Chapter 6
Narrating Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments' Experiences of Assessment Practices in Curriculum Delivery

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore deputy principals' and heads of departments' lived experiences as curriculum and instructional leaders in curriculum delivery in assessment practices at the school level. This study's exploratory qualitative approach had founded CAPS and NPA policies, direct DPs, and HoDs to execute their responsibilities by providing support, monitoring, moderating, and instructional leadership to SMT and subject teachers. It was found that teachers must set assessment tasks to enhance learners' higher-order thinking skills and critical thinking skills, which is a need for the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, two major "turning-points" have changed the world of work drastically, Education 4.0 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Education 4.0 has created exponential possibilities and opportunities for the knowledge economy, while the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on global events, from governance to socialisation. These two "turning-points" have changed and challenged international events radically while also bringing about an exponential shift in the boundaries of the knowledge economy. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all human activity and interrupted the educational sector with such a significant impact that radical changes were warranted in all institutions intended to survive and continue with its mandate.

Assessment is part of the curriculum delivery process and a critical dimension to measure the learner's performance. The importance of assessment in teaching and learning is essential in curriculum delivery

worldwide. Deputy principals (DPs) and heads of departments (HoDs) play a vital role in the curriculum delivery process and development as co-instructional leaders responsible for monitoring the assessment process towards total quality management. The South African schooling system is regulated by the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996; 2016). SASA stipulates the roles and functions of D.P.s and HoDs as role players in the school management team (SMT). Based on SASA conditions, the SMT and instructional leaders are compelled to act and adhere to the stipulations of SASA and apply the TQM philosophy in the implementation and delivery the school curriculum.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore deputy principals and heads of departments' lived experiences as curriculum and instructional leaders regarding assessment practices at the school level towards curriculum delivery. To answer the purpose of the chapter, the following questions have been formulated: What is the general purpose of conducting assessment in your school? What types of assessment and good assessment practices are used in your school? What challenges are you facing regarding learner assessment in your school? What suggestions or changes can be offered to positively influence good assessment practices in your school?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing the Theories Underpinning Instructional Leadership

This chapter is foregrounded in the constructivist, total quality management (TQM) and shared instructional leadership theories. A brief synopsis of each theory related to the context of this chapter is provided. In the context of this chapter, an integrative theoretical framework is selected to conceptualise the D.P.s and HoDs' roles and responsibilities concerning effective assessment practices as instructional leaders.

The constructivist theory, which has reformed educational practice, has been framed by classical philosophers such as Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1962). Based on the classical theorist work on constructivism, the constructivist roots are evident in the cognitive strategies' instruction, cognitive guided instruction, scaffolded instruction, literacy-based instruction, discovery-related instruction and self-directed lifelong learning (Bruner, 1961; Harris & Graham, 1994). Therefore, D.P.s and HoDs must understand their roles in instructional design and implementation.

The total quality management (TQM) theory was coined by Edwards Deming (1988), and it holds that the management leader drives processes, practices, and control toward quality products and services. Steingard and Fitzgibbons (1993) argue that TQM is a set of related technical processes and procedures implemented to eliminate deviations in the production or delivery of a service to increase efficacy, quality, and best practices. Scholars reported that since the 1980s, TQM, as a management phenomenon, had gone through various changes in managerial thinking and decision making towards better existing managerial practices and operations within organisations (Steingard & Fitzgibbons, 1994; Petersen, 1996; Lunenburg & Fred, 2010).

An effective instructional leader is people-driven and is conscious of leadership theories. This type of leadership is driven by social justice, instructional leadership, and change management. Such a leader would be focused on the abilities of the teaching staff and provide opportunities for enrichment towards a better school environment. Currently, D.P.s and HoDs have a new challenge, COVID-19, and other instructional leadership demands related to their managerial tasks, as stipulated in SASA. The community and other stakeholders have vast management expectations, particularly in the context of

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