

**Social Sciences teachers' implementation of the Curriculum and
Assessment Policy Statement in public primary schools**

By

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Supervisor

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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July 2025

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Ethics Committee

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

Fakusetsi: Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my beloved parents, Willie and Jakkie van Niekerk.

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To have achieved this milestone in my life, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to:

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- My parents, for their endless support and inspiration, motivating me to persevere and succeed.

ABSTRACT

Learner assessment is vital for measuring their academic success. While the development of textbooks and social sciences content has progressed significantly, this qualitative study rooted in the interpretivist paradigm focuses on how teachers from two public primary schools in the Overberg district Western Cape apply the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in teaching social sciences at the Intermediate Phase and Entry-Level Senior Phase. Although teachers assess their learners, the rigour of their assessment practices varies.

The study addresses the literature gap concerning what constitutes fair, valid, and reliable curriculum and assessment practices. Grounded in the Integrated Course Design theory, 10 participants were purposively selected, and data collection methods included semi-structured interviews followed by thematic data analysis. The study argues that government policies and strategies often present challenges for teachers to deliver the social sciences curriculum effectively. The study found that when one teacher's assessments are significantly easier than another's, learners' grades may not accurately reflect their skills, understanding of content knowledge, or ability to apply knowledge.

It is further unclear how social sciences teachers' assessment practices are legitimately measured or compared for compliance. This ambiguity undermines the very 'raison d'être' of assessments to ensure accountability and consistency in evaluating learner performance. The study contends that such ambiguity and uncertainty in evaluation methods contradict the fundamental goal of education: fairness. The study recommends the need for ongoing professional teacher development so that teachers may identify, establish and implement effective, consistent, fair, credible, and dependable curriculum and assessment practices in South African public primary schools.

Keywords: Social sciences, professional development, curriculum and assessment policy, assessment practices, 'raison d'être'

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Confirmation of editing of dissertation

This serves to confirm that I edited the dissertation listed below in my capacity as a professional editor. Issues corrected were grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and phrasing.

DISSERTATION TITLE: **SOCIAL SCIENCES TEACHERS'
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM AND
ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT IN PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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Helen Yardley

Editor

17/12/2024

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	Further Education and Training
NCEE	National Centre for Education Evaluation
NCSS	National Council for the Social Studies
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NPA	National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBET	Outcomes-Based Education and Training
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Implementing curriculum and assessment policy frameworks is essential for driving meaningful educational reform, particularly at the public primary school level. This process is fundamental to achieving successful teaching and learning outcomes. In the social sciences domain, teachers are instrumental in translating these policies into effective classroom practices, significantly impacting the quality of education. Continuous evaluation of educational strategies emphasises the importance of adhering to well-designed policy frameworks that will enhance the quality of education in South Africa (Fullan, 2016). Furthermore, there is a persistent need for assessment methods that are fair, valid, and reliable to accurately measure learning progress and promote educational equity (DBE, 2022b).

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-12 in South Africa governs teaching and learning. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is a key component of the NCS, setting the standards for curriculum delivery and assessment practices. Other key policy documents within the NCS include the National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements, which outlines criteria for programme implementation and learner promotion, and the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (NPA), which outlines detailed guidelines for assessing learner progress and performance (DBE, 2022b).

CAPS is a detailed, specific document that operates within the broader NCS framework. While the NCS provides overarching principles, standards, and goals for the South African educational system, CAPS translates these broad objectives into specific, actionable curriculum content and assessment guidelines across various subjects and grade levels (DBE, 2022b). CAPS details learning outcomes, content, and assessment methods for each subject and grade, ensuring consistent and effective implementation of the NCS vision. It provides teachers with clear instructions on what to teach, how to assess learners, and how to achieve the educational standards set by the NCS (DBE, 2022b).

Effective implementation of these policies is crucial for maintaining high educational standards (Obadiora, 2019) and, more especially, to give South Africans as a nation

the opportunity to change our future as involved and active citizens. However, recent studies reveal gaps between what is planned and what actually happens on the ground. Discrepancies between policy frameworks and classroom practices are evident, emphasising the need for better alignment and support (Smith, 2020; Jones & Brown, 2021; Lee et al., 2022). This study aims to explore these identified gaps by examining the implementation of CAPS in South African primary schools, with a specific focus on social sciences as a subject. It investigates social sciences teachers' current practices, aiming to identify the challenges they encounter and determine how best to support them. Understanding the challenges social sciences teachers face is key to enhancing educational outcomes and ensuring equitable teaching practices.

1.2. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

When there is a change in the politics of a country, change in practice is essential. Usually, educational reform practices are the easiest way to demonstrate key structural leadership changes. The transition from an apartheid education system to becoming a democratic country is evident in the many educational reforms and policy initiatives in South Africa (Chetty, 2016). The transition to Outcomes-Based Education and Training (OBET) in the early 1990s marked a significant shift in global educational reform. Still, this change was especially crucial for South Africa, which had long been burdened by an education system deeply rooted in apartheid policies. Under apartheid, the education system was characterised by severe inequities, with a rigid, racially segregated curriculum that disadvantaged non-white learners (Chetty, 2016). The Bantu Education Act of 1953, for example, imposed a segregated and substandard education system for black learners, perpetuating social and economic disparities (Chetty, 2016). Despite reports that OBE did not work well in other countries, the OBET framework aimed to address these historical inequities by promoting an outcomes-based approach that emphasised equal educational opportunities and competency development regardless of a learner's background (Chetty, 2016). The merit of the significantly symbolic change in the education system, OBE, silenced any perceived raised objections.

South Africa adopted OBE in 1997, but early challenges in implementation led to several revisions by 2000 (Chetty, 2016). By 2008, OBE principles were fully

implemented across all grade levels as part of a broad reform effort initiated with the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in 2002, targeting the General Education and Training (GET) phase. However, the rollout of OBE was not as successfully as planned (Chetty, 2016). Problems with implementation and a lack of resources exasperated the education crisis on the ground. Following this, the NCS for the Further Education and Training (FET) phase was introduced in Grade 10 in 2006 (Chetty, 2016). In response to persistent challenges, the NCS underwent amendments in January 2012, leading to the establishment of the NCS Grades R-12. The revised framework sought to provide clear guidelines for curriculum and assessment. It marked a significant shift from previous curricula, which were characterised by fragmentation and inequalities rooted in the apartheid era (Kallaway, 2002).

In South Africa, CAPS serves as a critical framework for standardising educational practices and addressing historical inconsistencies across various subjects (DBE, 2022a). Teaching and learning continued to suffer as teachers were not adequately trained to implement the new curriculum (Soudien, 2017). However, achieving curriculum objectives is often complicated by challenges such as inadequate training, limited resources, and inconsistent support, which can hinder the effective implementation of CAPS (Soudien, 2017). Social sciences, encompassing history, geography and social issues, present a unique context for examining CAPS due to its broad content and diverse pedagogical requirements. The subject's complexity – spanning a range of topics and approaches – makes it particularly rich for studying CAPS applications. Given its connection to contemporary social issues and historical contexts, effective teaching in social sciences is crucial for enhancing learners' awareness and understanding of current events and societal structures, highlighting the subject's substantial educational and societal value (DBE, 2022a). Yet, the quality of education is often affected by challenges in CAPS application (DBE, 2022b). Thus, analysing the CAPS implementation in this subject area can offer valuable insights into the policy's effectiveness and its impact on teaching and assessment (DBE, 2022a). Moreover, Van der Berg (2017) suggests that while CAPS is designed to offer a structured curriculum, its success largely is heavily influenced by the support teachers receive and their capacity to integrate policy principles into classroom practice. This context highlights the challenges of CAPS implementation and the

necessity for further exploration into how social sciences teachers navigate these issues. Such research is essential for addressing the identified gap in social sciences, improving educational practices and achieving the objectives set by the reformed curriculum framework (Van der Berg, 2017).

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Moving from no prescribed OBE textbooks to the sudden use of content-driven textbooks, teachers faced the challenge of what to do next (Soudien, 2017). The implementation of CAPS by social sciences teachers in public primary schools has revealed substantial variability and inconsistency, presenting a significant problem in achieving a uniform understanding of curriculum standards and learning outcomes (Smith et al., 2023). Recent research indicates that this lack of consistency often leads to manipulating standards to meet individual or institutional needs, resulting in ambiguous measurable outcomes, delays in school progress, and diminished accountability (Smith et al., 2023). Such circumstances undermine the efficacy of educational accountability measures, which are designed to ensure fairness, validity, and reliability in assessment practice.

Consistency in assessment is crucial for achieving comparable educational outcomes across different contexts. According to the Forum for Education Standards and Support (2015), ensuring that evaluations are comparable across various settings is essential for maintaining consistent outcomes. Specifically, assessments are considered consistent when teachers who are evaluating learners against the same unit of competency in diverse contexts make similar decisions regarding their performance. While a shared understanding of competency units is essential for maintaining consistency, teachers must also adapt their assessment strategies to meet the unique needs of learners and their educational contexts, ensuring fairness and preventing undue disadvantage (FESS, 2015). Despite the emphasis on consistency, recent literature highlights persistent challenges in achieving reliable and valid assessments. For instance, Hattie and Timperley (2020) and Wiliam (2023) demonstrate that inconsistencies in the formulation and implementation of assessments hinder teachers' ability to measure and compare learners' performance accurately. These inconsistencies undermine accountability measures and compromise the core purpose of educational standards, which is to ensure that

outcomes are comparable across diverse educational settings. Tackling these issues is crucial for strengthening the implementation of CAPS and enhancing the overall quality and fairness of educational assessments.

1.4. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

In the evolving landscape of education, particularly within the social sciences domain, the effective implementation of curriculum and assessment policies is critical for achieving educational objectives. This study is grounded in the theory that teachers play a pivotal role in translating policy frameworks into practice (Fink, 2013). Jemialu (2018) emphasises that the success of social sciences education hinges on teachers' ability to deliver content proficiently and conduct meaningful assessments. This dynamic interplay between instructional strategies and assessment practices is essential for fostering learner engagement and achieving the desired educational outcomes (Obadiora, 2019). However, the challenge lies in designing assessments that produce consistent and comparable outcomes across diverse educational settings. As noted by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2015) and Van der Berg and Louw (2021), discrepancies in assessment can compromise the coherence of the curriculum and disrupt accountability measures. Ensuring that assessments are fair, valid, and reliable is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the educational system and supporting equitable learner evaluation (Ghaicha, 2016).

From a professional perspective, the successful implementation of curriculum and assessment policies such as CAPS requires more than just adherence to guidelines; it necessitates that teachers are well-trained and supported. Despite the theoretical framework provided by CAPS and other policy documents, practical challenges such as inadequate training and varying levels of support can impede effective application (Soudien, 2017). The importance of consistent and reliable assessment practices cannot be overstated, as they are essential for tracking learners' progress and ensuring alignment with educational standards (Ghaicha, 2016). Professional development and training are vital for equipping teachers with the skills needed to implement context-appropriate assessment strategies effectively (Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs, Australia, 2015). This study seeks to examine how these factors influence the practical application of CAPS in the social sciences curriculum, with particular emphasis on summative assessments, which are key to

evaluating academic performance.

From a personal perspective, my experiences and observations in educational settings have revealed a substantial disconnect between the intentions of educational policies and their actual implementation in the classroom. As a social sciences teacher, I experienced some confusion when, at district cluster meetings, I realised that some school's social sciences assessment practices were not at the prescribed level. I have observed the challenges teachers face in implementing curriculum frameworks and conducting assessments that align with national standards. This disconnect highlighting the need for research that addresses the practical issues hindering the effective application of CAPS and other policies. By investigating these issues, this study seeks to uncover key insights into the factors influencing curriculum and assessment practices while proposing strategies to improve consistency and accountability. The goal of this research investigation is to close the gap between policy and practice by integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experiences, ultimately fostering the development of more effective and equitable educational assessment practices. It is hoped that future research could build on these findings by examining long-term effects, testing intervention strategies, and exploring stakeholders' perspectives, thereby contributing to robust and equitable educational practices and policies.

1.5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine how social sciences teachers implement CAPS in primary schools, with a particular focus on evaluating their adherence to and accountability for the established norms and standards essential for ensuring fair, valid, and reliable teaching and learning.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.6.1. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

- **How do social sciences teachers implement CAPS in public primary schools?**

1.6.2. SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following secondary research questions were asked to assist the researcher in addressing the primary research question:

- How do social sciences teachers interpret CAPS?
- What challenges do social sciences teachers experience in the implementation of CAPS?
- What strategies do social sciences teachers use to address the challenges identified in the implementation of CAPS?

1.7. RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this study was to investigate how social sciences teachers in public primary schools in the Western Cape's Overberg district implement CAPS as prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To establish how social sciences teachers interpret CAPS. This objective focused on understanding how they perceive and comprehend its requirements and guidelines.
- To identify the challenges that social sciences teachers experience in implementing CAPS. The aim was to uncover the obstacles they face when applying CAPS in their teaching practices.
- To establish the strategies that social sciences teachers use to address the challenges identified in the implementation of CAPS. The aim was to explore and document the approaches they employ to overcome these difficulties.

By pursuing these objectives, the study sought to offer a thorough analysis of CAPS implementation within the specified context, identify key challenges and strategies, and contribute to the enhancement of educational practices in line with CAPS requirements.

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section offers a brief overview of the Methodology Chapter. This study employed a qualitative research methodology to explore how Social Sciences teachers implement CAPS (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). A case study approach was chosen to facilitate in-depth interactions with participants and gather detailed insights into their experiences and practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The research was conducted in two public primary schools located in the Overberg district of the Western Cape, South Africa. These schools were selected based on criteria including accessibility, availability of summative assessments and academic records, support from school leadership, and the proximity of the schools. Social sciences, which integrates history and geography, was the focus of this study. Initially, the sample was intended to include two teachers from each school – one specialising in history and one in geography – across Grades 4 to 7. However, the number of participants was adjusted due to the consolidation of teaching roles within the selected schools. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews using a set of predetermined questions aimed at generating detailed responses from the ten (10) participants. Additionally, the study included document analysis of summative assessments. Specifically, one summative assessment for each grade (4 to 7) from the 2022/23 financial year was collected from both schools, resulting in a total of 16 summative assessments analysed.

1.9. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

An overview of the theoretical framework is presented in this section. The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Integrated Course Design (ICD) theory developed by L. Dee Fink (Fink, 2013). This framework offers a structured approach to designing educational courses by emphasising the alignment of learning goals, assessment methods, and teaching activities (Fink, 2013). The ICD theory is found to be relevant to this study as it is pivotal for understanding how to effectively integrate various components of course design to enhance learning outcomes.

1.9.1. Core Concepts of the Theoretical Framework

1.9.1.1. Situational factors

Understanding the educational context, including the setting and specific needs of the learners, is crucial for designing an effective course. The ICD framework emphasises the importance of tailoring course components to align with the distinct characteristics of the learning environment (Fink, 2013).

1.9.1.2. Learning goals

The ICD theory stresses the need to establish clear, measurable learning outcomes that direct both instruction and assessment. Learning goals should articulate what learners are expected to understand, do, and value by the conclusion of the course (Fink, 2013).

1.9.1.3. Assessment methods

The framework underscores the alignment of assessment strategies with learning goals. Effective assessments are designed to evaluate whether learners have achieved the intended outcomes and provide meaningful feedback to support their learning (Fink, 2013).

1.9.1.4. Teaching activities

The ICD advocates for diverse and engaging teaching activities that align with learning goals and assessment methods. These activities are designed to engage learners actively in the learning process and promote a deeper level of understanding (Fink, 2013).

1.9.2. Application of the Theory to CAPS

In the context of CAPS, the ICD framework provides a lens through which to evaluate the alignment between educational policies and classroom practices. CAPS outlines specific educational goals and standards (DBE, 2022b), and ICD principles can be used to assess how well these goals are integrated into teaching and assessment practices. By applying ICD, the study examines how CAPS impacts teachers' assessment practices and whether these practices effectively support the achievement of the policy's objectives.

1.9.3. INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

The ICD theory informs the study's approach by guiding the design and evaluation of the research methodology. It helps in identifying how theoretical principles can be applied to real-world educational settings, particularly in assessing the implementation of CAPS. This alignment ensures that the study's conclusions are grounded in a robust theoretical framework, providing valuable insights into improving educational practices and policy implementation (Fink, 2013; DBE, 2022a).

Overall, the theoretical framework of this study provides a comprehensive basis for analysing the effectiveness of educational policies and practices. By integrating ICD principles with the CAPS framework, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how theoretical concepts are applied in practice, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes.

1.10. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Inconsistencies in the implementation of the social sciences curriculum and assessment in South African public schools may stem from inadequate or ineffective professional development programmes. These programmes often fall short in providing teachers with the essential skills and competencies to implement and measure learning outcomes consistently. By comparing the implementation of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks among social sciences teachers, this study aims to clarify measurable outcomes and enhance the level of accountability and compliance. Ensuring that teaching and learning are assessed as fair, valid, and reliable is essential for educational quality (UNESCO, 2019).

The importance of this study lies in its potential to identify areas where teachers may require additional support and training, thereby addressing gaps in professional development. Specifically, the study focuses on summative assessments, such as end-of-year examinations, which are crucial for evaluating learner performance within the prescribed policy frameworks. The findings are expected to contribute to greater consistency and comparability in the implementation of CAPS among social sciences teachers in primary schools. Ultimately, this research aims to promote more effective and equitable teaching and learning practices across the educational system.

1.11. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following key concepts inform the understanding of the dissertation.

1.11.1. ACCOUNTABILITY

Ghaicha (2016) defines accountability as the responsibility of educational institutions, including teachers and administrators, to demonstrate their effectiveness in improving learner outcomes and to be held accountable for their performance. This involves establishing clear benchmarks, consistently tracking progress, and making adjustments to continuously improve educational quality.

Darling-Hammond and Oakes (2023) refer to accountability as the process by which schools and teachers are held responsible for learner achievement and overall performance. This includes being subject to evaluation based on learner outcomes, ensuring that teaching methods and practices are aligned with educational goals and standards, and taking corrective actions to address areas of underperformance. This definition is better suited for this study because it emphasises the processes and mechanisms by which schools and teachers are evaluated based on learner outcomes and performance. It aligns with the study's focus on assessing how teachers' practices meet educational standards and goals. It addresses the need for performance-based evaluation and corrective actions, which are crucial for understanding the effectiveness of curriculum and assessment policy implementation.

1.11.2. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is defined by Hattie and Timperley (2023) as the process of systematically collecting and analysing data on learner learning to make informed decisions about teaching effectiveness, learner progress, and educational outcomes. This process involves various methods and tools to assess and document learners' knowledge, skills, and performance, thereby guiding instructional practices and curriculum adjustments. According to Ghaicha (2016), assessment includes techniques that teachers use to evaluate learners' readiness, progress, skills development, and educational needs.

For this study, assessment specifically refers to summative assessments or end-of-year examination papers, as outlined by CAPS (DBE, 2022a). This definition is preferred because it explicitly relates to the types of assessments being studied (i.e., summative assessments and end-of-year examinations) and ties directly to CAPS. It provides a clear context for understanding the role of assessments in the study and aligns well with the focus on evaluating how these assessments are used to meet educational objectives in social sciences.

1.11.3. CURRICULUM

Curriculum refers to the structured set of lessons and academic content provided to learners in a school, course, or educational programme. It includes the subjects, topics, and educational materials used to shape and organise the teaching and learning process (DBE, 2022b).

According to the National Research Council (2012), the curriculum functions as a detailed plan that translates broad educational objectives set by standards into specific instructional practices. This concept is similar to how chapter titles or unit headings in a textbook organise and summarise key ideas (National Research Council, 2012).

Smith and O'Day (2023) define curriculum as a detailed blueprint that translates broad educational standards into specific, manageable steps and content to be covered over shorter intervals, like a semester or an academic year. For example, if educational standards stipulate that learners must understand how historical events have shaped contemporary society, the curriculum will outline comprehensive lessons, interactive activities, and assessments to help achieve this overarching objective. This definition is more applicable for this study because it emphasises the comprehensive nature of an effectively crafted social sciences curriculum that not only aligns with standards, but also clearly documents how this alignment is achieved. This approach aligns closely with the study's focus on examining how the CAPS is implemented, as it covers not only the content and subjects but also the planned lessons and activities designed to meet educational objectives.

1.11.4. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS)

Mertens (2020) defines a curriculum and assessment policy statement as a comprehensive framework that specifies the policies and procedures related to curriculum and assessment within a particular educational context. A statement provides clear guidelines and rules for implementing the curriculum and assessment framework, outlining how its principles are applied in practice. Teachers use it to guide daily operations and decision-making related to curriculum and assessment, ensuring consistency and clarity in achieving educational goals and evaluating learner performance (Mertens, 2020).

CAPS is a detailed and specific policy document that operates within the broader framework of the NCS for Grades R–12. It outlines precise learning outcomes, content, and assessment methods for each subject and grade, ensuring consistent and effective curriculum implementation in line with the NCS objectives. CAPS offers teachers clear guidelines on what to teach, how to assess learners, and how to meet the educational standards set by the NCS (DBE, 2022b). This definition aligns with the study by highlighting that CAPS serves as a practical policy document that translates the broader vision and standards of education into actionable guidelines and detailed requirements for curriculum content and assessment across various subjects and grade levels. This supports the consistent application of educational policies across different contexts.

1.11.5. IMPLEMENTATION

Gannon and Duffy (2023) refer to implementation as the process of executing a set of planned actions or policies in a structured manner to achieve specific objectives. This includes deploying resources, coordinating activities, and monitoring progress to ensure that the intended results are realised.

Ghaicha (2016) defines implementation as a systematic approach of applying educational strategies and policies, including recognising and addressing professional development needs, integrating new methodologies, tracking their impact, and making iterative improvements to enhance teaching effectiveness and learner growth. This definition is preferred because it captures the comprehensive and systematic approach to applying educational policies, encompassing

professional development, methodology integration, and impact assessment. It aligns closely with the study's focus on evaluating how teachers apply the CAPS framework, ensuring the process is thorough and adaptable for improving educational outcomes.

1.11.6. LEARNING

Learning refers to the lasting change in an individual's behaviour or understanding that is brought about by experience or education (Schunk, 2023). This definition emphasises the impact of experience and the transformative nature of learning, which influences how people engage with their environment and process information (Schunk, 2023).

Mayer (2023) describes learning as a process through which individuals develop new knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes by engaging in study, instruction, or experience. This process entails integrating new information into existing cognitive frameworks, allowing individuals to adjust their behaviour and understanding in response to new experiences. This definition is preferred because it emphasizes the process of obtaining and assimilating new skills and knowledge, which is directly relevant to understanding how learners engage with and benefit from the CAPS curriculum. It highlights the significance of both cognitive processes and educational experiences in facilitating effective learning.

1.11.7. NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT GRADES R – 12

Hattie and Zierer (2021) state that a curriculum and assessment policy framework serves as a foundational guide for the design and implementation of curriculum and assessment policies. It defines the scope, objectives, and strategic direction, shaping the development of more specific curriculum and assessment documents and practices. By providing a conceptual structure, it informs and supports the creation of detailed policies and procedures.

The NCS for Grades R–12 is the official framework established by the DBE, providing comprehensive guidelines for curriculum and assessment in South African public schools. This policy statement details the educational objectives, content, and evaluation processes for all subjects, aiming to standardise educational practices and

promote effective learning across all grade levels (DBE, 2022b). This definition clearly outlines the role of the NCS as a comprehensive framework that standardises educational practices and provides detailed guidelines for both curriculum and assessment. It emphasises the document's purpose in promoting effective learning and ensuring consistency across all grades, which aligns with this study's focus on implementing CAPS within the broader NCS framework.

1.11.8. SOCIAL SCIENCES

Giddens et al. (2023) describe social sciences as the exploration of human society and interpersonal dynamics. It includes various disciplines that analyse how individuals engage with one another, their social structures, and the surrounding environments. This field includes subjects such as history, geography, economics, and sociology, which collectively analyse the complexities of human behaviour and societal structures.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2023) defines social sciences as a comprehensive field that integrates social sciences and humanities with the aim of promoting civic awareness and responsibility. This broad field encompasses various disciplines such as sociology, economics, political science, history, anthropology, civics, and geography. Additionally, because humanities are often included within social sciences, some curricula cover subjects such as literature, art, communication, philosophy, psychology, religion, and culture. Many educational institutions employ an interdisciplinary approach to teaching social sciences, which helps to integrate diverse perspectives and subjects (NCSS, 2023). The primary goal of social sciences education is to prepare learners for active citizenship by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become informed, responsible citizens who can make positive contributions to their communities and uphold moral and civic standards (NCSS, 2023).

Laraba (2015) notes that social sciences education varies widely across countries and among teachers. The social sciences curriculum is increasingly recognised as essential for advancing equity, inclusion, and sustainable development. It is crucial in tackling poverty, promoting tolerance, and developing informed societies. The curriculum is designed to facilitate personal and community development, encourage

active citizenship, and improve individual lives. Its primary goal is to empower learners to make thoughtful and informed decisions that promote the common good in a diverse and interconnected world. By studying social sciences as a subject in schools, learners gain insights into their societal roles and historical contexts, understanding how cause and effect shape interactions between individuals, groups, and nations. As learners progress, the study of history enhances their research and critical thinking skills, which are essential in today's world. Consequently, social sciences are highly valued in education for their contribution to comprehensive human development (Laraba, 2015).

Social sciences explore the interactions between individuals, their societies, and their environments. It encompasses both history and geography, aiming to help learners comprehend how human societies evolve, how people relate to their environments, and how they interact across time and space. This subject promotes critical thinking and encourages exploration of historical and geographical contexts to better understand contemporary social issues and global interdependencies (DBE, 2022a). This definition is well-suited to this study because it provides a broad understanding of the social sciences as an interdisciplinary field that explores various aspects of human society and relationships. It aligns with the study's focus on social sciences as an integrated subject that includes history and geography, reflecting the wide range of topics addressed within the CAPS framework.

1.11.9. STANDARDS

The American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education (2022) define standards as specific, written descriptions that outline what learners should understand and be capable of achieving at various stages of their education. These benchmarks serve as clear goals for learner learning and performance, providing teachers with guidelines to measure and ensure that educational objectives are met.

Standards in social sciences set broad goals and expectations for learning, encompassing areas such as historical events, geographical concepts, and civic principles. These standards specify the skills and knowledge learners are expected to acquire at various grade levels, serving as a guide for what should be taught and

learned throughout the educational process. However, these standards alone do not constitute a curriculum. Instead, they offer a framework of general objectives that the curriculum must develop into specific lesson plans, instructional strategies, and assessment methods (Smith & O'Day, 2023). This definition is particularly relevant for this study as it emphasises the role of standards in guiding teaching practices and assessing learner progress, which is critical for the implementation of CAPS in social sciences. It highlights how standards help ensure consistent educational outcomes across different stages, aligning with the study's focus on the effective implementation of curriculum and assessment policies.

1.11.10. TEACHING

Hattie and Yates (2019) define teaching as the process of interacting with learners to help them grasp and use knowledge, concepts, and skills effectively. This process involves several essential elements, such as planning and organising the curriculum, selecting appropriate content, delivering lessons, assessing learner understanding, and reflecting on and refining teaching methods to enhance learning outcomes (Hattie & Yates, 2019).

According to Loughran (2022), teaching is the active process of engaging with learners to facilitate their understanding and use of knowledge, concepts, and skills. This encompasses the planning and selection of content, the delivery of instructional material, the assessment of learning outcomes, and ongoing reflection to improve instructional practices. This definition is preferred because it provides a comprehensive view of teaching as an interactive and dynamic process. It includes crucial aspects such as planning, content selection, delivery, assessment, and reflection, which are integral to effectively implementing the CAPS framework in social sciences. The focus on continuous improvement and interaction aligns closely with the study's aim to explore how teachers implement and adapt their practices within the curriculum.

1.12. ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive introduction to the research by presenting the topic, outlining the study's aims and objectives, defining the problem to be addressed, and posing the key questions that will guide the investigation.

Chapter 2 provides a thorough literature review that establishes the foundation and context for the research topic. This chapter explores existing research, theories, and perspectives related to the subject matter, offering a broad overview of the relevant academic discourse. It examines key concepts, historical developments, and contemporary issues pertinent to the study. By reviewing a range of scholarly sources, it aims to identify gaps in the current knowledge, highlight significant findings, and set the stage for the study's specific research questions and objectives. The literature review serves to contextualise the research within the broader field, demonstrating how it builds upon and contributes to existing knowledge.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used in the study. It begins with a detailed explanation of the research design, describing the overall approach and strategy employed to explore the research questions. The chapter includes a comprehensive sampling plan that specifies how participants were selected and the criteria used to choose them. It also details the data collection procedures, including the methods and tools used to gather information, such as surveys, interviews, or observations. Furthermore, the chapter provides a description of the participants, highlighting their relevant characteristics and roles. This chapter ensures transparency and rigour in the research process, allowing readers to understand the methods used for data collection and analysis to meet the study's objectives.

Chapter 4 examines the analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the data collected during the study. It starts with a detailed examination of the data, applying relevant statistical or qualitative methods to organise and analyse the results. The findings are then presented in a clear and systematic manner, through tables, graphs, and charts, to highlight significant patterns and trends. Following the presentation of the data, the chapter interprets the results, discussing their relevance to the research questions and objectives. This interpretation is aimed at drawing meaningful conclusions, linking the findings to the theoretical framework and existing literature.

The chapter aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the research results and their implications for the broader context of the study.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study's key findings, highlighting the main insights and conclusions drawn from the data analysis. It outlines the results and their significance, demonstrating how they address the research questions and objectives. Based on these findings, the chapter offers recommendations for practical application, policy revisions, or enhancements. It also proposes potential avenues for future research, identifying areas where further inquiry could build on the study's results, address unresolved issues, or explore new research opportunities. This chapter aims to consolidate the study's contributions, provide practical insights, and suggest directions for further research in the field.

1.13. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter, the researcher introduced the background and context that informed the development of the study. It started by presenting the problem statement and formulating the research questions that guided the investigation. Key concepts relevant to the study were defined to ensure a clear understanding of the topic. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the study's significance, explaining its relevance and potential impact on the field. This overview set the stage for the subsequent chapters by framing the study's objectives and importance.

Chapter 2 presents an in-depth literature review aimed at better understanding the nature and implications of the identified problem. It explores existing research and theoretical perspectives, clarifying the issue while highlighting key assumptions that support the research questions. Through the examination of relevant studies and concepts, the chapter seeks to establish a strong foundation for the research, situating the problem within the broader academic context.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER

Chapter 1 introduced the field of interest, outlining the research design and methodology as a roadmap for the study while defining key concepts relevant to the research investigation. The study examines the implementation of the CAPS curriculum within the framework of the NCS Grades R-12 in South African primary schools, with a specific focus on the social sciences subject area. While CAPS provides comprehensive guidelines for curriculum and assessment, actual classroom practices often fall short of these standards. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review relevant to the study's focus, organised into two parts. It thoroughly examines how social sciences teachers implement CAPS, providing a structured exploration of the key issues surrounding its application.

Part one of the chapter examines the implementation of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks, with particular emphasis on how CAPS operates within the NCS for Grades R-12. The NCS serves as the overarching framework for the educational system, establishing broad principles and goals, while CAPS details the specific curriculum content and assessment methods for each subject. This section reviews both historical and contemporary research on how CAPS translates the broader goals of the NCS into practice and identifies key challenges and gaps in its implementation. It is divided into four subsections, beginning with an examination of the history and background of curriculum and assessment policy implementation in social sciences. It then discusses teachers' perceptions of the policy framework, evaluates their literacy in assessment practices and, finally, discusses the role of professional development in facilitating effective implementation. Part two of the chapter presents the theoretical framework that underpins the study. It outlines the foundational theories and concepts that guide the research, providing a theoretical basis for the study's approach and analysis.

A literature review serves several functions (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). It introduces readers to key studies that contextualise the research, situating it within the broader academic discourse. By identifying gaps in previous research and building on existing studies, the literature review clarifies the study's contribution to advancing the field (Cooper, 2021; Marshall & Rossman, 2023). Through a comparison with existing

literature, the review highlights the study's significance, contributing to the academic conversation while refining the focus of research methods. Creswell and Creswell (2022) emphasise that this process of integrating literature into a study involves identifying key search terms, exploring both general and specialised databases, locating relevant articles and books, and analysing data in relation to the research problem, questions, data collection, and results.

2.2. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING CAPS: VARIABILITY AND IMPACT ON ASSESSMENT

Variations in how social sciences teachers implement CAPS can create gaps in understanding and application, leading to inconsistent measurable outcomes for learners. These inconsistencies often arise from differing approaches to assessment and planning, including inaccurate evaluations, disputes over prescribed criteria, and deviations from established guidelines (Jansen, 2023; Van der Berg & Burger, 2022). It is generally assumed that teachers who were given the freedom with OBE to design their own assessment strategies found it challenging when faced with CAPS, which is informed with a more standardised and guided approach to assessment practices. Research indicates that such discrepancies in interpreting CAPS can undermine the quality and fairness of educational assessments (Mthiyane, 2024; Naidoo, 2023), negatively affecting learner evaluations and overall learning experiences (Mokoena, 2023). Furthermore, Smith and Brown (2024) and Patel (2023) highlight that reliance on non-standard assessment methods or informal criteria leads to varied and less reliable evaluations of learner performance.

The lack of uniformity in assessment practices and adherence to guidelines can weaken accountability in educational settings, affecting both the quality of education (Jones & Lee, 2024; Thompson, 2023) and the effectiveness of the CAPS framework. These inconsistencies contribute to significant disparities in educational outcomes (Ngcobo & Dube, 2023; Adams, 2024), creating inequities that affect learner performance. Studies by Harris and Brown (2022) and Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith (2023) demonstrate that variations in assessment criteria can lead to unfair comparisons of learners' achievements across schools, further perpetuating a sense of inequity. Recent research shows that teachers who deviate from CAPS guidelines

often assess learners based on subjective rather than objective, standardised criteria, resulting in unequal evaluations of performance (Patel, 2023).

Additionally, inconsistencies in the application of CAPS across different grade levels contribute to unfairness in the educational system. For example, a greater emphasis on formative assessments in lower grades compared to summative assessments in higher grades can create an uneven playing field for learners as they progress through their education (Ngcobo & Dube, 2023; Adams, 2024). This disparity can disproportionately affect learners who have not received the same level of assessment preparation, ultimately leading to inequities in educational outcomes (Jones & Lee, 2024). Over the past few decades, considerable efforts have been made to enhance fairness and transparency in teaching and learning. These efforts have focused on establishing clear standards and ensuring consistency in measurable outcomes by setting explicit criteria. However, there is a notable lack of studies specifically investigating the consistency among teachers in implementing curriculum and assessment policy frameworks, particularly concerning the fairness, validity, and reliability of summative assessments and end-of-year examination papers.

This study aims to explore the similarities and differences in summative assessments among social sciences teachers by examining their alignment with CAPS standards and objectives. It seeks to understand how inconsistencies in individual assessment constructs relate to teachers' overall judgments of assessment quality. The study investigates whether understanding the factors that cause discrepancies in grading and evaluation can lead to effective methods for minimising these differences. Additionally, it questions the practicality and effectiveness of strategies designed to address and reduce inconsistencies in assessment processes.

Having established the context and significance of the literature review, the focus now shifts to a detailed exploration of the curriculum and assessment policy frameworks' implementation. The following section will lay the groundwork for understanding the critical aspects of these frameworks in relation to the focus of the study.

2.3. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS

This section explores the core principles and practices of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks. It examines various studies on the progression and impact of these policies and practices, providing context and insights for assessing their practical application and effectiveness. By integrating findings from key scholars, this section offers perspectives on how curriculum and assessment frameworks are implemented and adapted across diverse educational settings.

2.3.1. IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN THE SUBJECT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

A blended combination of both history and geography methodology, with core content being rich in detail, requires a well-trained teacher to interpret the curriculum and implement prescribed assessment standards. Implementation of social sciences in the CAPS is not a straightforward performance indicator of a teacher. According to Mertens (2020), a curriculum and assessment policy framework is a structured conceptual system designed to guide the comprehension and development of a specific field. It serves as a blueprint, outlining key components, relationships, and principles that ensure consistency and alignment with overarching goals or standards. In contrast, a curriculum and assessment policy statement is a clear, concise document that communicates specific principles, guidelines, and objectives related to practices or governance. In the context of this study, a policy statement is defined as a practical guide utilised within educational environments. In contrast, a policy framework represents a broader conceptual structure that informs the development of such policies (Mertens, 2020). Although they serve distinct functions, both are complementary components within the educational system.

Historically, the development and implementation of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks have been shaped by educational, political, and social influences. CAPS, developed within the framework of the NCS for Grades R–12, emerged as a crucial document aimed at standardising teaching practices and assessment methods in South Africa. Understanding the history and background of these policy frameworks is crucial for comprehending how they shape current educational practices and outcomes. This part of the literature review explores the evolution of

curriculum and assessment policies in the subject area of social sciences, focusing on foundational developments, major reforms, and their impact on teaching and learning. Examining the historical context and implementation strategies provides valuable insights into the challenges and successes associated with these frameworks, as well as their impact on current practices.

The Centre for Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI) is a leading educational research, development, and service agency in the United States. Its primary focus is on enhancing educational standards, assessments, and accountability systems to improve overall educational outcomes. According to the CSAI (2023), effective curricula are developed with clear standards, outlining both the educational goals and strategies for achieving them. This approach promotes coherence in teaching and learning, ensuring alignment with the intended outcomes. Moreover, the detailed, written curriculum plays a vital role in the successful implementation of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks in social sciences. It translates broad educational standards into specific, actionable instructional content, ensuring coherence and alignment with educational goals (CSAI, 2023), enabling teachers to create a well-organised learning environment that fosters both intellectual development and measurable achievement.

The implementation of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks is a multifaceted and ongoing process that requires several key mechanisms. These include securing adequate funding and resources, providing comprehensive teacher training, and fostering the exchange of information and best practices among teachers (UNESCO, 2022). Each of these elements is essential for effectively applying the frameworks in diverse educational settings, ultimately resulting in improved teaching and learning outcomes. UNESCO (2022) highlights the critical roles of monitoring and professional development in the successful implementation of these frameworks. By examining key aspects such as teachers' actions, learners' engagement, material usage, and data collection, policymakers can gain valuable insights into the implementation process. Furthermore, the importance of professional development and alignment with policy expectations is emphasised in the 2021 Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2021), which highlights education's pivotal role in societal transformation and economic growth. The report asserts that "education empowers communities, transforms societies, and drives

economic growth” (UNESCO, 2021, p. 5). It also notes that the quality of an education system is directly linked to the effectiveness of its teachers. Unlocking teachers' potential through targeted professional development and ensuring alignment between the intended, implemented, and attained curricula is crucial for improving educational quality. Thus, it is essential that social sciences teachers receive adequate support and that their practices are continuously evaluated to transform educational practices and achieve meaningful, lasting reform.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), established under Act No. 58 of 1995 and regulated by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008, plays a vital role in shaping the educational landscape of South Africa. SAQA is tasked with managing the development and implementation of the NQF, formulating and publishing relevant policies and criteria, and ensuring that qualifications and standards align with international benchmarks (SAQA, 2001). Its mandate extends to providing comprehensive guidelines for curriculum and assessment policies utilised by Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) and their affiliated providers. As detailed by SAQA (2001), these guidelines are designed to be adaptable, allowing ETQAs and educational institutions to innovate while maintaining the integrity and comparability of qualifications across various levels of the NQF. This flexibility encourages creativity in education and training, ensuring that the standards remain relevant and effective in diverse learning environments (SAQA, 2001).

The NQF is the cornerstone of South Africa's educational system, designed to structure and recognise learning achievements across different levels. Administered by the SAQA, the NQF systematically records these achievements, ensuring national recognition and alignment with outcomes-based education (SAQA, 2001). It establishes a comprehensive structure for developing a qualifications system that adheres to principles, guidelines, and standards necessary for effective education and training. Rooted in South Africa's historical context, the NQF aims to redress past educational inequities while aligning the system with international quality standards and promoting lifelong learning. This commitment is reflected in the NCS and CAPS. The NCS outlines broad educational standards, while CAPS, developed under the NCS, standardises teaching and assessment practices to ensure consistent educational outcomes. Together, the NCS and CAPS reinforce the NQF's goals by

enhancing educational quality and fostering equity, contributing to both personal development and broader societal progress (SAQA, 2001).

The CAPS curriculum for social sciences is designed to give learners with a comprehensive, integrated understanding of both history and geography. Its aim is to expand their perspectives and help them grasp their role in an interconnected world. CAPS ensures that these subjects are taught in a systematic and complementary manner, guiding learners through a gradual exploration of historical and geographical concepts (DBE, 2022a). This structured approach resolves past curriculum inconsistencies, promotes uniform teaching practices, enables more effective assessment, and ultimately fosters a more organised and equitable educational experience for learners. A key factor in attaining consistent curriculum and assessment outcomes lies in the depth of content knowledge and practical application demonstrated by social sciences teachers. As Obadiora (2019) highlights, teachers' expertise in social sciences ensures that educational standards are met, and learners receive coherent and relevant learning experiences.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below provide a detailed overview of the topics covered in the social sciences curriculum. This includes the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6) and the Entry-Level Senior Phase (Grade 7). Table 2.1 focuses on the history curriculum, providing a structured outline of historical themes and periods introduced at each grade level. This systematic approach ensures that the curriculum is both comprehensive and sequential, enabling learners to progressively deepen their comprehension of historical events and concepts. Similarly, Table 2.2 outlines the geographical topics covered in the curriculum, mapping out the key areas of study within geography. This table provides a clear overview of the geographic themes and concepts learners will explore, ensuring the curriculum covers essential geographical knowledge and skills. Together, Tables 2.1 and 2.2 highlight the dual focus of the social sciences curriculum on history and geography, offering a balanced and structured approach to both subjects. These tables provide teachers with a clear framework for planning and delivering content, while giving learners a roadmap of what to expect in each discipline. By laying out the topics in this manner, the tables support a structured approach to teaching social sciences, ensuring that both history and geography are taught comprehensively and effectively throughout the Intermediate Phase and the Entry-Level Senior Phase.

Refer to the table below for the prescribed topics to be covered by the teacher and learners, per term and grade for History.

Table 2.1: History topics Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6) and Entry-Level Senior Phase (Grade 7)

HISTORY TOPICS INTERMEDIATE PHASE GRADES 4 – 6 AND ENTRY-LEVEL SENIOR PHASE (GRADE 7)	
TERM	GRADE 4
1	Local history
2	Learning from leaders
3	Transport through time
4	Communication through time
TERM	GRADE 5
1	Hunter-gatherers and herders in Southern Africa
2	The first farmers in Southern Africa
3	An ancient African society: Egypt
4	A heritage trail through the provinces of South Africa
TERM	GRADE 6
1	An African kingdom long ago in Southern Africa: Mapungubwe
2	Explorers from Europe find Southern Africa 3
3	Democracy and Citizenship in South Africa
4	Medicine through time
TERM	GRADE 7
1	The kingdom of Mali and the city of Timbuktu in the 14th century
2	The Transatlantic Slave Trade

HISTORY TOPICS INTERMEDIATE PHASE GRADES 4 – 6 AND ENTRY-LEVEL SENIOR PHASE (GRADE 7)	
3	Colonisation of the Cape in the 17th and 18th centuries
4	Co-operation and conflict on the frontiers of the Cape Colony in the early 19th century

Source: DBE (2022a)

Refer to the table below for the prescribed topics to be covered by the teacher and learners, per term and grade for Geography.

Table 2.2: Geography topics Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6) and Entry-Level Senior Phase (Grade 7)

GEOGRAPHY TOPICS INTERMEDIATE PHASE GRADES 4 – 6 AND ENTRY-LEVEL SENIOR PHASE (GRADE 7)	
TERM	GRADE 4
1	Places where people live
2	Map skills
3	Food and farming in South Africa
4	Water in South Africa
TERM	GRADE 5
1	Map skills (focus: Africa)
2	Physical features of South Africa
3	Weather, climate and vegetation of South Africa
4	Minerals and mining in South Africa
TERM	GRADE 6
1	Map skills (focus: World)

GEOGRAPHY TOPICS INTERMEDIATE PHASE GRADES 4 – 6 AND ENTRY-LEVEL SENIOR PHASE (GRADE 7)	
2	Trade (focus: South Africa and World)
3	Climate and vegetation around the world
4	Population – why people live where they do (focus: South Africa and World)
TERM	GRADE 7
1	Map skills (focus: local maps)
2	Earthquakes, volcanoes and floods
3	Population growth and change (focus: World)
4	Natural resources and conservation in South Africa

Source: DBE (2022a)

A well-structured curriculum lays the foundation with essential content and instructional guidelines, but effective assessment practices are key to determining if educational goals are being met and curriculum objectives achieved. Assessments serve as an integral part of the curriculum, acting as a bridge between teaching and learning. They provide meaningful insights into the impact and quality of instruction, gauge how well learners understand and apply the content, and inform the ongoing development of teaching methods and learner progress. Aligning assessments with the curriculum creates a measurable representation of educational effectiveness, identifies areas for improvement, and helps learners reach their full potential (Obadiora, 2019). Within the CAPS framework, assessments are designed to evaluate learners' understanding and application of the integrated content in history and geography. By aligning content knowledge with assessment strategies, educational standards are upheld, ensuring that assessments are relevant and effective in evaluating learners' comprehension and progress (DBE, 2022a).

Assessment has become essential for holding schools, districts, and public-school systems accountable for learners' academic achievements (UNESCO, 2019). Globally, educational institutions employ various forms of academic evaluation to

ensure that their education systems yield rigorous and measurable learning outcomes. In this context, the CAPS curriculum mandates that teachers conduct assessments aimed at collecting accurate information about the effectiveness of instruction. This approach helps to establish a clear picture of educational progress and effectiveness. Specifically, the social sciences curriculum within CAPS employs diverse methodologies to assist learners in achieving educational goals and developing a thorough understanding of their world (DBE, 2022a).

In the broader context of educational assessment, it is essential to define and understand various assessment methods to effectively measure and support learning. By clearly distinguishing between different types of assessments – such as formative, summative, diagnostic, and benchmark assessments – teachers can customise their evaluation strategies to meet diverse educational needs. This tailored approach ensures that assessments not only evaluate learner performance accurately but also foster a supportive learning environment that caters to individual learners' progress. Each method serves a unique purpose: Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback to inform learning and improve teaching strategies; summative assessments evaluate overall achievement at the conclusion of an instructional period; diagnostic assessments identify individual needs and challenges early in the learning process; and benchmark assessments monitor progress over time, allowing educators to gauge development and make necessary adjustments to instruction (Gardner & Galanouli, 2020). Understanding these methods enables teachers to align assessments more effectively with the curriculum. This alignment ensures that evaluations accurately reflect the content being taught and the skills that learners are expected to develop (Gardner & Galanouli, 2020). In employing a diverse range of assessment methods, the social sciences curriculum aims to provide a comprehensive educational experience that not only evaluates learners' knowledge but also supports their growth and development.

South Africa's Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL) emphasises that assessment is a crucial element of the educational system, systematically measuring learners' abilities to meet curriculum goals (CITL, 2013). Although a range of assessments is utilised, this study specifically focuses on summative assessments, particularly end-of-year examination papers, owing to their significant role in evaluating overall learner achievement. Summative assessments aim to measure

learners' cumulative knowledge and skills at the conclusion of an instructional period. However, an overemphasis on these assessments of learning can shift the focus from deep, meaningful learning to merely passing tests. In this environment, learners may prioritise demonstrating their mastery of content while hiding their mistakes, which can influence inadvertently lead teachers to focus more on test preparation than fostering a genuine understanding of the content (CITL, 2013). Understanding the role of summative assessments is critical for evaluating their alignment with curriculum goals and for improving the overall educational experience (DBE, 2022a).

By developing assessments that correspond directly with the curriculum, teachers can effectively gauge learners' understanding and progress, providing meaningful feedback that supports their learning journey (CITL, 2013). This alignment not only helps in evaluating learners' performance, but also reinforces the curriculum's intended outcomes, ultimately contributing to a more cohesive and effective educational experience. Standardised topics make it easier to compare learner performance across different schools and regions, leading to more equitable assessments and educational outcomes (CITL, 2013).

According to Section 3 of the CAPS, the purpose of summative assessments or end-of-year examinations is to offer fair, valid, and reliable measures of how well learners have achieved their educational goals. Summative assessments contribute 25% to the final grade at the conclusion of the learning programme. Section 4 of CAPS, along with Chapters 3 and 4 of the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (NPA), outlines the policy framework for creating learner profiles, teacher files, progress reports, record sheets, and assessment schedules. The NPA policy aims to standardise the methods for recording and reporting evidence of learner performance. In subjects such as history and geography, assessments should be administered separately and encompass a range of cognitive levels (DBE, 2022b). This approach ensures a thorough evaluation of learners' understanding and mastery of the material.

Table 2.3 below outlines the framework for the end-of-year examinations in history and geography for learners in Grades 4 to 7. This table is essential for understanding how assessments are organised and evaluated within these subjects. It provides a detailed overview of how summative assessments should be structured, ensuring

that evaluations are specific to the content and skills required for each subject. Table 2.3 facilitates a targeted approach to evaluating learners' understanding in each subject area by delineating the assessment criteria and procedures for history and geography. This focused evaluation aligns with the curriculum goals and objectives, enabling a more accurate measurement of learners' achievements.

Additionally, the table aids teachers in planning and implementing assessments that cover the required content and cognitive levels, offering a clear framework for designing fair and comprehensive examinations. For learners, the table provides clarity on what to expect in their examinations, which can enhance their preparation and boost performance. Understanding the detailed requirements and structure outlined in Table 2.3 is essential for both teachers and learners, as it bridges the gap between instruction and assessment, ultimately leading to a more effective educational experience.

Table 2.3: Programme of summative assessments or end-of-year examination papers: history and geography: Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6) and Entry-Level Senior Phase (Grade 7) (DBE, 2022b)

Programme of Assessment					
Term	Discipline	Forms of assessment	Contents	Marks	
4	Geography	End-of-year examination	Term 1 – 4 contents	Term 1 – 4 contents 25 marks each Total: 100 marks	Year-end exams 75%
4	History	End-of-year examination	Terms 3 – 4 contents	100	

Source: DBE (2022b)

The effectiveness of summative assessments, such as end-of-year examination papers, is significantly improved by incorporating a variety of cognitive levels in the questions. Each assessment should incorporate questions that target a range of

cognitive abilities. These cognitive levels encompass recall, which involves memorising and reproducing factual information (Krathwohl, 2002); comprehension, requiring learners to understand and explain concepts (Forehand, 2021); application, where learners utilise knowledge in new contexts (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2019); analysis, which entails breaking down information to understand its components and relationships (Krathwohl, 2002); and evaluation, involving making judgments based on criteria and evidence (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2019). Integrating these cognitive levels into assessments ensures a thorough evaluation of learners' intellectual abilities, ranging from fundamental knowledge to advanced critical thinking. This approach not only measures learners' factual knowledge but also assesses their capacity to apply and critically engage with the content, resulting in a more holistic appraisal of their understanding and skills.

Table 2.4 organises questions based on their cognitive levels found in end-of-year exams according to the cognitive processes they assess. These levels typically align with Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) or similar frameworks that classify cognitive skills into various hierarchies. Teachers can use Table 2.4 to develop questions that encompass a range of cognitive levels, ensuring a comprehensive assessment. A balanced approach to cognitive levels ensures that all learners are evaluated fairly across a spectrum of skills, rather than just memorisation. By aligning questions with cognitive levels that reflect specific learning objectives, this framework enhances the validity and reliability of assessments. Specifying percentages for each cognitive level allows assessments to align with curriculum goals, which often prioritise higher-order thinking skills. This alignment ensures that learners are tested on all key areas of cognitive development that the curriculum aims to address.

Table 2.4: Cognitive level of questions in summative assessments or end-of-year examination papers (DBE, 2022b)

Cognitive levels	Source-based assessment	Percentage
Level 1 (L1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extract evidence from sources • Answer short answer questions • Remember/recall knowledge acquired 	30

Cognitive levels	Source-based assessment	Percentage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify characters in a cartoon 	
Level 2 (L2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain historical concepts Straightforward (simple) interpretation of sources What is being said by (the point of view of) the author/creator of the source 	50
Level 3 (L3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret and evaluate information and data from sources Identify different points of views Engage in questions of (identify) bias, prejudice, reliability and usefulness (evaluation) of sources Use information from sources as evidence for their particular line of argument Compare and contrast interpretations and perspectives within and by authors 	20

Source: (DBE, 2022b)

Assessment plays a crucial role in recognising and validating individual achievements, as highlighted by Smith and Jones (2021). The quality of assessment practices is important for ensuring credible accreditation, which relies on the principles of fairness, validity, and reliability. These principles are fundamental in establishing the credibility of assessments, ensuring that results are trustworthy and reliable. Credibility reflects the confidence that learners, teachers, and the public place in assessment outcomes, influencing both individual progress and broader social and educational contexts. When assessments align with these core principles, they effectively support the NQF and provide a solid foundation for accurate and meaningful results. Understanding and applying these principles is essential for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of assessments. A closer examination of each principle reveals its significant impact on the credibility of assessment results.

- **Fairness**

Fairness in assessment ensures that each learner is given an equal chance to succeed, regardless of their individual circumstances or background (Mthiyane, 2024; Naidoo, 2023). This means providing equal access to necessary resources and support, removing any biases in how assessments are designed, and applying uniform standards to all participants. By preventing disadvantages related to factors such as disability, language barriers, or cultural differences, fairness preserves the integrity of the assessment process. It also creates an inclusive setting where all learners can fully demonstrate their abilities (Mthiyane, 2024; Naidoo, 2023).

- **Validity**

Validity refers to the extent to which an assessment accurately evaluates what it is intended to measure (Jones & Lee, 2024; Thompson, 2023). This principle includes aspects such as content validity, which ensures the assessment addresses the appropriate subject matter; construct validity, which verifies that the assessment truly assesses the theoretical concept it is designed to measure; and criterion-related validity, which examines how closely the assessment aligns with other evaluations of the same construct. Achieving validity ensures that the results are accurate and reflect the learners' understanding or abilities, offering a dependable foundation for educational decisions (Jones & Lee, 2024; Thompson, 2023).

- **Reliability**

Reliability refers to the dependability and consistency of assessment outcomes over time and across different contexts. An assessment is considered reliable when it yields consistent results under similar conditions (Ngcobo & Dube, 2023; Adams, 2024). This includes internal consistency, where different parts of the assessment generate similar outcomes; test-retest reliability, which confirms that the assessment delivers consistent results when given at different times; and inter-rater reliability, ensuring that multiple assessors evaluate the same work in a consistent manner. High reliability ensures that assessment results are trustworthy, enabling fair and well-informed decisions regarding learners' performance and achievements (Ngcobo & Dube, 2023; Adams, 2024).

According to Smith and Jones (2021), applying these principles requires the adoption of several specific procedures and practices. First, selecting appropriate assessment tools is critical, as these instruments must effectively measure the intended learning outcomes. Second, developing clear assessment criteria is essential, as it provides a structured and transparent basis for evaluating learner performance. Third, training assessors is vital to ensure they are equipped to apply the criteria consistently and impartially. Lastly, establishing comprehensive guidelines for conducting assessments is essential, helping to standardise the process and safeguard the integrity of the overall assessment system. By adhering to these principles and implementing these practices, educational institutions can strengthen the credibility of their assessment procedures, contributing to a fairer and more effective educational experience for all learners.

These assessment practices not only improve the fairness and effectiveness of learner evaluations but also play a pivotal role in ensuring accountability within the broader education system. As UNESCO (2018) notes, collaboration among key stakeholders – such as schools, governments, the private sector, teachers, parents, and the international community – is vital for improving the quality, efficiency, and equity of education. UNESCO (2018) outlines various accountability mechanisms aimed at ensuring that each party takes responsibility for providing inclusive and high-quality education. Without strong accountability frameworks, educational progress can stagnate, and harmful practices may become ingrained within education systems. For instance, if governments fail to establish clear and comprehensive education plans, the resulting ambiguity in roles and unmet commitments can undermine the system, leaving critical policies underfunded and ineffective. This situation is exacerbated in countries where the right to education is not legally enforceable, leaving numerous grievances unresolved. The involvement of multiple stakeholders ensures that not only is there transparency in action but also a shared responsibility in advancing educational goals, making accountability a collective endeavour.

In line with these accountability frameworks, the evaluation of teaching effectiveness plays a crucial role in maintaining high educational standards. Teachers must consider several key factors: Evaluations should accurately reflect the content delivered and be presented in a clear and comprehensible manner; results must

show consistency across different learners and groups, with uniform scoring or grading by various evaluators; and the measures used should precisely assess the intended knowledge or skills, ensuring alignment with their designed objectives (UNESCO, 2018).

The evolution of curriculum and assessment frameworks has laid the groundwork for how educational policies are designed and implemented in classrooms today. As these frameworks have evolved, they have introduced new standards, guidelines, and expectations that influence teaching practices. Understanding this historical context is crucial, as it highlights the foundation upon which current policy frameworks, such as CAPS, are built.

2.3.2. TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

Obadiora (2019) emphasises that teachers' understanding of what to teach and how to assess is crucial for effective implementation of the social sciences curriculum and the achievement of learning outcomes. Teachers' perceptions of the policy framework are often influenced by their ability to properly implement the curriculum, which is a key concern. Chetty (2016) identifies critical gaps in summative assessment design, such as inadequate content coverage and a lack of cognitive and language challenges in questions. These issues reflect teachers' perceptions of how well curriculum and assessment policies are communicated and implemented. When teachers perceive the guidelines as insufficiently detailed or poorly specified, it can lead to difficulties designing assessments that accurately reflect learners' progress and meet the curriculum's objectives. Chetty (2016) observes that vague guidelines in CAPS hinder teachers from effectively using "backward design" to create assessments that are aligned with intended outcomes.

UNESCO (2018) observes that in the United States, summative assessments often fail to distinguish between well-taught and poorly taught learners, reflecting broader systemic issues rather than providing an accurate measure of individual teaching effectiveness. This situation is similarly reflected in South Africa, where teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and assessment framework are shaped by the limitations of assessment tools, which frequently fail to capture the true impact of

teaching. Teachers who work in underprivileged schools may struggle with assessments that do not accurately reflect their teaching efforts or the learning achievements of their learners. Overall, teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and assessment policy framework are strongly influenced by the clarity and applicability of these policies. When frameworks are perceived as unclear or poorly defined, it can affect teachers' confidence in using them, ultimately influencing their overall perception of the policy's efficacy and their ability to achieve desired educational outcomes.

Popham (2018) noted that while all teachers assess their learners, the intensity and impact of these assessments on instruction vary. Teachers' assessments are influenced by numerous factors, including their individual perspectives on learner performance and their interactions with the broader educational environment. In particular, teachers' perceptions of assessment scope, such as its purpose, reliability, and the processes involved, significantly affect how they conduct evaluations (Brookhart & Nitko, 2022). Teachers often assess not only academic knowledge and skills, but also social factors such as learner participation, interaction, and attendance (Brookhart & Nitko, 2022).

Moreover, Gardner and Galanouli (2020) suggest that teachers' assessment practices are shaped less by their personal educational beliefs and more by their perceptions of the role of assessment within their teaching frameworks. Some teachers may view assessment as a standalone process aimed solely at measuring learning outcomes, while others see it as an integrated part of the teaching and learning process, or a combination of both. These perceptions can be influenced by deeply held, often unarticulated beliefs, or by routine, unreflective practices, such as the mindset of "I teach, they learn, someone else assesses" (Gardner & Galanouli, 2020).

Teachers' views on the effectiveness and relevance of assessment practices are closely tied to their understanding of the curriculum and assessment policy. When teachers see assessment as merely a separate, administrative task, they may not fully integrate it into their instructional practices, potentially undermining the effectiveness of the curriculum. Conversely, when teachers perceive assessment as an integral tool for enhancing the learning process, they are more inclined to tailor

their methods to align with the goals outlined in the policy framework. Thus, teachers' perceptions of the scope, purpose, and integration of assessment play a crucial role in how effectively they implement curriculum and assessment policies. In this context, Harris and Herrington (2022) examine how teachers interpret and navigate curriculum and assessment frameworks, emphasising the challenges they face and the support they receive during implementation. Their study reveals that perceptions of curriculum and assessment policies can differ considerably based on the specific educational context and the scope of policy change. They highlight that while some teachers find these frameworks beneficial for guiding their practice, others encounter difficulties due to inconsistencies or inadequate support.

Teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and assessment frameworks significantly impact how they apply these policies in their classrooms. These perceptions shape their approach to designing and implementing assessments, which directly affects their assessment practices. As teachers navigate the complexities of curriculum guidelines and assessment expectations, their assessment literacy becomes crucial. Assessment literacy involves the understanding and abilities needed to proficiently design, administer, and analyse assessments. It includes understanding assessment principles, such as validity, reliability, and fairness, and applying these principles to ensure that assessments accurately measure learner learning and align with curriculum standards. In essence, while teachers' perceptions inform their approach to policy implementation, their assessment literacy determines how well they can translate these perceptions into effective assessment practices. Thus, exploring the link between teachers' perceptions and their assessment literacy provides a comprehensive understanding of how teachers manage the demands of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks and enhance their instructional effectiveness.

2.3.3. TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT LITERACY

Assessment literacy is crucial for teachers, as it involves an understanding of assessment design, various types of assessment, their purposes, and how to effectively utilise assessment data to guide teaching and learning practices. According to Popham (2018), effective assessments must adhere to principles such as validity, reliability, fairness, learner engagement, and significance. A key aspect of assessment literacy is content validity, which guarantees that assessments

effectively measure the intended knowledge or skills. This validity is assessed at three levels: the overall design, the individual items, and the learners' experiences during the assessment (Popham, 2018).

Strengthening teachers' assessment literacy through professional development is crucial, as it promotes more informed decision-making and leads to better educational outcomes. However, even well-designed assessments can be ineffective without content validity. Rigorous review processes are necessary to ensure that assessments measure the intended concepts at the appropriate cognitive levels (Popham, 2018). Teachers who possess strong assessment literacy are more capable of designing reliable and valid assessments, thereby enhancing the overall quality of teaching and learning.

A key concern in the field of assessment is the lack of flexibility and inconsistencies in summative assessments and end-of-year examinations. These assessments often vary in design and execution, leading to discrepancies in evaluating learner performance. Such inconsistencies undermine the reliability and validity of the assessments, creating challenges in accurately measuring and comparing learners' learning outcomes. This issue is particularly concerning when alignment with curriculum standards is essential for ensuring equitable and effective evaluation. Addressing these inconsistencies is crucial for improving the assessment accuracy and supporting teachers in delivering fair and meaningful evaluations of learner learning.

In their comprehensive review of the evolution of assessment literacy within the social sciences, Popham and McTighe (2022) highlight both the advancements in assessment practices and the areas that require further development. They argue that while progress has been made in enhancing teachers' understanding of assessment principles, there is still a crucial need to strengthen social sciences teachers' ability to effectively apply these principles in practice. The review identifies several key areas for improving assessment literacy, with a major focus on enhancing social sciences teachers' ability to implement CAPS more precisely and effectively. This involves training teachers to design assessments that not only align with curriculum standards, but also accurately measure a range of cognitive skills and content knowledge. Popham and McTighe (2022) suggest that professional

development programmes should emphasise practical strategies for developing high-quality assessments, focusing on techniques to ensure content validity, design diverse question formats, and meaningfully interpret assessment data. By improving these aspects of assessment practice, teachers can better support learning and make more informed instructional decisions.

Black and Wiliam (2018) provide valuable insights into effective practices, common challenges, and the influence of assessment literacy on teaching and learning through their exploration of its development among social sciences teachers. They emphasise the critical role that assessment literacy plays in improving educational outcomes and in helping teachers refine their assessment practices. This includes targeted professional development programmes focused on understanding assessment principles, designing valid and reliable assessments, and utilising assessment data to inform instruction. By mastering these practices, social sciences teachers can create assessments that accurately reflect learners' knowledge and skills, leading to more meaningful feedback and improved instructional decisions.

Despite these advancements, Black and Wiliam (2018) identify significant challenges teachers face in developing and applying assessment literacy, including limited training opportunities, inconsistencies in assessment practices, and difficulties in interpreting complex assessment data. Many teachers struggle with aligning assessments to curriculum standards and ensuring that assessments are both valid and fair. Overcoming these challenges requires ongoing support and resources, as well as a commitment to continuous professional growth. Black and Wiliam (2018) emphasise the profound impact of assessment literacy on teaching and learning. Teachers with strong assessment literacy can better gauge learner performance, identify learning gaps, and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. This enhanced ability to use assessment data effectively contributes to a more responsive and adaptive teaching environment, ultimately benefiting learner-learning outcomes.

2.3.4. TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers' assessment literacy is fundamental to improving educational outcomes. However, maintaining and advancing this literacy requires continuous professional development. Professional development opportunities are crucial for enabling

teachers to refine their assessment skills, stay informed about the latest educational research, and effectively implement new assessment strategies in their classrooms. Through targeted professional development programmes, teachers can gain deeper insight into assessment literacy, address gaps in their knowledge, and effectively incorporate best practices into their teaching methods. Thus, focusing on teachers' assessment literacy naturally leads to an emphasis on professional development, as it provides the necessary support and resources for teachers to improve their assessment skills. Investing in ongoing training and development is essential for equipping teachers with the expertise they need to implement effective assessments, adapt to evolving curriculum standards, and ultimately improve learning outcomes.

Educational frameworks are heavily influenced by our perceptions and biases, particularly concerning assessment, which is evident in both teacher and learner experiences (Harris & Brown, 2021; Kane & Wollack, 2021). Criticism of assessment practices often stems not from the inherent functions of assessment, but from issues related to its implementation, including fairness, validity, reliability, transparency, and communication (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2022; William & Leahy, 2022). Recent literature emphasises that while assessments are crucial for educational development, ensuring their effectiveness relies heavily on addressing these implementation challenges and improving the overall processes (Mertler & Campbell, 2022; Guskey, 2023). To address these issues, significant efforts have been made to improve teachers' understanding of assessment practices and the effective use of assessment results.

Developing well-designed and continuous professional development programmes that support teachers in interpreting and implementing assessment strategies is crucial. Such programmes aim to enhance the credibility of assessments and strengthen the overall learning experience (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2020; Sutton, 2018). Despite extensive research on teacher assessment literacy, challenges persist in translating new approaches and theories into practical classroom applications. The emphasis on accountability in education accentuates the need for credible assessment practices, teacher competence, and teaching excellence (McMillan & Hearn, 2023; Popham, 2018). Therefore, investing in continuous professional development is crucial for providing teachers with the skills and

knowledge necessary to manage assessments effectively and meet educational standards.

Many teachers today have an inadequate understanding of educational assessment. Historically, teacher preparation programmes in South Africa have not prioritised assessment knowledge, leaving many teachers with limited exposure to assessment concepts – typically through a brief educational psychology class or a single unit in a methods course (Feldman, 2020; Smith, 2021). This gap in assessment knowledge raises significant concerns, as it affects teachers' ability to effectively measure and support learner learning. Recent advancements in pre-service teacher training are beginning to address this issue by offering more in-depth instruction on assessment practices. However, many teachers still require ongoing professional development to further enhance their assessment skills (Heritage, 2021). Effective professional development should focus on equipping teachers with the tools to accurately implement curriculum and assessment policies as well as to evaluate learning outcomes effectively. This is vital for enabling teachers to design and implement assessments that are valid, reliable, and insightful, leading to improved educational outcomes across schools (William & Black, 2022). To support teacher professional development in educational systems, it is vital to implement curriculum and assessment strategies effectively and consistently within policy frameworks (DeLuca, 2016). Therefore, it is crucial that all teachers undergo sufficient professional development, empowering them to effectively implement curriculum and assessment policies and assess educational outcomes in a fair, valid, and reliable manner.

This next part of the literature review will provide a deeper understanding of foundational theories that guide the research and offer insights into how these frameworks inform the implementation and evaluation of curriculum and assessment policies.

2.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The first part of the literature review addressed the primary research question regarding the implementation of CAPS, exploring key assumptions related to its interpretation, challenges faced, and strategies for overcoming those challenges.

Additionally, the review examined how inconsistencies in assessment practices can undermine accountability measures and negatively affect the quality of education.

In this second part of the literature review, the study delves into some of the theoretical frameworks and conceptual models relevant to the study, providing a foundation for understanding how these perspectives shape and guide the implementation of CAPS. This section aims to elucidate the underlying principles that influence teachers' professional development, assessment literacy, and perceptions of curriculum frameworks. Through this analysis, the review will emphasize how these theoretical perspectives enhance our understanding of educational practices and their influence on teaching and learning outcomes.

Identifying relevant theories is essential when reviewing literature for a scholarly study, as they help shape research questions (Creswell, 2018). In quantitative research, theories typically guide the formulation of hypotheses and are detailed in the research proposal. Conversely, qualitative research may use theory flexibly, either generating it inductively, as in grounded theory, or using it to shape the study's focus, such as in ethnographic or participatory research. Mixed methods research can integrate theories to both test and generate insights, employing frameworks from various perspectives such as feminist or racial theories (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative researchers may refer to theories as patterns or theoretical lenses, providing a structured representation of relationships within a phenomenon (Maree, 2020).

Having explored the implementation challenges and impact of CAPS in the first part of the review, it is essential to now examine the theoretical frameworks that underpin and inform this study.

2.4.1. OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding differing frameworks with a common theme provides key insights into how they shape and guide the implementation of CAPS, influencing teachers' professional development, assessment literacy, and curriculum perceptions. This informed theoretical perspective is crucial for addressing the research questions and informing the study's approach, as noted by Creswell (2018) and Maree (2020).

This study examines how CAPS affects teachers' assessment practices, exploring the assumptions behind their interpretations, challenges, and strategies for

overcoming them. It also considers how inconsistencies in assessment practices undermine accountability measures and impact educational quality. The Integrated Course Design (ICD) theoretical framework is essential to address these challenges (Fink, 2013). The ICD framework emphasises the alignment of learning goals, classroom activities, and assessments, which helps clarify how discrepancies in summative assessments arise (Fink, 2013). Taylor (2020) and Nguyen (2023) note that variations in teachers' interpretations of policy standards often lead to inconsistent assessment outcomes. The ICD framework sheds light on these inconsistencies by revealing how misalignments between learning goals, activities, and assessments disrupt the implementation of CAPS. Building on this, the study applies ICD to explore how such misalignments affect summative assessments, accountability measures, and educational quality. By improving alignment, the ICD framework aims to enhance assessment practices and support the successful implementation of CAPS.

The following subsection delves into the key theory and model that offer specific insights into how CAPS is operationalised in practice. A detailed examination of the theory will provide greater insight into how theoretical perspectives inform and shape the implementation of CAPS, addressing the core issues and challenges identified.

2.4.2. KEY IDENTIFIED THEORY

The following discussion will examine the theory and model critical for analysing the impact of CAPS on teaching practices and assessment outcomes. This theory will provide a nuanced view of how CAPS is interpreted and applied in educational settings, helping to clarify the mechanisms behind the observed variations in assessment practices.

The ICD framework, developed by L. Dee Fink (Fink, 2013), offers a structured approach to course development, emphasising the alignment of learning goals, assessments, and teaching activities while also taking situational factors into account. Its comprehensive model comprises the following key elements: situational factors; learning goals; feedback and assessment; and teaching and learning activities. Understanding these components is crucial for creating significant learning experiences.

- **Situational factors**

The first step in designing a course involves considering situational factors such as the educational context, available resources, and the backgrounds and specific needs of learners. Situational factors encompass the context of the educational environment, including the characteristics of learners and the teaching practices employed (Fink, 2013). Teachers aim to assess the extent of knowledge or skills that learners have acquired by the end of a learning period. Recent literature suggests that practice and reflection alone may not fully capture the complexities of teaching effectiveness. Boud and Falchikov (2020) argue that while empirical research offers valuable insights, the use of theoretical frameworks is critical for maintaining coherence and consistency in educational practices. Despite significant advancements in learning and teaching over the past few decades, a persistent gap remains between pedagogical innovations and assessment practices.

According to Eva and Regehr (2021), pedagogies have increasingly embraced learner-centred approaches, but assessment practices have often remained rooted in teacher-centred methodologies. This gap may be attributed to a reluctance to shift power dynamics from teachers to learners. Furthermore, recent discussions highlight the need for theoretical frameworks that integrate learning, teaching, and assessment to bridge this divide (Panadero, 2019). Despite the availability of these insights, they have not been effectively utilised within the academic community (Panadero, 2019).

In the implementation of CAPS, situational factors are crucial in shaping how learning goals and assessments are integrated into the curriculum. These factors can influence the feasibility and effectiveness of aligning CAPS requirements with classroom practices.

- **Identifying significant learning goals**

Establishing clear and specific learning goals is essential for aligning instructional activities with classroom objectives (Fink, 2013). Teachers adopt this approach to ensure that learners understand the intended outcomes of their education. Setting clear and measurable learning goals allows teachers to define what learners are expected to achieve upon completing the curriculum. These goals provide a framework for selecting appropriate content and resources to support learner success. The process of content selection involves identifying key concepts, topics,

and themes, as well as choosing relevant textbooks, reference materials, multimedia resources, and other educational tools. This systematic approach ensures that all aspects of the course are consistent with the learning goals, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of both teaching and learning (Popham, 2018). The ICD framework highlights the importance of establishing clear learning objectives aligning with course objectives and CAPS standards. This alignment ensures learners' expected outcomes are consistent with CAPS, helping to bridge any gaps between curriculum expectations and classroom implementation.

- **Designing learning activities**

Teachers who move beyond traditional lecture-based methods often incorporate active learning strategies into their classrooms. As Fink (2013) highlights, active learning involves experiential activities, reflective dialogue, and the establishment of motivating and inclusive environments. Once learning outcomes are clearly defined, teachers employ various strategies and techniques to meet these objectives. Effective teaching goes beyond content delivery – it actively engages learners to enhance their understanding and application of knowledge, concepts, and processes (CSAI, 2023). This requires a deep understanding of both subject matter and how learners learn, fostering active involvement in the process. Teachers leverage their learners' previous learning and life experiences to shape the curriculum, playing a pivotal role in identifying learning objectives, selecting relevant content, and designing effective instructional strategies. In the classroom, curriculum implementation includes lesson delivery, facilitating discussions, and assessing learner progress. Key steps in this process are conducting needs assessments, setting clear goals, selecting content, choosing instructional methods, and evaluating assessments. Teachers are at the core of successful curriculum implementation, ensuring all these elements work together to support learner learning (Popham, 2018).

The ICD framework emphasises the importance of designing learning activities that align with clearly defined learning goals. When applied to CAPS, the ICD framework involves developing instructional strategies that only align with the objectives outlined in CAPS while addressing situational factors. This approach strengthens the

relevance and effectiveness of teaching by ensuring that all elements of the course are coherent and aligned with the intended learning outcomes.

- **Creating assessments**

Teachers enhance their instructional effectiveness by incorporating real-life contexts into assignments, discussions, and exercises, which helps learners understand how the content applies beyond the classroom (Fink, 2013). They also provide clear, continuous feedback and regularly assess learner progress to ensure that learning objectives are being met. Effective integration of curriculum elements involves a systematic process of aligning learning outcomes, classroom activities, assessment protocols, and syllabi with the curriculum's context and potential challenges (Fink, 2013). For social sciences teachers, instructional efficacy is crucial for successful implementation of the curriculum in schools (Chetty, 2016). To ensure that assessments are fair, reliable and valid, teachers should plan assessments before starting instruction, design their teaching to prepare learners for these assessments, and seek feedback from colleagues, parents, learners and experts. Additionally, providing learners with ample opportunities to practice and receive feedback before final summative assessments is essential for accurate evaluation of their knowledge and skills (Popham, 2018).

Assessments must align with learning goals to accurately measure learner achievement. The ICD framework reinforces this alignment, ensuring that assessments are consistent with CAPS standards. By promoting coherence between learning objectives and assessments, the framework helps address inconsistencies and enhances the reliability of summative evaluations.

- **Aligning course components**

A key aspect of the ICD framework is ensuring that all course components are aligned to support the achievement of learning goals cohesively. This alignment creates consistency across the course, with all parts working towards the same objectives, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of instruction.

Recent studies emphasise the importance of alignment in enhancing educational outcomes. For example, research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) highlights how aligning learning objectives, instruction, and assessment leads to improved learner

performance and greater consistency in educational practices. By systematically aligning course components, teachers create a coherent and effective learning environment that enhances learner achievement and ensures that all aspects of the course are working together toward educational goals. Ensuring that learning activities, assessments, and teaching strategies are aligned with both the learning goals and situational factors is essential to addressing challenges in CAPS implementation. This alignment fosters a cohesive educational experience where each component supports the others in achieving the intended outcomes.

- **The 12-step integration process**

The 12-step integration process is a comprehensive methodology designed to create a cohesive and effective educational experience by systematically aligning learning outcomes, classroom activities, assessments, and the syllabus with the unique context and challenges of the curriculum (Fink, 2013).

By applying the ICD framework, this study aims to explore how considering situational factors and aligning learning goals, activities, and assessments can help address the variations and inconsistencies in the implementation of CAPS. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how to enhance the implementation of CAPS, improve assessment practices, and ultimately contribute to better educational outcomes.

2.4.3. INTEGRATION AND APPLICATION OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Integrating and applying the theoretical framework in educational practice is crucial for effective curriculum design and implementation. This section explores how integrating theoretical perspectives such as the ICD framework can enhance alignment between learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment methods, particularly in the context of CAPS. By systematically integrating these components, teachers can address the challenges posed by diverse educational contexts and enhance the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning (Fink, 2013; Mertler, 2021). The integration process involves the following:

- **Situational analysis** – understanding the unique context of the educational setting, including the learners' needs and the specific challenges of the

curriculum (Merriam & Bierema, 2019). This step is essential for tailoring instructional strategies and assessments to fit the local context and learner characteristics.

- **Goal alignment** – establishing clear, measurable learning objectives that guide the development of instructional activities and assessments. This alignment ensures that all course components work towards achieving the intended educational outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2019; Smith & Ragan, 2022).
- **Activity design** – creating engaging and relevant learning activities that support the achievement of learning goals. This step involves designing activities that address the content while encouraging active learner participation and critical thinking (Brame, 2019; Hattie & Yates, 2019).
- **Assessment development** – creating assessments that effectively track learner progress in relation to the learning objectives. These assessments should be closely aligned with teaching activities and offer valuable feedback to support learner growth (Black & Wiliam, 2018; Popham, 2018).

In the context of CAPS, applying these integration principles involves ensuring that the curriculum design aligns with the policy's objectives and standards. While CAPS provides a structured framework for curriculum implementation, its effectiveness depends on teachers' ability to integrate its guidelines into practical teaching and assessment practices (DBE, 2022b). For example:

- **Curriculum alignment** – teachers should align their lesson plans, teaching methods, and assessment tasks with the CAPS requirements to ensure that learners meet the specified learning outcomes (DBE, 2022b).
- **Instructional strategies** – teachers need to tailor their instructional strategies to address the diverse needs of learners while adhering to CAPS guidelines. This includes incorporating a range of teaching methods and resources that promote tailored instruction (Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2018).
- **Ongoing evaluation** – regular evaluation and reflection on the effectiveness of curriculum and assessment practices are crucial. This iterative process helps

teachers make the necessary adjustments and improvements based on learner feedback and performance data (Guskey, 2019; Wiliam, 2018).

By integrating the theoretical framework with practical applications, teachers can enhance the alignment and coherence of their curriculum design, ultimately enhancing the quality of education and learner outcomes.

2.4.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The theoretical framework will shape the research questions by focusing on the interplay between policy implementation and educational outcomes. It will also shape data analysis by offering a perspective to evaluate the effectiveness and challenges of CAPS. Understanding and applying the theoretical frameworks, such as the ICD framework, has significant implications for this study, which examines the implementation of CAPS and its effects on teachers' assessment practices. Insights gained from frameworks like ICD can significantly inform the study in several keyways:

- **Enhance alignment in CAPS implementation**

The ICD framework emphasises the importance of aligning learning goals, teaching activities, and assessments. For this study, applying ICD principles means ensuring that the implementation of CAPS is coherent and integrated. This alignment helps to identify and address discrepancies between the intended learning outcomes of CAPS and actual classroom practices. By focusing on alignment, the study can reveal how misalignments affect educational outcomes and offer recommendations for improving the consistency and effectiveness of CAPS implementation (Fink, 2013; Mertler, 2021).

- **Addressing contextual challenges**

The ICD framework highlights the role of situational factors in course design. Understanding the local context – including the diverse needs of learners, school resources, and teacher expertise – is crucial for the effective implementation of CAPS. This study will explore how situational factors influence the application of CAPS and identify strategies to tailor the policy to fit specific educational contexts better. Recent research emphasises the importance of context in curriculum

implementation, noting that effective adaptation requires a nuanced understanding of local conditions (Hattie & Yates, 2019; Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2018).

- **Inform professional development**

This study will benefit from the ICD framework's focus on continuous feedback and professional development. By incorporating ICD principles, this research can offer valuable insights into how continuous teacher training and support can improve the alignment between CAPS standards and classroom practices. Effective professional development is essential for equipping teachers to implement CAPS consistently and overcome the challenges they face. Research shows that focused professional development can greatly enhance teachers' instructional methods and assessment techniques (Guskey, 2019; Desimone, 2016).

- **Improve assessment practices**

A key principle of the ICD framework is the alignment of assessments with learning goals. This study will apply this principle to evaluate how effectively assessments in CAPS align with the intended learning outcomes and contribute to fair and reliable evaluations of learner performance. By examining the alignment of assessments with CAPS standards, the study aims to identify areas for improvement and propose solutions to enhance the fairness, reliability and validity of summative assessments (Popham, 2018; Black & Wiliam, 2018).

- **Provide actionable recommendations**

The insights gained from applying ICD will inform actionable recommendations for improving CAPS implementation. These recommendations will focus on enhancing alignment, addressing contextual challenges, and supporting teachers through professional development. The goal is to provide practical strategies that teachers and policymakers can implement to achieve more effective and coherent implementation of CAPS, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes (Smith & Ragan, 2022; Brame, 2019).

Figure 2.1 below provides a diagrammatic overview of the ICD theory (Fink, 2013), illustrating the interconnectedness of learning goals, assessment methods, teaching activities, and context. This alignment aims to enhance the overall effectiveness of course design. The diagram serves as a tool for analysing how theoretical principles

apply to the practical challenges of implementing CAPS, helping to improve teachers' assessment practices and contributing to more effective educational practices.

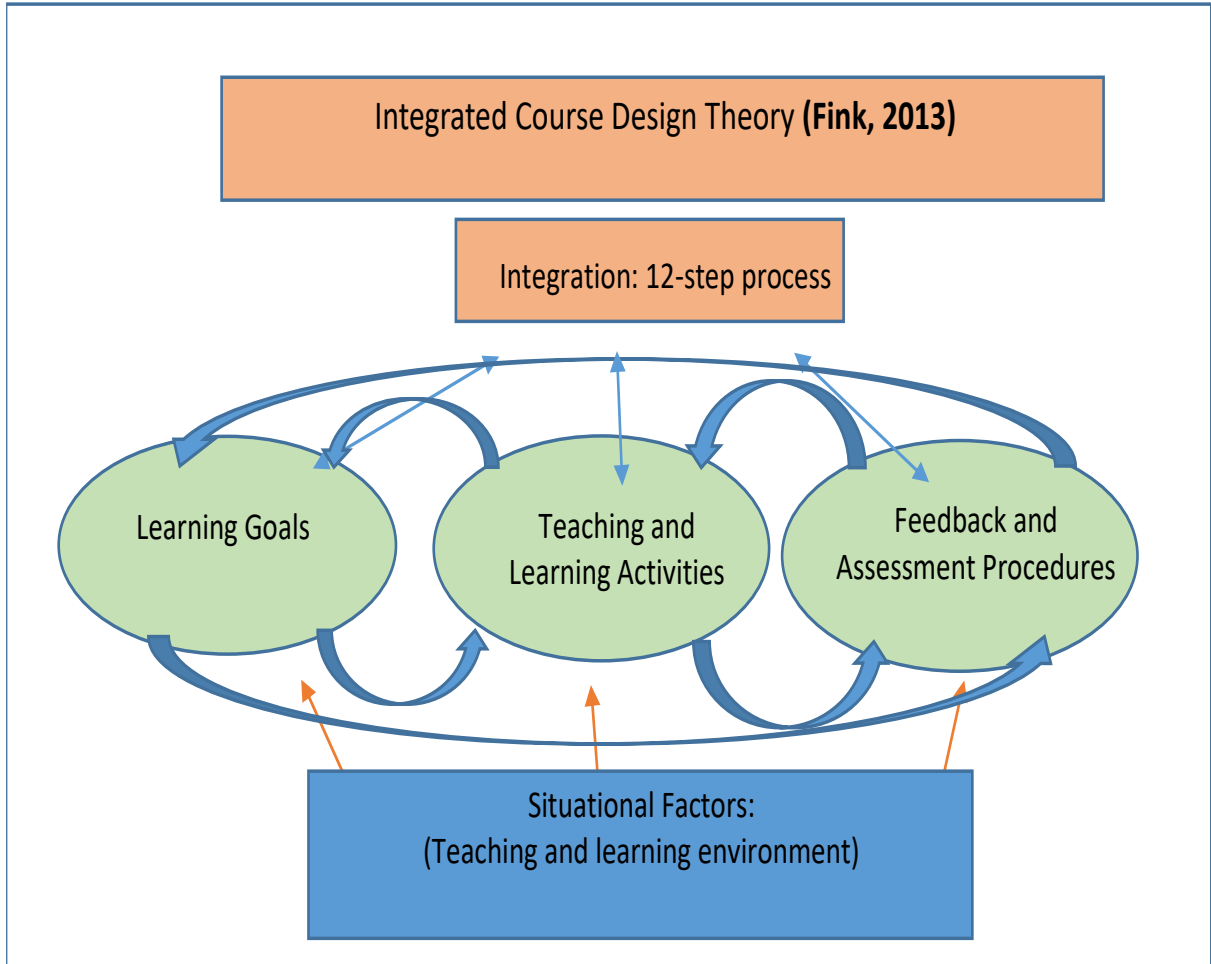


Figure 2.1: Key components of the Integrated Course Design Theory (adapted, Fink, 2013)

By illustrating the integration of the key components of the ICD theory, Figure 2.1 clarifies how aligning learning goals, assessments, and teaching activities impacts course design and influences CAPS implementation. This clarity is crucial for analysing how CAPS aligns teachers' assessment practices with instructional goals. The diagram demonstrates how ICD principles apply to CAPS, supporting the evaluation and improvement of CAPS implementation. It helps teachers align assessment practices with CAPS goals to enhance educational outcomes.

For this study, Figure 2.1 simplifies the complex relationships between course components, making it easier to assess CAPS's impact on assessment practices and identifying areas for improvement. It gives emphasis to the importance of strategic alignment in course design, which is relevant to both ICD principles and CAPS implementation.

2.5. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

CAPS functions as a central policy framework in South African education; however, its implementation — particularly in assessment — lacks fairness, reliability, and comparability across schools, and thereby exacerbating existing inequalities. These disparities stem from uneven resource distribution, varied teacher capacity, and insufficient professional development and supervisory support, which hinder coherent application of CAPS protocols. Research underscores that sustained, well-structured professional development significantly enhances teachers' ability to design and execute effective formative and summative assessments. Additionally, the absence of explicit assessment principles and practical guidelines within the CAPS documentation further complicates alignment between assessment tasks and policy objectives. The Integrated Course Design (ICD) framework — which promotes coherence among learning outcomes, instructional activities, and assessments — has been advocated as a means to ameliorate these challenges. Ultimately, the efficacy of CAPS depends less on its theoretical provisions and more on the extent to which teachers are adequately trained, supported, and resourced to implement it in practice.

The next chapter will explore the study's methodology, building on the insights and theoretical framework established in the literature review. It will detail how these theoretical perspectives inform the study's approach, ensuring a rigorous and informed investigation into the effective integration of CAPS into assessment practices and its contribution to improved educational outcomes.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER

Chapter 2 provided an in-depth review of the current and authoritative literature on the implementation of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks, setting the stage for understanding the research context. The chapter examined key contributions from prominent scholars in the field, including the ICD theory (Fink, 2013), which offers insights into aligning learning goals, assessments, and teaching activities. The literature review highlighted how previous research has addressed the complexities of policy implementation and its impact on educational practices.

Building on the theoretical framework and context discussed in Chapter 2, this chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the research approach, design, and methodology used in the study. It begins by justifying the choice of a qualitative approach over quantitative methods, then provides a description of the research design focused on two primary schools in the Overberg district of the Western Cape and finally outlines the data collection procedures used. It also addresses the role of the researcher, reflexivity, and theory integration and outlines criteria for ensuring research trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research paradigms reflect the core beliefs and perspectives that shape how researchers view their research problems and formulate questions. In qualitative research, the paradigm shapes both the formulation of research questions and the approaches employed to investigate them, influencing the entire research process (Maree, 2020). These paradigms shape the overall approach to inquiry and can be broadly categorised into:

- **Positivism**, which focuses on objective, quantifiable data, and often employs statistical analysis.
- **Interpretivism**, which emphasises understanding subjective experiences and meanings through qualitative methods.

- **Critical theory**, which aims to challenge and change societal structures by uncovering power dynamics and injustices.

The interpretivist paradigm was used for the study.

3.2.1. INTERPRETIVISM AS THE CHOSEN PARADIGM

The interpretivist paradigm focuses on understanding individuals' subjective meanings and experiences and directly informs the choice of research design and methods. This paradigm prioritises capturing the richness and depth of participants' lived experiences, making it ideal for qualitative research designs such as narrative research, phenomenological research, and case studies (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2023). It was selected for this study as it facilitates a thorough exploration of how social sciences teachers in the Overberg district experience and implement CAPS. The interpretivist approach aligns with qualitative research methodologies and data collection methods such as interviews and document analysis, which aim to uncover rich, contextual insights into participants' practices and perceptions.

3.2.2. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE INTERPRETIVIST PARADIGM

Each research paradigm is built upon three fundamental components: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2023). Together, these elements define how knowledge is perceived, constructed and interpreted within the framework of the paradigm.

- **Ontology** refers to the researcher's interpretation of reality, which is informed by the insights gained through interactions with participants (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2023). In an interpretivist paradigm, ontology acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, highlighting the need to understand various perspectives to answer the research questions effectively (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2023). For this study, the researcher interacted with participants subjectively through interviews, interpreting their responses to uncover the deeper complexities within the data.
- **Epistemology** pertains to the tools and methods used to acquire and interpret knowledge (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). In the interpretivist framework,

epistemology entails employing qualitative instruments that facilitate an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). This study employed semi-structured interviews, using an interview guide with open-ended questions, to collect and analyse data. This approach facilitated a detailed understanding of how teachers perceive and implement CAPS.

- **Methodology** refers to the structured approach used to design the study and answer the research questions (Maree, 2020). It outlines the procedures and techniques for gathering and analysing data (Maree, 2020). In this research, the interpretivist paradigm guided the methodological decisions, resulting in the adoption of qualitative methods such as interviews and document analysis to deeply examine the implementation of CAPS.

By adopting an interpretivist approach, the study seeks to offer an in-depth exploration of the complexities surrounding the implementation of CAPS, offering meaningful interpretations based on teachers' lived experiences. In this paradigm, the researcher recognises the value of subjective meaning and the importance of capturing participants' perspectives. The study relied on semi-structured interviews and document analysis to generate data, allowing teachers' voices and experiences to guide the understanding of CAPS implementation. The interpretivist paradigm also emphasises the researcher's active role in interpreting data, which aligns with the reflexive stance adopted during the study.

3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach operationalises the theoretical framework by outlining the methods and strategies for data collection and analysis. It is directly shaped by the theoretical framework, which offers practical tools to explore and interpret the study's theoretical constructs (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Essentially, the research approach reflects the overall strategy or methodology chosen for conducting the research, rooted in the foundational philosophical paradigm. This approach determines how data will be systematically gathered and analysed, reflecting the core principles of the research philosophy (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The choice of research paradigm (e.g., interpretivism) influences the research approach (e.g., qualitative) by guiding how researchers perceive the nature of reality and knowledge.

Research methodologies are typically classified into three categories: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Qualitative research aims to explore and comprehend the interpretations that individuals or groups assign to social phenomena, relying on open-ended questions and inductive data analysis to derive general themes from specific instances. This approach is distinguished by its flexible structure and focus on contextual and interpretative insights (Maree, 2020). Conversely, quantitative research focuses on testing hypotheses by analysing relationships between measurable variables, employing closed-ended questions and statistical analysis. The approach follows a structured format that includes an introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion, with the goal of generalising findings to larger populations. Mixed methods research integrates both qualitative and quantitative data, utilising the advantages of each approach to offer a more in-depth understanding of the research problem. By integrating numerical and narrative data, this methodology offers a more comprehensive, multifaceted perspective (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). A qualitative research approach was selected for this study to thoroughly explore the experiences and perspectives of social sciences teachers regarding the implementation of CAPS in primary schools in the Overberg district of the Western Cape. This methodological choice was informed by several key factors that highlight the suitability of qualitative research for addressing the study's objectives.

3.3.1. RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

The main goal of this research is to explore the nuanced experiences and perceptions of social sciences teachers as they interact with and implement CAPS. Qualitative research is particularly well-suited for this purpose, as it facilitates an in-depth exploration of participants' subjective experiences and insights. Unlike quantitative methods, which focus on measuring variables and testing hypotheses using numerical data, qualitative research emphasises the depth and complexity of human experiences (Maree, 2020). By employing methods such as in-depth interviews, this study can capture the detailed narratives and contextual factors that influence teachers' implementation of CAPS.

3.3.2. CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Qualitative research focuses on exploring phenomena in their natural context, aiming to understand them from the perspective of those directly involved (Maree, 2020). In this study, teachers' experiences with CAPS are best understood through their daily practices and interactions within their specific educational environment. This approach enables an in-depth exploration of how CAPS is applied in various contexts and how factors such as local educational policies, school resources, and teacher training affect its implementation (Maree, 2020). Gaining contextual insights is essential for developing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes experienced by teachers in the Overberg district.

3.3.3. FLEXIBILITY IN DATA COLLECTION

The qualitative approach provides flexibility in data collection, enabling researchers to adjust their methods as they gain new insights (Maree, 2020). This flexibility is important for exploring complex and dynamic processes, such as the implementation of an educational policy. This study used semi-structured interviews to encourage open dialogue with teachers, allowing them to share their perspectives and experiences in a way that reflects their unique viewpoints. This method allows the researcher to probe further into particular topics, seek clarification on responses, and investigate emerging themes that may not have been anticipated at the outset of the study, generating rich, detailed data that can reveal underlying patterns and themes (Maree, 2020). This richness is particularly valuable when investigating subjective phenomena, such as teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards CAPS.

By analysing detailed interview transcripts and educational documents, the study aims to uncover how social sciences teachers in the Overberg district interpret and implement CAPS, as well as the factors that influence their practices. This rich data will provide insights into both the successes and challenges faced by these teachers, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the policy's impact. The research adopts a participant-centric perspective, focusing on the experiences and viewpoints of the teachers, which is essential for comprehending how they perceive and navigate the CAPS framework. Through qualitative methods, the study captures the voices of the participants, accurately reflecting their experiences rather than imposing

predetermined categories or hypotheses (Maree, 2020). This approach ensures that the research findings are grounded in the teachers' realities, providing a more authentic representation of their experiences. A qualitative research approach was adopted to gain in-depth insight into how teachers implement CAPS. This approach allowed for rich, descriptive accounts of the participants' lived experiences. Unlike quantitative methods, which rely on numerical data, qualitative research is more suitable for exploring complex social realities such as teaching practices and curriculum implementation. The qualitative approach also aligns well with the interpretivist paradigm, as it supports open-ended inquiry and recognises that knowledge is constructed through interaction. The goal of this study was not to generalise findings, but to understand how curriculum and assessment policies are applied in two specific schools in the Western Cape.

3.3.4. THEORY AND PRACTICE INTEGRATION

Qualitative research connects theory to practice by allowing researchers to explore how theoretical concepts are applied in real-world settings (Maree, 2020). In this study, a qualitative approach enables an examination of how theoretical principles of educational policy are put into practice. By analysing teachers' experiences and practices, the study assesses how effectively the CAPS framework meets its objectives and identifies areas for improvement. The qualitative approach is ideal for this study, as it provides a deep understanding of social sciences teachers' experiences with CAPS, allowing for a thorough exploration of their perceptions and the factors influencing policy implementation. This approach offers valuable insights that can shape and guide future educational policy and practice. A qualitative research approach aligns seamlessly with the interpretivist paradigm, as both emphasise understanding the complex, subjective experiences of individuals (Maree, 2020). This alignment allows for a comprehensive exploration of how social sciences teachers navigate and implement the CAPS framework, providing insights grounded in their personal perspectives and the specific contexts in which they work.

The following section will elaborate on the specific research design chosen for this study, detailing how it operationalises the interpretivist paradigm and aligns with the overall research objectives.

3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design acts as a structured framework for conducting a study, specifying the methods and procedures for data collection and analysis to effectively answer the research questions (Maree, 2020). Recent literature highlights several key strategies for designing qualitative research.

- **Narrative research** focuses on individuals' life stories and experiences, resulting in a collaborative narrative that merges participants' accounts with the researcher's interpretations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2020).
- **Phenomenological research**, grounded in philosophy and psychology, aims to describe and interpret lived experiences associated with a specific phenomenon, often through in-depth interviews (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2022).
- **Grounded theory**, derived from sociology, involves generating theories based on empirical data collected from participants. This methodology employs an iterative cycle of data collection and analysis to explore and explain social processes (Bryant & Charmaz, 2021).
- **Ethnography**, originating from anthropology and sociology, studies cultural groups in their natural settings over extended periods, employing detailed observations and interviews to understand cultural practices and social interactions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2023).
- **Case study** design offers a thorough examination of particular cases – such as events, processes, or individuals – enabling researchers to address complex issues in real-life contexts through various data collection methods (Yin, 2024).

A case study design was used to explore how social sciences teachers implement CAPS in two public primary schools in the Overberg district. This design allowed for detailed, context-rich descriptions of real-life teaching practices. The case study approach also made it possible to collect multiple forms of data — including interviews and document analysis — to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and strategies teachers use. This design fits well with both the qualitative approach and the interpretivist paradigm, as it allows for a thorough investigation into how social sciences teachers navigate and apply CAPS, offering valuable insights that challenge existing assumptions, propose practical solutions, and suggest

directions for future research. The selection of a case study design aligns with the interpretivist focus, as it enables the capture of the complexities of social processes through the participants' perspectives. Thus, the research paradigm not only establishes the theoretical framework for the study but also informs the practical aspects of the research design, ensuring consistency with the philosophical principles of understanding subjective experiences and meanings. By translating the case study design into concrete methodological practices, the study effectively addresses the research questions and contributes meaningful perspectives on the implementation of CAPS in the Overberg district of the Western Cape.

3.4.1. ADVANTAGES OF THE CASE STUDY DESIGN

The case study design offers several significant benefits, particularly its capacity to deliver a thorough and detailed examination of a specific case or a limited set of cases, allowing for a deep exploration of complex issues. This approach allows for a thorough exploration of complex issues and offers rich contextual insights (Yin, 2024). By examining a specific instance within its actual environment, case studies reveal the interplay of various factors that influence outcomes, providing critical contextual analysis essential for interpretation (Stake, 2020). Additionally, the flexibility inherent in case studies permits the integration of multiple data sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents, resulting in a multifaceted perspective on the research problem and enhancing the validity of findings through triangulation (Baxter & Jack, 2021). Moreover, case studies play a crucial role in theory development, particularly for exploring new or under-researched phenomena, as they can generate hypotheses and establish theoretical frameworks rooted in empirical evidence (Yin, 2024).

3.4.2. DISADVANTAGES OF THE CASE STUDY DESIGN

The case study design has several disadvantages, the most notable being its limited generalisability. Findings from case studies are often specific to the case in question and may not easily apply to other contexts due to the focus on a small number of cases (Baxter & Jack, 2021). Moreover, the in-depth nature of case studies can introduce potential biases, as the researcher's personal interpretations and perspectives might shape the findings, which could compromise the consistency and

trustworthiness of the results (Finlay, 2020). Case studies are also time-intensive, requiring extensive data collection and analysis, which can narrow the scope of the research and extend its duration (Yin, 2024). Moreover, the unique focus and context of each case can make replication challenging, as the specific circumstances of one case may not be easily reproduced in another study (Stake, 2020).

3.4.2.1. Addressing the disadvantages

Several strategies were employed to mitigate the disadvantages of the case study design. Triangulation was used to enhance validity and address the limitations of generalisability and potential bias by incorporating multiple data sources such as interviews, document analysis, and observations. This approach provided a more robust understanding of the research problem (Baxter & Jack, 2021). To reduce subjectivity, the study maintained detailed documentation of the data collection and analysis processes, while reflexivity was practised by acknowledging and managing potential researcher biases throughout the study (Finlay, 2020). Although case studies can be time-consuming, careful planning and a focused scope ensured that the research was both thorough and feasible within the given timeframe, allowing for in-depth data collection (Yin, 2024). Lastly, while the findings may not be broadly generalisable, they offer valuable insights specific to the study's context, contributing to a deeper understanding of similar phenomena and informing future research and practice (Stake, 2020).

Building on the chosen case study design, the research methodology operationalises the design by detailing the practical steps involved in executing the research.

3.5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology involves the strategies and procedures implemented for gathering and interpreting data, acting as the practical framework for executing the research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). This study employed semi-structured interviews and document analysis to gather rich, contextual data that allows for a thorough exploration of social sciences teachers' perspectives and their engagement with the CAPS curriculum. The collected data were analysed inductively through coding, identifying themes and patterns that reflect participants' experiences and the practical implementation of CAPS. Ethical considerations are essential in this

process, guaranteeing that participants provide informed consent and that their privacy is protected throughout the course of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The data collection begins with careful sampling to select a representative subset from the larger population.

3.5.1. RESEARCH SITE

Sampling is the process of selecting a smaller subset from a larger group to make inferences about the entire population (Maree, 2020). It is based on the assumption that the sample represents the broader population or universe from which it is drawn. Representativeness is crucial, as studying an entire population is often impractical due to logistical and financial constraints. Recent research suggests that effective sampling can yield more precise and detailed insights than studying an entire population, as it allows for more efficient use of resources and a focus on higher-quality data (Maree, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2020). This study adopted a qualitative research design, utilising case studies and interviews, and focused on two public primary schools in the Overberg district of South Africa's Western Cape province. The Overberg district, home to 82 public primary schools, was chosen for its representativeness of the regional educational landscape. The selection of these schools was strategic, providing a comprehensive understanding of the local educational environment. The researcher, residing in Hermanus, was well-positioned to engage with the study sites, facilitating efficient data collection and interaction with the educational environment. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and document analysis, providing an opportunity to explore the teachers' experiences and viewpoints in a flexible and open-ended manner.

Schematic presentations and maps visually represent the geographical and demographic context of a study, aiding in spatial orientation and understanding. These visual aids allow for comparisons between different locations, shedding light on spatial relationships and socio-economic diversity (Wilson, 2023). The Overberg district of the Western Cape is predominantly rural, characterised by extensive agricultural lands and low population density. Understanding this rural context is vital for interpreting key aspects of the research, particularly as it relates to socio-economic factors. The maps provide insight into whether the area is developed or developing. The Overberg district includes both developed towns and less developed

rural areas, contributing to diverse socio-economic conditions that are significant to the study (Lee, 2022). Figure 3.1 situates the Overberg district within the broader geographical framework of the Western Cape province, providing essential spatial context that aids in understanding the regional context of the study area (Google Maps, 2024). Figure 3.2 presents a detailed map of the Overberg district, emphasising the specific region of the study. It outlines the district's boundaries and neighbouring areas, which is crucial for understanding the scale and layout of the research location (Google Maps, 2024). Figure 3.3 illustrates the locations of the two selected primary schools within the Overberg district, providing precise information about their geographical placement. This helps readers visualise the exact sites of the study and their proximity to key landmarks or infrastructure (Google Maps, 2024). Schematic presentations and maps are included on the following three pages.



Figure 3.2: Map of the Overberg district of the Western Cape province in South Africa (Google Maps, 2024)

3.5.2. SAMPLING AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Creswell and Creswell (2020) classify sampling procedures into probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling involves random selection, guaranteeing that every individual in the population has an equal and known likelihood of being chosen. On the other hand, non-probability sampling does not rely on random selection, meaning the probability of selecting a particular individual is unknown, often due to the researcher's limited knowledge of the entire population or its composition. Non-probability sampling includes methods such as accidental, purposive, quota, dimensional, target, snowball, and spatial sampling. Qualitative research typically employs purposive sampling, where researchers deliberately choose participants who have relevant knowledge or experience related to the phenomenon being investigated. This approach aims to gather detailed and relevant information from those best positioned to provide insights into the research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

In this study, participants included social sciences teachers from two primary schools in the Western Cape's Overberg district, specifically chosen due to the focus on the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6) and Entry-Level Senior Phase (Grade 7). Purposive sampling was employed to choose teachers who possessed specific characteristics relevant to the study's focus, including professional experience, expertise in social sciences, and direct involvement with the CAPS framework. This approach ensured that their perspectives were vital for understanding the educational practices, challenges, and perspectives unique to this phase. Their experience was invaluable in providing insights into the practical implementation of educational policies and their effects on learner outcomes. Moreover, their expertise in social sciences, encompassing both history and geography, was essential for addressing the nuances of teaching and effectively implementing assessments. Selecting participants from schools in the Overberg district ensured a representative sample that captures the regional context, which is crucial for understanding how local factors influence educational practices. Additionally, their direct experience with summative assessments offered valuable insights into the design, implementation, and evaluation of assessments that align with educational standards. Initially, the plan was to include two social sciences teachers from each grade of the participating schools, resulting in a total sample size of 16 teachers across both schools. However, adjustments became

necessary since the schools had merged history and geography teachers into single roles for certain grades, reducing the available pool of social sciences teachers. Consequently, the sample comprised 12 social sciences teachers. During the data collection phase, one teacher withdrew consent, and another became unavailable due to other commitments, leading to a final sample of 10 participants. These 10 participants provided valuable perspectives on the educational practices and challenges encountered within the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6) and Entry-Level Senior Phase (Grade 7) of the Overberg district. The sampling and participant selection directly informed the research methods employed in this study. With a final sample of 10 social sciences teachers, qualitative research methods were used to gather in-depth insights into their experiences and perspectives.

3.5.3. RESEARCH METHODS

Research methodology encompasses the particular techniques and processes employed for gathering and analysing data within the framework of the selected research design. It is the practical application of the research approach and design. Employing a well-structured methodology is essential for ensuring the reliability and validity of research findings. The research methods outline the systematic approaches implemented to gather and analyse data for this study, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the study's approach and outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Data sources in research are generally classified into primary and secondary sources, with further distinctions made between official documents and other materials (Saldana, 2021). Primary sources are original data gathered from first-hand evidence. In the context of educational research, official documents such as attendance registers, timetables, meeting minutes, lesson plans, and assessment records are considered primary sources because they offer direct insights into the educational environment (Yegidis et al., 2022). Secondary sources in qualitative research provide essential context, background, and supplementary information that enhance the interpretation of primary data. For example, literature reviews offer insights from recent scholarly articles and books, situating the research within the broader context of existing knowledge (Smith & Jones, 2022). Additionally, previous research studies, including more recent theses or research reports, can offer relevant findings or methodologies that inform the current study (Lee, 2021). Policy documents

offer background on the context and regulations affecting the research topic (Brown & Green, 2023). These secondary sources help to enrich and contextualise the primary data collected through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis.

3.5.3.1. Interviews

Interviews are an essential technique in qualitative research, functioning as a dialogue where the interviewer asks questions to collect data and gain insights into participants' thoughts, beliefs, perspectives, attitudes, and actions (Jacob & Furgerson, 2023). In qualitative research, interviews can be classified into several types, including individual interviews and focus groups (Cohen et al., 2021). Among the different types of individual interviews — unstructured, semi-structured, and structured — semi-structured interviews are the most suitable for this study. They provide a blend of predetermined questions and the flexibility to explore topics more deeply as they arise during the conversation. This approach was particularly useful in collecting rich insights from 10 social sciences teachers across two public primary schools in the Overberg district of the Western Cape.

Advantages of interviews

Interviews are particularly useful for efficiently obtaining rich, detailed data. As Creswell and Poth (2022) highlight, interviews enable researchers to explore complex phenomena and gain valuable insights, making them a powerful tool in qualitative research. Their interactive nature encourages active engagement between the interviewer and participant, allowing for deeper exploration of the underlying meanings behind responses. Additionally, the researcher plays a pivotal role in interpreting the context of participants' answers, further enhancing the quality of the data collected (Jacob & Furgerson, 2023).

Disadvantages of interviews

Interviews can be time-intensive and challenging, necessitating careful management to maintain a balance between structure and flexibility (Yegidis et al., 2022). The personal nature of interviews necessitates participant cooperation, which can vary, and maintaining a neutral yet encouraging stance can be difficult (Creswell & Poth, 2022). To mitigate these challenges, I made it a priority to create a welcoming

atmosphere for the participants, ensuring the interviews were both structured and conducted within a 45-minute timeframe. This approach proved essential in facilitating an in-depth exploration of the experiences and viewpoints of the social sciences teachers involved in the study.

3.5.3.2. Document analysis

Document analysis was a key method used in this study to examine summative assessments or end-of-year examination papers. Summative assessments play a critical role in evaluating and summarising learning at the conclusion of an instructional period, such as the end of a school year. These assessments offer valuable insights into learner achievement and the overall effectiveness of educational practices (Patton, 2019). In this study, document analysis was conducted on summative assessments from the 2022/23 financial year, focusing on one end-of-year examination paper for history and geography for each of the grades (4, 5, 6, and 7). This amounted to eight assessments per public primary school. With the study focusing on two public primary schools in the Overberg district, a total of 16 assessments were analysed. Table 3.1 below provides a clear representation of the data analysed, making it easier to understand the scope and scale of the document analysis conducted in this study.

Table 3.1: Distribution of summative assessments analysed by subject and grade

Distribution of summative assessments analysed Social sciences: Grades 4 - 7 2022/23 financial year				
Subject	Grade	Number of papers per school	Total number of papers per school	Total number of papers (two schools)
History	4	1	1	2
History	5	1	1	2
History	6	1	1	2
History	7	1	1	2
Geography	4	1	1	2
Geography	5	1	1	2
Geography	6	1	1	2
Geography	7	1	1	2

Distribution of summative assessments analysed				
Social sciences: Grades 4 - 7				
2022/23 financial year				
Subject	Grade	Number of papers per school	Total number of papers per school	Total number of papers (two schools)
TOTAL			8	16

The table above categorises the summative assessments analysed based on several attributes. “Subject” refers to the specific assessments being analysed, which in this context include history and geography – two distinct subjects within the social sciences curriculum. “Grade” denotes the educational level of the assessments, covering grades 4 through 7. “Number of papers per school” specifies how many end-of-year examination papers were collected for each subject and grade at individual schools. “Total number of papers per school” represents the overall number of papers collected for each subject and grade at each school, consistently one per grade. Finally, “total number of papers (2 schools)” provides the combined total of assessments from both schools in the district, offering a comprehensive overview of the documents analysed. The examination papers were reviewed for their alignment with CAPS, the diversity and relevance of question types, and their overall fairness and reliability. The aim of this analysis was to gain insights into the effectiveness of the assessments and how well they align with educational objectives, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of assessment practices and their impact on learner learning.

The integration of semi-structured interviews and document analysis in the research procedures ensured a robust and comprehensive approach to data collection, combining personal insights from participants with objective evaluations of educational materials. Following this, the research procedures that outline the specific implementation of these methods will be detailed, demonstrating how data collection and analysis were conducted systematically to ensure robust and credible findings.

3.5.4. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Maree (2020) emphasises the importance of a systematic approach for effective data collection and analysis in qualitative research. Building on the chosen research

methods, the research procedures were carefully crafted to ensure systematic data collection and analysis, as detailed below:

- **Permission to enter the field**

Obtaining permission from relevant authorities is essential for conducting research. Creswell (2018) emphasises that formal authorisation not only legitimises the study but also informs stakeholders about its objectives. In this research, written permission was obtained from the Western Cape Department of Basic Education (WCDE) to conduct the study in the Overberg district, as outlined in Annexure A. This permission was crucial for initiating the study. Additionally, Creswell (2018) notes that while initial permission is required, it does not ensure full access to all information, and ongoing consent may be necessary throughout the research process. Consequently, written consents were obtained from the principals of the selected primary schools and participating teachers, detailed in Annexure B.

- **Arranging the semi-structured interviews**

Creswell (2018) emphasises the need to prepare participants for interviews to ensure effective data collection. In this study, interview times and locations were scheduled in advance, and confirmed telephonically as the date approached. As detailed in Annexure C, interviews were conducted at the participants' offices, with written consent obtained for participation and recording. Each interview began with an introduction outlining the research objectives, the interview's purpose and expected duration, and confidentiality assurances. Creswell (2018) suggests that the purpose of the interview is to create an environment where participants can express their ideas and experiences in a clear and thorough manner. The researcher employed this approach to facilitate open and meaningful discussions.

- **Interview instrument**

An interview schedule is crucial for structuring qualitative interviews (Maree, 2020). I developed a comprehensive interview schedule, as outlined in Annexure D, with predetermined questions designed to address key aspects of the study. This schedule allowed for a focused yet flexible interview process, allowing for both structured and spontaneous responses. Additionally, audio recordings were made with participants' consent, improving the accuracy and depth of data collection (Maree, 2020).

- **Analysing the interviews**

Creswell (2018) recommends analysing interviews as soon as possible, rather than waiting until all data is collected. In this study, interviews were transcribed and analysed promptly to capture fresh insights and avoid oversimplifying responses into quantitative categories. This approach ensured that the analysis remained closely connected to the participants' immediate expressions and context.

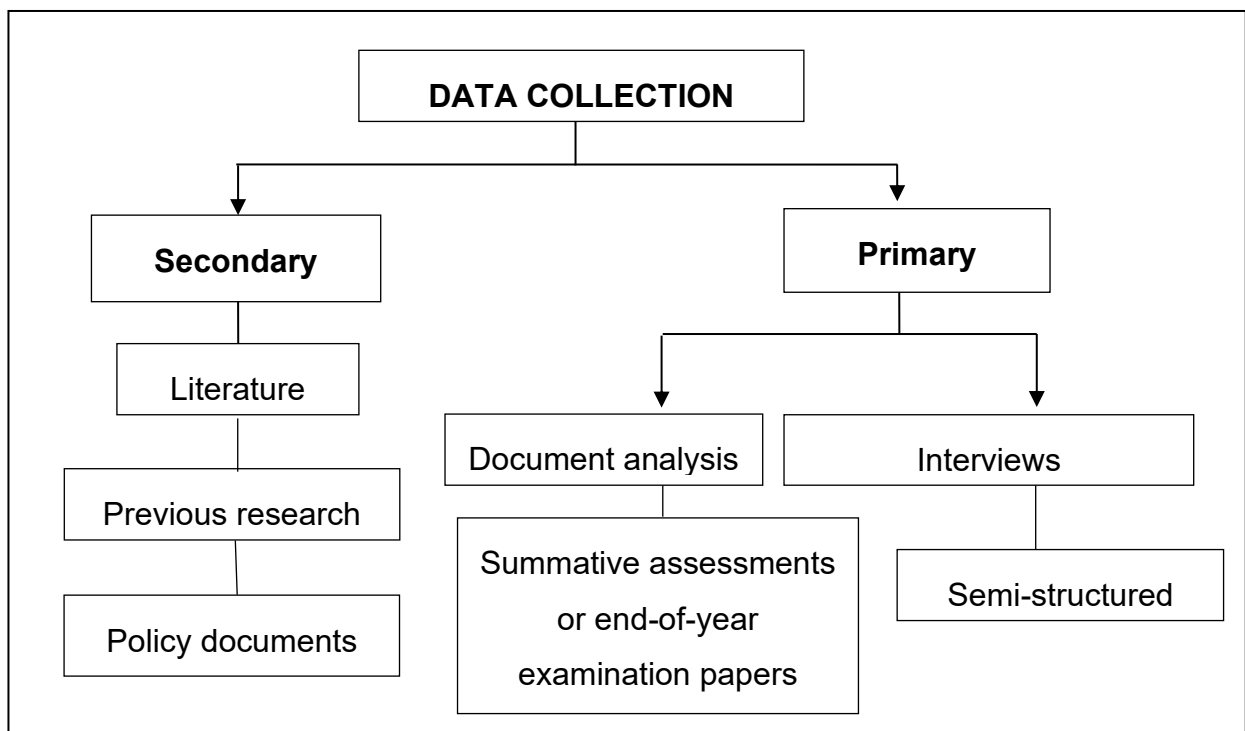
- **Data processing, analysis, and interpretation**

Maree (2020) highlights that qualitative research involves iterative and intertwined processes of data collection and analysis, unlike the linear approach typical of quantitative research. Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously, enabling the continuous adjustment of data collection strategies based on emerging insights, and contributing to a more nuanced and coherent interpretation. Additionally, Maree (2020) notes that triangulation – using multiple sources or methods – strengthens the credibility and depth of qualitative findings, ensuring a richer understanding of the data.

The primary objective of qualitative research is to generate meaningful insights through careful data analysis, transforming raw data into understandable results. This study used triangulation by analysing data in two phases: an initial analysis during data collection, and a more comprehensive post-collection analysis. To ensure the credibility of the findings, triangulation was used by making comparisons across different data sources. Additionally, member checking was implemented by sharing the findings with participants, allowing them to verify the accuracy of the interpretations and confirm that their perspectives were appropriately represented (Yegidis et al., 2022).

Table 3.2 below illustrates the data collection methods used in this study, providing a clear overview of the systematic approach taken in gathering data. A mix of interviews and document analysis was employed, with each method offering unique insights. By combining these approaches, the study was able to obtain a thorough understanding of the research problem. This structured methodology enhances transparency and ensures that the data collection process is thorough and aligns with the research objectives.

Table 3.2: Data collection methods (Researcher's own construct)



The data collected through these varied methods were analysed rigorously to generate meaningful insights. By integrating multiple data sources, the study allowed for a deeper interpretation of findings, with each method enriching the overall analysis. This involved a two-phase process: an initial analysis during data collection, and a more comprehensive analysis following data collection. The transformation of data included coding and categorisation to identify patterns and themes.

3.5.5. DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

Maree (2020) emphasises the importance of a structured data analysis process that includes the stages of data preparation, coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation. During data preparation, the raw data from interviews and documents were organised and transcribed, making it easier for further analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This process ensures rich, detailed information is captured from the context (Maree, 2020), allowing the researcher to assemble and interpret the data in a coherent and insightful manner. As Patton (2019) explains, qualitative data analysis entails observing patterns, gathering relevant details, and reflecting on significant themes to derive insights. This process includes observing, recording interviews, writing field notes, and gathering relevant documents. I ensured meticulous organisation by keeping all data

– such as field notes and interview recordings – separate and clearly marked with identifying characteristics such as time, location, method and purpose of collection. Data were organised into folders according to batches, and participants were assigned identifying numbers for clarity: Primary School A included Participants 1 through 6, while Primary School B included Participants 7 through 10. Table 3.3 below presents the assignment of participants to their respective primary schools and their corresponding identification numbers. This clear organisation ensured that all data were systematically tracked.

Table 3.3: Participant Identification by Primary School

PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION BY PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Primary School	Participants
Primary School A	Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 6
Primary School B	Participant 7, Participant 8, Participant 9, Participant 10

The next stage of the analysis process was coding, where the transcribed data were systematically segmented into meaningful units. Codes were developed inductively from the data, capturing key concepts and patterns. This process entailed an iterative review and adjustment to ensure that the codes effectively encapsulated the essence of the data (Saldana, 2021). To organise the data, I systematically reduced the volume of raw information by distinguishing significant patterns from trivial details. This process involved recognising core themes and developing a structured framework to communicate the main insights from the findings. Data were broken down and sorted into manageable pieces and organised by types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns, or wholes. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy, with thorough review of the data through repeated reading and listening. I also employed “memoing”, which entails writing reflective notes about insights gained from the data by keeping a journal to capture my observations and facilitate deeper understanding (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Saldana, 2021). I had engaged in a meticulous process of carefully analysing the transcribed data by reading it thoroughly and organising it into meaningful analytical units. This involved defining and marking data segments with symbols, descriptive terms, or unique identifiers, and assigning codes

or labels to significant segments. Data were analysed using an inductive thematic analysis approach, which includes data reduction through coding, categorisation, and theme identification (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The coding process began with colour coding the transcribed audio recordings. This method required a detailed, word-by-word examination of the text to ensure accuracy. Colour coding facilitated the efficient retrieval and collection of text segments, allowing me to examine and compare sorted data across different cases. This approach, known as open coding, is described by Saldana (2021) as time-consuming and meticulous but essential for developing a detailed and structured conceptual data model.

The study's aims and objectives, derived from the secondary research questions, were organised into three main themes: Theme 1, Theme 2, and Theme 3. Each theme was further divided into sub-themes corresponding to specific interview questions, numbered as Sub-Theme 1, Sub-Theme 2, Sub-Theme 3, and so on. This systematic approach enabled me to segment the data comprehensively. The process continued until all data were thoroughly coded and initial coding was completed. Table 3.4 below provides a structured overview of the thematic analysis of qualitative data. It organises and presents the main themes and their associated sub-themes, as derived from the data analysis process.

Table 3.4: Themes and Sub-Themes

THEMES AND SUB-THEMES	
Theme	Sub-Themes
Theme 1: Interpretation of CAPS	Sub-theme 1.1: Regulatory Policy Frameworks Sub-theme 1.2: Aims and Objectives Sub-theme 1.3: Minimum Standards Sub-theme 1.4: Roles and Responsibilities
Theme 2: Challenges in Implementation	Sub-theme 2.1: Measurable Teaching and Learning Sub-theme 2.2: Consistency and Comparability Sub-theme 2.3: Compliance and Accountability Sub-theme 2.4: Academic Resources Sub-theme 2.5: Professional Development Sub-theme 2.6: Criteria for Assessments Sub-theme 2.7: Level of Responsibility

THEMES AND SUB-THEMES	
Theme	Sub-Themes
	Sub-theme 2.8: Utilisation of Resource
Theme 3: Strategies to Address Challenges	Sub-theme 3.1: Responsibility of Professional Development Sub-theme 3.2: Situational Factors Sub-theme 3.3: Alignment with Learning Goals Sub-theme 3.4: Integration of Learning Outcomes Sub-theme 3.5: Validity, Reliability, and Fairness

To ensure the integration of the ICD theoretical framework (Fink, 2013) in data collection and analysis, it was essential to align the identified themes with the principles of this framework throughout the research process. The ICD framework emphasises the interconnectedness of individual, cultural, and developmental factors in understanding educational practices and outcomes. It encourages a holistic view that considers how these factors influence teaching and learning experiences. The final stage of analysis involved interpretation, where the identified themes were woven into a coherent narrative that directly connected to the research objectives. This connection facilitated a thorough examination of how the themes addressed the research questions, ensuring that the analysis was both systematic and reflective of the ICD framework.

During interpretation, each theme was evaluated in the context of the theoretical underpinnings of ICD, allowing for a deeper understanding of the findings and their relevance to educational practice. By considering how each theme relates to the core tenets of the ICD framework, the study provided insights that not only highlighted the experiences of social sciences teachers but also offered recommendations for enhancing CAPS implementation in alignment with the theoretical principles. This approach ensured that the findings were thoroughly grounded in the ICD framework, thereby enhancing the depth of the overall analysis and interpretation (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Themes and sub-themes offer a detailed interpretation and understanding of the categories presented in Table 3.4, shedding light on how each theme and its related sub-themes address key aspects of the research questions.

A set of criteria was developed for the document analysis to ensure a thorough and consistent evaluation of the summative assessments. These criteria were designed to

assess key aspects of the assessments, including their alignment with curriculum standards, clarity, and appropriateness. Each criterion was evaluated systematically, with results recorded using a binary marking system: a check (✓) was used to indicate that the criterion was met, while a cross (X) signified that it was not met. This approach provided a clear and objective measure of each assessment's adherence to the required standards.

The criteria included the following: essential details such as the institution's name, subject, grade, test type, and date to provide context for the assessment; clear instructions to ensure learners understand the requirements; a structured division of the test into sections based on question types to promote clarity; and the inclusion of various cognitive challenges, such as remembering and creating, to provide a comprehensive assessment.

Additionally, difficulty levels are quantified to balance the test and accurately measure learner performance; the questions are phrased using specific terms aligned with cognitive levels, enhancing clarity; and both the content and questions align with prescribed learning outcomes to ensure relevance. Marks are allocated based on the importance of each question and section, guiding learner effort, with the total available marks indicating overall learner performance. The criteria used for analysing the effectiveness and curriculum alignment of assessments are outlined in Table 3.5 below. These criteria were applied to history and geography assessments across Grades 4 to 7.

Table 3.5: Criteria for Analysing Social Sciences Summative Assessments for the 2022/23 Financial Year

ANALYSES CRITERIA FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS 2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR			
No	Criteria	✓	X
1	<u>General Layout:</u> (e.g. Name of the institution; subject; grade; type of test; learner name and surname; moderator name; examiner name; time duration; date of test)		
2	Clear test instructions		
3	Test divided into sections		
4	Sections represent difficulty levels		
5	Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %		
6	Keywords of questions suited to the difficulty level		
7	Test covers prescribed learning content		
8	Questions align with the prescribed learning content		
9	Mark allocation per question		
10	Mark allocation per section		
11	Total mark of the test		

Recognising the interaction between the research approach and the researcher's role allows for a more nuanced and transparent examination of the findings. This ensures that the conclusions are not only methodologically sound, but also ethically and contextually informed. The following discussion will focus on how the researcher's position and reflexive practices contribute to the integrity and depth of the research process.

3.6. THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER AND REFLEXIVITY

My background in implementing CAPS has been shaped by my diverse experiences across various schools and subjects, covering grades 4 to 12. Specialising in business studies and history during my studies, I most recently taught social sciences to the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6) and Entry-Level Senior Phase (Grade 7) in Gauteng. In this role, I was deeply involved in high-level administrative tasks and collaborated closely with subject heads for both history and geography. Additionally,

my teaching experience extends to life orientation, mathematics, and economic management sciences.

I also found it challenging to master social sciences assessment practices and thus needed my supervisor's support to understand the potential influence of unknown bias in data analysis. This comprehensive understanding of the educational context and my role as an educator enhances my awareness and sensitivity to the challenges and decisions faced by teachers. This perspective assisted me in engaging with participants in this study and in analysing the summative assessments of the 2022/23 financial year.

However, my prior experience as an educator also introduced certain biases to this study. To avoid prejudice, participants were selected based on their characteristics and the representativeness of social sciences teachers in the Intermediate Phase and the Entry-Level Senior Phase. Written permission to conduct the study at two public primary schools in the Overberg district, where I relocated to in 2021, was obtained from the Western Cape Department of Basic Education (WCDE). Despite my efforts to maintain objectivity, my biases may influence how I perceive and interpret the data and experiences gathered. I recognise that primary school structures differ significantly, making it challenging to identify commonalities between schools. As I explored how social sciences teachers adhere to and are accountable for the standards of fair, valid, and reliable teaching and learning in their implementation of CAPS, I hold high expectations for this study. I consider this research necessary and looked forward to uncovering diverse perspectives from participants to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on social science assessment practices. Throughout this process, I have learned to adapt calmly to unexpected challenges and value the importance and virtue of patience and perseverance. I struggled to balance my work, life, and family roles with my research ambition. A lot of self-reflection helped me to realise that I needed to focus and get the research done in the academic manner required. Learning to write academically and objectively is an ongoing process, and I am thankful for the in-depth guidance my supervisor shared with me so openly.

3.7. THE ROLE OF THEORY

Qualitative research is inherently interpretative, involving close and sustained interaction between the researcher and participants. This immersive approach enables researchers to explore phenomena in natural settings where human behaviour and interactions naturally occur (Creswell, 2018). Unlike quantitative research, which typically begins with predefined theories or hypotheses, qualitative research aims to uncover and understand the diverse realities experienced by participants.

This study focused on how social sciences teachers interpret and implement CAPS, drawing on their personal experiences and perceptions. The researcher utilised a range of methods, including interviews, and document analysis, as the key tools for collecting detailed and descriptive data (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2023). This data was presented in textual or visual formats to capture the depth and nuances of participants' experiences, rather than relying on numerical representation. The aim was to understand both the processes and outcomes of the phenomena under study, recognising that multiple, context-specific realities can exist (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The research adopted an idiographic approach, focused on individual cases' specific details and particulars rather than broad generalisations (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2022). This approach was consistent with the dynamic and adaptive nature of qualitative research, where meanings and interpretations were co-constructed with participants. Tacit knowledge – the intuitive insights gained from personal experience – was essential for grasping the nuances of participants' lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2021).

In qualitative research, the criteria for assessing credibility differ from those in quantitative studies. Rather than focusing on traditional validity and reliability measures, qualitative research prioritises coherence, depth of insight, and trustworthiness, aiming to provide a thorough and authentic portrayal of participants' perspectives (Patton, 2019). This approach aligned with Creswell's (2018) view that qualitative research aims for credibility through rigorous and contextually relevant verification processes.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Maree (2020) defines ethics as a framework of widely recognised moral principles that govern the appropriate conduct towards experimental subjects, respondents, employers, sponsors, fellow researchers, assistants, and learners. In fieldwork, where research takes place in real-world settings with participants engaged in their everyday roles, strict adherence to these ethical principles is crucial. The following ethical considerations were observed during the study:

- **Informed consent:** Before the study began, all participants provided written, informed consent. This process ensured that they fully understood the purpose of the research, the nature of their involvement, and their rights throughout the study (Maree, 2020).
- **Audio recording permission:** Participants were asked to provide permission to record the interviews and granted it, ensuring transparency and respect for their consent to be recorded (Maree, 2020).
- **Anonymity and confidentiality:** Participants' privacy was safeguarded by anonymising their identities during data collection, analysis, and reporting. No personal names or identifying information were revealed in the study's findings (Maree, 2020).
- **Professional conduct:** Professionalism was maintained throughout the research process. This included establishing a good rapport with participants, respecting their dignity, and safeguarding their privacy (Maree, 2020).
- **Non-harm principle:** The study was conducted with a strong commitment to avoiding any intentional harm to participants. Measures were implemented to ensure that no physical or psychological harm occurred (Maree, 2020).
- **Right to withdraw:** Participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point, without any repercussions or undue influence (Maree, 2020).
- **Research permission:** Approval was secured from the Western Cape Department of Education to conduct research within the Overberg district, ensuring compliance with local regulations and policies (Maree, 2020).

- **Data security:** All collected data will be securely archived for 15 years in the University of Pretoria's database, safeguarding it from unauthorised access and ensuring its long-term preservation (Maree, 2020).

These ethical considerations were integral to maintaining the integrity and credibility of the study, ensuring that it was conducted responsibly and respectfully (Maree, 2020).

3.9. ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH

To ensure the research's reliability and validity, I incorporated Maree's (2020) criteria of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability, which strengthened the study's overall trustworthiness. Additionally, I incorporated reflexivity to ensure a thorough and reflective approach.

Credibility ensures that the research findings are trustworthy and authentically represent the participants' viewpoints (Maree, 2020). Credibility was enhanced by:

- **Recognising and addressing biases:** Personal biases in sampling were acknowledged, and ongoing critical reflection was engaged throughout the research process to ensure that data collection and analysis were thorough and relevant (Maree, 2020).
- **Member checking:** During interviews, member checks were conducted by summarising the data and asking participants to verify the accuracy of these summaries, ensuring their perspectives were correctly captured (Maree, 2020).
- **Rich descriptions:** Detailed, verbatim accounts of participants' responses were included to provide robust support for the findings (Maree, 2020).
- **Data triangulation:** Multiple methods of cross-checking and corroborating findings were applied to strengthen the reliability and validity of the findings (Maree, 2020).

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of a study can be relevant or applicable to different contexts, settings, or groups (Maree, 2020). Transferability was facilitated by:

- **Careful participant selection:** The selection of participants was done with careful consideration to ensure their alignment with the research context and objectives (Maree, 2020).

- **Providing contextual background:** Comprehensive background data and a detailed account of the research problem were included to facilitate comparisons and assessments of applicability to other settings (Maree, 2020).

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the research findings are free from bias and accurately reflect the participants' perspectives and the data collected rather than the researcher's interests (Maree, 2020). Confirmability was enhanced by:

- **Triangulation:** Triangulation was implemented to mitigate researcher bias, ensuring that limitations in the study methods were identified and addressed (Maree, 2020).
- **Recognising potential biases:** Potential biases and their impact on the research outcomes were acknowledged and addressed (Maree, 2020).

Dependability refers to the stability and consistency of the research findings over time, as well as the thorough documentation of the research processes to ensure reliability (Maree, 2020). Dependability was supported by:

- **Documenting procedures:** The research procedures were thoroughly documented, allowing others to replicate, assess, and evaluate the research process for transparency and accountability (Maree, 2020).
- **Maintaining reliability:** Authentic and truthful data interpretations were upheld by including rich quotes from participants that accurately represent emerging themes (Maree, 2020).

Reflexivity involves the researcher's ongoing self-reflection on their influence on the research process and outcomes (Maree, 2020). Reflexivity was enhanced by:

- **Self-awareness:** Regular self-reflection was practised to understand how personal beliefs, experiences, and biases might affect the research process and findings (Maree, 2020).
- **Documenting reflexive insights:** A journal was maintained to record insights and reflections throughout the research process, which helped address and mitigate potential biases and maintain objectivity (Maree, 2020).
- **Transparency:** The researcher's role and perspective were made transparent throughout the research process, clarifying how these factors might shape the data collection and analysis (Maree, 2020).

By adhering to these criteria and incorporating reflexivity, I ensured a comprehensive approach to enhancing the quality and trustworthiness of the study, reinforcing the credibility, applicability, and depth of the findings (Maree, 2020).

3.10. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter outlined the comprehensive blueprint of the qualitative research approach employed in the study. It began by describing the research design, which provided the framework and rationale for the chosen qualitative methods. The chapter described the methodology in depth, including the specific qualitative approaches and techniques used to explore the research questions. It also highlighted the data collection procedures, such as interviews and document analysis, and the tools used to gather rich, detailed information. The sampling plan was discussed, explaining how participants were selected to ensure their experiences and perspectives were relevant and informative. Additionally, the chapter covered the process of ensuring trustworthiness in the research, including strategies for credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Finally, a thorough description of the participants was provided, offering context and insight into their backgrounds and how these factors influenced the study's findings. In summary, the chapter presented a comprehensive and cohesive account of the qualitative research design, methodology, and procedures, establishing a strong basis for understanding and evaluating the study.

In Chapter 4, the analysis and findings of the study will be presented in detail. This chapter will systematically explore and interpret the data collected, highlighting key themes, patterns, and insights. The findings will be examined in relation to the study's theoretical framework, and how they align with existing theories and concepts will be addressed. By connecting the results to the theoretical underpinnings, the following chapter will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the study's outcomes contribute to or expand upon the theoretical perspectives guiding the research.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER

Chapter 3 explored the qualitative research approach that underpins this study, emphasising the significance of understanding participants' experiences and perspectives. By employing in-depth interviews and document analysis, the researcher seeks to uncover nuanced insights that may be overlooked by quantitative methods. The chapter described the research design and methodology utilised, illustrating how these were tailored to capture the depth and complexity of the data.

Chapter 4 will delve into the analysis and findings of the study, building on the methodological foundation established in the previous chapter. It will systematically present and interpret the data gathered, revealing key themes, patterns, and insights that emerged from participant narratives. Through this detailed examination, Chapter 4 aims to highlight the significance of the results, offering a thorough understanding of how participants' experiences inform the wider conversation in the field. This chapter offers an in-depth overview of the participants' demographic backgrounds, contextualising their responses in relation to the implementation of CAPS. Participants' viewpoints and perceptions are presented in their transcribed format to ensure authenticity. Where necessary, clarifying phrases are included in square brackets, but no editing or corrections have been made to preserve the validity of the data. Additionally, the chapter consists of a document analysis of 16 summative assessments or end-of-year examination papers for Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 for the 2022/23 financial year.

4.2. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

In qualitative research, including biographical information about study participants is essential for several reasons. First, it provides critical context for interpreting the findings, allowing both researchers and readers to understand how participants' backgrounds may shape their perspectives and experiences (Flick, 2020). Variations in factors such as age, gender, teaching experience, and subject specialisation can lead to diverse interpretations of educational practices, particularly in studies focusing on integrated curricula like social sciences. Additionally, presenting detailed biographical data enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. Lastly,

detailed biographical data contribute to the transferability of the research outcomes, allowing future researchers to evaluate the relevance of the study's context to their own settings (Tracy, 2019). Thus, the biographical information presented in this chapter is integral to comprehensively understanding the study's findings and their implications.

The study participants were chosen from two public primary schools located in the Overberg district of the Western Cape, South Africa. These schools were selected because of their close geographical proximity to the researcher and the supportive nature of their management. Table 4.1 below presents the biographical details of the 10 participants, including their years of teaching experience, the subjects and grades they are responsible for, as well as their age and gender.

Table 4.1: Biographical information of the participants

Participant ID	Subject allocated	Grade allocated	Years of teaching experience	Age	Gender
PRIMARY SCHOOL A					
1	History	Grade 4	2	25	F
2	History and geography	Grade 5	25	48	M
3	Geography	Grade 6	35	58	M
4	History	Grade 6	12	35	M
5	History and geography	Grade 7	25	48	F
6	Geography	Grade 4	29	52	F
PRIMARY SCHOOL B					
7	History	Grade 6	6	29	M
8	History and geography	Grade 4	30	53	M
9	Geography	Grade 7	19	42	M
10	History and geography	Grade 5	33	56	F

The demographic information presented in the table above is essential for understanding the study context, as it highlights the diversity in teaching experience and age among the participants, which may influence their perspectives on

educational practices and challenges, particularly regarding the implementation of summative assessments within the CAPS framework.

4.2.1. SUMMARY OF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL A

In Primary School A, six participants contributed to the study, each bringing diverse teaching experiences and qualifications. Participant 1 is a 25-year-old female with two years' experience and teaches history in Grade 4. Participant 2 is a 48-year-old male who teaches both history and geography in Grade 5, and has 25 years' experience. Participant 3, a 58-year-old male with 35 years' experience, teaches geography in Grade 6. Participant 4 is a 35-year-old male with 12 years' teaching experience, and teaching history in Grade 6. Participant 5, a 48-year-old female with 25 years of experience, teaches both history and geography in Grade 7. Lastly, participant 6 is a 52-year-old female with 29 years' experience teaching geography in Grade 4.

4.2.2. SUMMARY OF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL B

Four participants contributed to the study in Primary School B. Participant 7 is a 29-year-old male with six years' experience, and teaches history in Grade 6. Participant 8, a 53-year-old male with 30 years' experience, teaches both history and geography in Grade 4. Participant 9 is a 42-year-old male with 19 years' experience, and teaches geography in Grade 7. Lastly, Participant 10 is a 56-year-old female with 33 years of experience who teaches both history and geography in Grade 5. This group of teachers brings a diverse range of expertise and perspectives, enriching the study through their varied backgrounds, teaching experiences, ages, and gender representations. Table 4.2 below provides a comprehensive overview of the participating teachers from the two primary schools included in the study.

Table 4.2: Overview of Participating Teachers from Primary Schools A and B

Primary school ID	Number of teachers per school	Number of males per school	Number of females per school	Range of teaching experience per school	Range of age per school
A	6	3	3	2 to 35 years	25 to 58 years old
B	4	3	1	6 to 33 years	29 to 56 years old

This group brings a diverse range of expertise and perspectives, enriching the study with their varied backgrounds, experiences, ages, and gender representations.

4.2.3. Summary of Biographical Information by Primary School

In Primary School A, the participants were evenly split between males and females, with years of teaching experience varying from two to 35 and ages between 25 and 58. In Primary School B, the participants comprised three males and one female, with a slightly narrower scope of teaching experience, from six to 33 years, and ages spanning 29 to 56. This range of expertise and demographics across both schools contributes to a balanced representation of perspectives in the study.

4.3. RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The formulation of research questions is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research, as it shapes the study's focus and trajectory, while steering the data collection process (Flick, 2020). This section outlines the research questions that directed the investigation into the educational practices and challenges faced by teachers in the selected primary schools. These questions were formulated to elicit in-depth insights into the implementation and impact of summative assessments within the CAPS framework.

To further explore these questions, specific interview questions were developed to facilitate in-depth discussions with participants. These questions aimed to capture their experiences, perspectives, and the contextual factors influencing their teaching practices (Hays & Singh, 2019). The study ensures a coherent and focused exploration of the issues at hand by aligning the interview questions with the

overarching research questions. Table 4.3 below presents a thorough outline of the primary and secondary research questions, and the corresponding interview questions designed for this study.

Table 4.3: Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
<p>Primary research question: How do social sciences teachers implement CAPS in public primary schools?</p>	
<p>Secondary research question (a): How do social sciences teachers interpret CAPS?</p>	1. What regulatory policy frameworks are prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for teaching and learning in the schooling sector in South Africa?
	2. What are the aims and objectives of the policy framework for teaching and learning in the schooling sector, as prescribed by the DBE in South Africa?
	3. What are the minimum standards prescribed by the DBE for the effective implementation and formulation of the CAPS framework?
	4. What roles and responsibilities are prescribed by the DBE for the effective implementation and formulation of the CAPS framework?
<p>Secondary research question (b): What challenges do social sciences teachers experience in the implementation of CAPS?</p>	5. What constitutes measurable teaching and learning within the curriculum and assessment policy framework, specifically regarding end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments as prescribed by the DBE?
	6. How consistent and comparable are teaching (teachers) and learning (end-of-the-year examination papers or summative assessments) outcomes amongst public primary schools in South Africa?
	7. How are you measured for compliance and accountability in the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework prescribed by the DBE?
	8. To what extent are academic resources available and contributing towards the effective implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, as prescribed by the DBE?

Research Questions	Interview Questions
	9. What professional development is provided by the DBE to acquire the skills and abilities needed for the implementation and formulation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework?
	10. What criteria do you use to ensure consistent and comparable formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?
	11. What is your level of responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, the formulation of end-of-the-year examination papers or summative assessments?
	12. Describe how resources are utilised to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, consistent and comparable formulation of end-of-the-year examination papers or summative assessments?
	13. What professional development are you undertaking to acquire the skills and abilities needed for effective and consistent implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, the formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?
<p>Secondary research question (c)</p> <p>What strategies do social sciences teachers use to address the challenges identified in the implementation of CAPS?</p>	14. What situational factors have an impact on the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, the formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?
	15. How are the end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments aligned with the learning goals prescribed by the DBE?
	16. How are learning outcomes, classroom activities, and the syllabus integrated to achieve consistent and comparable implementation of CAPS?
	17. How valid, reliable and fair are the academic performance or skills that learners have acquired at the end of the learning process in relation to the minimum standards of learning outcomes prescribed by the DBE?

The next section will focus on the research questions, exploring the key themes and sub-themes that emerged from the participants' responses.

4.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS, THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Understanding the core themes and sub-themes that arise from qualitative data is essential for interpreting a study's findings. Through qualitative analysis, examining participants' responses reveals rich insights that contribute to the overall narrative of the investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2023). This section outlines the research questions along with the identified themes and sub-themes, demonstrating how they capture the experiences and perspectives of social sciences teachers in relation to the implementation of CAPS. Table 4.3 provides a detailed framework for exploring the implementation of CAPS by social sciences teachers in public primary schools. It categorises the research into primary and secondary research questions, and corresponding themes, sub-themes, and aligned interview questions.

Table 4.4: Research questions, themes, sub-themes, and interview questions

Research question	Theme	Sub-Theme	Interview Questions
Primary research question: How do social sciences teachers implement CAPS in public primary schools?			
Secondary research question 1: How do social sciences teachers interpret CAPS?	1. Interpretation of CAPS	1.1 Regulatory policy frameworks	1.1.1 What regulatory policy frameworks are prescribed by the DBE for teaching and learning in the schooling sector in South Africa?
		1.2 Aims and Objectives	1.2.1 What are the aims and objectives of the policy framework for teaching and learning in the schooling sector, as prescribed by the DBE in South Africa?
		1.3 Minimum standards	1.3.1 What are the minimum standards prescribed by the DBE for the effective implementation and formulation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework?
		1.4 Roles and Responsibilities	1.4.1 What roles and responsibilities are prescribed by the DBE for the effective implementation and formulation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework?

Research question	Theme	Sub-Theme	Interview Questions
Secondary research question 2: What challenges do social sciences teachers experience in the implementation of CAPS?	2. Challenges in implementation	2.1 Measurable teaching and learning	2.1.1 What constitutes measurable teaching and learning within the curriculum and assessment policy framework, specifically regarding end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments as prescribed by the DBE?
		2.2 Consistency and comparability	2.2.1 How consistent and comparable are teaching (teachers) and learning (end-of-the-year examination papers or summative assessments) outcomes amongst public primary schools in South Africa?
		2.3 Compliance and accountability	2.3.1 How are you measured for compliance and accountability in the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework prescribed by the DBE?
		2.4 Academic resources	2.4.1 To what extent are academic resources available and contributing towards the effective implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, as prescribed by the DBE?
		2.5 Professional development	2.5.1 What professional development is provided by the DBE to acquire the skills and abilities needed for the implementation and formulation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework?
		2.6 Criteria for assessments	2.6.1 What criteria do you use to ensure consistent and comparable formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?
		2.7 Level of responsibility	2.7.1 What is your level of responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, the formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?
		2.8 Utilisation of resources	2.8.1 Describe how resources are utilised to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, consistent and comparable formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?

Research question	Theme	Sub-Theme	Interview Questions
Secondary research question 3: What strategies do social sciences teachers use to address the challenges identified in the implementation of CAPS?	3. Strategies to address challenges	3.1 Responsibility of professional development	3.1.1 What professional development are you undertaking to acquire the skills and abilities needed for effective and consistent implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically the formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?
		3.2 Situational factors	3.2.1 What situational factors have an impact on the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically the formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?
		3.3 Alignment with learning goals	3.3.1 How are the end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments aligned with the learning goals prescribed by the DBE?
		3.4 Integration of learning outcomes	3.4.1 How are learning outcomes, classroom activities, and the syllabus integrated to achieve consistent and comparable implementation of CAPS?
		3.5 Validity and reliability	3.5.1 How valid, reliable and fair are the academic performance or skills that learners have acquired at the end of the learning process in relation to the minimum standards of learning outcomes prescribed by the DBE?

The structured framework in Table 4.4 serves as a tool for an in-depth exploration into the complexities of CAPS implementation. It enables a thorough analysis of the experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by social sciences teachers in public primary schools. This framework is integral to addressing the research objectives and contributing valuable insights to educational landscape.

The following paragraphs summarise the primary research question, along with the themes and sub-themes that arose during the process of data analysis.

4.4.1. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS, THEMES, AND SUB-THEMES

The primary research question investigates how social sciences teachers implement CAPS in their classrooms. It seeks to understand teachers' perspectives on the guidelines established by the DBE (2022b) and how these guidelines inform their

teaching practices. The themes and sub-themes evolved to support the aims and objectives of the study and are summarised as follows:

4.4.1.1. Interpretation of CAPS

This theme explores how teachers comprehend and apply the CAPS framework, with a focus on their understanding of its aims, objectives, minimum standards, and the roles and responsibilities defined by the DBE. The associated interview questions seek to gather insights into how teachers interpret and apply these guidelines within their specific teaching contexts.

4.4.1.2. Challenges in implementation

This theme addresses the obstacles teachers encounter in implementing CAPS effectively. It explores key factors such as measurable aspects of teaching and learning, the consistency and comparability of educational outcomes, accountability mechanisms, and the availability of academic resources. Additionally, it examines the professional development opportunities provided to teachers, and the assessment criteria they are required to follow. The associated interview questions are designed to identify specific challenges teachers encounter and how these affect their ability to deliver the curriculum effectively.

4.4.1.3. Strategies to address challenges

This theme focuses on the methods teachers employ to address the challenges of implementing CAPS. It investigates the professional development opportunities available to them, situational factors that influence implementation, and how teachers align their teaching practices with prescribed learning goals. Furthermore, it explores the integration of learning outcomes and the consideration of validity and reliability in assessments. The associated interview questions are designed to reveal the strategies teachers find most effective in navigating the complexities of CAPS implementation.

With a clear understanding of the research questions, themes, and sub-themes established, the next section will present the research findings, highlighting key insights gathered from the study.

4.5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The exploration of educational practices and challenges social sciences teachers face in implementing CAPS has provided valuable insights. This section presents the findings derived from qualitative interviews with participants, offering a comprehensive account of their experiences, interpretations, and strategies. As Creswell (2018) notes, qualitative research allows for a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives, thus enriching the knowledge base in educational studies. The research findings are closely linked to the principles of the ICD framework, illustrating how individual, cultural, and developmental factors influence teachers' experiences and practices. This alignment emphasises the importance of ensuring coherence in CAPS implementation by effectively connecting learning goals, teaching methods, and assessments. By applying the ICD principles, the findings provide insights that inform both educational practice and policy, offering recommendations for improving the consistency and effectiveness of CAPS implementation (Fink, 2013; Mertler, 2021). These findings aim to enhance teachers' and learners' teaching and learning experience.

4.5.1. THEME 1: INTERPRETATION OF CAPS

This theme is articulated through four sub-themes: Sub-theme 1.1 explores teachers' understanding of CAPS, revealing the varying degrees of familiarity and confidence among teachers. Sub-theme 1.2 addresses the perceived relevance of CAPS in guiding teaching practices, highlighting how teachers interpret and adapt the policy to meet their classroom needs. Sub-theme 1.3 focuses on the alignment between CAPS and classroom activities, examining how effectively teachers translate policy directives into practical learning experiences. Finally, sub-theme 1.4 investigates the roles and responsibilities of teachers in implementing CAPS, shedding light on their accountability and collaborative efforts within the educational framework. Together, these sub-themes provide a comprehensive view of how CAPS is interpreted and enacted in the classroom, reflecting both the challenges and successes that teachers encounter in striving to meet curriculum objectives.

4.5.1.1. Sub-theme 1.1: Regulatory policy frameworks

All participants from the two primary schools consistently described the regulatory policy framework, identifying CAPS as the primary guideline for teaching and learning within the South African education system. Notably, nine of the participants mentioned that CAPS was temporarily replaced by annual teaching plans (ATPs) during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, with plans for revisions every three years.

The study found the participants consistently demonstrated a clear understanding of the regulatory frameworks, highlighting their familiarity with the guidelines established by the DBE (2022b). Participant 4 emphasised the importance of both CAPS and ATPs as essential tools prescribed by the DBE for effective teaching and learning, indicating a clear recognition of these frameworks in practice.

We as teachers have the CAPS document and the ATP that is prescribed by the DBE to use for effective teaching and learning in our classrooms. (Participant 4)

Participant 10 provided a contextual perspective, explaining how the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated changes to educational policies. They noted that prior to the pandemic, teachers strictly adhered to the CAPS document, which outlined objectives, aims, and outcomes.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that we faced before that we had to follow the CAPS document which they prescribed, and the CAPS document was laid out specifically your objectives, your aims, your outcomes, so you need to follow that, but that was before COVID. So, when COVID arrived they adapted the policy, they changed it to ATPs. (Participant 10)

Participant 9 provided a more concise response, simply stating that they use the CAPS documents for teaching.

We use the CAPS documents to teach subjects. (Participant 9)

This suggests a basic understanding of the frameworks without exploring the broader implications or changes introduced by the pandemic. This alignment with the ICD framework illustrates the teachers' recognition of the interconnectedness of various policy documents, and their roles in facilitating effective educational practices (Fink, 2013).

The results presented above indicate that participants are well informed about the regulatory policies governing their teaching practices, which contributes to the effective implementation of CAPS in their classrooms.

4.5.1.2. Sub-theme 1.2: Aims and objectives

Most participants demonstrated a solid grasp of the goals and objectives of the teaching and learning policy frameworks established by the DBE for the South African schooling sector. Six participants (60%) highlighted key elements such as lesson planning, content coverage, and the achievement of learning outcomes. In contrast, three participants provided more general responses, while one quoted the definition verbatim, but struggled to articulate its meaning in their own words.

The study reveals that all 10 participants are familiar with the aims and objectives outlined in the assessment and policy framework, suggesting a robust understanding of how these frameworks can inform effective educational practices in their classrooms. The findings reveal a common understanding among participants about the core objectives of CAPS. Participant 6 explained that the main goal is to guarantee learners acquire and effectively apply knowledge and skills, highlighting the curriculum's role in fostering local knowledge within a global framework. They also highlighted the guidance CAPS offers teachers on recommended topics and timelines for teaching and assessment.

It aims to ensure that learners acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. The curriculum also promotes knowledge in local context while being sensitive to global imperatives. It also gives us as teachers a framework as to which topics to address or teach to the children and a certain time period that's given to us. One of the aims also of the CAPS document is it tells us how the learners should be assessed, and which formal assignments should be done in that term. (Participant 6)

Participant 2 echoed this perspective, noting that the framework provides clear guidelines for teaching and outlines the expected outcomes and assessments to be conducted at the end of each lesson. This structured approach emphasises the value of CAPS in facilitating effective learning.

The objective of the framework is that it gives us the guidelines or the way that we have to teach, then the outcomes that we have to achieve and the assessment that we have to do at the end of each lesson. (Participant 2)

Participant 1 offered a broader viewpoint, asserting that both CAPS and ATPs contribute to ensuring quality education for every learner, thereby reinforcing the overarching mission of the curriculum to enhance educational standards.

The CAPS and the ATP ensures or helps us to ensure quality education for every learner in every school. (Participant 1)

The results above reflect a general consensus among participants regarding the aims and objectives of the CAPS framework (DBE, 2022a), emphasising its crucial role in guiding teaching practices and improving learner outcomes. This alignment suggests a solid foundation for implementing effective educational strategies that contribute to the broader objectives of the South African education system.

4.5.1.3. Sub-theme 1.3: Minimum standards

The participants exhibited varying levels of understanding regarding the minimum standards required for effective teaching within the CAPS framework. Six participants articulated a clear grasp of essential standards, such as resource availability, lesson planning, and learner assessment. In contrast, four participants either provided general responses or struggled to differentiate between content delivery and teaching processes, indicating a disparity in comprehension. Furthermore, while three participants emphasised the significance of professional development and ongoing training, others suggested a lack of engagement with the curriculum guidelines, suggesting that not all participants prioritise or benefit from professional growth opportunities.

This inconsistency is reflected in their responses; some expressed clear views on the necessity of resources and effective lesson planning, while others provided vague or superficial insights into the CAPS framework. Additionally, one participant highlighted the importance of fostering positive learning environments, yet the overall findings focused more on standards and processes. This variation suggests that not all participants equally value the socio-emotional aspects of teaching.

The findings reveal a significant gap in the participants' understanding of the minimum standards prescribed by the DBE (2022a) for the effective implementation of CAPS. Despite the regulatory framework being designed to guide teachers, many participants struggled to articulate the distinct differences between the processes of teaching and the standards for content delivery. This confusion appears to stem from a combination of insufficient professional development opportunities and a lack of engagement with the curriculum guidelines.

While some participants could identify key standards-related elements, such as resource availability and lesson planning, their responses often lacked depth and clarity, indicating a superficial understanding of the policy framework. The participants highlighted several critical elements essential for effective teaching and learning within the CAPS framework (DBE, 2022a). Participant 2 emphasised the necessity of qualified teachers and adequate resources as fundamental minimum standards. They noted the importance of regular subject meetings, professional development opportunities, and online classes to enhance teachers' skills, underscoring the role of ongoing training and collaboration in maintaining educational quality.

Quality teachers that are qualified, sufficient resources, subject meetings that they have to do, and then we must have to understand the ATP, and then we have to have regular, have subject meetings. Then there's also online classes for us teachers have to be qualified, and textbooks must be ready for kids, and there's professional development for teachers and subject meetings to develop the skills of the teachers. (Participant 2)

Participant 6 concurred, stressing that teachers must be well prepared and familiar with the ATP to engage learners effectively. They also highlighted the importance of utilising a variety of resources beyond textbooks to accommodate diverse learning styles, emphasising the need for adaptability in teaching methods.

The teacher should be prepared, he must use the ATP, must be prepared when they come to class, must know what to do and how to go about to effectively give it or bring it over to the learners; he or she must make use of different resources not only the textbooks, but he must have different resources. Especially, the children nowadays, we have children that learn, that has

different learning styles so we must make provision for them as well.
(Participant 6)

Participant 5 expanded on these points, asserting that minimum standards encompass creating a positive learning environment, demonstrating thorough curriculum knowledge, engaging in effective lesson planning, and employing sound learner assessment practices. They further emphasised the role of professional development in meeting these standards.

The standards are the creation of a positive learning and teaching environment, curriculum knowledge, lesson planning and presentation. Then we have our learner assessment and achievement and professional development.
(Participant 5)

The results presented above corroborate Chetty's (2016) earlier research, which highlighted that many teachers face challenges in meeting minimum curriculum standards due to inadequate training and the absence of clear assessment guidelines. Similarly, Obadiora (2019) emphasised the necessity for teachers to possess both robust content knowledge and practical skills in order to implement CAPS effectively. This observation aligns with Fink's (2013) Integrated Course Design theory, which underscores the importance of aligning educational standards, instructional activities, and assessment methods. Consequently, this study further supports the argument that, while teachers are generally aware of the required standards, inconsistent training and ambiguous guidance hinder their ability to apply them reliably.

4.5.1.4. Sub-theme 1.4: Roles and responsibilities

The 10 participants highlighted several key responsibilities integral to their teaching practice. These included imparting subject and curriculum knowledge, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the curriculum, planning and preparing lessons, delivering engaging instruction, achieving learning outcomes, conducting assessments, providing regular feedback to learners, and maintaining communication with parents and other stakeholders.

Participants demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in implementing CAPS. Participant 1 emphasised the importance of covering the required curriculum as outlined in the ATP and CAPS (DBE, 2022a). They highlighted the value of professional development opportunities, such as workshops and Zoom

meetings, which help teachers align their practices with CAPS. Additionally, they stressed the necessity of preparing effectively for lessons and fostering cooperation among learners and parents to enhance learning (Obadiora, 2019).

So, I am responsible to cover the curriculum that is needed according to the ATP, or the CAPS and the department also provides us for, with zoom meetings and we also have several workshops. We, we discuss the CAPS and what needs to be covered so that we as teachers know exactly how to go according to the CAPS document. And it is also my responsibility as a teacher to be prepared when I teach the learners and also to get enough cooperation with the learners, and also parents need to be involved so that they can help with the effective learning of children. (Participant 1)

Participant 4 echoed these sentiments, stating that adhering to the CAPS document is a fundamental responsibility. They noted the importance of managing time effectively and ensuring accurate assessment practices as key elements of their role.

One of the roles and responsibilities prescribed by the DBE for the effective implementation of the curriculum is to follow the CAPS document and stick to the time location, make sure different assessment takes place and that assessment takes place accurately. (Participant 4)

Participant 6 elaborated on the specific duties involved, emphasising the need to adhere to designated timeframes for each topic. They point out the responsibility of marking learners' work, checking homework, and ensuring that knowledge is effectively transmitted to learners.

Each topic has their specific timeframe and the teacher must see to it that he stays with or works within that timeframe, otherwise he or she is going to fall behind and he must ensure that the books are marked and the learners' work are done and he must check it and see to it that the children did their homework, and the teacher must ensure that he or she carries the knowledge over to the children. (Participant 6)

Integrating the ICD framework with the participants' insights reveals the multifaceted roles of teachers in curriculum implementation, emphasising the significance of professional development, effective communication, and adaptive teaching strategies

to foster positive educational outcomes in the South African context (Fink, 2013). Based on the results presented above, it is clear that participants recognise their responsibility in delivering the curriculum, conducting assessments, and engaging with learners and their families to support educational outcomes. This finding corroborates Chetty's (2016) research, which identified that insufficiently specified curriculum guidelines impede teachers' ability to effectively design assessments. Furthermore, recent scholarship by Harris and Herrington (2022) argues that ambiguity in curriculum policy contributes to uneven instructional practices. In this study, participants echoed these concerns, noting that although CAPS delineates curricular content, it does not consistently provide clear guidance for designing assessment instruments. This observation aligns with Fink's (2013) Integrated Course Design (ICD) framework, which emphasizes the importance of coherence between learning outcomes and assessment strategies.

4.5.2. THEME 2: CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

This theme, challenges in implementation, encompasses eight sub-themes highlighting key issues: Sub-theme 2.1, Measurable Teaching and Learning, explores difficulties in assessing learner progress; Sub-theme 2.2, Consistency and Comparability, reveals discrepancies in educational outcomes across schools; Sub-theme 2.3, Measuring Compliance and Accountability, examines the challenges of meeting compliance requirements; Sub-theme 2.4, Resource Utilisation, discusses the available educational resources; Sub-theme 2.5, Professional Development, investigates the various opportunities, programmes, and resources available for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge; Sub-theme 2.6, Criteria for Assessment, focuses on establishing fair assessment practices; Sub-theme 2.7, Level of Responsibility, reflects on teachers' perceptions of their roles; and Sub-theme 2.8, Utilisation of Resources, highlights the impact of resource management on implementation. Together, these sub-themes offer a comprehensive perspective on the diverse challenges associated with adhering to CAPS, while also highlighting potential areas for improvement and the need for targeted support.

4.5.2.1. Sub-theme 2.1: Measurable teaching and learning

Participants from the two public primary schools expressed uncertainty about how educational outcomes are measured based on the evidence found in learners' workbooks. While they demonstrated a general understanding of measurable teaching and learning principles, their responses were somewhat vague. They acknowledged the importance of aligning their teaching with CAPS and ensuring that learners' workbooks reflect the content covered (Fink, 2013). However, they did not provide specific details on how they effectively measure learner outcomes. For instance, while they recognised the importance of written work and assessments, they offered little insight into the processes or tools used to comprehensively evaluate learner progress. This suggests that although they understand the overarching concepts, there may be gaps in their ability to articulate and implement these practices systematically. Ambiguity was particularly evident in their responses regarding what constitutes measurable teaching and learning, particularly in relation to end-of-year examination papers and summative assessments.

Yes, a teacher has to understand the content of the subject and then you must work according to your ATP; the content from the ATP must reflect in the childrens' books and then the textbook and the childrens' books must correlate with one another, because according to that then you can draw up your exam and then do your assessment. (Participant 2)

A teacher who has covered everything in the curriculum. The teacher who has given them background knowledge about that subject or curriculum. There must be written work in the kids' books where they're going to study from. There must be resources like a textbook where they can also study from and there must be previous assessments where you can check, or and feedback where you can check what has he done wrong or right. (Participant 8)

So, me as a teacher will make sure that all learners' books are up to date and that we do discussions on topics that we have done, and I also do informal tests to make sure that the learners understand the work that we have done. (Participant 1)

This confirms findings that addressing the challenges related to measurable teaching and learning within the CAPS framework (DBE, 2022a) is crucial for improving

educational outcomes in South African primary schools. By providing targeted professional development and resources, teachers will be better equipped to navigate these challenges, ultimately enhancing their ability to implement the curriculum and support student achievement. This study supports the understanding of Obadiora (2019) that a well-structured curriculum lays the foundation with essential content and instructional guidelines, but effective assessment practices are key to determining if educational goals are being met and curriculum objectives achieved. Within the CAPS framework, assessments are designed to evaluate learners' understanding and application of the integrated content in history and geography. By aligning content knowledge with assessment strategies, educational standards are upheld, ensuring that assessments are relevant and effective in evaluating learners' comprehension and progress (DBE, 2022a).

4.5.2.2. Sub-theme 2.2: Consistency and comparability

Most participants (nine out of 10) expressed the view that teaching and learning outcomes are neither consistent nor comparable across public primary schools. They identified several contributing factors to this inconsistency, such as variations in school infrastructure, geographical location, and disparities in the distribution and quality of resources. Participants noted that disparities in teachers' interpretations of CAPS, along with differences in their backgrounds, qualifications, and teaching techniques, further complicate the issue. Additionally, the diverse backgrounds, social contexts, and learning styles of learners significantly influence educational experiences.

Participants discussed varying degrees of consistency and comparability in teaching and assessment practices across different schools. For instance, participant 6 emphasised that while certain aspects of teaching and learning can be compared, consistency is often lacking due to the varying contexts of different communities. They pointed out that parental involvement in learners' education varies greatly across communities, affecting educational outcomes. This is a critical factor in fostering the collaborative learning environment advocated by the ICD (Fink, 2013). Additionally, Participant 6 noted that resource availability varies widely, with some schools being well-equipped while others struggling with limited resources.

Some are comparable but not always. It's not always consistent because it's different schools, there is different, they are in different communities. Learners

come from different backgrounds. Teachers come from different backgrounds and the qualifications of the teachers aren't the same and some of the schools use the same textbooks, they use the ATPs if you look at some communities, you will see parents are involved in their learner's schoolwork but then you get the communities that parents don't worry, they don't come to meetings, they don't look at their learners' books, they don't check if the work has been done, also the facilities at the schools can't be compared schools are different. The resources that's available are different, some schools have a lot of resources but some schools their resources are limited. (Participant 6)

Participants also highlighted disparities in teachers' interpretations of CAPS, as well as differences in teachers' backgrounds, qualifications, and teaching methods. This aligns with the ICD framework's focus on teacher readiness and the importance of continuous professional development to ensure that all educators are capable of effectively applying the curriculum (DeLuca, 2016; UNESCO, 2019). Participant 5 noted that inconsistencies arise from the varying standards of teaching across schools. They remarked that even with the same curriculum in place, some learners may excel while others struggle, largely depending on the effectiveness of how teachers deliver content. Participant 5 further highlighted the significance of social context, pointing out that many parents may lack the resources or skills needed to support their children's education.

I wouldn't say it is consistent because there are many differences between the schools, firstly, depends on the standard of teaching within a school where some content or assessments may be easy for learners at the one school, another public school the same curriculum may struggle. It depends on how the different teachers teach it to the learners and another factor that I think plays a big role is the social context where the school is situated because in my community not all of the parents are well informed so they can't actually be there for the learners, as well as in another community another thing is resources, not all the schools have enough resources. (Participant 5)

Participant 7 elaborated on the collaborative process among teachers regarding assessments. They explained that teachers meet to discuss the term's work, determine assessment content, and engage in a review process that includes

department heads and principals to ensure alignment with the material that has been taught. This practice aligns with the ICD framework's focus on integrating assessment as a core component of the educational design, ensuring that assessments accurately reflect the intended learning outcomes. However, the effectiveness of this collaborative process may differ across schools, highlighting the necessity for consistent implementation of CAPS.

Well as teachers you first need to discuss the work that's been done throughout the term, how much time will be placing on that specific topic as teachers, we decide okay this is what we are going to do we hand in the test. Before that test can be given to the learners to write, the department head needs to go over it, look through it, see if the test is on par with what was taught in the learner's book. They take a book out of every class and then they say, okay all three for instance or all four of the classes are at this, or did the same work and after the department head signs off on it, then it goes to the principal, the principal then goes over it, and then the principal also needs to sign off on it before it can be given out to the learners or printed and then given out to the learners. (Participant 7)

Participants in this study indicated that assessment practices vary considerably across schools, influenced by factors such as teacher interpretation, learner backgrounds, and resource disparities. This finding corroborates Smith and Brown's (2024) research, which highlighted that non-standardised assessments frequently lead to unreliable learner outcomes. Moreover, it aligns with the Integrated Course Design (ICD) framework, which emphasizes the necessity of aligning curriculum goals with assessment methods to ensure consistency (Fink, 2013). Therefore, this study supports the assertion that inconsistencies in the implementation of the CAPS policy hinder fairness and comparability across schools.

4.5.2.3. Sub-theme 2.3: Measuring compliance and accountability

All participants asserted that they are held accountable for compliance by the school management team through various means, including class visits from subject advisors and department heads, inspections of subject files and records, and assessments conducted under the Quality Management System (QMS).

The participants highlighted the systems in place to evaluate teachers' adherence to curriculum standards and their overall effectiveness. This structured approach aligns

closely with the study's theoretical framework, which emphasises coherence among curriculum objectives, teaching methods, and assessment practices (DBE, 2022b; Fink, 2013). Participant 5 described the QMS as a primary evaluation tool employed by the DBE to assess teachers' performance levels, aimed at enhancing overall school effectiveness by ensuring compliance with curriculum standards. This reflects the ICD's principle of aligning assessment with intended learning outcomes, where ongoing evaluation serves to inform and improve teaching practices. Furthermore, as highlighted by participants, regular classroom visits conducted by subject advisors and departmental heads (previously referred to as heads of department or HODs) reinforces the ICD framework's emphasis on continuous feedback and support.

Educators are evaluated by a performance management system called QMS, Quality Management System. It is designed by the department to evaluate performance levels of educators or individuals in order to achieve high levels of school performance. We also have subject advisor that come to check if we are on board with the curriculum; the head of department visits in our classrooms to see if our learning environment in class is up to code, our files filed correctly, are the necessary documentation at hand and ready to be presented; we also have subject meetings where we discuss our subjects. (Participant 5)

Participant 6 noted that phase heads observe lessons and review subject files, underscoring the importance of collaborative support and professional development. This interaction not only helps maintain educational standards but also fosters a culture of shared responsibility among teachers, which is central to the ICD's focus on creating a cohesive learning environment.

The phase head come in your class, listen to your lessons and look at your different subject files, to make sure that you that your work has been done. During subject meetings, we get some help from the subject head, and the work that you must do in class your subject head will help you, and we also get help from the curriculum advisors, but the QMS is the main tool that assess you as a teacher. (Participant 6)

Participant 1 reiterated the critical role of various levels of school leadership in reviewing teachers' work to ensure adherence to the CAPS guidelines. This multi-tiered oversight aligns with the ICD framework's call for systematic evaluation and

accountability, emphasising that effective educational practices require structured support and collaboration.

So, at the school we regularly do QMS where certain people come into your class to measure how you as a teacher are. We also have subject heads and grade heads and the principals that go through your books to make sure that you have enough work up to date, and to make sure that you work according to the CAPS document etcetera. (Participant 1)

This finding aligns with previous research emphasising the importance of compliance and accountability in education, highlighting the need for credible assessment practices, teacher competence, and teaching excellence (McMillan & Hearn, 2023; Popham, 2018). The evidence suggests that participants' insights highlight a well-organised system for measuring compliance and accountability. This anecdotal evidence emphasises the importance of regular evaluations, supportive oversight, and collaborative practices among educators. These measures are crucial for maintaining high standards of teaching and learning. Such a structured approach is integral to the ICD framework, which aims to enhance educational quality through the coherent alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Fink, 2013).

4.5.2.4. Sub-theme 2.4: Academic resources

All 10 participants unequivocally agreed that the prescribed textbook is the primary resource used in their teaching. Additionally, they mentioned other tools such as whiteboards, projectors, posters, and information technology, including computers and internet access. However, two participants indicated that computers, laptops and projectors are not readily available in their school.

Participants highlighted the critical resources necessary for effective classroom teaching and learning, aligning closely with the ICD framework's emphasis on coherence between educational objectives, teaching methods, and assessment strategies (Fink, 2013). Participant 1 identified learners' textbooks and notebooks as fundamental instructional tools, complemented by the use of projectors to accommodate diverse learning styles and ensure that all learners remain engaged. This approach aligns with the ICD's focus on accommodating varied learner needs through appropriate resources.

So, the main resources that we use are the learners' textbooks and also the learners' books, and sometimes we also make use of a projector to make sure that the learners who learn on a different way that they are also included in education. (Participant 1)

Additionally, participant 5 elaborated on the resources provided by the DBE, including textbooks, online resource links, and classroom posters, while expressing a desire for additional materials, such as projectors and opportunities for field trips (DBE, 2022a). This desire highlights the ICD principle of enriching the learning environment, as experiential learning opportunities can significantly enhance learner engagement and understanding.

The department supplies us with textbooks links, websites, posters for your classroom, our homework books that we give the homework in, the textbook that is provided by the department. What I would gladly appreciate is if every classroom could get a projector, if we can have more field trips for our learners to experience the world; we have our textbooks, we have the internet, I maybe use it to watch YouTube videos. (Participant 5)

Participant 9 reinforced the significance of textbooks as essential for summarising content and facilitating exercises alongside overhead projectors and whiteboards that promote interactive learning. This integration of traditional and technological resources exemplifies the ICD's emphasis on aligning teaching methods with the expected learning outcomes for learners.

During the lessons there are resources available to use like overhead projectors, white boards and also textbooks, and the textbooks is the main resource of learning for the kids and also to do summaries out of it and also to do exercises. (Participant 9)

The evidence presented indicates that all participant responses reflect a reliance on conventional resources while acknowledging the importance of integrating technology and experiential learning. This balanced approach is vital for promoting a dynamic and impactful educational experience, consistent with the ICD framework's goals of creating a cohesive and adaptive learning environment (Fink, 2013). This supports the findings of Mthiyane (2024) and Naidoo (2023), who emphasise the importance of

fairness in assessment to ensure that all learners have equal access to necessary resources and support. Such an approach seeks to eliminate biases in assessment design and apply uniform standards to all participants, thereby fostering an inclusive environment where every learner can fully demonstrate their abilities (Mthiyane, 2024; Naidoo, 2023).

4.5.2.5. Sub-theme 2.5: Professional development

The 10 participants from the two primary schools acknowledged the availability of professional development opportunities, which include online training workshops, courses, and seminars presented by the DBE, as well as regular meetings with subject heads and departmental heads.

Participants highlighted opportunities for professional growth provided by the DBE and other educational entities. This aligns with the ICD framework, which emphasises the importance of coherence among curriculum objectives, teaching methods, and assessment strategies (Fink, 2013). Participant 4 noted the abundance of professional development opportunities available, including workshops and online training sessions designed to enhance teaching skills. They emphasised the accessibility of subject advisors, who are readily available for support and guidance on specific challenges teachers may encounter in their practice.

The Department of Basic Education gives us a lot of opportunities to develop ourselves professionally. Firstly, we get a lot of workshops; we have online workshops also to better ourselves. We have our subject advisors that's only a phone call away if we have hiccups concerning certain issues, we can easily just contact them. So, those are all ways we can professionally develop ourselves.
(Participant 4)

Participant 6 provided insights into the role of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Innovation (CTLI), which offers diverse programmes and courses aimed at equipping educators with essential skills. They mentioned that subject advisors not only offer advice but can also conduct classroom demonstrations to model effective teaching strategies.

Online training CTLI has different programmes that teachers can attend and courses to attend they can equip themselves with the necessary skills subject

advisors come to visit the schools they give you advise on how to approach the lesson. Some subject advisors come into class, and they give demonstration lessons as well. (Participant 6)

This hands-on approach allows teachers to observe best practices in real-time, enhancing their ability to implement effective teaching methods in their own classrooms.

Participant 8 pointed out that training sessions and seminars are typically organised by the district department, ensuring that teachers have opportunities to expand their knowledge on specific subjects.

The district department normally decides when the training is going to be or seminars on those specific subjects and also online sessions. Training sessions they give the teachers to expand their knowledge. (Participant 8)

Both in-person and online training indicates a flexible approach to professional development, accommodating different learning preferences and schedules.

The results presented above suggest that participants clearly recognise the value of ongoing professional development and the resources available to assist teachers in improving their practice, ultimately benefiting learners in the classroom (Popham & McTighe, 2022). Teachers reported having access to workshops and online training yet noted that the support provided is often inconsistent and lacks practical applicability. This finding aligns with Obadiora's (2019) assertion that continuous, targeted professional development is crucial for enhancing assessment practices. Furthermore, it resonates with Fink's (2013) Integrated Course Design theory, which underscores the importance of teacher development in achieving alignment between teaching, learning, and assessment. Thus, this study provides additional evidence that sustained professional development is essential for the effective implementation of CAPS.

4.5.2.6. Sub-theme 2.6: Criteria for Assessment

In terms of the criteria teachers use to ensure the consistent and comparable formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments, all participants agreed that they establish these criteria through collaborative discussions during subject meetings and moderation sessions. These collaborative efforts help

them to align their expectations and ensure that assessment tasks are relevant to the curriculum. Many participants highlighted the importance of adhering to established standards and using frameworks like Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) to create diverse question types that assess various levels of understanding. This structured approach ensures that assessments evaluate not only knowledge, but also critical thinking and the ability to apply skills effectively.

The study found a robust collaborative framework among teachers that aligns closely with the principles of the ICD framework (Fink, 2013). Participants emphasised the importance of structured processes for creating and evaluating assessment tools, highlighting how these practices foster coherence between learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. Participant 3 pointed out the significance of subject meetings among social science teachers, where criteria for marking are collaboratively established. This practice ensures that assessments are fair and relevant, aligning with the ICD's emphasis on coherence and alignment within educational practices.

We got subjects meetings where we as social science teachers discuss what how the answers must be. And, before the children is writing, the HODs come, and they check the books correlate with the paper that the children are going to write. So, we got much strength moderation period, so it's going to different kinds of people before it's been written. (Participant 3)

The role of departmental heads in reviewing learners' books to verify that assessments reflect that the taught content and material, brings together the vital commitment of teachers to maintain standards and accountability, which are integral components of the ICD framework. Participant 4 reinforced the importance of aligning assessments with classroom content and emphasised how moderation meetings ensure that assessments accurately represent the content covered in lessons. These meetings allow teachers to collectively refine questions, ensuring that assessments are both comprehensive and relevant. This collaborative process exemplifies the ICD's focus on aligning assessment with curriculum goals, ultimately improving educational quality.

First of all, we as teachers must ensure when we set up a question paper, we can't ask questions that a child didn't do in class. So, when we set up question

papers, the work must reflect in the classwork book. We also have subject meetings to discuss possible questions that we might ask in the question papers. We moderate the question papers. (Participant 4)

Participant 5 described a multi-tiered review process involving various levels of school leadership, including subject heads and principals, to ensure the quality and validity of examination papers. This systematic approach promotes consistency in assessment criteria and reflects the ICD's principle of collaborative engagement among teachers, which is essential for maintaining academic standards across schools.

Okay, so first, firstly we look at our learners' books, is the curriculum covered. We have subject meetings to discuss the quality of the examination papers. We discuss the rubric, we discuss the memorandum we also check the learners' books it is checked by our head of subject, then it is checked by our vice principal and as well as the principal. (Participant 5)

Recent research shows that teachers who deviate from CAPS guidelines often assess learners based on subjective rather than objective, standardised criteria, resulting in unequal evaluations of performance (Patel, 2023). The lack of uniformity in assessment practices and adherence to guidelines can weaken accountability in educational settings, affecting both the quality of education (Jones & Lee, 2024; Thompson, 2023) and the effectiveness of the CAPS framework. These inconsistencies contribute to significant disparities in educational outcomes (Ngcobo & Dube, 2023; Adams, 2024), creating inequities that affect learner performance. Studies by Harris and Brown (2022) and Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith (2023) demonstrate that variations in assessment criteria can lead to unfair comparisons of learners' achievements across schools, further perpetuating a sense of inequity. Overall, the results illustrate a strong emphasis on collaboration and adherence to established assessment criteria, ensuring that evaluations are equitable, relevant, and reflective of classroom instruction (Fink, 2013). This alignment with the ICD framework supports a cohesive educational experience that ultimately benefits learner outcomes.

4.5.2.7. Sub-theme 2.7: Level of responsibility

All 10 participants emphasised their clearly defined roles in developing assessments, demonstrating a proactive approach to ensuring alignment with the curriculum. Their insights reflect a collaborative yet structured approach to the assessment process

among educators, aligning with the ICD framework (Fink, 2013). Participant 5 highlighted their responsibility in preparing question papers and attending meetings to discuss assessment standards and content, reinforcing the shared commitment to maintaining consistent academic quality.

Okay, so my role is to set up question papers, attend the meetings where discussions are being held about the question papers or the standard of the question papers. I'm involved or there for the meetings where discussions are being held about the question papers and the questions that are being asked. I'm only responsible for setting up the question paper and seeing too that the learners complete their work and abide by the curriculum. (Participant 5)

This proactive involvement aligns with the ICD's emphasis on coherence between learning objectives and assessment strategies, ensuring that evaluations accurately reflect the intended learning outcomes. Although not directly involved in moderating tests, Participant 7 described participating in discussions with colleagues about term assessments.

Well as a post level one teacher, I don't have to moderate the test itself. I only speak with other teachers, decide okay this is what we want to have tested during this term so then we, or I set up the test then I send it through to the department head and then when they feel like the test is set up on the standard needed, then they will sign off on it and then it goes further. (Participant 7)

This shared responsibility among teachers supports the ICD's principle of collaboration, where input from various stakeholders enhances the relevance and rigour of assessments. Furthermore, Participant 8 noted that social sciences teachers convene to identify key topics for assessment and engage in discussions to ensure consistency in marking.

As Social Sciences teachers we normally get together before we draw up a test and then we decide which are the important parts that should be asked, and after that we sit together and have a memo discussion to ensure there's consistency in the marking and that all other relevant answers that are not on the, on the memorandum also included. (Participant 8)

This teamwork reinforces the importance of maintaining standards and accountability (UNESCO, 2019), key tenets of the ICD framework. These collaborative efforts not

only reinforce alignment with the curriculum but also promote fairness and standardisation in the evaluation process. The study's in-depth findings disclose the need for a clear understanding of individual teacher responsibilities within a structured framework that also promotes collaboration and an adherence to achieving set educational standards. This approach aligns with the ICD's goal of fostering cohesive educational experiences, ultimately aimed at improving learner outcomes.

4.5.2.8. Sub-theme 2.8: Utilisation of Resources

Each of the 10 participants provided unique insights into how various resources, including textbooks, technology, and the ATP, play a crucial role in enhancing their teaching practices. Their responses emphasised the importance of access to a variety of educational resources – such as textbooks, digital platforms, classroom materials, and supplementary resources like maps and atlases – in improving teaching effectiveness. The availability of these resources has a significant impact on the quality of instruction and the ability of teachers to engage learners meaningfully.

Participants highlighted the collaborative use of textbooks as guidelines for assessment, and the integration of digital tools to broaden learners' understanding. They also emphasised the importance of adhering to CAPS documentation to ensure comprehensive coverage of content. This collective emphasis demonstrates the critical need for structured support and resource accessibility to promote effective teaching and learning in South African primary schools (DBE, 2022a).

Participant 2 noted the importance of starting with the assessment policy and ATP to guide both instruction and exam preparation.

What we do, we look at the assessment policy first of all and then we see what is guiding us for us to do at the end of the year. Then we use the ATP that also guides us what we have to teach the knowledge and the skills and after that we use the textbooks or any other resources to compile our exams and all the stuff and we also use Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) to have the different levels of thinking and weighting. So, we use that to compile our exam and the work that we have done for the year and according to that we draw up the exam for the school. (Participant 2)

Such a structured approach described above, ensures that resources, such as textbooks and supplementary materials, align with the prescribed learning outcomes.

Moreover, the application of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) in exam compilation supports a multi-level cognitive approach, enabling learners to engage with the content on different thinking levels, thereby fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Participant 7 pointed out that textbooks serve as crucial guidelines for understanding what learners have been taught and the types of questions they have encountered, ensuring consistency in creating relevant assessments. This consistency plays a critical role in aligning assessments with the curriculum and helping learners meet expected standards. Furthermore, the integration of technology, such as computer labs for accessing additional information, enhances learners' comprehension and broadens their perspectives on the topics studied (DBE, 2022a).

We make use of the textbook as a guideline as to show you what work has been done with the learner, what type of questions they've been exposed to, for instance in history or geography, and then you need to set up your test papers based on the type of questions that they've been exposed to, based on the information they have gained throughout the term or the year. We make use of the computer lab here in the front for the learners for instance where they can get instant extra information if needed just to give them a broader view on the work that they did so they'll have a better understanding of that work. (Participant 7)

Participant 8 reiterated the reliance on the CAPS document and textbooks to ensure all necessary content has been covered. They also emphasised the value of collaboration with colleagues and the use of online resources, which fosters a supportive environment for teachers struggling with assessment preparation.

We normally have a look at the CAPS document and if everything has been covered according to the CAPS document, and then we have a look at the textbook. You can use for resources, especially when you struggle to get a question paper, when you struggle to get an answer then you can use the textbook for more consistency in this case. Then I can use the internet or ask other teachers who have more experience in that subject and you have a word with them as well. (Participant 8)

This supports the findings of Popham (2018), who stated that the process of content selection involves identifying key concepts, topics, and themes, as well as choosing relevant textbooks, reference materials, multimedia resources, and other educational tools. This systematic approach ensures that all aspects of the course are aligned with the learning goals, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of both teaching and learning (Popham, 2018). The study's results illustrate clear alignment with the ICD framework, which advocates for coherence among learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment strategies (Fink, 2013). The collaborative nature of resource utilisation among teachers further enhances the quality of assessments, ensuring they accurately reflect learners' progress and understanding, ultimately contributing to a more equitable educational experience.

4.5.3. THEME 3: STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

This theme encompasses five sub-themes that highlight effective strategies for professional and educational development: Sub-theme 3.1, Responsibility of Professional Development, focuses on individual accountability and outlines the roles played by different stakeholders – such as teachers, school administration, the DBE – in supporting or mandating professional growth; sub-theme 3.2, Situational Factors, explores adaptive strategies that address specific contextual challenges; sub-theme 3.3, Alignment with Learning Goals, focuses on the alignment of assessments with educational objectives, examining how teachers ensure that assessments remain relevant; sub-theme 3.4, Integration of Learning Outcomes, examines the techniques teachers use to incorporate learning outcomes into their classroom practices; and sub-theme 3.5, Validity, Reliability, and Fairness, addresses the need for standardised assessment practices to ensure equitable evaluations across diverse learner populations.

Collectively, these sub-themes offer valuable insights into the proactive measures teachers implement to foster a more effective and equitable educational environment. They emphasise the importance of adaptability, collaboration, and ongoing professional growth as essential components in overcoming challenges.

4.5.3.1. Sub-theme 3.1: Responsibility of professional development

The responses from participants in the two public primary schools reveal diverse approaches to professional development and the responsibilities teachers assume to enhance their skills, particularly in formulating question papers and assessments.

The study uncovers a multifaceted approach to the formulation of assessment tools, highlighting participants' reliance on a variety of resources and collaborative practices. Participant 4 described how their journey began at university, where they first learned the fundamentals of developing question papers. They actively utilise the internet to gather examples from multiple sources and seek guidance from retired teachers to improve their examination design. This approach emphasises the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in professional practice (Smith & Jones, 2021).

I think it all started at varsity. That's where I first learned how to formulate question papers. I also make use of the internet different websites, get few examples of three or four different sources and try to formulate my own question paper. I also ask advice from retired educators as to how to formulate or set up better examination papers in the future. (Participant 4)

Participant 6 echoed this sentiment, noting the influence of their college education, particularly the application of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) in question formulation. They emphasised the value of collaboration with colleagues and subject advisors for guidance on creating effective assessment tools.

I use the knowledge that I that I got from the college that I studied as a teacher and they showed us that when we, when we set a paper that we must use Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). We must ask different types of questions in terms of the level of the questions and if I struggle, I ask colleagues to help me and to, to give me guidance on how to ask questions or what to ask and also the subject advisor give advice on what to ask and how to set the paper and the internet as well is also a guide to help me with, when setting the paper. (Participant 6)

This collaborative effort is essential for ensuring that assessments are varied and aligned with educational standards. While Participant 8 acknowledged their current

lack of responsibility for final assessments, they expressed a strong desire for further training from knowledgeable officials within the DBE.

At the moment I am not responsible for recommendation of the final papers and assessment because we have a leader who normally draw up the test paper, I would like to have training by the Department of Education official or people who are more skilled and have knowledge about the subject. (Participant 8)

The findings confirm previous research by Guskey (2019) and Desimone (2016), which highlights that effective professional development is essential for equipping teachers to implement CAPS consistently and overcome the challenges they face. Research indicates that focused professional development can significantly enhance teachers' instructional methods and assessment techniques (Guskey, 2019; Desimone, 2016). Additionally, it emphasises that the quality of an education system is directly linked to the effectiveness of its teachers. Unlocking teachers' potential through targeted professional development and ensuring alignment between the intended, implemented, and attained curricula are crucial for improving educational quality. Therefore, it is essential that social sciences teachers receive adequate support and that their practices are continuously evaluated to transform educational practices and achieve meaningful, lasting reform. The ICD framework (Fink, 2013) underscores the significance of coherence between learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. The educators' commitment to seeking knowledge, collaborating with peers, and pursuing professional development exemplifies their dedication to creating high-quality assessments that not only reflect curriculum standards, but also address the diverse needs of learners. By leveraging various resources and expertise, these teachers are actively working toward achieving a comprehensive and effective educational experience for their learners. The study results presented above highlight a recognition of the need for professional development to enhance assessment skills, suggesting a proactive attitude toward improving teaching practices.

4.5.3.2. Sub-theme 3.2: Situational factors

The majority of the study's participants (90%) demonstrate a keen awareness of the various situational factors affecting the implementation of CAPS. These challenges include a lack of subject specialisation, absenteeism among both learners and

teachers, barriers to learning, and reduced instructional time due to external disruptions.

That would be factors such as absenteeism we have learning barriers where learners are not all on the same cognitive level. We have language barriers in the classrooms we have diversity in our classrooms different individual supporting plans resources or the lack thereof and lastly not all teachers are equipped to teach all the subjects for example teachers that went to go study languages, are being expected to teach sciences. (Participant 5)

Absenteeism of the children plays a big role because if a child is absent then the teacher must set a different test sometimes the teachers are absent and maybe then you can't, you don't cover all the work sometimes the teacher doesn't have the necessary subject knowledge and the circumstances at home learners in our class, they are on different levels. (Participant 6)

I think subject knowledge in this case is crucial can't take a teacher with 10 years' experience in for example Maths and then put him in a history class. (Participant 8)

The study found that situational factors encompass the broader educational context, including learner characteristics of learners and teaching practices (Fink, 2013). Participants demonstrated an understanding of these factors, which offer critical insights into how they influence the knowledge, and skills learners acquire. Schools in disadvantaged areas often face additional challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited teaching materials, and a lack of parental involvement, all of which hinder effective curriculum delivery. Systemic issues, including high staff turnover and inconsistent teacher training, further impact the fidelity of CAPS implementation.

While the overwhelming majority of participants identified these factors, only one participant mentioned a lack of resources as a negative influence on the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework. This indicates that while resources are important, the participants perceived more immediate challenges related to teaching conditions and learner engagement. External factors such as loadshedding (power outages), community unrest, and extracurricular activities further contribute to learners falling behind. This highlights the challenges

participants face as they strive to overcome obstacles to enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving learner outcomes. It illustrates a clear alignment with Fink's (2013) principles, which emphasise the importance of teachers continuously assessing the learning environment to ensure that their instructional strategies meet the needs of their learners.

In conclusion, the results clearly demonstrate that the insights gathered from the participants not only underscore the importance of contextual factors in educational settings but also affirm the relevance of the ICD framework in guiding teachers to make informed decisions. This framework supports effective curriculum implementation and assessment.

4.5.3.3. Sub-theme 3.3: Alignment with the learning goals

Teachers employ various strategies to ensure that assessments are closely aligned with educational goals. This involves using CAPS as a framework for developing assessments that reflect the specific learning outcomes expected for each grade. Teachers focus on creating assessments that not only measure knowledge retention but also assess critical thinking and application skills. By referring to the ATP, teachers can outline their assessments to ensure they address the competencies required for learner success.

This study highlights the importance of developing clear and specific learning goals as a crucial step in aligning instructional activities with classroom objectives (Fink, 2013). Participants demonstrated a strong understanding of the principle that learners are more likely to succeed when expectations are clearly communicated. By articulating specific learning objectives, teachers can design instructional strategies that facilitate the achievement of these goals (Fink, 2013).

The study results emphasise the integral role of aligning teaching and assessment practices with the goals outlined in the curriculum, particularly through the use of ATPs and assessment rubrics. Participant 10 described a structured approach where goals are established at the start of each quarter, allowing for systematic evaluation at the end of the year.

At the start of each quarter, you get goals because you work towards achieving that goal at the end of each quarter and you formulate one broad assessment

rubric or assessment tool at the end of the year to see how well you achieved your goals from quarter one up to quarter four. (Participant 10)

This view aligns with the ICD framework, emphasising coherence among learning objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment methods. By setting clear, measurable goals, teachers can ensure that their instructional practices remain focused and aligned with the desired learning outcomes (Fink, 2013). Participant 3 reinforced the importance of aligning learning concepts and skills with CAPS, underscoring the need for educators to prepare learners effectively.

You have to make sure that the learning concepts and skills that the CAPS required that the children are well prepared. (Participant 3)

This approach resonates with the ICD's emphasis on the significance of alignment in fostering meaningful learning experiences. Moreover, Participant 6 highlighted the ATP as a crucial framework for developing learners' knowledge and skills.

The ATP is set to develop the knowledge and the skills of the learners, and the teacher must use the ATP as a framework [to] test the skills of the learners that was developed during the year. Teachers must ask different question types to develop the critical thinking skills of the learners, and it's very important for the teachers to study the ATPs and make sure that the learners are prepared for the tests. (Participant 6)

By employing a variety of question types to enhance critical thinking, teachers demonstrate their commitment to creating assessments that not only measure knowledge, but also promote higher-order thinking skills, a key component of the ICD framework (Fink, 2013).

The results illustrate a robust understanding among teachers of the necessity for alignment in their teaching and assessment practices. This alignment not only supports the achievement of educational goals, but also enhances the overall quality of instruction, which is fundamental to effective educational outcomes.

4.5.3.4. Sub-theme 4.4: Integration of learning outcomes

All participants demonstrated strong integration of learning outcomes into teaching practices, which is vital for contextualised learning. Integrating learning objectives, instruction, and assessment enhances learner performance and promotes greater

consistency in educational practices, as Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) highlighted. This integration process is crucial for effectively addressing challenges in the implementation of CAPS.

The participants highlighted various strategies for effectively integrating learning outcomes into their teaching practices. These include aligning classroom activities with the specific objectives outlined in CAPS. Many teachers employ backward design, starting with the desired learning outcomes and then planning assessments and instructional activities that directly support those goals (Fink, 2013).

CAPS we use that to develop the learning outcomes in the class and then from that we set up classroom activities to achieve those learning outcomes. (Participant 5)

The ATP or the syllabus learning outcomes, you then develop your learning outcome and use your classroom activity, see if you have reached the outcome. (Participant 6)

Well, the learning outcomes it comes from the syllabus, for instance, in geography, they need to know the directions of the compass. At the end of that specific topic or subject, in this amount of time, and then you can create your activities, and you can create your activities to align with the outlines or the goal that was given to you from the syllabus. (Participant 8)

Additionally, teachers emphasise the importance of using diverse teaching methods, such as project-based and cooperative learning, to engage learners and facilitate the achievement of these outcomes (Fink, 2013). Interview data revealed several successful integration practices among participants. For instance, one teacher described how they developed thematic units that encompass multiple learning outcomes, allowing for a more cohesive learning experience. Another participant shared their use of formative assessments throughout the instructional process, which helped track learners' progress toward meeting the established outcomes.

The findings call for attention to the critical role of the CAPS in guiding teachers in developing and aligning learning outcomes with classroom activities. This systematic approach highlights the ICD's focus on designing learning experiences that are directly linked to clearly defined outcomes, fostering both accountability and clarity in the educational process (Fink, 2013).

The study results indicate the participants not only recognise the importance of integrating learning outcomes, but also actively implement effective strategies to enhance learner engagement and achievement.

4.5.3.5. Sub-theme 3.5: Validity, reliability and fairness

Eight of the 10 participants expressed concerns regarding the validity, reliability, and fairness of academic assessments in measuring learners' performance or skills at the end of the learning period. These participants highlighted inconsistencies and biases in grading practices, suggesting that the current assessment methods may not accurately reflect learners' true abilities.

I would say it's not reliable and not fair at all, for example, in my case, I have two history classes, my colleague has the other two history classes and I've seen numerous times where you for example is a way stricter marker than I am. I'm a bit more lenient; I've given learners much more marks. (Participant 4)

It's not always valid and reliable; the learner must have a certain percentage, but sometimes the learners are allowed to progress to another grade and irrespective of if they get that percentage; teachers they mark differently. (Participant 6)

Conversely, two participants provided more ambiguous responses, suggesting that while they conduct regular assessments and strive to adhere to the curriculum and assessment policy frameworks, their views on the overall effectiveness of these assessments remain unclear.

It's hard to tell because not all schools in South Africa are the same, and there are various reasons for that; also, not all the teachers who teach certain subjects are qualified to teach that subjects. (Participant 9)

This dual perspective highlights the complexity of implementing fair and reliable assessment practices within the educational context, revealing significant challenges that need to be addressed.

The study found that all teachers assess their learners, though the intensity and impact of these assessments on instruction vary. In particular, teachers' perceptions of assessment scope, such as its purpose, reliability, and the processes involved, significantly affect how they conduct evaluations. Teachers often assess not only

academic knowledge and skills, but also social factors such as learner participation, interaction, and attendance (Brookhart & Nitko, 2022).

The findings regarding the validity and reliability of assessments reveal crucial insights into teachers' perceptions of fairness and accuracy. Many teachers articulated that fair assessments are those that align closely with the learning objectives established in the curriculum, particularly those outlined in CAPS. This alignment is a key component of the theoretical framework, which accentuates the importance of coherence between learning goals, teaching methods, and assessment strategies (Fink, 2013). Additionally, insights from the interviews highlighted the collaborative processes in place for establishing assessment standards. Teachers discussed the significance of moderation meetings, where they collectively review and refine assessment tools to ensure they adhere to the intended learning outcomes. This practice not only fosters consistency and fairness in evaluations but also aligns with the ICD's principle of collaborative design, where stakeholder input enhances the overall quality of the educational experience (Fink, 2013). By engaging in these practices, teachers are better equipped to deliver assessments that are both valid and reliable, reinforcing the importance of a systematic approach in which assessment practices are directly linked to the learning objectives. Ultimately, the findings indicate that a structured assessment process, in line with the ICD framework, promotes a more equitable educational environment, where all learners are assessed fairly based on clearly defined standards.

The results indicate that participants place a strong emphasis on the need for clear and consistent assessment criteria, which they believe are vital for ensuring that evaluations accurately reflect learners' true capabilities.

Having explored the themes and sub-themes that highlight the experiences of social sciences teachers and provide recommendations for enhancing CAPS implementation in line with theoretical principles, the focus now shifts to analysing the summative assessments. This phase aims to evaluate how well these assessments align with the principles discussed by the teachers, and whether they effectively measure the intended learning outcomes outlined by the CAPS framework. By examining the structure, content, and performance metrics of the summative assessments, we can gain deeper insights into the practical implications of the teachers' perspectives and identify areas for improvement in the overall assessment strategy.

4.6. RESULTS OF DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The results of the document analysis will provide a broader context for understanding the implementation of CAPS and highlight any discrepancies or support for the themes emerging from the interviews. The researcher compiled criteria using a system that signifies ✓ yes and X no. The comments provided in the tables below explain the findings related to these criteria. Tables 4.5 to 4.12 present a comparative analysis of summative assessments for history and geography, specifically for Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7, during the 2022/23 financial year for primary schools A and B.

Table 4.5: Comparison of Summative Assessment Analysis for Grade 4 History (2022/23 Financial Year)

History Grade 4 Primary School A		History Grade 4 Primary School B		
Criteria	Primary School A	Primary School B		Comment
General layout	✓		✓	Both schools included all necessary elements.
Clear test instructions	✓		X	School B's instructions were not included.
Test divided into sections		X	X	Neither school organised tests into distinct sections.
Sections represent difficulty levels		X	X	Neither school effectively represented difficulty levels.
Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %		X	X	No evidence of difficulty levels calculated in weighting % in either assessment.
Keywords of questions suited to difficulty level		X	X	Neither school aligned question keywords with difficulty levels.
Test covers prescribed learning content		X	X	Prescribed content insufficiently covered in both assessments.
Questions align with the prescribed learning content	✓		✓	Both schools' questions were relevant.
Mark allocation per question	✓		✓	Logical and well-distributed mark allocation in both.
Mark allocation per section		X	X	Neither school provided clear mark allocation by section.
Total mark of the test	✓		✓	Total marks calculated correctly in both assessments.

Table 4.6: Comparison of Summative Assessment Analysis for Grade 5 History (2022/23 Financial Year)

History Grade 5 Primary School A		History Grade 5 Primary School B			
Criteria	Primary School A	Primary School B		Comment	
General layout	✓		✓		Both schools included all necessary elements.
Clear test instructions	✓			X	School B's instructions were not included.
Test divided into sections		X	✓		School B organised tests into distinct sections, while School A did not.
Sections represent difficulty levels		X	✓		School B effectively represented difficulty levels; School A did not.
Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %		X	✓		School B calculated difficulty levels, while School A did not.
Key words of questions suited to difficulty level	✓		✓		Both schools used appropriate keywords for their questions.
Test covers prescribed learning content		X	✓		School B covered prescribed content adequately; School A did not.
Questions align with prescribed learning content	✓		✓		Questions in both assessments were relevant to the prescribed content.
Mark allocation per question	✓		✓		Both schools had logical and well-distributed mark allocation.
Mark allocation per section		X	✓		School B provided clear mark allocation by section; School A did not.
Total mark of the test	✓		✓		Total marks were calculated correctly in both assessments.

Table 4.7: Comparison of Summative Assessment Analysis for Grade 6 History (2022/2023 Financial Year)

History Grade 6 Primary School A			History Grade 6 Primary School B		
Criteria	Primary School A		Primary School B		Comment
General layout	✓		✓		Both schools included all necessary elements.
Clear test instructions	✓			X	School B's instructions were not included.
Test divided into sections		X	✓		School B organised tests into distinct sections, while School A did not.
Sections represent difficulty levels		X	✓		School B effectively represented difficulty levels; School A did not.
Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %		X	✓		School B calculated difficulty levels, while School A did not.
Key words of questions suited to difficulty level	✓		✓		Both schools used appropriate keywords for their questions.
Test covers prescribed learning content		X		X	Prescribed content insufficiently covered in both assessments.
Questions align with prescribed learning content	✓		✓		Questions in both assessments were relevant to the prescribed content.
Mark allocation per question	✓		✓		Both schools had logical and well-distributed mark allocation.
Mark allocation per section		X		X	Neither school provided clear mark allocation by section.
Total mark of the test	✓		✓		Total marks were calculated correctly in both assessments.

Table 4.8: Comparison of Summative Assessment Analysis for Grade 7 History (2022/2023 Financial Year)

History Grade 7 Primary School A		History Grade 7 Primary School B			
Criteria	Primary School A	Primary School B		Comment	
General layout	✓		✓		Both schools included all necessary elements.
Clear test instructions	✓		✓		Clear instructions were present in both schools.
Test divided into sections	✓		✓		Both schools organised tests into sections.
Sections represent difficulty levels		X	✓		Only School B effectively represented difficulty levels.
Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %		X	✓		Only School B calculated difficulty levels.
Key words of questions suited to difficulty level	✓		✓		Both schools used appropriate keywords for their questions.
Test covers prescribed learning content		X	✓		Only School B adequately covered prescribed content.
Questions align with prescribed learning content	✓		✓		Questions in both assessments were relevant to the prescribed content.
Mark allocation per question	✓		✓		Both schools had logical and well-distributed mark allocation.
Mark allocation per section		X	✓		Only School B provided clear mark allocation by section.
Total mark of test	✓		✓		Total marks were calculated correctly in both assessments.

Table 4.9: Comparison of Summative Assessment Analysis for Grade 4 Geography (2022/2023 Financial Year)

Geography Grade 4 Primary School A		Geography Grade 4 Primary School B		
Criteria	Primary School A	Primary School B		Comment
General layout	✓	✓		Both schools included all necessary elements.
Clear test instructions	✓		X	School B lacked clear test instructions.
Test divided into sections	✓		X	School B did not divide the test into sections.
Sections represent difficulty levels		X	X	Neither school effectively represented difficulty levels.
Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %		X	X	No evidence of weighting for difficulty levels in either school.
Key words of questions suited to difficulty level		X	X	Neither school aligned keywords with difficulty levels.
Test covers prescribed learning content		X	X	Both schools insufficiently covered prescribed content.
Questions align with prescribed learning content	✓	✓		Questions in both assessments were relevant to the prescribed content.
Mark allocation per question	✓	✓		Both schools had logical and well-distributed mark allocation.
Mark allocation per section		X	X	Neither school provided clear mark allocation by section.
Total mark of the test	✓	✓		Total marks were calculated correctly in both assessments.

Table 4.10: Comparison of Summative Assessment Analysis for Grade 5 Geography (2022/23 Financial Year)

Geography Grade 5 Primary School A			Geography Grade 5 Primary School B		
Criteria	Primary School A		Primary School B		Comment
General layout	✓		✓		Both schools included all necessary elements.
Clear test instructions	✓			X	School B lacked clear test instructions.
Test divided into sections		X		X	Neither school organised tests into distinct sections.
Sections represent difficulty levels	✓			X	Only School A represented difficulty levels effectively.
Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %		X		X	No evidence of weighting for difficulty levels in either school.
Key words of questions suited to difficulty level	✓		✓		Both schools aligned keywords with difficulty levels.
Test covers prescribed learning content	✓		✓		Both schools adequately covered the prescribed content.
Questions align with prescribed learning content	✓		✓		Questions in both assessments were relevant to the prescribed content.
Mark allocation per question	✓		✓		Both schools had logical and well-distributed mark allocation.
Mark allocation per section		X		X	Neither school provided clear mark allocation by section.
Total mark of the test	✓		✓		Total marks were calculated correctly in both assessments.

Table 4.11: Comparison of Summative Assessment Analysis for Grade 6 Geography (2022/2023 Financial Year)

Geography Grade 6 Primary School A			Geography Grade 6 Primary School B		
Criteria	Primary School A		Primary School B		Comment
General layout	✓		✓		Both schools included all necessary elements.
Clear test instructions	✓		✓		Clear instructions were provided by both schools.
Test divided into sections		X	✓		Only School B divided the test into sections.
Sections represent difficulty levels	✓		✓		Both schools effectively represented difficulty levels.
Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %		X	✓		Only School B calculated difficulty levels.
Key words of questions suited to difficulty level	✓		✓		Both schools aligned keywords with difficulty levels.
Test covers prescribed learning content	✓		✓		Both schools adequately covered the prescribed content.
Questions align with prescribed learning content	✓		✓		Questions in both assessments were relevant to the prescribed content.
Mark allocation per question	✓		✓		Logical mark allocation was present in both assessments.
Mark allocation per section		X	✓		Only School B provided clear mark allocation by section.
Total mark of the test	✓		✓		Total marks were calculated correctly in both assessments.

Table 4.12: Comparison of Summative Assessment Analysis for Grade 7 Geography (2022/2023 Financial Year)

Geography Grade 7 Primary School A			Geography Grade 7 Primary School B		
Criteria	Primary School A		Primary School B		Comment
General layout	✓		✓		Both schools included all necessary elements.
Clear test instructions	✓		✓		Instructions were clear in both assessments.
Test divided into sections		X	✓		Only School B divided the test into sections.
Sections represent difficulty levels	✓		✓		Both schools effectively represented difficulty levels.
Difficulty levels calculated in weighting %	✓		✓		Both schools calculated difficulty levels effectively.
Key words of questions suited to difficulty level	✓		✓		Keywords aligned with difficulty levels in both assessments.
Test covers prescribed learning content		X	✓		School A did not sufficiently cover prescribed content.
Questions align with prescribed learning content	✓		✓		Questions in both assessments were relevant.
Mark allocation per question	✓		✓		Logical mark allocation was present in both assessments.
Mark allocation per section		X	✓		Only School B provided clear mark allocation by section.
Total mark of the test	✓		✓		Total marks were calculated correctly in both assessments.

Following the presentation of the summative assessments, which aims to deepen our understanding of the alignment and effectiveness of assessment practices within the classroom, the following section summarises the findings of the document analysis.

4.6.1. SUMMARY OF TABLE 4.5: COMPARISON OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR GRADE 4 HISTORY (2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR)

While both schools exhibited strengths in layout, relevance of questions, and mark allocation, significant differences emerged between them. School B outperformed School A's clarity of instructions, section organisation, difficulty level representation, and prescribed content coverage. This disparity highlights the need for Primary School A to improve its assessment practices to ensure a more effective evaluation process.

4.6.2. SUMMARY OF TABLE 4.6: COMPARISON OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR GRADE 5 HISTORY (2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Both schools displayed strengths in layout, question relevance, and mark allocation. However, School B demonstrated superior practices in clarity of instructions, section organisation, difficulty level representation, and prescribed content coverage. These differences indicate areas for improvement for Primary School A.

4.6.3. SUMMARY OF TABLE 4.7: COMPARISON OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR GRADE 6 HISTORY (2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Both schools exhibited strengths in layout, clarity of instructions, and mark allocation. However, School B demonstrated better practices in representing difficulty levels, calculating weighting, and covering prescribed content, highlighting areas for improvement for Primary School A.

4.6.4. SUMMARY OF TABLE 4.8: COMPARISON OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR GRADE 7 HISTORY (2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Both schools displayed strengths in general layout, clarity of instructions, and mark allocation. However, School B outperformed School A in representing difficulty levels, calculating weighting, and adequately covering prescribed content, indicating specific areas for improvement for Primary School A.

4.6.5. SUMMARY OF TABLE 4.9: COMPARISON OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR GRADE 4 GEOGRAPHY (2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Both schools demonstrated strengths in general layout, alignment of questions with learning content, and mark allocation per question. However, significant weaknesses were observed in areas such as clear test instructions, division into sections, representation of difficulty levels, and coverage of prescribed content. These findings indicate critical areas for improvement for both schools.

4.6.6. SUMMARY OF TABLE 4.10: COMPARISON OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR GRADE 5 GEOGRAPHY (2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Primary School A exhibited strengths in the representation of difficulty levels and clarity in general layout. At the same time, Primary School B faced challenges with clear test instructions and dividing the test into sections. Both schools performed well in keyword alignment and mark allocation per question. However, improvements are needed in weighting difficulty levels and providing section mark allocations. Overall, both schools demonstrated a need for enhancements in test organisation and clarity to ensure effective assessments.

4.6.7. SUMMARY OF TABLE 4.11: COMPARISON OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR GRADE 6 GEOGRAPHY (2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Both schools exhibited strengths in general layout, clear test instructions, and the alignment of questions with prescribed content. However, only Primary School B effectively divided the test into sections and provided a mark allocation per section.

While both schools need to improve in calculating difficulty levels, they successfully covered the required learning content and allocated marks logically for each question. Overall, both assessments demonstrated a solid foundation but require further refinement in specific areas to enhance their effectiveness.

4.6.8. SUMMARY OF TABLE 4.12: COMPARISON OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR GRADE 7 GEOGRAPHY (2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Both schools demonstrated strengths in general layout, instructions clarity, and questions alignment with prescribed content. However, only Primary School B effectively divided the test into sections and provided a mark allocation for each section. While School A fell short in covering the prescribed content, both schools successfully calculated difficulty levels and allocated marks logically for each question. Overall, the assessments exhibited a solid foundation but require further refinement in specific areas to enhance their effectiveness.

The analysis above offers valuable insights that enhance our understanding of the implementation of CAPS in primary education.

4.7. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter 4 focused on the analysis and findings of the study, drawing from the responses of 10 participants and examining 16 summative assessments from the 2022/23 financial year. The chapter also included a comprehensive document analysis, offering a comparative evaluation of the formulation of end-of-year examination papers for Social Sciences in Grades 4 to 7.

Chapter 5 presents a comprehensive summary of the findings, outlines the limitations and delimitations of the study, offers recommendations, provides suggestions for future research, and concludes with final reflections on the study.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER

Chapter 4 emphasised the significance of participant experiences in understanding educational practices and informed discussions on curriculum effectiveness and areas for improvement. It highlighted key themes and insights regarding the implementation of CAPS.

This chapter summarises the research journey, outlining the study's purpose, research design and methods employed, and its significance. It concludes with a recap of the findings, offering recommendations and suggestions for future research, followed by final reflections on the study. This chapter encapsulates the insights gained throughout the research process and emphasises the implications for practice and further exploration in the field.

5.2. RETROSPECTIVE SUMMARY

This retrospective summary provides an overview of the key findings and insights from research on implementing CAPS in public primary schools. Focusing on the experiences of 10 teachers across two schools in the Overberg district of the Western Cape, the study captured their perceptions on both the challenges and successes encountered in applying CAPS.

Several key themes emerged, including teachers' interpretation of CAPS, the challenges in its implementation, and the strategies they adopted to address these obstacles. Participants expressed a strong commitment to aligning their teaching practices with CAPS objectives, while recognising various obstacles, such as inconsistent assessment practices and limited resources. The study highlighted the critical role of collaboration among teachers, emphasising that shared responsibilities and professional development are essential for enhancing teaching effectiveness. Insights from the document analysis further supported these findings, revealing patterns in assessment practices that either aligned with or diverged from CAPS standards.

Reflecting on this study, I am impressed and humbled by the deep dedication and resilience demonstrated by the social science teachers as they work to align their teaching practices with CAPS, despite the significant challenges they encounter. Their commitment to collaboration and professional growth emphasises the importance of fostering an environment where both teachers and learners can thrive within a complex educational framework. It is hoped that the insights gained from the participants in this research will not only inform future studies but also drive meaningful advancements in professional development, enhancing educational outcomes for all learners and ensuring they receive the quality education they deserve.

This summary encapsulates the complex realities of implementing CAPS in primary education, highlighting the strengths and improvement areas. The study offers valuable recommendations for further research and professional development to refine assessment practices and improve learners' educational outcomes.

5.3. RECAP OF THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study explored how social sciences teachers implement CAPS in primary schools, aiming to determine the degree to which their practices conform to the prescribed norms and standards of fair, valid, and reliable teaching and learning. It specifically focused on summative assessments, also known as end-of-year examination papers, to evaluate compliance and effectiveness in the educational process.

5.4. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This research utilised a qualitative approach to examine the teachers' experiences and perceptions on the implementation of CAPS in public primary schools. Data was primarily gathered through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Ten teachers from two public primary schools in the Western Cape's Overberg district participated in the study. The interviews were designed to gain a deep understanding of the challenges, strategies, and perceptions related to the implementation of CAPS. The semi-structured format provided room for the participants to discuss their experiences in detail while ensuring that key topics were addressed. In addition to

interviews, the study involved a thorough document analysis of summative assessments from the 2022/23 financial year. Specifically, this included end-of-year examination papers for history and geography across Grades 4 to 7, resulting in a total of 16 assessments being analysed. This dual approach offered a thorough understanding of both the qualitative experiences of teachers and the quantitative aspects of assessment practices. The interview data were analysed thematically, highlighting the key themes and sub-themes related to the implementation of CAPS. Document analysis complemented this by providing concrete examples of assessment practices, allowing for a holistic view of the educational context. Overall, this research design and methodology facilitated a nuanced exploration of teachers' perceptions and the real-world realities of applying CAPS in the classroom.

5.5. SUMMARY OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This section offers a summary of the demographic data collected from study participants, including key characteristics such as age, gender, years of teaching experience, and educational qualifications. The sample consisted of 10 teachers from two public primary schools in the Overberg district of the Western Cape. Among the participants, there was a diverse representation of genders, with an equal balance between female and male teachers. The participants' years of teaching experience varied significantly, ranging from recent graduates to seasoned and teachers with more than two decades of experience in the classroom. Educational qualifications also differed, with a mix of postgraduate degrees and advanced certifications. This diversity in background and experience contributed to a rich tapestry of perspectives on the implementation of CAPS, offering a thorough insight into the experiences and difficulties encountered by teachers in relation to assessment practices and curriculum implementation.

5.6. SUMMARY OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significant value for multiple stakeholders in the educational landscape. Firstly, it enhances the understanding of how teachers interpret and implement CAPS, illuminating both the obstacles they encounter and the effective strategies they employ. By identifying inconsistencies in assessment practices, the study emphasises the need for uniformity, which is essential for ensuring fair, valid,

and reliable summative assessments across public primary schools. Secondly, the findings provide actionable insights for policymakers and educational leaders, highlighting the importance of continuous training and resource utilisation in enhancing teaching and assessment quality. The focus on teacher collaboration creates an opportunity to cultivate an environment of ongoing growth and development within schools. Lastly, the research serves as a foundation for future studies, paving the way for further exploration into the dynamics of assessment practices and their impact on learner outcomes. Overall, this study aimed to promote a more informed and equitable understanding of the educational environment, ultimately benefiting learners by ensuring they receive consistent and high-quality assessments throughout their educational journey.

5.7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The examination of data gathered through interviews and document analysis provides valuable perspectives on the application of CAPS in public primary schools.

5.7.1. THEME 1: INTERPRETATION OF CAPS

The first theme highlighted the teachers' varied understandings and approaches to the curriculum, emphasising the need for greater clarity and consistency in its interpretation. Within this theme, sub-themes explored the roles and responsibilities of teachers, showcasing their proactive efforts to align teaching methods with CAPS requirements.

5.7.2. THEME 2: CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

The second theme illuminated the multifaceted obstacles faced by teachers, including resource limitations, inconsistencies in assessment practices, and situational factors affecting the educational environment. Sub-themes within this area highlighted the need for effective strategies to enhance compliance and accountability, while also addressing the varied responsibilities of teachers in maintaining educational standards.

5.7.3. THEME 3: STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

Finally, the third theme identified practical approaches employed by teachers to traverse the challenges of implementing CAPS. This theme revealed that collaboration among educators and ongoing professional development is critical in fostering effective assessment practices and ensuring alignment with educational goals. The findings draw attention to the importance of a structured, collaborative framework, as illustrated by the ICD, to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning in accordance with CAPS. Ultimately, this approach promotes more just learning environments for all learners.

5.8. DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The document analysis aimed to evaluate the summative assessments used in history and geography across Grades 4 to 7 during the 2022/23 financial year. This review involved a systematic analysis of various assessment papers to determine their effectiveness in measuring learners' understanding and skills as per the curriculum requirements. Key criteria for evaluation included:

- **General layout:** Assessments generally followed a clear format, and included essential components such as subject, grade, and examiner details.
- **Clear test instructions:** While most assessments provided clear instructions, some lacked sufficient clarity, potentially affecting learners' understanding of what was expected.
- **Test structure:** A significant finding was the inconsistent division of tests into sections, which may hinder the clarity of content and flow for learners.
- **Difficulty levels:** While some assessments attempted to represent varying difficulty levels, the calculation of difficulty weighting was often absent, impacting the assessments' reliability.
- **Alignment with curriculum:** Most questions were relevant to prescribed learning content, although some assessments did not adequately cover all required topics, which could affect overall learner preparedness.
- **Mark allocation:** The allocation of marks per question and section was logical in many cases, though some assessments did not specify this clearly, which could lead to confusion during grading.

Overall, the document analysis highlighted several strengths in the assessments while also identifying critical areas for improvement, particularly in the clarity of instructions, test structure, and coverage of learning content. These findings emphasise the need for more standardised and effective assessment practices to enhance fairness and validity in educational evaluation. Below, Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate the results of the summative assessments analysis for history and geography, specifically for Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7, during the 2022/23 financial year for Primary School A and Primary School B.

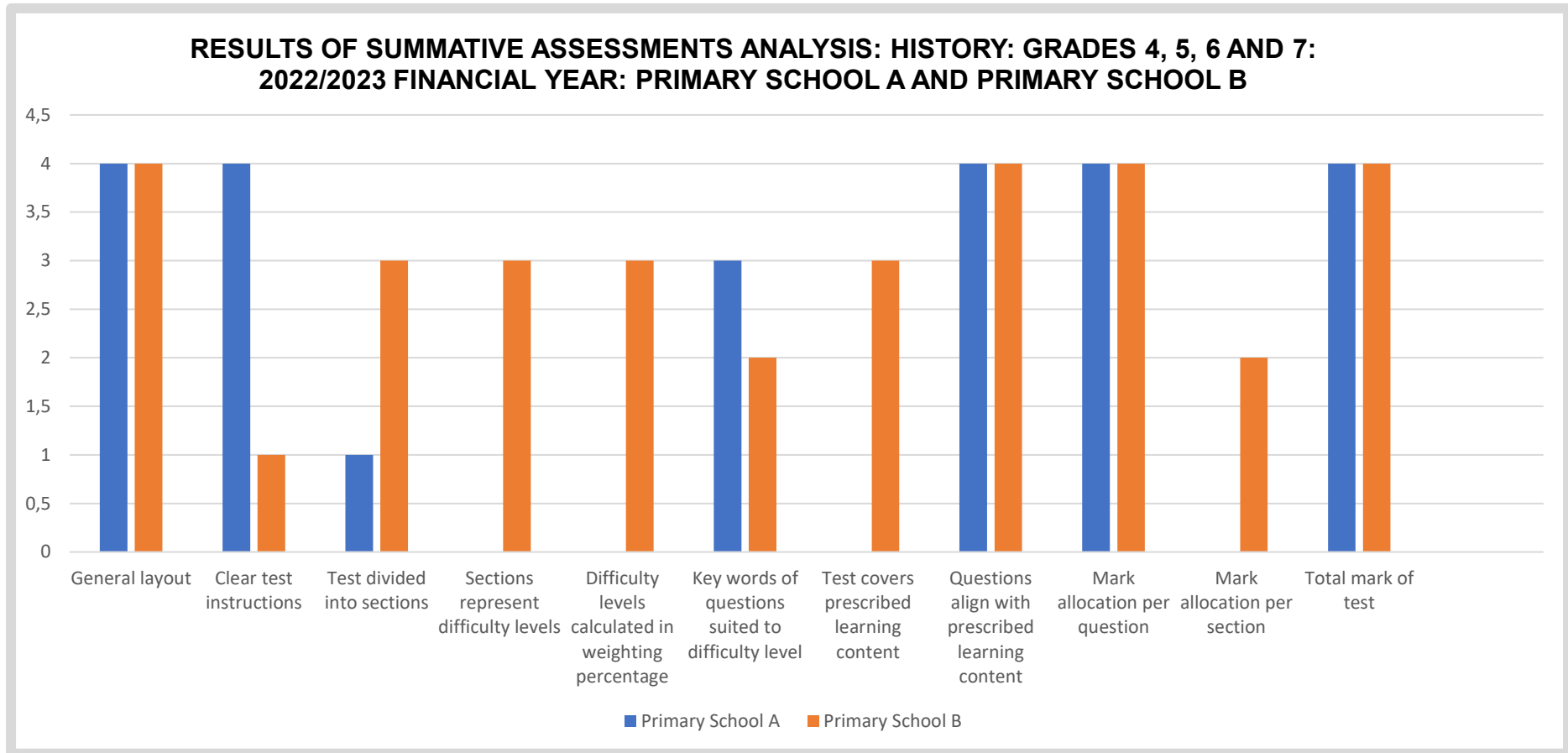


Figure 4.1: Results of summative assessment analysis: History: Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7: 2022/23 financial year: Primary School A and Primary School B

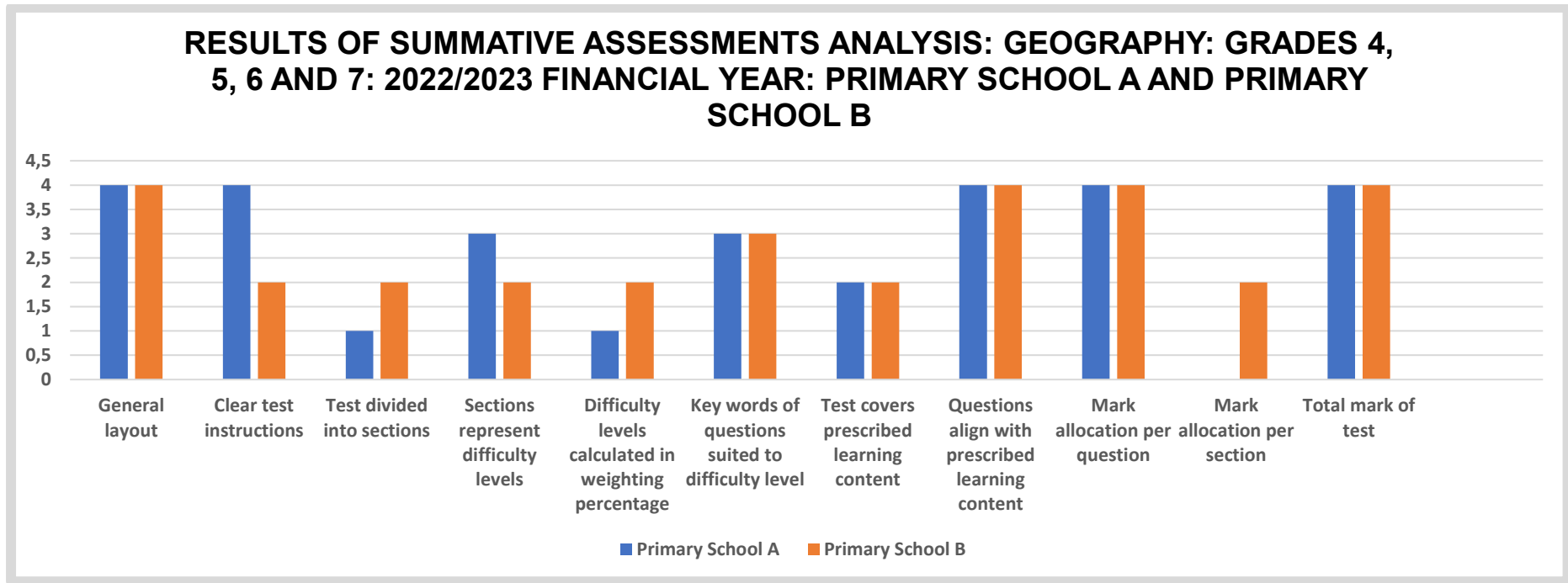


Figure 4.2: Results of summative assessment analysis: Geography: Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7: 2022/23 financial year: Primary School A and Primary School B

The subsequent sections outline the study's limitations and delimitations, along with recommendations and proposals for future research.

5.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A significant limitation of this study was the reduction in sample size, which affected the overall scope of the research. Initially, the study aimed to include two social sciences teachers from Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 of each of the two selected primary schools in the Overberg district of the Western Cape, targeting a total of 16 participants. This sample size was chosen to ensure comprehensive insights and robust data collection, aligning with the typical requirements for a full dissertation. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the final sample was reduced to 10 participants – six from Primary School A and four from Primary School B. This reduction was influenced by the integration of history and geography teachers into combined roles for some grades, participant withdrawals, and unavailability. Consequently, the final sample fell short of the recommended range of 12 to 15 participants typically suggested for studies of this nature. This narrow focus may not adequately represent teachers' diverse experiences and perspectives across different regions or school types. Despite this limitation, the study continued with the available participants, selected for their expertise and direct involvement with CAPS. Although the reduced sample size presents a constraint, the qualitative methods employed – including semi-structured interviews and case studies – were designed to capture detailed and meaningful insights.

Additionally, the qualitative approach of the study means the findings are based on self-reported data, which could be prone to bias. Participants may have provided responses influenced by personal beliefs or perceptions rather than the objective realities of their teaching practices and the implementation of CAPS. To mitigate this, the researcher employed several strategies. Triangulation was utilised by incorporating multiple data sources, including document reviews of summative assessments, to provide a comprehensive view of CAPS implementation. Interview questions were designed to elicit detailed, reflective responses, promoting richer data collection. Additionally, the researcher fostered a trusting environment to reduce social desirability bias by emphasising confidentiality and the importance of authentic

responses. Furthermore, potential biases were acknowledged, allowing for a critical assessment of the findings. These approaches were designed to improve the study's validity and consistency. It is important to take these limitations into account when interpreting the results and making recommendations.

5.10. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is delimited by several factors that define its scope and focus. Firstly, the study concentrates specifically on the Intermediate Phase, and the Entry-Level grade of the Senior Phase within the Overberg district of the Western Cape. Secondly, it examines the implementation of CAPS specifically for the subject of social sciences, which encompasses history and geography in Grades 4 to 7, thereby excluding other subjects and grade levels. This limited focus may restrict the ability to generalise the findings to other similar educational settings. While this focused approach is deliberate, the researcher incorporated a review of literature that discusses the implementation of curriculum and assessment policy frameworks across various educational settings, subjects and grades, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and successes observed in the targeted educational landscape. Lastly, the research focuses on teachers' perspectives and does not include input from learners, parents, or school management, which may offer different viewpoints on the implementation and effectiveness of CAPS. To overcome this parameter, the researcher acknowledged the potential biases and engaged with existing literature that includes multiple stakeholder perspectives. This literature review enriched the study's findings by situating teachers' insights within the broader context of stakeholder experiences and opinions. These delimitations are essential to consider when interpreting the results and their impact on practice and future research.

5.11. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends the following actions:

5.11.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THEME 1

To enhance the understanding and implementation of CAPS, it is recommended that comprehensive training sessions be conducted for teachers, focusing on the key components and objectives of the curriculum.

Additionally, developing clear guidelines and resources that outline the expectations and interpretations of CAPS will promote consistency among teachers. Regular workshops and collaborative meetings should be established to foster dialogue and the sharing of best practices, enabling teachers to clarify doubts and better align their teaching approaches.

5.11.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THEME 2

Addressing the challenges identified in the implementation of CAPS requires a multifaceted approach. Schools should advocate for increased access to resources, including teaching materials and technology, to support diverse learning needs. Moreover, regular evaluations of the curriculum implementation process should be conducted to identify specific situational factors hindering progress.

Creating a supportive environment that encourages open communication between teachers, school management, and the DBE will facilitate improved accountability and compliance with assessment standards.

5.11.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THEME 3

To further strengthen strategies for overcoming implementation challenges, it is crucial to promote ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers. This could include mentorship programmes and peer observations that encourage collaborative learning and the sharing of effective teaching practices.

Additionally, establishing clear assessment criteria and conducting regular moderation meetings will ensure that assessments are valid, reliable, and aligned with learning goals. By promoting a culture of ongoing development and support, schools can improve the overall quality of education and more effectively address the needs of all learners.

5.12. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should explore the long-term impacts of professional development programmes on teachers' implementation of CAPS, specifically examining how these programmes address the inconsistencies in assessment practices identified in the current study. Investigating the effectiveness of various assessment strategies employed in public primary schools is essential. This involves assessing their alignment with the learning goals outlined in CAPS and evaluating their impact on learner performance. Additionally, future studies could delve into the specific situational factors influencing curriculum implementation in diverse contexts, such as rural versus urban schools. This research could help identify tailored approaches that effectively address unique challenges faced in each setting. Qualitative studies capturing learners' perspectives on their learning experiences and assessments would provide important insights into the effectiveness of current practices and highlight aspects for improvement, particularly regarding fairness and accuracy in assessments. Addressing these inconsistencies is crucial for fostering equitable educational outcomes.

5.13. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study explored the challenges in assessing Social Sciences implementation of CAPS in two public primary schools within the Western Cape's Overberg district. The study focused on the challenges teachers face and the strategies they employ to address them. Using a blend of interviews and document analysis, key findings emerged regarding the interpretation of CAPS, the challenges in its implementation, and the strategies teachers use to improve teaching and learning results. Findings emerged that strongly suggest a misalignment between curriculum goals and assessment practices. The research highlighted significant variations in assessment practices, revealing inconsistencies that could affect summative assessments' fairness, validity, and reliability. The study identified the need for improved teacher preparedness to support meaningful teaching and learning and enhance assessment strategies.

Educators expressed a strong desire for professional development to standardise these practices and improve their alignment with CAPS objectives. Furthermore, integrating resources and collaborative approaches among teachers were identified as critical factors in facilitating effective curriculum delivery.

The study aimed to improve educational outcomes in primary education and to address systemic gaps in assessment plans. The study emphasises the importance of ongoing support and training for teachers, as well as the need for coherent assessment strategies that reflect the learning goals outlined in CAPS. The insights gained from this study contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges surrounding curriculum implementation and highlight areas for further exploration and policy improvement.

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LIST OF ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A – PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



Directorate: Research

meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za
Tel: +27 021 467 2200
Fax: 084 590 2282
Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000
www.westerncape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 16375E04C000055-20230405

ENQUIRIES: Mr M. Kanzi

Mr Petrus van Niekerk
25 Louis Trichardt Street
Sandbaai
Hermanus
7200

Dear Petrus van Niekerk,

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: SOCIAL SCIENCES TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **9 June 2023 till 30 September 2023**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Mr M Kanzi at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards,
Meshack Kanzi
Directorate: Research
DATE: 9 June 2023



ANNEXURE B – WRITTEN CONSENT OF PRINCIPALS



Faculty of Education

19 June 2023

Information letter requesting consent

The Principal

I am Pieter van Niekerk, a MEd student at the University of Pretoria. The title of my study towards my M.Ed. degree is 'Social Sciences teachers' implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in public primary schools'. The aim of the study is to investigate how Social Sciences teachers implement the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in primary schools in the Overberg district of the Western Cape and to make recommendations to reinforce the professional development skills of teachers in the formulation of summative assessments. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Nevensha Sing, from the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies at the University of Pretoria.

I hereby seek your consent to approach the Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7 Social Sciences teachers to participate in this study. Each teacher will also be given a formal letter inviting her/him to participate in this study. There are two parts to this research, an interview (using a semi-structured interview schedule) and document analysis of their summative assessment or end-of-year examination paper, for the 2020/2021 financial year. The interview will take place after formal contact time and will not interfere with day-to-day duties. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. The semi-structured interviews will be completed and reported on anonymously. When participating in this study, permission to make an audio recording of the interview will be requested. The purpose thereof is to make the transcription of data valid and authentic.

During the reporting phase of the study, pseudonyms and codes will be used to ensure anonymity. Confidentiality will be ensured, no personal information, such as the name of the school or teacher will be mentioned in the study and will be guarded by the POPI Act. Personal information and research data will be confidentially stored on a password-protected device, to which only my supervisor and I will have access. Since participation in the study is voluntary, please note that no participant will receive any monetary awards or awards in kind. I would also like to request your permission to conduct the above-mentioned research and use the data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Kind regards,

Petrus Albertus (Pieter) van Niekerk

Email address: pietnie@gmail.com

Contact Mobile number: 0736076775

Supervisor: Dr. Nevensha Sing

E-mail address: Nevensha.Sing@up.ac.za

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

ANNEXURE C – WRITTEN CONSENT OF PARTICIPANTS



Faculty of Education

19 June 2023

Information letter requesting consent

Dear Research Participant

I am Pieter van Niekerk, a MEd student at the University of Pretoria. The title of my study towards my M.Ed. degree is 'Social Sciences teachers' implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in public primary schools'. The aim of the study is to investigate how Social Sciences teachers implement the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in primary schools in the Overberg district of the Western Cape and to make recommendations to reinforce the professional development skills of teachers in the formulation of summative assessments. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Nevensha Sing, from the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies at the University of Pretoria.

I kindly invite you to participate in this study. There are two parts to this research, an interview (using a semi-structured interview schedule) and document analysis of your summative assessment or end-of-year examination paper, for the 2020/2021 financial year. The interview will be scheduled as per your availability and will take place at a venue convenient to you. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. The semi-structured interviews will be completed and reported on anonymously. When participating in this study, your permission to make an audio recording of the interview is requested. The purpose thereof is to make the transcription of data valid and authentic. The recording will be safely kept on a password-protected device, to which only my supervisor and I will have access. During the reporting phase of the study, pseudonyms and codes will be used to ensure your anonymity. Confidentiality will be ensured, no personal information, such as the name of the school or teacher will be mentioned in the study and will be guarded by the POPI Act. Since your participation in the study is voluntary, please note that no participant will receive any monetary awards or awards in kind. I would also like to request your permission to use the data provided, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Please complete the form below to indicate that you understand the information shared above, and hereby give your consent to participate. However, you can, at any time later, choose to revoke your consent, in the event of which we shall delete and not process the data further. Revocation of your consent will not result in any disadvantages.

Kind regards,

Petrus Albertus (Pieter) van Niekerk

Email address: pietniei@gmail.com

Contact Mobile number: 0736076775

Supervisor: Dr. Nevensha Sing

E-mail address: Nevensha.Sing@up.ac.za

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Leopoldo la Thero

PARTICIPANT CONSENT TO BE INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

I, _____, hereby give my consent to Pieter van Niekerk to be included as a participant in his research on 'Social Sciences teachers' implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in public primary schools'.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PRINCIPAL CONSENT TO BE INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

I, _____, hereby give my consent to Pieter van Niekerk to include my school, and the Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7 Social Sciences teachers as participants in his research on 'Social Sciences teachers' implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in public primary schools'.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ANNEXURE D - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TITLE:	Social Sciences teachers' implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in public primary schools
Primary research question:	How do Social Sciences teachers implement the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in public primary schools?
Sub-question 1: How do Social Sciences teachers interpret the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement?	Interview question 1: What regulatory policy frameworks are prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for teaching and learning in the schooling sector in South Africa?
	Interview question 2: What are the aims and objectives of the policy framework for teaching and learning in the schooling sector, as prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa?
	Interview question 3: What are the minimum standards prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for the effective implementation and formulation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework?
	Interview question 4: What roles and responsibilities are prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for the effective implementation and formulation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework?
	Interview question 5: What constitute measurable teaching and learning of the curriculum and assessment policy framework for, more specifically, end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments as prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE)?

<p>Sub-question 2:</p> <p>What challenges do Social Sciences teachers experience in the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement?</p>	<p>Interview question 6:</p> <p>How consistent and comparable are teaching (teachers) and learning outcomes (end-of-the-year examination papers or summative assessments) amongst public primary schools in South Africa?</p>
	<p>Interview question 7:</p> <p>How are you measured to be compliant to and accountable for the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE)?</p>
	<p>Interview question 8:</p> <p>To what extent are the academic resources available and also, contributing towards the effective implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, as prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE)?</p>
	<p>Interview question 9:</p> <p>What professional development are provided by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to acquire the skills and ability needed for the implementation and formulation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework?</p>
<p>Sub-question 3:</p> <p>What strategies do Social Sciences teachers use to address the challenges identified in the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement?</p>	<p>Interview question 10:</p> <p>What criteria do you use to ensure consistent and comparable formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?</p>
	<p>Interview question 11:</p> <p>What is your level of responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, the formulation of end-of-the-year examination papers or summative assessments?</p>

	<p>Interview question 12:</p> <p>Describe how resources are utilised to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, consistent and comparable formulation of end-of-the-year examination papers or summative assessments?</p>
	<p>Interview question 13:</p> <p>What professional development are you undertaking to acquire the skills and ability needed for effective and consistent implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, the formulation of end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments?</p>
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	<p>The Integrated Course Design theory will provide the researcher with means to explore how Social Sciences teachers relate their interests and efforts, upon their most vital educational process of learners' summative assessments to the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.</p>
<p>Concept 1:</p> <p>Situational factors reflect on information already known about the teaching and learning environment, the characteristics of the learners and the teaching practices.</p>	<p>Interview question 14:</p> <p>What situational factors have an impact on the implementation of the curriculum and assessment policy framework, more specifically, the formulation of end-of-the-year examination papers or summative assessments?</p>
<p>Concept 2:</p> <p>Developing learning goals first, help teachers align learning goals with classroom activities</p>	<p>Interview question 15:</p> <p>How are the end-of-year examination papers or summative assessments aligned with the learning goals prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE)?</p>
<p>Concept 3:</p> <p>Once the end goals and learning outcomes have been determined the teacher puts the strategies, processes, techniques, and other ways into place to achieve the goal.</p>	<p>Interview question 16:</p> <p>How are learning outcomes, classroom activities, and the syllabus integrated to achieve consistent and comparable implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement?</p>

<p>Concept 4:</p> <p>Teachers provide clear feedback on learners' work and assess learners in a continuous manner.</p>	<p>Interview question 17:</p> <p>How valid, reliable and fair are the academic performance or skills that learners have acquired at the end of the learning against the minimum standards of learning outcomes prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE)?</p>
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