

Chronicling Teachers' Experiences in the Teaching of Business Education in Three Secondary Schools in Lesotho

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ABSTRACT This qualitative case study aimed at providing an in-depth insight into the day-to-day teaching of Business Education in secondary schools in Lesotho. The data collection methods used were influenced by interpretive paradigm and the study used individual interviews, observation and document reviews. The research findings revealed that teachers were not adequately trained on how to implement Business Education and not many of them were involved in the design of the new curriculum. The study further revealed that there was ineffectiveness in the delivery of Business Education curriculum to learners, which was influenced by the unevenness in the training as it resulted in three categories of teachers. The unevenness of the delivery was further exacerbated by the unavailability of resources and the provision of support by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). This study recommends that the NCDC should ensure that communication about the workshops between the schools and NCDC should be improved. In addition, the NCDC should officially close schools during those days that are set aside for workshops, in order to make workshops effective.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Before Lesotho got its independence in 1966, it adopted its education system from the British Education system to the extent that the assessment and syllabuses were very similar. Since Lesotho gained its independence from the colonial rule, its secondary education has dramatically expanded in scale even though it continued to deliver the colonial-style curricula (Ansell 2006). The formal school education is perceived as a joint responsibility of the Lesotho government, the missionary churches and the community as well. This includes establishing schools, providing the curriculum and facilities, and paying and supporting teachers. But the policy guidelines, school curricula, the public examinations for Junior Certificate (JC) and Cambridge Overseas Certificate (COSC), and the teachers' salaries are provided by the government through its ministries (Ministry of Education 2002). Even though the government is still involved in education and sharing responsibilities with the missionary churches, formal education is still managed, controlled and administered by the missionary churches (Ansell 2006). Teachers in the government, community and church schools are employed and paid for by the government. As before, education is not free – this means that

parents are responsible for paying the school fees for their children. In other developing countries some schools employ unqualified teachers because of the shortage of trained teachers in the country, and South Africa is not an exception to this matter. The lack of qualified teachers does contribute to the poor performance of learners.

Business Education was introduced as a practical subject in 2000 (Nketekete 2004). It has two components, that is, the practical and theory components. Currently, the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), which consists of the Educational Inspectorate (EI) at a district level, teacher training institutions, the Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL) and teachers. It is responsible for formulating the school curricula and syllabi, producing textbooks, supporting teachers and generating necessary teaching aids as well as disseminating these materials to different schools. It also conducts in-service workshops for teachers. The NCDC oversees the implementation of curricula and is also responsible for the entire curriculum policy and development work. It thus designs and develops curricula that will satisfy the needs of the nation (Ministry of Education 2002).

The new Business Education curriculum includes a project in which students practise business. The project's pedagogical aim is to ensure that each learner develops the necessary "action competencies" to manage environmental is-

sues and to support sustainable development. “Action competency” aims at building a sustainable citizenship in each learner. Action is associated with behaviour, activities, traditions, life skills (Mabathoana 2008). Nketekete (2004) asserts that the new curriculum (Business Education) should reflect the nature of business and target the development of entrepreneurial skills. Business Education provides learners with life skills and focuses on equipping learners with entrepreneurial skills, which are important for socioeconomic development. It is hoped that this curriculum will further develop knowledge and attitudes necessary to start and manage one’s own business. Nketekete (2004) argue that Business Education is learner-centred in that it integrates theory and practicals in a project, where learners are equipped with skills to handle actual business situations such as creating business plans, handling business finances, identifying staff and other students’ needs and marketing products. Swartland (2008) argues that the new curriculum should aim at stimulating creativity in learners, which in turn will enable them to identify opportunities for innovations. Based on our experiences, this is important in a country such as Lesotho where there is a high rate of unemployment (Ansell 2006).

Why this study? The findings of the study will inform the national and international debates on issues of successful curriculum implementation, particularly the training and support offered to the teachers in order to improve the teaching of Business Education. Studies had been conducted on curriculum implementation in the United Kingdom (Cuban 2006; Smit 2001; Fisherman 2006). The results showed that teachers need to be involved in the design and development of the new curriculum because they are the key role-players in this implementation phase. Teachers can be the silent voices in implementation if they are ignored and discounted.

In Botswana, Lesego (2005) conducted a study to identify relevant factors in implementing the Chemistry curriculum. The study sought to map out teachers’ effectiveness to improve students’ learning of Chemistry as compared with teaching during old curriculum. Studies have been conducted on the methods used by Business Education teachers in the teaching and learning of this subject (Nketekete 2004; Nketekete and Motebang 2004). Another study was conducted in Lesotho by Phakisi (2008),

which looked at factors affecting the implementation of the new Junior Secondary Science Curriculum in Lesotho.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by curriculum implementation theories, namely the adaptive model, the adoptive model/power-coercive model, and the rational-empirical model.

1.2.1 The Concept of Curriculum Implementation

According to Fullan (1992), implementation involves the process of putting into practice the idea or set of activities and structures that are new to people attempting to change. Marsh and Willis (1995), on the other hand, call it a translation of a written curriculum into classroom practices. This is what Lubisi et al. (1998) refer to as “curriculum as practice” because it refers to what actually happens in the classrooms when teachers deliver the plan to the students.

Curriculum undergoes four related phases: design, development or dissemination, implementation and evaluation. Each phase is linked to the other phase in terms of their processes (Carl 1995:48). Curriculum implementation is only a phase of a curriculum (which is the focus of this study), following design and dissemination. Curriculum has to be designed before it can be implemented, and it is defined by Mbingo (2006) as a phase that relates to both creation of a new curriculum as well as the replanning and review of the existing one after evaluation has taken place. Mbingo (2006) also views curriculum dissemination as one of the phases of curriculum and purports that it is an essential component that creates a bridge between theory and what is actually practised. It can also be seen as the distribution or publication of planned information that is revised or a newly introduced curriculum.

In our understanding, curriculum implementation includes putting into practice the aims, content and methods, which are planned and developed for schools as guides to teachers to implement. It is the phase where design is put into practice (Carl 1995). In order for a curriculum to be effectively implemented, it would be useful to continuously evaluate it to see whether the changed curriculum is working or

not working. Logically speaking curriculum implementation is the main focus of these four phases because it is the phase in which the actual dissemination of planned content is being delivered. According to Mbingo (2006), curriculum evaluation is one of the phases that ensures that the planned curriculum reaches the targeted people. Carl (1995) explains that curriculum evaluation can be understood as the continuous effort to trace its effects in terms of content towards an achievement of the defined goals. It might be perceived as the process of monitoring and measuring the achievement of the set goals, and a reflection of what is to be done next.

Marsh and Willis (1995) show that careful planning and development are very important, but they count for nothing unless teachers are aware of the plan and are informed about how they can implement it in their classrooms. They further mention that to effectively implement any curriculum a considerable period of time may be required since individual teachers need to become competent and confident in how to use it. Effective implementation also implies that teachers implement it as intended, and that they understand and support its implications. If teachers are to implement a curriculum successfully, it is essential that they have a thorough understanding of the principles and practices of the proposed change. It is desirable that they understand both the theoretical underpinnings and classroom application of the changed curriculum. Powell and Anderson (2002) add on this, saying that implementation of a reformed curriculum is the interaction of a teacher's knowledge and beliefs about the nature of the reform with the curriculum that determines what actually happens in the classroom.

In contrast to what Carl (1995) believes as curriculum phases, Hord and Hall (2000) view curriculum implementation as consisting of two main phases, which are development and implementation in which schools and the government invest their time and resources. According to them, support to teachers in the implementation process and supply of materials/resources during training should be equated to implementation/delivery of any curriculum in the classrooms for effective, and the success of such curriculum implementation. Their argument is that if curriculum developers ignore the actual implementation of such a curriculum, which is done by teachers in classrooms, failure is likely to occur.

1.3 Models of Curriculum Change

There are three prominent models of curriculum change, namely the adaptive model, the adoptive model/power-coercive model, and the rational-empirical model. These will be discussed briefly below.

1.3.1 The Adaptive Model

The adaptive model of curriculum change is sensitive to local and individual schools. Teachers are placed at the centre of the innovation process to identify the problem and the need for change. In this model teachers are active and develop responses to the problem in their own classrooms. Even though teachers are actively participating in this model, they may lack the necessary skills to plan and implement the new or reviewed curriculum. Daft (1978) confirms that this type of change is initiated, or originated, and implemented by the lower organisational members. He further asserts that freedom and exposure of members at the lower level of such an organisation enable innovative ideas to enter the organisation, and implementation will depend on the approval or disapproval by lower level members.

1.3.2 Adoptive Model/Power-Coercive Model

Phakisi (2008) defines the adoptive model of curriculum change as a model where power is applied by those holding greater power and enforcing those with less power to comply with it. Generally speaking, this represents a top-down approach. This approach to curriculum change ignores the different conditions and contexts that exist in schools. It is a top-down approach, which assumes that change is linear and is motivated by an authority figure. Anderson (1997) explains that this model is concerned with measuring, describing and explaining the process of change experienced by teachers involved in attempts to implement new curriculum materials and instructional practices.

1.3.3 Rational-Empirical Model

In this model, the change agents introduce the new curriculum with the belief that it will benefit teachers because they are assumed to be rational people who will adopt the proposed

change. Similarly, the rational empirical model uses a top-down approach, as does the power-coercive model. According to Phakisi (2008), this model involves formulation of an innovation by an “originator”, who starts by identifying the problem and finding the solution to the problem. Havelock, cited in Phakisi (2008), explains that this model involves three processes to be adopted: trial (which entails the practice of the proposed change with a few people or schools), implementation (putting into practice in real classrooms), and institutionalisation (making it permanent by legalising and putting it in the examination). This is what happened in Lesotho; the NCDC, which is the originator, realised the deficiency in the curriculum and decided to change it. Few teachers were involved in the design – these were the ones who were the members of the panel.

1.4 Research Question

The research attempted to answer the following questions:

- How do Lesotho teachers implement the new Business Education curriculum?
- What is the nature of training and support that was offered the teachers of Business Education?

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This is a qualitative study that was located within the interpretive paradigm and which employed a case study approach. The collected data was triangulated through the use of interviews, observations and documentary reviews. These methods ensured an adequate dialogue between the researchers and the participants, and were chosen because researchers wanted to understand and interpret the experiences of the participants in the context within which they live. Therefore, as Mertens (1998) argues, qualitative methods such as interviews, observations and documentary reviews are predominant in this paradigm. He further states that they are applied in correspondence with the assumption about the social construction of reality – the research is conducted through interaction between researcher and participants (Mertens 1998).

Interviews were foregrounded for this study. Interviews provide in-depth data if they are well

conducted because they allow both the participants and researchers time for clarification. Cohen et al. (2007) argue that interviews increase the chance of obtaining valid information from the participants; they are the most effective means of eliciting cooperation from the participants as the researcher starts by establishing a rapport with them. Further, interviews provide the participants with opportunities to express themselves freely, and they eliminate the possibility of interviewer’s bias (Cohen et al. 2007).

2.1 Observations

As the researcher have indicated earlier, this study used methods of data collection that included observations. “Observation is a method which involves the researcher in watching, recording and analysing events of interests” (Blaxter et al. 2006). The reason for using observations in this study was to make an empirical and factual judgement rather than a value judgement of the setting, and juggling the observations with the elements of participation of learners as not all learners would behave the same. Observations were important in this study so that we could examine the nature of implementation of Business Education curriculum in schools. Naicker (1998) clarifies that observation provides the researcher with first-hand information about what is actually done, and that it was done by recording impressions and happenings in the natural environment, so that it is possible to describe and understand events as they were.

2.2 Document Reviews

The study also used documentation review to complement the data collected from observations and interviews, which might not provide a complete picture of the study under investigation. The researcher found it important to have a review of the documents as they might provide information and clarity about the teachers’ experiences underlying the current practices in their classrooms. Henning (2004) argues that documents are used as a method of data collection along with other methods. We reviewed the following documents: the Business Education Curriculum for grades 8-10, syllabus, teachers’ lesson plans, scheme books to find out what

teachers wanted to impart, and finally students' tests records. Mdtutshane (2007) argues that document reviews help the researcher to uncover meaning, develop understanding and discover insights relevant to the problem researched.

2.3 The Sample

Purposive sampling was used since we needed those teachers who were involved in the teaching of Business Education. The participants were also teachers who had taught Book-keeping and Commerce before this subject was replaced by Business Education, and who had been trained by NCDC, and those who did not get any training. In a nutshell, we needed those teachers who would add to the understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny. This is in line with Gay et al. (2009), who define qualitative sampling as the process of selecting a small numbers of individuals for a study in such a way that individuals are good key informants who contribute to the researcher's understanding of a given phenomenon. Bertram (2003) argues that purposive sampling is a useful method of selecting participants in that it often coincides with convenience sampling whereby the researchers choose a sample that is easy to reach.

2.4 Data Analysis

Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis is defined as the process of tracing the thinking pattern of the interviewees and the pattern of action depicted in observation notes (Henning 2009). Henning (2009) further maintains that this approach is used to analyse data from written documents, transcripts, news reports and visual media. In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse data from qualitative responses to open-ended questions on interviews and document reviews. According to Gay et al. (2009), the first step in analysing data is to read and write memorandums about all field notes, transcripts and observer's comments to get the initial sense of the data. In analysing data the researchers familiarised ourselves with the audio recordings by listening to the entire collection of audio recordings several times and reading the transcripts a number of times in order to provide a context for the emergence of specific units of meaning, and later on themes. This is line with

Cohen et al. (2007:370). The researchers transcribed and translated the audio recordings to the language of science, which was understood by local and international readers. Translation was effected since interviews were in the mother tongue. Coding was done by hand while reading through each interview transcript. As the researchers explored data collected, the categories developed acted as a framework for understanding and working with the information collected.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

All due ethical considerations were discussed with the participants. Reynolds (1979), as cited in Robson (2002), states that ethics refer to rules of conduct, a code of principles. Mertens (1998) contends that ethical guidelines in research are needed to guard against any possible dilemmas. Furthermore, she suggests that guidelines are also needed to guard against the less obvious, yet harmful effects of research. The following ethical issues were discussed with respondents:

- *Privacy.* Information that clearly identified the participants or organisations was not revealed. Instead, acronyms were used so that confidentiality was guaranteed.
- *Consent.* All efforts were made to obtain participants' consent without coercion. Moreover, it was determined when it was appropriate to gain permission from the school governors. A letter of permission from the relevant education authorities was obtained. Further, participants were allowed to withdraw from the project at any time for any reason.
- *Information.* Participants were informed of the use that would be made of the data and it was explained why their participation was important.
- *Approval.* To conduct research in schools permission was sought from the respective Provincial Departments of Education.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The use of respondents' voices in research is a very powerful tool in qualitative research. It is for this reason that selections from the transcripts of interviews have been used to ensure that teachers' voices are heard in terms of their experiences in implementing the Business Education

curriculum. This section presents the themes that emerged from the data that was sought. The themes are:

- Teachers' participation in the design of the curriculum
- The nature and adequacy of training
- Lack of support to teachers
- Nature and availability of the teaching and learning materials
- The new curriculum and its challenges on teachers and students

3.1 Teachers' Participation in the Design of the Curriculum

When asked about participation in the design of the new curriculum, teachers offered varied responses. From the responses provided it became apparent that the teachers were involved in the whole process of the introduction of the Business Education curriculum in the Lesotho secondary school. At the first level, that is designing the curriculum, teachers were represented in the design because some teachers are members of National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), which is the central part in the curriculum design. For example, a teacher said:

As a member of the Panel ... I think teachers were involved in the design of a new curriculum ... in the design of a new curriculum. As we discussed we agreed that Bookkeeping and Commerce is of no use to teach to students ... so we decided that Business Education should be introduced (Secondary School 1, Teacher 1)

Another teacher indicated that:

Business Education was introduced and we were called for a series of workshops. Fortunately I attended some of them. So I think it was a good transition from Bookkeeping and Commerce to Business Education because ... those workshops helped us a lot because we understood what was expected of us. It also helped us connect the two curricula because they are not very different. So for me teaching it was not a problem and I think I like Business Education than Bookkeeping and Commerce (Secondary School 2, Teacher 3).

Another teacher from a different school that was not involved in the participation said:

We were not informed because we were just told that Bookkeeping and Commerce will no longer be taught as a subject starting from the

following year. I have forgotten the year really, but I can remember that we were not informed before that. We only find it in schools the following year but there wasn't any information before about its introduction, I have forgotten the year serious (Secondary School 3, Teacher 6).

Also, the NCDC realised the importance of the participation of teachers and the critical role they can play in the design of the curriculum; hence it ensured that teachers were represented by replacing a teacher who had left for another department. Literature shows that teachers must be involved in any curriculum change as any change would demand their professional involvement in practice (Naicker 1998). He further states that the success of implementation depends on the implementers' views and impressions about it. If they do not view it as important, they might not be impressed and might ignore it. These teachers were trained so that they cascade the training to other teachers at the workshops that were held by NCDC. A teacher said:

I am now a member of Commercial Subject Panel, who was just called to join the panel after someone has left in the panel to fill the gap left, that person left for another Department. We were just invited to a workshop to discuss Bookkeeping and Commerce. Therefore, I was just informed when I got there that NCDC has decided to change the curriculum from Bookkeeping and Commerce to Business Education (Secondary School 1, Teacher 1).

Many commentators mention the involvement of teachers could offer insights in each phase of the curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation; and they must be involved at the beginning stages of the designing/planning. They further indicate that teachers may be involved in order to comment on the appropriateness of the learning tasks or exercises that students will engage in during implementation. By so doing, change would be eventually influenced by those who are concerned. This is what was done in Lesotho as stakeholders were involved in the design of the new curriculum. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) also point out that in the first stage of the design all stakeholders should be involved and there must be schools that will be exemplary implementers. In Lesotho these were referred to as the pilot schools. These pilot schools were selected although the teach-

ers were not made aware of how they were selected.

Literature shows that the success of implementation of a new curriculum depends on the extent to which all consumers of that curriculum are informed about its purpose (Mbingo 2006). The curriculum carries teachers' ideas and decisions because they were represented in the panel that decided what should go into the new curriculum. One of the teachers, who was a member of NCDC, said that some teachers were invited as members to discuss the replacement of the old curriculum. Even though not all teachers were involved, the panel members were invited in the design and got training, which is cascading. Bennet and Lubben (2006) contend that involving teachers in all phases of curriculum implementation assures that the curriculum would reflect the realities of the classroom practices. The participation of teachers in the decisions made about curriculum change has influence on the successful implementation of such curriculum as teachers can bring their rich experiences as implementers. Allowing teachers to participate in curriculum decisions would also mean empowering them as implementers through the direct participatory role in curriculum decisions (Jansen 1990).

Teachers seem to have valued the training offered to them and they understood that although the concepts are the same, the training helped them in implementing it in their classrooms. Koosimile (2004) says that if the new curriculum is accepted by the teachers, it means that they have understood it and the impact it has on its implementation in the classrooms.

3.2 The Nature and Adequacy of Training Provided

When asked about adequacy of the training material teachers offered varied responses. One teacher said:

No, actually I didn't find any problems, the only difference is that in Bookkeeping and Commerce, Bookkeeping which was to produce subsidiary books, final accounts and part of Commerce in which we have types of trade, business statements. But in Business Education they are combined together to make one book. That is the difference; there was no problem at all (Secondary School 2, Teacher 2).

Another teacher, who was a panel member, indicated that

As panel members we were the ones who trained other teachers, we decided on the training (Secondary School 1, Teacher 1).

Teachers who could not attend the NCDC workshops were trained through the cascade model. There was no evidence that the cascade training model was inferior. All participants felt that they were equally and adequately trained to deliver on the new curriculum. The cascade training model was successful in that teachers seemed to have been trained because they indicated that they did not experience any problem in implementing the new curriculum. They also indicated that they decided on the type of training to be offered to teachers, and teachers were adequately trained. After the training, teachers felt that they could teach the new curriculum in their own classrooms.

There were different training sessions offered to different groups of teachers in the replacement of the Bookkeeping and Commerce curricula with the new curriculum, Business Education. The first category comprised of teachers who were members of the NCDC and who were directly trained, and they decided on the training to be given to the second category. These teachers pointed out that teachers were involved in the design of the new curriculum and mentioned that there are four teachers in the centre representing all other teachers. As indicated earlier, involving teachers in all the phases of the curriculum assures that the design reflects the realities in the classrooms (Bennet and Lubben 2006). This implies that the NCDC knew that it has to involve other stakeholders in the design of the new curriculum as explained by Fullan (1992).

These teachers felt happy because they were invited to discuss Bookkeeping and Commerce, and the introduction of the new curriculum. As teachers are the ones who implement the designed curriculum in their classrooms and they are the people to be involved in the design so that they bring fresh and building ideas from their experiences. Teachers who are also members of the panel indicated that they were also the ones who decided on the type of training to be offered, and ultimately they trained them. Even though their view about training was that the training was too short because it lasted for only one week it was not enough for them and the teachers to have been training on the implementation of the whole curriculum at ago. This

is confirmed by Phakisi (2008) who says that the short-term in-service training in the form of workshops on curriculum change has a little impact on the teachers' classrooms practices because they are too short to be effective. Therefore, this would mean teachers will still have problems in trying to implement this new curriculum, which might lead to poor performance of the learners.

The second category is the teachers who were cascaded in order to implement the new curriculum. These teachers found the training insufficient because in that one week of training, they were divided into groups and were given topics to present as groups. While the teachers acknowledged the necessity and importance of the new curriculum, they struggled with implementing it properly. The problem arose due to the inadequacy of training and insufficient support in this category of the teachers trained. It was in these presentations that other teachers would make recommendations. This also indicates that training was not adequate because the topics were dealt with in a very short time. This category also did not have support from the NCDC, which was not making follow-ups to check on the progress. Teachers decided to help one another as colleagues at school level. They even decided to form an association at the regional level, which most of the teachers in the region joined. In the association teachers prepared the scheme (plan work for the quarter) together and this helped them not to omit some of the parts of the syllabuses.

This also helps in broadening their understanding of the syllabus contents and how they can disseminate that to students (Leu 2004). It also helps them grow professionally and become experienced teachers. It is at this stage that the teachers taught in a team in their own schools and helped one another. At this point, the teachers had to ask for help from other teachers who even supplied them with pamphlets they got from the training workshop. The lack of support and inadequate training by NCDC complicated the implementation of Business Education and caused attitudes and mistrust towards Business Education teachers. As a result teachers fell behind because of insufficient training and development by NCDC. The teachers felt that training did not prepare them to implement Business Education in their classrooms. They complained that training focused on teaching topics from this new curriculum rather than en-

gaging them in the methods of teaching it. This means NCDC was not confident in cascading the training. Most teachers were not satisfied with the training because they indicated that some critical issues needing attention were not attended to. Teachers did not enjoy their teaching as they did not have a deeper understanding of Business Education.

There are teachers who did not attend workshops, hence they received no training. Some of them were not yet in the teaching profession when Business Education was introduced. Therefore, without sufficient training and support, the teachers may have become frustrated in implementing the new curriculum (Fullan 1992). Moreover, they did not get support from NCDC and they had just joined teaching without training. Some teachers were told while they were in the Marking Board (marking end-of-the year examinations) that they were no longer going to teach Bookkeeping and Commerce, but Business Education. Powell and Anderson (2002) state that implementation of any new curriculum requires a transformation in the teachers' ideas and understanding of the subject matter, teaching and learning of the such curriculum. Teachers were left alone so much that they had to ask for help from other schools. Teachers did not change and adopt a new paradigm because there was not any training and support to the teachers by NCDC. Jansen (2001) argues that lack or shortage of training disempowers teachers and that may lead to failure in curriculum implementation. It would be better if the teachers were exposed to the new curriculum earlier because they would respond to it more willingly (Arnott 1994).

There were some teachers who had experiential learning because they were selected to be at the pilot schools. These teachers were very happy even if they were not training because NCDC offered them teaching materials and also supported them in the trial of the new curriculum. On the basis of their previous knowledge, they were able to teach using their old practices and found them helpful and suitable in the implementation of the new curriculum. Arnott (1994) points out that the teachers who are more traditional have a tough time adopting the different strategies, and when they have their first few failures they get turned off. He further argues that they selectively pull out the key ideas or use catch phrases which do fit their under-

standing and knowledge. It is proved that some teachers use their personal maps, which do not sometimes provide reliable or valuable guidance.

3.3 Lack of Support to Teachers

When asked about support and follow-ups, the teachers indicated that no follow-ups were made. Instead the NCDC said that it was inhibited by problems in making any follow-ups. It did not make any follow-ups to find out whether teachers were implementing what they were expected to teach. There are teachers who did not attend workshops and who found their schools as disadvantageous because they were not selected to pilot the subject, hence they were not given support. Some teachers who were not in the pilot schools seem to have been helped by teachers from the pilot schools with pamphlets given during the training to help them prepare for implementation. As Arnott (1994) indicates, not all teachers are as professional as they should be and some of them lean back on their old ways. These teachers would not take the risk of getting themselves involved.

The teachers showed the importance of having the teachers' association in their regions because this is where they get support for the classroom practices. In all these categories the prevailing issue about the different teachers' experiences is that they did not get support, which is because the Ministry of Education and Training offers free education at the primary level and partially at the secondary level. The Ministry of Education and Training is decentralised at the district level through the Inspectorate whose role is to provide support for schools in the form of administrative assistance and professional guidance (UNESCO 2006). But this seems not to have materialised because some teachers denied receiving support from the Inspectorate.

Hord and Hall (2006) argue that the top-down approach of introducing a new curriculum can work as long as it is accompanied by continuous communication and monitoring as well as feedback on implementation. As the teacher who was a panel member explained:

In addition, teachers were not given any support. For example, the only support they got was from their individual schools where they explained that they helped each other and they even did team-teaching in their schools. It was

like the only schools which were trained are the pilot schools, because some teachers were consulting them when they experienced problems even though they seemed to have received full training. There was no support from the NCDC as they indicated; one has to ask for help from neighbouring schools who even gave them some pamphlets that were given during trial time (Secondary School 1, Teacher 1)

But even the trained teachers did not have adequate skills to disseminate what they were trained on by other teachers. According to Conco (2004), the successful implementation of any new curriculum depends on the orientation, training and support teachers receive, and on the quality and use of learning support materials. He further indicates that if trainers lack confidence, knowledge and understanding to make the training process succeed, the cascading will result in the misinterpretation of important information. Another teacher said that he did not get any support or training at his school, and he was the only teacher in that school teaching Business Education. He said:

It wasn't easy like I said earlier, no one helped and unfortunately I was the only person in that school teaching Business Education, it wasn't easy (Secondary School 3, Teacher 1). Another teacher added that they got help from outside school, that is, from other neighbouring schools:

I think mostly we get support from the Commercial Subject Association because we share a lot when we are there. You will find that we even help each other with topics that we find difficult on our own and you are not competent in teaching. Then you will find that you get new ideas and skills of how to tackle such problems as other teachers would give us tips on how to do it. Like Bookkeeping and Commerce has [a] project part you will find that most teachers do not like it because they don't have ways of conducting it, then it is in this association that we share (Secondary School 3, Teacher 2).

Actually, NCDC did not prepare thoroughly at the time of implementation because some of the teachers complained that they did not have learning and teaching materials, which were supposed to be supplied by NCDC.

The NCDC did not deliver the materials to the schools because they were only available from its offices. Then, some of the teachers had to go to NCDC to fetch for the books, and some-

times they could not find them as not enough materials were available at the centre. It became the responsibility of individual teachers to seek help from other neighbouring schools so as to smooth the implementation. Even though the learning materials were not easily found by these teachers, they were found to be user-friendly to both teachers and the students in that they are written in simple English. The unavailability of learning materials in the first year of implementation resulted in students depending on the teacher for notes provided in classrooms.

3.4 Nature and Availability of the Teaching and Learning Materials

Teachers also had input into how the new curriculum would be delivered as they participated in material development. The books that were used to implement the new curriculum in classrooms were written by some of those teachers and this implies that teachers were involved in all stages of the introduction of the new curriculum. Jansen (2001) mentions that the involvement of the teachers is necessary because they can bring their rich experiences and ideas to the design. This also would mean empowering teachers through the direct participatory role in the curriculum decisions. However, these books had some discrepancies, which were diagnosed by teachers in the field, and teachers were invited to another workshop to evaluate the book and make corrections. Another teacher from a different school commented:

They were [The material] very shallow ... they were very shallow really. NCDC distributed them to us when we went to their offices but, there were no students' books only teachers' guides or teachers' whatever, but after that NCDC arranged that students also should get some copies or books that they will use, but they were very shallow as compared to those of Book-keeping and Commerce books. Actually people hate Business Education as a result (Secondary School 3, Teacher 2).

This implies that few teachers participated in the revision of the book and the materials that were used by students were also designed by the same teachers. Some schools piloting the curriculum were also used to train other teachers because they were the first group for the NCDC cascade model. According to Al-Zyoudi (2006), the limited or non-existence training would make teachers not acquire competencies and

teaching experiences, which will cause negative attitudes and teachers may never be committed to the work they are entrusted. This is also indicated by a teacher:

Yah! Not necessarily all teachers, but some teachers especially those who have written the book that we are now using (Secondary School 1, Teacher 2).

It is also argued that teacher participation promotes greater responsibility, accountability, commitment and support to implementation and results of curriculum change (Cheng 1994). Another teacher claimed that not all teachers participated in the revision of the book and said:

According to my knowledge, no, not at all except for the pilot schools we were just given books. The only way we were involved was in the evaluation of the book itself (Secondary School 3, Teacher 2).

3.5 The New Curriculum and its Challenges on Teachers and Students

There are more demands in the new curriculum to both teachers and students. Students are to take part in their own education in that they participate in class discussions. This implies that Business Education is learner-centred. More work should be done by students, such as recording, selling, buying and keeping records. But teachers are not yet willing to act on those demands. A teacher indicated that

Just because it is designed in a spiral manner, it has that part which is important even if it is troublesome, tiresome and causes problems in schools in that students are engaged in all activities of buying and selling. I think it is the most important part of this curriculum where students are experiencing handling of money, they record, they do all that the business man is doing in the business. That is why I am saying at the end of every level a student can open up a business and then survive (Secondary School 2, Teacher 1).

Another teacher said:

Oh, not easy because sometimes you find that you encounter problems and you find that you are the only one, so you had to go to other schools to ask sir or madam from a different schools 'how do you treat this'. So it wasn't easy really. Later on I joined this association of teachers Lecsta (Lesotho Commercial Subjects Teacher Association) and that's where people

realised actually that we have to meet because we had some workshops which we attended to equip ourselves (Secondary School 2, Teacher 2).

Literature supports this in that if teachers are empowered, they can initiate changes in their lessons and teaching plans, and should have the opportunity to visit other colleagues to have a picture of how the new curriculum is implemented. According to Conco (2004), training helps teachers plan and develop their own work thoroughly. The lessons were well prepared and presented by all teachers observed.

4. CONCLUSION

The qualitative case study was used where individual interviews were used to gain in-depth insights from Business Education teachers from their day to day implementation of the new curriculum. The study revealed that there was ineffectiveness in the delivery of Business Education curriculum to learners, which was influenced by the unevenness in the training as it resulted in three categories of teachers: teachers who were trained by the NCDC, teachers who were cascaded and teachers who did not receive any training at all. The unevenness of the delivery was influenced by unavailability of resources and the provision of support by the NCDC. Therefore, there is inadequacy among teachers. Some teachers experienced problems in implementing the new curriculum because they were not trained and had no resources so much that they had to go to the neighbouring school and seek for help. Teachers who are effective in the implementation of the new curriculum are the ones who were properly trained and fortunately these teachers are the ones who were supplied with the material resources. This implies that they were fully supported by the NCDC as well as those schools which were involved in the pilot project. There is still a need to find out what strategies could be used to empower teachers to disseminate the new curriculum. There is still a need again for NCDC to find the cost effective model of training that can be used to train a very large number of teachers with minimal resources. The research is still needed again to find the strategies to implement the project part smoothly when resources are scarce.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that the NCDC should ensure that communication about the workshops between the schools and NCDC should be improved, by officially closing schools during those days that were set aside for workshops in order to make workshops effective. If teachers are consulted, they can help in identifying deficiencies in the former curriculum so that it is not included in the current curriculum. DCDC should provide ongoing support to all staff in all regions. Team-teaching should be promoted by the NCDC in all the regions and follow-ups should be made to check the progress of implementation on the new curriculum.

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