EXPLORING EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
STANDARD-BASED GRADING IN BOTSWANA JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS (JSS):
A CASE OF MOETI JSS IN MAUN

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER IN EDUCATION

In the subject

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

At the

UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA
SUPERVISOR: DR L.M.MPHALE
November 2015

APPROVAL PAGE

This research project has been examined and approved as meeting the required standard of scholarship for partial fulfilment of the award for the degree of Masters of Education (Educational Management).

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The work in this research essay was completed by the researcher at the University of Botswana. It is my original 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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   Researcher's signature   Date

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Supervisor's signature   Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

Dedication- To my late mother Ms Oakantse Maupo.

I would like to dedicate this piece of work to;

My wonderful late mother Ms Oakantse Maupo who passed on while I was about to complete my Masters Degree. I will not forget her unconditional love. May her soul rest in peace!

My husband Mr Kebadire Mmopi,my daughter Tshepiso Mmopi and my sons Tiiso and Motheo Mmopi; thank you so much for lighting the days of my life.

It gives me a great pleasure to say how grateful I am to appreciate Moeti support staff that gave me a warmth welcome and inspired me to apply extra effort in my project.
Moeti Junior Secondary School management and the Chief Education Officer in the North West region for granting me a permission to do research in Moeti JSS.

Thank you again Moeti JSS community, God Bless!

KEY TERMS

Experience

Implementation

 Grading

Standards

Standard-Based Grading

Standard-Based Assessment

Standard-Based Reporting

Standard-Based report cards

Curriculum 2010

Cascade Model

Criterion-Referenced Testing

Norm-Referenced Testing

Formative Assessment

Summative Assessment

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

SBG - Standard-Based Grading

SBC - Standard-Based Curriculum

SBA- Standard-Based Assessment

OBE- Outcome-Based Education

OBR- Outcome-Based Reporting

NCLB- No Child Left Behind

NCE-National Commission on Education (NCE)

ESEA-Elementary & Secondary Education Act

BEC- Botswana Examination Council

MoESD- Ministry of Education and Skills Development

RNPE- Revised National Policy on Education

JCE- Junior Certificate Examination

JSS- Junior Secondary School

CRT- Criterion-Referenced Testing

NRT- Norm-Referenced Testing

NCEA- National Certificate of Educational Achievement

TQP- Teacher Questionnaire Participant

MQP- Management Questionnaire Participant

SFG- Students Focus Group

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ABSTRACT

A survey of literature, both in Botswana and internationally showed that implementation of standard-based grading (SBG) is a common problem in schools. The national educational goal is to raise educational standards at all levels, therefore quality assessment tools such as SBG were adopted to help in achieving this goal. Hence the purpose of this study was to explore the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG in Moeti Junior Secondary School. Further, the study investigated the aims that necessitated the introduction of SBG. Teachers' current grading practices and teachers' use of standards in classroom instruction were also explored. The research also sought teachers' perception on the benefit of SBG on students' performance. The study was structured according to the descriptive case study design. One school was selected purposefully for this study in North West region. Twenty teachers' participants were purposefully sampled for this study while two did not take part. Forty students were randomly sampled for focus group interviews but only thirty turned up for the interviews and one student left before the interview started. The study was guided by four research questions. The data from this qualitative case study was collected through open-ended questionnaires for teachers and standardized open-ended questions for focus group interviews for students. The findings indicated that teachers vary in their implementation of SBG as proved by the way they treated the components necessary for implementation of SBG. Further the study revealed that all teachers had limited knowledge on the SBG phenomenon. This was reflected by their level of understanding on the philosophy of this concept. This was reflected by teachers' failure to link their planning and lesson implementation to the identified standards. From the study, it was clear that participants believed that SBG as it involved change of curriculum from the traditional curriculum to standard-based has contributed to the school's academic performance which was declining in consecutive years since the introduction of SBG. The study established the causes for poor implementation of SBG as being; lack of teacher professional development, lack of resources and lack of stakeholder involvement. The study also developed recommendations to help improve the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG as being; presentations from experienced teachers or experts, and the study has revealed that for effective implementation of SBG all stakeholders must be taken aboard. Amongst some of the recommendations made by the study is that Botswana Examination Council with the input of the Ministry of Education and skills Development should establish a policy document for SBG. Empowerment for school management on SBG is recommended in order for them to be conversant with the changed curriculum and components necessary for implementation. The study further recommended that there is need for needs assessment in order to determine how well the standard-based grading meets the needs of the learners, teachers and society.

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Raising the standard of education is one of Botswana's national goals since she gained independence in 1966 (Republic of Botswana, 1994, as cited in Mphale, 2014). Many innovations such as discovery learning, team teaching, mixed ability and student centred learning were introduced and implemented to raise the quality of education which has not been accomplished (Mokgosi, 2013 in Mokgosi &Jotia, 2013). The latest innovation in education was the introduction of standard-based curriculum and grading in Botswana schools both primary and secondary. Standard-based grading (SBG) was introduced in some countries across the globe in order to improve student achievement by focusing on instruction and the alignment of curriculum with the content standards (Perlstein, 2003; Manzo, 2001). Poor policy implementation and how this problem is addressed is an issue of concern in most countries of the world including Botswana. This challenge has triggered the researcher to explore the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG in Botswana junior secondary schools.

This chapter discusses the background information of the study and also presents the statement of the problem and purpose of the study. The chapter highlights the significance of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, the terms used, as well as the research delimitations. Lastly the chapter presents the summary and it ends with an organization of the research study.

1.1 Background

There are various education challenges faced by countries in the globe and amongst them is poor implementation of education policies. In order for a country to compete globally in the provision of quality education, schools should be equipped with necessary resources for the achievement of education policies. The provision of necessary resources such as well trained teachers, who can implement education policies, is linked with quality classroom instruction. Urich (2012) contends that the teaching experience has been driven more by teachers' grading practices than students' achievement of learning targets. Urich further attests that, in this era of accountability for academic results where schools are held responsible for all students learning, schools now

increasingly need data-driven practices that provide the opportunity to improved performance and achievement for each student. Countries moved from the norm-referenced assessment which ought to compare students against each other and teachers ranked students on some measure of their achievement performance (Guskey, 2001). Many countries have adopted SBG which centres on students' performance by measuring what each student does by comparing them against clearly stated performance descriptions regardless of how well or poorly their classmates perform (Guskey & Bailey, 2010). In SBG system, grading and reporting must be criterion-based. Teachers must identify what they want students to learn and be able to do and how their achievement will be judged.

SBG reform can be traced back to the educational philosophies of Bloom's (1956) work "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives". In Bloom's work he discusses the significance of requiring students to develop "higher-order thinking skills" which is far divorced from memorized learning. Bloom's philosophies were the driving force in the first uprising of standard-based reporting which was then called outcome-based reform. Critics of outcome-based reform were dismayed by the word "outcome" and finally became standard-based grading which is used synonymously with; standard-based assessment, standard-based reporting and outcome-based reporting (www2.ed.gov/pubs/CPRE/rb/ostan.htm|). In order to understand the context in which SBG is developed it is helpful to examine the development of the standards movement.

The modern standards movement in the United States of America (U.S.A.) can be traced to the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983.The Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) declared the United States of America to be a nation at risk, and subsequently published A Nation at Risk Report. Its publication was often endorsed as the initiating event of the modern standards movement (Buttram & Waters, 1997). The Report warned that the skills and knowledge of the U.S.A. workforce must improve dramatically for the country to remain internationally competitive (Paeplow, 2011).

In the context of the United States of America, Guskey (2003) posits that students are being taught concepts and skills believed important and necessary according to states' standards. The standards require student learning to be measured against an established standard by assessing

their understanding of the concepts and skills through high stake testing. Further students are not compared against their counterparts. Guskey (2003) further attests that, concerning instructional delivery, teachers are not only required to cover the material but to ensure that students learn what they are supposed to learn, that is published standards. In particular, because learning is a process that takes place over time, each assessment will provide feedback for the student about what to focus on next and the students are allowed to re-take assessments (Guskey, 2003). Guskey further asserts that, learners are given the opportunities to work at their own pace and in different ways as according to their individual abilities. Non-academic factors like behaviour, attitude and attendance are not included in this grade and are reported in a different manner (Guskey, 2003).

In Germany the assessment procedures used are largely the responsibility of teachers even for certification and selection purposes with least external intervention which is different from the U.S. A.(Bonnet, 2004 as cited in Masole, 2009). Bonnet further posits that assessment is based on both cognitive and attitudes, behaviours and manipulative skills. Even though there are some instances where these countries differ but there is where they corroborate. In Germany and the U.S.A., students have an opportunity of being re-assessed when they have not achieved the learning goal, but re-assessment is conducted by a different teacher. During this process, parents are closely involved. In Germany teachers are deemed as professional assessors and mark their own students work and then assessed by a second assessor. Some scripts are sampled for external scoring to check verification (Bonnet, 2004 as cited in Masole, 2009).

In South Africa the standard-based grading is synonymous to outcome-based reporting (OBR). OBR is the assessment for outcome-based education (OBE). OBE is about preparing students for life, not simply preparing them for tertiary. It focuses on organizing schools' entire program and instructional efforts around the clearly defined outcomes that all students should be able to demonstrate when they leave school (Spady, 1992).

In Botswana, education has undergone extensive change during the past few years. In an effort to improve the country's economy, Botswana has set herself goals in every sector of the economy that needs to be achieved by 2016. These goals are collectively known as Vision 2016. For the

education sector, Vision 2016 Goal Number 1to be achieved is, "...an informed and educated nation by the year 2016" (Republic of Botswana, 1997, p.5) which is envisaged to produce skilled, knowledgeable and efficient work force. To that end Botswana's emphasis has been on education structure that promotes high achievement through the use of quality assessment methods.

1.1.1 A brief history of education in Botswana

This study took place in Botswana in a town/village called Maun. Botswana is a landlocked country situated in the Southern part of Africa. Botswana shares borders with Zimbabwe to the northeast, Namibia to the west, South Africa to the south and southeast, and Zambia to the north.

Figure 1: Map of Africa indicating Botswana's position
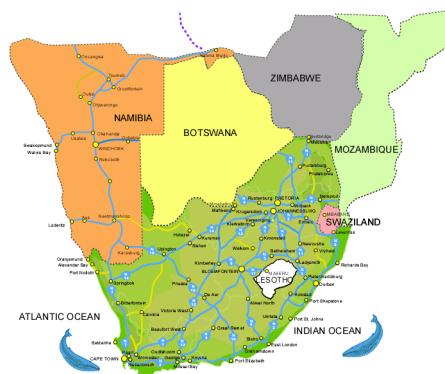
Source: (Keaikitse, 2013, p.43)

At the time Botswana gained her independence in 1966, she was counted amongst the poorest countries which depended on livestock for much of its income. There were few graduates by that time and that affected the country adversely in all sectors, including education. According to Boikhutso (2013) as in Mokgosi and Jotia (2013) the first two decades after independence appeared to have been the most challenging for the Botswana government regarding not only the provision but also the quality of education. At that period Botswana did not have a specific set of educational goals due to absence of central administrative entity dealing with curriculum issues. It was on this basis that Botswana commissioned the first National Commission on Education in 1976. The mandate of the commission was to undertake a broad ranging review of Botswana Education system, its goals and major problems and avail some recommendations in

an attempt to bring improvement in education (Boikhutso, 2013 as in Mokgosi & Jotia, 2013). In 1977 the commission's report was submitted and was named *Education for Kagisano* which means education for social harmony. The second commission on Education was set up in 1992 because the first policy on education did not meet the educational standards and the report was released in 1993. Its terms of reference constituted the need to review the education system and its relevance to the Botswana's changing and complex economy.

The 1993 report produced the Revised National Policy on Education (R.N.P.E.) because the report was the revision of the National Policy on Education of 1977 commission. Keaikitse (2013, p.41) posits that "R.N.P.E. implemented a ten-year basic education and emphasized the need for improvement and management of education structure that promotes students' learning outcomes and higher achievement through the use of quality assessment methods". In fact after the development of these policies there was a concern that the quality of education had not shown any improvement since independence. Since Botswana acquired administrative entities who dealt with the curriculum, some years after independence the type of curriculum and grading that has been used in schools was a norm-referenced which sought to compare the students to one another. In an attempt to keep pace with the global educational changes and demand, Botswana adopted the standard-based curriculum in secondary schools in 2010 followed by its grading in 2012.

Given that the traditional grading has been a mainstay in Botswana examination, there were reasons which necessitated the introduction of the Standard-based grading. The reform was introduced and aimed at bringing out of the learners, important skills which will position them for the world of work (www.bec.co.bw). The other reason which motivated SBG introduction was that standards-based grading helps educators and their communities to identify explicitly what students must know and be able to do. Once standards are set, teachers can focus and organize their curriculum and instruction to help all students meet standards (Buttram & Waters, 1997).

Masukusuku (2014) argues that in Botswana the public outcry which has been in the recent years concerning the declining examination results necessitated the introduction of SBG but it seemed that the new grading system aggravates the problem as there is no improvement noticed

since the inception of the practice. The Botswana Examination Council (B.E.C.) with its introduction of standard-based curriculum and grading, the main thrust of the revised curriculum is to provide learners with pre-vocational preparation through knowledge and selected practical experiences (www.bec.co.bw).

The standard-based curriculum and grading was adopted in Botswana junior secondary level for its emphasis on understanding and application of concepts; development of high order thinking skills (HOTs) such as inquiry, decision-making, reasoning, creativity, analytical problem solving and process skills. The standard-based grading also calls for the acquisition of hands-on experience that should increase the participation and performance of all groups with different learning abilities, learners with special needs and all genders (B.E.C., 2013). The Junior Certificate Examination (J.C.E) assesses achievement of students who have completed the three year course of the ten-year basic education program.

In Botswana, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development's mandate is to manage educational structures whereas B.E.C. has the mandate of providing effective and quality centred assessment and examination system. In addressing that, B.E.C. developed sets of assessment strategies which were believed to enhance important skills and equip learners in order to face the world of work. Among those strategies are the grading rules, hence standard-based grading system which has been adopted for Junior Certificate Examination. With effect from 2012 Junior Certificate Examination, Botswana Examination Council started the new grading system in which candidates were awarded the overall grade based on seven syllabi (B.E.C., 2013). In determining the overall grade for each candidate as per B.E.C. procedure for grading, the grades obtained by a candidate at subject level are converted from alpha to numeric grades in order to allow for an aggregation. The conversion is as shown below:

A=9

B=7

C=5

D=3

E=1

All the structures deployed in the grading are supported by B.E.C. which was mandated under section 5 of Botswana Examination Act No.11 of 2002, and the examination council has an overall mandate of taking care of all national examination issues or any other examination activities for the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. The mission of B.E.C. is to advance the quality of education through effective and responsive assessment practices. With all the grading procedures in place, what is not known and given much attention is the teachers' understanding in the implementation of such practice and what current grading practices teachers use.

SBG is a set of standards that every teacher must fully implement in his or her instructional delivery to ensure that each student in the country graduates with the same set of skills (Guskey, 2001; Reyes, 2013). SBG, while its main aim is accurately representing students' performance, it faces resistance by many, particularly in secondary school level (Urich, 2012). Attention was drawn to the assumption that teachers' experience and their grading practices in the implementation of SBG were not given much attention in Botswana. The transition of Botswana's curriculum from traditional grading to SBG was not investigated to find out how much understanding do teachers posses on the concept. Therefore the achievement of content standards in most of Botswana schools seems to be far reaching. Numerous studies show that schools and teachers with the same standards and resources yield different results in terms of student teaching and learning (Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2003). It seems that these variations depend on how the standards are applied by the implementers. Through this investigation the researcher explored how often teachers use the standards to give classroom instruction and share ideas and experiences on teachers' understanding of the SBG which may lead to desired results.

The grading reform, just as in the U.S.A., New Zealand and South Africa, students' assessment is compared against the content standards. This is in which learners are assessed on their understanding of the concepts and skills through high stake testing rather than being compared against other students. In Botswana this procedure of assessing students against the standards seems to be practiced during the summative assessment by B.E.C. Teachers in schools seem not to be competent with the assessment procedure and as a result they prefer utilizing the traditional way of assessing learners.

Contrary to Germany whereby the assessment of students combines both cognitive and attitudes behaviours and manipulative skills into one grade, in Botswana non-academic factors such as behaviour, effort and attendance are reported differently and not included in the grade mark. In that case the grade is clearly reflected than being distorted by non-academic factors. Botswana's assessment procedures differ from that of Germany whereby the assessment is the responsibility of teachers even for certification and selection procedures. Instead, in Botswana there is an examination council mandated to control the examination procedures working hand in hand with the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. Botswana's model of engaging an independent council for assessment can be of great benefit if all the stakeholders such as education officers, teachers, students and parents are consulted and trained on the good innovations for quality assessment methods such as SBG.

Contrary to South Africa and the U.S.A. Botswana teachers are not able to give learners opportunities to work at their own pace and in different ways as per their individual abilities. This is not possible due to limited time allocated for teaching and learning in schools .Teachers' working hours in government schools are equivalent to other public service workers who work for eight hours that is from 0730 hrs to 1630hrs.This working time structure makes it difficult for schools to cater for remedial lessons so that learners can work at their pace. Therefore this is one of the gaps identified in the Botswana education structure that impedes on the national standards.

In Botswana schools, learners' work depends on what the teacher wants them to achieve so that the teacher moves onto the next objective or topic in an attempt to save time. Unlike in other countries like the U.S.A. and Germany where standard-based education is being practiced, learners in Botswana are not given opportunity for re-assessment when they have not achieved some proficiency skills. Therefore a large gap still exists in the knowledge and skills, which students possess compared to what they are expected to be able to achieve on the SBG test. If Botswana can improve on the implementation of education policies like that of SBG, and adopt practices found in other countries where re-take is allowed, that can help students in our country to achieve desired results as defined by SBG.

In an attempt to focus on the teachers' understanding of SBG in Botswana junior secondary schools, this study does not only shed some valuable light on the teachers' experience in the implementation of SBG in schools, but also contributes to the debate on how best to establish

initiatives centred on grading practices. This study sought to explore the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to understand teachers' current grading practices. Gaining an understanding of teachers' beliefs about grading has been beneficial in determining the significance of this change of educational standards in teachers' minds. This is to identify the teachers' current grading practices in order to discover teachers' assessment criteria which can be linked to the content standards. The study can also assist the teachers to understand the significance of the SBG phenomenon, since understanding the phenomenon underpins the ability to deal with the problem. The SBG phenomenon has to be recognised and clearly understood. To this end teachers' perceptions on the introduction of SBG was explored in order to obtain their views on what necessitated its introduction.

1.2 Statement of the problem

One of the goals for national education is to raise educational standards at all levels (Republic of Botswana, 1994). The main thrust of the national goal is to produce workforce that is skilled, critical thinkers with problem solving skills, knowledgeable and efficient. Despite the Ministry of Education and skills Development's effort to raise standard of education through quality assessments methods such as standard based grading, the quality of education keeps on declining. The implementation of policy on educational standards seems not to be properly done. If policies continue to be poorly implemented, that will hinder the national education's main aim and therefore that will impede on the achievement of the schools' goal. As a result, Botswana education system will fail to produce workforce that is skilled, critical thinkers, with problem solving skills, knowledgeable and efficient and ready for the world of work. Limited studies have been done to explore how standard based assessments methods are being implemented in Botswana schools. It is against this background that a study on the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG was conducted.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to explore the experience of teachers in the implementation of standard-based grading (SBG) in Botswana schools. In an attempt to improve students' performance, the focus of this study was to identify the extent to which teachers understand the set standards for SBG by exploring how often they use the standards in the classroom instruction. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to understand teachers' current grading practices.

1.4 Significance of the study

There has been a renewed emphasis on ensuring that all students receive an interior set of knowledge and that students comprehend this essential information (Wheelock, 1995). This study explored the degree to which standards-based grading (SBG) practices are understood and implemented by teachers in junior secondary schools in Botswana. SBG practices empower teachers to meet each student-learner at her or his readiness level by providing guidance needed for differentiated instruction at high levels. Instead of setting for a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching, whereby only some students learn at high levels on any given time, SBG provides students and teachers with descriptive information on skill development within the required curriculum (Urich, 2012). In U.S.A. all stakeholders, teachers, students and parents take an active role in the learning of the student (Hall &Hord, 2001). The significance of this study rests in shedding light to the current grading discussion by exploring on teachers' understanding in the implementation of standards-based grading within Moeti JSS. The data generated from the study can have practical application for schools such as; informing SBG training needs and shed light to teachers understand the significance of the SBG phenomenon. The understanding of the SBG of the participants in this study will serve as a model for other junior secondary school teachers and management embarking on the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG. Furthermore, the results obtained from the research can also enable teachers, students, parents, educators, researchers and the community to appreciate the efforts made by the government in improving the education system. This review serves as a contribution to the field of education as secondary schools turn to research for best initiatives centered on SBG practices, which might then contribute to upgrade student learning. Eventually, this can positively impacts the economy because students would be better prepared as productive, contributing citizens in the workforce and society.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The study aims to;
1. Explore the perception of teachers on the introduction of SBG and its aims.
2. Identify the teachers' current grading practices on students' work.
3. Explore how often teachers use the standards to give classroom instruction.
4. Obtain teachers' views and knowledge on how SBG benefits students' performance.

1.6 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of teachers on the introduction of SBG and its aims?

2. What are the teachers' current grading practices on students' work?

3. How often do teachers use standards to give classroom instruction?

4. What are the teachers' views and knowledge on how SBG benefits students' performance?

1.7 Definitions of terms

Standard-based reporting- involves measuring students' proficiency levels using well-defined course objectives. It is the process of reporting students' progress as measured against specific standards or learning targets while, in tandem, using students' proficiency levels and to guide instruction (Urich, 2012).

Traditional grading- method of grading students based on percentages of correct responses. Points are added together at the end of a term the teacher assigns grade based on the total number of points earned (Rosales, 2013; Marzano & Heflebower, 2011).

Norm-referenced testing- refers to standardized tests that are designed to compare and rank students in relation to one another (Paeplow, 2011).

Criterion-referenced testing- are designed to measure student performance against a fixed set of pre-determined criteria or standards. Assessment of student performance is not measured against the performance of other student performance but against the set performance standards (Guskey, 2001).

Teachers- In this study teachers refers to those people whose profession is teaching those includes; subject teachers and subject coordinators, School Head, deputy School Head, Head of House and senior teachers academics.

Formative assessment-is the knowledge of effective practices, knowledge within the domain, content pedagogy and knowledge of students' previous learning. In addition recognize and

respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning, during learning and it provides feedback to teachers and students for the purpose of guiding to improve learning. (Heritage, 2007; Schrad, 2012).

Summative assessment- is concerned with summing-up or summarizing the achievement status of a student, and is geared towards reporting at the end of a course of study especially for purposes of certification. Familiar examples are tests, performance tasks, final examination, projects and work portfolios (Sadler, 1989; Schrad, 2012).

Grade descriptors-show how a given level of performance will be reflected in a grade. They act as guidelines for the student and teacher (Guskey, 2001).

Rubric scale- are objective assessment instruments which provide scouring guides which aid in the establishment and communication of criteria for assessing, addressing subjectivity on the teachers' part (Arter &Chappius, 2006).

Learning targets- learning targets are written by the classroom teacher based on the curriculum standards that described the skills, processes, and information that students developed during the course of instruction. Learning targets are more than objectives; they guide the learning process (Moss & Brookhart, 2012).

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The researcher experienced some limitations which were beyond control, which are fully discussed in chapter 5. Qualitative case study was delimited to the anecdotal data generated from the 48 participants in this particular school. The experiences of teachers in a junior secondary school, or region could vary greatly when compared to those of another school or region. This confirms an assertion by Creswell (2009) that, conducting a case study research in one grade level from one school can in fact be perceived as delimitation.

1.9 Summary

This chapter presented detailed background of the study. Then the chapter defined the statement of the problem stating the aim of the study with the intention of expounding on the objectives of this research essay. The national goal for education was also stated and what prevents the goal

from being achieved as well as the anticipated results if the situation is not attended. Afterwards the definitions of concepts used in this study were stated.The chapter also provided an overview of the significance and purpose of the study of Moeti Junior Secondary School teachers' transition to SBG. Finally an organisation of what all the chapters in this research entail has been outlined.

1.10 Organisation of the research

In Chapter one the detailed discussion on the background of this study, the statement of the problem and purpose of the study were presented. Subsequently, the significance of the study was shown and also highlighted the objectives of the study and research questions.

Chapter two covers the review of relevant literature, discussing facts, various points of view and theoretical aspects of the topic under study.

Chapter three gives an overview of the methodology of the study.

In Chapter four all the collected data were compiled, analysed and presented in detailed discussion and interpretation.

Chapter five presents the limitations of the study, main conclusions and some recommendations from the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the review of literature related to standard-based grading (SBG), also commonly known as standard-based reporting (SBR) or standard-based assessment (SBA) and outcome-based reporting (OBR) which are synonymously used. The high-stakes prevalent in education raise the level of teacher accountability in all aspects of the classroom. Accurate grading practices need to be implemented in order for all stakeholders to have an accurate picture of what students know and can do (Rosales, 2013). The chapter is organized around the main purpose of the study which was to explore the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG. The literature review outlines the components of SBG and the supporting researches that show components that help in success of SBG practice. The literature took a stance with a brief review of the historical perspective on SBG teaching and learning as recommended by the Commission on No Child Left Behind. Then next followed discussion on SBG and how it is practiced in other countries. The theoretical framework of the study was also discussed.

 The framework outlines components critical to the success of SBG. Such elements include simplified objectives and goals, student self reflection and assessment and effective feedback to students. All these components are grounded in formative assessment (Schrad, 2012). The challenges of establishing SBG reporting, difference on grading criteria and transition from letter grade to SBG is interwoven throughout the literature review. Teachers' perceptions on what necessitated SBG, teachers' use of standards in classroom instruction, teachers' current practices and SBG benefit to students' performance were explored within the context of each subheading. The final part of the literature review is a summary of the literature and justification of the study therefore set the stage for a qualitative case study in Moeti Junior Secondary School in Maun, Botswana.

In the 1970's and 1980's a national assessment program was implemented in the United States of America (U.S.A.).The country discovered that the results of Mathematics and Science were declining and this put the nation's social and economic lives at risk. The National Commission on Excellence declared the U.S.A. to be a nation at risk hence published A Nation at Risk Report in April 1983 (Schrad, 2012). Popham (2002) asserts that the reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) signed into law by President George W. Bush, sought for more strict educational accountability. The report's publication was often endorsed as the initiating event of the modern standards movement. President Bush called the first "education Summit" in which he made some education proposals. At the Summit the governors concurred to set national goals and pledged support for state-based reform initiatives (Mathis, 2010). Popham (2006) asserted that public schools which did not achieve to improve students' performance on state-selected accountability tests, those schools were designated as those that require improvement and re-structuring.

With the implementation of the NCLB Act 2001 there was an increased emphasis on ensuring that educators enhance their students' scores as measured by standardized tests (Paeplow, 2011). Schrad (2012) contended that in 2010, President Obama stated a strong commitment to academic standards as fundamental element of his education reform agenda. The proposal for the reauthorization of the ESEA, the first section of *A Blueprint for Reform*, addressed raising standards for all children. The Blueprint for Reform document also asserts that common standards are important in achieving the quality goal of ensuring that all children, regardless of circumstances, achieve at high levels (U.S.Department, 2010). It was on those bases that Standard-Based Grading found its inception in the U.S.A. education system.

During the 1990s' the mission of schools in the U.S.A. changed as the society wanted all the students to meet high academic standards. The society wanted students who are competent readers, writers, and students with mathematical problem solving skills (Stiggins, 1999).The transition in the American education left educators with an assignment of developing ways to motivate all students. Therefore assessment reforming requires educators with broad minded in order to cater for all students' needs (Schrad, 2012). Scholars describe standards precisely as what we want students to know and be able to do as a result of their experiences in school

(Guskey & Bailey, 2010; Urich, 2012). This can be achieved when teachers have knowledge of what they are assessing and agree on the purpose of assessment before they can address the way they assess student learning.

In response to standard-based education reform, educators have seen the need to assess students' achievement according to current standards which require educators and their communities to identify explicitly what students must know and be able to demonstrate (Guskey, 2001; O'Shea, 2002). In addition, standards must be aligned with assessments and criteria by which teachers evaluate students' achievement of the set standards. Once standards are set, teachers can focus and organize the curriculum and instruction to help all students meet standards (Buttram & Waters, 1997). Researchers agree that in order to do this, schools and teachers need solid knowledge of the standards that students are expected to achieve. Adrian (2012) argues that this proves to be extremely difficult because most States standards are unclear, unrealistically extensive or too specific.

Guskey and Jung (2006) reported on the challenges of establishing a standard-based reporting tool. These authors reported the challenges as being; clarifying the purpose of a reporting tool. They further contended that developing a new report card is more a challenge in effective communication than simply documenting or quantifying student achievement. Guskey and Jung (2006) further assert that another challenge is moving from letter grade to standards. This challenge stems from the parents who would prefer that educators stick with traditional letter grades rather than reports based on standards. O'Connor (2002) presented grading issues, theories and guidelines for grading to aligned standards, with the underlying belief that grades need to communicate about students' achievement in relation to the content standards. Research has sought to explain teachers' experience in the implementation of SBG considering their grading practices and their use of standards in classroom instruction. In this review of literature, these findings are discussed and examples of assessment and grading practice and reporting are given.

2.1 Concept of grading

According to Guskey (2001, p.2) "The primary goal of grading and reporting is communication, regardless of format. Its purpose is to provide high-quality information to interested persons in a form they can understand clearly and use effectively". While grades may serve various purposes, educational researchers have identified various reasons for assigning grades. Jung and Gus key (2007, p.48) report that, "One of the most important purposes of grades and reporting is to communicate children's progress in school to their parents." On the contrast, Guskey and Jung (2006) contend that, the mistake made by educators is choosing the reporting before considering its function. As a result both parents and teachers perceive the change as valueless to them as it does not present its advantage over the traditional reporting methods. Clarifying the purpose of something makes its intentions clear on the onset (Guskey, 2011). Therefore if the report card is to inform the parents about the achievement of students then the information in the report card must be communicating to the parents and they should know how to use it (Guskey, 2011). A good number of scholars concur that grades serve as a communication tool (Marzano, 2000; O'Connor, 2002; Carlson, 2003; Stiggins, 2005; Jung & Guskey, 2007).

O'Connor (2009) provided most useful ideas about grading. This author's contentions are generally convincing with the majority of his thoughts utilizable with all levels of learning. O'Connor's work is focused on grading for individual attainment, changing grades and quality assessment. In order for reports cards to be effectively communicating to parents they need an extension on their format in which teachers can be able to provide information on student achievement of specific learning goal (O'Connor, 2009). Paeplow (2011) argues that due to the fact that grades communicate multiple factors, it is problematic since according to O'Connor (2002, p.16) "…putting together such a variety of information makes it very difficult to clearly understand what grades mean".

Guskey and Bailey (2010) assert that grades give students feedback about their relative level of achievement. As such grades play a major role in many high-stakes educational decisions that intensely affect student' lives (Guskey, 2011). This is supported by Schrad (2012) who asserts that grades can be the sole focus from parents' perspective of their children's progress; primarily because they are a focus of admission into college. Grades are used to give awards or honors to students and grades are often a motivational force (Haladyna, 1999). Scholars such as (Guskey

(2007) and O'Connor (2002) concur with other writers that grades shape the child's educational future.

2.2 Concept of Standard-Based Grading

The term standard-based grading (SBG) also known as standard-based reporting (SBR) was initially called outcome-based reporting (OBR). Ramroop (2004) posits that after the educators' and policy makers' dissatisfaction of the word "outcome", it was then altered to become standard-based grading. The acronyms SBG, SBR, SBA, and OBR are synonymous depending on the area where they are being used. In Botswana, similar to the United States of America, SBG is used whereas in South Africa, OBR is used and in New Zealand they use standard-based assessment (SBA) but still referring to the same concept. In this essay, the researcher will consistently use 'SBG'.

SBG involves measuring students' proficiency on well-defined course objectives and the final scores of a student should reflect their proficiency of each skill assessed (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). This view affirms an assertion by Brookhart (2011, p.13) that the initial principle of standard-based grading is that "Grades are not about what students earn; they are about what students learn. Implementation involves assessing students' work in relation to pre-established standards and criteria, usually illustrated in rubrics and students are not compared against each other (Guskey, 2009). The most significant advantage of this reform is its alignment of standards, assessment and instruction with learner-centred focus (Colby, 1999). From the synopsis of the above definitions the concept of SBG focuses on achievement of the students on content standards.

Schrad (2012) argues that although the use of SBG has become more prevalent, not much can be shown to support student achievement gains. A study in cognitive psychology has demonstrated that skills' learning commonly takes a specific form (Marzano, 2001). A study by Marzano (2001) revealed the importance of formative assessment and practice. From the study findings on practice that has strong classroom implications is that students must achieve skills as they are

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learning them. Marzano (2001) in his findings has shown that learning new content does not happen quickly but requires practice spread out over time. Marzano (2001) further indicated that results of such practice will be additions in learning that start out rather big but gradually reduces as students fine-tune their knowledge and skill. It is after a great deal of demonstration through practice that students can perform a skill with momentum and accuracy.

In the U.S.A., although the implementation of SBG has varied by State and school district, there are key factors that are common in the teachers' grading practices, factors such as use of rubrics and re-take of assessment that teachers use to gauge the students' learning (Guskey 2003). Similar standards are employed in most U.S.A. districts. They have curriculum, scope and sequence for each grade level. At the beginning of every unit, the teacher breaks down the standards for the unit into smaller objectives and criteria using a detailed rubric (Guskey, 2003). During the unit, the student is assessed to see if they truly know the material using a variety of assessments, such as formative tests, projects, discussions, or reports (Paeplow, 2011). The class grade is based on all of the evidence the teacher collects, demonstrating mastery of the essential standards (Guskey, 2003; Paeplow, 2011). The students are allowed multiple opportunities to prove their understanding of classroom standards in different ways. When they demonstrate their acquired skills and knowledge, those who did not achieve are allowed to re-take the assessment. Students practice standards individually through home work or other class work which are not taken as part of the final grade (Guskey, 2003).

Most schools in the U.S.A. use a four-point scale system for grading. In this system, the highest grade point average is 4.0 which is equivalent to letter grade A in a subject. Numeric grades are as follows:

A= 4

B= 3

C= 2

D=1

The four-point system more clearly indicates student proficiency level in core subjects by separating students who are proficient, that is those who fell in category 4 and 3 and ready to proceed from those who did not meet required standards, that is those who fell in category 2 and 1 and should not proceed (Guskey,2003).

Similar to the U.S. A., assessment in New Zealand is no longer about students competing against each other, but about achieving to a set standard. To that end, students are becoming more empowered by SBA hence increasing in confidence (Rawlins, Brandon, Chapman, Leach, Neutze, scott and Zepke, 2005). Agnew (2010) asserts that in New Zealand, a National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is the commonly used secondary school qualification offered. Students are provided with clear objectives which help them to recognize gaps in their learning between the current level and the desired level, and can take effective action to close the gap (Brookhart, 2001). Agnew (2010) maintains that schools in New Zealand assess three types of standards being; unit standards, which were used as an alternative to norm-referenced testing prior the implementation of NCEA. Agnew further posits that unit standards: are assessment done and marked within schools. Students' work is sampled and moderated periodically by the New Zealand Qualification Authority. Internal assessment achievement standards: Is whereby students who have achieved standards are awarded credit on merit of excellence rather than pass or fail. According to Agnew (2010) the last type is external assessment achievement standards which differ from unit and internal assessment achievement standards as it involves external moderation and marked examination which is completed at the end of the year.

In South Africa outcome-based reporting (OBR) uses criterion-referenced approach same as SBG and assessment is done in continuum and not only at the end of a learning experience. OBR's main objective is to ensure that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values required in fulfilling various roles in the society. Therefore OBR provides clearly defined outcomes that learners work towards attaining in their various learning contexts (Ramroop, 2004). Similar to the U.S.A., teachers are required to give learners opportunities to work at their own pace and in different ways, according to their individual abilities. Schools are allowed to choose content and use teaching methods of their choice as long as these meet the critical outcomes. Learners are aware of the criteria that is, what they are being assessed on and how. In

South Africa, same as in the U.S.A., learners are expected to learn as they progress through their education and at their own pace towards mastery of the outcomes (Spady, 1992).

In the context of Botswana just like in the U.S.A. SBG is used to grade the students using criterion-referenced testing which is standard-based. This system entails a number of components which are used for the success of the grading practice (BEC, 2013). The way this system is being implemented in other countries seems to differ from how it is being done in Botswana but there are some instances where the countries are comparable. The use of formative assessment to check students' learning which is used in the U.S.A. is also practiced in Botswana with the use of quizzes, projects, homework, tests and discussions. The numeric grading practiced in the U.S.A. is also used in Botswana even though the numbers range from 1-9 as compared to those of the U.S.A. which range from 1-4. Contrary to the U.S.A. and South Africa where learners are allowed opportunities to prove their capabilities and given chance to re-take assessment, in Botswana, learners do not re-take assessment regardless that they have not achieved the proficient skills. On the contrast in South Africa and the U.S.A. learners in Botswana secondary schools are not given chance to learn at their own pace towards mastery of the outcomes due to limited working hours (8 hours) for teachers to perform their instructional delivery. The change from the traditional practice to SBG in Botswana still remains a challenge.

2.3 Theoretical framework

 SBG in Botswana junior secondary schools yields information of little value which is not reflective of students' abilities. Students are assessed throughout the duration of study through formative assessments. Summative assessment gives summary of students' achievement status at the end of a course of study especially for certification purpose (Rosales, 2013).The standard-based approach to teaching and learning is focused on the formative assessment. An assessment is formative when approached in a suitable, accurate manner, honouring that there is time to take action that will guide instruction (Burke, 2010; Danielson, 2007; Popham, 2009). Common examples include quizzes, class activities, home work, and demonstration. There are common key elements found to most interpretations of the concept of SBG. Schrad (2012) cited Black and William (2006) outlined the theory after study findings from the King's-Medway-Oxfordshire Formative Assessment Project (KMOFAP) and Berkeley Evaluation and

Assessment Research project (BEAR). The study was intended to improve teaching and learning through formative assessment. Among those elements are the establishment of student-friendly objectives and goals, student reflection and self assessment and effective feedback to the student from the teacher. All of these elements are critical to the success of SBG and are grounded in the theory of formative assessment. Stiggins (2002) contends that teachers must inform students about learning goals in such a way that students will understand from the onset. Masole (2009) asserts that in Botswana schools at the beginning of the term, topic objectives and goals are discussed with students and thus setting direction to where students are going. Self assessment permits students to participate in two processes important in developing thinking skills, understanding the nature of the task and possessing a conscious awareness of one's own thinking (Rosales, 2013).Students are empowered as they "develop the ability to monitor and assess their own learning so that they recognize when they are learning and when they are not" (Heritage, 2007, p.143) as they develop strategies to respond when they realize that they are not learning. Involving students in self-assessment and monitoring their own progress allows them to be more in tune with their proficiency levels (Black & William, 1998; O'Connor, 2011). Opportune feedback is one of the most powerful tools a teacher can use to influence student performance (Hattie, 2009). Students must be given informative feedback, letting each one know their excellence and weaknesses on each learning goal (Rosales, 2013).

2.4 Aims that necessitated an introduction of SBG in schools

According to Moahi (2013) the move to introduce the standard-based grading procedure in Botswana was aggravated by the fact that it provides more informative evaluation of student's performance and allows year-to- year comparisons of national performance patterns. Pertinent to this study, teachers are agents of curriculum implementation and are therefore central to education system and can or break the system (Republic of Botswana, 1994).It was adopted in 2010 after the change of norm-referenced curriculum to standard-based. The first assessment on this curriculum 2010 was in 2012 with the Junior Certificate Examination (Moahi, 2013).

Recent researches about SBG indicate that when the standard-based approach is properly implemented it could achieve desired results. Therefore empirical data is crucial to support teachers' views on the implementation of SBG and how such implementation impacts on

students' achievement. If the efforts for this system aim to result in significant improvements in student learning, serious attention must be given to their intended impact such as teachers' understanding in the implementation of SBG.

A sound training on implementation of SBG is a humane response to the hardships associated with the interpretation of grading and assessment standards. It should be one of the features of the broader program of staff development that would benefit teachers as they adapt to a new policy. In a research carried out on grading by Whitney, Culligan and Booksher (2004) the findings revealed that teachers confessed to be unprepared in their first year experience in the area of grading. Guskey (2004) concurs with the view that the feeling of unpreparedness is tantamount to confusion and high-stake consequences for all stakeholders affected by grading. Guskey (2004) attests that consequently teachers exercise their experience that was done on them and apply it in their own grading practices. Researchers such as Hill (2001), Guskey (2004) and Brookhart (2001) argue that teachers may have difficulty interpreting the information of State standards and therefore operationalize them incorrectly in their classrooms. Hill's (2001) research findings revealed that teachers interpreted the same objective quite differently and experienced difficulty in coming to consensus about what is intended by standards documents.

O'Connor (2007) contends that the paradigm shift from the traditional grading system to SBG system needs changes in teachers' philosophies around the purpose of grading and calculation of grades. Yukl (2010) attests that disconnecting from familiar practice to new practices, procedures and processes can cause personal twinge. Therefore teachers need professional development in order to enlighten their thinking and change from old practice. Studies have shown that many classroom teachers lack skills in assessment (Stiggins & Conklin, 1997). O'Connor (2007) recommended that once standards are in place, teachers should have frequent opportunities to collaborate to build common understanding so that standards can be applied consistently. On the other side O'Shea (2005) advocates for teacher lesson plan collaboration as an important part of professional development for standards implementation. As such teachers should align standards with lesson objectives.

Danielson (2007) asserts that the full power of assessment is realized only when teachers also include assessment for learning in their instructional planning. She maintains that this type of

assessment serves to indicate that its purpose is not to certify mastery of content by students but to provide information to teachers, students and their parents as to what has not yet been learned and to guide next steps. In this process all stakeholders, teachers, students and parents take an active role in the learning of the student (Hall & Hord, 2001). Even though the research findings on effects of SBR cards on Learning have revealed that stakeholder involvement in SBG change may not be yielding desired result that shows improvement in learning (Craig, 2011).

2.5 Teachers' current grading practices

Keaikitse (2012) asserts that the grading systems that teachers use in different countries should not be perceived as isolated practices, but should be viewed in the context of educational systems in which they are used. The reason that the approach to teaching and learning in SBG is focused in formative assessment, therefore the primary purpose of formative assessment is to improve student learning (Urich, 2012).Teachers' improvement of their practice and instruction adjustment is based on the process of formative assessment. "It is the act of responding to the current evidence of students' mastery levels in relation to the learning target that makes a difference" (Urich, 2012, p.26). The formative assessment designs the road map by provision of information during the instructional process that is before the summative assessment (Urich, 2012).At the beginning of the topics, teachers provide the students with learning objectives and goals. Ultimately, after the students have understood the goals and objectives, and can assess their current gap in skills, there must be a practical reasonable action plan that students can undertake which will help them progress in their learning and close the gap (Sadler, 1989).

Teachers' mastery of grading can be acquired through better communication of policy as Darling-Hammond (1990) elaborated on some important lessons about policy and implementation. Darling-Hammond attests that "Policy must be better communicated if it is to be well understood" (p.240). The same author further advocates for meaningful discussion and wide professional development at all levels of the system as they are critical components of such communication. Schrad (2012) supports Darling-Hammond's lesson by asserting that training and staff development are keys to help teachers understand.

McMillan and Nash (2000) carried out a study in Virginia on classroom teacher assessment and grading decision making. The research findings identified themes that explained how and why

teachers apply certain assessment and grading practice. The findings reported that teachers believe that informal, observational and constructed-response assessments are best for checking student understanding. They also indicated that teachers make use of formative and pre-assessment to inform their classroom instruction.

From their study on grading practices, McMillan et al. (2002) reported that Language Arts and Mathematics teachers are inclined to use objective assessments most frequently, followed by performance assessment and projects used by Language Arts teachers. The study findings revealed that in testing knowledge, teachers ask questions that measured student understanding followed by those that require application and reasoning whereas few teachers used recall questions.

Carlson (2003) in her work asserts that best grading practice is accomplished through valid assessment that is directly related to learning objectives. She cited the use of field projects, portfolios, collaboration activities and exhibitions as examples of such assessment. O'Connor (2000) posits that when grades are determined, teachers should collect adequate data to confirm previous assessments with more emphasis put on the most recent assessments when students had opportunity to demonstrate their learning.MacMillan and Nash (2000) argued that grading students' work can be a complex process as it comprises of an array of issues such as; results that come from assessments, teachers' beliefs and values, and overall learning goals.Tomlinson (2001) on the other hand asserts that criterion for grading students work should be based on clearly-defined criteria for quality work while Guskey and Bailey (2010) consider differentiating grading criteria into three categories; product, process and progress.

In a study conducted by Adrian (2012) in Washington on Elementary teachers' beliefs, practices and concerns, the findings revealed that majority of participants indicated that their report card uses numeric grading of 4,3,2,1 rather than letter grades. The participants further responded that letter grades are meaningless to students or too difficult to understand and also do not communicate students capabilities. According to Adrian (2012) allocating letter grades for individual assignments is a practice that of itself is neutral as regards to alignment with standards-based grading. According to O'Connor (2007), each level of achievement must be clearly described and the lowest level of proficiency labelled so that the assignment of a grade or mark can be justified.

In the same study by Adrian (2012) when teachers were asked if they allocate percentages to students' assignments, 54% of respondents do not give percentage scores on individual assignments. Twelve of them reported that they teach primary grades and percentages are not used. Four teachers stated that they use the 4, 3, 2, 1 scoring consistently, and the findings indicated that some participants found the use of numeric grading of 4, 3, 2, 1 more authentic than percentages. The findings of the same study revealed that four teachers responded that they focus on whether or not students met standard than giving percentages or letter grades.

The study conducted by Craig (2011) on Effects of SBR cards on Learning, revealed that no significant difference in the performance improvement in schools using single grade in content area or use several grades to show students' each learning goal. The findings further indicated that schools that remained using ABC grading system or percentage report cards shows similar performance to those schools using multiple grades on each learning goal. The conclusions made from the same study reflected that school leaders and educators were advised to transition from traditional grading as it does not provide enough presentation of student achievement.

2.6 Teachers' use of standards in the classroom instruction

An array of studies reveal that teachers with similar professional qualification instruct differently in their classroom and vary significantly in their ability to help students grow academically (Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005). Numerous studies reveal that schools and teachers with the same standards and resources yield different results in terms of student learning. Therefore it seems clear that these differences depend on how the standards are applied by those who work in instruction (Cohen, Raudenbush & Ball, 2003). Guskey (1999) contended that in order to bring significant improvement in education, standards should be linked to teaching and learning. Guskey further maintains that teachers need to translate standards into specific experiences that facilitate student learning and ensure that classroom assessments effectively measure that learning.

Guskey (2005) argues that teachers' concern should not be with results only. He further asserts that teachers' primary concern should be how they assist students to reach the proficiency level.

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This involves a complex process that takes place in effective standard-based teaching and learning. Guskey (2005) clarifies that teachers must unpack the standards by organizing instructional units and appropriate planning is required with classroom activities. Each component of each standard should be determined and students must learn and make a plan to strategize in making these components meaningful series of learning steps.

Implementing standard-based assessment includes development of written descriptions of standards for grading tasks often called grade descriptors both to serve as a guide for marking process and clarify teacher expectations for students (Hammer, 2007; Tan & Prosser, 2004). Rubrics are used which list criteria and descriptions of standards for each criterion which can be distributed to students prior to each assessment task (Reddy & Andrade, 2010). Rubrics have the potential to boost students understanding of their learning targets and the standards of quality for a particular assignment as well as help them review their own work and plan for revision and improvement (Reddy & Andrade, 2010).The use of scoring guides (rubrics) practice aligns with SBG.

From the study findings by Adrian (2012) 90% of the respondents use rubrics for individual assignments. Those who use scoring guides justified by that, they use rubrics so that students are aware of the expectations and are clear about what they need to do in order to meet standards. The respondents indicated that rubrics help in consistency, fairness in their grading, hence easy work and less subjectivity. These findings confirm an assertion by O'Connor (2007, p.61) that "Don't assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards, but provide clear descriptions of achievement." Adrian (2012) concurs with this view by saying that, if performance standards are not appropriate or necessary for every assignment; scoring guides provide clear descriptions of performance meeting standards.

Nevertheless recent research has revealed that many students find descriptions of standards difficult to understand unless they engage with typical examples of work of each standard (Sadler, 1989; Carless, 2006). According to Colby (1999) if teachers are not teaching to the standards or if the classroom instruction is textbook, module or tests driven then teachers must learn how to use standards to give instruction. Colby (1999) further maintains that in SBG teachers are required to report on how well each student has done in relation to each content

standard. In that case, teachers are expected to clearly define the scoring guides to students so that they are aware of the expectations and are clear about what they need to do in order to meet those standards.

2.7 Teachers' knowledge on how SBG benefits students' performance

A common refrain from new teachers is that they see standards as vague. As standards do not help them figure out what their lessons should be at all, teachers do not figure out what to teach. The statement highlights a common misconception about the structure and purpose of standards. Some researchers argue that although teachers graduate from tertiary institutions with certification empowering them as educators, majority are ill-equipped to create and implement a grading system that is accurate, effective and justifiable (Whitney, Culligan, & Brooksher, 2004). It can easily and readily be assumed that teachers link their planning and lesson implementation to the identified standards and yet, it has been identified and apparent in some schools, that there still remains a gap between the teaching of required standards and how student mastery of these standards is determined (Oliver, 2011). These are some of the gaps which the study tends to close.

Buttram and Waters (1997) assert that teachers' work becomes easier since the learning targets are clearly stated to the students in the course of the instruction, in that case parents can see which learning targets students have mastered and which ones need remedial and learning (Guskey,2003). Adrian (2012) posits that through SBG, teachers would become better communicators with parents since the report cards clearly list all standards which students are evaluated on in a term (Colby, 1999). Teachers are also to benefit from this reform since teachers of the same subjects have the same expectations and standards therefore grading would not be subjective. SBG also gives easy access to each student's performance, and teachers could focus discussions on how to meet the needs of individual students basing on their progress (Colby, 1999). In addition teachers know exactly where students stand in their progress toward learning targets and what supports need to be provided especially to those not achieving as per expectations. Colby (1999) further asserts that SBG also assists on how teachers make clear decisions about what they need to teach, how and to whom they would teach and how they would assess it. Students also tend to benefit from SBG since learning targets are clearly defined

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and students are able to monitor their own progress toward the achievement of learning targets. Since students learn at different rates hence have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency and knowledge of a standard.

Guskey (2001) has identified some challenges faced in the implementation of SBG. The first challenge experienced by teachers is the transition from the norm-referenced testing to the criterion-referenced testing. The transition seems to be hard for many teachers. This is so hence teachers are used to comparing students against each other and students are normally assigned a set percentage of top-ranked students. On the other hand, in SBG system, grading and reporting must be criterion-based and students are not supposed to be compared against each other but their performance must be compared against standards. This can be affirmed by Guskey (2011) that the most significant impact of assessment on increased student learning will not be recognized if schools use results merely to rank themselves and students.

The second challenge concerns differentiating grading criteria to be used by teachers. Kovas (1993) contends that although teachers and students generally consider CRT to be fair and more equitable, the precise grading criteria that can be employed by teachers may be very diverse. Guskey (2006) classified these grading criteria into three broad categories of product, process and progress. He further elaborates on the grading criteria that product criteria relate to students' specific achievements or levels of proficiency. It describes what students know and are able to demonstrate at a particular point in time. When product criteria are used, they release students' grade or reports exclusively on final examination results, final product such as reports, portfolios and subject projects. Whereas in process criteria, a grade does not only reflect results but relate results, showing how the student got there by counting on formative assessment and other non-academic factors. Progress criteria relate to the level that student actually gain their learning experiences. Terms synonymously used are improvement grading, learning gain, value-added grading and educational growth. Guskey (2001) asserts that teachers who apply this type of grading look at how far students have come rather than where students are. For the reason that teachers are concerned with students' motivation and self-esteem, few teachers use product criteria alone in determining grades. Instead majority's grading is based on some combination.

Literature has revealed that SBG is surrounded with some shortcomings. Guskey (2001) argues that first and foremost it seems the whole SBG process takes a lot of time. After identifying learning goals or standards, the teacher should identify grading criteria, and also come up with evidence that illustrate students' attainment of each learning goal. Further, the teacher identifies graduated levels of quality for assessing students' performance and develops a reporting tool to communicate students' progress to parents. All these tasks may add to the workload that teachers already have. Second shortcomings are ways of reporting which are sometimes too complicated to be understood by parents considering the fact of describing each learning goal. The third shortcoming is that the report may not communicate the appropriateness of student progress. In order to make sense of these, parents need to know how level achievement compares to content standards.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has presented a brief introduction of grading reform and the concept of standard-based grading (SBG). Grading is an integral part of learning. It is clear from the review of literature that grading particularly SBG will continue to play an integral part. Grades give students feedback about their relative level of achievement and grades are used as feedback so that students would know how far they have gone with the mastery of the standard (Guskey, 2010). It is through grades that educators are able to make informed decisions in shaping and informing critical decision making in education. Schrad (2012) asserts that grades can be the sole focus from parent's perspective of their child's progress; primarily because they are a focus of admission into college. This chapter has also presented literature of SBG with provision of facts necessary to understand the context of the study while establishing the need for further research into parents' involvement in standard-based grading practices. Although a number of studies have been conducted on SBG, little has been done regarding teachers' understanding on the implementation of SBG in the entire Botswana schools. Therefore, it was on that basis that there was a need to explore the experience of teachers on SBG phenomenon. Since there is scarce information about Botswana, this indicates that the study was mainly based on general information from literature of other places and the studies on assessment in general made in Botswana. Therefore further research on perception of school heads as curriculum drivers about the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG is of paramount importance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLODY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the methods and procedures that were used in data collection and analysis under the following headings: Research design and justification, study site, population and justification, sample and justification, sampling procedure, data collection procedures, pre-testing, data analysis and data analysis procedure, followed by ethical consideration and lastly the summary.

3.1 Research design and justification

The study adopted an interpretive paradigm using a qualitative approach in the form of descriptive study. According to Chilisa (2012, p.20) "Paradigm is a way of describing a worldview that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (ontology), ways of knowing (epistemology), ethics and value systems (axiology)."This paradigm was adopted in order to guide the researcher in capturing the meaning that Moeti junior secondary school teachers give to their experiences regarding the extent to which they understand the standard-based grading. This is affirmed by Brown (2010) that qualitative methods guide the researcher in capturing the meaning people give to their experiences. Again qualitative approach was employed as it allowed a detailed exploration of a topic of interest in which information was collected by a researcher through a case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). A case study was applied for this research because it is the most flexible, which allowed the researcher to retain the holistic characteristics of real-life events while investigating empirical events (Yin, 2009). This research design allowed the researcher to design instruments that made easy for the collection of reliable and valid information out of the variables under investigation. The use of qualitative research design aimed at understanding reality by discovering the meanings that people in a specific setting attach to it (De vos, Fouche, Poggenpoel, Schurink, & Strydom, 1998).Therefore participants' behaviour at the research site was intentional and natural and hence the qualitative researcher's focus was to get the understanding of the phenomenon as it present itself and to explore the reality as it was presented from an insider's perspective (De vos et al., 1998).

In this study the focus group interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used since these techniques are appropriate in investigating about people's experiences. As supported by Chilisa and Preece (2005) this approach was used because it is an inquiry whereby the researcher conducts research about people's experiences, in natural settings, using a variety of techniques such as observations, interviews and documents analysis, and report the findings mainly in words rather than statistics.

3.2 Study site

The site used was Maun town/village in the North Western region of Botswana. There are four junior secondary schools and one senior secondary school in the town/village. Each of the schools had approximately seventy-nine (79) teachers. Since the entire population cannot be studied, due to financial constraint, Moeti JSS in Moeti ward was sampled for the study because it was getting the first position in the region in Junior Certificate Examination. More importantly, the choice of this school was due to the motive that, it is the researcher's work station. The assumption was that, there was going to be a cordial relations and easy accessibility of data. In order to avoid bias the researcher avoided leading questions which might have led the respondents to give answers of the researcher's choice.

3.3 Population and justification

"A population is any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common and that is of interest to the researcher" (Best & Kahn, 2006, p.13). The population for the selected school was 79 teachers and 318 Form 2 students. The total number of the participants in the selected school was 397.The reason for selecting the population was that, it was accessible to the researcher. This is affirmed by Best and Kahn (2006) when they posit that the population from which the sample will be drawn should be accessible populations.

3.4 Sample and justification

A sample refers to a portion of the population understudy (Hernon & Schwartz, 2009). In most cases, due to time and financial constraints, it is not possible to study the whole population and as such a sample is required. The sample comprised of 20 teachers thus; 3 senior managers being the School Head, deputy School Head and a Head of House, 6 senior teachers' academics and 11 subject coordinators and 30 students. The participants were sampled on the basis that they had

the knowledge about the subject of the study. In the current study, teachers with an experience of less than 5 years were excluded from participating in the research because their few years of service may be a limiting factor to determine their experience in the implementation of SBG. Only the Form 2 students were sampled. They were selected because the Form 3s could not be targeted since at the time of the data collection, they were writing their Agriculture Junior Certificate Examination practical. Again Form 2s were selected rather than Form 1s because they were better placed in understanding of the curriculum and grading standards as compared to them. The Form 1s' short period of stay in the school may be a restrictive reason to be able to determine their understanding in the implementation of SBG.

3.5 Sampling procedures

Sampling involves the selection of a representative number of units from the population of study (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). For most small populations, however, it is preferred that the whole population is studied. Purposive sampling also referred as purposeful sampling was used to sample teachers and school managers. The researcher used this type of sampling because it allowed the researcher to select those participants who provided the richest information about the study topic (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Patton, 2002).

In order to solve the problem of too much diversity in students' population, the researcher narrowed the population by randomly sampling 30 students to make the sample easy to manage. This is affirmed by Best and Kahn (2006, p.20) that "Samples of 30 or more are actually considered large samples and those with fewer than 30, small samples". The simple random sampling was used to allow individuals to have an equal and independent chance of being selected (Best & Kahn, 2006). Again, simple random sampling was done to ensure that the probability of all the selection remains the same throughout the selection process (Chilisa & Preece, 2005).

Regarding random sampling, the researchers identified the population and all the individual names were written on a piece of paper and cut into pieces. Later all papers were placed in a container and picked randomly by the researcher from the container until the desired sample size of 30 was achieved. This procedure was in- line with Chilisa and Preece (2005) view that simple

random sampling starts with defining the population of study, identifying each member of the population and selecting individuals from the population.

3.6 Data collection procedures

The data were collected using qualitative methods, mainly questionnaires for teachers and focus group interviews for students. Before the data were collected, the researcher sought approval and made consent with all the relevant offices in order to be allowed to conduct a research. The researcher sought approval from the supervisor at the University of Botswana prior to any data collection and he responded in writing paving way to data collection (see Appendix A). In order to undertake the research, consent was sought through a letter to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (see Appendix B).Once the approval was received from the supervisor and the permit from the Research Office from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (see Appendix C) the researcher submitted a request in the form of a letter to the Director in the North West Region (see Appendix D) to conduct a study. The protocol was observed on a separate page which included the invitation of participants to engage in the study, and the participants were informed of the risks involved if any. The researcher visited the school to consent the School Head in order to issue questionnaires and conduct interviews (see Appendix E).

After the researcher gained access in school, appointment was made with the Head of House in order to be allocated time to seek consent with the students. There were 30 teachers who were given invitation letters (see Appendix F) to take part in the study prior the issuing of the consent forms. After getting positive responses from 20 teachers, consent forms (see Appendix G) were distributed to teachers two days after the invitation. After an agreement with teachers in the morning, the researcher sought approval with the students in the afternoon by issuing them with the consent forms (see Appendix G) and allowed them time to question where they needed clarity. The researcher distributed the teacher biographical data questionnaire (see Appendix H) to teachers after getting the consent forms. Members of management were also issued with an open-ended questionnaire relevant to them (see Appendix I). The researcher established rapport with the participants during the visits by explaining to them the intentions of the study.

The researcher also made certain that, the participants were comfortable and not disturbed during the data collection exercise. The focal discussions were held in the school library in which

the environment was conducive. This is in support of Kruger (1998) who asserts that, it is the duty of the researcher to ensure that the participants are safe and free from any distraction. Before the interview guide was availed to the participants, ground rules were set and participants allocated themselves pseudo names. This was followed by completion of biographical data questionnaire by the students (see Appendix J).Students' participants were attending standardized open-ended interviews in focus groups of at least 9 participants. The researcher availed questionnaire interview guide (see Appendix K) to the participants and was translated into a native language. Each group attended per day as per schedule prepared by the researcher and Head of House together with the participants. The focus group interviews were face-to-face and were conducted for three days. The questionnaires were administered to twenty teacher participants by the researcher.

3.6.1 Instruments

For any study to be effectively addressed properly, a suitable instrument is required. The type of instruments used depend on the type of information required (Bell, 2010). Therefore the instruments used to collect data for this study were self-administered questionnaires and focus groups interviews. The questions were piloted at a non-participating school, using teachers; senior teachers' academics, subject coordinators, a deputy School Head, a Head of Department and a School Head from a neighbouring junior secondary school. Piloting was done for purposes of improving the questions' reliability and validity in order for them to do the job for which they are needed. The researcher administered the questionnaires and conducted the interviews on separate days. Any amendments highlighted by the pilot were made to the questionnaire and focus group interview guide before the final version. This procedure was in-line with an assertion by Bell (2010) that whatever procedure for data collection is selected, it should always be examined critically to access the extent to which it is likely to be reliable or valid. Further, the researcher utilized her colleagues to validate the instruments. After the corrections were made the questionnaire and an interview guide were ready to be used in the main research.

3.6.1.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are data collecting tools in which respondents are given standardized questions to complete in a written form (Obasi, 1999). According to Coombes (2001) questionnaires are best

used for collecting factual data and appropriate questionnaire design is essential to ensure that valid responses are obtained from the questions. The researcher selected the questionnaire for teachers who are subject coordinators, senior teachers' academics, and members of the administration because it is easy to administer, reduces time and financial expenses. Questionnaire was also favoured because it tends to be more reliable than an interview because it avoids face to face interaction, thus reducing bias (Cohen, Manion, & Morris, 2007).Furthermore, a questionnaire can reach a large group in a short space of time (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).For this study, an open-ended type of questionnaire was used to allow further elaboration. Since the main goal of this study was to explore teachers' understanding and how they use SBG standards in classroom instructional delivery, teachers across various content areas were requested to complete the questionnaire.

It is worth noting that the researcher was aware of the fact that questionnaires have no proportions of returns and it lacks clarification and further probing. Also that with questionnaires it is not easy to ask questions in a way that each respondent will interpret them similarly; neither do people have the time to give great attention to the questions nor answers they provide. Nevertheless, a questionnaire was used because it is anonymous and economic in terms of money and time, and encourages honesty.

The researcher prepared twenty questionnaires for teachers. The questionnaires were divided into three sections. These included bio-data, respondents' confirmation as teachers and teachers' views on their experiences in the implementation of SBG. Part A was designed to elicit information on the respondents' gender, age, nationality, qualification and number of years in teaching. Part B contained semi-structured questions to confirm if the respondents are teachers. Part C contained 4 open-ended questions with 17 sub items which offered the respondents an opportunity to express their views on questions that reflect on their experience in the implementation of SBG in Botswana junior secondary schools. The respondents' perspectives on the introduction of SBG and the aims of changing from the traditional grading to SBG were included. In addition, questions to elicit teachers' views on their current grading practices were asked and how often did they use standards to give classroom instruction.

3.6.1.2 Focus group interviews for students

According to Chilisa and Preece (2005, p.141) "Focus group interview is a discussion-based interview in which multiple research participants simultaneously produce data on a specified issue." For this study, three focus group interviews were done with 30 randomly selected participating students who were divided into three groups each comprising of 11, 10 and 9 participants respectively. The standardized open-ended interview was deployed. In the interview participants were asked identical questions and the questions were worded so that responses were open-ended (Gall, Gall& Borg, 2003).Standardized open-ended questions were used because it allowed the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up. An interview schedule featuring a probe question and open-ended questions was designed to generate discussion. The interview guide comprised of 2 sections. Part A was designed to elicit information on biographical data. Part B included 4 standardized open-ended questions with 13 sub items which offered the respondents an opportunity to express their views on questions that asked about their experience in the implementation of SBG in Botswana junior secondary schools. The focus group demographics extracted data on gender, age, nationality, form and class. Hand written notes were generated during the interview for the purpose of capturing points of interest and importance. The discussion was tape- recorded with the consent from the participants. Focus group was selected because a wide range of issues can be covered in a short period and information can be checked for accuracy. The researcher ensured that she guarded against those who tried to dominate the discussion as Chilisa and Preece (2005) point out that focus group interview has limitation in the sense that few individuals can dominate and the researcher has to guard against that. The focus group interviews took approximately 60 minutes each group.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is an important aspect of any research that helps in drawing conclusions and generalizations of findings to a problem statement. Creswell (2003) points out that data analysis is not distinctly disconnected from other activities of the research process, such as data collection and formulating of research questions but rather it is a continuation. Creswell (2003) also point out that data analysis refers to how data collected from the field is classified and interpreted. For this study the data collected were analysed through the coding process and represented in the form of tables and percentages.

3.7.1 Data analysis procedures

The data were reviewed in order to obtain a general overview of the information. A detailed analysis began with the coding process using themes and categories. Focus group interviews and open-ended questionnaires were analyzed and coded based on emerging patterns and themes. The coding process was lead to deeper descriptions, which then led to more recurrent emerging themes. The themes were then woven together in a qualitative narrative. Following the transcriptions, the researcher contacted each participant so that they could have the opportunity to re-assess the respective transcript in order to validate accuracy of data collected. Lastly the meaning of the data was interpreted. According to Creswell (2010) data interpretation in qualitative studies involves explaining findings, answering the why questions, attaching significance to particular results and putting patterns in to analytic format. To address the notion that reporting in case studies is highly subjective and researcher biased, the researcher compared the interview findings and the questionnaire responses in order to establish connectivity among the two (Creswell,2010).

3.8 Ethical Consideration

According to Creswell (2009) the researcher must foresee any ethical issues that may arise during the qualitative research process. Since research involved data collection from people about people therefore, it was the researcher's mandate to protect the research participants by developing trust within them, promoting the integrity of the research and guard against any misconduct that might reflect on their institutions or organizations (Cresswell, 2009; Punch, 2005).

The researcher allowed individuals to make their own decisions by offering them an opportunity to decide, to the extent they are able, whether or not they wish to participate in research activities. The researcher made clear to the participants that their participation was voluntarily and they may quit during the process of the research if they so wish. The possible benefits were knowledge gained from the interviews and some little incentives of packets of biscuits from the researcher in appreciation for using their time.

3.9 Summary

The chapter has served to outline the research paradigm and design of the study focusing on the interpretive research paradigm used as well as an elaboration on the qualitative methodologies used. The chapter also outlined justifications for adopting qualitative research approach together with an explanation of the data collection procedures, methods and techniques. The role of researcher as a data collection instrument was also discussed. That is the researcher conducts interviews, take notes about the events and focus group interviews. Therefore, in order to maintain the integrity and usefulness of this study, the researcher made every effort to maintain the highest level of internal validity by standardizing the procedures. In order to check validity and reliability was also fairly explained. The discussion on protecting the human subjects in the research data collection was also given justice.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the qualitative case study findings from the open-ended questionnaires as well as from standardized open-ended interviews carried out by the researcher. It also describes data generated from open-ended questionnaire and two focus groups interviews. Initial themes that emerged from questionnaires were further explored in focus group interviews. The method of analysis employed was qualitative narrative data analysis. The qualitative data was presented according to the research questions in the open-ended questionnaire and it was complemented by the information from focus group interviews. Descriptive analysis was applied to present the profile of the respondents and the outline of the participants in the study. This chapter also discusses the themes within the context of this study, particularly how they align with the four research questions.

The findings of the study are arranged according to the emerging themes based on the research questions. These themes are: the aims that necessitated an introduction of SBG, availability of SBG policy, school academic performance, and philosophy on SBG, teachers' current grading practices, teachers' use of standards in classroom instruction and lastly SBG's benefits on students' performance.

4.1 Restatement of research questions

The study was guided by four research questions of which the first one sought to get teachers' views on what necessitated the introduction of standard-based grading. The second one identified teachers' current grading practices while the third question explored the extent to which teachers use standards to give classroom instruction. The last question sought to obtain teachers' views and knowledge on SBG benefits to students' performance. The four open-ended research questions had seventeen sub-items formulated from the research questions in order to get in-depth information from the teachers. Further, four standardized open-ended research questions and thirteen sub-items were used to gather detailed data from the students.

4.2 Response rate

Twenty open-ended questionnaires were distributed to teachers including three members from senior management and 18 were returned completed yielding a response rate of 90%. From the 30 randomly sampled students who consented to participate, 29 took part in interviews yielding response rate of 96.6% which is appropriate for data analysis to be carried out.

4.3 Demographic data

Table 1: Demographic data for teachers

Gender	Initial number	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	12	10	55.6
Female	8	8	44.4
Ages	**Initial number**	**Frequency**	**%**
22-35	8	7	38.9
36+	12	11	61.1
Nationality	**Initial number**	**Frequency**	**%**
Motswana	18	16	88.9
Foreigner	2	2	11.1
Qualifications	**Initial number**	**Frequency**	**%**
Diploma	10	9	50
Bachelor Degree	10	9	50
Masters Degree	0	0	0
Total	20	18	100

Number of years teaching	Initial number	Frequency	%
6	1	1	5.55
7	1	1	5.55
8	5	5	27.8
9	1	1	5.55
10	3	3	16.7
11	2	2	11.1
13	2	2	11.1
15	2	1	5.55
16	1	1	5.55
27	2	1	5.55
Total	20	18	100%

As shown in Table 1 above, the participants whose age ranged from 22-35 years were 7 (38.9%) whereas those who were 36+ years were 11 (61.1%). The ethnicity of the participants was mostly Batswana with the population of 16 (88.9%) and 2 (11.1%) foreigners. The qualification of the participants discovered were Diploma and Bachelor Degree with 50% each. Within the 18 participants, 10(55.6%) were males and 8 (44.4%) were females. The findings revealed that the least experienced teacher has taught for 6 years whereas the most experienced has taught for 27 years.

Table 2: Demographic data for students

Gender	Initial number	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	13	12	40
Female	17	17	56.7
Ages	**Initial number**	**Frequency**	**%**
13-15	29	28	93.3
16+	1	1	3.3
Nationality	**Initial number**	**Frequency**	**%**
Motswana	30	29	96.6
Foreigner	0	0	0
Class	**Initial number**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
2A	6	5	16.6
2B	4	4	13.3
2C	2	2	6.7
2D	2	2	6.7
2E	6	6	20
2F	3	3	10
2G	3	3	10
2H	4	4	13.3
Total	30	29	100%

As revealed in Table 2 above, 29 (96.7%) of the participants ranged between 13-15 years whereas only 1 (3.3%) participant was over 16 years. All the participants were Batswana by nationality which made it easier for the interview guide to be translated into native language so that all the respondents could understand the contents in the guide.

Table 3: Teacher participants responses to the questionnaire, part A

Questions	tqp 1	tqp2	tqp3	mqp4	tqp5	tqp6	tqp7	tqp8	tqp9
1.Number of students in your class	38-41	40+	40	45	40	45	20	-	39
2.Number of classes taught	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	2
3.Number of teachers in your subject	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	2
4.Number of years as a marker (JCE)	0	0	0	8	0	1	0	0	0

Table 3 continuation

Questions	tqp10	tqp11	tqp12	mqp13	tqp14	tqp15	tqp16	tqp17	Mqp18
1.Number of students in your class	38-43	-	15-25	40	35	45	20-25	38-43	36-43
2.Number of classes taught	4	3	3	1	2	4	3	5	3
3.Number of teachers in your subject	4	3	3	1	2	4	3	5	3
4.Number of years as a marker (JCE)	7	5	3	0	0	7	0	2	3

As shown in Table 3, the population of students in the classes taught by the participants ranged from 15-45. The number of classes taught by the participants was also explored. The results revealed that, 5 was the maximum number of classes taught by the participants at the time of study. Again, the least number of classes taught by the participants was 1 which is within the government's recommended number of classes per teacher, that is, 6 classes and 30 periods per week. The maximum numbers of teachers teaching the same subjects were 7 and the least were 3.

As reflected in Table 3 above, all the subjects in the school had full complement of staffing as per establishment register. At the time of the study, it was revealed that 8 (44.4%) teachers did mark Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) for Botswana Examination Council (BEC) and 10 (55.5%) were not markers for final examinations. This reflected less teachers marking as opposed to those not marking because of the criterion used to select markers, whereby teachers apply for advertised vacant posts at the Botswana Examination Council, supported by the recommendation from the School Head. The marking experience for teachers ranged from 1-8 years.

4.4 Data analysis and interpretation

The results are presented in a qualitative descriptive narrative form. A holistic picture of experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG was driven by description of respondents' experiences and the meanings they attached to them. The findings showed that their experiences are the same even though they expressed them differently. The data collected was organized into narrative descriptions with major themes. The researcher employed two methods of data collection, being open-ended questionnaire for teachers and standardized open-ended questions for focus group interviews in order for them to complement each other.

4.4.1 Research question 1: Aims that necessitated an introduction of SBG in schools.

Research question 1 sought to seek management and teachers' knowledge on the introduction of SBG by obtaining the views of teachers on the introduction of SBG and why it was introduced.

4.4.1.1 The introduction of SBG and its aims.

In item 1.1questionnaires for management and for teachers wanted to find out when SBG was introduced and what could have necessitated its introduction. "When was SBG introduced in your school and what was the aim of introducing it?"All the participating managers; stated that SBG was first housed in junior secondary schools in 2010 due to the change of curriculum from a norm-referenced to standard-based curriculum 2010 and grading in 2012.

The participants explained that the reform was introduced in an attempt to improve students' achievement. (MQP13) indicated that *"... for the past consecutive years, our country's academic*

performance has and it is still declining and with the hope to raise performance hence the introduction of SBG". A teacher (TQP1) concurred with this view by stating that, *"SBG was introduced to help students acquire skills."* A colleague pointed out that, *"... if the practice of SBG is properly done with the procedures followed in order for the learners to achieve the set standards, there was not going to be any student who leaves school empty handed without having acquired some skills"* (TQP17). (TQP16) stated that, *"I think this innovation was adopted in order to help us improve our results."* On the contrary (TQP3) said that, *"These initiatives are just brought to us without having researched on them and at the end we fail to implement them since we do not know what is expected from us."* Another teacher raised a concern that, the introduction of SBG increases workload for teachers when she said, *"Innovations that are adopted on top of others is just a way of putting much work on the plates of teachers so that we can fail to perform"* (TQP7).

Since the study was interested in finding out the experience of teachers in the implementation of the practice, the aims for SBG introduction were stated by the teachers. The respondents indicated that the main aim of SBG is to improve students' achievement and help students acquire proficient skills. It is clear from the findings that, implementation of SBG came as a gateway to improve results and it is important that schools devise strategies to fight the problem of low academic performance. Even though not all studies of SBG confirm improvement in student performance, comparison of SBG to non-SBG schools suggests no difference in the growth of the students performance level (Marzano, 2010).The study findings validate the views by Perlstein (2003) and Manzo (2001) that, SBG has been introduced in some countries across the globe in order to improve student achievement by focusing in instruction and the alignment of curriculum with the content standards.

The researcher's personal experience having worked as a head of academics is that, SBG's main aim is to improve students' achievement. Therefore putting learners in the centre of learning appears to encourage and motivate them. It seems when students are motivated, at the end, it brings out of them achievement skills as defined by content standards. Consequently, the researcher supports the findings of the study and the assertions from the literature that, to improve student achievement and skills acquisition, are the aims that necessitated an introduction of SBG in junior secondary schools.

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4.4.1.2 Availability of SBG policy

Item 1.2 for management and teachers sought to seek their views on the provision of SBG policy. "What can you say about the policy that was provided during the introduction of the practice?" The respondents indicated that, there was no policy available when the SBG was introduced. (MQP13) stated that: *"I don't remember seeing any documented policy on SBG but the school has been receiving some communiqué on SBG including the grading rules"*.(MQP4) corroborated this view by saying: *"During the cascading workshops by the BEC personnel we were not provided with the policy but we were well informed on the grading procedures."*All the teachers concurred with the members of management when they revealed that, during the workshops on SBG syllabus, they were not provided with the policy. Another teacher (TQP 17) affirmed that: *"No policy was availed to us in our workshops but the procedure that determined the award of marks was well explained to us and assessment syllabi were provided*".

The general sentiment was that, there was no documented policy for SBG. However, instead of a policy, the teachers were provided with the grading rules for awarding marks. The absence of the policy for the new innovation seems to make it obvious as to why the innovation cannot be properly implemented. It was revealed that the grading procedures were solely used for the implementation of SBG. It is so critical that schools device means of establishing their own SBG policies which comprise of all components necessary for the implementation of SBG. It appeared that, in the absence of the policy, the innovation was not well communicated from BEC to the recipients and implementers .Therefore, this tends to result in resistance by the implementers due to lack of a guiding principle. The findings verify the views by (Darling-Hammond, 1990 cited in Ramroop, 2004, p.5) that "Policy must be better communicated if it is to be well understood. Meaningful discussion and extensive professional development at all levels of the system are critical components of such communication, directives are not enough."

The researcher's personal experience as a school manager having managed teachers implementing new policies, can also assert that, it looks like poor implementation of education policies impede on the schools' goals as well as the country's education. Therefore, the researcher supports the findings of the study and the assertions from the literature that failure to establish policy document and lack of better communication on innovations might be major

causes of failure to SBG (Ramroop, 2004). Consequently, the researcher suggests that the MoESD in collaboration with BEC must establish a documented policy for SBG that can be used as a guiding tool for implementation.

4.4.1.3 SBG Training for teachers

Item 1.3for teachers' questionnaire and management questionnaire wanted to get the views of the school management and teachers on how SBG was disseminated to them. "How was SBG introduced into your school?" The teachers indicated that, workshops were held when the reform was first launched and teachers were informed of the changes in their syllabuses. One participant substantiated that, *"... the reform was rolled down through workshops which started with the deputy School-Heads followed by Senior Teachers and Subject Coordinators and some of those teachers who attended the SBG workshops never passed the information to us who had no opportunity of attending"* (TQP 8). This view was similar to the one expressed by (MQP13) who stated that, *"The cascading model was used in which resource people from BEC came and trained teachers so that they can go and train others."*Another participant said that, *"The model of introducing SBG which was used disadvantaged most of us because some of the teachers who were trained failed to pass what they were taught instead they would say they have forgotten what was said"* (TQP 1).The results reflected that the model that was used to launch SBG was basically cascading whereby a selected few would be trained so that at the end of the programme they go and train others.

It was a common finding from the study that, cascading was used to introduce SBG to teachers. However, this model seems to contribute to poor implementation as the selected few who are normally trained in most cases do not fully pass the information to others (Vally, 1998). This is in agreement with an assertion byYukl (2010) that, disconnecting from familiar practice to new practices, procedures and processes can cause personal twinge. Therefore, teachers need professional development in order to enlighten their thinking and change from old practice. Scholars in the likes of Stiggins and Conklin (1997) contend that, the success of any comprehensive assessment programme like that of SBG depends on the quality of teachers trained to assess. Studies have shown that many classroom teachers lack skills in assessment.

It is the opinion of the researcher that, it is a trend that most educators or management staff who receive training and are expected to cascade into their respective schools, in most cases never did as it was expected but instead lock the information in their cupboards. It is also debatably uncertain that one or two day training for teachers will be enough to understand a new approach to go and teach the colleagues as it is expected. This view is confirmed by Teacher (TQP1) by saying: *"The model of introducing SBG which was used disadvantaged most of us because some of the teachers who were trained failed to pass what they were taught instead they would say they have forgotten what was said."* This agrees with contention by Vally (1998, p.16) that "The cascade model of training where a selected few are trained to impart knowledge to others who in turn would pass it on has proved not as successfully as envisaged."

This is supported with an assertion by Ramroop (2004) that apart from the message "…getting badly distorted as it travels down the human chain" (Vally, 1998, p.16) these "trained" teachers when they go back to the same environment that has not changed, they find it difficult to incorporate the "new" ideas into the school's programme and this leads to a sense of paralysis on the whole implementation process. It seems not surprising to find teachers display both active and passive resistance to change. The resistance is a natural change process and unfortunately it is not given much attention in the training of SBG. Darling-Hammond (1990) in Ramroop ((2004) contends that, it is pivotal that before a new process is implemented, there should be a process of unlearning and understanding as to why there is a need for change. Often, that is ignored as it is assumed that, as the new innovation lands on top of others, teachers must be in a position to take on these changes and easily incorporate them into their daily practice. Consequently, the researcher as a manager and having dealt with teachers for years, one would realise that this is not like an easy task and this assumption really needs to be addressed. The researcher suggests that, teachers should be directly trained in their schools so that they can all be covered and gain confidence with the demands of the new curriculum and grading and implement it reasonably.

4.4.1.4 School academic performance

Item1.4 for teachers and management questionnaires and item 1.2 for students' focus group interviews asked; "How is your school academically performing?" Justify your answer. With this item, the researcher wanted to get views of the management, teachers and students on how their

school was performing academically and justify the performance they have aforesaid. Most of the respondents shared the same sentiment as it was reflected that 23 (76.6%) Student Focus Groups (SFGs) believed that their school has been doing well as it has been attaining position one in the region while 7 (23.3%) SFGs did not agree. In justifying their argument, Bame, in students focus group 1 (SFG1) said that *" Our school has been getting position one but with very low marks as little as 37.6% for last year(2014) which cannot be considered as a pass mark."*Oratile, in student focus group 1 (SFG1) also supported the view that, their school has been doing well by saying:*"I think Moeti has been doing well in the past years, ever since it has been getting good marks may be that was before the introduction of SBG."*

The teachers corroborated with the view that Moeti Junior Secondary School was performing well which was also discovered from the focus groups. It was indicated that 11 (61.1%) teachers supported that their school was performing well while 2 (11.1%) teachers said that their school was on average performance and 5 (27.7%) shared that their school performance was low. In support of good performance, a teacher questionnaire participant (TQP16) responded by stating that *"Our school performs to some extent in subjects like Art usually performs credibly well. Also in comparison to other schools in the region Moeti performs best. However, in terms of the national standards our performance leaves much to be desired"*. On the contrary to good performance, some participants did not agree that Moeti Junior Secondary School was a performing school. TQP11stated that, *"Even though our school attained position one in consecutive years, does not qualify that it is a performing school as it does not perform up to the national standards."* In support of that,(TQP 12) responded by saying: *"No good performance in our school even though we are at the top in the region our results are still very far from being good and BEC reports indicate that our students perform poorly in high order tasks."*A member of management raised a concern that, *"Since the introduction of SBG in 2012 our school performance declined since then till now. I think the change of curriculum and its grading is the cause"* (Management Questionnaire Participant 13).The other factor raised by (TQP16) which impacts on school performance was that, *"The school has no enough resources for implementation of SBG. This starts with shortage of classes and other teaching and learning materials."* Management questionnaire participant (MQP13) further stated that *"Teachers' training on SBG is the cause for low performance since the cascading was done during the*

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introduction of SBG and due to financial constraints no follow up was done through in-service training to equip the teachers with necessary skills.”

4.4.1.4A) Factors that contribute to good performance

In focal discussions students justified their responses for good performance when they mentioned that, their school rewards good performance which encourages competition amongst the students. According to the participants, competition amongst the students impact positively on their performance. They also shared that with the availability of a Student Representative Council (SRC), teachers are assisted in bringing order to school as far as student discipline is concerned. It is researcher's opinion that, a school with a disciplined student body is a good school. The general consensus for the teachers and students was that, their school has very cooperative teachers and students whose main aim was to produce skilled and responsible leaders of tomorrow. The teachers valued their school as a result –oriented, which made it easy for them to work towards a common goal. Another factor mentioned in focal discussions was that,” *Monthly academic awards and subjects quizzes against classes encourage competition amongst us.”*This was stated by Thabiso in SFG3.

The findings indicated that the school has a SRC which helps in instilling discipline to students. That was clear; the school involves student body in the school governance which is in line with the government pastoral policy which recommends 70% of students' representation in school committees (Republic of Botswana, 2007). The other factors that were stated as contributing to good performance were cooperative staff and competition encouraged among the students. This was done through the selection of the best ten performing students during tests and examinations and quiz class competitions. Even though the competition amongst the students might be bringing good performance but the practice is in disagreement with the attributes of SBG. This is supported by Guskey (2001) by his assertion that, in SBG, students are compared against performance standards than being compared against each other. This is done in an attempt to encourage all the students that, they are all capable as they can work at their own pace and achieve the content standards. If students are compared against each other, it gives chance to high achievers to dominate in the learning process. Consequently, it would give an impression

that SBG with its emphasis on high order thinking tasks is specifically designed for high achievers. This view supports the findings from some of the teachers who asserted that, only high achievers benefit from SBG. This should be known to teachers that, SBG was not designed for high achievers only. The findings have indicated that even though there are factors which help to bring good performance, there are those which negatively impact on students' performance.

4.3.1.4 B) Factors that impact on students' performance

A common cause of low performance in schools is students' indiscipline which impede on their learning as perceived by the participants from the focal discussions. One student shared that student' laxity impacts on their work when she said *"Some students' behaviours prove that they are not dedicated to school work and suggests that teachers go extra mile in informing the student body about the importance of education" (*Hope, SFG1). Another concern of low performance raised by one teacher was change of the curriculum and grading which required the recipients and implementers to adjust to it. The teachers were of the view that, the unavailability and access to learning/teaching resources necessary to implement SBG impede on its implementation hence poor student performance. Another factor raised by the management representative was that, lack of teachers' training on SBG is the cause for low performance.

 The focus groups gave students' indiscipline and laxity as contributory factors to low performance. Students' indiscipline is mainly manifested in leadership in schools and sometimes lack of parental involvement in children's education. The literature confirms that for a successful SBG all stakeholders must be involved. This view confirms an assertion by Guskey (2007) that parental involvement contributes to school performance. It was interesting that in the focal discussions none of the participants has cited parental involvement as a contributory factor to low performance. This may be a sign that; parents are not much involved in the implementation of SBG. However, the findings show that management and teachers have not seen students' indiscipline as a cause for low performance, instead a member of management cited change of curriculum and grading to standard-based as a contributory factor to low performance (MQP13). This may be due to the fact that when the participants described their school they revealed that

they have the SRC which works tirelessly with teachers to help guard against students' indiscipline.

Even-though the participants in both questionnaire and focal discussions did not see parental involvement as a contributing cause for low achievement by students, the researcher attests that parents must develop keen interest in the education and welfare of their children. By so doing students will take total responsibility in the learning process. This can make SBG a success as it requires learners to become active participants in the learning process and they are expected to take responsibility for their own learning. Lack of resources necessary for the success of SBG was also cited as a contributory factor to low performance. Amongst those, is teacher training on the concept of SBG. Therefore, the researcher can also attest to the view that in schools, there is normally shortage of learning and teaching resources. The researcher's observation is that some of the shortages seem to be the results of the poor planning and consultation like in the case of SBG. At the introduction of this innovation, not all resources were in place, such as prescription of relevant textbooks for the changed standard-based curriculum in 2010, which was the reason for standard-based grading in 2010. As a result, this became a challenge for teachers especially that some did not receive training on the reform. However the researcher suggests that schools conduct needs assessment in order to find out which resources are not available in their departments for the implementation of SBG and also training of teachers so that they can be competent on the implementation.

4.4.1.5 Philosophy on Standard-Based Grading

Item 1.5 was for teachers and management questionnaire and item 1.3 for students' focus group interviews; "What is your philosophy on Standard-Based Grading?" this item sought to seek management, students and teachers' viewpoints on SBG. It was indicated that 14 (77.8%) out of 18teachers had knowledge of what SBG is all about whereas one teacher showed that he had no idea and 3 left the question unanswered which reflected that 4 had no idea (22.2%) .The correlation between the responses showed that SBG is students' acquisition of proficient skills as defined by learning goals. This can be translated in to that; SBG can be of great help to the students to gain defined skills by the learning standards. The teachers showed that, they have limited knowledge on the philosophy of SBG; this is proven by the responses they gave which did not reveal much on philosophy of the concept. The focus groups had no idea of what the

grading used on them was called. In an attempt to help the participants to be part of the discussion, the researcher used probing questions in order to obtain relevant information from them. The students' lack of knowledge indicated that not all stakeholders are taken on board in the implementation of SBG and it showed that the practice was not being fully implemented by the whole school.

Table 4: Participants' philosophy on SBG

participant	Philosophy on SBG
TQP1	Students are examined on set standards and they are expected to meet them
MQP4	System that measures what students can do and be able to do by not comparing them against others.
TQP5	Capabilities of students based on the acquired skills.
TQP6	Reporting students proficiency in a number of specific learning goals.
TQP7	Measuring skills acquired by students as defined by the learning standards.
TQP8	Giving a score to the student for having mastered a certain objective skill.
TQP9	Students graded according to the proficiency on well-defined learning objectives.
TQP10	Grading the students against the set standard but not comparing with other students.
TQP12	Grading learners according to an individual's mastery of certain skills, no comparison against others.
MQP13	Grading students using certain prescribed descriptors i.e skills displayed.
TQP14	Awarding students marks looking at how they have grasped certain aspects.
TQP15	Fair and reliable method of grading learners.
TQP16	System of measuring learners' skills and ability on well-defined course standards.
MQP18	Assessment/grading based on students demonstrating mastered skills.

As shown in Table 4 above, teachers managed to give their viewpoints on SBG. There were some commonalities in the teachers' responses as they asserted that, SBG is an assessment or grading based on skills acquired by students as defined by learning standards. Again, students are

not compared against each other. In addition, another teacher indicated that, "*It is a fair and reliable method of grading*" (TQP15). These findings are in agreement with assertions by Guskey (2009) that, SBG implementation involves assessment of student work in relation to pre-established standards and criteria, usually illustrated in rubrics and students are not compared against each other.On the other hand, the focus groups had void minds on the concepts as the researcher had to use probing questions in order to get the information from them.

It is clear that teachers are not conversant with the SBG innovation because important attributes such as, learners re-take of assessments was not mentioned by the participants when proving their philosophy on SBG. Nevertheless, teachers had an idea that SBG's emphasis is on students acquiring skills and students are compared against standards. Re-take of assessment is the other SBG attribute evident from the literature which helps learners in achieving non-proficient skills since they will be given a second chance. Interestingly none of the teachers had knowledge of re-take of assessment in SBG. This is because re-take is not practiced at the national examination level but, after the course of study, students are assessed and graded using the standard-based procedure while the practice in Botswana does not allow re-take of assessment. Teachers also did not mention alignment of standards to their lesson planning and implementation, and this showed that teachers are not well informed on this concept.

The researcher can also bear out to the findings that, since SBG is a criterion-referenced testing which measures student performance against a fixed set of pre-determined criteria or standards therefore, supports the view by (TQP15) that SBG is a reliable type of grading which can be fully practiced to avoid teachers' subjectivity in grading. The researcher further posits that even-though re-take of assessment is not officially practiced, it is suggested that teachers allow students to re-do tasks in formative assessments in order for them to acquire non-proficient skills. An assertion by Spady (1992) shows that, in SBG, learners are expected to learn as they progress through their education and the final scores of a student should reflect their proficiency of each skill assessed. It is the researchers' view that since the core assumption that underpins SBG is that all learners can succeed at their own pace; therefore the way teachers deliver their instruction will have an impact on the level of success of the learner. However, SBG is learner-centred in that, the emphasis is on what the learner should be able to know, understand and demonstrate, and to become not what the teacher wants the learner to achieve. Since this shift

requires learners to become active participants in the learning process, and is expected to take responsibility for their own learning, the researcher suggests that the educators are required to give opportunities to learners to work at their own pace in different ways according to their individual abilities and levels of development as per SBG requirement.

4.4.2 Research question 2: Teachers' current grading practices

Research question 2 for management, teachers' questionnaires and for focus groups, sought to get the views of management, teachers and students on the current grading practices deployed in their school. The researcher wanted to explore if the learners are made aware of their expectations and to identify the type of assessment used by teachers in the implementation of SBG.

4.4.2.1 Learning objectives and goals

Item 2.1 for teachers' questionnaire: "How do you inform your students about the objectives and goals that they are expected to achieve at the end of the term?" Item 2.1 in management questionnaire: "How do you ensure that your teachers inform the students about the objectives and goals that they are expected to achieve at the end of the term?" In focal discussion research question 2, item 2.1 in focus groups reads: "How do your teachers inform you about the objectives and goals that you are expected to achieve at the end of the term?"It was revealed that teachers and students were in agreement that teachers avail the subjects' course outline which has topic objectives to the students at the beginning of the term. The other similar findings were that, teachers say out general and specific objectives at the beginning of the new topic and discuss them with the students. Maths teacher (TQP5) shared that*, "...in every lesson, objectives are laid out for students according to SMASSE."*The focus group corroborated with the view that, the teachers articulate objectives when they start a new topic and students are normally required to copy them down.

The teachers and students were in agreement that teachers provide the subjects' clear course outline and objectives to the students before the term begins. It was also indicated that teachers discuss the goals and objectives with the students in order for them to gain an understanding of the contents of the lesson. It is clear that learners are made aware of their expectations through objectives and goals of the topic. Therefore, by so doing teachers have established direction for

the learning process. The study results confirm the views by Black and William (2009, p.7) and Rosales (2013) who described this portion of the process as "…establishing where the learners are going." While Rosales asserts that learning goals provide a firm foundation for communication about the skills and concepts a student does or does not know well as offering both the teacher and student clear direction for each unit of study. This agrees with the contention by Sadler (1989) that once the students have clearly mastered the learning goals, they must have the opportunity to measure the gap between their current abilities and the expectation set forth in the learning targets.

It is the researcher's view that learning goals should be students-achievement based, that is, it should focus on what students learn, achieve and accomplish. From the researcher's experience in teaching, learning goals can be of great benefit if they can be translated into lesson objectives, then the teacher identifies exactly what students need to accomplish by the end of each class period and how the teacher will know that the students have achieved this goal.

4.4.2.2 Students 'current stand in learning

Item2.2 for management and teacher questionnaire; "How do you realize where your students currently stand in the learning?" From the focus group interview guide; "How do you realize where your students currently stand in the learning?" This research item sought to get the views on the component of students' current stand in learning in the implementation of SBG. Similar responses were obtained from the teachers and focal discussions as they indicated that they identify students' learning through their responses to the task assigned to them and the skills displayed for the learning objective. Another teacher, (TQP3) indicated that "*We get to know their current stand when analyzing the marks at the end of the month or term.*"It was revealed that, students are given formative assessment such as quizzes, homework, oral questioning, class exercises, projects, experiments, tests and examinations in an attempt to know how much students have mastered the learning. The findings from the focal discussions were similar to those of teachers which revealed that students are given homework, projects, revision modules, tests and examinations in order to check their learning. One of the students lamented that, *"...not all students acquire skills expected during the lessons but teachers continue with the next objective because they always say time is not on our side to complete the syllabus (*Theo, SFG2)." The students were of the view that they reflect on themselves through their capability in

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answering questions correctly or getting right the task entrusted to them. The student from (SFG1) substantiated this view by articulating that, *"When I see myself recalling what I was taught in previous lessons, now I know my stand in learning."*

It was clear that students' learning was reflected through their responses to what was assigned to them and the skills they have acquired for the learning objectives. It is the researcher's opinion and evident from the study findings that some teachers check students' capabilities through monthly tests or end of term examination instead of checking regularly. The results reflected that, students' learning was checked by formative assessments such as quizzes, homework, oral questioning, class exercises, projects, experiments, tests and examinations. These formative assessments could be used by teachers to communicate students' progress to their parents so that if there is a possibility of them helping they are at liberty to do so. The question worth questioning is what happens to those students who have not acquired the proficient skills? As stated by (Theo,SFG2) that not all students acquire skills expected during the lessons but teachers continue to the next objective due to pressure of limited time to complete the syllabus. This is contrary to assertions by Guskey (2003) that, as students demonstrate their acquired skills and knowledge; those who did not achieve are allowed to re-take the assessment. Therefore the researcher suggests that teachers should make learners central to learning and allow them opportunity to re-do the task assigned to them until they all acquire skills and knowledge as defined by content standards.

4.4.2.3 Grading practices

Item 2.3 for management, teachers' questionnaire and focus groups asked; "What type of grading is used in your school and how effective is it?" With this question the researcher's interest was to find out whether the type of grading used was aligned with the standard-based grading or not and also to find out if the grades do not only reflect the final results but show how students got there.

All teachers indicated that, in their school, they use standardized grading as defined by the school academic policy. The results stated that, percentages are used to grade tests and examinations, then the alpha grades are converted into numeric grades of 9,7,5,3,2,1 which means A=9,B=7,C=5,D=3,E=2 and F=1. The results showed that, 13/18 (72%) participants

justified why they grade in percentages while 5(28%) did not justify. One of those who justified said *"Marks are awarded in percentages because the marks allocated to each question in a test paper can be easily calculated into percentages and converted into numeric grades"* (TQP16).It was also reflected by the teachers that, grades are converted into numeric grades for tests and examinations. This is so, because the report cards are communicated in SBG rules which use numeric grades to show students' achievement in respective subjects and then the overall grade is calculated into aggregate. Another teacher mentioned that, when they grade homework and class exercises they use raw marks to communicate to students their achievement levels. The participant did not justify why they use raw marks for grading homework. From the focal discussions, the general perspective was that teachers give raw marks for home work and class work and use percentages for tests and examinations which are normally converted into numeric grades for the purpose of reporting. The student (Bame, SFG3) declared that *"the award of raw marks for homework does not serve much purpose to us since in most cases the teachers do not show the skills we have not acquired besides putting a grade mark."*

The findings have shown that 2 (11.1%) out of 18 teachers gave students scoring guides for essay writing so that students would be well equipped with some writing skills. It has proven that majority 16 (88.9%) of teachers did not create the scoring guides which brings in the question of how fair would their grading be without the scoring guides? The students validated that, in subjects like English, Setswana and Religious Education whereby they write essays. Some teachers in those aforesaid subjects give scouring guides so that they would know what is expected of them. It is clear that this other component of SBG was not fully practiced in the school. This brings in the question of, is the grading practice for teachers in Moeti Junior Secondary School effective and do teachers understand proper implementation of SBG? Therefore, the researcher suggests that students could work together to evaluate their work. At the end of the assessment, they could look at the scoring guides and grade themselves. In that way students would understand the different levels of performance and therefore, find it easier to meet high expectations.

The findings showed that, the grading in the school was standard as defined by the school academic policy. It was apparent that percentages were used for grading students' tests and

examinations of which alpha grades were then converted into numeric grades of 9, 7, and 5,3,2,1 which is BEC grading procedure for the curriculum 2010. It has showed that 13 (72%) of the teachers justified their use of percentage for tests and examinations while 5 (28%) did not justify. The teachers stated that percentages are easily calculated after getting the raw marks from the marks achieved by the student which were allocated to questions in the test or examination paper. Participants verified that for grades to be converted from alpha into numeric grades was to allow for aggregation which was used in reporting the students' progress to the parents. The findings stated that the grading procedure was as per BEC rules. It reflected that the numeric grades used for reporting did not show the proficiency achieved by the students. This is in disagreement with literature review when Danielson (2007, p.62) asserts that, "...indicate that its purpose is not to certify mastery of content by students but to provide information to teachers, students and their parents as to what has been learned and guide next steps." Guskey (2001) maintained that the student is encouraged to continue learning and practicing until the concepts in a topic are passed with proficiency. When grades are reported in this manner the reporting shares explicitly the areas of strength and weaknesses of individual student.

It is the researcher's view and evident from the study that, teachers seem to be stuck into traditional grading systems that, grading only reflects the final result but does not show how students obtained it. This perception is supported by the study findings in which some components of SBG are not given much attention. Even the practice of grading which makes use of percentages and raw marks to communicate student's progress does not contain students' marks of concepts within the subject. The findings reveal that numeric grades are used to report students' progress, the fact that the marks do not show the concepts achieved by the student, the SBG is far from accomplishment. Therefore, the researcher suggests that unless assessment corresponds to specific standards then transition to SBG will be difficult. The lesson plan must cater for assessment of all students on each learning standard, in order for this grading system to be useful. Unless when teachers report on how well each student progress against each standard, then SBG system will become essential. As proved by the findings, the teachers' grading was not fully aligned to SBG procedures whereby a grade for a subject, its reporting would contain student's marks of concepts within the subject. As such it cannot be justified that the teachers' grading practice in Moeti was aligned with SBG. However, it was clear that the teachers' grades

only reflected the final results but did not show how the students arrived there, as such the grading practice in the school cannot be said to be effective.

4.4.2.4 Reporting students' progress

Item 2.4 for management, teachers' questionnaire and focus groups interviews asked: "How is progress communicated to parents?" With this question, the researcher's interest was to find out how students' achievement was being communicated to the parents. It was explained that, the reporting style used is from the Botswana Examination Council (BEC), which used points for grading subject level, and overall grade was calculated into aggregate. One teacher responded by stating that,*" The marks awarded for tests and examinations are in percentages and then converted to numeric grades when results are electronically analyzed"* (TQP9). Another teacher (TQP8) said, *"Even though we use numeric grading to show students' achievement, it does not communicate to students or parents which standards have been achieved and not*." The focal discussions corroborated with views from the teachers that, the reporting style used numeric grades and aggregates. When students were responding to the usefulness of the type of reporting, they indicated that they did not see any authenticity of the reporting, except that it was the same procedure used for final examination which becomes advantageous to them to familiarize themselves with the grading. (PrinceSFG3) shared that, *"...reporting style is not easy for the parents to read, as compared to the system of letter grades that we know from primary."* The same participant further maintained that, when communicating students' progress to parents, teachers have to explain to the parents what points mean, and keep on referring to the traditional grading that was used on them.

The results proved that, the type of grading used in the school at the time of the study was SBG procedure, which used points for grading. The findings reflected that, students have not seen the accuracy of this kind of reporting, except that, the grading has been considered advantageous because it was the same procedure used during final examinations. This observation is supported by an assertion by Guskey and Jung (2006) that educators make the mistake of choosing the reporting format before considering its function. In this case, it seems after the introduction of SBG in schools, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development adopted the type of reporting format which used points and aggregate without having considered its purpose. According to

Jung and Guskey (2007) the main purpose of grades and report cards is to communicate students' progress to their families. Therefore if the type of reporting is not understood by parents, it means SBG reporting is not properly done. This is supported by the findings which indicated that the use of numeric grades do not communicate to parents which standards have been achieved or not achieved. This agrees with an assertion by Guskey and Bailey (2001) that, each tool for reporting must accomplish specific purpose, by considering the primary audience, what we want them to know and how we like the information to be used. This is one of the challenges that have been identified by Guskey (2001) in his study of the implementation of SBG.

The researchers' opinion is that, the reporting of students' progress in the school did not show students' achievement on each learning goal therefore, the researcher's experience as a teacher supports the literature that, grades and report cards' main function is to inform the students' parents about their progress. However, the researcher supports the contention by Guskey (2001) that even though the report cards are primary methods of reporting students' progress to parents, there are various methods used by schools to report achievement. On those basis the researcher suggests that the school can adopt such methods used for reporting being; open-day meetings, newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, student-led conferences and evaluated projects or assignments. The school should also do research on SBG reporting style that could be detailed enough to be understood by all the stakeholders.

4.4.3 Research question 3: Teachers' use of standards in classroom instruction.

Research question 3 sought to explore how standards are applied by those who work in instruction. Also, to find out how students get the knowledge of description of standards for grading and clarity of teacher expectations.

4.4.3.1 Subject grade descriptors

Item 3.1 for management, teachers' questionnaires and students' interview guide asked; "How do you inform your students about the grade descriptors for your subjects?" With this item, the researcher wanted to find out how teachers with the same standards inform and clarify to the students the assessment criteria which use grade descriptors in order for students to know their expectations. From the focal discussions, it showed that all the students had no idea of what the

grade descriptors were. Interestingly from the focus groups, one of the students out of interest uttered that, "*Madam! Maybe if you could share with us what the grade descriptors are, we can recall what you mean as gongwe you are using a different name*" (AtangSFG3).

As shown in Table 5 below, not all teachers gave and discussed with students the written descriptions of standards for grading. This was supported by the fact that, 5 (27.7%) out of 18 teachers confessed that they never availed nor discussed the grade descriptors with the students whereas 2 teachers (11.1%) TQP6 andTQP15 did not understand the question as it was proved by their responses. From the data analysis 11(61.1%) out of 18 teachers gave various views which showed that they informed the students about the grade descriptors. It was discovered from the responses that, this component was not given much attention. That is affirmed by the comments that, "*...not as often as maybe I should*" (TQP12) and another teacher (TQP16) said that "*...availed a copy to students but much room for improvement.*"

Table 5: Teachers' responses to availability of grade descriptors

Participant	Subject	Response
TQP1	Mathematics	Availed a copy to the students.
TQP2	Design & Technology	Never availed descriptors to them.
TQP3	Physical Education	Explain assessment syllabus to the students per module.
MQP4	Setswana	Once displayed on notice boards and students removed them.
TQP5	Mathematics	Never showed them the descriptors.
TQP6	Business Studies	Through a short questionnaire to give teacher feedback.
TQP7	Home Economics	Not at all.
TQP8	Religious Education	Only for essays, we availed individual essay marking criteria,
TQP9	Agriculture	Availed a copy to the class.

TQP10	English	Not at all.
TQP11	Science	We standardize marking keys guided by BEC marking criteria.
TQP12	French	Not as often as I maybe I should. Learners find goals not achievable.
MQP13	Mathematics	Not at all. Teachers are not familiar with SBG.
TQP14	Agriculture	Availed them to students to copy them at the back of their notebooks.
TQP15	Setswana	Assess using group work and presentation.
TQP16	Art	Availed a copy to students but much room for improvement.
TQP17	Moral Education	Discuss grade descriptors in general not for specific subject.
MQP18	Social Studies	Discuss with the students unfortunately not displayed in the classroom.

The focal groups pointed out that, they were not informed on grade descriptors. The teachers reflected that, not all of them availed and discussed with students the written descriptions of standards for grading. The findings proved that 5 (27.7%) of the participants never availed nor discussed the grade descriptors with the students. Surprisingly from the teachers, the findings have showed that 11 (61%) availed the grade descriptors to students in diverse ways whereas the students have confessed that they have never came across such. This means that, there was no correlation between the teachers' responses and students' responses on this component of SBG. It was clear that, this innovation of SBG was not given much attention by the whole school; this was supported by teachers' indication that they have not given it attention. Literature reflects that, the implementation of SBG includes development of written description of standards for grading. This view is affirmed by Hammer (2007) and Tan and Prosser (2004) that, implementing standard-based assessment includes improvement of written descriptions of standards for grading tasks, often called grade descriptors, both to serve as a guide for marking process and clarify teacher expectations for students.

From the researcher's view, an observation was made by the researcher that, it appeared normal for teachers not to provide the written descriptions of standards to students which would show

teachers' expectations. It is therefore suggested that all the subjects should discuss the description of standards with students because by so doing, individual students would take action and strategize on how to reach the content standards. This view agrees with an assertion by Hammer; Tan and Prosser (2007; 2004) that, written description of standards for grading tasks often serves as a guiding process for marking and clarifies teacher expectation for students."

4.4.3.2 Students' self-assessment

Item 3.2 for management, teachers' questionnaire and for focus groups interviews was that; "How do you encourage your students to do self-assessment in order to develop their thinking skills and understanding?" With this item, the researcher sought to get the teachers' views on how they encourage the students to reflect on themselves in order to develop their thinking skills and understanding of the task entrusted to them. It was affirmed that, teachers never gave thought to students' self-assessment as revealed by the responses such as: done, never give it attention, and N/A. Another teacher, (TQP9) pointed out that, *"Students are encouraged to check their understanding by setting themselves questions using the objectives of the lesson and answer the questions by themselves."* A colleague (TQP16) also shared that *"Self-assessment is done by students through conference session with individual students as well as open critique sessions."* The general feeling obtained from the teachers was that students introspect themselves and then identify their mistakes. Teachers further declared that after teachers have marked the students' work they are given opportunity to identify their mistakes and share that with others.

The findings showed that, just like teachers, the students in focal discussions understood self-assessment to mean the student introspection in order to develop one's thinking skills. Students' views matched with teachers' responses when they shared that, they set themselves questions and attempt them, then submit to teachers for marking. A different view from (Atang, SFG3) reflected that after she has read her notes, she summarizes the notes in order to check her level of understanding. On the other hand, other students stated that, they attempt past examination papers and request teachers to mark for them (Bame, SFG3; Kuende, SFG3& Baba, SFG2). It was declared that even though teachers never gave this component attention, it was evident that students made use of it in order to achieve desired results, as it was revealed by the findings.

The findings validated that, teachers never gave thought to this element of SBG; this was supported by their responses which reflected that the component was not fully practiced. However, teachers substantiated that students are encouraged to check their understanding by setting themselves questions, using objectives then attempt them. Another teacher showed that this component was checked through students' conference sessions. However, from the students' focus groups reflected some connection with teachers' responses when they shared that, they set themselves questions and attempt them then submit to teachers for marking. The findings confirm the view by Heritage (2007, p.13) that students are empowered as they "...develop the ability to monitor and assess their own learning, so that they recognize when they are learning and when they are not" as they develop strategies to respond when they realize that they are not learning.

It is the opinion of the researcher that, teachers should give students the opportunity to monitor their progress even by plotting their progress for all proficient skills achieved, so that they would know which skills they have achieved and have not achieve. Therefore, the researcher supports the findings of the study and assertions from the literature that, students' involvement in self-assessment allows them to be more focused with their skill acquisition. In that case, the researcher suggests that the whole school could adopt the method used by (TQP16), who declared that, students' assessment is done through conference sessions. This might help in identifying the students' understanding.

4.4.3.3 Teachers' feedback to students

Item 3.3 for management and teachers' questionnaires and focus groups; "After how long do teachers give students their feedback and what does your home work policy say?" with this question the researcher was interested in finding out teachers' feedback to students and what does the school home work policy say about feedback. Similar results were found from management, teachers and students when they concurred with that, teachers are expected to return feedback to students within six days from the end of the last paper written during tests or examination. Teachers' responses focused on tests and examinations but silent on the assignments given to students. It proved that, in all the three focus groups they said that there was no available homework policy in their school since the six day policy was only in use during the monthly tests and examinations. A student (Oratile, SFG1) stated that, *"Some teachers give*

us work without saying when to submit and for those who collected our work; it will depend on the load that the teacher has in order to bring feedback."The students said that in subjects like Mathematics they are given work every day and the next day they get the feedback which helps them to focus on the areas where proficiency was not achieved. (Thabo, SFG2) expressed that in some subjects that remained anonymous, *"...teachers get our books and take long with them whereas some even misplace them."* The students pointed out that; this put them on a disadvantage because they would write monthly tests and examination without knowing their feedback.

It was clear that, there was no homework policy in the school at the time of this study, as the six day policy only applied to tests and examinations. It is so pivotal that, the school establishes the homework policy in order to curb the problem of students' feedback being given according to the teacher's schedule. This view is supported by the study findings which revealed that some teachers give students work and return the feedback depending on the load that the teacher has. Literature has shown that feedback is a powerful tool to generate self-efficacy for students by linking their efforts with success in performance (Urich, 2012).Therefore, it is the researcher's view that the school could use the same policy used for tests and examinations to serve the same purpose for all tasks assigned to students in order to help the students to get their feedback on time so that they can take action on non-proficient skills.

4.4.3.4 Teachers feedback with reference to students' strengths and weaknesses.

Item 3.4 for management, teachers and students focal groups asked; "How do you give students feedback with reference to their strengths and weaknesses on each learning goal?" This question item wanted to find out the type of feedback given to students, if it shows them their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers stated that, it was not always the case that they showed the students their strengths and weaknesses on each learning goal. This view was affirmed by (TQP12) that *"Sometimes feedback is lacking in terms of showing strengths and weaknesses since I rely too much on performance."* Teachers proved that their feedback focuses on general performance. On the other hand (TQP16) viewed that, *"It is mostly general in terms of theory and more specific to each learning goal in practical work."*Teacher (TQP9) argued that *"Since the feedback is discussed during the lessons with the whole class, attention is never given to individual students*

*to give feedback on each learning goal."*Similar findings were discovered from the focus groups as one student (Gloria,SFG3) said that,*"...teachers' comments are general when giving us feedback, they write, 'can do better', 'keep it up', ' excellent', 'good', 'work harder', 'fair' and 'poor'."*

The findings reflected that, with reference to teachers' feedback to students, showing their strength and weaknesses, teachers uncovered that it was not always the case that they showed students' strength and weaknesses on each learning goal. The results show that, since feedback was normally given during the lesson with the whole class, attention was never given to individual students. It was also stated that teachers' comments are normally general. This finding is confirmed by an assertion by Urich (2012) that, it was the normal practice that in a classroom, feedback was given to selected participating students and it was usually general instead of being specific. It is therefore, clear that another component of SBG which can contribute to success was not properly practiced as per SBG standards. This is in disagreement with the literature which states that strengths and weaknesses specifically describe the quality in student's work relative to learning targets (Brookhart, 2008). Therefore, the researcher as a teacher supports the findings and literature which says that, it is common to find the teachers in a state of lax to provide feedback to learners in pressure of the time constraint to cover the syllabi. A teacher (TQP9) asserts that feedback given during lessons with the whole class, attention is not given to each student. However, it shows that the student-teacher ratio of 1:45 at maximum at Moeti Junior Secondary School seems to make it impossible for teachers to attend to individual students needs.

Therefore, the researcher suggests that teachers re-structure their times in such a way that feedback can be given to students at convenient times rather than in a lesson. By so doing teachers will be able to assist students in developing improvement strategies in order for them to achieve the standards. This view is in agreement with an assertion by Urich (2012) that time must be reserved and structured for learners to reflect on and interact in order for them to achieve and master the proficiency skills.

4.4.4 Research Question 4: Teachers' understanding on how SBG benefits students' performance.

The research question 4 was interested in obtaining students and teachers' views and knowledge on how SBG benefits students' performance.

4.4.4.1 Measuring students' proficiency skill.

Item 4.1 for management, teachers' questionnaires and students' focus groups interview guide, the researcher sought to find out how teachers measure students' proficiency on well-defined objectives by this question: For teachers' questionnaire: "How do you measure students' proficiency (skill) level?" For management questionnaire: "How do your teachers measure students' proficiency (skill) level?" For students focus group interview guide: "How do your teachers measure your proficiency skill level?"

Similar findings were found from the teachers and from the focal discussions. Teachers explained that they measured students' level of proficiency through class activities, demonstrations, practical exercises, research projects, administering exercises to measure different skills. This is confirmed by views by (TQP5; TQP9 andTQP16) that "*Students' proficiency is measured through homework and practical exercise that recognizes diversity of learners such as their learning styles*."Students supported that, their proficiency was measured through demonstration, practical work and topic quizzes. Another student (Oratile, SFG1) expressed that " *... for those students who failed to achieve the skills defined by the learning objective, first they are given* corporal *punishment and then the teacher moves on without offering students opportunity to re-do the task."* Another concern raised by students was that, if they are not re-assessed, then it was a disadvantage to them because the proficient skill which they did not achieve will be assessed on the final examination which might make them fail.

It was stated by both teachers and students that, students' proficiency is measured through class activities, demonstration, projects, and class exercises. However, the findings reflected that non-proficiency was not taken care of by the teachers. This made it clear from the findings that, teachers did not practice re-assessment for non-proficient skills but instead the teaching continued with those who have achieved the standards. This differs with an assertion by Rosales (2013) that SBG allows students to re-test concepts after further practice and review provides them time to develop and demonstrate that development at their pace, when they are ready.

Researcher's view is that teachers' failure to re-assess non-proficiency of students appeared to be due to shortage of both physical and time resources as indicated in the findings. It is a fact that in most of the schools in Botswana, there is shortage of teaching and learning areas to the extent that even laboratories are used as base rooms and for teaching all other subjects. However, teaching becomes more abstract than concrete as at times lessons are attended from outdoor areas which makes it not easy to employ learner-centred approach. The findings reflected that, the focal school initially was an eighteen stream which later turned into a twenty-four stream without the expansion of the buildings and other resources. Therefore, the learner centred approach that was recommended in SBG seems not to be working due to shortage of resources. Consequently the researcher supports the findings that non-proficient skills are not re-assessed by teachers therefore, the researcher suggests that the Ministry of Education and Skills Development in collaboration with BEC should enforce the UNICEF initiative of child friendly schools which recommend that learners should be put in the centre of learning.

4.4.4.2 SBG benefit to students

Item 4.2 for management and teachers' questionnaire says: In students' focus groups interview guide; "How has the implementation of SBG helped you grow as a learner and what evidence can you use to support your answer?" With this question the researcher wanted to obtain the participants' views on how they think SBG profit the students' performance. The findings reflected that SBG helps students become open-minded, ensures creativity and develops their thinking skills. Teachers and students concurred with the view that since students control their learning, therefore they become motivated. There was a general feeling raised by teachers as confirmed by (MQP18; TQP15 and TQP3) "*SBG benefits the high achiever students than the low achievers because of its attribute of high-order thinking tasks."* Another teacher (TQP2) confessed that he is not sure if SBG is of benefit to his students because he has very little knowledge on the concept whereas the other teacher (TQP11) left the question unanswered. It was also expressed by two teachers that SBG could benefit the students if it could be fully implemented (TQP8 and TQP16).It was further affirmed by (TQP16) that *"SBG is mostly utilized during analysis of tests and examinations and less in the classroom therefore its benefit on students cannot be measured."*From the focus groups 24 (82.7%) out of 29 participants indicated that SBG has moderately developed them while 6 (20.6%) out of 29 students did not

agree. In justifying how SBG has helped them grow as learners, (Phatsimo, SFG1) stated that,"*...because we are given more chance to show our capabilities than the teacher doing it for us*."Another student, (Theo, SFG2) affirmed that, the concept has not benefited them because,"*...we are not aware of the descriptions of standards for grading except for grading rules that we know*." In addition another student attested that, "*...if we can be given opportunity for re-assessment that would help us grow as learners* (Prince, SFG3).

It was indicated that, SBG helps students become open-minded, creative, develops thinking skills and triggers students' motivation since they control their learning. This confirms an assertion by BEC (2013) that, standard-based curriculum and grading was adopted for its emphasis on development of high order thinking skills such as inquiry, creativity, analytical problem solving skills. This is in line with the expectations for the national goal of improving educational standards. One teacher (TQP16) pointed out that, SBG was not fully implemented in the classroom therefore; its benefit on students' performance cannot be measured. On the contrary one of the students asserted that, the fact that they are given more chance to show what they are capable of doing, has developed them as students. This assertion by the student validated the view that, when students are given chance to work on their pace they are instilled with motivation and at the end achieve some desired results. This view confirms the contention by Guskey (2003) that, with SBG, learners are given opportunities to work at their own pace and in different ways according to their individual abilities.

The researcher's observation is that, when new education policies are adopted and teachers are not informed, the implementation seems to impede on the students like in the case of SBG. It was clear from the findings that students in Moeti have got less to benefit from SBG because the curriculum implementers are not informed. When teachers are not informed like it was the case in Moeti JSS, teachers would not see how well the students progress in relation to each standard and they will not know what they could do about those not achieving the standards. In addition, lack of teachers' understanding on the significance of SBG phenomenon will disadvantage both teachers and students to determine how often students have been assessed on a particular standard and whether they need to spend extra time on it or as the whole class. The researcher supports the findings and literature review by Colby (1999) that SBG gives easy access to each student's performance, and teachers could focus discussions on how to meet the needs of

individual students basing on their progress. Therefore, it is justified from the results that the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG in Moeti Junior Secondary School was not fully accomplished. As a result, the researcher suggests that in order to equip the teachers with SBG skills, it needs presentation on this topic by experienced teachers or experts from outside school, which can help teachers as they transition from traditional grading to standard-based grading and go through different stages of the change process.

4.4.4.3 Teachers' competence in the implementation of SBG

Item 3 for management and teachers' questionnaire asked; "Do you think you are competent with SBG?" If yes justify and if No, how can you be assisted to help you gain competence in the grading system? With this item, the researcher was interested in obtaining the views of management and teachers on their level of understanding of this concept and how they think they can be assisted to gain the competence.

It was revealed that, starting from the top management of the school they have limited knowledge on the concept of SBG. (MQP13) indicated that "*Teachers are not conversant with this practice because nothing has changed as delivery in the classroom is the same and I believe teachers are not aware that things have changed.*"The same participant when suggesting what could be done to help teachers gain competence he said, *"...only if teacher training department could train and make teachers aware that change of curriculum and grading meant change of lesson planning and instructional delivery.*

It is researcher's observation that teachers seem to be practising SBG partly because some avoid too much work involved in SBG preparation, teaching and reporting. Again, others might have not adopted it at all as it is a change and change is likely to face resistance especially when the innovation has no policy to guide. The researcher supports the assertions by Stiggins and Conklin (1997) that studies have shown that many classroom teachers lack skills in assessment and in some instances teachers think they are doing the right thing when in actual fact they are not. This assertion confirms the study findings that Moeti Junior Secondary School uses SBG procedure for reporting of which they think they are doing right whereas it is still wanting. The reporting is not communicating enough to students and their parents as it does not show proficiency achieved in each learning goal.

4.4.4.4 Research Item 4.4: Any other information that concerns experiences with SBG.

Item 4.4 for teachers and management questionnaires asked; "Is there any other information that concerns your experiences with SBG that you would like to share?" This question item was interested in getting the views of the participants in relation to their experiences on SBG that was not covered in prior items. All teachers indicated that they had very little knowledge on SBG. They also mentioned that they know much about SBG procedures which they use for reporting students' progress. In support of this view teacher (TQP12) said;*"Teachers are not familiar with SBG and therefore struggle to apply it or explain it fully."*Another teacher concurred with the colleague by saying, *"We have little knowledge about SBG"* (TQP8). The same teacher further stated that, *"If SBG was fully implemented, it could produce desired results; the problem is that, it is not fully implemented because of long syllabuses."*This is supported by management representative (MQP4) by saying, *"This innovation was not well communicated to the teachers who are the implementers and as a result make teachers focus on the traditional practice."*

4.5 Summary of the findings

In summation, this chapter presented findings of the research at the school. The findings revealed that implementation of SBG came as a gateway to improve results as its main emphasis is on student achievement and skills acquisition by students. These emphases are indicated to be the main aims which necessitated introduction of SBG. The research further revealed that, for the success of SBG, availability of the policy document plays a critical role as the findings reflected that there was no policy available. It became clear that teachers need training on the SBG system in order for them to embrace its demands. The findings have shown that SBG is not fully implemented, that is confirming the views expressed in the literature review section. According to SBG procedures, a grade should not reflect results only without showing how the students got there. The results have showed that, in Moeti Junior Secondary School grade reflects the final result but does not show how the students obtained it. Further the study has revealed that the achievement of SBG is not a sole responsibility of the school but rather all stakeholders should be involved.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

5.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the limitations of the study, conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations and the summary.

5.1 Limitations of the study

(i)The research was limited to one school in Botswana due to financial constraint and therefore the study does not suggest that the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG in the school of study is necessarily the experience in every school in the country but this may assist to draw a picture on the innovation of SBG in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools.

(ii) Due to time factor, it was not possible to cover all the teachers in the field. The study restricted to 5.6% (20) of informants currently involved in teachers' experience in the implementation of SBG out of a population of approximately 360 in 4 junior secondary schools in Maun.

 (iii) Another limitation was amount of workload. Making appointments and administering questionnaires, conducting interviews and making follow-ups were energy consuming. Again a lot of time was spent on travelling to the field and waiting for respondents to complete their business before they could accede to the researchers' request.

(iv) The respondents' failure to communicate when they did not understand the question or terms used was perhaps the reason why some questions were left unanswered.

5.2 Conclusions

The study findings revealed that, the grades only reflected the final results but did not show how the students obtained it. The findings were in disagreement with the contention by Guskey (2005) that teachers' concern should not be with the results only but should show how the student achieved the marks. This may have affected the study in that, not all the teachers and students knew much of the concept, as it was not fully practiced as per SBG standards.

The study also reflected that, the cascade model which was used to introduce SBG disadvantaged some teachers, as those trained failed to inform others. This is supported by Vally (1998) that the cascade model seems to contribute to poor implementation as the selected few in most cases do not fully inform others. The results also pointed out that, there was no SBG policy by the time of study therefore; it became clear that the teachers needed training and be provided with SBG policy to guide them in order for them to embrace the demands of SBG. It was evident from the study that, the national goal of raising educational standards and school goals cannot be achieved if professional development is not addressed. Further, the study has revealed that the achievement of SBG is not a sole responsibility of the school but all stakeholders, such as education officers, teachers, parents and students must show their involvement in the implementation. The study has also shown that school management need to be empowered on SBG, in order to enable them to have input in the implementation of the changed curriculum and grading. Along with the conditions for an educated and informed nation pronounced by the Botswana Vision 2016, education is viewed as a critical component. Subsequently, if education influences the long term future of a nation, priority should be on teacher training and professional development. Without doubt, the training of teachers and management empowerment on curriculum changes is of paramount importance. The principle of continuous training and development must be emphasized.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study provide useful overview of the present situation regarding SBG in schools that could be beneficial for further research. The study has further revealed that, the practice of SBG in Botswana is different from other countries. This difference is shown when comparing the U.K., New Zealand, and South Africa where students are allowed to learn at their pace and offered the opportunity to re-take assessment in order to achieve non-proficient skills. Scholars such as Marzano (2001) and others proclaim that, learning new content does not happen quickly therefore, students should learn as they progress.

The study has also shown that poor implementation of SBG has a negative impact on the morale of both teachers and a students as the school performance keeps on declining. It is therefore hoped that, this study will be of value to all stakeholders involved in education and will play their role and do their best to promote student achievement in schools.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has explored and offered some insight into the experience of teachers in the implementation of SBG in junior secondary schools. The findings from this research have significant implications to the current grading discussions. The data generated from the study can have practical application for schools such as informing SBG training needs and shed light to teachers understand the significance of SBG innovation. The answers to key research questions of this study are listed in the recommendations below:

5.3.1 Availability of SBG policy

The study has shown that, there was no available policy document for SBG therefore; Botswana Examination Council through the input of the Ministry of Education and Skill Development should establish a policy document for SBG that can be used as a guiding tool for implementation.

5.3.2 Teacher training

(i) It was reflected that the cascade model which was used for introducing SBG and curriculum 2010 to teachers has proved not to achieve results as it was envisaged. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers should be trained at their schools in order for them to have the opportunity and gain confidence with the new curriculum and grading so that they can implement it reasonably. This is highlighted by the findings from one of the teachers who reflected that, teachers who attended the workshop never passed the information to other teachers (TQP8).This view is supported by an assertion by Stiggins and Conklin (1997) that the success of any comprehensive assignment depends on the quality of teachers trained to assess.

(ii) The school should conduct needs assessment for teachers so as to get a clear picture of their deficiencies and also carry out needs on resources available in the school for the implementation of SBG. Again, this should be treated as priority.

5.3.3 Assessment of students

(i)The findings reflected that students were not put at the centre of learning because teachers were not well informed about the SBG. It is recommended that teachers must position learners centrally to learning and allow them the opportunity to re-do the task assigned to them until they

all acquire skills and knowledge as defined by content standards. This recommendation is supported by Guskey (2003) who contends that, in SBG students are allowed multiple opportunities to prove their understanding of classroom standards in different ways.

(ii) It is also recommended that students be allowed to re-take assessment. This can be done with formative assessments since their total involvement in and ownership of their work seems to increase their motivation to learn. Guskey (2003) proclaims that as students demonstrate their acquired skills and knowledge, those who did not acquire skills are allowed to re-take the assessment.

(iii) It is recommended that the assessment of students must correspond to specific learning standards.

5.3.4 Reporting students' progress

The study revealed that, the type of reporting used at Moeti Junior Secondary School is SBG procedure which uses numerals for students' report cards. In addition, to report students' progress, the findings showed that students are compared by selecting the top ten high achievers from the classes after writing tests and examinations. Although the report cards are the only primary model to report students' work at schools presently; it is recommended that the school should adopt other methods of reporting such as; open-day meetings, newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, student-led conferences and evaluated projects or assignments. Guskey (2001) states that teachers' transition from traditional grading to SBG remains a challenge as teachers are used to comparing students against each other and students are normally assigned percentage of top-ranked students. The same author argues that this is against SBG procedures.

5.3.5 Teachers' feedback to students

The results have shown that feedback given to students does not reflect their strength and weaknesses on each learning goal. The recommendation made is that, the school and teachers should reserve and structure their time so that it allows them to give feedback to students at convenient times rather than during lessons with the whole class. This view corroborates with an assertion by Urich (2012) that, time should be reserved and structured to allow teachers to give feedback to students.

5.3.6 Teachers and students competence on SBG

(i) Regarding the understanding of teachers and students on the implementation of SBG, the findings reflected teachers having little knowledge on this system of grading. As such, a large gap still exists in the teachers' lesson planning as they do not link their planning and lesson implementation to the identified standards. This still remains the gap identified by this study. Therefore, it is recommended that presentations on SBG from experienced teachers or experts from outside the school can be useful to teachers as they go through SBG transition and different stages of the change process. Oliver (2011) asserts that, it is apparent in schools that, there still remains a division between the teaching of required standards and how mastery of these standards is determined.

(ii) Regarding students' understanding on the implementation of SBG, the findings reflected students to be having little knowledge on this innovation. As such a large gap still exists in the knowledge and skills students possess compared to what they are expected to achieve on the SBG test. As a result, it is recommended to sensitize the students on this concept in order for them to benefit from it.

(iii) Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) should send some teachers to benchmark on this concept from countries which have been using the practice and have achieved desired results.

(iv) MoESD and BEC should empower School Heads and their deputies on the SBG system so that they can be conversant with the changed curriculum and grading.

5.4 Further Research

(i) This topic of teachers' experience in the implementation of SBG does not include the perceptions of other role players like parents who are involved in the student learning, so for better achievement, further research on parents' understanding in the implementation of SBG is necessary.

(ii) Another research would possibly be to obtain the perceptions of specifically School Heads who are the curriculum drivers. Therefore, findings from such studies are necessary to complement the findings of this study.

(iii) This topic is open to further research in a larger section of Botswana since the study was limited to one school in Maun. It would be of great interest to find the perceptions of teachers in urban areas of Botswana and how they would respond to questions like those asked in Appendix H. Hence it is recommended that a replicating study in other areas is carried out. This is to check if the findings of the study will match those revealed by this study.

(iv) The teachers and students in this sample were designated in public schools. In future, a comparative study of private schools in respect of teachers' professional development in their SBG implementation is recommended.

5.5 Summary

In summing up, the findings revealed that the implementation of SBG was introduced as a way of improving student achievement. From the findings, it was also clear during the introduction of SBG that, there was no available policy guideline for the implementation. This seems to have contributed to the failure to its implementation. It was a general concern that teachers who were trained did not pass what they were taught to others. As a result, not all teachers were inducted on SBG at their school. Teacher training on the SBG innovation appears to be impacting on performance of the school. This is supported by the study findings that, the participants were of the feeling that SBG makes their school performance to decline, since its first Junior Certificate Examination grading in 2012.However, there were factors raised as contributing to good and low performance in the school. The competition against the students and involvement of SRC in school governance were cited as factors which contribute to good performance. On the other hand, students' indiscipline, lack of resources, teacher training and change of curriculum were said to be contributing to low performance. The results revealed that, students were not fully taken on board on issues that concern them in the school, and it was clear that students were not informed of the concept of SBG. On teachers' side, the results reflected that, they had little knowledge of the concept. The findings have also showed that the grade reflects the final result without showing how the students obtained it. The reporting also did not show standards achieved in each learning goal which is contrary to SBG procedures. Further, the study has revealed that the achievement of SBG is not a sole responsibility of the school but suggests that in devising initiatives to implement SBG properly all stakeholders such as parents, political leaders, police, and chiefs, Non-Governmental Organizations, BEC and MoESD must show their

involvement in the implementation. The results showed that school senior management needs to be empowered on SBG in order to enable them to have input in the implementation of the changed curriculum and grading.

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Faculty of Education

Department of Primary Education

Corner of Notwane and Mobuto Road, Gaborone, Botswana	Private Bag 00702 Gaborone, Botswana	Tel: [267] 355 2254/5 Fax: [267] 318 5096 E-mail: pansirio@mopipi.ub.bw

UNIVERSITY of BOTSWANA

27th May 2015

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

This letter serves to inform you that **Mrs Madulo Mmopi** is a student at the University of Botswana enrolled on a graduate program in the Faculty of Education. As part of her studies, the said student is working on a research project that requires her to approach your office in order to seek assistance with essential information in the form of publications or to collect raw data through the administration of a questionnaire, classroom observation or by conducting an interview. Her study is about **Exploring experience of teachers in Implementation of Standard-Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools: A case of Moeti Junior Secondary School in Maun.**

In my capacity as the Research Supervisor, I wish to humbly request your office to kindly assist her.

Yours faithfully

Dr. L. M. Mphale
Research Supervisor

Moeti Junior Secondary School

Private Bag 148, Maun

04/06/2015

The Director, Research Unit

Ministry of Education Skills and Development

Private Bag 005,Gaborone

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: **<u>REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-MRS MADULO MMOPI (Personal no. 70486)</u>**

This communiqué serves as a request for permission to be allowed to conduct my research project as part of the fulfilment for Masters in Educational Management at the University of Botswana. My study is on **Exploring Experience of Teachers in Implementation of Standard-Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools: A Case of Moeti JSS in Maun.**

A **qualitative** approach will be employed and my research target **populations** are **teachers** and **students** in the North West region, at Moeti JSS in Maun. The data collection instruments entail focus group **interviews**, **questionnaire** and the **documents analysis**. The documents are lesson preparations, scheme books and tests papers.

The anticipated period for data collection is from the **16th June** till **30th June 2015** which adds up to two weeks.

I am willing to receive any further correspondences about my application.

Yours Sincerely_____

MaduloMmopi (Id No. 114 724 702)

Cell: **74427579** email:**dulosmmopi@gmail.com**

APPENDIX: C

TELEPHONE (027)
3655469
TELEX: 2944 THUTO BD
FAX: 3185167

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
PRIVATE BAG 005
GABORONE

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

REFERENCE: DPRS 7/1/5 XXI (36)

10 June 2015

Mrs. Madulo Mmopi
P Bag 148
Maun

RE: PERMIT TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

This serves to grant you permission to conduct your study in the sampled areas in Botswana to address the following research objectives/questions /topic:

Exploring experience of Teachers in the implementation of standard –based grading in Botswana Junior Secondary schools: Case of Moeti Secondary in Maun.

It is of paramount importance to seek **Assent** and/or Consent from the Director of North West Region, School Head, teachers and students of Moeti Secondary school that you are going to collect data from. We hope that you will conduct your study as stated in your proposal and that you will adhere to research ethics. Failure to comply with the above stated, will result in immediate termination of the research permit. The validity of the permit is from 10th May 2015 to 10th May 2016.

You are requested to submit a copy of your final report of the study as stated in the Research Guidelines (as per paragraph 4.5 and 4.6, 2007) to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, in the Department of Educational Planning and Research Services, Botswana.

Thank you.
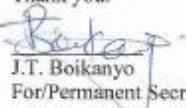
J.T. Boikanyo
For/Permanent Secretary

University of Botswana

Private Bag 0022, Gaborone

12th June 2015

The Director, North West Region

Private Bag 324

Maun

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: <u>**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM MOETI JSS IN NORTH WEST REGION IN MAUN**</u>

This communiqué serves as a request for permission to be allowed to collect data in your region at Moeti JSS for my research project as part of the fulfilment for Masters in Educational Management at the University of Botswana. My study is on **Exploring Experience of Teachers in Implementation of Standard-Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools: A Case of Moeti JSS in Maun.**

A **qualitative** approach will be employed and my research target **populations** are **teachers** and **students**. The data collection instruments entail focus group **interviews**, **questionnaire** and the **documents analysis**. The documents are lesson preparations, scheme books and students homework.

The anticipated period for data collection is from the **16th June** until **30th June 2015** which adds up to two weeks.

I am so much willing to receive any further correspondences concerning my request.

Yours Sincerely

_____

Madulo Mmopi (Id No. 114 724 702) Cell: **74427579**email: **dulosmmopi@gmail.com**

APPENDIX E

University of Botswana

Private Bag 0022, Gaborone

12th June 2015

The School head

Moeti Junior Secondary School

Private Bag 148, Maun

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: **<u>REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM YOUR SCHOOL</u>**

This communiqué serves as a request for permission to be allowed to collect data in your school for my research project as part of the fulfilment for Masters in Educational Management at the University of Botswana. My study is on **Exploring Experience of Teachers in Implementation of Standard-Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools: A Case of Moeti JSS in Maun.**

A **qualitative** approach will be employed and my research target **populations** are **teachers** and **students** in the North West region, at Moeti JSS in Maun. The data collection instruments entail focus group **interviews**, **questionnaire** and the **documents analysis**. The documents are lesson preparations, scheme books and students homework.

The anticipated period for data collection is from the **16th June** until **30th June 2015** which adds up to two weeks.

I am so much willing to receive any further correspondences about my request.

Yours Sincerely

_____

Madulo Mmopi (Id No. 114 724 702) Cell: **74427579**email: **dulosmmopi@gmail.com**

Participant Selection Letter

M. Mmopi
University of Botswana
Private Bag 0022
Gaborone
_____ June 2015

Dear _____:

RE: **REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY DATA COLLECTION EXERCISE**

My name is Madulo Mmopi a Masters student in the Department of Education Foundations pursuing Educational Management at the University of Botswana. As a teacher in Moeti Junior Secondary School I would like to invite you to participate in my research project: ***Exploring Experience of Teachers in Implementation of Standard-Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools: A Case of Moeti JSS in Maun.***

I would like to interview you to ask about your experience in the Implementation of Standards-Based Grading. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to share your experience, including professional development you are receiving in order for you to enlighten your thinking and change from old practice.

I would like you to take part in completion of a questionnaire on the above topic which might take you about 20 minutes or less. There are no probable risks to participating in this research study. You will receive some small kind of incentive as a token of appreciation for your time for participation. If you would like to participate in this research study, please return the enclosed Informed Consent document with your signature to me by **June 16, 2015**.

If you have any questions now please contact me at **74427579**, or you may contact my advisor, Dr. L.M .Mphale , at **74915213**.

Yours Sincerely

_____

Mrs Madulo Mmopi (email address: dulosmmopi@gmail.com)

APPENDIX: G

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE*:* Exploring Experience of Teachers in the Implementation of Standard Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools (JSS): A Case of Moeti JSS in Maun

 Researchers' phone number: 74427579

What you should know about this research study:

- I give you this informed consent document so that you may read about the purpose, risks, and benefits of this research study.
- You have the right to refuse to take part, or agree to take part now and change your mind later.
- Please review this consent form carefully. Ask any questions before you make a decision.
- Your participation is voluntary.

PURPOSE

You are kindly being asked to participate in a research study of ***Exploring Experience of Teachers in the Implementation of Standard- Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools (JSS): A Case of Moeti in Maun***. The purpose of the study is to contribute to Botswana's education system by recommending strategies or models that can work effectively in the implementation of curriculum standards and improve on the academic performance of schools in the region as well as nationally. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are teaching the syllabus which assesses with SBG or as a student you are taught on the standard-based syllabus which assesses with SBG. Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

PROCEDURES AND DURATION

If you decide to participate, you will be invited to the venue of the meeting or given the questionnaire to complete.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The only risk that might be experienced is the duration for interview if we cannot be time conscious but otherwise there are no risks and discomforts in this study.

BENEFITS AND/OR COMPENSATION

Even-though no benefits will be offered through this study, you will be given some incentives as a compensation and appreciation of your time and effort involved in the tasks you will perform.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data from this investigation will be used for educational purposes and will be treated as such. None of these will be used for commercial use.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study, your decision will not affect your future relations with the University of Botswana, its personnel, and associated institutions. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Any refusal to observe and meet appointments agreed upon with the central investigator will be considered as implicit withdrawal and therefore will terminate the subject's participation in the investigation without his/her prior request.

AUTHORIZATION

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in this study. Your signature indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had all your questions answered, and have decided to participate.

_____   _____

Name of Research Participant (please print)   Date:

APPENDIX: H

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS   Date: -----------------

Research Topic: Exploring Experience of Teachers in the Implementation of Standard Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools (JSS): A Case of Moeti in Maun

BIOGRAPHY DATAFOR [TEACHERS]

PART: A

Please kindly fill in the information below:

Tick where appropriate

 Gender: Male (   ) Female (   )

AGE: 23-35(   )   36 + (   )

Nationality: Motswana (   )   Foreigner (   )

Qualification: _____

Number of years as a teacher: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

B) **Please complete this part to confirm that you are a teacher.** (*If not, please do not complete the questionnaire*).

1. What is your subject of specialization? --------------------------------------

2. What is the student population in your class?------------------------------

3. How many teachers teach your subject? ---------------------------------------

4. How many classes do you teach? ---

5. Do you have any other description of your school that I should know about? -----------

----

6. Do you mark for Botswana Examination Council? If yes, which level? -----------------

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

C 1] What do you think necessitated the introduction of Standard-Based Grading (SBG)? From your perspective;

1.1When was SBG introduced in your school and what was the aim of introducing it? -------------
----

1.2 What can you say about the policy that was provided during the introduction of the practice?

1.3 How was SBG introduced into your school? --

1.4 How is your school academically performing? Justify your answer. --------------------------------
----

1.5 What is your philosophy on Standard-Based Grading and what skills are acquired through it?

2] What are the teachers' current grading practices in your school?

2.1 How do you inform your students about the objectives and goals that they are expected to achieve at the end of the term? --
----

2.2 How do you realize where your students currently stand in the learning?"-----------------------
----

2.3 What type of grading system is used in your school and how effective it is? ---------------------
----

2.4 How is progress communicated to parents? --

3] How often do you use standards in classroom instruction?

3.1 How do you inform your students about the grade descriptors for your subjects? ---------------

----

3.2 How do you encourage your students to do self-assessment? ---------------------------------------

----

3.3 After how long do you give students their feedback and what does your home work policy

say? ---

3.4 How do you give the students feedback, with reference to their strengths and weaknesses on

each learning goal?--

4] What is your view on how SBG benefits students' performance?

4.1 How do you measure students' proficiency (skill) level? --

----

4.2 How has the implementation of SBG helped your students grow as learners? Justify your

answer.---

4.3 How competent are you with SBG and if not how can you be assisted to help gain

competence in this grading practice?---

4.4 Is there any other information that concerns your experiences with SBG you would like to

share? ---

Thank you so much for taking part in my study. You receive your token of appreciation as you return the questionnaire.

APPENDIX: I

Questionnaire for Senior Management   Date: ---------------------

RESEARCH TOPIC: Exploring Experience of Teachers in the Implementation of Standard Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools (JSS): A Case of Moeti in Maun

PART: A

BIOGRAPHY DATA FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Please kindly fill in the information below:

Tick where appropriate

 Gender: Male (   ) Female (   )

AGE: 20-35(   )   36 + (   )

Nationality: Motswana (   )   Foreigner (   )

Qualification: _____

Number of years as a teacher: _____

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

B) **Please complete this part to confirm that you are a manager.** (*If not, please do not complete the questionnaire).*

1. How many teachers do you have in your school? Males------------- Females-------------

2. How many streams do you have in your school? ------------

3. What is the student-teacher ratio in your school? -------------

4. What is your subject of specialization? --------------------------

5. How many classes do you teach? ---------------------------------

6. How many senior teacher academics do you currently have in your school? -----------

7. Do you have any other description of your school that I should know about? -----------

8. Do you mark for Botswana Examination Council? If yes which level? ------------------

C 1] What do you think necessitated the introduction of Standard-Based Grading (SBG)? From your perspective;

1.1 When was SBG introduced into your school and what was the aim of introducing it? ----------
----

1.2 What can you say about the policy that was provided during the introduction of the practice?

1.3 How was SBG introduced into your schools? --

1.4 How is your school academically performing? Justify your answer. ------------------------------
----

1.5 What is your philosophy on Standard-Based Grading? --

2] What are the teachers' current grading practices in your school?

2.1 How do you ensure that your teachers inform the students about the objectives and goals that they are expected to achieve at the end of the term? ---
----

2.2 How do you realize where your students currently stand in the learning? ------------------------
----

2.3 What type of grading system is used in your school and how effective it is? ---------------------
----

2.4 How is progress communicated to parents? ---

3] How often do teachers use standards in classroom instruction?

3.1 How do your teachers inform the students about the grade descriptors for their subjects? ------
----

3.2 How do you encourage your students to do self-assessment? ---------------------------------------
----

3.3 After how long do teachers give students their feedback and what does your home work policy say? --

3.4 How do you give students feedback with reference to their strengths and weaknesses on each learning goal? --

4] What is your view on how SBG benefits students' performance?

4.1 How do your teachers measure students' proficiency (skill) level? ------------------------------
----

4.2 How has the implementation of SBG helped your students grow as learners? Justify your answer.---
----

4, 3 Do you think your teachers are competent with SBG? If yes justify and if No, how can they be assisted to help them gain competence in the grading system? -------------------------------------
----

4.4 Is there any other information that concerns your experiences with SBG that you would like to share? --
----

Thank you so much for taking part in my study. You will receive your token of appreciation as you return the questionnaire.

APPENDIX: J

BIOGRAPHY DATA FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS (STUDENTS)

FOCUS GROUP NO. -------------   DATE: -----------------

Please kindly fill in the information below:

Tick where appropriate

 Gender: Male (   ) Female (   )

AGE: 13-15(   )   16 + ( )

Nationality: Motswana (   )   Foreigner (   )

Indicate the form you are doing: Form 1(   ), Form 2(   ), form 3 (   )

Indicate your class: (   )

APPENDIX: K

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDEDATE: ------------------------

FOCUS GROUP NO: ------------------------

RESEACH TOPIC: Exploring Experience of Teachers in Implementation of Standard-Based Grading in Botswana Junior Secondary Schools: A Case of Moeti JSS in Maun**.**

[Participant],

Thank you so much for accepting to meet with me at this time. I would like to acknowledge that you have abusy schedule as you are writing your end of term examination and I appreciate your willingness to take part in this crucial project.

For ease of note-taking, at this moment I would like to ask for your permission to record our interview conversation. The tape made from this recording will be kept confidential and in a safe place. If atany time you would prefer that I stop the recorder, you are at liberty to let me know and I will do so immediately. Do you permit me to begin taping our discussion?

-Start tape recording if applicable-

Thank you. I have several main questions to ask you today. As we talk, I may think offollow-up questions as well. On the process of our conversation ifyou do not wish to answer a question, or would like to terminate the interview, please let me know. I anticipate that our conversation will take about 50 minutes andprobably will be shorter than that.

1. Have you completed the consent form that I distributed to you prior our meeting? [*If the form was notreceived, read consent form to the participant at this time]*? Do you give your consent atthis time to take part in this study? Do you have any questions for me at this time for any clarification?

2. Would you confirm that you have permitted me to record this conversation *[if Participants have done so]*?

Observe protocol! (On a separate page)

Standardized open-ended interview questions

1] I **would like next to talk about the general performance of your school. From your perspective, you tell me about your school.**

1.1 How can you describe your school?

1.2 How is your school performing? Please justify your answer.

1.3 How much do you know about the practice used for grading your achievement (SBG) in your school?

2] Tell me about the teachers' grading practices in your school.

2.1 How do you get to know the objectives and goals that you are expected to achieve at the end of the term?

2.2 What type of grading system is used in your school and how effective it is?

2.3 How is your progress communicated to parents?

3] How often do teachers use standards in classroom instruction?

3.1 How do your teachers inform you about the skills you are expected to achieve as described by the grade descriptors?

3.2 How do you do your self-assessment in order to develop your thinking skills and understanding the nature of the task assigned?

3.3 After how long do you get your feedback from your teachers and what does your home work policy say if you have it?

3.4 How do your teachers give you feedback with reference to your strength and weaknesses on each learning goal?

4] What is your view on how SBG benefits students' performance?

4.1 How do your teachers measure your proficiency (skill) level?

4.2 How has the implementation of SBG helped you grow as a learner and what evidence can you use to support your answer?

4.3 Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experiences with SBG?

Thank you so much for taking part in this interview. I really appreciate your time today. After I took over the transcript and tape of our conversation, may I contact you if I have further questions?

Thank you, if you have any further questions for me, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time. Do you have my contact information?

Thank you. Have a great day! (Distribution of incentives to the participants)