Chapter 8
The Role of Departmental Heads in the Procurement of Teaching and Learning Resources to Enhance Learner Performance

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ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces transformative learning as a helpful theory to consider the role of departmental heads in the procurement of teaching and learning resources in selected secondary schools in Alexandra Township, South Africa. South Africa felt the effects of the pandemic as the country was ill-prepared for the devastation the pandemic brought to its learning systems. The Department of Basic Education tried to implement various strategies to ensure that teaching and learning continue to save the academic year. In this qualitative study, the interpretive paradigm and a purposive convenient sampling technique were employed to sample five mathematics DH from five secondary schools. The thematic data analysis was used to interpret and discuss data obtained from the document and semi-structured interviews. It was found that the schools did not have teaching and learning resources that could allow remote learning. Moreover, there is a need to improve retrieval practices as resources loaned to learners remain unaccounted for.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE STUDY

Over the past years, researchers have shown interest in exploring the role of DH in schools (Ogina, 2017; Bipath & Nkabinde, 2019; Mthiyane, Naidoo & Bertram, 2019). In this chapter, we locate our discussion on the role of departmental mathematics heads (DH) in the procurement of teaching and learning resources for effective teaching and learning in selected under-resourced secondary schools in Alexandra Township, South Africa. The term resources in this study include tablets or textbooks, mathematics instruments, and study guides. Transformative learning is examined in relation to the function of mathematics DH in the procurement of teaching and learning resources in the South African educational system (Mezirow, 1978). We argue that the ability to transform the procurement of relevant teaching and learning resources in schools is a skill that requires to be imparted to (DH) for the effective procurement of appropriate resources post Covid-19.

In his State of the Nation Address (SONA, February 2019), the President of South Africa, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, tabulated the state's agenda to improve teaching and learning. The president announced that every school child in South Africa would a tablet device containing workbooks and textbooks (BusinessTech, 2019). Elaborating on the government's rollout plan, Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga said DBE is on track in providing each learner with digitised LTSM. UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) of the 2030 Agenda, which aims to "provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone," was seen as a step forward (UNESCO, 2017).

Fast forward, South Africa felt the first impact of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. The spread of the pandemic in the country made it impossible for learners to attend classes physically. The Ministry of the Department of Basic Education then decided to temporarily close down the schools to minimise the spread of the virus and protect the learners and teachers from contracting it. However, the country was not prepared for remote learning as teachers and learners did not have the necessary resources that could allow it. Due to lost time, the Department of Basic Education then introduced a phased-in approach through which learners and teachers could return to school in different months and days in the year (Head of Education Committee, 2020). The race was now how to help learners in secondary schools make up for lost time and meet the educational needs of all the learners. Therefore, we argue that there is a need to procure teaching and learning resources to allow remote learning in the worst circumstance. Remote learning requires schools to have sufficient resources to enable teacher-learner communication irrespective of physical contact (EdTech, 2020). Therefore, DH has a significant role in helping the schools identify and procure such resources.

The South African School Act, 84 of 1996 (SASA, 1996) empowers each school governing body (SGB) to design, among other things, their school finance policy that regulates procurements processes without contributions from DH. Botha (2002) writes that educational change is required to provide equity in educational provision and create a more balanced South African society. We believe that SASA suppresses the role of DH in the procurement of teaching and learning resources as much power is invested in the SGB to draw up the policy that regulates resource procurement. Our opinion is that, for the sake of balance, DH should have a say in the fiscal policy of a school that determines the procurement of teaching and learning resources before that policy is approved and implemented.

Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb (2007) strongly suggest that transformation should guide teaching practices. Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb (ibid) suggest that transformative education offers alternative school finance policy design and the procurement of teaching and learning resources. Besides, DH must be

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