



The Involvement Of Teachers In The Development Of History Education Curriculum In The Further Education And Training Phase

Tebogo Mogashoa, Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, University of South Africa, mogasti@unisa.ac.za, Orcid: 81264056

Abstract. This enquiry intended to determine teachers' involvement in the development of history education curriculum in the further education and training phase. The researcher used qualitative method to gather information from the teachers on how they are involved in curriculum development. The main data collecting procedures were in the form of interviews. This research found that teachers contributed very less in the development of curriculum for history education, there was inadequate professional development or capacitation of teachers, and that teachers received less training to be able to be involved in curriculum development. Teachers must be involved fully in the development of any curriculum for all subjects or learning areas, be taken through various steps of curriculum development and design in the form of workshops that can be done in not less than ten days.

Keywords: Curriculum development, Teacher involvement, Teacher professional development.

INTRODUCTION

According to Patankar and Sahebrao (2018) the teacher knows the needs of all stakeholders of teacher education. The teacher can understand the psychology of the student. The teacher is aware about the teaching methods and teaching strategies. The teacher plays the role as evaluator for the assessment of learning outcomes. Thus, the teacher must possess some qualities such as planner, designer, manager, evaluator, researcher, decision maker and administrator. Finally, the teacher plays the respective role for each step of curriculum development process. Carl (2020) states that the curriculum development process comprises of these phases: curriculum design, curriculum dissemination, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation.

Over the past 24 years curriculum changed four times: Curriculum 2005 (C2005); National Curriculum Statement (NCS); Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS); and currently, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The teacher has received minimal or inadequate training in changing or compiling the curriculum during this process.

In order for the curriculum to fulfil what it is intended to do, the teacher should be trained and be actively involved in curriculum development. The teachers are the ones implementing the curriculum first hand in their classrooms. They (teachers) should participate in what is or should be taught in their classrooms.

This article will contribute to body of knowledge in the area of teacher involvement in curriculum development in South Africa. The data and findings will be valuable for teachers, government administrators, education specialists or curriculum designers who play important roles in shaping the education system in South Africa. In addition, this research will encourage teachers to be involved in curriculum development when given adequate tools and skills to do so. This research can provide ways in which teachers could be equipped with knowledge they need to ensure successful curriculum development of history education.

Hence, teacher involvement is important for successful and meaningful curriculum development. Teachers being the implementers are part of the last stage of the curriculum development process (Alsubaie, 2016). Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans, and Donche (2019) reported that, although a lot is known about teacher development by means of formal learning activities, Borko (2020), cited in Kyndt et al., 2019), reported that “research on teachers’ everyday learning is more limited”. Furthermore, (Hoekstra, Brekelmans, Beijaard, & Korthagen, 2018, cited in Kyndt et al., 2019), states that a systematic overview of these learning activities and their outcomes within the specific context of teachers’ professional development is lacking. Although many countries require teachers to attend mandatory staff development activities (e.g., courses, workshops, training) and teachers’ professional development is highly valued, little support is provided for teacher learning in the workplace itself. According to (Hoekstra et al., 2018, cited in Kyndt et al., 2019 and Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Lüdtke, & Baumert, 2016, cited in Kyndt et al., 2019). However, this lack of support does not mean that teachers do not learn in the workplace, as teachers do report undertaking different types of activities even when specific support is missing (Hoekstra et al., 2018, cited in Kyndt et al., 2019).

Our curriculum does not outline our current history in the post-apartheid era or into our democracy. Much is written about the day-to-day events of our government and how it was voted into power, but our students in schools do not understand the background of implementation of our democracy. This research seeks to provide answers to the following research question:

- How are teachers involved in curriculum development of the history education in the Further Education and Training Phase?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dynamic teacher involvement in curriculum development can make a real contribution to professional development (Carl 2020). This professional development can, however,

only take place if opportunities for it are created. Taba (1962 cited in Carl 2020) states that curriculum development and training must be combined for this purpose. Training is, however, only one instrument in empowering the teacher. The ultimate aim is that the process of empowerment should be strongly characterised by self-empowerment (Carl 2020).

In Carl (2020) the author makes pronouncements concerning the principle of teacher participation; they must be interpreted against the background of their educational thinking within a particular education system. Carl (2020) further states the importance for success that those who are involved in the implementation of curriculum development should play an active role from the design and planning thereof to the evaluation aspect. The teacher therefore occupies or, rather, should occupy a prominent position, as he/she will be the implementer of the relevant curriculum.

By involving teachers in curriculum development, it would improve their morale and they would feel as part of the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum. However, they would not be able to achieve this without proper training strategies or mechanisms offered to them.

According to Booyse and du Plessis (2014) South Africa embarked on a radical transformation of education and training between 1989 and 1994, and later on reviews of the curriculum. One of the most challenging aspects of the initial transformation has been the adoption of an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) approach that underpins the introduction of Curriculum 2005 (C2005). C2005 has tried to capture aspects of three approaches of Tyler, Stenhouse and Freire, but just as there was tension between the three approaches, there was tension between different aspects of policy as well. Tyler used the narrow definition of “curriculum”, while Stenhouse argued for a broader definition and Freire just assumed a broader definition. But that was only their starting point. The main focus of their debate was on what should go into a curriculum and how it should be approached. For this reason, these different approaches become useful tools for sharpening our understanding and interpretation of C2005, both revised and amended National Curriculum Statements (NCS) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), (Booyse & du Plessis, 2014).

Elliot and Norris’s views (2012, cited in Booyse and Du Plessis, 2014) state that Stenhouse changed the relationship between curriculum theory, educational research and teachers; placing teachers right at the heart of the curriculum development process and the teacher as researcher at the heart of developing teaching professionalism (Booyse & du Plessis, 2014).

Theoretical framework

This research employed constructivism as a learning theory, as a basis for developing pedagogy and designing curriculum and instruction (Taber 2012). A theory may be

defined as “a set of interrelated variables, definitions and propositions that specifies relationship among the variables” (Collis & Hussey 2014). Theory is based on the relationship between a set of concepts. Concepts applied in a research project should be defined in order to “clarify the theoretical focus of your research” (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey 2020). Therefore, concepts are the ingredients of theories (Ngulube 2018).

This version of constructivism offers a theoretical basis for designing effective pedagogy that is acceptable to classroom teacher (Taber 2012). Constructivism as a learning theory comprises of ideas about how learning occurs, and the factors that tend to channel learning and ideas about how curriculum and instruction should be designed to respond best to educational purposes, given what is understood about learning (Taber 2012). Booyse and du Plessis (2014) state that Lev Vygotsky, an educationist who argued for a socio-constructionist perspective in education, was a young man during the Russian Revolution (1917-1918) a time of great change in his culture and society. It stated that (Vygotsky 1978) believed that the lifelong process of development is dependent on social interaction, and that social learning leads to cognitive development (Booyse & du Plessis, 2014). The constructivist perspective on the nature of leaning can be seen as part of a long tradition in education thought, but in its modern form, has as its basis of how people make sense of their experience (Taber 2012). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that constructivist also known as interpretive, uses systematic procedures but maintain that there are multiple social constructed realities. According to Swain (2017) interpretivism describes a range of theoretical perspectives that are interested in the process of human interpretation and how people make and give sense to their experience.

For the purpose of this research, the researcher relates constructivism leaning theory with history teachers that should be able to construct new knowledge on history education. Teachers should be able to develop and understand the new history content from planning, design, and implementation and evaluation stages. This will be possible when the schools, department or education ministry get them involved in the curriculum development process rather than being implementers of the curriculum. Furthermore, this process will be possible when there is adequate training on curriculum development.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative research design in order to gain insight into the nature of teacher involvement in curriculum development of the history education in the Further Education and Training Phase. This approach was suitable for this research, as it seeks to gain an understanding of whether teachers are involved in curriculum development and what training is available to them. Creswell (2014) defines research design(s) as procedures for collecting, analysing, and reporting research in quantitative and qualitative research. McMillan & Schumacher (2010) further state that the purpose of a research design is to specify a place for generating empirical evidence that will be

used to answer the research question. In this regard, the researcher conducted interviews with teachers.

In the qualitative design, the researcher identifies participants and sites on purposeful sampling, based on places and people that can best help the researcher to understand the central phenomenon (Creswell 2014). For this research, the researcher conducted interviews with selected teachers at their schools. Flick (2015) states that qualitative research addresses issues by using one of these three approaches: it aims at grasping the subjective meaning of issues from the perspectives of participants; often, latent meaning of a situation are in focus, it is less relevant to study a cause and its effect than to describe or reconstruct the complexity of situation; and in many cases social practices and the life world of participants are described. Flick (2015) states that the aim is less to test what is known than to discover new aspects in the situation under study and to develop hypotheses or a theory from these discoveries.

The research method for this article was a phenomenological approach. This research was conducted to understand the teacher involvement phenomenon. Because the Department of Basic Education only considers teachers as implementers of the curriculum, the researcher determines the teacher's understanding and experiences, as well as the capability in order to participate in the curriculum development process. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) a phenomenological study describes the meaning of a lived experience. The authors further indicate that the researcher "brackets" or puts aside, all prejudgments and collects data on how individuals make sense out of a particular experience or situation. Dudovskiy (2016) posit that phenomenology studies focus on experiences, events and occurrences with disregard or minimum regard for the external and physical reality. Dudovskiy (2016) further states that phenomenology is a variation of interpretivism, along with other variations such as hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism and others. For the purpose of this research, a phenomenological study is in the hands of the participants.

Sampling

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalise the results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The population of this research comprised of 21 teachers from the seven (7) secondary schools that were selected.

For the purpose of this research, the researcher refers to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) who state that a research problem relates to a specific population and the population encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. Welman et al. (2005), further refer to the members or elements of the population as units of analysis. In the human behavioural sciences, units of analysis refer to humans, groups, organisations or institutions, human products or outputs as well as events (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2005).

Due to the number of teachers and the time that was required to conduct the interviews with all individual participants, the researcher selected a population of a proportional number of teachers as a convenient sample.

A sample refers to a group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected. The sample can be selected from a larger group of persons, identified as the population, or can simply refer to the group of subjects from whom the data are collected (McMillan and Schumacher 2010). The sample of this research was informed by purposive sampling to be used to select history education teachers.

A non-probability sample was used. This form of sampling is the most common type in educational research. Non-probability sampling does not include any type of random selection from a population. The researcher uses subjects who happen to be accessible or who may represent certain types of characteristics (McMillan and Schumacher 2010).

A purposeful sampling was selected for this research, “researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell 2014). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be represented or informative about the topic of interest. Furthermore, based on the researcher’s knowledge of the population, a judgement is made about which subject should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research.

Henceforth, a sample of seven (7) schools were selected. From these schools, a number of three (3) teachers were selected from each school, in order to make a total number of 21 ($n=21$) teachers. The teachers involved in curriculum development, those teaching history, were selected for interviews. The reason for a number of 21 is that, in case at least one (1) teacher would not be able to continue with the research, the researcher will be left with a reasonable number of 20 in order complete the research.

Data collection tools, procedures and analysis

The researcher employed a qualitative data collection method to determine the extent of teacher involvement in curriculum development of history education in the Further Education and Training Phase.

The data collection method used for this research was qualitative interview. A qualitative interview occurs when the researcher asks one or more participants general, open-ended questions and records the answers (Creswell 2014). The researcher listened to the participants, during interviews, described their everyday experiences related to the phenomenon, listened to their meaningful cues, their expressions, pauses, questions and occasional side-tracks (Leedy & Ormrod 2015). The interview is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research. For this article, it was a good way

of exploring peoples' perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Punch & Oancea 2014).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The semi-structured format guaranteed that the researcher asks the teachers open-ended questions where the researcher has little control over the teachers' responses. The researcher transcribed and typed the data into a computer file for analysis (Creswell 2014).

Furthermore, a semi-structured interview involves a set of open-ended questions that allow for spontaneous and in-depth responses. The process of using semi-structured interviews as data collection strategy involves several phases, including the development of the interview guide, conducting the interview, and analysing the interview data (Baumbusch 2010).

This research employed qualitative data analysis. The researcher preferred this method because it is beneficial as a method of organising data; it pulls the significant data together for the purpose of interest to the researcher. It also maintained the coherence of the material and brought back the reader to the intention of the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). In terms of the qualitative analysis, it involved inductive coding. This required identifying key patterns and describing them. The qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analysed through identifying common themes, categories and subcategories from the data.

Inductive analysis is the process through which qualitative researchers synthesize and make meaning from the data, starting with specific data and ending with the categories and patterns (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). Content analysis is a set of procedures that can be applied to any message medium (text, spoken word, actions video recordings) to identify what is being communicated, by whom and to whom. It is concerned with the significance and meaningfulness of the communication; it is further concerned not just with words but also on the concepts and ideas that are being communicated (Newby 2014).

The analysis was done on a word processing or qualitative data analysis software, Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) called ATLAS.ti. The researcher chose this software because it makes the organising of data manageable; and assists the researcher to connect the links from themes which emerges within the data.

Trustworthiness and validity

The trustworthiness and validity of the research was ensured by the data collection tool itself, which were the interviews that were conducted with the teachers. In order to enhance validity, the researcher used these possible strategies, amongst others: member checking and participant review. In member checking, the researcher requested participants to check for accuracy during data collection, by listening to the audio recording after the interviews. As well as participant review, by requesting participants to review the synthesis of the interview for accuracy of presentation

(McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The researcher also employed four strategies to enhance trustworthiness of the research. The trustworthiness of qualitative research can be established by using these four strategies: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Thomas 2010).

Trustworthiness is the term used in qualitative research as a measure of the quality of research. It is the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy (Thomas, 2010). Assessing the accuracy of qualitative findings is not easy. The researcher ensured the trustworthiness and credibility of the research with multiple procedures and four strategies as mentioned above, applied in a qualitative study. Creswell (2014) also supports the view that the participants will review and respond to transcripts of their interviews through, e.g., member checking.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), the school principals as well as the teachers. The permission letters from the GDE were presented to the school principals. Participating teachers were informed that the information provided by them will be treated with confidentiality. The full details of the research will be outlined in the consent letters. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), the essence of anonymity is that information provided by research participants should, in no way, reveal their identities. For this research, teacher codes were used to identify them, alphabetically, according to the teacher that was interviewed first. The signed consent letters were obtained from every participant in the research before the interviews were conducted. The teachers' participation was voluntary, and they were allowed to withdraw at any given time. Furthermore, all interviews were audio taped with participants' permission, and transcribed (McMillan & Schumacher 2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the manual analysis process of data, the following themes were identified:

Curriculum

Most of the teachers that were interviewed remarked on their understanding of the concept "curriculum".

Below are some of the verbatim comments by the participants:

Teacher G said: "Curriculum is the set of objectives that the students must follow and achieve by the end of the year".

Another teacher had this to say: "Curriculum is what the department sets for the students of a particular grade or standard to achieve".

Du Preez and Reddy (2014) explain that, Curriculum is a social construct (developed by human deliberation) and it must therefore be accepted that there is no generally

accepted interpretation of this concept. According to Thijs and Van den Akker (2009), cited in Booyse & du Plessis, 2014), a curriculum can be defined as a “plan for learning”, as used by the American Hilda Taba in 1962 (Booyse & du Plessis, 2014). The researcher posits a Curriculum as a plan or content of what should be taught at schools according to each specific subject.

Curriculum development

Teachers that participated in this research had the following to say:

Teacher C said: “Teachers must be involved in any development of the curriculum so that they can be able to implement it with ease”.

Teacher G said: “We as implementers of any curriculum, we must be the first people to be contacted in developing the curriculum”.

Curriculum Development focuses on improvement and innovation in education (Booyse & du Plessis, 2014). Curriculum development, based on a broad understanding, can be seen as a continuous process, which is context specific, flexible and adaptable. In this regard, Hlebowitsh (2010, cited in du Preez & Reddy 2014) states that “the curriculum development process is organic and comprehensive in its outlook; it makes it clear that any determination about how to teach has to be done in relation to what gets taught and that any determination about what gets taught has to be understood in relations to wider learning purposes and accompanying learning effects”.

Curriculum development comprises of the following phases: curriculum design, curriculum dissemination, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation (Carl 2012).

Curriculum development revolves around a particular subject matter or discipline, for the purpose of this study, for example, history subject. This development or design would provide an opportunity to select assignments, teaching and learning experiences, topics or activities to be taught or learned by learners.

Training

Below are some of the verbatim comments by the teachers that participated in this research:

Teacher D said: “Training that we received from the Department of Basic Education is not enough. We were trained for only one day and expected to do miracles”.

Another participant had this to say: “The facilitators of the training were also not clear about what we must do. Some just read information to us as is in the training manuals”.

Dynamic teacher involvement in curriculum development can make a real contribution to professional development. The professional development can take place if opportunities for it are created. Taba (1962, cited in Carl, 2012) states that curriculum development and training must be combined for this purpose. Training is, only one instrument in empowering teachers.

Teacher involvement

Regarding their involvement teachers that participated in this research had the following comments:

Teacher F said: “Our involvement is crucial but was inadequate”. We need to be fully involved and our opinions taken seriously”.

Another participant said: “Teacher involvement must be taken into consideration when planning any teaching and learning activities in schools, especially curriculum development”.

With their knowledge, experiences and competencies, teachers are central to any curriculum development effort. According to Alusbaie (2016) better teachers support better learning because they are most knowledgeable about the practice of teaching and are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom. The process of curriculum development requires teachers to act and reflect on society's needs in each stage of the development process of the curriculum.

A considerable amount of research on teacher involvement in curriculum development has been done throughout the world. Most studies focused more on the extent of teacher involvement in curriculum development than on how their involvement relates to or is supported by professional development (Nghihalwa2018). Therefore, it is important to also determine the teachers' perceptions and suggestions to the improvement or reduction of hindrances, to their involvement in the overall curriculum development and not only of a specific subject, as this study intends.

History education

The participants in this research had the following say regarding History curriculum:

Teaches B said: “The document explains clearly what History education all is about. However, there are just questions that one has to answer”.

Another participant said: “I understand clearly what History education is in South African context”

The present South African History curriculum provides this heading to its introduction. The paragraph reads:

“History is the study of change and development in society over time. The study of history enables us to understand how past human action affects the present and

influences our future, and it allows us to evaluate these effects. So, history is about learning how to think about the past, which affects the present, in a disciplined way. History is a process of enquiry. Therefore, it is about asking questions of the past: What happened? When did it happen? Why did it happen then? What were the short-term and long-term results? It involves thinking critically about the stories people tell us about the past, as well as the stories that we tell ourselves” (DoE 2011).

Teacher learning

Most of the participants in this research indicated their understanding of the concept of teacher learning. Below are some of their verbatim comments:

Teacher A said: “Teacher learning is important for development especially in curriculum. Teachers must be life long learners. We need continuous learning activities to keep abreast with new developments”.

Another participant said: “Teacher learning is crucial for curriculum development, teachers must always be knowledgeable about new curricula and many other developments concerning teaching and learning”.

This article comprises several concepts on the involvement of teachers in curriculum development of History education in the Further Education and Training Phase. Teacher learning is significant in curriculum development. According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle ([s.a.]) the concept teacher learning is part of a new perspective on teacher education and professional development. Korthagen (2017) discusses the underlying shift in focus on theory and practice on teacher learning; and indicates that more attention is going to the question of how teachers learn.

The author presented findings about teacher learning as a fundament for thinking about professional development of pre-service and in-service for teachers. Furthermore, the view of professional development, often unconscious, multi-dimensional, and multi-level nature of teacher learning should be taken seriously. Therefore, professional development connects the professional with the personal aspects of learning. Korthagen (2017) states that in the literature on teacher learning, little attention has been devoted to professional development at the layers of teachers’ professional identity and mission.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research found that teachers contributed very less in the development of curriculum for history education. Furthermore, this research argues that teachers do not understand the concept of curriculum as explained in their own words. There was also inadequate professional development or capacitation of teachers in terms of curriculum development. It was also established in this research that teachers received less training to be able to be involved in curriculum development. The findings also recognised that teachers’ involvement in curriculum development was not satisfactory

to them. However, there are some of the positive aspects such as the way history education was planned in the manuals the teachers received.

Teachers must be involved fully in the development of any curriculum for all subjects or learning areas. Furthermore, teachers should be taken through various steps of curriculum development and design in the form of workshops that can be done in not less than ten days. Curriculum development should be done by both teachers and Department of Education officials.

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