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CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM TOWARDS 21ST CENTURY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is responding to the repercussions of the continuous curriculum revisions that took place in South Africa since 1994. Ever since Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was introduced in place of traditional content based method, professional teachers lost confidence in their classroom practice. They felt demotivated, deterred, and not productive. Therefore, this paper investigated the enhancement of teachers' professionalism towards 21st century basic education development. Case study research design was adopted with the use of interviews as research instrument. Two schools were purposively selected in Eastern Cape Province and twelve participants were also purposively selected. Results revealed that South Africa is still facing a problem in producing more learners who are competent with outside world. Also, the continuous change in curriculum was said to be demoralising teachers instead of empowering them with current innovations. Moreover, teachers claimed that the facilitators were less experienced in facilitation and lack the full knowledge about the curriculum being introduced. This paper therefore, suggested that, the review of the curriculum should gear towards professionalism of teaching. Also, the Department of Basic Education should involve the teachers on the development and review of existing curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was introduced in place of traditional content based method in South Africa, professional teachers lost confidence in their classroom practice. They felt demotivated, deterred, and not productive (Ngibe, 2013). The continuous curriculum revision leaves teachers doubting their profession as most of them are unable to cope with changes hemmed in these revisions. One of the attributes of a professional, according to Msibi and Mchunu (2013) is the ability to handle change. As noted in Ngibe (2016), education and curriculum changes post 1994 have anticipated a monotony to teachers with the one which was followed before 1994. Instead of developing professionalism among teachers alongside curriculum reforms, the focus from government was rather on the curriculum. However, with the National Curriculum Statement for Grade R-12 (NCS R-12), teachers assume that the curriculum is more or less similar to the one they are used to. NCS R-12 comprises also of

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document with all approved subjects listed in this document. Nonetheless, the same curriculum is quiet about the development of teacher professionalism. Instead, the department is busy monitoring teacher attendance, punctuality, and proper use of school resources (South Africa Year Book, 2015/2016:144).

Professional Development of Teachers: Professional development on teachers' knowledge and practice includes effects on learners' education, personal changes of teachers' cognitions, beliefs and practice as well as pupil change and teacher satisfaction (Avalos, 2011). It is about teachers' learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students' growth. Due to global continuing change in living, development in curriculum that equip the 21st century learners with relevant knowledge and skills to operate in the existing world is a key. Hence, the effective professional teacher development to empower these learners with sufficient and efficient knowledge, skills, and attitudes is obligatory. The formal structures such as courses and workshops are therefore

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important to serve the purpose of developing teachers professionally (Avalos, 2011:10-20 augmented). Nevertheless, not every form of professional development is relevant to teachers. According to Shulman (2010), the philosophy about professionalism has both a practical and an ethical characteristic. On practical aspect, it involves competent performance of skilled work in which extensive and multifaceted knowledge is applied. The attainment of formal academic study is involved in this aspect. Morally, professionalism is directed by ethics. Shulman (2010) states that professional ethics are guided by an appreciation of the important social ends it served. Therefore, specialists of professions need to develop ethical understanding to aim and guide their practice. Korthagen (2017) links professional development to theory-to-practice approach in that through theory teachers know how to handle leaners in the classroom. Bakkenes, Vermunt, and Wubbels (2010:533-548) articulate that there is a huge gap between theory and practice (Korthagen, 2017:387-405). Nevertheless, Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000:523-545) concluded that the problem of teaching and teacher education is to move from intellectual understanding of the theory to enactment in practice.

Novice teachers

Novice teachers join professional community with theory from teacher training institutions together with little experience from their school experience program. According to Boaduo, Milondzo and Gumbi (2011), for the 21st century teacher training programs, it should be noted that novice teachers are empowered with characteristics of the 21st century learners. This is confirmed in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) Department of Education's (2018:1) mission statement that its' mission is "to provide leadership in the establishment of a South African education system for the 21st century". Lecturers' focus should be on equipping them (novice teachers) with aspects of educational and content knowledge. The objective for curriculum among others is to produce competent and creative citizens (Department of Education, 2011). Thus, teacher training and education should be central in the curriculum planning as teachers are the implementers of curriculum. Trudeau and Omu (2017) therefore, concur with Boaduo, Milondzo and Gumbi (2011) in that, transformation in all universities in Africa is necessary so as to produce skilled graduates who are innovative. This could help to improve learning for learners in basic education, particularly in South Africa. Thus, learning and teaching in teacher training colleges and universities should be designed to provide necessary information and appropriate skills for the 21st century students. The two researchers, Trudeau and Omu (2017) reveal that graduates and or whoever, ready for transition to workplace should be critical thinkers and integrate into fast-paced work environments. Boaduo, Milondzo and Gumbi (2011) recommend that the globalization concept should be taken into account in South Africa. This could be done if teachers and teaching is recognised as a profession as it is with other professions. Training in teaching for novice teachers and or workshops for experienced professional teachers require intensive training and acquisition of knowledge and skills. Hence, the aforesaid researchers, commend that the gap between 20th century teachers and 21st century teachers has to be closed. Education curriculum used in South Africa is common, however, the problem is with the condition of schools in as far as infrastructure is concerned. This idea of common-core curriculum has been suggested to be globalised

so as to benefit all learners to gain same knowledge and skills required in workplace, the researchers amplified. Intensive service training for teachers by subject specialists is of significance for superb desired education outcomes.

Professional teachers with experience in teaching: Kennedy (2016) argues that professional development programs should be grounded on different theories of how students and teachers learn. This therefore means that there should be well organised teacher professionalism workshops and trainings so as to develop teachers. Hunter (2017) sharing on Professor Kennedy's (2016) research confirms that there are various theories of teaching or teacher learning so, the effects of professional development may not be easy to observe. This then puts teachers in confusion on what to do in the classroom. She (Hunter) reminds also that professional development is usually conducted outsid*e* the classroom but modelled or shown inside the classroom. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Professional OECD (2005) reported matters based on teacher training policies analysed in 25 countries. It was concluded that teacher quality is the most important factor in an education system. Variety of factors affecting learner achievement including family background were not left behind from factors that influence quality education. In conjunction to what OECD (2005) has reported, Boaduo (1988) and Lawal (2006) concur that quality education for every country is highly dependent on the quality of its teachers. Likeminded with Steyn (2008), the most appropriate equipment should be provided to teachers during training. Moreover, the content knowledge gap and skills to be developed should be addressed during workshops (Boadou *et al.,* 2011). Wilmot (2017) confirms also that education system' dependence on quality of its teachers and the quality of curriculum implementation is recognised globally and nationally. Nonetheless, JET (2013) views that poor teaching lies with the education system that produced those teachers and not with teachers. Therefore, each and every country should be responsible for the genuineness and relevance of its education system. However, well-equipped, well supported and accountable teachers are required to play a critical role in improving the quality of learning. That is the reason therefore that, Steyn (2008) supports the fact that teachers are expected to be competent in their classrooms practice hence there is a need for the professional teacher development.

In developed countries, every proposal to reform or transform school curriculum highlights teacher professional development as critical in affecting improved education quality and students' outcome (Nakabugo, Bisaso and Masembe, (2011). Teachers happen to lose confidence when they are not sure of what to do in class teachers happen to lose confidence when they are not sure of what to do in class to improve students' performance. This was confirmed by teachers in a study conducted by (Ngibe, 2016). Darling-Harmond, Heyler and Gardner (2017) align also professional development with school improvement. If teachers are developed professionally, it is highly expected that the culture of the school is being retained. Research has established that the educational system within which professional development occurs has implications for its effectiveness. However, the conditions under which teaching and learning process takes place, both within schools and at the system level can be an obstruction in the effectiveness of professional development. Issues of inadequate resourcing for professional development as well as failure to align policies with practices may delay school

improvement efforts. Shava (2015) embolden the development of teachers' professionalism to improve the knowledge, competences and skills of teachers who are at the centre of teaching and learning in education. Improvement in teaching and learning will result in South Africa producing learners who are competent since today's global economy is knowledge based and quality of education will be the cornerstone of broad-based economic growth. The broad aim of the national Department of Basic Education's (DBE) *Curriculum and Assessment Plan Statement* (CAPS) is to develop, maintain and support a South African school education system for the 21st century (Department of Basic Education, 2010). The CAPS envisions closing the divide between learners in poor schools and their well-resourced counterparts, and identifying and addressing the various barriers or challenges to learning. The question then lies with the effectiveness and genuineness of the workshops being conducted for teachers. Are they developmental and influential so as to capacitate teachers to fulfil the aims of the national curriculum of South Africa?

Malm (2009) understands the diversity and complexity of the post-modern era to be challenging to South African teachers who have been taught and trained in old traditional approach. The researcher, Malm (2009) then suggests innovations on teacher training programmes, that is, shift from focusing on cognitive part of learning to social and emotional aspects of human development. Professionalism in education involves a comprehensive information on educational issues whereby a professional teacher develops positive attitude in education developments. This includes the introduction of Outcomes Based Education introduced in South Africa in 1997 which affected teachers and learner performance in one way or another (Adu and Ngibe, 2014). In his book, Professor Carl mentioned a professional in education to be someone well-informed about the curriculum (Carl, 2009). Schools as learning organisations need professional teachers to operate successfully. Therefore, the lead researcher wanted to know if teacher professionalism has been enhanced so as to produce competent 21st century learners.

21st Century Students in South Africa: Onderwys Monitor (2016) refers to 21st century learners as screen generation, all knowing learners, and or literature learners. This portrayal refers to the 21st century learners under general. However, in South Africa there are schools in rural areas where there is no electricity nor libraries. The National Education Infrastructure Management System (2015) identified 913 schools in South Africa with no electricity readily available. This then raises a question on how will learners from those schools participate in the larger world operations. Nevertheless, technology is not the only component that characterises the 21st century learner, communication skills too are central. Likewise, new concepts are vital to learning as they are a signal of learners' grasp of what is being taught. The aim of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) which took over the apartheid education after 1994 in South Africa is to promote learners' knowledge in local contexts while being sensitive to global imperatives (RSA Department of Education, 2010). South African learners' innovation skills, however, could be improved, for these learners do not repeat other people's ideas, instead they use their own common sense and introduce new interesting perspectives to the world (Onderwys Monitor 2016). This is why teachers should be developed professionally to deal with different kinds of classroom situation to be able to accomplish the mission of CAPS. 21st century learning is a fundamentally

social activity whether in schools, workplaces, or other environments, which intends providing 21st century learners' innovative skills for communication and collaboration (Pacific Policy Research Center, 2010:2). The curriculum prepared for the 21st century students should be the one that encourages critical learning whereby their ideas will have impact to the society. So, according to the Pacific Policy Research Center (2010:2), these communication and collaboration skills will then assist students to collaborate effectively and responsibly with diverse populations. Referring to 21st century skills, Macmillan Education (2016) articulates that 21st century skills are a set of abilities that learners need to develop in order to succeed in the information age. For these skills to be established, effective workshops and trainings should be conducted for teachers by skilled and conversant facilitators. Professional development engages attending workshops and also participating in meetings about professional development (Yadav, 2011). Mentoring and reading professional articles, as well as watching academic documentaries from television form part of professional development (Yadav, 2011) augmented. This therefore provides opportunities for teachers to develop new teaching strategies and develop both professionally and personally (Mahmoudia and Özkana, 2015:57-64).Failure to implement 21st century pedagogy and effective technology integrations is often attributed to educators being unprepared for the changes demanded by and formed by "technology infusion (Rakes and Casey, 2002). Msibi and Mchunu (2013) concurs with the aforementioned authors in that curriculum change, with specific reference to South Africa, has been undertaken without sufficiently addressing the issue of teacher professionalism. They also maintain that Information Communication Technology (ICT) be included in curriculum for the present generation. The focus of these authors, Msibi and Mchunu (2013) reiterates the above insistence of the importance of focusing on on-going educator support and development. Thus, teachers can begin with supplemental use of 21st century skills and move to full integration. However, these authors suggest an ongoing educator support and development.

Research Questions

The central research questions driving this paper were:

1. How has curriculum enhanced teachers' professionalism?
2. How has curriculum enhanced teachers' capacity to develop knowledge and understanding of the present generation?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used qualitative approach. Qualitative approach was used since participants were going to be interviewed in their work place. Johnson and Christensen (2008:224) suggest that qualitative provides understanding and descriptions of personal experiences of phenomena (that is, the emic or insider's viewpoint). For this paper, the lead researcher was interested to find teachers' responses on curriculum enhancement to their professionalism and to their capacity to develop knowledge and understanding of the present generation.

Research design: Maree (2013) commends that "A research design is a plan or strategy which moves from understanding philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, to choosing data-gathering technique to be used".

The case study design was used in this study. Suter (2012) defines case study as an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the study of a single person or entity using an extensive variety of data.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: Participants were purposively selected from junior secondary schools. The sample of twelve teachers were purposively selected on the basis of the phases they teach, that is four from each phase in the General Education and Training band (GET) band. The researcher believed that, by the virtue of being a teacher in the phase, the participants would provide information useful to the study. Johnson and Christensen (2008) states that in purposive sampling, the researcher specifies the characteristics of a population of interest and then tries to locate individuals who have those characteristics.

Table1. Distribution of selected teachers by gender, age, teaching experiences, academic and professional qualifications

Respondents	Gender	Age in years	Teaching experience	Highest academic qualification
CT1	Female	44	12	Bed
CT2	Male	46	13	Bed
CT3	Female	47	18	Bed
CT4	Female	54	12	PTD
CT5	Female	45	18	Med
CT6	Female	44	20	Bed. Hon
CT7	Female	46	23	Bed
CT8	Female	50	26	Bed. Hon
CT9	Female	48	21	STD
CT10	Male	44	13	Med
CT11	Female	55	29	STD
CT12	Male	39	11	Bed

Data Collection: For this paper, interview questions were prepared for the purpose of collecting data from the sample picked from the population of teachers. Maree (2013:87) defines an interview as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and to learn about ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours of the participants. Semi-structured interview guide was used with the intention of exploring the participants' views, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes on the curriculum enhancement to teachers' professionalism.

Data analysis: A thematic analysis of data was used. The teachers were interviewed in English although some used code-switching. The researcher audio recorded the interviewees and also took notes so as to record non-verbal communication like body language. The collected data from teachers of selected schools was transcribed, coded, categorised and presented in themes. It was analysed thereafter. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2014:342) commend that a core component of qualitative analysis is the process of coding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

When teachers were asked to voice out their views on curriculum enhancement to their professionalism and the capacity to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of the present generation, they respondent contrarily.

Curriculum Enhancement on teachers' professionalism

The information gathered from the participants varies according to their view on curriculum enhancements. The submission of the participants are as follows:

The only challenge I have is that with this Technology, I did not do it when I was training at the college. I am trying to be a teacher who is eager to do but the only thing is that workshops that are done have limited times. You cannot have two or three days for workshop and think that you can be developed. In addition, there is lack of skills development in our department comparing to other departments. (CT1).

CT8 augmented on what CT1 has said: "*I don't think there is any enhancement because they read what is in the books they have given us. In the university we took four years to complete the course but for the curriculum change to be understood, it takes three days.*"

CT3, CT4, CT5, CT7 and CT11 concurred with the two participants.

"Once, there is any change in curriculum, many of us as teachers find it very difficult to adjust to professionalism of teaching. What is worse with our department is that these workshops are conducted by teachers who most of them cannot come with solutions to problems we have in our classes. They are unable to relate what they say to different classroom situations." (CT2).

"the necessary provisions that are required by the government of stakeholders for the smooth implementation of enhancement of teachers' professionalism through curriculum are not always in place. There is lack of resources in our schools out there in rural areas but the government expects us to perform. How without resources?". (CT5).

''... the teachers must be work shopped thoroughly and resources be provided. Let me first talk about examination (common paper) which includes every school irrespective of the background of each school. Mandela bridge in Gauteng, learners from rural schools were never been there." Rural school learners are disadvantaged. There are no resources, no exposure but when they are assessed the questions are the same." (CT 1 added).

"I cannot see any provision for the enhancement of teachers professionalism because the change in curriculum focus more on learners and not us as teachers" (CT6).

Change in curriculum also affects teachers' confidence on the subjects they teach and the teaching strategies they use in their practice. The participants then suggested core planning among subject teachers. Some of mathematics and language teachers argued that the content does not change; only teaching strategies increase their confusion because their schools have limited resources. However, they commended the introduction of NCS R-12 (which they say it is CAPS) in South Africa. They appreciate relief as compared to previous curricula: Curriculum 2005 (C2005); Revised National Curriculum Statement R-9 (RNCS R-9); and National Curriculum Statement 10-12 (NCS 10-12). With CAPS (as document), planning is easier, they amended to their recommendation of CAPS.

"Yes at least with CAPS, there's change, for instance in planning, if you plan your teaching programme. I see the difference with CAPS, but with others there was no difference. I gained nothing. You feel that you are from workshop, like Natural Sciences and Technology (NS&TECH) you are guided especially that you are given the policy documents. (CT 11).

They complained about scarcity of workshops too.
One participant even said,

"In fact workshops are there for record purposes for the department officials and not for change in profession for the individual educator." (CT 7).

Although most participants were grumpy about the workshops on curriculum change being conducted by less knowledgeable facilitators, some commended the workshops conducted.

"Yes workshops conducted by the department are effective though we are not clear of what are doing but at the same time the kids we are teaching "yhoo" they are so unruly." (CT 7).

"Yes. Some workshops are fruitful and you'll find that what you did in workshops become easy to do in class, but some of them you'll find that the facilitators say you must approach your learners like this but when you get to learners it is not easy."
(CT 5).

Learners' competency with the outside world

Responding to the question of their learners' competency with the outside world, some participants clearly stated that their learners were not ready to compete due to: Lack of confidence from teachers and learners; shortage of resources; language of learning and teaching (LOLT); and the influence of the environment in which rural schools are situated. Nonetheless, few participants were confident though. With LOLT, foundation phase teachers were the most complaining in that, they use mother tongue as LOLT.

"…if we talk of an outside world, learners have to compete in English. How can you compete with isiXhosa? You cannot do that." (CT 11).

"Not really, may be 2% of them can try." (CT3)

"Not yet. You know the problem we have in foundation phase is this language we use when teaching mathematics but they are using English in intermediate phase so that makes us not sure, whether our leaners are marketable. Terms like 'ungquphantsi', 'umbhoxobuxande' are not there in other phases." (CT 4).

"Few learners can but most of them cannot due to the environment and the community surrounding them. Resource are the problem to our learners and also language used generally." (CT5)

"The level of learners produced by this curriculum is below standard. When the curriculum is changing we are just trained for one week and we are expected to be effective of which that is difficult". (CT12)

Summary of themes

Theme one: Curriculum enhancement on teachers' professionalism

- **No enhancement:** Workshops are conducted by teachers from the classroom in two or three days. They also have limited information about the new curriculum being introduced, just like other teachers attending the workshop. Workshop facilitators are therefore below the expected standard. Resources in schools for teachers to produce competent learners are also limited.

- **Enhancement:** In Mathematics and English there is no change in content. Some workshops are fruitful. It is easy to implement skills that are gained in workshop when you are in class.

Theme two: Learners' competency with the outside world.

- **No:** There are not enough resources to implement the current curriculum. Learners from rural areas are disadvantaged by the environment in which they live. Language of learning and teaching also affect learners' performance. Teachers are not sure about their teaching.
- **Yes:** Through collaboration among subject teachers, learners can be competent in the outside world. In some subjects there is a lot of practical work so the learners can compete with others in the outside world.

Conclusion

According to the findings of this paper, most participants, particularly in school A indicated that their learners were disadvantaged because learning and teaching materials and equipment suitable for the 21st century learners are limited. Steyn (2008) views education transformation in South Africa as the process that demands appropriate equipment for teaching and learning. Changing curriculum without providing relevant equipment for its implementation creates challenges for teachers. Teachers particularly those teaching in rural schools are facing hitches in successfully preparing their learners for the outside world. Workshops conducted on the new curriculum being introduced were not sufficient hence there was confusion among those who were responsible for the curriculum implementation. Avalos (2011) insists that courses and workshops serve the purpose of developing teachers professionally. However, Avalos also comments that not every form of professional development is relevant to teachers. Most teachers were complaining about the quality of workshops that they were not informative. The confusion brought by curriculum change resulted in discouragement among teachers, particularly those in rural areas.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- Adequate preparation should be made for teachers for any change in curriculum.
- Curriculum should focus on teachers' professionalism and not only on learners' development.
- Workshop and seminars should be organise and adequately funded by the government to enable teachers on curriculum enhancement
- Curriculum should target more on capacity development and understanding
- The duration for the workshop on curriculum enhancement should be adequate and there should be enough time for skill acquisition on enhancement
- Teachers should be fully involved in the curriculum planning and implementation towards development and enhancement

Curriculum experts should be engaged in the training and retraining of teachers towards professionalism.

Ethical consideration: Lichtman (2013) defines ethical behaviour as "a set of moral principles, rules, or standards

governing a person or a profession". Therefore, ethical considerations were included in my original study from which this paper is extracted. Participants were informed about voluntary participation and that they had the right to withdraw at any time. They were also informed that there was no harm or risk in participating in the study, be it physical or mental harm. Their anonymity too was guaranteed, as their names were not going to be revealed in the coding of the interview results. As a result, no personal information was asked during the interviews.

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