**27 February 2017**

**Analysis of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) CAPS Implementation Report**

1. **Introduction**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is a modification of what to teach (curriculum) and not how to teach (teaching methods) in South African schools. In July 2009, the Minister of Basic Education appointed a panel of experts (Independently Constituted Quality Assurance Body) to investigate the nature of the challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS).[[1]](#footnote-1)

During 2011, the NCS was reviewed extensively and amendments were made to the NCS, which is now referred to as the NCS (CAPS).[[2]](#footnote-2)

The DBE developed a CAPS implementation plan which then became as follows:[[3]](#footnote-3)

* 2011 - Ensuring that the System is ready for the implementation of CAPS;
* 2012 - CAPS implementation in the Foundation Phase (Grade R – 3) and Grade 10;
* 2013 - CAPS implementation in the Intermediate Phase (Grade 4 – 6) and Grade 11; and
* 2014 – CAPS implementation in the Senior Phase (Grade 7 – 9) and Grade 12.

Implementation of CAPS included amongst others, ensuring that:[[4]](#footnote-4)

* There is one *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)* for every subject from Grade R to 12;
* There is sequencing, pacing, content and assessment per subject;
* Subject specific training of teachers is offered to support curriculum implementation (40 hours per year of implementation);
* Assessment requirements are simplified and streamlined;
* Quality and status of assessment is improved by making the GET and FET phases consistent;
* A CAPS aligned LTSM National Catalogue is developed and approved per subject per grade (Grade R – 12);
* Exemplar question papers are developed and distributed to support the implementation; and that
* Progression is regulated in grades 10 – 12.

The brief seeks to analyse the DBE report so as to establish areas of CAPS that need strengthening and review.

1. **Analysis of the CAPS Report**

The report stated that progress has been made in the following areas:[[5]](#footnote-5)

* Teacher Development on new challenging content leading to upgrade of School Based Assessment;
* LTSM catalogue available nationally to guide LTSM requisitions – leveraging on the economies of scale;
* English First Additional Language was introduced in Grade 1;
* Workbooks are distributed annually in order to strengthen Mathematics and Languages;
* The establishment of the Maths Science and Technology (MST) Grant was done;
* Item bank used to support Teachers in developing assessment tasks;
* Promoting Access and Inclusivity by:[[6]](#footnote-6)
	+ Introduction of Screening Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS) Policy;
	+ Implementation of Sign Language;
	+ Inclusion of Technical Vocational Curriculum;
	+ Inclusion of Technical Occupational Curriculum;
	+ Ensuring a curriculum for the Intensely Intellectually Disabled;
	+ Ensuring the availability of State Owned Textbooks in Grade 10 and Grade 11 Mathematics and Physical Science;

The successes as reported are confirmed by a sudden improvement in performance in the SAQMEC, TIMMS and NSC Exam Results.

1. **Challenges Reported**

**The report indicated the following set of challenges still prevalent despite efforts made:**[[7]](#footnote-7)

* Schools experiencing content overload and failing to reach expected curriculum coverage;
* Poor quality of formal assessment tasks;
* Lack of understanding on the use of cognitive levels by Teachers;
* forms of assessment;
* weighting of assessment with regards to time and marks;
* Accommodation and concessions as a principle in the CAPS;
* Teaching for assessment not mastery;
* Reading levels of learners; and
* Development of 21st century skills.

**The Department of Basic Education has already planned against each of the challenges as reported on.**

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| **Matters for consideration*** To a great extent, the report clarified that CAPS guides what must be planned and taught against what must be assessed. It is well structured; it covers study areas, topics and sub-topics, examples, plans, annual teaching plans, assessment activities and resources to guide teachers.

This means that teachers are able to plan effectively using these guidelines. Teachers are guided to use appropriate forms of assessment. * Time tabling provides clear guidelines on the number of periods to be allocated for each subject.

However, Creative Teachers might find CAPS a bit restricting, especially in more forward-thinking schools.* Teachers have little say in what they teach and when. Moreover, implementation and provision of textbooks remain a challenge.

**The following are suggested questions:*** + Has CAPS addressed the negative aspects of the NCS? Which are those negative aspects of the NSC? And how were they addressed?
	+ Are Teachers already provided with lessons plans? In which subjects/Grade are they provided?
	+ Are there clear guidelines provided on the pacing, sequencing of curriculum coverage?
	+ How did CAPS amend the NCS by avoiding the repetition of content in different grades and the over-emphasis of content in a grade?
	+ How is the risk of work overload addressed especially in the foundation phase?
	+ How are slow learners accommodated by CAPS?
	+ Why is it that the basic requirements for resources are not always given or listed in all subjects?
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1. **Reference**

**Department of Basic Education, (2017). *CAPS Implementation Report.* Pretoria.**

**Du Plessis, (2015).** *Reflections on the NCS to NCS (CAPS): Foundation Phase teachers’ experiences.* UNISA. Pretoria.

1. Du Plessis (2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Ibid* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. DBE (2017) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Ibid* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. DBE (2017) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Ibid* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Ibid* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)