LEARNER AS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

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Submitted to the
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the Department of

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL STUDIES

at the

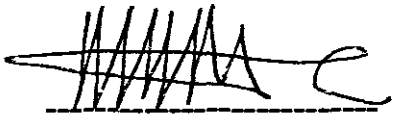
UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

SUPERVISOR : DR DP NGIDI

DATE SUBMITTED: DECEMBER 2004

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that **"Learner as an active participant in learning and continuous assessment"** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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SUMMARY

The present study examines the active participation of learners in learning and continuous assessment. The first aim was to ascertain the extent to which learners play an active role in learning and continuous assessment. The second aim was to determine whether learners' biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have any influence on the active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment. To this end, a questionnaire was administered to a randomly selected sample of three hundred and fifty four learners.

The findings reveal that learners differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment. A very high percentage (79.9%) of learners report an average level of active role. The findings also show that learners' personal variables such as gender, age as well as grade have no influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

On the basis of the findings of this study, recommendations to the Department of Education as well as for directing future research were made.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my most sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following people for their resolute support, assistance and endless contribution to this study:

- The **Almighty God** through his helping hand that gave me power to undertake this study.

- **Dr DP Ngidi,** my supervisor for his expertise, guidance, motivation, resilience and scholarly advice. I have learnt a lot from you.

- My father **Rev Walter Mlungisi Mkhize** for his strong support and encouragement, and for providing me education from grade one up to now. Thanks Khabazela.

- My brothers and sisters **Mtsewu, Jibha, Nqapha, Christopher, Ayo, Mfundo, Doto, Thono** and **Thandeka** for their unreserved support and for being on my side always when I needed support.

- **L.D. Dubazane,** the Principal of Khomo Primary School for professional advices that he provided me. Thanks Mwelase.

- **S.G. Mthembu,** the Principal of Nkwenkwezi for allowing me to use school resources for typing and printing my study. Thanks Mvelase.

- **Siphiwe** for typing and printing my study.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who supported me from the beginning up to the end of this research. May God bless you with his Love and Kindness.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 ORIENTATION

1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

With the advent of the Apartheid Government in 1948, the education system started to be run according to racial lines. Whites were receiving best education while Blacks were receiving poor education. Black education was falling under the Department of Bantu Education which was introduced by Verwoerd, the Minister of Bantu Education in 1953, who said "Teach the Africans to accept their proper place of being inferior and passive" (Ndhlovu, Bertram, Mthiyane & Avery, 1999 : 48). The Bantu education curriculum has been described as racist, sexist, Eurocentric, authoritarian, prescriptive, context-blind and discriminatory (Jansen, 1999 : 4).

African schools used methods of teaching which were teacher-centred and strongly authoritarian. Teachers overstressed traditional methods of teaching and learning. These methods excessively put emphasis upon abstract learning and memorization, and neglected the practical studies and acquisition and application of skills (Republic of Botswana, 1977 : 100). In Bantu education teachers were acting as depositors and learners as depositories which Freire (1972) calls "Banking Education" (Tabulawa, 1997 : 189). In "Banking education" teachers have to bank or deposit the knowledge to the learners and

learners in turn have to withdraw that knowledge in forms of tests and examinations.

A learner in African schools was treated as an empty vessel and a passive receiver of information who was expected to be cognitively docile. Bantu Education was teacher-centered and little student-student's interaction. Teachers were the dominant figures in the classroom. Learners were doing work assigned by the teachers. They were following teachers' instructions. They were revising work done by the teachers. They were also listening attentively to the teachers. In the assessment teachers were there to ask and learners to answer questions. This teaching and learning was based on rote learning (Holidays, 1991 : 55).

Teachers were using traditional methods of teaching like audio-lingual method, where they directed lesson and controlled all learning that happened. Teachers immediately corrected all errors and were seen as 'experts'. The role of the learner in the lessons was to follow the teachers' instructions and give a response when required by the teachers. Learners did not initiate anything themselves and had passive role in a lesson (Land & Fotheringham, 1999 : 66). Teachers were using other traditional methods such as Grammar-based method where lessons are largely centered on textbooks. Learners have to follow the rules of the textbook. It was based on written exercises and error correction. Learners were praised for giving correct answers but those who made mistakes and incorrect answers were criticized or punished (Land & Fotheringham, 1999 : 67).

Knowledge was seen as finite and closed where it transmit facts and information to the learners. Schools or teachers were using norm-reference assessment (Inglis, Thomson & Macdonald, 2000 : 46) where they were relating one learner's performance to that of the others. Some schools or teachers used assessment or results to offend or punish some learners. Learners were forced to fail tests, exams or repeat the class because of their ill behaviour toward the school or teachers (Wheldall & Glynn, 1969).

Most parents were not actively taking part in the assessment of their learners. Parents invested all hopes to the teachers and they also liked the formal style of teaching where teachers worked hard and kept everyone under strict control. Parents believed that this was good because learners remained quiet, working hard and listening to what their teachers told them. They placed a high value in the kind of education that is teacher-dominated (Harley, Bertram & Mattson, 1999: 120).

These above arguments indicate that learners were not playing an active role in the teaching and learning and also took no part in their assessment. Learners were passively receiving knowledge from the teachers and released it back to the teachers in the form of tests and exams. This situation has been identified as wrong and as unacceptable system of education by the democratic government. This made the government of National Unity to introduce some educational changes such as Curriculum 2005 with Outcomes-Based Education and Continuous Assessment. Some principles of Curriculum 2005

require a learner to be an active participant and be assessed continuously (Bertram, Fotheringham & Harley, 2001 : 72).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In essence the problem that will be investigated in this study pertains to the role of learners in learning and in continuous assessment. To this end, answers have to be found to such questions as:

1.2.1 To what extent do learners play an active role in learning and continuous assessment?

1.2.2 Do learners' biographical factors, such as gender, age and grade have any influence on their active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment?

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

To serve the purpose of the study the following specific objectives are formulated:

1.3.1 To ascertain the extent to which learners play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

1.3.2 To determine whether learners' biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have any influence on the active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

1.4 HYPOTHESES

Based on the aims of the study the following hypothesis are formulated:

3.2.1 Learners do not differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

3.2.2 Learners' biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have no influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.5.1 An active learner

"An active learner" in this study refers to a learner who always want to discover things, want to solve problems and work with others in small groups (Bertram, *et al.*, 2001 : 73).

1.5.2 Continuous assessment

In this study the term "continuous assessment" refers to an ongoing process of measuring and monitoring the learner's performance based on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (Lubisi, 1999 : 12).

1.6 THE PLAN OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Chapter one consists of motivation of the study, statement of the problem, aims of the study, definition of terms and plan for the organisation of the whole study.

1.6.2 Chapter two deals with the theoretical background to the study. Theories about a learner as an active participant in learning and continuous assessment are discussed.

1.6.3 Chapter three details the research design and methodology of the study. This includes the collection of the data, the selection of subjects, plan for organizing and analysis of data.

1.6.4 Chapter four deals with the analysis and interpretation of the research data. The formulated hypotheses are tested in this chapter.

1.6.5 Chapter five provides a summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 AN ANALYSIS OF LEARNER AS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

At the heart of all educational processes lies the child (British Department of Education and Science, 1967 : 7). It is in the light of this statement that this chapter reviews literature on the learner as an active participant in learning as well as in continuous assessment. Literature on learners as active participants in learning will be viewed first.

2.2 AN ACTIVE LEARNER AND EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES

The philosophy of learner as active participant or learner-centred education is found in "Progressive Education" of John Dewey, an American educationist (Bertram *et al.*, 2001 : 149). It emphasizes the child as a unique person who should have opportunities to discover new things in an environment that support and nurtures him or her.

The learner as active participant is also derived from the philosophy of people's education, which involves things like learner-centered approach to the teaching, critical thinking (anti-rote learning), an

egalitarian political mission, teachers as curriculum developers, group work (co-operative learning) rather than directive teaching, and community participation (Department of Education, 1992). Other elements of people's education are to integrate non-disciplinary knowledge that is based on linking different topics on one theme for example, state of water in Science, water cycle in Geography, measuring water in Maths.

People's education is aimed at closing a gap between theory and practice, and it should be relevant and useful in children's everyday life. It is based on strong focus on linking school knowledge to the children's everyday knowledge and it has to prepare a learner in life and work (Department of Education, 2000). Learner as active participant is a learner with an approach that is called self-directed learning where he/she constructs his/her own understanding and meaning from discussion and readings. This helps him/her to reason, solve problems and think critically about the content. An active learner is self-motivated, independent and responsible for his/her actions (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999 : 99).

An active learner needs to be taught according to Vygotsky's theory of "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). This concept refers to 'where' in the learning process the mediation takes place. It is the area where a learner cannot do something alone, where he/she needs the help of the teacher. In other words, it is a space that lies just beyond a child's (or adults) present understanding. It is the critical space where a learner could not understand something on his/her own, but has the

potential (ability) to do so, but through interaction with another person who has capacity. A parent, peer or a teacher can interact with a learner and allow him/her to think forward into that space, and act as mediator in shifting the learner's present understanding to a new level (Vygotsky, 1978 : 212).

Another theory that needs to be considered when teaching an Active Learner is "Ecosystem Theory". This theory is defined as interdependence and relationship between different organisms and the physical environment. It can also be explained as a relationship that exists when two or more things need each other for their physical survival or social functioning. This can be explained clearly by Bronferbrenners Theory, which is made up of Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem and Macrosystem. These systems can have positive and negative impact on the learning of the child. Microsystem is based on something very close to the child like immediate family such as cousin, siblings, aunt and granny. The negative influence of microsystem is when there is friction between parents of the child. This affects the performance of he child. Mesosystem is based on environment such as school, neighbours and church. The exosystem is based on things such as parent place of work, siblings, peer groups, local education, health and welfare. Macrosystem is based on cultural or socio-political context (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999 : 214-217).

2.3 AN ACTIVE LEARNER AS A LEARNING AGENT

An active learner has to be competent where he/she has to have the ability to apply skills to perform tasks and have the theoretical understanding of the task as well as the ability to transfer knowledge, skills and understanding to another context (Christie, 1997 : 56). He/she has to receive education that will develop his/her own potential and talents for the sake of becoming a well-rounded person. An active learner has to be build holistically where there is a combination of thinking, doing and attitudes. We can observe these expectations through visible and invisible performances. The visible part of the performance include manipulation of tools. For example, accurate use of a ruler and computer. The invisible part of performance is the way in which information is interpreted within a particular value orientation through employing particular mental abilities such as problem-solving and decision-making (Christie, 1997: 65).

An active learner works towards achieving outcomes that are having similar meaning to goal, purpose and the end products. He/she has to describe the end products or results of instructional processes that have to be achieved during the period of teaching and learning. Outcomes have to include knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Since an active learner is regarded as the agent of his/her learning, the curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activities and experiences rather than knowledge to be acquired and stored (British Department of Education and Science, 1967 : 194-195). It should be understood

that learners can think and form concepts as long as they work at their level, and are not made to feel that they are failures (British Department of Education and Science, 1967 : 196).

2.4 AN ACTIVE LEARNER AND THE GOVERNMENT

An active learner has to be equipped with knowledge, competences and orientations needed for success after he/she left school or completed his/her training. The guiding vision is that of a thinking, competent future citizen (Department of Education, 1997 : 7). There should be some control over his/her learning, self-evaluation and evaluation of the course he/she follows. Ideally, an active learner is a learner that will be able to think critically and question the society, which he lives in (Land & Fotheringham, 1999 : 75). An active learner must follow the ideas of "Society Critical Perspectives" that tend to empower a learner to participate in the solutions of the problems and to act in the interest of democracy and social justice (Fien, 1993 ; Huckle, 1995). This perspective is based on knowledge in any situation, in collaboration and dialogue with others, towards finding collective solutions to the problem together. This is so because the construction of knowledge is not an individual endeavour, but a communal activity (Le Roux, 2001 : 69).

2.5 AN ACTIVE LEARNER AND A SCHOOL, TOGETHER WITH CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

An active learner learns better in a place where there is a continuous process of interaction between himself/herself and his/her environment. Each new experience reorganizes slightly to the structure of the mind and contributes to the child's world picture (Department of Education, 1997 : 192). An active learner learns better in a supportive environment where he/she can enjoy experience of being with friends, playing and studying. A school has to provide a conducive environment for learners to enable them to develop in their own way and with a pace appropriate to them. It should lay a special stress on individual discovery, first hand experience and opportunities for creative work. If a child is brought up in such environment or atmosphere all stages of his/her education, he/she has more hope of becoming a balanced and matured adult who is able to live in, to contribute and to look critically at society of which he/she forms a part (British Department and Science, 1967 : 187-188). An active learner learns better in a place where he/she is not crushed, bored, humiliated and punished day after day. He/she also learns better if he/she has a good health that is protected from diseases and receives education that will enhance his/her self-esteem and facilitate moral values (Probe Team, 1999 : 4).

2.6 AN ACTIVE LEARNER AND A TEACHER

Good education is about continuous and personal contact between pupil and educator (Durkheim, 1977 : 101). Teachers and learners often form strong bonds. A teacher has to use diversity of methods or strategies to encourage all learners to be successful. Each and every learner should be allowed to learn at his or her own pace. The educator has to designs learning outcomes. These outcomes must state clearly what learners should be able to demonstrate at the end of the learning process. Learners on the other hand, should know what they are to learn about before they engage in the learning process. All outcomes should be assessable so that the educator and the learner can judge whether the outcomes have been achieved or not. However, the educator should understand that learners progress through the system at different rates (O' Donoghue, 1998).

An active learner wants a "Good Teacher". A good teacher is characterized by a general good conduct or behaviour. This include among other things : sober habits, punctual, discipline, self-control, well speaking, role model, confidence and sociability. A good teacher must also be approachable, fair, helpful, sympathetic, kind, and friendly. He/she must offer some parental guidance and advice, be a good listener, try to solve problems, be loving and kind. He/she must have a good attitude, knowledgeable, confident, organized, well prepared, truthful, creative, and positive. He/she must have high moral values that are characterized by honesty, loyalty, respect, love,

reliability, responsibility and fairness (Department of Education, 2003).

An active learner needs an educator that is regarded as mediator of learning, where he/she has to have more adjustments or changes on his/her language to help learners to construct their own meaning from the content (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999 : 142). A teacher needs to scaffold activities for his/her learners. Scaffolding involves providing hints and prompts at a different level (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999 : 143).

"Interaction Theory" and "Negotiation of Meaning" calls teachers to allow learners to ask for clarification, stressing and exploring key words and providing visual aids (Inglis, Thomson & McDonald, 2000 : 140). The active learner needs active teacher who is operational enough to create the sense of involvement of the teacher and the learner. He/she acts as the facilitator in the learning process by introducing new ideas to the class and distributes questions and activities, and moves from one group to another for the reinforcement purposes. The active learner needs a supportive, respective teacher and programme that meet his/her needs.

The learner needs what Land and Fotherignham (1999 : 67) call "Communicative Approach" in teaching. This approach calls a teacher to be less on stage but act as facilitator of learning, and spend a lot of time before the lesson. A teacher that creates a good learning environment, sets up and gives instructions for activities for a day,

elicit ideas and activities, gives learners new languages when necessary and acts as advisor and resource person during the activities is also expected by this approach. Learners on the other hand are encouraged to participate fully in the activities designed for them. The classroom becomes a place where a learner discusses, asks questions and interacts with his/her fellow learners during the lesson or activities. Errors are seen as natural and positive signs of development because a learner is trying new things and taking risks (Landa & Fotheringham, 1999 : 68). Errors are seen as the sign of development and not a failure. A learner is being taught things that are relevant and accessible to him/her (Larsen-Freeman, 1987).

2.7 AN ACTIVE LEARNER AND HIS OR HER PARENT

A parent of an active learner must rear his/her child with love, faith and good support. He/she has to win his/her child's confidence, accept his/her child and show an understanding of his/her child, exercise the authority and set norms and values for future development (Urbani, 1982 : 44; Munnik & Swanepoel, 1990 : 5-6). If the learner is at school, the parent is expected to improve his/her child's academic achievement, attendance at school, the behaviour at a school, and also increase community support for school, including human, financial, and material resources (Dekker & Lemmer, 1993 : 154; Lemmer & Squelsh, 1993 : 960). The parent is expected to take full responsibility of his or her child's education and must look after his/her child's welfare and well-being. He/she has to cooperate and contribute to his/her child education. A parent is expected to be involved in school

and also provide skills and knowledge if necessary. The parent can assist in the management of the school and can reduce misunderstanding and possible conflict within the school. This can improve home-school communication (Hunt, 1990 : 67).

The parent has a responsibility, for physical education related to the physical care, protection and also clothing of the child. He/she has to help in the formation of the child's character in aspects such as honesty, diligence, patience and dependability. He/she has to teach a child some religious instructions. The parent has to educate his/her child with some cultural formation of the community (Van der Vyver & Joubert, 1985 : 611).

2.8 AN ACTIVE LEARNER AND LEARNER-CENTERED STRATEGIES AND METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

An active learner needs Outcome-Based Education strategies and methods of teaching and learning which are learner-centered. Learner-centered strategies and methods of teaching and learning need a teacher that will involve learners and be able to state why he/she teaches that particular thing and learners have to use their thinking, conceptualizing and internalizing knowledge.

A teacher has to introduce investigative learning where he/she gives learners the responsibility for their learning, use open ended approach by allowing learners to contribute their own ideas and follow up on

their own. A teacher acts as a facilitator of learning by using non-judgmental intervention rather than correcting or direct instruction. A teacher has to provide opportunities to discuss and clarify ideas through trial and improvement. A teacher has to encourage learners to understand, reason, and apply skills and knowledge, not just use rote learning methods. He/she has to put knowledge into the relevant context.

Learners need to be given the opportunities to explore, devise the end use of their methods, be reflective, discuss, criticize constructively, exchange ideas or strategies, explain solutions and method used, and also compare strategies and results. Learner-centered methods need to be involved in the active process based on the interests and unfolding mental development of the child. The child should be offered a range of experiences and opportunities to discover the world (Child, 1997 : 436).

The learner-centered strategies and methods originates from curriculum as process which sees an individual as an active being, entitled to control his/her own destiny (Kelly, 1998 : 93). Learner-centeredness is also appreciated by liberal-humanist perspectives that advocate that the natural potential in a learner is simply allowed to develop, and also learners are free to decide on what they want to do (Le Roux, 2001 : 65).

Learners must draw from their background knowledge and their present understanding to make new information meaningful. Learner-

centeredness goes together with authentic learning tasks that stimulate real life problems and provide learners with practical thinking in a realistic situation. Such situation can increase a learner's motivation to learn. This also promotes practical studies and acquisition and application of skills (Republic of Botswana, 1977 : 100).

Learner-centered approach encourages action research that wants teachers to be always planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Action research encourages learning that might sometimes best take place outside the classroom, through investigations in the library, through observation in fields or the market and in group discussion or project work (Harley *et at.*, 1999 : 76). The strategies and methods of teaching and learning are outlined in the following sections:

2.8.1 Co-operative teaching and learning strategy

Co-operative teaching and learning strategy wants learners to work together as pairs, groups or teams to complete the task. They share the work, discuss ideas and debate to find the best way to tackle a problem. This strategy emphasises on social interaction as well as completion of the task which develop many skills such as discussion, collaboration, agreeing and disagreeing, reaching the consensus, resolving conflicts, problem-solving, investigating, compromising, supporting and encouraging each other, and give each other the confidence.

This strategy promotes social interaction, develop important social skills such as interdependence, collaboration, conflict resolution and compromising. It encourages the development of thinking and understanding, and also develops communication skills such as talking, listening and discussion. It also encourages integration and mutual support, challenges, prejudices and develops greater trust and respect. It encourages individual development, offering learners opportunities for success and challenges. It encourages sharing, discussion and evaluation of a range of methods and approaches. It fosters a high level of learner interest and enjoyment, and it is also an efficient and effective way of managing learning. It encourages a more relaxed and informal classroom atmosphere that is, helpful to learning and understanding.

This approach needs teachers to be very clear and provide achievable learning outcomes for each and every activity, and they must give clear, unambiguous instructions for the group work. While learners are busy with each other in a group, a teacher has to move around from group to group, listening to what they are saying, joining in discussion, asking questions and generally facilitating learning (Inglis *et al.*, 2000 : 13).

Discussion is an essential teaching method where the teacher uses cooperative learning strategy. Discussion methods may take the following forms: class discussions, small group discussions, panel discussions, brainstorming exercises, debates and symposia (Mahaye, 2000 : 115-223).

2.8.1.1 Class discussions

Class discussion involves the participation of all learners in the classroom. Class discussion requires the teacher to introduce and clarify the topic. Learners have to exchange ideas related to the topic. A teacher must make sure that the environment is warm, friendly and relaxed. Learners should be advised to read and get information about the topic beforehand. The topic should have a clearly defined outcome which is within the capability of the group. The aim of a class discussion is to obtain a rich contribution of ideas to encourage learner-to-learner interaction (Mahaye, 2000: 215-216).

2.8.1.2 Small group discussions

Small group discussions can be made up of three to six learners. A teacher may form the groups according to the friendship, interest, random grouping or by mixed ability. Learners must sit facing each other. There must be a chairperson who has to control the discussion. Learners should be allowed to work independently. The teacher must be there to help the groups. The teacher must make sure that all learners do participate in the discussion even shy learners. A teacher must encourage the leaders to discipline the domineering members. After discussion, the report back should be done or given. It can be in a verbal or written form. The teacher will therefore assess the learners' reports (Mahaye, 2000 : 220).

2.8.1.3 Panel discussions

A panel discussion consists of four or five participants who discuss the topic in front of the class and then respond to questions from the floor. Learners who are panelists must prepare themselves as they should have adequate knowledge of the topic. The topic should be relevant and make sense to panelists and other learners. The leader of the panelists must encourage positive participation from the learners (audience). The panelists should be expected to answer questions from the floor (Mahaye, 2000 : 220-221).

2.8.1.4 Brainstorming exercises

Brainstorming happens when the teacher poses a problem to learners who will attack the problem with a hail of ideas. Learners are given the opportunities to give all ideas which can be good or bad. The ideas used to be written on the board for everyone to see. All ideas are accepted because the emphasis is on the free and relaxed outpouring of ideas. Learners are allowed to add or expand upon one another ideas. All learners are encouraged and motivated to express their views since all ideas are accepted. Therefore, there is no fear for giving wrong answers. When learners have exhausted their ideas, all ideas that have been put forward are examined and best ones selected. This stage is called a buzzing stage. Selected ideas are used to solve the problem at hand (Mahaye, 2000 : 221).

2.8.1.5 Debate

Debate is a type of formal discussion. It consists of participants from one team who oppose the views of those in another team. The first team supports the proposal and the other one opposes it. Adjudicators are needed to decide on a winning team. The debate needs the chairperson in order to control the debate. Debates also need the time-keeper to watch the use of allocated time. The advantages of the debate are that it creates controversy, arouses interests and shows two sides of the issue. It also creates critical thinking (Mahaye, 2000: 222).

2.8.1.6 Symposia

A symposium is a formal group discussion and consists of three to four learners presenting speeches which represent different views on a particular topic. Presentations are followed by an open discussion in which learners ask questions, make contributions and propose new viewpoints, therefore, learners who are chosen as speakers in symposium have to prepare thoroughly (Mahaye, 2000 : 222).

2.8.2 **Problem-Based Strategy**

This strategy encourages interaction and co-operation. It encourages critical thinking. It is a creative process in which learners become active participants. It involves the use and application of learning, to put learning into context. It is a process that allows all learners a degree of success. It develops imagination and cognitive skills, and

gives learners more responsibility for, and control of their learning (Independent Examination Board, 2000 : 17).

Problem based strategy is being appreciated by psychologists such as Piaget and Vygotsky with their idea of constructivism, where they believe that knowledge construction is basically an internal individual process that takes place in the mind of the person. They also believe that knowledge is made in a social context and is shared with others. Learners are encouraged to think logically but rather construct such logical mechanisms through their experiences with physical world objects and people around them. Piaget's constructivism implies that children are active builders of knowledge like scientists who are continually creating, testing and revising their theories of their world. An active learner has to be placed at the heart of the learning process.

The problem-solving method is appropriate when a teacher uses problem-based solving strategy. The problem-solving method which is also known as the heuristic method can also be used in a discovery strategy, where learners are encouraged to discover information for themselves in solving problems.

Th problems-solving method (heuristic method) allows learners to discover things for themselves and engage in solving problems. Learners learn through self-activity. Duminy and Sõhnge (1987) point out that self-activity always concerns a problem to be solved. The teacher has to guide the learners towards the problems which form part of the prescribed outcomes. Problem-solving is a form of enquiry

learning which engages learners in seeking knowledge, processing the information and applying ideas to real world situation (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1977 : 176). This means that a problem should be real to learners and fall within the learner's field of interest. Problem-solving helps in developing learners' thinking and reasoning skills.

2.8.3 **Discovery strategy**

Another strategy of teaching that need to be used when teaching an active learner is discovery strategy. The discovery strategy goes together with other perspectives such as experiential learning perspective that sought to educate through experience in nature. Piaget argues that children learn by encountering and manipulating objects in their environment. This emphasizes the importance of actual, hands-on experience in learning. It is based on dialogue-encounter-reflection model that used to be known as Three Ts : Talking, Touching and Thinking (O'Donoughue & Van Rensburg, 1995). Teaching methods that are appropriate for a teacher who uses discovery strategy are: project, problem-solving (heuristic), experimental, role play and dramatisation, and role play and simulation games.

2.8.3.1 Project method

The project method requires learners to participate in a project. The project could be designed by the teacher or the idea could come from the learners. The project should be challenging, be problem-solving in character, be realistic, meaningful and also be within the field of

interest of the learners. The project should have clear outcomes which can be assessed. The teacher must give a class instructions about: what should be done, how it should be done, the resources available, the deadlines for the completion of the project, how the project will be assessed. When assessing the project the teacher should not only assess the content or outcome but also the process. Learners can work as individuals or as groups. Through groups project learners learn to work co-operatively with other members of the team. Learners may investigate different aspects of the problem independently, compare solutions and discuss their findings together. The teacher offers guidance only when it is necessary to allow learners freedom to investigate, seek information and display their creative and cognitive abilities. Learners are more likely to identify with knowledge which they have collected (Mahaye, 2000 : 231-232).

2.8.3.2 Experimental method

Experimental method is used by the teacher to allow learners to discover reality by means of studying relevant examples and generalised, statements (Fraser, Loubser & Van Rooy, 1991 : 145). This method allows learners to experience reality and discover things themselves. Experimenting deals mainly with discovery of reality by means of a specific example in order to arrive at a generally valid pronouncement concerning the phenomenon or object (Van der Stoep & Louw, 1990 : 93). This method is commonly used in natural and biological sciences. The experimental method encourages learners to learn through self-discovery, exploration and observation.

2.8.3.3 Role play and dramatization

Dramatisation means that a learner reads or acts out roles from a written script. The script could have been written by a well-known play-writer, another writer, the teacher or by the learners themselves. Dramatisation is frequently used in the teaching of languages. It is also popular in other learning areas such as Human and Social Sciences and Economic and Management Sciences, provided the script is linked to lesson outcomes (Mahaye, 2000 : 232).

2.8.3.4 Role play and simulation games

Simulation games depict real life situations. In simulation games the learners assume the role of decision-makers, act as if they were actually involved in a real life situation and compete for certain goals (Hyman, 1974 : 234). The game is presented to the learners as a problem needing to be solved. Simulation games are often used to initiate a discussion. To motivate learners to participate, games should resemble the real situation as closely as possible. In a simulation game the entire class is involved in a make-belief exercise. Simulation games are aimed at stimulating learners' interest, thus motivating them to strive toward finding solutions to everyday problems, relevant to the subject being taught. The simulation game should be followed by a review or a debriefing session where both the teacher and learner carefully analyse the role-play. Simulation games can be used in any subject, depending on the aims and learning outcomes to be achieved (Mahaye, 2000 : 232).

2.9 AN ACTIVE LEARNER AND CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The following sections review literature on continuous assessment and involvement of learners in it.

2.9.1 Principles of assessment

There are two presentations of principles of assessment, the one from the Department of Education and Culture and the other one from the Independent Examination Board (IEB).

The principles of assessment from assessment policy, Department of Education and Culture are as follows:

- Have a clear, direct link with critical outcomes and specific outcomes,
- Be integral to teaching and learning,
- Be balanced, comprehensive and variable, valid and fair
- Engage learners,
- Value of judgment of education and training practitioners,
- Be time efficient and manageable,
- Recognize individual achievements and progress,
- Involve the "Whole School" approach,
- Actively involve parents, convey meaningful and useful information,

- Free from bias and sensitive to gender, race and cultural backgrounds and abilities of learners,
- Improve the quality of learning, and
- Be diagnostic

(Department of Education and Culture, 1998 : 11).

The principles of assessment from the Independent Examination Board (IEB) are as follows:

- The purpose of assessment should be made explicit,
- The criterion-referenced approach will be used,
- Assessment must be authentic, continuous, and multi-dimensional, varied and balanced,
- Assessment is an on-going part of the learning process,
- It must be accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and efficient,
- Assessment takes many forms, gathers information from several context and uses a variety of methods,
- The methods and techniques used must be appropriate to the knowledge, skills, attitudes to be assessed as well as the age and development level of the learner,
- It must be bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities,
- Assessment must be communicated clearly, accurately, timeously and meaningfully,

- Progression should be linked to achievement of the specific outcomes and should not be rigidly time bound, and
- Evidence of progression achieving outcomes shall be used to identify areas where the learners needs an remedial intervention (Independent Examination Board, 2000 : 6-17).

Principles of assessment work together with philosophies of authentic assessment that are as follows:

- Assessment must assist in learning,
- It must encourage good instruction,
- It must relate curriculum to the outcomes,
- It fosters an orderly learning,
- It follows developmental perspectives,
- It uses testing sparingly,
- It supports time efficiently,
- It reports meaningful information,
- It promotes partnership of parents, educators and students,
- It fosters student metacognition and reflection, and
- It is somehow individualized. (Eisner, 1993 : 219-233).

These principles of assessment have created some features of assessment such as :

- To use a planned learning experience to assess each learner's achievement and progress,

- It provides a total evaluation of every learner,
- It takes place over a long period of time,
- It is diagnostic in monitoring the strengths and weaknesses in a learner's performance,
- It considers the pace of the learner and provides enrichment for fast learners,
- It sets well defined targets (outcomes) for learners,
- It avoids teaching for the tests,
- It is generally more informal and covers a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks,
- It is transparent to the learners so that she or he must be aware and understand what has been assessed,
- It must have a sound assessment record for promotion,
- It encourages learners and teachers to appraise their own work, and
- It must use assessment techniques.

2.9.2 FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

Forms of assessment:

- Baseline assessment
- Diagnostic assessment,
- Summative assessment,
- Norm-referenced assessment,
- Formative assessment, and
- Criterion-reference assessment.

Each and every form of assessment will be briefly described.

2.9.2.1 Baseline assessment

Baseline assessment is used by an educator at the beginning of a new set of learning activities in order to find out what learners already know and can demonstrate in order to decide the level of demands to build into the learning experience plan (Department of Education, 2001 : 14).

2.9.2.2 Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment is assessment that specifically focuses on finding out the nature and cause of the learning difficulty, and providing appropriate remedial help and guidance (Department of Education, 2001 : 14).

2.9.2.3 Formative assessment

Formative assessment is a collection and interpretation of information on a daily basis in order to monitor whether learning is taking place as planned. This information is used to provide feedback to the teacher and learners about effectiveness of instructional strategy and material in enhancing learning. It is based on teacher's observation, classroom oral questioning, homework assignments and (Department of Education, 1998 : 17). Formative assessment can also be seen as part

of the learning process so that we will be aware about what has been achieved and need to be done as remedial intervention. It helps teachers to see whether learners are coping or not. It provides room for selecting the best method of teaching. It also helps learners to improve and make some critical awareness about their performances. It also informs teachers and learners on what steps in learning needs to be done, what needs to be revised and what needs remediation (Independent Examination Board, 2000 : 6-17).

2.9.2.4 Summative assessment

Summative assessment refers to assessment that takes place at the end of the learning programme or term. One main test or examination that is written at the end of the school year usually constitutes it. The aim of the summative assessment is to determine how much of the subject's content the learners know. Summative assessment provides information to other people, for example, parents, employers, state etc (Flanagan, 1998 : 74; Le Grange & Reddy, 1998 : 4).

2.9.2.5 Criterion-referenced assessment

Criterion-referenced assessment is the method of assessment that compares learner's performances with the set criteria. This method is opposed to the norm-referenced assessment where a performance of a learner is compared with the performances of other learner or learners (Le Grange & Reddy, 1998 : 5). A criterion is expressed in terms of observable behaviours that are set to represent a learner's progress

towards perfect performance. For example a year criteria of grade one learners is to count and write numbers up to one hundred. This criterion has to be known before learners start learning.

2.9.2.6 Norm-referenced assessment

Norm-referenced assessment is the method of assessment where learner's achievement is compared with that of other learners or with passed marks to determine how well a learner is doing (Flanagan, 1998 : 74; Le Grange & Reddy, 1998 : 4).

2.9.3 **Outcomes-based system and continuous assessment**

2.9.3.1 Outcomes-Based assessment

Outcomes-Based Education is a system of education that constitutes Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA). OBA is defined as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, administered within the guidelines of a provincial department of a education that implies the National Education Policy. Rowntree (1987 : 151) define assessment in education as a thought occurring in a person if there is some kind of interaction, direct or indirect with another, is conscious of obtaining and interpreting information about knowledge and understanding, or abilities and attitudes of that persons. It is an attempt to know a person. It can be seen as the human encounter (Lubisi, 1999 : 12). Another definition of assessment is that, it is a process of getting hold of evidence using various means and making judgment of evidence in

order to make inference about individual competence (Learning Resource, 1996 : 55).

Outcomes-Based Assessment is based on formative assessment, summative assessment as well as continuous assessment and the criterion-referenced approach. It must include learning programme. Learners have to be assessed against the criteria not against each other, this is criterion referencing. Learners should know assessment criteria, in advance so that they will know exactly what is expected of them. The purpose of assessment in OBE is to check whether learners are achieving the outcomes and diagnose problems they might be having. Teacher can then give further practice when they need it. The assessment methods emphasize the application of learning in a relevant and real life context (Bertram *et al.*, 2000 : 116).

The general purpose of assessment is to maximize learner's access to knowledge, skills and attitudes (Department of Education, 1997 : 3). It is connected with quality assurance (main standard) together with national requirement of equity, assess and redress. It must be fair and unbiased in terms of for example, race, gender, and ELSEN (Department of Education, 1998 : 80).

Lubisi (1999 : 20) outline the purpose of assessment as a way of monitoring the learner's progress in acquiring taught knowledge, skills and values, for grading for progress purposes and selection for work or interview. It also consider certification for qualification e.g. diploma or degree, prediction which is based on tentative conclusion

before actual conclusions. It is involved in guidance where present understanding can lead to guidance in some tracks in life, e.g. science, commerce or social activities. Assessment can be used for evaluation where the school wants to find out what is working or what is not working. Another purpose of assessment is to identify strengths and weaknesses of a learner, and get a clear picture of strengths and developmental needs.

Rowntree (1987 : 152) talks about dimensions in assessment that are involving five questions such as why we assess (purpose), what to assess (knowledge, skills and values), how to assess (method used), how to interpret (interpretation of learners performance) and how to respond (positive response to the learner's performance). These questions can be answered by saying we assess in order to assess learning programs, discover what learners are learning, to monitor effective teaching strategies, for continuity and progression, to promote learning, to assist and monitor learners' progress, to analyze how learners are learning, for recording and reporting, evaluate learners' progress and diagnose problems and also allow learners to learn at their own pace.

Surnsky (cited in Learning Resource, 1996 : 54) describes the key idea underlining contemporary assessment practice in South Africa as a new assessment system that can be used as an effective tool for curriculum reform. It allows for meaningful comparison across student population (media). Assessment can also be used as an instrument for accountability (educational authorities). Assessment

can be used to measure what the student really knows about the subject matter (psychometricians). Assessment can assure and maintain the acceptable standard (educational authority). Calvin cited in Learning Resource, (1996 : 55) is of the view that assessment can serve to integrate education and training in a unified education system and that assessment in a different context means the same thing.

Assessment plays a vital role in uplifting our education to the global economy that demands sites of learning to develop competent citizens, capable of flexible thinking and independent learning. It is a driving force behind educational reform in the desire to initiate improvements of standard in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Each learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement and application of learning rather than 'covering' material. Each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools. The tasks assess what the learner knows and can do. The learners need to reflect on the task they encounter in the world outside the school, not merely those limited to the school. However, the task should reveal how a learner goes about solving a problem, not only a solution they formulated.

Assessment task should reflect the value of intellectual community from which the tasks are derived and must not be limited to the solo performance. New assessment tasks should make it possible that there are more than one acceptable solution to a problem and that there are more than one acceptable answer to a question. Assessment tasks

should have curricular relevance, but not limited to the curriculum as taught. Assessment tasks should require students to display a sensitive mind to configuration or whole, not simply to discrete elements. Assessment tasks should permit the student to select a form of representation he or she chooses to use to display what has been learned (Eisner, 1993 : 219-233).

Critical outcomes goes together with the philosophy of authentic assessment that creates the opportunity for learners to demonstrate their ability to integrate and fluently use knowledge, skills and good judgement in meaningful activities. It calls learners to use knowledge and skills in the context of real life situations or issues. It also reveals how learners go about with a given situation not only the end results. It integrates the demonstration of multiple learning outcomes and use of complex reasoning strategies. It also focuses on multiple dimensions of learners' learning and allow them to select a form of representation to display what has been learned (Learning Resource, 1996 : 56).

Specific outcomes describes the knowledge, skills, attitude and values that are applicable within a specific learning area. These outcomes serve as the basis for assessing the learner's progress in the specific learning area.

Continuous assessment does not only enable a wider range of educational outcomes to be assessed but it also provides information about the learning process and the learner's development. It also

involves more that mere teaching and testing for the purpose of grading.

Continuous assessment also does the following:

- It provides feedback on the learning outcomes that the learner has achieved, and those that have not been achieved;
- It assists with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the learners;
- It encourages communication between the teachers and learners;
- It works hand in hand with evaluation and therefore provides important information about curriculum issues like teaching methods and the relevance of learning outcomes and resources (Le Grange & Reddy, 1998 : 10).

In an outcomes-based education and training system, continuous assessment is criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced. It is more formative than summative.

2.9.3.2 Assessment methods, tools and techniques

2.9.3.2.1 *Assessment methods*

Assessment methods refer to a procedure to follow in assessing the learners. They address the question : who does the assessing and how? (Department of Education, 2001 : 24).

2.9.3.2.1.1 *Educator's assessment*

Several authors Burnett (1970); Meyers and Hammil (1971); Wallance and Larsen (1978) have implied that the classroom teacher should play an important role in the assessment process. Utilizing the teacher in this manner is not a new concept. Smith and Neisworth (1969) have earlier made reference to this fact. The research conducted by Ingram (1980 : 5) have earlier made reference to this fact. The research conducted by Ingram (1980 : 5) related to the skills revealed that they needed to plan more effective educational programmes (Ingram, 1980:6).

Igram (1980 : 6) further mentions that within the regulation it is recommended that a team of professionals be responsible for conducting the child's education assessment. The classroom teacher is identified as the member of that team, and it is suggested that the teacher be involved in the diagnosis. This involvement increases the teacher's responsibility for knowing how to conduct an educational assessment.

Even if evaluation effort is used, the individual classroom teacher must possess some minimum level of assessment skills just to participate with the team or to act as an individual teacher in the preparation of the child's individual programme. These includes:

- Being able to develop or utilize assessment procedures formal or informal that will generate information about the child's specific skill level of performance on any school related task.
- To be able to interpret diagnostic data from standardized or criterion-referenced measures (Ingram, 1980 : 7).

2.9.3.2.1.2 *Self assessment*

Self-assessment is where a learners assesses herself or himself. It is when a learner assesses his or her performance, against the desired outcomes and criteria, and is able to decide what he/she needs to improve in his or her performance. This method helps the learner to reflect on his or her own learning, therefore, time should be spent on helping learners to do that (Department of Education, 2001 : 26).

2.9.3.2.1.3 *Peer assessment*

Peer assessment occurs when a learner is being assessed by his or her peers against clearly defined outcomes. Peer assessment may fall under the following categories: Learner to learner, that is, where two learners assess each other's performance; learner to group; that is, where the performance of the group is assessed by each learner, class to learner, that is, when the whole class assesses a performance of other learners individually, group to learner, that is, when a group in class assesses an individual learner's product, group to group, that is, when groups within one class assess each other's performance.

2.9.3.2.1.4 *Group assessment*

Group assessment may be looked at in two different ways, first, when a group assesses another learner, second, when an educator assesses the entire group (Airasian, 1994 : 17; Department of Education, 2001 : 29).

2.9.3.2.2 Assessment tools

Assessment tools refer to the records that the educator keeps. They include *inter alia* observation sheet, profile, assessment grid, class list and journals. These tools are described in Department of Education (2001 : 29-30) as follows:

2.9.3.2.2.1 *Observation sheets*

An observation sheet is used when one observes a learner against a certain criterion. It is a tool in which an educator records his or her observation. The specific skills, behaviours and achievements must be linked to the learning programme outcomes and be readily observable.

2.9.3.2.2.2 *Profile*

A learner profile is a panoramic representation of the learner's qualities as observed by educators. It is an up-to-date database on all information that may assist the learning progress, collected throughout the learner's path. It also includes records of a learner's progress

collected over a period of time. It includes the range of activities that gives a holistic view of the nature of the learner, for example, strengths, areas that need support and achievement.

2.9.3.2.2.3 *Rubrics or assessment grids*

A rubric is a set of criteria that is used to ensure that different parts of the task has been assessed. A rubric can be designed in the form of a grid. It can, however, simply be a list of what has been assessed, who assesses and what assessment key is used e.g. NOT YET ACHIEVED/ACHIEVED. A rubric is a handy tool for gathering information. It can seldom be used on its own to determine whether an assessment criterion (AC) or specific outcomes (SO) has been achieved. Thus, other rubrics and assessment tools could be used in a given learning experience in order to contribute towards a formal recording.

2.9.3.2.2.4 *Class lists*

Class lists are for ensuring that individual learners are assessed systematically. The less demanding learners are not ignored, for example, for checking how many times you have heard each other reading. These can be adapted to help the educator to record broad groupings within the class in terms of allocating follow-up work.

2.9.3.2.2.5 *Journals*

Each learner might keep a journal in which for example, a learner reflects on his/her own learning and/or writes about his or her life in general. The learner's journal should be considered as confidential by the educator and everyone else. If a relationship of trust exists between educator and a learner, the educator can share this journal and write her own comments and messages in it.

2.9.3.2.3 Assessment techniques

Assessment techniques refer to how learners generate evidence of performance. This list of assessment techniques is too long to describe, so it is suffice to enumerate them. These techniques include *inter alia:*

- Project work;
- Collage;
- Test;
- Research project;
- Assignment
- Survey;
- Debate/argument;
- Role-play;
- Interview;
- Drama;
- Presentation;
- Panel discussion;

- Panel discussion;
- Practical demonstration;
- Scenario;
- Construction;
- Music/song;
- Poetry/rhyme;
- Story telling/oral presentation;
- Model making/plan design, e.g. toys;
- Sculpture/painting;
- Drawing/graph;
- Game design;
- Physical activity;
- Map;
- Poster;
- Chart;
- Table;
- Description;
- Written presentation e.g. report, essay;
- Posing a question;
- Portfolio;
- Worksheet;
- Questionnaire;
- Rubric;
- Exhibition;
- Self-reporting and answers by learners; and
- Conferencing (Department of Education, 2001 : 24-25).

2.10 CONCLUSION

It has transpired from the preceding review of literature that learners can be active participants in learning and continuous assessment. Their active participation in learning is largely determined by teaching and learning strategies and methods that teachers use. If learner-centered strategies and methods of teaching and learning are used, learners get opportunity to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Their active participation in continuous assessment is also largely determined by assessment methods, tools and techniques used by the teachers. Self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment methods give learners opportunity to be actively involved in learner-centered assessment methods.

In the next chapter the research design and methodology of the study will be detailed.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter the literature study has revealed that in order to ensure that learners are fairly judged in their work, learners themselves have to play a pivotal role in learning and continuous assessment. In this chapter the research methodology used in the investigation of the role of learning and continuous assessment will be discussed.

3.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to investigate the role of learners in learning and continuous assessment.

The following specific objectives are formulated:

3.2.1 To ascertain the extent to which learners play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

3.2.2 To determine whether learners' biographical factors such as gender, age, and grade have any influence on the active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

3.3 FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

Based on the aims of the study the following hypothesis are formulated:

3.3.1 Learners do not differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

3.3.2 Learners' biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have no influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

3.4 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Data is collected by means of questionnaires. A questionnaire is the set of questions dealing with some topics or related groups of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration (Van der Aardweg & Van der Aardweg, 1988 : 190). However, the questionnaire has its own advantages and disadvantages.

3.4.1 Advantages of the questionnaire

According to Mahlangu (1987 ; 96) the questionnaire is one of the most common methods of gathering information. It is also time saving and conducive to reliable results. The researcher used the written questionnaire as a research instrument taking into consideration certain advantages cited by Cohen and Manion (1989 : 111-112),. They are as follows:

- Affordability is the primary advantage of a written questionnaire because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.

- Written questionnaires preclude possible interview bias. The way the interviewer asks questions and even the interviewer's general appearance or interaction may influence respondent's answers. Such biases can be completely eliminated in the written questionnaire.

- A questionnaire can be given to many people simultaneously, that is to say that a large sample of a targeted population can be reached.

- They permit a respondent, sufficient amount of time to consider answers before responding.

- They provide a greater uniformity across the measurement situations than do the interviews. Each person responds exactly to the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.

- Generally, the data provided by questionnaires can be more easily analyzed and interpreted than the data obtained from verbal responses.

- Using a questionnaire solves the problem of non-contact "when the researcher calls". When the target population to be covered is widely and thinly spread, the mail questionnaire is the only possible method of approach.

- Through the use of the questionnaire approach the problems related to interviews may be avoided. Interview "errors" may seriously undermine the reliability and validity of the survey results.

- A respondent may answer questions of a personal or embarrassing nature more willingly and frankly on a questionnaire than in a face-to-face situation with an interviewer who may be a complete stranger. In some cases it may happen that the respondents reports less than expected and makes more critical comments in a mail questionnaire.

- Questions requiring considered answers rather than immediate answers could enable respondents to consult documents in the case of the mail questionnaire.

- Respondents can complete questionnaires in their own time and in a more relaxed atmosphere.

- Questionnaire design is relatively easy if the set guides of guidelines are followed.

- The administration of questionnaires, the coding, analysis and interpretation of data can be done without any special training.

- Data obtained from questionnaires can be compared and inferences can be made.

- Questionnaires can elicit information, which cannot be obtained from other sources. This renders empirical research possible in different educational disciplines.

3.4.2 Disadvantages of the questionnaire

Although the questionnaire has advantages it also has significant disadvantages. According to Van der Aardweg and Van der Aardweg (1988 : 190), Kidder and Judd (1986 : 223 - 224) and Mahlangu (1987 : 84-85) the disadvantages of the questionnaire are *inter alia* the following:

- Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews. In an interview an idea or comment can be explored. This makes it possible to gauge how people are interpreting the question. If questions asked are interpreted differently by respondents the validity of the information obtained is jeopardized.

- People are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing.

- Questionnaires can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straightforward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.

- The mail questionnaire does not make provision for obtaining the views of more than one person at a time. It requires uninfluenced views of one person only.

- Answers to mail questionnaires must be seen as final. Re-checking of responses cannot be done. There is no chance of investigating beyond the given answer for a clarification of ambiguous answers. If respondents are unwilling to answer certain questions nothing can be done to it because the mail questionnaire is essentially inflexible.

- In a mail questionnaire the respondent could examine all questions at the same time before answering them and the answer to the different questions could therefore not be treated as 'independent'.

- Written questionnaires do not allow the researcher to correct misunderstanding or answer questions that the respondents may

have. Respondents might answer incorrectly or not at all due to confusion or misinterpretation.

3.4.3 Construction of the questionnaire

The most important point to be taken into account in questionnaire design is that it takes time and effort and that the questionnaire will be re-drafted a number of times before being finalized. A researcher must therefore ensure that adequate time is budgeted for the construction of the questionnaire (Kidder & Judd, 1986 : 243 : 245). All of the above was taken into consideration by the researcher during the designing of the questionnaire for this investigation.

The questionnaire was designed to determine the role of learners in learning and continuous assessment. In order to obtain information needed for the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely, Section A and Section B.

The first section (Section A) deals with the biographical information of the respondents, namely gender, age, and grade. Second section (Section B) focuses on the role of learners in learning and continuous assessment.

3.4.4 Response alternatives or categories of the rating scales and scoring thereof

With regard to Section B of the research instrument, rating scale with four response alternatives or categories namely, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) is used. According to Ngidi (1995 : 84) Rossi, Wright and Anderson (1983) have identified two major advantages of such categories. Firstly, they have been tested in many different situations and have worked successfully. Secondly, they have got a wide applicability because they can fit almost any subject matter.

A further advantage of such standard categories is that they are easily adaptable to a list of items. One can present a number of different questions or statements while using a single set of response categories, making it easier for both respondent and interviewer (Urbani, 1993 : 93). The five point has become popular in this regard, both for use in scales and for lists of items (Urbani, 1993 : 99). The researcher intentionally omitted the midpoint category because it attracts respondents to choose it, sometimes merely for non-commital purpose.

Urbani (1993 : 96) advises that unfortunately the empirical evidence regarding the effect of the omission of the middle category on responses is inconclusive, so no definite rules in this regard can be offered, suffice to say that the researcher should always be guided by the context of the questions he/she is asking. Therefore the four

categories used in this study are of a Likert type, although they do not have five categories.

3.4.5 The structure of the items

As mentioned in section 3.4.3 the questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A, with items 1, 2 and 3 solicit biographical information. This information is used in relation to aim number two of the study which intends to determine whether biographical factors have any influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

In Section B, there are 22 items. These items are meant to ascertain the extent to which learners differ in the active role they play in learning and continuous assessment (aim number one).

3.4.6 Validity of the instrument

Validity is the degree to which an instrument actually measures what it purports to measure (Sibaya, 1993 : 160). Content validity, and face validity are the two various kinds or types of validity interpretation to be discussed and used in this study.

3.4.6.1 Content Validity

Content validity refers to the representativeness of the sample of questions included in the instrument (Henerson, Morris & Fitz-Gibbon, 1997 : 141). Sibaya (1993 : 159) suggests that content validity must be a matter of judgement, not empirical correlation : this really means a systematic examination or scrutinity of the content, to find out if it covers all the information on which the tester means to test subjects. Nzimande (1970 : 43) maintains that content validation entails a careful examination and checking of the scale items, through the use of experts in the field concerned. The researcher of this study will therefore consult the experts from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies at the University of Zululand. Experts will be used for examining the scale items for content validity. Behr (1988 : 122) regards validity as indespensable characteristics of measuring devices.

3.4.6.2 Face Validity

According to Sibaya (1993 : 162) this does not denote validity in the true sense of the term. It simple means that a cursory examination seems to show that the instrument does measure what it is intended to measure. This will be done by the researcher and supervisor before the questionnaire is finalised. The questionnaire is also shown to the experts at the University of Zululand and some students and colleagues to peruse.

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3.4.7 Reliability of the instrument

Reliability refers to the degree to which a test is internally consistent (Sibaya, 1993 : 154). In order to ensure that items 1-22 are internally consistent, Cronbach's alpha reliability co-efficient will be calculated.

3.5 METHOD OF CODING OR SCORING AND PLANNING FOR THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.5.1 Method of coding or scoring the research instrument

Raw data obtained from the questionnaire are converted to a quantitative form for analysis and display: converting process is called scoring or coding (Orlich, 1978 : 135). Urbani (1993 : 135) defines coding as a process whereby the responses on a questionnaire are classified into meaningful categories and converted into numbers which are suitable for the analysis of data by computer.

In this study the respondents are requested to make a cross along the SA, A, D and SD continuum to describe the statement which suit their perception toward the role of leaner in learning and continuous assessment. The items are precoded in the questionnaire.

The twenty-two positively worded statements are assigned codes or values as follows:

- 4 to Strongly Agree
- 3 to Agree
- 2 to Disagree
- 1 to Strongly Disagree

Once the questionnaire is completed and returned the codes are manually entered onto code sheets. Thereafter, they are punched onto the SPSS Computer Programme designed for research purposes. Coding for respondents' personal particulars (Section A of the questionnaire) is done by assigning numerical symbols using a systematic method. This is because these response categories do not have a quantitative relationship to each other (Orlich, 1978 : 66).

3.5.2 Determination of learners' active role in learning and continuous assessment .

For the purpose of testing the hypothesis that learners do not differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment (aim number one) the researcher decided to divide respondents into groups. Since the lowest possible score on items concerning learners' active role in learning and continuous assessment is 22 (could be theoretically obtained by a respondent who endorses strongly agree responses in every item and the highest possible score is 88 (could be theoretically obtained by one who

endorsed strongly agree to every statement) with scores that could range from 22 to 88 and three response categories, the following three groups are created:

* LAR GROUP : A Low Active Role group consist of respondents with scores in the range of 22-44.

* MAR GROUP : A Moderate Active Role group consist of respondents with scores in the range of 45-66

* HAR GROUP: A High Active Role group consist of respondents with scores in the range of 67-88.

The above groups are divised by grouping scores into class intervals (Sibaya, 1993 : 184).

3.5.3 Procedure for analysing data

Labovitz and Hagedorn (Abhilak, 1994 : 216) suggest that the analysis of data involves both descriptive and inferential statistics. In this study the analysis of data involves both descriptive and inferential statistics. In the following sections the difference between descriptive and inferential statistics are discussed. The procedures to be followed in analysing data using these two methods are also outlined.

3.5.3.1 Descriptive analysis of data

The term descriptive statistics (also called summary statistics) refers to statistical methods used to describe data which have been collected on a research sample (Borg & Gall, 1983 : 356). Descriptively, the data are summarised and reduced to a few statistics for the actual sample (Abhilak, 1994 : 216). Descriptive statistics serves as a tool for organization, tabulation, depicting and describing, summarization and reduction of comprehensible form of an otherwise unwieldy mass of data (Sibaya, 1993 : 165). Therefore, it does not involve testing of hypotheses for making generalizations about the population parameters. In this study descriptive statistics is used for summarization and reduction of the data which have been collected on a research sample.

Analysis of the respondents in the sample according to their personal particulars (section A of the questionnaire) is done first. Descriptive analysis of the sample data for the 22 statements (section B of the questionnaire) is then done, using respondent counting, percentages, and average (mean) for the responses to each statement. These concepts are discussed in the following section.

a) Respondent counting and percentages

Orlich (1978:132) maintains that the preliminary step in analysing data is usually counting the responses for every item or respondent counting, using either hand tabulations or electronic data processing.

Electronic data processing is used in this study. Respondent counting involves counting the number of respondents who marked SA, A, D and SD categories in each statement. Respondent counting provides a summary of the tabulated frequency for which each category is marked, therefore, frequency data can be converted to percentages, indicating the number of respondents who marked a particular category in relation to the total number of respondents (Orlich, 1978 : 136). In order to avoid bias and giving misleading information, the number of respondents who marked a particular category is always given with the reported percentages in brackets (parenthesis).

b) The mean (average) for the responses to each statement

"By averaging group scores on a set of items, you are reducing or summarizing the data in order to make them easier to work with and interpret" (Henerson, *et al.*, 1987 : 174). When the mean or average for the responses to each item is converted to the nominal categories, it gives an indication of the group's response to a particular statement (Orlich, 1978 : 136; Henerson, *et al.*, 1987 : 17). In this study it means that when the mean or average for the responses to each item are converted to SA, A, D and SD categories, it will give an indication of the learners' response to a particular statement.

3.5.3.2 Inferential statistics

While descriptive statistics is concerned with summarizing or describing the data of a sample, inferential statistics is concerned with generalizing from a sample to make estimates and inferences about a wider population (Rowntree, 1981 : 21). Rowntree (1981 : 19) asserts that the distinction between descriptive and inferential statistics depend upon another: the distinction between samples and populations. Borg and Gall (1983 : 356) also affirm that inferential statistics is used to make inferences from sample statistics to the population parameter. Sibaya (1993 : 166) maintains that the purpose of inferential statistics is to predict or estimate or surmise the properties of a population from a knowledge of the properties of only a sample of the population. Therefore, inferential statistics builds upon descriptive statistics (Sibaya, 1993:166). However, the descriptive characteristics of a sample can be generalized to the entire population, with a known margin of error, using the techniques of inferential statistics (Sibaya, 1993 : 166). Inferential statistics is also used to determine whether differences between groups might be due to chance (Orlich, 1978 : 144). It therefore involves hypotheses testing. Inferential statistics is used for the same purposes in this study.

To test the hypothesis that learner do not differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment (aim number one) a chi-square (χ^2) one sample test will be used.

The chi-square (χ^2) test is the most frequently used non-parametrics statistics for significance (Orlich, 1978 : 145; Behr, 1988 : 79). The chi-square (χ^2) test of significance is used when the investigation concerns the category variables, that is, comparing how many members of a sample fall into each one of a number of descriptive categories: concerned with comparing differences in the actual (observed) frequencies (or counts) with the expected frequencies (or counts) Behr, 1988 : 79-80). The chi-square test (χ^2) is a test that tells us the extent to which an observed set of frequencies differs from the frequencies that were expected. It is used when the research data are in the form of frequency counts (Borg & Gall, 1983 : 559). In other words, it is used to test the hypotheses about proportions (Sibaya, 1993 : 258).

In this study the researcher has in the single sample, three groups or categories, namely LAR, MAR and HAR. The researcher intends to test whether significant differences exist between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies in these three respective categories. This type of chi-square test is called one sample test (Behr, 1988 : 82 ; Sibaya, 1993 : 259).

Since the researcher hypothesis is based on the null hypothesis (which is a 'no difference' statistical hypothesis), it is decided that if there is no significant difference between the frequencies in the three respective categories or groups the null hypothesis will be accepted.

However, if there is a significant difference the null hypothesis will be rejected and the alternative or research hypothesis will be accepted.

The null hypothesis is rejected at 0,05 level of significance, which means that the likelihood of the results occurring by chance is less than 5 times in 100. If the calculated probability value of the results (p) is greater than 0,05 level of significance the null hypothesis is accepted. This is recorded as $p > 0,05$. If it is less, the null hypotheses are rejected. This is recorded as $p < 0,05$ (Sibaya, 1993 : 257). Lutz (Abhilak, 1994, 1994 : 221) also confirms that using the 0,05 level of significance means that we only reject the null hypothesis when we get sample results whose sampling error probabilities are as low as or lower than 0,05. That is the 5 percent level.

The chi-square test for k independent samples will be used to test the hypothesis that learners' biographical factors such as gender, age and learners' grade have no influence on learner's active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment (aim number two).

The chi-square test for k independent samples is an extension of χ^2 for two independent samples : in general the test is the same for both two and k independent samples (Sibaya, 1993 : 260). This statistical test (the chi-square test for k independent samples) is suitable for this study because the respondents in the sample are categorized in terms of their personal particulars and their responses are considered independently. For example, under the category of gender, males and females responses are treated independently of each other.

3.6 SAMPLING OF THE SUBJECTS FOR THE STUDY

Learners will be the respondents in this study. These respondents will be drawn from schools under Lower Tugela Circuit. Lower Tugela circuit is a circuit under Ilembe district of the Ethekwini Region which is in the Northern part of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. The focus will be on grade 7, 8 and 9 learners where Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and continuous assessment will have been implemented at Senior Phase. At the time of writing there were 74 Senior Primary schools with grade 7 and 11 Secondary schools with grade 8 and 9, in the Lower Tugela circuit. For the purpose of this study 12 Senior Primary school and 6 Secondary schools will be randomly selected. All learners in grade 7, 8 and 9 of the selected schools will form part of the sample.

A simple random sampling method will be used for selecting the sample of this study. The usual definition of a random sampling is that it is a procedure in which all the individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample (Borg & Gall, 1983 : 244).

Som (1973 : 20) maintains that in simple random sampling the probability that the universe unit (member of the defined population) will be selected at any given draw is the same as that at the first draw. The technique that is used other than the table of random numbers, is where a slip of paper with the name or identification number of each individual in the population is placed in a container, mixing the slips of paper with the name or

identification number (Borg & Gall, 1983 : 246). Sibaya (1993 : 67) advises that to ensure that each slip pulled out has the same probability, it must be returned to the bowl before the next draw. Burroughs (1971 : 58) warns that if one puts the number back into "the hat" after selection then the same number may appear again, if it is not put back after selection, the number of the population as well as the sampling fraction changes, that is, the selection of each individual changes slightly the probability for the next case selected. Sibaya (1993 ; 67) maintains that if the number previously picked comes up again, we would ignore it, thus the process is called sampling with replacement (Som, 1973 : 20; Williams, 1978 : 106; Sibaya, 1993 : 67).

Borg and Gall (1983 : 244-245) contend that if the replacement is not done, a more precise definition of a simple random sample is that "it is a process of selection from the population that provides every sample of a given size an equal probability of being selected". They maintain that this definition would be technically correct because if no replacement is made, once the first selection has been made, the population from which the selection is made would become one case smaller. Sampling using replacement technique is therefore the better technique and will therefore be used in this study.

The estimated size of the sample is ± 300 respondents. Travern (1978: 336) maintains that there is no simple answer to the question "how large should the sample be?" Travern (1978 : 337) further argues that it is evident that merely increasing the size of the sample does not necessary lead to accuracy. Williams (1978 : 45) also maintains that samples are often less than 1% of the size of the population and are nearly always less than 5%. He further

asserts that occasionally samples may be as large as 20%, but these do not seem to be frequent and so far seem always to be associated with data stored in computers or with a very small population.

3.7 PLANNING FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The researcher wrote a letter to Mrs LN Ntuli (Regional Chief Director) requesting permission to conduct research at Lower Tugela district. One copy of the letter was sent to Ms MV Mzoneli (District Manager) another copy was sent to Ms N Khoza (Lower Tugela Circuit Inspector).

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the selected schools. Questionnaires were distributed to learners for completion and clarification was made on items that learners did not understand. The researcher also personally recollected questionnaires from the learners after completion. This method of administration facilitated the process of the response rate.

3.8 PILOT STUDY

Pilot study is an abbreviated version of a research project in which the researcher practices or test the procedures to be used in the subsequent full-scale project (Dane, 1990 : 42). It is preliminary or "trial run" investigation using similar questions and similar subjects as in the final survey. Kidder and Judd (1986 : 211-212) state that the basic purpose of a pilot study is to determine how the design of the subsequent study can be

improved and to identify flaws in the measuring instrument. A pilot study gives the researcher an idea of what the method will actually look like in operation and what effects (intended or not) it is likely to have. In other words, by generating many of the practical problems that will ultimately arise, pilot study enables the researcher to avert these problems by changing procedure, instruction and questions.

The number of participants in the pilot group is normally smaller than the number scheduled to take part in the final survey. Participants in the pilot study and the sample for the final study must be selected from the same target populations.

According to Plug, Meyer, Louse and Gouts (1991 : 49-66) the following are the purposes of a pilot study:

- It permits a testing of the hypothesis that leads to testing more precise hypotheses in the main study.

- It provides the researcher with ideas, approaches and clues not foreseen prior to the study.

- It permits a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, thus allowing an appraisal of their adequacy in treating the data.

- It greatly reduces the number of errors because unforeseen problems revealed in the pilot study results in the redesigning of the main study.

- It saves the researcher major expenditure of time and money on aspects of the research which would have been unnecessary.

- Feedback from other persons involved is made possible and lead to important improvements in the main study.

- In the pilot study the researcher tries out a number of alternative measures and select only those producing the best results for the final study.

- The approximate time required to complete the questionnaire is established in the pilot study.

- Questions and/or instructions that were misinterpreted are reformulated.

Through the use of the pilot study as a "pre-test" the researcher was satisfied that the questions asked complied adequately with the requirements of the study.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In the introduction of this chapter, the aims and the hypotheses of this study were outlined. The methods and procedure for selecting subjects for sampling, creating and applying the measuring instrument, coding or scoring and analysing data have been discussed. In the next chapter (Chapter four) the empirical research is reflected, and an analysis and interpretation of the data gained by means of the empirical research is discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three a detailed account of research design and methodology was given. In this chapter the analysis and interpretation of data are discussed. Descriptive statistics is used to summarize learners' responses to the 22 items, without testing the hypotheses of the study. Inferential statistics is used to test the hypotheses of the study.

4.2 ADMINISTRATION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The SPSS Computer programme was used for analysing data. Cronbach's co-efficient alpha was used to determined the internal-consistency reliability estimate for items 1-22 (section B), which measures learners' active role in learning and continuous assessment. The internal-consistency reliability estimate is .68, which is very good (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989).

TABLE 4.1 **Distribution of subjects according to biographical variables (N = 354)**

Criteria	Levels			
Gender	Male		Female	
	214		140	
Age	12 and below	13 – 14	15 –16	174
	21	152	133	48
Grade	7	8		9
	126	122		106

Table 4.1 illustrates the distribution of learners according to their biographical characteristics. The questionnaire was administered to 354 learners.

4.3 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.3.1 Descriptive analysis of data

TABLE 4.2 **Frequency distribution of responses to items 1–22 (N=354)**

Statement No.	Response Category SA	A	D	SD	MEAN $\bar{X}$
1	196 (55.4)	139 (39.2)	13 (3.7)	6 (1.7)	3.48
2	110 (31.1)	139 (39.2)	86 (24.3)	19 (5.4)	2.96
3	66 (18.6)	90 (25.5)	95 (26.8)	103 (29.1)	2.34
4	36 (10.2)	54 (15.2)	68 (19.2)	196 (55.4)	1.80
5	22 (6.2)	56 (15.8)	76 (21.5)	200 (56.5)	1.72
6	60 (16.9)	95 (26.7)	85 (24.0)	114 (32.2)	2.29
7	209 (59.0)	93 (26.3)	36 (14.7)	16 (4.5)	3.40
8	219 (61.9)	94 (26.5)	28 (7.9)	13 (3.7)	3.47
9	280 (79.1)	51 (14.4)	8 (2.3)	15 (4.2)	3.68
10	47 (13.3)	95 (26.8)	86 (24.3)	126 (35.6)	2.18
11	92 (26.0)	115 (32.5)	78 (22.0)	69 (19.5)	2.65
12	45 (12.7)	77 (21.7)	75 (21.2)	157 (44.4)	2.03
13	53 (15.0)	75 (21.2)	105 (29.6)	121 (34.2)	2.17
14	78 (22.0)	144 (40.7)	80 (22.6)	52 (14.7)	2.70
15	144 (40.7)	105 (29.6)	61 (17.3)	44 (12.4)	2.99
16	230 (65.0)	64 (18.1)	34 (9.6)	26 (7.3)	3.41
17	46 (13.0)	120 (33.9)	80 (22.6)	108 (30.5)	2.29
18	117 (33.1)	126 (35.5)	85 (24.1)	26 (7.3)	2.94
19	64 (18.1)	94 (26.5)	107 (30.3)	89 (25.1)	2.38
20	122 (34.4)	117 (33.1)	75 (21.2)	40 (11.3)	2.91
21	71 (20.1)	59 (16.6)	72 (20.4)	152 (42.9)	2.14
22	162 (45.8)	104 (29.3)	55 (15.6)	33 (9.3)	2.12

Percentages are in parentheses

GRAPH 1: GRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF RESPONSES TO EVERY STATEMENT

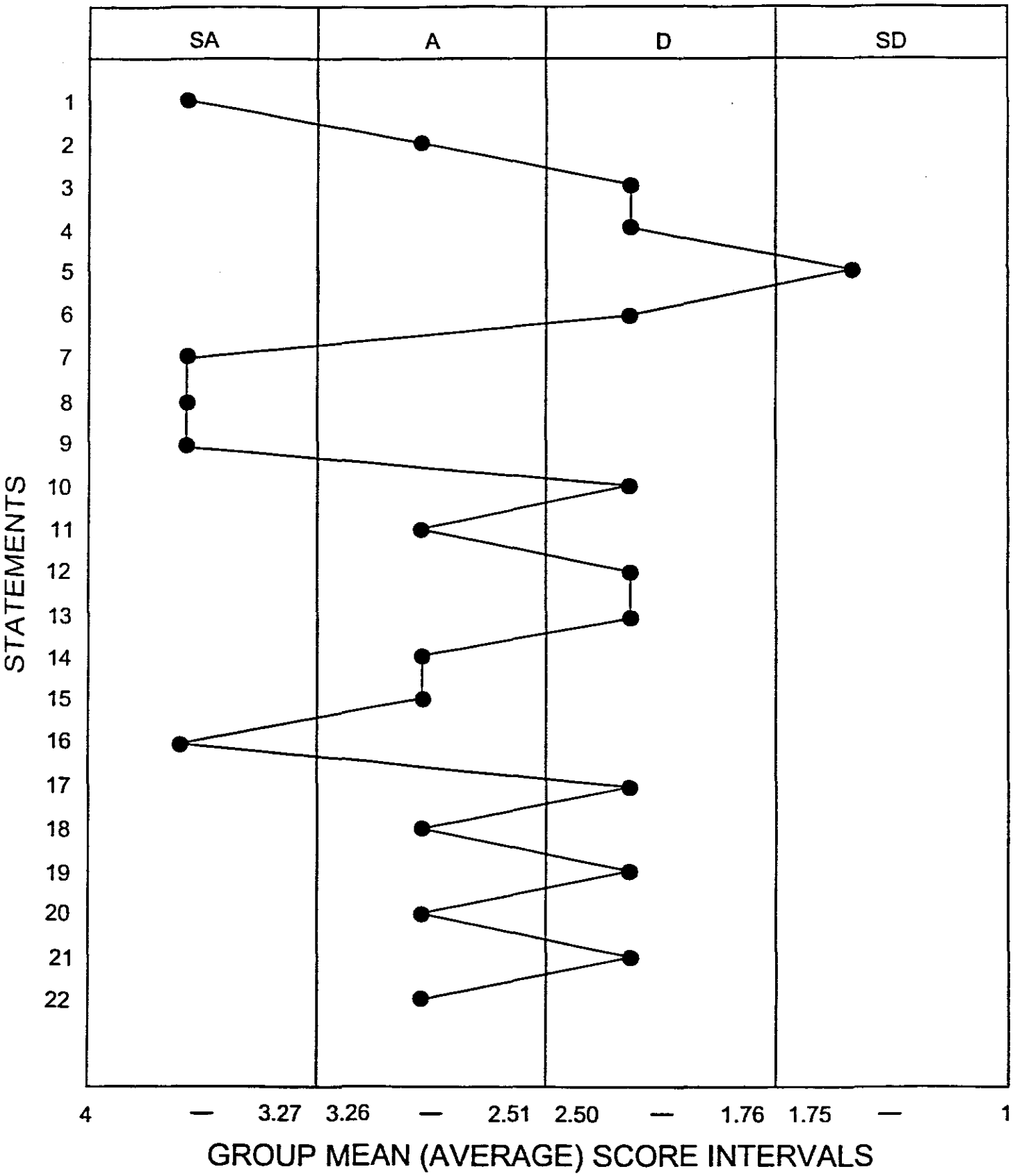

Table 4.2 reveals the following information pertaining to learners' responses to each statements.

Statement 1 : We work as groups

A relatively high number of learners, 196 (55.4%) strongly agree and 139 (39.2%) agree that they work as groups. Only 13 (3.7%) who disagree and 6 (1.7%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.48. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "SA" category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners strongly agree that they work as groups.

Statement 2 : We discuss issues in the classroom

About 110 (31.1%) learners strongly agree and 139 (39.2%) agree that they discuss issues in the classroom. About 86 (24.3) disagree and only 19 (5.4%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.96. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "A" category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners agree that they discuss issues in the classroom.

Statement 3 : We work as pairs

About 66 (18.6%) learners strongly agree and 90 (25.5%) agree that they work as pairs. About 95 (26.8%) disagree and 103 (29.1%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.34. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "D" category

(see graph 1). This means that on average, the learners disagree that they work as pairs.

Statement 4: We debate some issues in the classroom

A relatively small number of learners 36 (10.2%) strongly agree and 54 (15.2%) agree that they debate some issues in the classrooms. About 68 (19.2%) disagree and 196 (55.4%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 1.80. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "D" category (see graph 1). This means that on average the learners in the sample disagree that they debate some issues in the classroom.

Statement 5: We conduct some experiments

A relatively small number of learners 22 (6.2%) strongly agree and 56 (15.8%) agree that they conduct some experiments. About 76 (21.5%) disagree and 200 (56.5%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 1.72. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "SD" category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners strongly disagree that they conduct some experiments.

Statement 6 : We investigate or discover new things

About 60 (16.9%) learners strongly agree and 95 (26.7%) agree that they investigate or discover new things. About 85 (24%) disagree and 114 (32.2%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.29. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the

"D" category (see graph 1). This means that on average the learners disagree that they investigate or discover new things.

Statement 7 : We conduct some projects

A relatively high number of learners 209 (59.0%) strongly agree and 93 (26.3%) agree that they conduct some projects. Only 36 (14.7%) disagree and 16 (4.5%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.40. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls with the "SA" category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners strongly agree that they conduct some projects.

Statement 8 : We do some assignments

A very high number of learners 219 (61.9%) strongly agree and 94 (26.5%) agree that they do some assignments. Only 28 (7.9%) disagree and 13 (3.7%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.47. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "SA" category (see graph 1). This means that on average the learners strongly agree that they do some assignments.

Statement 9 : We write tests

A very high number of learners 280 (79.1%) strongly agree and 51 (14.4%) agree that they write tests. Only 8 (2.3%) disagree and 15 (4.2%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.68. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "SA"

category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners strongly agree that they write tests.

Statement 10: We discuss topics in panel form

A relatively small number of learners 47 (13.3%) strongly agree and 95 (26.8%) agree that they discuss topics in panel form. About 86 (24.3%) disagree and 126 (35/6%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.18. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "D" category (see graph 1). This means that on average, the learners disagree that they discuss topics in panel form.

Statement 11: We give our ideas in a brainstorming manner

About 92 (26/0%) learners strongly agree and 115 (32.5%) agree that they give their ideas in a brainstorming manner. Only 78 (22%) disagree and 69 (19.5%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.65. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "A" category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners agree that they give their ideas in a brainstorming manner.

Statement 12: We dramatize and role-play some lessons

A relatively small number of learners 45 (12.7%) strongly agree and 77 (21.7%) agree that they dramatize and role-play some lessons. About 75 (21.2%) disagree and 157 (44.4%) strongly disagree. The

mean score is 2.03. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "D" category (see graph 1). This mean that on average, learners disagree that they dramatize and role-play some lessons.

Statement 13: We do some practical demonstrations

A relatively small number of learners 53 (15.0%) strongly agree and 75 (21.2%) agree that they do some practical demonstrations. About 105 (29.6%) disagree and 121 (34.2%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.7. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "D" category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners disagree that they do some practical demonstrations.

Statement 14: We make some oral presentations

About 78 (22.0%) of the learners strongly agree and 144 (40.7%) agree that they make some oral presentations. About 80 (22.6%) disagree and 52 (14.7%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.70. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "A" category (see graph 1). This means that on average, the learners agree that they make some oral presentations.

Statement 15: We design things

A relatively high number of learners 144 (40.7%) strongly agree and 105 (29.6%) agree that they design things. Only 61 (17.3%) disagree and 44 (12.4%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.99. When converted back to the nominal categories of the sale it falls with then "A" category (see graph 1). Therefore, an average the learners agree that they design things.

Statement 16: We make some drawings

A very high number of learns 230 (65.0%) strongly agree and 64 (18.1%) agree that they make some drawings. Only 34 (9.6%) disagree and 26 (7.3%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.41. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "SA" category (see graph 1). This means that on average, the learners strongly agree that they make some drawings.

Statement 17 : We write some essays

A relatively small number of learners 46 (13.0%) strongly agree and 120 (33.9%) agree that they write some essays. About 80 (22.6%) disagree and 108 (30.5%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.29. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within "D" category. (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners disagree that they write some essays.

Statement 18: We assess other groups

About 117 (33.1%) learners strongly agree and 126 (35.5%) agree that they assess other groups. Only 85 (24.1%) disagree and 26 (7.3%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.94. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "A" category (see graph 1). This means that on average, the learners agree that they assess other groups.

Statement 19 : We assess our peers

A relatively small number of learners 64 (18.1%) strongly agree and 94 (26.5%) agree that they assess their peers. About 107 (30.3%) disagree and 89 (25.1%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.38. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "D" category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners disagree that they assess their peers.

Statement 20 : We do self-assessment

About 122 (34.4%) learners strongly agree and 117 (33.1%) agree that they do self-assessment. Only 75 (21.2%) disagree and 40 (11.3%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.91. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale. It falls within the "A" category (see graph 1). This means that on average, the learners agree that they do self-assessment.

Statement 21 : We keep our journals

About 7 (20.1%) learners strongly agree and 59 (16.6%) agree that they keep their journals. About 72 (20.4%) disagree and 152 (42.9%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 2.14. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "D" category (see graph 1). Therefore, on average the learners disagree that they keep their journals.

Statement 22 : We have portfolios

A relatively high number of learners 162 (45.8%) strongly agree and 104 (29.3%) agree that they have portfolios. Only 55 (15.6%) disagree and 33 (9.3%) strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.12. When converted back to the nominal categories of the scale it falls within the "A" category (see graph 1). This means that on average, the learners agree that they have portfolios.

4.3.2 **Inferential statistics**

In this section, hypotheses are tested and the results are presented in the tables. There are two hypotheses to be tested in this study. The presentation of data (in the tables) is preceded by the reiteration of each hypothesis

4.3.2.1 Hypothesis number one is reiterated as follows:

Learners do not differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

The appropriate statistical test chosen for testing this hypothesis is the chi-square one sample test. The chi-square one sample test is appropriate because testing hypothesis number one is concerned with comparing how many respondents of the whole sample fall into each of the descriptive categories, namely, low active role (LAR); moderate active role (MAR) and high active role (HAR).

The chi-square one sample test is recommended for comparing differences in the observed frequencies with the expected frequencies in a single sample with various categories to determine whether differences (except for sample error) are typical of the population from which the sample was drawn (Behr, 1988 : 82).

TABLE 4.3 **Group and active role levels**

	LAR (22-44)	MAR (45-66)	HAR (67-88)
Frequencies	12	283	59

A chi-square value of 355.441 at df = 2 was obtained for table 4.3. It is significant at our chosen level of significance, which is 0.05. Since $p<0.05$, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that

learners differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

4.3.2.2 Testing of hypothesis number two.

Hypothesis number two is reiterated as follows:

Learners' biographical factors such as gender, age as well as grade have no influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

The chi-square test for *k* independent samples is chosen as an appropriate statistical test for testing this hypothesis. The chi-square test for *k* independent samples is appropriate because the respondents in the sample are categorised in terms of their personal particulars and their responses are considered independently.

TABLE 4.4 **Gender and learners' active role**

Gender	LAR (22-44)	MAR (45-66)	HAR (67-88)
Male	8	176	30
Female	4	107	39

A chi-square value of 4.997 at df = 2 was obtained for table 4.4. It is not significant at our chosen level of significance, which is 0.05. Since $p>0.05$, the decision is to uphold the null hypothesis and conclude that

gender has no influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

TABLE 4.5 **Age and learners' active role**

Age	LAR (22-44)	MAR (45-66)	HAR (67-88)
12 and below	0	19	2
13 – 14	6	120	26
15-16	6	106	21
17+	0	38	10

A chi-square value of 4.509 at df = 6 was obtained for table 4.5. It is not significant at our chosen level of significance, which is 0.05. Since $p>0.05$, the decision is not to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that age has no influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

TABLE 4.6 **Grade and learners' active role**

Grade	LAR (22-44)	MAR (45-66)	HAR (67-88)
7	2	96	28
8	5	107	12
9	5	82	19

A chi-square value of 8.671 at df = 4 was obtained for table 4.6. It is not significant at our chosen level of significance, which is 0.05. Since $p>0.05$, the decision is to uphold the null hypothesis and conclude that grades has no influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The findings reveal that learners differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment. A very high percentage (79.9%) of learners report an average level of active role compared to those who reported a low level (3.4%) and those who reported a high level (16.7%). The implication for this high percentage of learners reporting moderate active role level is that most educators are not adequately using participative methods of teaching and learning as well as assessment strategies as required by the Outcomes-Based Education approach. The reason for their shortcoming may be that they are not well prepared to teach and assess using Outcomes-Based Education approach.

The findings also show that learners' personal variables such as gender, age as well as grade have no influence on learners' active role which they play in learning and continuous assessment. This is an indication that learners, irrespective of their personal characteristics display the same active role.

With regard to learners' responses to each item, the graphic presentation reveals that on average, learners strongly disagree that they conduct some experiments. The reasons may be that the majority of schools included in the sample are from rural areas, hence do not have resources such as laboratories and equipment for conducting experiments.

The results further reveal that on average, learners disagree that : they work in pairs; debate some issues in the classroom; discuss topics in panel form; dramatize and role-play some lessons; do some practical demonstrations; write some essays; assess their peers; keep their journals. This indicates that educators are not giving learners opportunity to use these learning methods and assessment strategies.

The findings further show that on average, learners strongly agree that: they work as groups; conduct some projects; do some assignments; write tests; make some drawings. They also agree that: they discuss issues in the classroom; give their ideas in a brainstorming manner; make some oral presentations; design things; assess other groups; do self-assessment; have portfolios. This shows

that educators provide learners opportunity to use these learning methods and assessment strategies.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse learners' responses to each statement without testing the hypotheses. This was done with the purposes of identifying learning methods and assessment strategies used by learners in learning and continuous assessment. Inferential statistics was used for testing hypotheses of the study. The latter was done for the purpose of making inferences from the findings of the study. The data was presented, analysed and interpreted. The findings were also discussed.

The next chapter (chapter 5) is dedicated to the summary of the whole study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

5.1.1 THE PROBLEM

The study was designed to investigate learners' role in learning and continuous assessment. To this end, the problem was stated in the form of the following questions:

(i) To what extent do learners play an active role in learning and continuous assessment?

(ii) Do learners biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have any influence on their role which they play in learning and continuous assessment?

5.1.2 The aims of the study

(i) To ascertain the extent to which learners play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

(ii) To determine whether learners' biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have any influence on their role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

5.1.3 Hypotheses postulated

The following hypotheses were postulated:

(i) Learners do not differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

(ii) Learners' biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have no influence on their role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

5.1.4 Methodology

A questionnaire was used as a research instrument. The instrument was administered to a randomly selected sample of 354 learners. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysing data. Respondent counting, percentages as well as means (averages) were used for descriptive analysis in the item by item analysis. The chi-square one sample test and the chi-square test for k independent samples are the appropriate statistical tests which were used for testing hypotheses of the study.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study led to the following conclusions:

(i) Learners differ in the extent to which they play an active role in learning and continuous assessment.

(ii) Learners' biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have no influence on their role which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to the Department of Education.

(i) Learners should be encouraged by educators to be active in learning and continuous assessment.

(ii) Educators should be assisted to learn to use participative methods of teaching and learning as well as a variety of assessment strategies.

The following limitations of the study are highlighted and recommendations for directing future research are made:

(i) The sample of this study was drawn from learners of Lower Tugela Circuit only, therefore, it is not representative of the entire population

of learners in other circuits, districts and regions. Further studies need to be conducted in other circuits, districts and regions.

(ii) Only public schools were target population in this study. Further research focusing on private schools is needed.

(iii) The sample of this study consisted of only 354 learners. More research, with a bigger sample, preferably a provincial or national study is essential.

(iv) The sample of this study was drawn from learners of grades 7, 8 and 9 (senior phase) only. There is a need for a study at other grades or phases in which Outcomes-Based Education has been introduced.

(v) Only the questionnaire was used as a research instrument in this study. Further research, using a combination of questionnaires and interviews is needed.

(vi) The sample of this study focused on learners. Further research focusing on educators, to find out whether they use appropriate teaching methods and assessment strategies is needed.

In spite of the limitations mentioned above, this study has achieved its objectives of understanding learners' active role in learning and continuous assessment. It has also provided recommendations for the Department of Education as well as for researchers who are interested in the same field of study.

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ANNEXURE A

QUESTIONNAIRE TO LEARNERS

QUESTIONNAIRE

You are kindly requested to complete this questionnaire as accurately as possible. The information you provided will be used to establish the role of the learner as the active participant in the continuous assessment. Do not write your name or any form of identity on this questionnaire. There is no right or wrong answer. Honesty in your responses will serve the purpose of this study. Please be ensured that all information will be dealt with strictest confidence.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

SEN MKHIZE
KWAMANQONDO CP SCHOOL
P/BAG 246
KRANSKOP
3268

SECTION A

Biographical information

Please complete by making an "X" in the appropriate block.

1. Gender

Male	Female

2. Age

12 and below	
13 – 14	
15-16	
17 and above	

3. Grade

7	8	9

SECTION B

Below are statements concerning your active role in learning and continuous assessment. Please make a cross (X) through letter that best describe your position. The meaning of the letters are as follows:

A = Strongly Agree A = Agree

SD = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree

1	We work as groups	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
2	We discuss issues in the classroom	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
3	We work as pairs	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
4	We debate some issues in the classroom	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
5	We conduct some experiments	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
6	We investigate and discover new things	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
7	We conduct some projects	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
8	We do some assignments	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
9	We write tests	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
10	We discuss topics in panel form	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
11	We give our ideas in a brainstorming manner	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
12	We dramatize and role-play some lessons	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
13	We do some practical demonstrations	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
14	We make some oral presentations	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
15	We design things	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
16	We make some drawings	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
17	We write some essays	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
18	We assess other groups	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
19	We assess our peers	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
20	We do self-assessment	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4
21	We keep our journals	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
22	We have portfolios	SA 1	A 2	D 3	SD 4

ANNEXURE B

A LETTER OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

KwaMaqondo CP School
Private Bag 246
KRANSKOP
3268

23 July 2003

The Chief Director
Department of Education
Ethekwini Region
Private Bag X1577
DURBAN
4000

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUESTING FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am registered for M.Ed degree in the Faculty of Education (Curriculum and Instructional Studies) at the University of Zululand. I am conducting an investigation entitled : ***"Learner as active participant in the continuous assessment"***. I am writing this letter to request for permission to conduct a research with learners randomly selected from schools under Gingindlovu Ward that fall under Lower Tugela Circuit. The proposed research is intended to be a contribution to an understanding of the role played by the learners to learning the continuous assessment. The aims of the study are as follow:

1. To ascertain the extent to which learners play an captive role in learning and continuous assessment.

2. To determine whether biographical factors such as gender, age and grade have any influence on their active role, which they play in learning and continuous assessment.

A copy of a questionnaire is attached. I hope it meets your approval. The names of schools and learners will be treated as confidential, but the findings of the research can be forwarded to your office if you wish so.

Your permission to conduct research in this ward will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

SAMKELISO EMMANUEL NKWAYI MKHIZE