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Leadership Practices of Heads of Department in Executing of Physical Development Activities in Primary Schools in South Africa

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ABSTRACT The teaching of physical development activities has been undermined across the world. Physical development activities are part of physical education curriculum. The teaching of physical development activities is different from teaching other learning areas as it involves learning through movement. This part of the learning area is more practical than other learning areas as learners learn the skills of movements through practical performances. This study investigates the leadership practices of Heads of Department (HODs) in the teaching of physical development activities. The results should assist HODs and school management teams to consider the experiences as well as the skills that educators possess when allocating learning areas to their staff members. Teaching physical development activities should not be regarded as a filler learning area but should be regarded as an important learning area that will benefit learners to cope with future adult life experiences. A case study of two HODs and four educators in their respective departments found that School Management Teams (SMTs) were not protecting the teaching of physical development activities. Educators are allocated to teach physical development activities even if they lack content knowledge to teach it. Time allocated to develop such educators is limited and as a result they tend to rely only on the information they access through afternoon workshops or cluster meetings. The findings indicate that lack of experience and specialisation in the teaching of physical development activities has an influence on the HODs' leadership style. More support is needed in the teaching of physical development activities in order to boost the confidence of those who are teaching this part of the learning area. Deployment of staff members to the relevant positions is one of the priority areas. An implication for schools, particularly HODs and school management teams, is that the teaching of physical development activities is as important as the teaching of other learning areas.