

# RECONTEXTUALISATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE IN THE INTERMEDIATE LIFE SKILLS

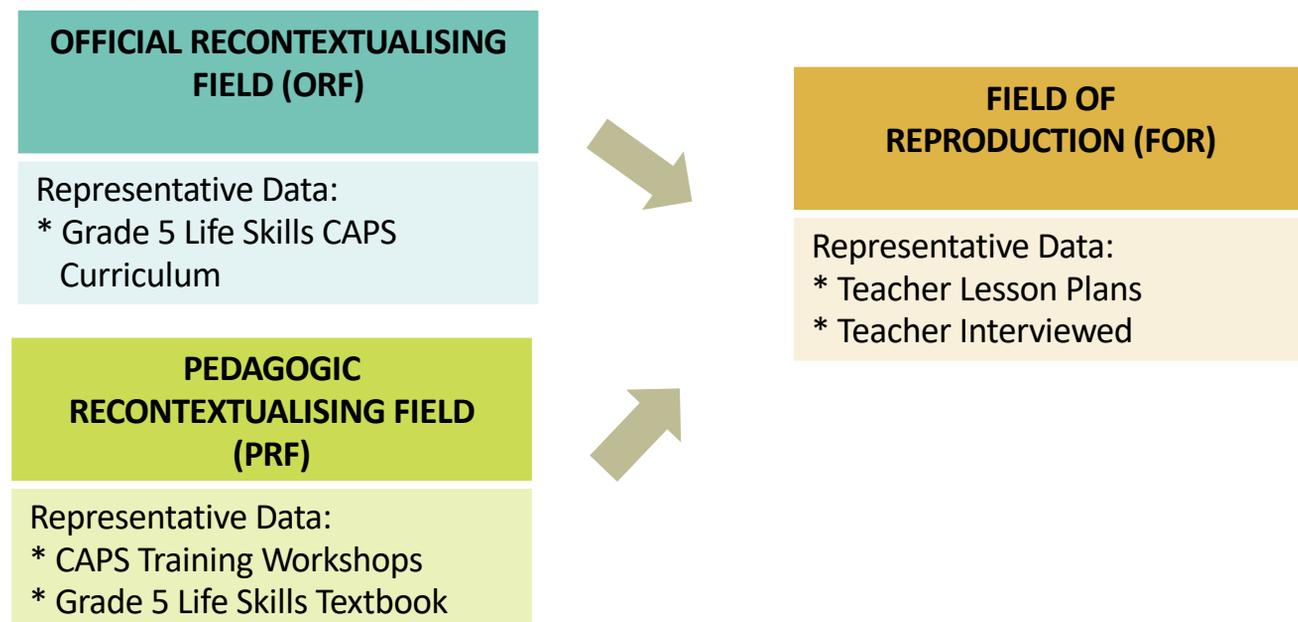
Sindiswa Yoyo's Master's research was influenced by her experiences during monitoring and support of curriculum implementation in schools, as this is one of her key responsibilities. She noted that teachers experienced challenges with implementation of the curriculum: content knowledge, teaching and learning practices and assessment.

The study was undertaken when the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in the Intermediate Phase was first implemented. A key data generation technique was observation of CAPS orientation training for teachers. The aim was to explore how facilitators and teachers engaged with environmental content knowledge (ECK) so as to strengthen curriculum implementation. The study also included analysis of the following documents; CAPS Life Skills Intermediate Phase, Facilitators' and Participants' manuals, A draft Oxford Textbook for grade 5 and lesson plans developed by teachers during the training. A final data source was focus group interviews with teachers.

Data were analysed using Bernstein's Pedagogic Device with a focus on recontextualisation. Bernstein defines the pedagogic device as a relay system as it involves the formation and delivery of educational knowledge (Bernstein, 1996). The analysis focused on the relay:

- from CAPS Life Skills Intermediate Phase policy (representing the Official Recontextualising Field - ORF)
- and CAPS training and a Grade 5 Life Skills textbook (representing the Pedagogic Recontextualising Field - PRF)
- to classroom implementation (FOR). In this case the FOR was represented by lesson plans developed by teachers during the training as well as focus group interviews with teachers.

The figure below explains the relay of knowledge from ORF to PRF, how knowledge has been de-located from ORF and re- located in the FOR. During this process knowledge can be selectively appropriated (where some knowledge can be left out) or ideologically transformed (where underlying values may be changed).



Findings from the document analysis indicate that ECK is made explicit in the Life Skills CAPS document under the topic: Health and environmental responsibility. The facilitators and participants' manuals and the Oxford textbook had the same ECK specified in the curriculum document. At this level there was a seamless inclusion of ECK from CAPS into the textbook and training manuals, meaning there were no gaps or omissions found during the de- and re location of environmental content knowledge.

Findings from the teacher training (PRF) were that the facilitators read directly from the facilitators' manual without providing additional input. Facilitators also did not give feedback to participants when group work activities were presented during training.

Lesson plans developed in one site showed that the environmental content knowledge topic from CAPS was included but the subtopics contained in the Annual Teaching Plan were excluded. This omission meant the ECK knowledge in the lesson plans was not elaborated. Thus creating a knowledge gap in the de – and relocation process from the ORF to the FOR. Participants were not given feedback on this activity so they could improve their lesson planning. There was lack of active interaction between facilitators and teachers when teachers presented activities completed during the training.

Although content knowledge was accurately de-located from the ORF and re-located in the materials in the PRF, there were omissions when the environment content knowledge was re-located in the FOR as demonstrated in the lesson plans. This has implications for what teachers would do in in their classroom practice.

It emerged during focus group interviews that teachers had different understandings of ECK although they had worked with this content during the training and had included it on their lesson plans.

Recommendations are that during teacher training facilitators need to make explicit the ECK if they want to strengthen its teaching and learning in the classroom. Facilitators need to engage actively with participants and give feedback after activities to consolidate what was covered during the training. Teachers need to be supported with lesson planning as a lesson plan is what guides what teachers do in the classroom.

## REFERENCES

Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique*. London: Taylor & Francis.