

Chapter 5

Developing Inclusive, Collaborative Initiatives in Curriculum Delivery: The Role of School Management Team and Sustainable Leadership

Ntombizandile Gcelu

University of the Free State, South Africa

Fumane P. Khanare

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1707-9179>

University of the Free State, South Africa

ABSTRACT

While teaching and learning are underway, the world is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on educational systems, particularly curriculum delivery across the globe, on both developing and developed countries. As a result, collaboration and partnerships with primary, secondary schools, and higher education institutions are more vital than ever. Unfortunately, many schools have yet to show real leadership when it comes to this. This chapter foregrounds the school management team voices to depict collaborative initiatives and ways to improve curriculum delivery in a rural context of two secondary schools in Free State, South Africa during the crisis. In so doing, the chapter considers collaborative initiatives that are inclusive and provide much-needed practical information for curriculum delivery and sustainable leadership.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7168-2.ch005

INTRODUCTION

Historically, education and school leadership have been highly centralized and linear in South Africa. However, since the dispensation of democracy in 1996, the South African government has made tremendous strides in revamping the country's education system structures, such as the School Management Teams (SMTs) (Department of Education, 1996). This structure created an entirely new approach to leading and managing the schools (Botha, 2006) and making recommendations on all aspects of curriculum delivery in South African schools. Managing a unique and integrated curriculum, supporting teachers and learners from diverse backgrounds in South Africa is a breath-taking task. The SMT's role is vast and complex (Department of Education, 2010) and closely related to addressing the exclusionary practices of the apartheid education system. Hence, the purpose of this chapter seeks to examine the existing collaborative initiatives that are needed in managing curriculum delivery during the pandemic, focusing on the role of SMT and sustainable leadership. The chapter has the following objectives: 1. To determine the collaborative roles of SMT in curriculum delivery for sustainable leadership. 2. To illuminate the schools' collaborative initiatives in the South African rural schools. 3. To determine how collaborative initiatives could bolster curriculum delivery during the crisis and what it means for sustainable leadership.

BACKGROUND

The SMT's role is vast and complex (Department of Education, 2010) and closely related to addressing the exclusionary practices of the apartheid education system. School Management Team is a formal and compulsory structure in all public schools in South Africa. Its role is to ensure that teachers deliver curriculum and practical aspects of teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2010; Khumalo, 2014). The SMT structure includes the principal, deputy principal, and head of the department. In some schools, a post-level one teacher is coopted as a member of SMT (Department of Education, 1996). The Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, which also contains the Personal Administration Measure (PAM) (Government Gazette, 2016), clearly indicates the curriculum functions of each SMT member. For example, the core areas of the principal include "leading the teaching and learning in the school" and "developing and empowering self and others" (p.20) (Department of Basic Education, 2015).

Further to this, Dayson (2016) emphasizes that principals could improve curriculum delivery through collaborative work with SMT taking into account the unique needs in their environment (in this case, COVID-19). In the South African school context, SMT performs functions of curriculum delivery. They support day-to-day formal school days, assigning duty loads to educators, encouraging learners' involvement in curriculum matters, and setting up a functional subject committee (Department of Education, 2010).

In the past decade, effective curriculum delivery has been arguably the biggest challenge facing schooling systems in South Africa for the SMT. For example, in economically poor rural schools, the continuing uneven resources allocation, ill-trained and ill-equipped teachers (Maponya, 2015) defeat the role of the SMT. Smith (2020) observed that lack of necessary facilities, such as water, health facilities, and proper roads, has been responsible for several ills, discouraging teachers from delivering curriculum effectively. Seemingly, challenges associated with curriculum delivery are out of control of teachers who are expected to provide curriculum efficiently, irrespective of the context. This is even more so in rural schools because SMT is expected to answer multitudes of problems. Some SMTs have questioned

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