chapters a more detailed analysis will be made of such conditions in the different provinces.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

4.1 Introduction

In a previous report on the Quality Assurance Indicator Project, several frameworks for the development of indicators for an education system were proposed. All frameworks show some broad commonalities that can
be described as context-, input-, process- and output-indicators. A model whereby the indicators can be calculated can be seen in Annexure A.

4.2 Context

The context in which education takes place, is reflected in the first 24 tables in Annexure B where the figures are expressed as percentages. The context will be handled under the following headings:

4.2.1 Family background

To gain information on the family background, one parent per learner (of the selected classes) had to complete a parent questionnaire. The responses reflecting the family background of the learners, as captured in the first 11 tables, show the same trends in all the provinces and the comments will be on all the provinces in general, except where there are differences.

According to the responses in Table B1 the majority of the interviewees of the parents’ questionnaire were the mothers of the learners. Although the majority of the interviewees were married, a substantial percentage indicated that they were single (Table B2). Their ages show a fairly normal distribution over the ages 20 years to over 51, with the peak at ages between 31 and 40 years (Table B3).

The number of people living in the same house as the learner varied. Up to 8 or more people were living in the same house. In KwaZulu-Natal, 40% of the households indicated between 4 and 6 people living in the same house, while up to 41% indicated 8 and more people. This figure for 8 or more people is the highest of all the provinces. Usually, in houses where 8 or more people live, learners find it difficult to get space to study.

The interviewees indicated that only about 61% of the fathers and about 45% of the mothers were working, with only the Eastern Cape having a higher unemployment rate. Census data of 1996 (Fig 4.1) also indicate a high unemployment rate. The employment rate of fathers as well as that of mothers gives an indication that income in most of the households might be very low. A substantial number of households reported that one or more of the children in the household were also working (Table B7).

In nearly 80% of households in KwaZulu-Natal, the home language is always spoken at home. The majority of households (41%) indicated that they sometimes use English, and in 32% of the cases not at all (Table B8). This could have an effect on the scores in the literacy tasks, as well as on the learners’ general understanding of the questions in the questionnaire.

In Figure 4.1: Average unemployment rate per province, Census 1996, the unemployment rate ranges from 14.8% in the Western Cape to 49.4% in Eastern Cape. The unemployment rate is highest in the Eastern Cape, followed by the Northern Province. The other provinces have lower unemployment rates, with the Western Cape having the lowest rate among the provinces.
Responses as to the education levels of both the father and mother indicated that, on average, up to 40% of the parents did not complete primary education and a large portion could be found to be illiterate. This issue should be addressed, as it is one of the priorities on the program of the new Minister of Education.

Similar figures for the literacy rates for the different provinces were calculated in the 1996 census as can be seen in Figure 4.2. As the majority of interviewed parents fell in the age group older than 24, the average literacy rate for parents in KwaZulu-Natal is 63%. In some households parents might thus not be able to help their children with their schoolwork, as they had not completed primary education. This also explains why some parents could not complete the questionnaire on their own. Urban responses indicated a higher percentage of higher qualified parents.

4.2.2 Household features

The type of house in which the parents/guardians of pupils live, shows a large variation. In KwaZulu-Natal slightly more than half (51.69%) of the participating parents lived in huts/informal dwellings (Table B12), with slightly more than 40% living in permanent or brick houses. Up to 67% of the respondents indicated that they owned the house they were living in (Table B13). The same household feature is evident if the total population is taken into account, as can be seen in Figure 4.3.

According to this survey learners indicated that radios were available in more than 90% of the households, followed by a TV (70%). This tendency was confirmed by the parents but with a slightly lower average. Both
these media can be used effectively to further education goals. Telephones (or cell phones) were available in nearly 80% of the investigated cases (Tables B14 and B16).

In KwaZulu-Natal 40% of the households had piped water, which is below the national average. Only about 46% of the inhabitants of this province had electricity, which is also slightly less than the national average. Almost the same percentage of the interviewed parents indicated that they had electricity (Table B15). This might be considered as an impeding factor to learner performance in particular and education in general in KwaZulu-Natal as learners might find it difficult to study at night.

Possessions of the guardians/parents as indicated varied substantially. Nearly thirty per cent (30%) of the respondents in this province indicated that they owned a motor vehicle. A motorbike was low on the list, while 26% indicated they owned a bicycle. Slightly more than 40% owned land, which is more than the national average, while up to 49% of the respondents indicated that they owned livestock, which is also well above the national average (Table B17).

Salaries, wages or pension (70% of the responses) were the most common source of income, which is 10% more than the national average. This was followed by respondents having their own businesses (17%) and then by public support (15%) (Table B18).

From the above findings it is clear that a substantial portion of the respondents had no access to many of the mentioned resources. Transport could be a problem, unless public transport is available. The lack of availability of water and electricity to many of the households, as well as the overcrowding of houses, can be limiting factors for learning.
4.2.3 Newspapers and books at home

Nearly 80% of the interviewed learners indicated that their parents bought newspapers or magazines, while parents indicated the frequency was not very high – 13% daily and 23% weekly. A relatively low percentage of households had access to books. About 51% of the respondents indicated access to less than 10 books in total, while only a quarter of the parents were members of a library service. These percentages match that of the national averages. Slightly less than 60% of the learners were not members of a library (Tables B19-B23).

A possible outcome of this situation might be that learners who have a high access to the radio and TV but not to reading materials, cannot spell correctly. This was found to be the case in the literacy tasks where the learners wrote words phonetically. As the literacy task was put in English, and the respondents indicated that English was not used frequently, this could have influenced the results of this task.

4.2.4 Poverty of the community

Of the responding principals, 71% indicated that the poverty of the community has influenced the teaching quite a lot or to a great extent, while 17% indicated a little (Table B24). From Figure 4.6 it is clear that the per capita income for KwaZulu-Natal is well below the national average, and the second lowest of all the provinces. This could effect the expenditure on education by parents to a large extent. See also comments on family income under Family background (4.2.1).

![Figure 4.6: Per capita income (in Rands) per province, Census 1996](image)

4.3 Conclusion

When looking at the context and socio-demographic background of the interviewed learners (as revealed in the completed questionnaires), many factors that are not conducive for learning come to the fore. Factors that might limit learning are: parents with incomplete primary education, the low rate of access to books at home as well as at libraries, the overcrowding of some houses, the low income of some of the parents, the low availability of electricity and the high unemployment rate. The readily availability of radios and television sets can, on the other hand, be factors that promote learning.
CHAPTER 5

INPUTS INTO EDUCATION

1. **Introduction**

Inputs into education can be seen as the provision that is made before education can take place or to make it possible to take place. The provincial government plays an important role in supplying human, financial and physical resources.

5.2 **Educator characteristics**

From Table B25 can be seen that nearly 82% of the educators that were teaching Grade 4 learners, were females. The age of the majority of the educators ranged from 21 years to 50 years. The largest age group was 31 to 40 years (Table B26).

In KwaZulu-Natal 35% of the interviewed teachers indicated that they had completed primary education, 3% completed secondary education and 59% had completed between 2 and 4 or more years post secondary education (Table B27). The professional qualifications ranged from teacher’s certificate (25 %), teacher’s diploma (57 %) and other one or two year’s training (Table B28).

Officially educators are considered unqualified if they have a REQV 10 qualification, under-qualified if they have a REQV 11 or 12 qualification and appropriately qualified if their qualification falls within the REQV 13-17 range. According to these qualification structures, the qualifications of primary school educators in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa are given in the next table. From the table it is evident that two thirds of KwaZulu-Natal’s educators are thus appropriately qualified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1: Percentage distribution of primary school educators according to qualification level and province, 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Department of Education, 1997 EMIS

According to this table and also Tables B27 and B28, it becomes evident that quite a number of educators are considered un- or underqualified.

Data on the teaching experience of educators reveal that most of them were fairly well experienced, as more than 45% of the interviewed educators had more than ten years' teaching experience (Table B29). A small percentage of educators were teaching Grade 4 for less than two years. There was little mobility found amongst the interviewed educators, as many have been teaching for more than two or even 10 and more years at the same school, and the others between two and nine years.

In KwaZulu-Natal nearly 51% of the educators indicated that they used a combination of languages, while 46% used only English and a very small percentage only their home language as medium of instruction (Table B30). Comments by the administrators of this project revealed that, in a number of cases, the learners experienced trouble in completing the questionnaires that were printed in English only.

According to Table B32, most of the educators indicated that they always (38%) or sometimes (42%) attended external in-service training programmes. 11% rarely attended such courses and 8% never. The majority indicated that they did not receive training in OBE (Table B33).

5.2.1 **Summary**

From the above profile of the educators it becomes clear that

- they were quite experienced;
- 34% of the educators were un- or underqualified;
- they were teaching in a combination of languages;
• up to 80% attended INSET courses either always or sometimes;
• the majority of them did not receive any training in OBE.

5.3 Inspection and appraisal of educators

The majority of educators (70%) in KwaZulu-Natal indicated that they had not been appraised (Table B34). According to Table B35, almost 95% of the educators indicated that they were not appraised during the last two years or that they have never been appraised. In 54% of the schools a system of appraisal had been implemented (Table B38). In the majority of schools (on average 65%) no disciplinary procedures against staff members with poor performance were instituted (Table B39).

In answering the question on the number and the purposes of the visits of departmental officials, a substantial number of principals indicated that they had very few (if any) visits for inspection or to assess educators from the departmental officials during 1998 (Table B37). The main purpose of the visits was to provide guidance to educators and to provide guidance and support to the principal and to discuss teaching. Forty seven per cent of the schools had visits during the year of the survey, while 17% had visits during the previous year. (Table B36) Responses as to visits by departmental officials in KwaZulu-Natal were, to a large extent, much the same as the national averages.

5.3.1 Summary

In this section the input from educators and departmental officials towards education was determined. A wide variety of responses were received. Although a system of appraisal had been implemented at schools, the majority of educators had not been appraised. Since a system of appraisal was implemented, it is essential that visits to schools by departmental officials should be aimed at discussing teaching and giving guidance to educators and principals.

5.4 Central and regional support

5.4.1 Textbooks

According to Table B40, the majority of learners indicated that
• they had books for every subject (64%)
• they understood the books (75%)
• writing books and pencils were available (93%).

According to Table B41 there was a shortage of reading book, numeracy and General Study guides for educators. English Reading book guides were available in 69% of the cases.
The availability of teaching guides for numeracy had direct influence on learners’ performance in KwaZulu-Natal, as illustrated in Figure 5.1. This is in accordance with the provinces that had a lower than average score for the numeracy. In provinces with above average scores the general trend is that the availability of teaching guides for numeracy contributes to better scores.

According to Table B42, the majority of schools reported that they need between 20 and 80 (or more) text books for Numeracy, Reading, English Reading and General Studies. The greatest need seems to be for reading books (both sections), as not many schools had enough books.

### 5.4.2 Summary

The issue of text book-provision is more complicated than has been revealed in this survey. A need for books has been expressed and this need has not been satisfied. Other factors that should be taken into account are whether
- the books were ordered on time, as some of the educators did not respond to all the questions
- there were books available (to be delivered)
- resources were available to buy books
- books with appropriate content were available.

The effect of the shortage of books will be handled in a later section.

### 5.5 Learner characteristics
The age of the majority of learners in Grade 4 ranged from 9 to 13 years. Learners of age 10 years were the highest group where 15% learners were boys and 13% of the learners were girls. When all Grade 4 classes were categorised according to gender, non-repeaters (first year in Grade 4), and repeaters (more than 1 year in Grade 4), more boys were found to be repeaters than girls are. On average, 7% of the Grade 4 enrolments were repeaters. Approximately 5% of all learners had special needs (Table B49).

The next three figures show the correlation between the performances of learners in the three tasks and their age.

From Figure 5.4 it is clear that the 9 and 10 year olds were performing better in the literacy task than the other age groups, while the few 8 year olds are in the third spot. Only a few learners are eight years old in Grade 4 and their performance cannot be seen as a trend.
In the numeracy task, 9 year olds also put up the best performance, followed by 10, 11 year and 8 year olds. The differences in the performances of the different age groups are not so large as in the case of the literacy, but the low overall average will influence the differences.

Although the overall average of the life skills task is almost the same as that of literacy, the differences in performances by the different age groups is smaller than those of literacy. Here it is the 9-year-olds that performed the best, followed by the 10, 8 and 11 year age group (Figure 5.6).

Nationally in all three tasks the 9 year olds were performing better than the other groups. The performance of the 12 and 13 year olds was lacking behind. This group, who might be repeaters, might have no interest in their work or not able to master the work. In KwaZulu-Natal 9 year olds performed the best in all three the tasks.

According to Table B45, approximately 16% of the Grade 4 classes had more than one grade in the same classroom. The learner-classroom ratio in a third of the interviewed schools is between 20 and 39, while more than 45% had learner-classroom ratio between 40 and 59 and as many as 18% a ratio of more than 60. Such ratios could definitely not be conducive to teaching and learning.
In this province, responses by learners and principals on the average distance to school for learners differed to some extent. Principals indicated that 20% of the learners lived 1 to 3 km from the school, while the learners themselves indicated that about 63% stayed between 1 and 2 km from the school. According to the learners, more than 70% of them walked to school. (Tables B50, B51 and B52).

The majority of Grade 4 learners in KwaZulu-Natal indicated that they stayed with both parents or their fathers during the school week (Table B54). Very few indicated staying with relatives or family. All the principals responded that their schools had day learners only (Table B55).

Nearly 90% of the learners indicated that they had a meal before school, and 90% had a meal after school. Less than one percentage of learners indicated that they did not have a meal on that day (Table B56).

Responses on the activities of learners after school showed that a majority (on average 65%) is looking after younger brothers or sisters regularly or sometimes. The majority also indicated that they were helping their mothers regularly or sometimes (85%), with an average of 63% helping their fathers regularly or sometimes (Table B57).
According to Table B58, 62% of the learners attended pre-school classes.

A substantial number of the learners indicated that they strongly agreed on the following issues (Table 61):

- Enjoying school (79%)
- Feel secure in school (71%)
- Educators are interested in their work (68%)
- Learning and teaching are important for educators (72%)
- Educator inspires learners (74%)
- School has a nice atmosphere (65%)
- Learners enjoy learning at school (77%) and work hard (62%)
- Learners like the educator (78%)
- Learners learn a lot at school (74%)
- Learners have friends at school (71%)
- Educators tell parents about progress (61%)

On the statement whether learners like school, 38% strongly disagreed and 39% strongly agreed.

5.5.1 Summary

The characteristics of the learners are very complex. Some of the outstanding characteristics are the following:

Repetition of the learners in the lower grades could be responsible for the age range of more than six years in Grade 4. Other factors could be the accessibility of schools or late entry into school. Eight year olds, presently in Grade 4, entered school too early and cannot perform as they should.

The age difference among the learners can contribute to disciplinary problems and the domination of older learners over younger ones.

5.6 School Endowment

5.6.1 School facilities

According to Table B62, 59% of the schools in the survey were in rural areas, 20% in the urban, 14% in remote rural and 7% in semi-urban areas.

With regard to the conditions of schools, Table B69 shows that about 32% were described as weak and 36% of the schools needed minor repairs. Another 23% were indicated as either good or very good. These conditions are almost the same as the conditions of the schools found in the SRN-survey and displayed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Percentage of school according to condition, SRN 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In good or excellent condition</th>
<th>Needing minor repairs</th>
<th>In poor or very poor condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>29,1</td>
<td>47,5</td>
<td>23,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42,2</td>
<td>41,1</td>
<td>16,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the schools in the survey, 83.56% were government, 15.07% government-subsidised and 1.37% private schools (Table B64). On average, 90% of the instruction areas were regarded as permanent. When the number of classes per classroom was calculated, it was found that at approximately 44% of the schools there was less than one class per classroom, i.e. more classrooms than classes. In about 14% of the schools there were less classrooms than classes, forcing the principal to use one classroom for more than one grade (Table B68). This situation is also revealed in Tables B45 and B46. No schools reported a platooning system.
All the schools had either permanent or temporary classrooms, with only 0.88% using open-air areas for teaching.

In KwaZulu-Natal, nearly 70% (slightly more than the national average) of the schools in the survey indicated that the principal had a separate office, with only 35% having one for the secretary.

The majority of the schools in the project reported that they had inadequate sport equipment and sport fields, while adequate open space were existing at 48% of the schools (Table B74).

The availability of services and amenities at schools varied, according to Table B76. A feeding scheme existed in most of the schools (sometimes). The schools reported that they had the following always available:

- water (50%)
- electricity (38%) (more than 10% less than the national average)
- typewriters (27%) (much less than the national average)
- duplicating machines (29%) (much less than national average)
- telephones (46%)
- television, overhead projectors and tape recorders (20%).

**5.6.1.1 Summary**

When summarising the facilities at schools, it seems that there was a shortage of classrooms at some schools, as some of the classes exceeded fifty learners. Special classrooms were not readily available. Inadequate sport facilities and sport equipment deprive learners of the opportunity to spend the time after school hours developing other human capacities.

The lack of electricity, typewriters and duplicating machines could hamper the instruction of OBE in the classes, as teaching materials have to be developed by the educators. The lack of water at half of the schools is also a matter of concern.

**5.6.2 School furniture, learning and teaching material and other resources**

From Table B77 it seems that 14% of the learners did not have a desk available to write on. The influence of the non-existence of libraries comes to the fore in Tables B78 to B80 that shows that only a small percentage of learners had access to a library to borrow books. The SRN survey revealed the same situation in connection with the availability of media centres as illustrated in Figure 5.10.
Less than 40% of the parents agreed or strongly agreed that learners had enough stationery and learning materials. Slightly more than 40% (but still less than 50%), however, agreed or strongly agreed that

- school facilities are in a good condition;
- school grounds are well maintained and left clean (Table B81).

More than eighty per cent of the schools reported (Table B82) that the following were available in their classrooms:

- usable chalkboard
- chalk
- educator chair and desk
- desks and chairs for learners
- learner exercise books
- teacher-made wall charts
- pencils for learners.

Textbooks were available in 76% of the cases. Furniture and materials that were not so frequently available were the following:

- maps
- bookshelves
- classroom library or reading books
- dictionaries
- storage cupboards
- official educator’s guides.

Access for educators to professional services were limited due to the non-existence of libraries and resource centres or schools in remote areas (Tables B83 - B85).

1. **Summary**

The most basic furniture and learning materials are available in most of the classrooms, as reported by both the parents and educators. Materials to widen the scope of teaching only exist in a low percentage of schools. In the absence of libraries the classroom collection of books can promote reading and understanding, but such collections are found in less than a quarter of the schools. Especially the non-existence of libraries at the majority of schools could hamper learning seriously, reading in particular.

The low availability of educators’ guides as reflected in Tables B82 and B42, as well as the dependency of quite a number of educators on textbooks during lessons (Tables B114 and B115) might create a situation where educators cannot prepare themselves well enough for lessons, or where they are teaching strictly according to the textbook.
5.6.3 Medical and security facilities and security related issues

The distance to medical and security facilities is dependent on the placement of schools. The majority of the schools ((53%) are more than 5 km from the nearest medical or security facility (Table B86).

According to Tables B87 and B88, safety in the school environment was *poor to fair*, mainly due to
- less than 40% of the schools having fair or good fences
- security guard/services available only at about 21% of the schools
- alarm systems available only in 15% of the schools
- fire extinguishers available in 27% of the schools.

Relatively few schools (27%) reported that they had a *fair to good* first aid box.

The incidents named in Table B89 can be directly related to the security situation at schools. Physical abuse of learners and educators seemed to be rare. The incidents that occurred most frequently were theft or break-ins and vandalism at school. According to Table B88 the security was not good at most of the schools and this could be the reason for frequent thefts, break-ins and vandalism at the schools.

5.6.3.1 Summary

Although incidences like the use of drugs, sexual abuse, abductions and gangsterism did not happen frequently, the occurrence there-of disrupts education and threatens the safety of learners at school. Break-ins seem to be the most frequent incidences at school, followed by vandalism. They can, however, be controlled if better safety measures like good fences are available.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter the inputs that can influence the education were discussed. The most restraining factors can be seen as the lack of electricity at the majority of the schools, the fact that the majority of educators had not undergone OBE training and the absence of media and resource centres. On the positive side there are the vast experience of the educators and their commitment to teach.
CHAPTER 6
PROCESS AND OUTPUT

6.1 Introduction
The process in education tries to describe the activities taking place in the teaching and learning situation. All the stakeholders in education, namely the parents, learners, educators and principals, play an important role.

6.2 Local community support
The main source for funding schools seems to be school fees, which accounted for about 87% for the bulk of the fees. Another source of income was fund-raising functions at about 69% of the schools (Table B91).

According to Table B93, about 83% of the parents paid school fees and bought books, 60% paid sport fees and 39% paid transportation fees. Twenty one per cent (21%) of the parents said that children were staying at home because they could not afford the fees (Table B94).

6.2.1 Summary
Apart from school fees that parents had to pay, there were also other payments made by parents to keep children at school. The alternative contributions by parents to schools do not only show their willingness to help the school, but also demonstrate the parents’ commitment to keep children in school, sometimes perhaps even if they do not have a job or money. The commitment to keep children in school also stems from the fact that the parents are compelled to send their children to school according to the South African Schools Act. The reasons why children stayed at home when parents could not pay are not clear. It should, however, be considered that there could be no discrimination against learners who cannot pay fees.

6.3 Participation of parents in school activities
Nearly 43% of the parents indicated that they regularly participated in school activities, and nearly 41% per cent replied that they participated sometimes (Table B95). Approximately 40% of the parents had sometimes discussed the progress of their child with the educators, and 33.10% not at all (the national average for not at all is 25.96%).

According to Table B97, the majority of parents agreed or strongly agreed on a number of statements given to them, e.g.
- parents received information from the schools;
- school fees were used to benefit the children;
- parents felt welcome and comfortable in the school.

The majority strongly disagreed or disagreed to the question whether they would recommend their friends to send their children to the school. This is strongly in contrast to the rest of the country’s answers.

6.3.1 Summary
The participation of parents in school activities and their involvement in their children’s progress was indicated to be lower than that of the other provinces.

6.4 Learner participation
With regard to learner absenteeism, 27% of the learners indicated either no response or that they were not absent even one day, while 58% indicated that they were absent between 1 and 5 days during their Grade 4 year (Table B98), mainly because they were ill (Table B99).

Sixty six per cent of the learners indicated that they did not skip classes, while 21% skipped classes once or twice (Table B100).

![Figure 6.1: Learners attendance of school as rated by the principal and educators in KwaZulu-Natal and nationally, MLA 1999](image)

Slightly less than 70% of both principals and teachers rated the attendance rate of learners as good to excellent (Table B101- B102). In more than 80% of the schools a policy on absenteeism was in place (Table B103). According to Figure 6.1 less than 30% of the learners had an average to poor school attendance.

The majority of learners indicated that they were never late or only once in a while (Table B104). The same tendency was noted when learners were asked if they stayed away from school without good reason. Although the majority of learners reacted to the statements that these incidents never happened at their schools, it is evident that the following happened pretty often or daily:

- noisy learners disturbed classrooms (32%)
- learners brought dangerous weapons to school (15%)
- school property was broken (15%).

According to Table B105, 65% of the learners indicated that they participated in school sports or other activities.

In Table B106 parents’ reactions on learner attendance and participation correspond with those of the learners, except with regard to learners’ participating in sport or other cultural activities at school, which they rated lower than their children. The parents answered the following concerning their children:

- enjoying school (47% strongly disagreed and 37% agreed)
- feeling safe in the school (41% strongly disagreed and 38% agreed)
- behaving well in school (41% strongly disagreed and the same percentage agreed)
- getting homework on a regular basis (46% strongly disagreed and 38% agreed).

In the other provinces, the responses to these statements were mostly strongly agreed.

6.4.1 Summary

Although the majority of learners and educators indicated that they thought things were going well at school, there were schools where discipline was lacking. Issues demonstrating the lack of discipline are the following:

- disturbances in classrooms
- learners brought dangerous weapons to school
- school property was broken
• learners abusing drugs
• learners skipping classes (Table B104).

6.5 Teaching quality

6.5.1 Instruction time of educators

The majority of learners indicated that the following never happened or only happened once in a while:
• lessons started late
• the teacher was not in class
• learners were doing nothing during lessons
• learners went home early.

Less than 15% of the learners indicated that the above-mentioned actions happened very often or daily (Table B107).

In Tables B108, B109 and B110 the opinions of learners, educators and principals on the loss of instruction time are given respectively. When the sum of these days in all three cases was calculated, it was found that the responses of the learners, educators and principals had similar tendencies as indicated in the following table.

### TABLE 6.1: Total number of days lost in KWAZULU-NATAL, MLA 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days lost</th>
<th>Learners' views</th>
<th>Educators' views</th>
<th>Principals' views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>48.64</td>
<td>52.11</td>
<td>59.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 20</td>
<td>39.35</td>
<td>30.99</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 30</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learners indicated that in the majority of cases instruction in class started on time, but only if all the classes could start on time the instruction time could be used efficiently. In almost 20% of the schools up to 20 days were lost due to different factors. Reasons for the wastage of teaching time were:
• late registration
• boycotts
• illness among staff
• cultural activities (mostly)
• drawing up timetables.

6.5.2 Teaching practices
The majority of learners indicated the teaching practices of educators as follows: "Almost every day we sat still and listen to the educator who asked us questions or we had to write down notes from the chalk board and we had to repeat what the educator said. Pretty often could we work in small groups and the educator helped us and we could also talk to other learners about what we were learning. We followed in textbooks when some of the educators talked about the work almost every day or pretty often, but with other educators we never did that. In most of the cases we did not use calculators or computers, but different educators used quizzes or tests differently. Some never used them; other used them once in a while, while others used them often or daily. In most of the cases we did not solve problems or use things from every day life to solve problems. Perhaps we did it once in a while" (Table B111).

According to Figure 6.2 learners who were never sitting still performed the poorest. This is an indication that discipline might be lacking. Learners who were sitting still pretty often or almost every day performed the best. This might be an indication that there is discipline, but also some kind of activity in the class.

Most of the educators would describe their teaching practices as follows: "Almost always or pretty often I showed learners how to do problems (68%) and they had to write notes from the board (66%). Pretty often we had a quiz or test (59%), but we did not use computers (78%). I thought that I used things from every day life to solve problems almost every day or at least pretty often" (Table B112).

Table B113 indicates the frequency of learner activity during lessons. In some lessons:
- learners worked individually without assistance from the educator;
- learners worked in pairs or small groups without assistance.

In most of the lessons or in some lessons learners:
- worked individually with assistance;
- worked together responding to one another;
- worked in pairs of small groups with assistance;
- worked together as a class while the educator was teaching.

More than 90% of all the educators indicated that they used textbooks (Table B114). Of these, 40% used textbooks for 25% to 50% of the teaching time, 28% used it between 50% and 75% of the time and 7% between 75% and 100% of the time (Table B115).

Parents viewed the teaching by educators less favourably than the other provinces, because up to 50% strongly disagreed or disagreed on the statement put to them. Less than 10% reckoned (strongly agreed) that educators:
- were teaching actively for most of the day
- were committed to teaching
- encouraged and provided good education to children to do well in school
• provided good quality education to their children (Table B116).

The most important factors limiting teaching according to educators were:
• inadequate physical facilities and shortage of equipment
• large classes.

The other limiting factors, mentioned in Table B117, contributed either a little or quite a lot.

Principals and educators agreed to a large extent on the factors contributing to limited teaching (Tables B117 and B118).

6.5.2.1 Summary

The teaching practices, described by both the learners and educators, pointed towards a teacher-centred and textbook-centred approach, with no or little involvement of learners. The dependency of teachers on textbooks is illustrated by the time and frequency they were being used in the classroom. The fact that all schools do not have electricity or duplicating machines, forced educators to let learners copy notes from the chalkboard. Overcrowding of classrooms may also hamper progress.

6.5.3 Educators' absenteeism

According to Tables B119 to B121, educators, principals and parents viewed the attendance of educators as good to excellent. A policy on absenteeism was in place in 86% of the schools.

6.5.4 Use of time by educators

The majority of educators travelled from 10 to 30 minutes to reach school. As much as 27.78%, however, had to travel up to an hour to reach school (Table B123). Travelling did not have an effect on their teaching. (Table B124).

Table B125 indicates that apart from normal tasks during contact teaching time, time is also spent at school on meetings with principals and teachers, administrative tasks, extra-curricular activities and professional development sessions. Very little time was spent on private tutoring, further studies for self-development and lesson preparation during school time.

6.5.4.1 Summary

From the above it is clear that some time during contact teaching time is spent on activities that are not directly related to teaching. Such activities, like meetings, leave the learners unattended.

6.5.5 Assessment of learners

Grade 4 educators indicated that they assessed learners daily (36%) and once or twice a week (26%) (Table B127). In assessing the learners approximately 95% of them used tests and examinations developed by themselves, oral examinations (90%) and by observation of learners (100%) (Table B128). All the educators used classroom work, homework or assignments as part of the assessment of learners (Table B129).

In assessing learners, a lot of weight was given to
• educator generated multi-choice problems (72%)
• educator generated tests which require learners to describe their reasoning ((63%)
• homework and assignments (48%)
• projects and practical exercises (59%)
• observation of learners (85%)
• responses of learners in class (79%).

Assessment (Table B131) was pretty often used to
• provide learners with grades or marks (72%)
• provide feedback to learners (76%)
• diagnose learning difficulties (63%)
• plan for future lessons (76%).

Report to parents scored very low.

Assessment of learners seemed to be planned well and was used for a number of purposes.

6.5.5.1 Summary

In the assessment of learners a wide range of tools were used. The low rate of using standardised tests produced outside school, together with the non-appraisal of the work of educators and departmental officials not assisting teachers, can contribute to teachers not knowing what the standard of teaching should be. The low frequency of reporting to parents on the assessment of learners' work could also be a contributing factor in the low involvement of parents in school matters.

6.5.6 Homework

According to the learners 38% of them indicated that they got homework once or twice a week, 33% indicated that they got homework every day, while 28% indicated that they never got homework (Table B132). The majority (57%) indicated that homework could keep them busy in less than an hour (Table B133). Reasons why learners did not do their homework, were that they helped their mothers with work (47%), played with their friends (42%) or that they looked after younger brothers or sisters (39%). According to most of the responses, as indicated in Table B136, mothers regularly rendered assistance to learners with homework (62%), while sisters also regularly assisted in homework (46%).

A majority of learners indicated that
• they were given homework every day;
• guardians/parents helped them with their homework;
• guardians/parents made sure that homework was done (Tables B137 and B138).

In 42% of the cases educators always checked whether the homework had been done (this percentage is nearly 20% lower than the national average). In 58% of the cases it was marked and kept and in almost 83% given back, while feedback was always given to the class. Homework was sometimes used for class discussion and to contribute to the learners' marks (Table B140).

6.5.6.1 Summary

Although learners indicated on the one hand that parents/guardians were making sure that they completed their homework, almost half of the learner responses indicate reasons why they were not doing their homework. Up to 70% of the parents indicated that they regularly discussed homework with their Grade 4 children. The rate of rendering assistance by parents is not high, except for mothers helping their children.

6.5.7 Job satisfaction

The three main contributing factors needed by educators for job satisfaction seemed to be:
• amicable working relations with other staff members (93%)
• supplies (books, stationery) (89%)
• good relationships with communities (83%) (Table B141).
When ordering the reasons, the supplies of books and stationery topped the list (Table B142).

6.5.7.1 Summary

When identifying the most important factors for job satisfaction of educators, all chosen factors seemed to be in connection with relationships with the community and colleagues as well as the supplies of books, etc. Factors from which they would benefit directly, such as opportunities for promotion and part time study, was not that very important for them.

8. Effectiveness of teaching

According to principals and educators the misconduct by learners that happened most were arriving late at school and absenteeism (Tables B143 and B144).

The factors that were responsible for poor performance of learners pointed to a large extent to parents (especially their indifference), family problems and the socio-economic status of learners. Factors that were influencing the performance of learners to some extent were:

- automatic promotion
- socio-economic status of learners
- family problems
- parental indifference
- orphaned children
- language of instruction (Table B145).

When educators were asked to evaluate statements on the effectiveness of teaching (Table B146), they strongly agreed that
- educators were committed (70%)
- schools were open on official school days (63%)
- learners were encouraged to do well in school (66%).

6.5.8.1 Summary

In this section aspects were mentioned that might have influenced the effectiveness of teaching. The occurrence of incidences of misconduct by learners had a direct influence on the effectiveness of teaching. Although coming late and absenteeism were identified as the incidents occurring most often, other incidences such as slipping classes, classroom disturbance, intimidation or verbal abuse of learners also played an important role.

The indifference of parents, as identified by the educators, might be the other side of the coin where educators did not agree strongly but only agreed (61%) that they provided parents with information on the progress of children.

The fact that educators did not agree strongly on relation statements is an indication that the effectiveness of teaching can improve.

None of the educators strongly agreed that some teaching was excellent. There are contradictory remarks on discipline. In this section it is stated that the schools are disciplined, while disturbances in classes were reported by approximately one third of the respondents according to Table B104.

6.6 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT
6.6.1 Biography of the principal

According to Tables B147 to B153, a typical principal of the interviewed schools was a male between 41 and 50 years, perhaps a little bit younger, with a Teacher College training. His professional training included teaching methods, but not much administration and less management, guidance and counselling. His experience at the present school stretched mostly over 1 to 3 years, while he had also been a principal at other schools.

Responses on the further training of the principals reveals that they attended 1 to 2 (28%), 3 to 4 (30%), 5 to 6 (8%) or 7 and more (23%) courses in management.

6.6.2 Management

In evaluating the management skills of the principals, the opinion of approximately 80% of parents were split between strongly disagree and agree on the following matters, with the majority indicating strongly disagree (Table B153):

- The school was open on official schooldays.
- The school started on time and operated until closing time.
- Teachers were at school during school hours.
- The principal is a good manager and strong leader.

When principals had to evaluate the statements in Table B154 the majority of them (more than 75%) only agreed on the following:

- learners participated in school activities;
- educators informed parents on their children’s progress;
- educators were present at the school most of the time;
- learners were well behaved in school;
- learners were encouraged to do well in school;
- educators felt accepted by the community;
- the school had a disciplined atmosphere;
- educators enjoyed managing the school and felt accepted in the school;
- educators were committed to teaching and learning.

6.6.3 Communication

Communication between educators and principals as well as other educators happened, according to the majority of responses, often (Table B155). When communication took place on learning and teaching matters, educators communicated in 86% of the cases on a daily basis with principals as well as with other educators (79%).

The principals did not communicate very often with other stakeholders. In 34% of the responses, principals communicated with learners daily and 37% on a weekly basis. Communication with parents took place monthly but mostly a few times a year.

When teaching and learning matters had to be communicated, the principals communicated in more than 60% of the cases on a daily basis with learners. Communication between principals and educators in the same context took place on a daily basis in 52% and weekly in 33% of the responses. Communication with parents took place mostly a few times per year (and in 54% of the cases monthly).

6.6.4.1 Summary

Communication between principals, educators and learners took place on a regular basis, both on organisational as well as teaching and learning matters. Communication by principals with other stakeholders, such as parents, did not take place on the same level as with learners and educators. That is in accordance with the rest of the country.
6.6.5 Administration

Both principals and educators indicated that record keeping of school matters was done at a very high level (Table B160 and 161).

6.6.6 Leadership

In Table B162, educators' assessment on certain aspects of the leadership of their principals is indicated. Between 60% and 70% of the responses indicated that the principals were very successful in almost all the aspects.

6.6.7 Decision-making

Principals indicated, as shown in Table B163, that they had sometimes involved learners in decision-making (62%), parents sometimes (42%) and most of the time (40%) and educators always (58%). School Governing Bodies were involved when decisions on the use of school funds had to be taken.

Educators indicated that they did not have much influence on how money was spent or on the amount of supplies to be purchased (Table B165).

6.7 School Governing Bodies

The SGBs were constituted (Table B166) in more than 98% of the cases. According to the majority of responses, it was the responsibility of the SGBs to govern the school (Table B167). 64% of principals and 68% of educators indicated that the SGBs received training (Tables B168 and B169) and in all the cases that meetings took place on a monthly basis or once every three months.

Principals were not sure about which functions should be performed by the SGBs and which by the management committees (Table B172).

Principals were of the opinion that in 57% of the cases the SGB contributed quite a lot to the effective functioning of the school, while 67% of the educators were of the same opinion (Tables B173 and B174). Nearly 50% of educators and 40% of principals agreed that the SGBs had quite a lot influence on effective teaching and learning (Tables B175 and B176).

6.8 Further training of the principal

Seventy three per cent of the principals indicated that they attended departmental training in management for about two or more days, which they found to be partly useful or not useful at all (in both cases 50%). They also had subject-orientated training of two or more days, which were partly or very useful (Tables B178-B180).

6.8.1 Summary

School management highlights many aspects. Principals who did not attend in-service training on management should be given the opportunity to do so, as the post of a principal implies many tasks for which a freshman principal is not trained in his teaching career.

The rate of communication between principals and educators on the one hand and parents on the other was not very high. 68 per cent of the principals only agreed that they received information on new policies and
developments regularly – perhaps a consequence of departmental officials not visiting schools regularly. The communication between the school-based parties was of a higher level.

The assessment of leadership aspects of the principals by educators revealed that there were indeed shortcomings, as the majority of the responses indicated that the principals were only partly successful in all the aspects - which leaves space for improvement.

Decision-making was not only the responsibility of the principal, but educators and learners were also involved in the process.

The governance of the schools by SGBs was in place to a very high degree. The fact that not all of the SGBs had training can clearly be seen in the variety of answers on the functions of the SGBs and management committees. The contribution of the SGBs to school matters lies in the more effective functioning of schools and not so much in the advancement of learning and teaching.

Although principals received further training, most of the responses indicated that they found them only partly successful.

6.10 OUTPUTS

Educators indicated that 21% of them would like to change to another career if they had the opportunity, while 16% of the principals reacted in the same way (Tables B181 and B182) (slightly less than the national average). Both these groups, however, thought that society, educators and learners appreciated their work.

Reasons why educators and principals were not satisfied with their jobs, were not given. The fact that about one quarter of the educators and principals would have liked to leave teaching, indicates that they were not satisfied with the current situation.
CHAPTER 7
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

1. introduction

This survey produced a considerable amount of useful information about all the indicators that have been selected. The results can give a good impression of what is happening in the schools.

7.2 Socio-economic background

In this context the main feature that can slow down education is the level of education of the parents, as a large portion of them did not complete primary education - a fact that is substantiated by the census data. Over-crowding in some households and the non-availability of books and magazines can be other decelerating factors. The general poverty of a large part of the population seriously hampers any effort and should be addressed. The school feeding schemes as an effort to at least alleviate the effects of poverty actually did help.

Various reasons can be suggested for the low scores in these tasks. The socio-economic background of the learners especially could have played a major role. With regard to the education levels of both the father and mother, it was indicated that more than 45% of the parents did not complete primary education and a large portion was found to be illiterate. Nearly 70% of the parents indicated that they discussed homework regularly with their Grade 4 children. Assistance of learners by parents was not high, but mothers and sisters in general did help.

The availability of a radio in the interviewed households was indicated to be fairly high and a lesser number of households had access to television. Both these media can be used effectively to further education goals. A small percentage of households had access to books. More than 50% of the respondents indicated access to less than 10 books in total, while only a quarter of the parents were members of a library service. More than 55% of the learners were not members of a library. The non-existence of libraries at the majority of the schools could seriously hamper learning. In the absence of school or community libraries a classroom collection of books can promote reading and understanding, but such collections were only found in about a quarter of the surveyed schools. It was found that learners who had access to radio and TV but not to reading material, could not spell correctly. This was found to be the case in the literacy task where the learners wrote words phonetically.

7.3 Inputs

The evaluation of the input from departmental officials showed a wide variety of responses. Although a system of appraisal had been implemented at schools, the majority of teachers indicated that they had not as yet been appraised. Visits to schools should be aimed at discussing teaching and giving guidance to educators and principals.

Teaching practices, described by both the learners and educators, pointed towards a teacher-centred and textbook-centred approach, with no or little involvement of learners. The dependency of teachers on textbooks is not only illustrated by the time and frequency they were being used in the classroom, but also by the fact that a shortage of instructional materials is an important limiting factor in teaching. The fact that all schools did not have electricity or duplicating machines forced educators to let learners copy notes from the chalkboard. Educators also indicated that some time during contact teaching time was spent on activities not directly related to teaching. Activities, like meetings and professional development, left the learners unattended.
The teaching experience of teachers staying on at one school, implicating a fairly low mobility of staff, can benefit education. Language of instruction remains a contentious matter and learners in the survey experienced problems with English.

The appraisal of educators and their development and support should be seen as interdependent. The implementation of a system of appraisal can be seen as a first step, but the necessary development and support of educators should not be left behind. The low frequency of visits of departmental officials to schools in certain areas is a reason for concern.

The provision, availability and appropriateness of textbooks remain a central theme in education. Two issues that highlighted this were the non-delivery of ordered textbooks and the educators' dependency on these books - a situation that does not augur well for the envisaged paradigm shift to OBE.

The majority of learners indicated that they lived in the vicinity of the school, which guarantee easy physical/geographical access to education. The age range of Grade 4 learners indicated that they had repeated some grades during their school career.

### 7.4 School endowment

The overcrowding of some classrooms is an indication that there is a shortage of classrooms at some schools. The availability of water and electricity at less than a half of the schools is an issue of serious concern. The non-existence of libraries at the majority of schools denies learners access to books. This access is further diminished by the fact that a small percentage of classrooms had books and magazines available. Due to the lack of security at most schools, incidents of break-ins, vandalism and theft occurred.

The overcrowding of some classrooms cannot be conducive for learning, especially when OBE will be implemented and a new approach would have to be adhered to. The majority of learners were positive towards teaching and learning.

### 7.5 Process

Despite low income and poverty, parents were willing to pay school fees and other costs for their children to attend school. School fees seemed to be the main financial source of income for schools. The participation of parents in school activities was not very high. This lack of involvement was not only from the side of the parent, but principals and educators indicated that communication between them and the parents did not occur frequently. This is also the case when educators had to inform parents on school matters and the progress of learners.

Answers to questions on learner participation in the education process indicated that there is room for improvement on matters like school attendance and arriving at school on time. Principals and educators identified learner absenteeism and coming late as the misconduct that received their attention the most frequent. Other cases of misconduct of concern, although not occurring that frequently, were the use of alcohol and drugs.

Under teaching quality different aspects were investigated. Most of the responses from learners indicated that educators used teaching time effectively. About one tenth of the responses, however, indicated that teaching time was lost due to educators coming late, lessons starting late, learners doing nothing in class or going home early. The correlation between the responses of educators, principals and learners on the number of school days lost must be taken seriously. Educators themselves indicated that they were involved in activities other than teaching during actual teaching time. Meetings, cultural and other extra-curricular activities, and professional development sessions were the main activities mentioned.

In view of the fact that Curriculum 2005 will be implemented at schools, the teaching practices of OBE should be given a lot of attention. According to the survey, educators were very dependent on textbooks and teacher's guides and their teaching methods were very teacher-centred. An effort to bring about change should be integrated with the appraisal of teachers, visits and counselling of educators by departmental officials and in-service training.
The methods of assessment of learners and the assigning of homework seemed to be on a sound footing, but the standard of teaching and assessment should be higher and redirected at new teaching methods that will soon have to be in place. The results of the MLA project clearly indicate that there are shortcomings. The discussion between learners and parents on homework matters did not take place frequently, leaving the gap for learners to find reasons not to do homework. Factors influencing the effectiveness of teaching, according to the educators and the principals, point to parents and especially to their indifference, family problems, the socio-economic situation of learners and to a lesser extent language instruction and a too extensive curriculum. The majority of educators indicated that they were committed towards education and that they enjoyed managing their classrooms. They also indicated that learners participated in school activities and that they were encouraged to do well. Lack of discipline in some schools, the low frequency of communication between the parents and the school and between the school and the departmental officials, could have an adverse effect on teaching. Educators indicated good working relations and the availability of physical resources as the main contributing factors for job satisfaction.

In the assessment of learners by educators, a wide range of tools was used. The infrequent use of standardised tests produced outside of the school, the non-appraisal of the work of educators and departmental officials not assisting teachers, can contribute to teachers unaware of what the standard of teaching should be. The low frequency of reporting to parents on the assessment of learners' work can be a contributing factor to limited involvement of parents in school matters. In about 20% of the schools visited, up to 20 days were lost due to various factors. Some reasons for the wastage of teaching time were late registrations, boycotts, illness among staff, cultural activities, the drawing up of timetables, etc. Although the majority of learners and educators indicated that they thought things were going well at their school, there were some schools where discipline was lacking. The attendance of learners in more than 30% of the schools in the survey was rated as average to poor by principals and educators. Other issues demonstrating the lack of discipline are learners not dressing neatly, disturbances in classrooms, vandalism, possession of weapons, use of alcohol and drugs. Although incidences like the use of drugs, possession of weapons, sexual abuse and gangsterism did not happen frequently, the occurrence thereof disrupted education and threatened the safety of learners. Vandalism and break-ins seemed to be the most frequent incidences. This can, however, be controlled through better safety measures.

Responses on questions of School management highlight various aspects. Principals who did not attend in-service training on management should be given the opportunity to do so, as the post of a principal implies many tasks for which a freshman principal is not trained in his teaching career. Most of the parents agreed strongly on the effectiveness of the management of schools. Principals indicated that they were only partly successful in their management performance. This perception is justification for the assumption that the management of schools is not up to standard. The administration on record keeping of different aspects however reflected a very high standard.

Communication between principals and educators on the one hand and parents on the other did not score very high. Only sixty eight per cent of the principals in the survey agreed that they received information on new policies and developments from departmental officials regularly – perhaps a consequence of departmental officials not visiting schools regularly. The communication between the school-based parties was however of a higher level.

The assessment of leadership aspects of the principals by educators revealed that there were indeed shortcomings, as the majority of the responses indicated that the principals were only partly successful in some aspects - a situation which leaves space for improvement.

Decision-making was not only the responsibility of the principal, but educators and learners were also involved in the process. According to the survey, the governance structures of the schools (SGBs) were to a very high degree in place. The variety of answers on the functions of the SGBs and management committees indicated that not all SGBs received training. The contribution of the SGBs to school matters lies in the more effective functioning of schools and not so much in the advancement of learning and teaching. Although principals received further training, most of the responses indicated that they found these courses only partly successful.
The morale and attitude of some educators seemed to be low, as 21% of them indicated that they would like to change to another career if they had the opportunity, while 16% of the principals reacted in the same way. Both these groups, however, thought that society, educators and learners appreciated their work.

7.6 FINAL Conclusion AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching and learning that take place in the classroom and its immediate environment involves the teaching personnel (i.e. the educator and the principal) and at least the following must be present:

- creation of an environment where teaching and learning can take place
- school endowment by the state/province
- an environment conducive for learning at school:
  - management
  - punctuality
- culture of teaching and learning.

To optimise this process in the school environment, educators should be well equipped for their tasks. In view of the lack of appraisal of educators, the quality of teaching should be determined. Once it has been done, steps can be taken to develop the underachieving educators to their potential.

It can be seen from the results of especially the numeracy tasks, which can be compared world-wide, the correct level of teaching must be adhered to. To achieve this, the next level of assistance, namely the departmental officials at regional level should play a more important and prominent role. The achieving of a high quality of teaching and learning does not only include the appraisal, but also the development of the potential of the educator.

Learners are not only staying in the school environment. The refrain that parents and communities are not involved in school matters and not interested in their children’s work, need to be addressed.

All the issues raised in this section are mentioned in the statement of the National Minister of Education: Call to action: Mobilising citizens to build a South African education and training system for the 21st century. The government is indeed aware of the problems and envisages tackling them on various fronts. The implementation of the priorities spelled out by the minister will address the shortcomings on the short, medium and long term.