We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books
Built by scientists, for scientists

6,900
Open access books available

186,000
International authors and editors

200M
Downloads

154
Countries delivered to

Our authors are among the

TOP 1%
most cited scientists

12.2%
Contributors from top 500 universities

BOOK CITATION INDEX
CLARIVATE ANALYTICS
INDEXED

WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?
Contact book.department@intechopen.com

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.
For more information visit www.intechopen.com

A Critical Review of the Kind of Training or Professional Development Typically Offered to the Teachers

Tebogo Mogashoa

Abstract

The main aim of this research was to review the type of professional development or training that was offered to the teachers so that they can implement policies on teaching and learning. The researcher used critical theory as the basis of his research. Qualitative research assisted the researcher to review the type of professional development or training that was offered to the teachers so that they can be able to implement policies on teaching and learning. Data analysis included sorting, conceptualising, refining and organising data into a coherent new structure. Furthermore, the researcher discovered after data interpretation that some of the teachers were professionally developed or trained on the different policies for teaching and learning. The Department of Basic Education should provide teachers with pre-service and in-service training programmes or professional development programmes. Such professional development programmes or pre-service and in-service training programmes should be provided in order to empower teachers with knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfil their roles as mediators of teaching and learning.

Keywords: development, curriculum, implementation, programmes, strategies, transformation

1. Introduction

The new democratic dispensation was faced with many reforms and among those reforms proposed by the South African government was transformational outcomes-based education.

That educational reform ushered Curriculum 2005 (C2005) with emphasis on outcomes-based learning and teaching. It was believed by the education authorities that C2005 would empower all South African learners with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which would provide productive and valuable agents of social change in creating a better future for all [1, 2]. That transformative approach to outcomes-based education introduced by the Department of Education also emphasised critical outcomes. In 1997, C2005 was introduced and then piloted in some selected schools in the Republic of South Africa. Education authorities conducted a pilot study in Grade one classrooms in those few selected schools around the entire country from August to November 1997. Furthermore, in 1998, the Department of Education then introduced C2005 in all schools in the Republic of South Africa.

According to Mda and Mothata [3], the introduction of C2005 brought about a shift from teacher and content curriculum to outcomes-based and learner-centred curriculum. This brought in a paradigm shift on the side of both teachers and learners. Learners had to change the way they used to learn and be engaged in the learning processes while on the other hand, teachers also had to change the way they used to plan their lessons and teach their leaners. Due to many challenges experienced by teachers concerning the new teaching and learning policy, C2005 was reviewed in the year 2000. Thus, a Ministerial Committee was established, chaired by Linda Chisholm, which emerged with the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) [4]). However, in July 2009, another Task Team was established by the Minister of Basic Education to investigate the nature of the challenges and problems experienced by teachers in implementing the RNCS and to develop a set of recommendations designed to improve its implementation. The review committee of the RNCS then introduced the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). That was not the end of the new teaching and learning policy because another Task Team was established in order to review the NCS and then introduced a new document the replacement of the NCS and it is called the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The researcher deemed it necessary, logical and appropriate to review the type of professional development or training offered to the teachers in order to implement these policies on teaching and learning.

2. Research design and methods

In this chapter, a qualitative mode of inquiry was used. [5] Reflects that in the research design one does not have to explain the details of how to implement the techniques, but only discusses the technique/s that will be used. [6] Indicate that research methodologies on qualitative studies evoke participants' accounts of meaning, their experiences or perceptions by producing descriptive information in their own spoken words. Qualitative research is usually used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomenon, often with a purpose of describing and understanding the phenomenon from the participants' point of view [7]. The participants in this research were teachers who are teaching in the intermediate phase (grades 4–9) and who have been trained in Curriculum 2005, Revised National

Curriculum Statement, National Curriculum Statement and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. Teachers in the intermediate phase were selected or sampled because of their noticeable experiences of the C2005, RNCS, NCS and CAPS. The participants in this research were also interviewed separately on individual basis. In order to create an environment of multiple/diverse ideas, the researcher conducted the research in five different schools.

2.1. Theoretical frameworks

In this research, the researcher used critical theory as a lens to base his arguments. The key focus areas in the philosophy of critical theory are the 'change and emancipation' of societies from being indoctrinated towards being critical and questioning [8]. As for [9] as cited in [10], the essence of education about society is that social reality is made by people and can be changed by people. This theory would assist teachers in realising that political and social reality is not fixed, but that these concepts can be changed and transformed by those living in that society or environment. This may be caused by the fact that most of the curricula facing most implementers or teachers in most developing countries are handed down for implementation without any room for them to actively participate in curricula development. Through critical theory, learners can learn the skills in collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information. The most important aspects of the philosophy of critical theory are emphasised in reconstructing and in critically questioning the attitudes in the new curricula. Critical theory always raises some problems of the conscious especially when one deals with knowledge. Critical engagement about issues of education that affects the communities should be emphasised. It is imperative to give learners some learning activities that will cause them to be in engagement with themselves and the nature.

2.2. Data collection

According to Voce [11], the primary methods of data collection in qualitative research are observations, interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews were used as the main data collection method. However, other supplementary methods of data collection such as audio-tapes, diary notes and videotapes were also used in this research. Furthermore, the researcher used interviews in order to provide room for face-to-face interaction with the participants to clarify some concepts that might be confusing to them. Qualitative data can be the best if collected from fewer participants. The interviews were also tape-recorded, and as a researcher, there was a need to play a leading role in data collection.

2.3. Data analysis and interpretation

According to Michelle [12], qualitative data analysis consists of identifying, coding and categorising patterns found in the data. [13] As cited in [1], once the data had been interpreted and that a specific understanding of the scope and contexts of the most experiences under scrutiny, coding of themes will provide the researcher with a critical system

in organising data. This will assist to uncover and document additional connections within and between some concepts and experiences as discussed in the data provided. Collected data should be managed appropriately in order to maintain high quality and accessibility. The researcher made sure that data collected were stored and retrieved for analysis. In order to address the issues that were raised in the research questions of this chapter, the researcher involved a systematic analysis of sources and opinions. Data were sorted accordingly, conceptualised, refined and organised into a coherent new structure [1]. Furthermore, the audio-recorded interviews with the participants were transcribed and then analysed. The researcher made sure that contradicting points of view, opinions and new insights were revised and refined. On the other hand, the researcher made sure that collected data were compared against each other and then consolidated into meaningful discussions.

3. Research findings and discussions

The thematic issues that emerged from the narratives of participants' lived experiences of the kind of training or professional development typically offered to the teachers are noted below:

3.1. The kind of training teachers received in respect of the new teaching and learning policies

Most teachers who participated in this research conceded that they received training and workshops for Curriculum 2005, Revised National Curriculum Statement, National Curriculum Statement as well as Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. A few of the verbatim responses are indicated below:

Participant S said, "We attended workshops for C2005, RNCS, NCS as well as CAPS".

Participant T, "We did attend some training workshops for policies on teaching and learning such as Curriculum 2005, Revised National Curriculum Statement, National Curriculum Statement as well as Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. The facilitators of the workshops came from the Department of Basic Education. They were curriculum implementers or subject advisors called learning area specialists".

Participant G, "The Department of Basic Education organised workshops for Curriculum 2005, Revised National Curriculum Statement, National Curriculum Statement as well as Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement which we attended. However, the number of days we spent in the workshops was not adequate. We attended for three days only and then expected to implement those policies on teaching and learning. Some of the concepts for those policies were not clearly deliberated and as such, we were expected to implement what we did not understand well".

In order to identify the various aspects, the teachers received, teachers were asked to elaborate more on the workshops they attended.

3.2. The workshops teachers attended

In responding to the questions asked, most teachers mentioned that the workshops were not easy to understand. Few participants in this study had different points of views as indicated below:

Participant A, "In most of the training workshops we attended, the conductors provided us activities and tried to guide us on how to interact with those activities and we were also provided with chances to show how we will implement these teaching and learning policies in our classrooms. However, the content of the workshops were so huge to assimilate within three days only".

Participant N, "The workshops we attended, that is C2005, RNCS and the NCS, the facilitators told us different issues which were could not easily understand. The facilitators could not interpret the different documents the same way. We were also provided with many forms to complete. The presentations made by the participants in those workshops were actually not the same to what we were actually practicing in our everyday activities. However, the workshops for Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement were easily understood. The facilitators of the workshops were clear and the content was also clearly organised. Actually, I can say the content we must teach is clearly stipulated".

Participant K, "The learning area or subject advisors organised some workshops for us. We attended for three days after school. The facilitators for Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement were well prepared than those who took us through Curriculum 2005, Revised National Curriculum Statement and the National Curriculum Statement".

Participant B, "The curriculum advisors were not well prepared or maybe they also did not understand those new policies on teaching and learning. The workshop for Curriculum 2005 was very confusing. The facilitators were not clear about what teachers should do. At least, the workshop for Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement was better".

In order to identify the kind of support, the teachers received from the Department of Basic Education, some questions were asked and the participants in this research responded appropriately.

3.3. The support teachers received from the Gauteng Department of Basic Education

Workshops were organised for the various policies on teaching and learning. All teachers who participated in this research indicated that the only support they received were workshops though follow-ups were inadequate.

3.4. The relevancy of training activities to what teachers were doing in their classrooms

Teachers responded appropriately to the questions asked. All teachers who were interviewed in this research indicated that the workshops were relevant, but it was not easy to implement the new knowledge and skills in real classroom environment. This was emphasised

by teacher O, when he said, "We attended various workshops and trainings activities were relevant, but it is totally different from what we do in our classrooms. In the classrooms, there are those who are very slow, and some are very intelligent and can easily understand what is taught. The training activities are relevant but more challenging to implement in the real classroom environment. When you present in the workshops there are only the educators but when you present in the classroom is a different story. You are faced with a real teaching and learning situation. Learners do not respond like teachers. Teachers pretended to be learners but they are not learners. In the workshops it is not a real learning and teaching situation".

Participant C said, "Facilitators took us through theories while in the classroom is a real teaching and learning environment. The workshop activities were relevant but we struggle on how to implement them in real classroom situation". This was further emphasised by teacher P who said, "Theory and practice are two different things. In the workshop is theory but in the classroom you must do things practically. The activities are relevant but the problem is implementation".

The above-mentioned responses were followed by other questions to determine teachers' opinions about the competency of S or coordinators of these policies on teaching and learning.

3.5. The competency level of the workshop facilitators or coordinators of the workshops

All teachers who participated in this research indicated that the competency of the facilitators who trained them for Curriculum 2005, Revised National Curriculum Statement, and National Curriculum Statement was inadequate but for the situation for Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement was better.

4. Conclusions

An analysis from the research findings and discussions of this article indicates that teachers received training on the various teaching and learning policies. However, further analysis of these findings and discussions reveals that some policies were not deemed appropriate to what teachers were actually doing in their classrooms. The number of days that teachers spent in the workshops was not adequate. This research further found that the only intervention strategy the Department of Basic Education used to assist teachers in implementing policies on teaching and learning was in the form of workshops. This chapter also indicates that the coordinators or facilitators of the workshops were not sufficiently competent in Curriculum 2005, Revised National Curriculum Statement and National Curriculum Statement but were better in Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

5. Recommendations

High-quality teacher training or professional development is crucial for producing quality education in all schools in the Republic of South Africa. According to Guskey [14] as cited in [1], authorities responsible for drawing policies recognise more that schools or classrooms

can be no better than administrators and teachers together. It is, therefore, imperative to find appropriate professional development strategies to make sure that all the teachers, even the most experienced ones, are capacitated with the appropriate knowledge and skills for improving performance by their learners [15]. Just like the practitioners in many other recognised professions, teachers also need to increase their knowledge and capacitate their skills over the course of their professions (Report on Teacher Professional Development 2006). Research tends to show that most training and professional development programmes for teachers are not satisfactory and also do not meet what they are intended for [16]. All stakeholders in education and more especially the policymakers have to scrutinise professional development or teacher training to understand clearly what would be the best for changing teachers' classroom practice [17]. As cited in [1], the researcher assets that current views of training or professional development usually emphasise the significance of involving teachers in defining their needs and developing opportunities for their training or professional development. In order to make appropriate policies and programme decisions for training or professional development, district officials, school administrators and leaders need to understand if training or professional development programmes are recently satisfying the teachers who need them most [18]. It is imperative always to involve teachers in the decisions to be made by the education authorities. Teachers are the principal actors in continuing professional development and any other programmes on which to be decided. Teachers should therefore be allowed to give their viewpoints and ideas on teacher training or professional development programmes.

This research has revealed significant sets of findings, and these findings provide recommendations for what the teachers realised as the best characteristics of effective training or professional development programmes. For training or professional development programmes to be useful, such programmes have to be meaningful to the teachers who are participating in them. The most challenging issues to people who make policies and management are to understand what the participants in those policies need and what the participants find useful. They can then develop continuing training or professional development programmes that respond to the participants' needs. Continuing training or professional development programmes can only have the potential to be transformative and life changing if they have personal meaning for the participating teachers.

The researcher, therefore, recommends that in order to effectively implement teaching and learning policies, the National Department of Basic Education must supply adequate curriculum staff that have knowledge to do excellent training for both the teachers and School Management Team members. Capacitation and professional development of teachers in new strategies, skills, insights and qualities should also be given first priorities. Teachers' training or professional development should be more extended, although shorter than initial professional development or training. Teachers should work together and create learning area or subject clusters in order to resolve common curricular issues.

Initial and continuing professional training should always aim at developing teachers with knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfil their tasks as facilitators of learning processes. This can involve the revision of curricula in teacher training institutions to meet the demands of the current world. As part of teacher professional empowerment, the National Department of Basic Education should assist teachers to take courses that will upgrade them.

As teachers are lifelong learners, ongoing education is a requirement for teachers in all schools. Workshops, seminars and training courses can be conducted. Teachers can take part in upgrading activities such as courses/workshops (on subject matter or methods and other education-related topics), education conferences or seminars (at which teachers and researchers present their research findings, results and discuss education challenges), qualification developmental programmes (e.g. diploma or degree courses), observations at other schools, participating in networks with teachers mainly for the capacitation of teachers, individual or collaborative researches or a topic of professional interest as well as assisting and peer observations and coaching as part of formal school arrangement [1]). This will assist teachers to stay abreast of new trends and learn new strategies, techniques and methods for classroom activities.

Training or professional development should always align with and support system-based changes that encourage learning. Quality training or professional development must focus on empowering the improvement of teaching by enhancing knowledge and skills. Training or professional development programmes must also assist to change teachers' thinking regarding current developments. Professional developers must be guided by the research and practice knowledge about how effective transformation happens in education environments. The National Department of Basic Education must develop differentiated training or professional development programmes to respond to teachers' different of challenges.

Author details

Tebogo Mogashoa

Address all correspondence to: mogasti@unisa.ac.za

Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, College of Education, University of South Africa, South Africa

References

[1] Mogashoa TI. An identification of the kind of training of professional development typically offered to the teachers. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences. 2014;**5**(9):452-456

[2] Hirish S. Professional development and closing the achievement gap: Theory into practice. Cambridge Journal of Education. 2012;**44**(1):38-44

[3] Mda T, Mothata S. Critical Issues in South African Education after. Sandton: Juta and Company; 1994, 2011

[4] Review Committee on Curriculum 2005. (L. Chisholm (Ed)) A South African Curriculum for the 21st Century. Pretoria: Government Printers

[5] Hofstee E. Constructing a good dissertation: A practical guide to finishing a Masters, MBA and Phd on schedule. Johannesburg: Interpark books (Pty) Ltd; 2013

[6] De Vos AS. Combined quantitative and qualitative approach. In: De Vos AS, editor. Research at Grassroots: For the Social Sciences and Human Science. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers; 2011

[7] Leedy PD, Ormrod JE. Practical Research Planning and Design. Upper Saddle, N.J.: Merril Prentice-Hall; 2012

[8] Booyse C. The Teacher as Learning Programme Developer. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers; 2008

[9] Paulo F. Contemporary Education: Global Issues and Trends. Pretoria: Heinemann (Pty) Ltd; 2000

[10] Lemmer E. Contemporary Education: Global Issues and Trends. Pretoria: Heinemann (Pty) Ltd; 2000

[11] Voce A. Handouts for the Qualitative Research Module. London: Sage Publications; 2013

[12] Michelle B. Data analysis strategies for qualitative research-research corner. AORN Journal. 2012;**7**:103-115

[13] Bradley EH et al. Qualitative data analysis for health services research. Health Services Research. 2011;**156**:618-626

[14] Guskey TR. Professional development and teacher change. Teacher and teaching: Theory and practice. Oxford Journals. 2013;**8**(3/4):381-390

[15] Hirrish S. Professional development and closing the gap: Theory into practice. Cambridge Journal of Education. 2012;**44**(1):38-44

[16] Boyle B, Lamprianou T, Boyle T. A longitudinal study of teacher change: What makes professional development effective? Report of the second year of the study of school effectiveness and improvement. The Curriculum Journal. 2012;**16**(1):1-27

[17] Robinson M. Teacher education policy in South Africa: The voice of teacher educators. Journal of Education for Teaching. 2010;**29**(1):19-34

[18] Desimone LM, Smith T, Ueno K. Are teachers who need sustained, contend-focused professional development getting it? An administrative dilemma. Educational Administration Quarterly. 2014;**42**(2):179-215