

OBE INFO

FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM SERVICES OCTOBER 2003

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE - FROM 2006

FEATURES OF NEW FET CURRICULUM

The new curriculum aims for the following:

- A Learner who is a lifelong learner, a logical, analytical, holistic and lateral thinker who can transfer skills from the familiar to the unfamiliar.
- Teachers who will fulfil the roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators – designers of programmes, assessors, subject specialists etc.

DESIGN FEATURES

- ◆ Learning Fields:
 - ✓ Languages (Fundamentals)
 - ✓ Arts and Culture
 - ✓ Business, Commerce, Management and Service Studies
 - ✓ Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology
 - ✓ Human and Social Sciences and Languages
 - ✓ Physical, Mathematical, Computer, Life and Agricultural Sciences
- ◆ Subjects – in OBE defined by the learning outcomes – knowledge integrates theory, skills and values – dynamic in nature.
- ◆ Learning Outcomes – intended result of learning and teaching.
- ◆ Assessment standards – criteria providing evidence of what a learner should know and demonstrate – development of Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes and Values (SKAV) which delineate conceptual progression.

The following will assist teachers in the classroom:

- ✓ Learning programme guidelines to assist teachers in daily practice;
- ✓ Competence Descriptions which specify level of performance in every Learning Outcome.

THREE LEARNING PATHWAYS IN FET

- General pathway: Senior Secondary Schools – this provides articulation with other pathways.
- General Vocational pathway: FET Colleges and specialised technical senior secondary schools – broad based orientation to employment skills – also preparation for Higher Education.
- Trade, Occupational and Professional pathway (TOP) – based at workplace learning site or accredited college workshop – practise skills and attain determined competency standards recognised by relevant professional bodies.

CONCERNS, CHALLENGES AND QUESTIONS

- Why should we have a new certificate?
- How is this certificate different from the Senior Certificate?
- Will it provide entry to formal Higher Education?
- Will it have the same status and credibility as the Senior Certificate?
- Will its implementation not disadvantage learners?

WHY A NEW CERTIFICATE?

Criticisms of the Senior Certificate:

- Is not relevant for the demands of the 21st century.
- Subject choices and combinations do not lead to focus and specialisation.
- Too much regurgitation of facts rather than constructive learning – general separation of theory and practice.
- HG, SG and LG differentiation cumbersome and unreliable.
- Conversion from one grade to another very complex.
- Does not articulate with other FET qualifications.
- Complicated by complex HE entrance requirements.
- Bewildering array of subjects.

THE FET CERTIFICATE

The new certificate addresses these concerns and criticisms as follows:

- In terms of SAQA regulations, the FETC is pegged at NQF Level 4 and designed on the basis of the NQF Level 4 outcomes and assessment standards. As such it will provide entry into Higher Education with admission to special programmes and faculties determined by learner performance and subject choices and combinations.

DETAILED COMPOSITION OF THE CERTIFICATE

- A whole qualification that requires a minimum of 130 credits at NQF level 4 (grade 12).
- Minimum of 80 credits at 'Adequate Achievement' (40 – 49%) or above and a maximum of 50 credits at 'Partial Achievement' (30 – 39%).
- Learners exiting prior to Grade 12 will receive report cards or transcripts from the school indicating LOs achieved at the appropriate level or grade.
- All candidates must complete the school based assessment to be awarded an FETC.
- SAQA will ensure that the FET when registered as a qualification on the NQF will be internationally comparable – constant benchmarking against international norms.
- The task is to develop well-educated, autonomous citizens with ample opportunities for continuing learning. The FETC has thus been developed to:
 - ✓ Equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values that will enable meaningful participation in society;
 - ✓ Provide a credible basis for selection and entry into Higher Education;
 - ✓ Provide employers with a realistic profile of a learner's knowledge and competences;
- The FETC is based on the three NQF required learning components – the Fundamental, Core and Electives;
- ✓ Fundamentals cover essential literacies and values and are part of all qualifications at this level;
- ✓ The Core defines a purposeful qualification and leads to specialisation and focus;
- ✓ The Elective allows a wide range of choices – to strengthen or enrich.

RULES OF COMBINATION

- Fundamentals – 40+20+10 credits
2 languages (2 x 20 credits)
Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics (20 credits)
Life Orientation – 10 credits
- Core – 2 x 20 credits (2 subjects from same field)
- Elective – one further subject (free choice) – 20 credits

SUBJECT CHOICES – NEW FET

1. FUNDAMENTALS: (all four of the following are compulsory)

Languages (40 credits.)
2 from 11 official languages 1 at Home language level LoLT must be offered
Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics (20 credits)
Life Orientation (10 credits)

2. CORE: (2 to be chosen from one field) – 2x20 credits

Arts and Culture	Business, Commerce, Management Studies and Services	Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology	Human and Social Sciences and Languages	Physical, Mathematical, Computer, Life and Agricultural Sciences
Dance studies Design Dramatic Arts Music Visual Arts	Accounting Business Studies Consumer Studies Economics Hospitality Studies Tourism	Electrical Technology Engineering Graphics and Design Mechanical Technology (Civil Engineering in the process of being developed)	Geography History Languages (selected foreign languages including German and French OR a third official language from the full list – only 3 languages permitted)	Agricultural Sciences Computer Applications Technology Information Technology Life Sciences Physical Sciences

MYTHS ABOUT OBE

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1999) defines a myth as "a thing or person that is imaginary or not true". The purpose of this article is to dispel some of the myths about Outcomes-Based Education. The following represent some of the common myths:

OBE IS 'PASS ONE PASS ALL'

This myth probably emanates from a misunderstanding of one of the principles of Outcomes-Based Education which says that all learners can succeed. It is important to note that the principle does not say that all learners **will** succeed. It is simply an acknowledgement of the fact that all learners have the potential to succeed in spite of their background, experiences and present emotional or physical conditions. In this way, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders in education to create a teaching and learning environment which acknowledges the diversity of learners' cognitive, affective and physical abilities thus creating conditions conducive to success.

The creation of a suitable teaching and learning environment entails, inter alia, the use of adaptive learning and teaching methods in response to the needs of slow learners. The underlying point is that the educator must expand the learners' opportunities to succeed (another OBE principle). However, the learner must also take responsibility for his/her success and parents should give support. It is clear that if the learner does not cooperate with the educator, then the learner will not succeed.

OBE IS GROUP WORK

Outcomes-Based Education must not be equated with a teaching method. OBE is an approach to teaching and learning (or an instruction model) which recognizes participatory learning as a vital component of the learning process. Group work on the other hand, is a teaching and learning method that can be used to engage learners in meaningful and interactive learning.

Thus there is more to OBE than interactive teaching and learning methods. For example, OBE includes a focus on Outcomes and Assessment.

It is also worth noting that non-participatory methods can also be employed provided they are used judiciously and appropriately. For example, the narrative method can be used to introduce new knowledge.

THERE IS NO CONTENT IN OBE

Curriculum 2005 takes the place of the old content-based curriculum i.e. NATED 550. The old curriculum was centred on the knowledge component to the detriment of skills, values and attitudes. Curriculum 2005 puts equal emphasis on skills, knowledge, attitudes and values (SKAV). This means that OBE does cater for the knowledge component but it is not the only focal area.

It should also be acknowledged that the first version of C2005 was perceived not to be explicit enough in the area of content. However, the Revised National Curriculum Statement does address this problem in the form of Assessment Standards which give guidelines on the core knowledge that needs to be taught per grade. Even so, content is still not always prescribed. Thus schools have the freedom to adapt and contextualize content as they deem fit. What is important in this case is that content may be used in any way to demonstrate mastery of the outcomes.

THERE ARE NO EXAMINATIONS IN OBE

Examinations can still form part of the learner's Summative Assessment. However, examinations may not be used as the sole determinant of the learners' progression to the next grade. Furthermore, summative assessment can take different forms, for example, projects can be used to administer summative assessment. The results of summative assessment should always be seen within the context of the formative process of learning. The learner's performance during the course of the year is more important than a two-hour examination session. Examinations should also not be used to catch learners out but as a way of reflecting on the work done. Thus the results of examinations can always be used to inform future teaching and learning strategies.

TEXTBOOKS ARE OBSOLETE

In the old dispensation prescribed textbooks were used to teach prescribed syllabi. This led to total reliance on textbooks as teaching and learning support material. In OBE the use of various LTSM is encouraged. This can only be to the advantage of learners who will be exposed to different perspectives on the same topic. The use of a variety of resources is also an acknowledgement of learners' different styles of learning. For example, some learners understand concepts better when they see a pictorial representation. Learning and Teaching resources vary from audio-visual material to written texts. The key thing is to diversify LTSM for the good of the learners.

THE LEARNER DOES ALL THE WORK

There is no doubt that the inception of OBE has resulted in the discredit of the omniscient educator. The notion of the educator as an all-knowing sage on the stage is a thing of the past. OBE is predicated on social constructivist learning theories which put the learner at the centre of the learning process. This means that learners enter the classroom with pre-existing knowledge which can be harnessed to make meaning of new knowledge. Thus learners are not empty vessels which need to be filled up. Interactive methods of teaching and learning require of the educator to intermittently play the role of a facilitator in the classroom. However, this does not necessarily diminish the educator's role as an instructor and a vital carrier of SKAV in the classroom. The educator still plays a leading and essential role in classroom activities. The educator must be able to balance the role that he/she can play and the role that learners can play.

OBE IS AN EXPERIMENT

According to this myth, OBE is seen as an experiment which is bound to fail. The fact of the matter is that OBE is in line with the global movement towards learner-centred tuition. It is therefore unlikely to disappear any time soon. The hope that the 'failure' of OBE will result in the DoE's return to the old system is a complete fallacy. As a matter of departmental principle the effectiveness of our curriculum will often be tested against global standards and tendencies and this will inevitably necessitate adaptations to our current practices. This is an unavoidable reality of our constantly changing world.

OBE DOES NOT TEACH READING AND WRITING

Reading and Writing are important forms of literacy in Curriculum 2005. Their importance is made even more explicit in the Revised National Curriculum Statement. The Languages Learning Area Statement Outcomes encompass listening, speaking, reading, writing etc. The main thing is to make activities meaningful (i.e. Outcomes-Based) so that fundamental forms of literacy such as reading and writing are given the attention they deserve. In this way, OBE is not only about fun and games but it is about meaningful learning.

OBE IS A METHOD OF TEACHING

OBE is in fact an instruction model or approach which encourages cooperative methods of teaching and learning. In this sense, OBE is not a teaching method per se. Group work, peer work and individual work can be used en route to the achievement of critical and learning area outcomes. What is important, however, is to determine the appropriateness of each method according to the needs of learners and suitability of the method within the learning area. For example, it is a good thing for learners to conduct research before debating a topic.

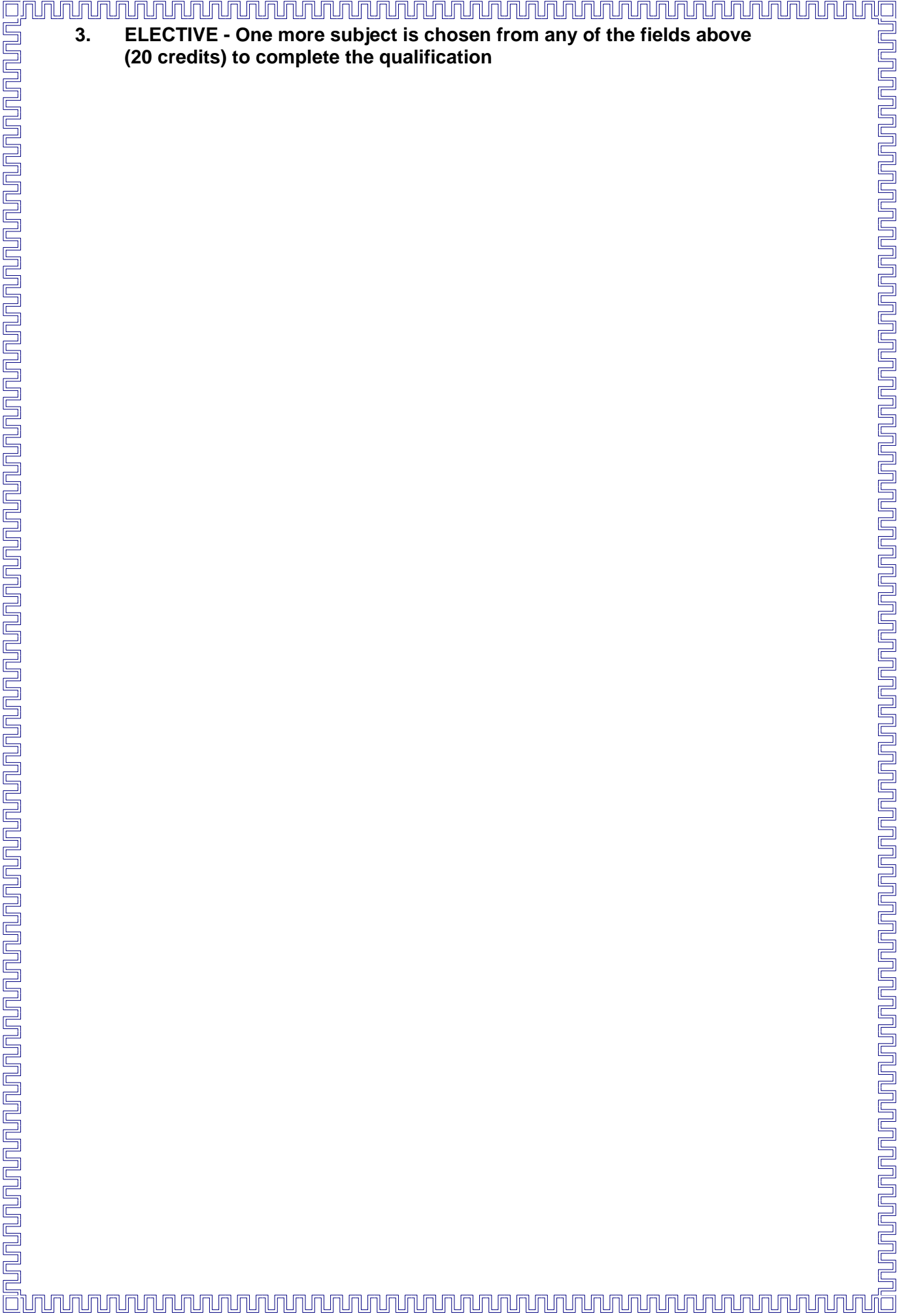
THE EDUCATOR ONLY FACILITATES

On the one hand, the educator is still the authority (not in the authoritarian sense) in the classroom, in the sense that he/she is a learning area expert. This means that the educator can still use narrative methods to explain new concepts and to elucidate conceptually difficult aspects of content. On the other hand, interactive methods require of the educator to play a facilitative role from time to time. As a facilitator, the educator starts by guiding the process and the moment learners understand what they are expected to do the educator fades into the background. However, the educator is always there to give support and guidance. In a nutshell, the facilitative role is essential but it is not the only role that the educator plays in the classroom.

"WE'VE BEEN DOING OBE ALL ALONG"

The notion that some schools were practising OBE before 1997 is unfortunately not true. However, it is true to say that some schools did infuse their classroom practices with interactive and learner-centred methods (read the paragraph on the myth: '**OBE is a teaching method**'). Even so, instruction was still to a large extent content-based and characterised by norm-based assessment. Furthermore, OBE does not only focus on knowledge, but skills, values and attitudes are also taken into consideration. Critical and developmental outcomes represent long-term aspirations which give direction to a **unitary** education system. Thus national outcomes drive learning and teaching throughout the system and this was not the case prior to 1997. Let it suffice to say that OBE is a fairly new approach for all educational practitioners in South Africa.

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT 0832981119 OR 051-4055077 FOR ANY OBE OR CURRICULUM QUERIES YOU MAY HAVE

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- 3. ELECTIVE - One more subject is chosen from any of the fields above (20 credits) to complete the qualification**

