

Chapter 2

Vocationalizing Education: Unpacking TVET College Lecturers' Instructional Practices

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ABSTRACT

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges continue to struggle to fulfill their mandate of skills development among the youth. This is so because TVET colleges still lag behind in integrating information and communications technology (ICT) in their classrooms, which has made inroads in industries. Qualitative approach was used to investigate the TVET college lecturers' instructional practices in their classrooms. Four TVET colleges as well as eight lecturers were purposefully and conveniently selected for the study. The technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) framework was used as an underpinning framework. Findings reveal that lecturers are not keen in integrating ICTs in their teaching and some are not encouraged to do so. It was also found that not all lecturers are adequately qualified to teach in the vocational field. The study recommends that teaching resources be sought in order for colleges to align their practices with industrial practices. Lecturers too should be capacitated in integrating technology in their lessons.

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INTRODUCTION

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College sector in South Africa is associated exclusively with the training of a post-school, pre-employed youth component and has a potential to respond to the lifelong learning needs of the population (Akojee, 2007). As such, TVET has the capacity to serve as an important means for responding to the Continuing Education and Training (CET) of both the employed and non-employed elements of society (Foster 2005). In addition to that, the South African government has put in place strategies to ‘vocalize’ education in a bid to create skills and workmanship to the youth. I am using the term ‘vocalize’ in order to emphasize the government’s aim of making the TVET College education, the sector that produces skills in order for the graduates to be employed. TVET College has, in response to ‘Vocalizing’ education, implemented the National Certificate Vocational [NC (V)] qualification that starts at National Qualification Framework (NQF) Level 2 in 2007 (Department of Higher Education and Training, DHET, 2007). The admission criteria into the NC (V) Level 2 are a Grade 9 pass or equivalent where the student would proceed to Level 4, which is their final year. The NC (V) curriculum is planned such that students are exposed to a 60% practical component, which outweighs the theory component, which stands at 40% each year (DHET, 2006). However, the skills’ response that the TVET College sector has to the job market seems to be struggling. In a study that was conducted in 2018, it was found that only 28 640 NC (V) Level 4 graduates of the year 2016 in the country, managed to be absorbed into the artisanal programme in industries (Department of Higher Education and Training, DHET, 2018). In addition to that, only 16 114 of the graduates (28 640 mentioned earlier), completed the programme and are qualified to work and nourish their skills in industries. This is a serious challenge seeing that less than 60% of the national NC (V) Level 4 graduates became artisans, leaving the rest wandering. The statistics is but the first of similar trends that continue to engulf the TVET College sector (DHET, 2018). An artisan is someone who could now work at a production and manufacturing company in the country, which is what the aim of TVET College education, is aimed towards. The above figures perhaps could be the reason why issues of skill development are always on the government’s agenda every time when employment statistics are being tabled in the country. As it stands, South Africa battles with skill development, particularly among its youth that end up adding to a national unemployment rate. When this study was undertaken, the statistician general of South Africa, Mr Risenga Maluleka announced that the unemployment rate among the youth has rocketed from 27% in the second quarter of 2019 to 27,6% (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

It is therefore apparent that skills development in the country is still a challenge. According to Ncgwangu (2019), during the earlier phases of the democratic era in

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