Making OBE Work

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Introduction

The state of Education in South Africa has become an important public discussion. It has become evident from the past matric results and many other publications that education is in a real crisis. At My current School, we have for many years dealt with the implementation of the curriculum in it's fragmented introduction by the Department of Education, first with Curriculum 2005 with its 44 Outcomes and later with the RNCS and later the addition of the NPAQ and the Assessment Guidelines. This fragmented approach to implementing OBE and its assessment has left school and many teachers confused and saturated for change.

We found that many teachers stopped reading because of the confusion and the many gaps which exist and were created because of a lack of policy to existing practices in schools, creating many questions which were not answered through policy, thus weakening the existing system. At My current school, we always kept asking questions and kept striving to make sense of it all and where needed we kept filling the gaps and addressing our teachers concerns to bring solutions to what they knew and what they needed to do their work. Through continuous teacher training and curriculum implementation, we have managed to implement OBE successfully to a degree that was acceptable to our teachers. We achieved this through:

1. Continuous curriculum development
2. Filling gaps in the curriculum and the way it was assessed, to match existing standards and practices
3. Keeping teachers positive by relating change to what they already know and did
4. Creating simple documentation that worked and made there tasks easier so that they can focus on their key task of teaching
5. Embracing change and development in education and the curriculum with a level-headed approach.

Make no mistake that this was not and easy task, we lost many valuable teachers who simply could not cope and rather opted to teach at private institutions who only took note of change. Private institutions implemented the NCS, but allowed their teachers to retain their professional identity by trusting that they were the experts in their fields and continued to teach what they knew was important and assessed the way they knew. Today these institutions have managed to maintain their standards, by continuing to:

1. Focus on the importance of content;
2. allowing their teachers to continue playing an important role in teaching and learning;
3. Retaining old practices of doing a variety of types of activities and assess learners on there (variety of forms of assessment);
4. Always placing emphasis on the importance of continuous assessment;
5. Tests and exams to teats knowledge still plays a major role;
6. Identifying the importance of assisting learners in dealing with barriers and the source of their barrier.

These key aspects to learning are not new and even all the ex-TED schools had adequate structures and procedures of doing this all very effectively. A good approach would have been to identify this goodness and expanding it into the new single system.

The important thing about bringing change is to always relate change to what is already done. With the introduction of OBE, it was interesting that for a new democracy, we chose the following approaches to implementing a new curriculum for all:

1. the “foreign to local”;
2. “outside to inside”;
3. “top to bottom”;
4. “unknown to known” approach

With the result, we did not relate change to what teachers knew and were trained in and because nothing fundamentally changed through all this, we have left teachers confused and insecure.

In most instances, there has been no fundamental change to the way teachers approach to teaching and learning. The problem is that many failed to see this, being bombarded with new terminology and concepts for what they were already doing. The top-down approach through documents and departmental officials, who could not relate to what teachers already knew, again left teachers confused and insecure. Teachers stopped reading and switched off to change. One important factor was that most principals were the last to understand what was going on and failed to make sense of change, failing to guide their teachers and their HOD’s.

Many Principals tried to compensate for their insecurities about the curriculum by sending their teachers on courses and dealing with the problem by “sending their best sheep to be slaughtered”. Only the very dynamic principals who retained their hand-on approach and still stood in the class, bothered to deal with the problems head-on. At My current school we were fortunate to have such a Principal.

The idea of this report is to highlight good practices that were identified over time and implemented to ease the administrative burden on our teachers and keep them positive and dynamic in the classroom. I will attempt to show this step by step to show how we developed by engaging positively with policies and embracing change for the better of our learners. This report might not be scientifically sound in its approach and comments made are not meant as criticism, but simply reflect our line of thought and state of mind while trying to make sense of it all.

The NCS

Although it can be agreed, the current South African curriculum and the curriculum statements are amongst the best found in the world. The curriculum statements cover a wide range of knowledge, skills and values for each grade and in most instances do address to a certain extent learner progression within each outcomes. However it has proven to be very difficult for teachers to work with it in its current form. Some of the areas which have proven to be problematic are:

1. The language used in the National Curriculum Statements, are not what teachers are used to and they find it difficult to identify the knowledge, skills and values within them which they are used to teaching their learners. You have to be very proficient in language and in this case English to interpret the correct meaning in each Outcomes and Assessment Standard.
2. The manner in which the statements have integrated knowledge, skills and values, often within the same Assessment Standard, calls for a specific interpretation, often not envisaged by the teacher and often in a combination which does not make sense to the teacher and therefore not easily interpreted into usable activities. Therefore rendering it unusable.
3. There is often not a natural progression within the statements and teachers find they are selecting Assessment Standards at random to try and keep to what they think the progression should be and what their learners may need to know before progressing to new work.
4. Generally it is found, and with this I refer to most competent teachers, that far too much decision making of what they need to teach, in which order it must be taught and which skills are important before the next skill is taught, is left up to the teacher. In discussions with other colleagues, most competent teachers start felling insecure about whether they are interpreting the Assessment Standards correctly and whether they are teaching the right knowledge, skills and values at the right time. Even textbook publishers all seem to have their own varied interpretation.
5. Further on the point of too much being expected from the teachers. With only a NCS document in their hand, Guidelines for Learning Programmes and the National Protocol on Assessment (NPA), the three levels of planning expected from teachers, for those of us who have actually developed our own Learning Programmes – very few have or even know how to – therefore the crisis we have today, is quite a tall order and putting a Learning Programme together from scratch is not an easy task but takes a lot of preparation and research and careful reading and understanding of the Assessment Standards as a whole. More about the three levels of planning later.
6. One of the biggest point of confusion, which started with Curriculum 2005 and was expended to a certain extend into the NCS, is the aspect of integration. Initially the idea was created, with Curriculum 2005, that full integration is required – teachers had to teach all learning areas

and integrate them to form a single learning programme. This made Principals and HOD's scramble to assign teachers to single grades, teaching all learning areas and integrating across learning areas as much as possible, using single themes (Programme organizers) and using one activity as assessment for all the Learning Areas integrated by that activity. This seemed workable, as many new Learning Areas were introduced which teachers had no knowledge background for and they simple went ahead and taught what they were used to, showing that the new Learning Areas were covered by integrating them into existing activities. Later, by the time the NCS was introduced, teachers were more familiar with the new Learning Areas and to a certain degree principals started directing their teachers to be more specialized and teachers started selecting which Learning Areas they preferred to teach, but teachers were kept within a grade and seldom knew what was taught in the previous grade and what learners are going to learn in the next grade. Besides integration is too highly rated and at the end of the day, so what? Each Learning Areas is as important as the next and an activity done in Mathematics, even if practical and creative and smacks of Arts and Culture, when it comes to the assessment, The identified Assessment Standard in Mathematics, which guides the activity and the criteria used to assess the activity and if the same activity were to be used to assess the integrated Arts and Culture Assessment Standard, the assessment may only be used across Learning Areas, if the teacher sets up a new set of criteria relating to Arts and Culture Assessment Standards – and learners are given the criteria in advance as stipulated in the Assessment Guidelines. And as I said, so what if the Maths activity relates to Arts and Culture, unless planned properly with both Learning Areas Assessment Standards in mind and assuming the teacher teaches both Learning Areas or plans with his/her colleague, it becomes a fruitless exercise. The bottom line is that this aspect has just put unnecessary strain on the implementation of the NCS as there is no guidelines, even if done correctly, how much integrating must be done and to what extend may Learning Areas be integrated. Is it just a free-style thing, do it if you can or integrate a certain percentage or integrate only certain Learning Areas, such as Technology with Natural Sciences etc.

7. The general abuse of terminology has also played an important role in the confusion and failure of OBE. As mentioned many concepts and ideas have been imported and implemented as if nothing existed before. This has left teachers with the impression that new ideas and concepts have been introduced, only to find upon further investigation that many of the concepts and ideas existed in schools and this confused schools as they were not able to spot similarities because no one bothered to investigate what was already being done in schools. Refer to the introduction of tasks – and the use of themes in schools.

In order to make the Curriculum and Curriculum Statements work for teachers, we need a better structure Curriculum and the following seems to

be some of the identified characteristics and seems to be the consensus amongst teachers:

1. The eight Learning Areas as currently taught ion our schools should remain however I will elaborate later on teacher's views as far as the assessment of the Learning Areas is concerned.
2. The presentation of the Learning Areas Assessment Standards, in its current integrated format, should be and rewritten to clearly distinguish what knowledge, skills and values should be taught in each Learning Areas and each Grade. I will attempt to illustrate this with the following example. In Grade 6 Technology, Technology is probably the best example, where the Assessment Standards are written with Outcomes 1 containing the skills to be taught in Technology, Outcomes 2 the Knowledge and Outcomes 3 the Ethics or Values. However the integrated nature of the Assessment Standards and the lack of specifics, allows for many interpretations and generally a lack of understanding.

I will use the entire all Technology Curriculum statement to illustrate the point that the current format of the curriculum makes the macro and micro level of implementation problematic. You need to be familiar with all Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards for Technology to understand, keeping in mind that they are partially separated into knowledge, skills and values as mentioned above.

Learning Outcomes 2, Assessment Standard 3 reads as follows:
Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the components of simple electrical circuits (e.g. connecting wires, battery, switch, output device), and how electrical energy can be converted into other forms (e.g. light, heat, sound, movement)

Now this is quite a mouthful and the teacher can interpreted this Assessment Standard and successfully, in his/her eyes dealt with it in many ways:

- One teacher might just teach the learners in a few lessons all the components of an electrical circuit, with learners acquiring no skills or ethics in dealing with electricity.

- A second teacher might teach the electrical components as mentioned and give the learners a few skills such as physically connect the wires and components to form a circuit.

- A third teacher might realize that it is the first time learners are learning about electricity and focus on what electricity is and where it comes from and how it gets to our homes and what we use it for and then eventually focus on the components and how electricity is converted into other forms, flooding learners with knowledge.

- A fourth teacher may find the balance between needed knowledge, skills needed to work safely with electricity and using electricity

successfully to the extend that they use the components connected into a working appliance, by designing, making and evaluating etc. as required from all Learning Outcomes. They will study the historical background of electricity and it's development and how communities excluded from having electricity have coped without it and what is done today to improve delivery to all. (All components from Learning Outcome 1, 2 and 3)

This illustrates the varied level of interpretation of one Assessment Standard, not to even mention the others used in each activity design. The manner in which the teacher will approach his interpretation of the Assessment Standard will depend on:

- Own knowledge base and understanding of technological concepts i.e. his academic training, own study and life experience.
- His own skills, just as knowledge is acquired, skills can only be transferred if the teacher has learnt how to do it himself to start with.
- General understanding and interpretation of the Learning Outcomes and the Assessment Standards and that level of understanding.
- The available resources to do the work practically, in Technology that is often the only way one can acquire skills – by doing and without the resources or the innovation to find ways that work or a manner to acquire the necessary equipment this will not be possible.
- How important the school sees his/her Learning Area, will determine the level of support. Has the school made provision in its budget for equipment or is the teacher left on his/her own accord.

All these factors play a significant role ion the success of the Technology teacher or any other Learning Area teacher for that matter. For teachers to be able to do their work properly and for us as a nation to be successful in our teaching efforts, we will need to find a way to address these issues or at least find a way to minimize them from occurring and the first thing we need to do is to look at the format and content of our curriculum and address the issues identified earlier.

For teachers to successfully design Learning Programme, more needs to be done with the curriculum to ensure a more uniformed interpretation by teachers and the only way to do this is abandon the integrated approach to Assessment Standards and to clearly distinguish the knowledge, skills and values to be taught and allowing teachers to formulate their own **"Activity Statements"** on a micro level when designing Assessment Task Activities.

This can be done in the following manner, continuing to illustrate Assessment Standard 3 from Learning Outcome 2, this is just for illustrative purposes and would require more careful thought when doing the actual Curriculum design:

Knowledge standard	Skill Standard	Value Standard
A Systems and controls 1. The electron theory of electricity. 2. Types of electricity: Static and current electricity. 3. Materials used in electricity: Conductors and isolators. 4. Sources of electricity and safety with electricity. 5. Generating electricity and electrical distribution 6. Controlling electricity: Plugs, switches and fuses. 7. The electric light bulb. 8. Closed and Open Electrical circuits. 9. Converting electrical energy to other forms. 10. The History of electricity. 11. The impact of electricity generation on the environment. 12. Coping without electricity. 13. Improving service delivery of electricity. B Processing 1. . 2. . 3. . 4. . 5. . 6. . 7. . 8. . C Structures 1. . 2. . 3. . 4. . 5. . 6. . 7. . 8. etc	**Investigates** **1.** Finds out about existing products relevant to a problem, need or opportunity, and **2.** identifies and compares their design aspects (e.g. who it is for, what it is for, what it looks like, what it is made of, how well it works) **3.** Performs, where appropriate, scientific investigations about concepts relevant to a problem, need or opportunity using science process skills: **4.** planning investigations; **5.** conducting investigations; **6.** processing and interpreting data; **7.** evaluating and communicating findings. **8. Designs** Writes or communicates a design brief for the development of a product related to a given problem, need or opportunity that clarifies the technological purposes of the solution. **9.** Suggests and records at least two alternative solutions to the problem, need or opportunity that link clearly to the design brief and **10.** to given specifications and constraints (e.g. people, purpose, safety, environmental impact, appearance). **11.** Further develops the choice with graphics and/or modelling. **12. Makes** Develops plans that detail the making steps, including drawings and sketches that help to clarify the plans. **13.** Chooses and uses suitable tools to make products by measuring, marking out, **14.** cutting or separating, **15.** shaping or forming, **16.** joining or combining, and **17.** finishing the chosen materials. **18.** Works efficiently and safely. **19. Evaluates** Evaluates the product according to the design brief **20.** and given specifications and **21.** constraints (e.g. people, purpose, environmental impact, safety, appearance), and **22.** suggests improvements and modifications if necessary. **23.** Evaluates the plan of action followed and **24.** suggests improvements and modifications if necessary. **25. Communicates**	**Indigenous Technology and Culture** **1.** Describes similarities in problems and solutions in own and **2.** other societies – past, present and future. **Impact of Technology** **3.** Finds out about the background context when given a problem, need or opportunity, and lists the advantages and **4.** disadvantages that a technological solution might bring to people and the environment **5.** Suggests ways to improve technological products or processes to minimize negative effects on people and/or the **6.** health of the environment. **Bias in Technology** **7.** Suggests how technological products or services can be made accessible to those presently excluded

	Draws appropriate sketches (e.g. labelled two dimensional drawings of ideas, **26.** enhanced drawings **27.** drawings showing measurements) to communicate different information appropriately and effectively. **28.** Chooses and uses appropriate technologies to present, **29.** record or **30.** communicate the design process (e.g. simple portfolio, posters, charts, models).	

Basically all Skills and Values listed are from the existing NCS's and the knowledge has been expanded to contain what is required at the time. The skills are clearly separated into single components in order for them to be used individually and not in an integrated manner in which they currently appear. A uniform system of numbering the Assessment Standards or **Knowledge Standards**, **Skills Standards** and **Values Standards** is also vital for cross referencing the educators planning and the NCS**.** As will all dynamic curricula, all knowledge, skills and values should be revised every 3-5 years to reflect the change in technology. The skills and values listed above therefore need revision and input from all stake holders, especially teachers on the ground – those with the necessary knowledge and understanding of the Learning Area concerned. It is clear, armed with the above document, the need for a Learning Programme is not needed as this forms the entire Learning Programme and what must be taught. (or at this stage only the component on electricity)

Back to the point in illustration, with a curriculum presented in this format, teachers are then easily able to design their own Learning Programmes. Some might say that the knowledge should be selected by the educator and clearly this has not worked and to standardize what is taught to our learners and to ensure that from the Department of Education's side our learners are taught the correct Knowledge, Values and Skills, we need to be very specific about the content of this knowledge, values and skills. And to ensure the correct interpretation of each, we need to issue a further expanding document which discusses and elaborates further on all these – similar to the STEPS documents which were issued to schools and attempted to do this. It needs to be more official to ensure the correct unified interpretation of what is meant in all aspects of Knowledge, Skills and Values as listed above. Also included should be ways of presenting (some form of methodology and accepted activities) the KSV's for the teacher who does not have training in the Learning Area or have the knowledge base.

Armed with this type of curriculum document, it is now up to the teacher to design Assessment Tasks and Assessment Activities, based on the statements, by formulating integrated **Activity Statements,** and again careful guidance needs to be given on how this is done, e.g. Using K6 - Electrical circuits S 18 – Work safely and S 25 - Make two dimensional drawings, the teacher will formulate and **Activity Statement** which could read as follows:

Learners will practically connect, and then draw the components of an electrical circuit using the components supplied, to safely illustrate open and closed circuits.
Reference: K8 S18, 25.

One activity statement, which covers three statements, showing what form the activity will take on and what end product will be assessed. What is left up to the teacher is to get the resources together, decide what grouping will be used in doing the activity and at what time during the activity will he assess the work or will it only be done on the end drawings. This will move away from trying to interpret complicated statements to constructing statements according to what they must teach. It will also not be needed to unpack statements as this will already be done.

A method of dealing with Task and Activity planning will be dealt with next, to further eliminate teacher paperwork and ensure that better micro-level activity planning by teachers without the tedious macro planning needed before teachers decide what to do in class – this is often not done and any existing paperwork is either window dressing to show that it is done or copied from a textbook. Good teachers, especially in the Foundation Phase have not changed what they are doing in their classes, just because the curriculum is presented in a format they don't understand - they have remained loyal to their college training and good practices, but have cooked up some wonderful documentation which they never look at or refer back to satisfy the needs of the department. We should ask ourselves the question now why do teachers say there is too much paperwork in OBE? Because they draw up volumes of documents which have no value to them and cannot help them in their everyday teaching.

We have carried on insisting on three levels of planning, very familiar in the old curriculum as Syllabus, Work Schedule and Lesson Plans. We forget that the first two were actually supplied by the Department of Education and teachers actually only did the final level of planning – the lesson plans.

Teachers are now required to sift through a very complexly integrated NCS document, make sense of it, draw up a Learning Programme (Phase Plan), based on very non-specific guidelines, then compile a Work Schedule (Grade Plan) and finally complete a lesson plan, of which there are hundreds of different format to choose from, for each activity they teach- some only 30 minutes in a particular day, for Learning Areas they are not trained in and we want to know why 10 years later we are still talking about implementation problems and teachers who simply don't get it and finally an education system which is collapsing at the core. We have played the blaming game for far too long now and we need to concentrate on the real issues at hand and the fact is that too much is expected from teachers. Drawing up documents which have no value to them and totally forgetting that their primary concern is what is done in class with the learners, assessing their work, recording their results and doing reports for parents. Why so many teachers have remained in teaching is quite a mystery.

- Some teachers have welcomed the flexibility and see the way open to now truly teach what they feel is important, producing very creative work as they have always wanted to, just to stop short at the paper work, cooking up something which keeps everyone happy.
- Other very professional colleagues have opted the way out to join private schools to get away from the nonsense paperwork.
- Many educators have attempted to make sense of it all, never feeling totally confident, but hanging in there with the hope that it will change.
- Some have opted to do nothing, not to show any incompetence, however if questioned to fall back on to – "I have no idea, I was not trained and the short course I attended did not teach me anything."

We cannot go forward making our teachers teach a curriculum they cannot truly understand and burdening them with paperwork which required massive amounts of macro planning and not allowing for quick productive daily activity planning.

I would therefore like to introduce, what I call **"3 in 1 Task Planning".** With or without the NCS presented in the proposed format or any other more usable format, the Task Planning suggested below will greatly eliminate much of the current paperwork done by teachers. It could at the least require the three levels of planning to look as follows:

1. **The Learning Programme**
   The NCS is a Learning Programme, compiling a further Learning Programme, making micro-level decisions such as assessment and resources etc. does not make the current format of the Learning Programme credible. We should accept that the NCS plays the role of a Learning Programme and need no further tampering on. Preferable it should be refined to distinguish between knowledge, skills and Values as proposed.

2. **The Work Schedule**
   If the current NCS document is not transformed into a more workable document, then we need to do it on a National or even Provincial level, this is not a task that should be done at school level, and far too important to leave up to teachers who have proven to be unable to take on this important task. The thing is, our curriculum does not do a bad job addressing skills, which has never received much attention in the past and also does not do too badly with values either, however when it comes to knowledge, we leave that up to the teacher to decide, well we are picking the fruit of that now. All three pillars of OBE teaching needs to get the same amount of importance, it is as if we want to avoid the NCS of smacking of anything of the past and may I say the Apartheid Curriculum. They did not invent Knowledge Education and many groups lobby in favour of Knowledge Education. A visit to the Core Knowledge Foundation at www.coreknowledge.org will give you an idea of how important some groups regard this. If our NCS does not reflect this, then we must present teachers with a document similar to

the one proposed, setting out the Core Knowledge to be taught in a progressive manner, which teachers can follow and combine with skills and values to form activities. We should take care of this nationally. For OBE to succeed, we need to produce learners that “know stuff” and learners who “can do stuff”, preferably both. Allowing those whose brains can cope with both, to fill Professional positions in this country and those who can only cope with “doing stuff” to get a technical qualification and fill skills based jobs and those who can only “do stuff” to follow an academic career if that is what suites them. But currently we have learners leaving school who can neither do nor know anything. This is a total failure on the Department of Education to produce workable documents for teachers to use and teachers who fail to do their jobs because they have been lost in the changes. Although the Foundations for Learning, dubbed as a campaign, has documents similar to that proposed, but not quite, we have been made to believe that it is based on the NCS, is not the NCS and must never replace the NCS. We don’t need more documents we need decent documents. Which one do you follow now?

3. Lesson Plans

Now if we want to mention something which was taken over from the old system as is, then it is lesson plans. Most teachers fail to see the practical use of lesson plans and even once they are completed, what a waste of time, they never look at them again or even find them remotely useful. Most of the information required on them is obvious and shows a lack of educational knowledge and does not promote teaching. They must be scrapped or simplified and standardized, although preferable each Learning Area should have one customized for the needs of that Learning Area, to serve a genuine purpose. I would like to shelf the lesson plan in favour of the **Task Planner**.

Task Planning

The idea behind task planning refers to the number of tasks and activities which are done to determine a learner’s level of achievement, whether these activities are formal or informal and even these two concepts could be confusing because even formal activities are proposed to be dealt with informally. The only difference noted is that formal activities are recorded for promotion purposes and informal activities are to guide and inform the teacher on the learner’s progress. This is all well in it’s approach and I will take the idea of a Task as for those of us who have been around long enough, will know that teaching has not really changed much over the past few decades and just by giving something a new name and wording, does not fundamentally change its character and intension in education. Therefore simplified, a Task can be seen as a Theme, which consists of a group of activities, interrelated by a theme or task organizer, covering a variety of knowledge, skills and values within them and teaching them to learners, using a variety of types of activities, now called Forms of Assessment. In the old days in English you had a

theme and within that theme, learners spoke about the theme, did poetry, completed a comprehension, wrote about the theme and learnt new words etc. This has not changed, a Task has a relating organizer and activities are done relating to this organizer and a variety of activities are done, ensuring a variety of forms of assessment. The forms relate more to the activity than the assessment, however with the focus now more on assessment, it is what the learners will be doing, which will be assessed, therefore “Forms of Assessment”.

Nothing has changed, why do we change terminology, write it in high English and simply send the document to schools. This is the only way we have heard about changes in education in the last 10 years, through documents which are sent to schools and do in no way relate aspects to what teachers already know. Yes, the documents are mostly done in a professional manner, the English is good for some of us, but it’s a new curriculum language not understood by most teachers or even remotely related to what they know. Do we want our teachers to feel incompetent? Do we want our teachers to leave the system? Do we want education to fail the way it has? Why have we been blind to this conspiracy? Someone out there is out to prove a point! Maybe you fooled 99% of the teachers, but some of us have managed to remain level headed and have actually understood your documents and made sense of them. Of course this is all just speculation, in an attempt to find the reason why we are at this point in our education system.

To understand task planning one needs thorough knowledge of the National Protocol on Assessment and Qualifications, which I will not proclaim as the holy bible in education as I will comment some assessment aspects later which make it difficult to implement, though just a few. The idea behind task planning is to take look at the Task as a whole and to plan the task in its entirety and like Work Schedule Planning, much pen and paper planning needs to be done before the task planner is completed. This can be done by following these few steps, which can be refined further.

1. Study your assessment standards and the proposed themes and topics in Learning Areas such as Technology, Natural Sciences, Economic Management Sciences and other Learning Areas where guidance on content is given and begin by mapping out the core knowledge to be covered during the task – use a mind map or any other structure, keep the time available in mind and decide on appropriate core knowledge. This forms the basis of what will be taught during the theme.
2. Now considering the resources available in your school, match the content to either a skill or a combination of skills as indicated in the Assessment Standards, also keeping natural progression of skills in mind. Where possible, identify single lessons which could address core values or integrate the values into your skill based activities. Now formulate Activity Statement, which should reflect the Content and skills and or value to be taught as well as the type of activity. If

you do this correctly, you will cover a variety of skills and values and they will dictate what form the activity will take on and what will be assessed during or at the end of the lesson.

3. Once you have your Activity Statements formulated, you have the basic framework of your task. Proceed to compile what the learners must do, are you going to compile a worksheet or give the instruction orally. Always keep in mind the fact that you must present some form of evidence that the activity was done and that you assessed it. Make good use of the Learner's Portfolio to keep this evidence. It will inform you alter of the success of the activity or whether you need to re-teach the skill again, using an alternative activity.
4. An important aspect of task planning is the numbering of your activities. This will help cross referencing activities from your task planner to your Assessment Plan, to the Learner's Portfolio, to the learners mark or score being recorded on the Record Sheet. Task one has Activity 1, 2, 3 … etc. Task 2 has activity 1,2,3…. Etc. Ensure a standard format of numbering.
5. The assessment also forms an integral part of the activity and learners need to know beforehand how they will be assessed and what the criteria is. Decide who will do the assessment. Formally recorded assessment must preferably be marked by the teacher, making use of a variety of tools i.e. a memorandum with the correct answers, a rubric or a checklist and besides the memorandum, learners should be given the rubric or checklist, containing the assessment criteria beforehand. Informal assessments are also marked, but you want to inform the child of his progress and see how they generally coped with the activity, therefore make use of rubrics, memorandum or checklists as well but here the learners can assess themselves or each other. The idea to assess group work, is an informal assessment and the main goal is to ensure that are taught to work together better and such assessment must never be recorded for progression purposes. More about assessment later.
6. You are now ready to plan your task and the question that must be asked, is what information out of the tons which you can record is actually useful when you need to present the lesson. The following come to mind when sifting through all that could appear on a lesson plan, and I end up with the following mini lesson plan.

Number of the activity - as part of the task

Activity No.:	K	S	V
3	8	18 25	
Activity Statement: Learners will practically connect, and then draw the components of an electric circuit using the components supplied, to safely illustrate open and closed circuits.			
Form of Assessment: Practical and written activity			
Grouping: Pairs of 2			

Resources: Circuit boards, cells, light bulbs, insulated copper wire.	
Assessment Tool: Memorandum for circuit drawings.	
References: Hand out of symbols for each electrical component.	
Recorded : Yes/No	yes

Focus knowledge, skills and values for this activity.

This simplified, planning can be represented in the following manner:

ASSESSMENT TASK PLANNING TOOL : TECHNOLOGY GRADE 4-6

Term: _____ Grade: _____ Assessment Task No.: _____ Contextual Organizer: _____ Week : ____ to _____

INVESTIGATE			DESIGN			MAKE			EVALUATE			COMMUNICATE		
Activity No.:	L O	A S	Activity No.:	L O	A S	Activity No.:	L O	A S	Activity No.:	L O	A S	Activity No.:	L O	A S
Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:		
Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:		
Resources:			Resources:			Resources:			Resources:			Resources:		
Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:		
Text References:			Text References:			Text References:			Text References:			Text References:		
Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No		
Activity No.:	L O	A S	Activity No.:	L O	A S	Activity No.:	L O	A S	Activity No.:	LO	A S	Activity No.:	L O	A S

Form of Assessment:	**Form of Assessment:**	**Form of Assessment:**	**Form of Assessment:**	**Form of Assessment:**
Grouping of Learners:	**Grouping of Learners:**	**Grouping of Learners:**	**Grouping of Learners:**	**Grouping of Learners:**
Resources:	**Resources:**	**Resources:**	**Resources:**	**Resources:**
Assessment Tool:	**Assessment Tool:**	**Assessment Tool:**	**Assessment Tool:**	**Assessment Tool:**
Text References:	**Text References:**	**Text References:**	**Text References:**	**Text References:**
Recorded : Yes/No	**Recorded : Yes/No**	**Recorded : Yes/No**	**Recorded : Yes/No**	**Recorded : Yes/No**

TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS	Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS	Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS	Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS	Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS
Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:		
Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:		
Resources:			Resources:			Resources:			Resources:			Resources:		
Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:		
Text References:			Text References:			Text References:			Text References:			Text References:		
Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No		

TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONEMNT

Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS	Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS	Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS	Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS	Activity No.: ☐	LO	AS
Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:			Form of Assessment:		
Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:			Grouping of Learners:		
Resources:			Resources:			Resources:			Resources:			Resources:		
Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:			Assessment Tool:		
Text References:			Text References:			Text References:			Text References:			Text References:		
Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No			Recorded : Yes/No		

Assessment

- Clear Assessment Guidelines which address the realities in schools, helping make assessment accurate and reliable.
- Skills-based activities assessed during each term.
- Formal exam-type activity based on the core content at the end of each term
- One formal systemic assessment based on the core knowledge at the end of the year.
- Assessment guidelines must clearly address the needs of learners in each phase and in each Learning Area.

Nature of Learning Areas

- Learning Areas such as Arts and Culture and Life Orientation which are formative in nature should have limited formal assessments and should be dealt with in a practical manner.
- Learners should be encouraged to express themselves.
- This should not be assessed.

- **Why do we assess and who needs this assessment?**
    - To determine learners level of progress.
    - To inform parents.
    - To determine competence in a grade.
- Keep this simple and uncomplicated:
- Grade R-3 : 4 point scale.
- Grade 4-12 : percentages only, no codes, no symbols.

The way forward:

- No curriculum re-write required, just a skilful separation, review and expansion of current core knowledge, skills and values for each learning area.
- Simplification of the planning process: single level contextual/thematic "Task Planning".
- Simplification of assessment using percentages;
    - accurate weighting of formal continuous (skills and values-based) assessments and formal summative (exam type) assessments.
    - Clear promotion requirements.