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Continuing Professional Teacher Development: The Case of Junior Teachers in one Rural Education District in South Africa

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ABSTRACT This article describes how teachers in rural junior secondary schools perceive current programmes for continuing professional teacher development (CPTD). The sample comprised 18 participants and utilized qualitatively analysed, semi-structured interview data. The results indicate that the strategies for implementing CPTD programmes for participants do not impact on their classroom practices. Participants are not motivated to attend out-of-school (off site) CPTD programmes, as they do not see the programme's impact on their teaching practices. The results equally suggest that teachers prefer on-school-site professional development programmes. The evidence suggests that participants have already started engaging in their own communities of practice in their schools. Contrary to expectations, the results reveal that District officials do not offer the expected support, nor do they visit the schools. In order to improve the effectiveness of CPTD programmes, teacher preferences pertaining to their development have to be considered by the education authorities. Some recommendations have been made.

INTRODUCTION

Evidence from Australia and the United Kingdom (Caena 2011; Walter and Briggs 2012); China (Paine and Fang 2006); Nigeria (Ejima 2012; Fareo 2013); France (Schleicher 2016); Thailand (UNESCO 2016) and the United States (Caena 2011), suggests that National development has continued to be linked directly to effective teacher education. With the ever-spreading force of globalisation, Paine and Fang (2006: 279) argue that "over time, there is a growing convergence in ideas about education, the notion of school and assumptions about and definitions of curriculum" that appears to connect nations globally. Nowadays, it would appear that what affects one nation may invariably affect other nations. As the area of continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) is currently receiving great attention locally and internationally, the researchers explore the effectiveness of strategies for implementing CPTD among junior

teachers in South Africa with the view to contributing to the growing international literature in this area that is intricately linked to all national and global developments. Given this scenario, it is imperative for researchers everywhere to begin exploring "ways in which policy can affect the professional learning" (Caena 2011: 6) of the teachers.

In South Africa, a lot of evidence exists which suggests that the Department of Education (DoE) is well aware of the role and value of CPTD in the overall improvement in the quality of teachers as well as in learning (Maistry 2008; DBE 2011; Steyn 2013; Mpahla and Okeke 2015a). Various approaches to and models of CPD are in place in many schools in the country (DoE 2010; DBE 2011; Taylor 2011; Mpahla and Okeke 2015b). Notwithstanding this, it is necessary to introduce CPTD programmes because the situation in schools remains unchanged, especially in rural schools. Although CPTD programmes are in place in the Education District where this study took place, the evidence in the data presented below suggests that the implementation of such programmes is grossly inadequate. A large number of teachers have not shifted from the old patterns of practice or past orientations to new ones. Based on the results from this study, it may be suggested that the commonly

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used cascade approach in the implementation of CPTD does not develop teachers to the appropriate level.

CPTD programmes in the District investigated are unable to address the challenges in the classroom and the larger context in which those teachers are teaching. Despite numerous interventions through on-going CPTD systems, research indicates that teachers have not shown enough observable improvement in their approaches to teaching and learning, nor has the quality of learner outcomes improved (Burton and Johnson 2010; DBE 2011; Steyn 2011; Adu and Okeke 2014). Evidence also suggests that many teachers are still practicing the old traditional classroom teaching methods, with no improvement in the expected learner performance (Steyn 2011; Pitsoe and Maila 2012).

Against this background, the authors assessed the effectiveness of the strategies for CPTD for rural junior secondary school teachers in one rural Education District in the Eastern Cape. To enable this assessment, two research questions were posed. Firstly, how do teachers assess the effectiveness of the strategies for implementing CPTD in rural schools? Secondly, what are the strategies preferred by teachers to make the implementation of CPTD programmes effective in meeting their needs?

Literature Review

Teacher Professional Development in Rural Areas

Different countries view professional development as central to education reform to sustain rural schooling. Countries such as Botswana, Ireland, Scotland, and China view professional development of teachers as part of teacher management and this is increasingly linked to the requirements of knowledge based societies and of lifelong learning (Zafeirakou 2007; Loucks and Matsumoto 2010; Adu and Okeke 2014; Schleicher 2016; Tait-McCutcheon and Drake 2016). A study by Darling-Hammond (2006) contends that the appropriate empowering of teachers, particularly in developing countries, is crucial. According to Zafeirakou (2007: 11), CPTD entails a process in which “teachers need to be actively involved in the change process [and where]...teacher professional development is a process and not an event”.

Based on these sentiments, studies unambiguously agree that practical training based on the realities of the classroom and ongoing on-the-job support is a critical factor for any successful teacher education (DoE 2004, 2008; Gardiner 2008; Wallin 2008; Mpahla and Okeke 2015b). To Harmon et al. (2007), improving the professional practice of teachers requires actions that address the unique context and conditions in rural schools. These views, reveal that claims of improving teacher practices are little more than rhetoric, unless the realities surrounding these challenges are addressed. Another critical challenge is to change teachers’ attitudes and those of community leaders. Teachers have to be assisted to avoid the accepted norm, as this seldom produces good results for their classroom practices.

Regarding the above concerns, Ntombela (2011) confirms the existence of structural imbalances in the education system. In 2010 Gulston, recommended a systemic and intensive training programme to develop teachers’ confidence and competence, as change occurs through ongoing staff development programmes. What is noticeable is that after several years’ experience in the classroom, teachers become set in their ways of thinking about teaching and learning. To avoid such a situation, it is imperative that retraining takes place over time, and that the components of such retraining have both theoretical and practical elements. School reform is, therefore, challenging as it involves a change in thinking - a paradigm shift. According to Boyer (2006), reflecting on professional development, education reform cannot succeed if it arrives pre-packaged from the outside. He insists that these reform efforts must be locally led by teacher communities, local educational leaders, parents and business leaders. These ideas are supported by Steyn (2013) who adds that more meaningful teacher development occurs when teachers collaborate in on-going and intensive interactions with their colleagues.

Principles of Continuing Professional Teacher Development

A key aspect of the effectiveness of CPTD programmes is their relationship with the established principles of adult learning (Knowles 1980). At the same time, part of being an effective teacher involves understanding how adults learn best.

In this subsection, a number of principles that underpin adult learning in the context of CPTD are discussed.

Of course, one of the fundamental principles in adult learning that may be essential for the effectiveness of CPTD is the fact that adults are inherently motivated and self-directed (QOTFC 2005). Ever since Knowles' (1980) work on adult learning theory was done, many studies have applied the concept in an attempt to understand, more explicitly, how adults learn (Lessing and de Witt 2007; Lee 2011; Killeavy and Murphy 2012; Steyn 2013; Mpahla and Okeke 2015a). According to Steyn (2013), adults do not like information, ideas or actions to be imposed on them during the process of learning. Doing so results in a negative attitude towards learning because, often, learners tend to refuse to go along with learning that comes from outside.

Moreover, Craig (2009) suggests that coercing teachers or any other learners into training activities, without first establishing whether those learners recognise the need for such training would be futile in the context of CPTD. In other words, teachers must intrinsically see the need for CPTD programmes for them to participate whole-heartedly, and subsequently, for learning to take place. Furthermore, it is part of the above CPTD principle that professional development of participating teachers become a continuous process that applies throughout the teachers' working life. That is why Megginson and Whitaker (2007) suggest that teachers be responsible for controlling and managing their own development.

Another key principle which relates to the effectiveness of CPTD programmes concerns the fact that, as adults, teachers bring life experiences and knowledge to the learning environment and situation. Personal experience, as supported by QOTFC (2005), has shown that adults like to be given the opportunity to use their pre-existing understanding about a situation in tackling a new challenge. This is a similar view to Craig (2009) who claims that adults bring into the learning situation a background of experience that is a rich resource. This view concedes that adults have a broader base of experience on which to attach new ideas and skills to give them richer meaning. This is a view supported by Steyn (2013) who posits that, since knowledge is embedded in experience and is personally constructed, it is necessary that the CPD programme

situate learning in authentic, real-world contexts that involve collaboration and social interaction. It is also supported by Lessing and de Witt (2007) when they state that professional development does not only require the informal and spontaneous learning of teachers from one another, but also relies on prior knowledge, and the wealth of potential and experience of each participant, which can be built upon and incorporated into further initiatives.

Hitherto, CPTD programmes' effectiveness appeared to revolve around a sense-making mechanism that enabled participating teachers to feel the value of various programmes. Without placing values on the programmes, teachers may feel it is a waste of their professional time. CPTD now refers to any activities aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills of teachers by means of orientation, training and support (Lessing and de Witt 2007). As a result, for a CPTD programme to be implemented, and for its success to be largely guaranteed, teachers need to know why they should engage in such learning (Craig 2009). This means that effective CPTD should first be aware of and address the specific needs of teachers. That is why Lessing and de Witt (2007) state that the best results are obtained if the programme is formally and systematically planned and presented with the focus on enhancement of personal and professional growth by broadening knowledge, skills and positive attitudes of the teachers.

In support of the above, Steyn (2013) advocates for professional development programmes to enhance deeper, ongoing teacher-directed learning, which removes teacher isolation as a barrier to effective professional development, and quality teaching. Steyn (2013) also views professional development as a dynamic, job-embedded, classroom focused supportive, collaborative and ongoing process that actively involves teachers in learning and development opportunities. This is the reason why traditional approaches to continuing professional development such as a one-day workshop where teachers are provided with information that they need to apply in practice, have been criticised (Steyn 2013). Professional development should, therefore, reflect individual teachers' needs and aspirations, the needs of the school as well as national strategic priorities.

Studies suggest that adults would most certainly want to know that what they spend time

learning is context-relevant (QOTFC 2005; Steyn 2013; Adu and Okeke 2014; Lazarus et al. 2014). Moreover, adults want to know the relevance of what they are learning to what they want to achieve (QOTFC 2005). This curiosity of wanting to know the relevance of the CPD programmes is aroused because teachers have become aware that their professional learning is shaped by the different classroom contexts in which they work. It is, therefore, necessary for the planners of training programmes to take as first priority, a consideration of what they (and teachers as well) wish to accomplish through training.

One other very important principle on which CPTD revolves is the issue of practical relevance. Most adults (including teachers), wish to assess from the onset, the measurable objectives of any programmes they want to invest their time in (Menlah and Mays 2013; Selemani-Meke and Rembe 2014; Mentese 2014). This is what the success of such programmes may depend on. According to Lessing and de Witt (2007), the success of the CPD programme is shown by the participants' ability to apply their new knowledge and skills in their own context, and by practicing the techniques explained during workshops. For instance, the positive aspects of a workshop are only valuable based on how it would impact the overall teaching career of particular teachers in the long run. Therefore, it is crucial for programme designers to endeavour to be explicit about how applicable such learning may be to the teachers' overall working competence.

Despite the usefulness of such programmes, they may fail even before they are implemented, as they are designed for the benefit of learners, adults in particular. For this reason, programmes as well as designers should not ignore the importance of respect and human dignity. Many studies have indicated that adult learners like to be respected (QOTFC 2005; Taylor 2011; Selemani-Meke 2013; Smith and Harrison 2013). For instance, the QOTFC (2007) notes that one way to show respect to adult learners is to ensure that CPD providers acknowledge the wealth of experience which adult learners bring to the context and environment of their learning. Respect for adult learners entails acknowledging the expertise that they bring into the learning context. This singular act would enable the cultivation of ownership, as respect for teachers' wealth of

experience in a learning context may result in teacher ownership of the programme. Teacher ownership is necessary for CPD programmes to achieve the desired goals (Selemani-Meke 2013; Adu and Okeke 2014; Mpahla and Okeke 2015a).

METHODOLOGY

Design, Sample, Analysis and Ethical Issues

The qualitative research study followed an interpretive paradigm because meeting with teacher participants in their natural settings was important to the researchers. This made the qualitative case study design necessary (Creswell 2014). The sample size comprised 18 participants of which 9 were post level one teachers; 3 were heads of department; and 3 were school principals. Furthermore, 2 office-based subject advisors and 1 head of curriculum took part in the study. Participants were purposively selected for the study. Although data for the larger study that informed this article were obtained through the semi-structured interview technique and document analysis, the results discussed in this article were basically informed by the data obtained through the semi-structured interviews. The trustworthiness of the semi-structured interview instrument was achieved through face validity (Creswell 2014) in which various interview guides were given to a panel of experts within the researchers' institution.

Qualitative data were analysed through a descriptive step-by-step approach that involved reading, re-reading and coding (Richards 2009; Creswell 2014). As the reading progressed, the researchers attempted to see across the data, and above the individual documents, in an attempt to establish the general themes and ideas in the various data obtained. Doing so enabled the researchers to get a general sense of the data obtained. Moreover, reading gave the researchers the opportunity to reflect on the overall meaning in terms of the impression of the overall depth, credibility and use of the data obtained (Creswell 2014). Reading the obtained information also enabled the researchers to discover topics and individual aspects which were then used to formulate the analytical categories presented in the section on findings. The process involved assembling of all the data on a topic, thinking and rethinking about the data,

which allowed various analytical categories to be assembled into a guide of analysis and coding. This approach was in line with Richards (2009) and Creswell (2014) who argue that in almost all cases, qualitative research involves coding in order to reduce what otherwise would be voluminous qualitative data into a more meaningful and manageable piece. This approach was followed to input meanings into the obtained data.

Ethical issues were observed as the researchers were mindful of issues relating to gaining entry to the research sites, participants' rights, informed consent, confidentiality, protection from harm, anonymity, and professionalism. As a result of these ethical sensitivities, all reference to participants was made using pseudonyms. This practice ensured that the researchers refrained from using the participants' real names in all cases. The following measures were then taken to ensure anonymity: CES denotes head of the curriculum section; SA1 denotes subject advisor 1; SA2 denotes subject advisor 2; SP1 denotes school principal 1; SP2 denotes school principal 2; while SP3 signifies school principal 3. In addition, HoD1 refers to head of department 1; HoD2 denotes head of department 2; HoD3 denotes head of department 3; ST1 to ST3 denote school teachers from school A; ST4 to ST6 denote school teachers from School B; and ST7 to ST9 denote school teachers from School C.

RESULTS

As obtained data were read and coded, the themes that emerged from that exercise include: the non-relevance of CPTD programmes; teachers' preference for on-school-site professional development programmes; and teachers' own communities of practice. It was on these themes that the discussions of findings of this study were based. But before these discussions are presented, the following were the main findings of the study.

- i. Strategies for implementing CPTD programmes for participants do not impact on the classroom practices of their teacher participants;
- ii. Participants are not motivated to attend out-of-school (offsite) CPTD programmes, as they feel that the programmes have no impact on their teaching practices. Teach-

ers were not motivated to attend off-site CPTD programmes. The reason is that they considered attending such programmes to bear no changes in their classroom practices;

- iii. Teachers prefer on-school-site professional development programmes;
- iv. Findings also showed that participants in the study were already engaged in communities of practice in their schools but found no support from the District officials, as subject advisors did not visit schools;
- v. District officials did not visit schools either. The absence of school visits by District officials made rural school teachers feel isolated as they did not receive the expected support and monitoring required by the education system.
- vi. Teachers complained about travelling expenses as central venues were far away from their schools. This emanated from the fact that there was no policy for funding travel to the out-of-school teacher development programmes in South Africa.
- vii. Lack of furniture was reported as another constraint by participants as they found it uncomfortable to stand for so many hours just listening to presentation workshops.

DISCUSSION

Irrelevance of CPTD Programmes

There are some indications in the responses of participants that the strategies for implementing CPTD programmes do not impact on the classroom practices of teachers. In terms of the focus, it would appear that District officials who provide off-school-site training decide on the programmes at their own discretion and based on their own interests. As the interviews were conducted simultaneously with document analyses, it became clear from the District office documents that there was no time table showing when and how a particular programme of development would be undertaken. It was also confirmed that school principals had no time table for CPD programmes from the District office nor did they have any of their own making.

Responses from the interviewed teachers and District officials, therefore, did not show any

sequence of events pertaining to the implementation of the programmes for teacher development. For instance, when SP2 and HoD2 were asked if the programme of development he had attended was for principals and school management, or what it was about, they responded by saying:

It was for every teacher in different learning areas. It was the theory, approach for introducing CAPS. There were no details in terms of the content. You know, these programmes seem to focus only on theory but there are some learning areas that we need practical aspects of it (SP2).

It was on how to make a lesson plan. About the content we just organise ourselves so that you ask from somebody else from our zone. It was a long time ago to meet about the content. Otherwise, the recent one was about schedules and lesson plans (HoD2).

The question of CPD relevance was then brought to the fore when teacher participants were asked to respond to a similar discussion. It is interesting to note that the teachers' accounts of the focus of the programmes and their relevance differed substantially. For instance, while one participant explained on-going CPD programme as simply about the explanation of how to implement CAPS document, another participant noted that it was the learning of content. Participants therefore seem not to really understand the whole mission of such programmes. Below are some of the extracts from the interview scripts:

For those who have missed the CAPS workshop, they were called on January. Those workshops were about introducing CAPS and not about content (ST7).

My last workshops were for maths and life skills, doing activities outside the class for life skills, physical training. In maths we were doing 3D and 2D shapes and other activities (ST2).

Moreover, another question asked if programme providers had considered the needs of teachers when establishing these development programmes. The subject advisors responsible remarked in the following way:

Yes, I always do, for example, my colleagues usually have workshops, mop-up workshops for those who were not there when the workshops took place. We usually do needs and analysis in areas such as your maths; we check where they need more attention (SA2).

Sometimes, when going to schools, I find out that sometimes they don't know the poetry so I design the workshop according to their needs (SA1).

However, the general sentiment from teachers was that the subject advisors might not have revealed the true situation to the teachers themselves. For instance, teachers revealed in their responses that they were usually not sure why they were called to attend workshops. Below is how one of the teachers presented the situation on behalf of her colleagues:

I'm not sure, because sometimes you go there and come back with nothing. As a result, I have decided not to go to a workshop for Technology because I will go there and come back to do nothing about it (ST4).

Consequently, participants seem unmotivated to attend out-of-school (offsite) CPTD programmes as they feel unrewarded in terms of the programmes' impact on their teaching practices. For this reason, CPTD programmes, whether off-site or on-site should endeavour to encapsulate what the needs and interest of teachers, especially rural teachers are. Studies indicate that the effectiveness of CPTD resonates through the value-laden nature of such programmes (QOTFC 2005; Steyn 2013). It was earlier noted in this paper that adults want to know the relevance of what they are learning to what they want to achieve (QOTFC 2005). It would appear that teachers who took part in this study do not value the off-site CPTD programmes as having any positive impact on their classroom and professional practices.

Preference for On-School-Site Professional Development Programmes

Indications from findings suggest that teachers would prefer on-school-site professional development programmes. Participating teachers in the study considered an on-site CPTD programme as the most valued professional development programme of their choice. Below are some of the extracts from the interviews with one teacher:

With the DoE not knowing what is happening on the ground, I'm not satisfied at all because I want the subject advisor to advise me in my school. I say this because we are here to teach a child and that is where the child is and I don't know if I got gaps in the subject content

or I'm doing the right thing. I need a subject advisor to advise me (ST3).

In addition, teachers stressed that they preferred professional development to be done on-site. They indicated that circumstances for a central gathering were not yielding any positive results for professional development. For instance, *ST1* articulated his views in the following manner:

The one for the school is the best. Let's say here comes a science subject advisor at the hall and I don't have science material yet, but, here at my school, I will be able to ask him on a one is to one. When he is here, he will see everything and my class, and I believe there will be a follow up after that. When the subject advisor is here at school, I will be able to dish up everything because here are the files even for the learners (ST1).

The teachers interviewed felt that professional development should be job-embedded and site-specific. This meant that District officials have to integrate professional development into the normal work day. According to the teachers, such programmes must happen in their places of work, rather than having different sessions of out-of-school CPTD programmes. This position concurs with those of Davids (2009); DBE (2012); ECDoE (2012); Eckert (2013); and Steyn (2013) who noted that participants thought that CPTD should connect theory to practice and be contextually relevant.

Teachers' Own Communities of Practice

The teachers interviewed seemed to prefer a shift towards work place professional learning, as they recognised that the continuing professional development of teachers was poorly implemented. This came from the claim that they were unable to implement what they learnt from the out-of-school CPTD programmes. Their preference, therefore, was based on continuous work place learning that acknowledged and understood the unique contextual nature of each teacher's working and learning environment. Since they were based in rural schools, they knew how best to devise means of practice (Zeelen et al. 2014) that would suit their unique conditions of work. Most of the teachers interviewed considered themselves to be already engaged in communities of practice, but what seemed to be lacking was the anticipated support from the

District officials. When asked to respond to a question about the kind of support he was giving to his staff, one of the school principals noted:

I have set up an SMT (School Management Team) and identify teachers who are knowledgeable to this learning area, maths for example, then we integrate our knowledge mostly with the old teachers that we have at school (SP2).

In order to confirm whether this was the case with this particular school, one of the HoDs was asked to confirm *SP2*'s response to the same question. Below are the extracts from the interview scripts:

Yes, I give the support, for instance, Grade 2 learners performed badly in June exams and I was delegated to go and talk to the teacher to hear the problem. The teacher informed me that learners are slow in writing. There was a child I know as good but I was concerned that out of those learners there's this learner who has performed very good even during our language day and the child excelled. Now I was surprised that the learner is among the bad performers. So, I talked to the teacher and advised the teacher on how to handle the subject and how to make learners concentrate (HoD2).

A community of practice becomes necessary, with the diminishing support from District officials for teachers at school. This appeared to be the situation when *SA1* responded to the question of how often District officials visited the schools. According to the subject adviser, "that one is a problem because we don't have transport to visit schools" (*SA1*). Teachers were, therefore, alone in the schools and had no choice but to find the means of implementing policy programmes through communities of practice. Confirmation of this understanding came from *SA2*. When interviewed, this participant agreed with the statement that there were no school-based programmes from the Department of Basic Education to support the teachers. *SA2* confirmed:

No, there are no programmes because what we usually do is to encourage teachers to have these subject heads so that teachers would come together and share their views. So, we don't have programmes that would say it's for senior phase maths, intermediate phase maths or the following day foundation phase teachers. It would really be time consuming.

A clinical support for the teachers therefore came from the management within the schools as confirmed by *HoD2*, who noted that:

As an old teacher, even the principal has no problem of coming to me and asks about a problem he encounters as he is a Maths teacher at senior phase. Even Xhosa language teachers come to me and ask for solutions to problems.

As teachers refuted the involvement of the District officials in their communities of practice. The District CES was engaged to indicate the strategies he had in place for programmes of an on-school-site CPTD, which did not entail calling teachers to neutral venues. To this question, the CES commented:

Our understanding is that teachers are taken to a workshop, when they go back to school, teachers of the same subject need to hold an on-site mini workshop report to give information to each other when teaching the same subject.

The researchers further asked if he (CES) was referring to teachers of the same school. His responses were:

Yes, if they teach the same subject. For argument sake, if we are teaching the same subject, when I go back to school we are supposed to have a meeting and share the information. So, the officials in the district office are responsible to ensure that teachers are capacitated. The principal in the school is supposed to monitor the implementation of the programme. The subject advisors are not running the schools. HoDs are important in this case. The SMTs are running the schools.

Wenger's (1998) social learning theory and adult learning stresses that communities of practice be formed by people engaged in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour. This would appear to be the reason why participant teachers responded to the situation by ensuring that they set up mechanisms to support one another, within the teaching and learning communities. This enabled them to engage one another in conversations about their teaching practices (Steyn 2013). Steyn (2013) asserts that the implementation of CPTD can be enhanced through teacher professional learning communities. Hirsh (2012) also suggests that successful professional learning communities enhance the sharing of effective practices among teachers and are more likely to lead to improved student performance. This is why communities of practice are regarded as ongoing teacher-directed learning which removes teacher isolation as a barrier to effective professional

development as well as to quality teaching (Chappuis et al. 2009).

CONCLUSION

In order to improve the effectiveness of CPTD programmes, teacher preferences pertaining to such programmes must be considered by the education authorities. This, of course, is of paramount importance if CPTD is to become effective in Eastern Cape schools. Thus, as the efforts to transform rural education take place through CPTD programmes, this study finds that teacher preferences pertaining to their development be considered by the education authorities. Given that teachers had already started their own communities of practice, these can only be strengthened with support from the District officials, and from government, generally. Out of these innovations, teacher change must be sustained through the organisational processes. This means that short term programmes of teacher professional development must be modified to be school based and include local communities of practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the researchers would like to make the following recommendations. Firstly, that discussions and debates concerning improvement of teacher education include teachers themselves. Secondly, that education Departments, as well as programme designers, take into account the context of rural schools and their unique location so that rural-schools-specific policies are built into the CPTD programmes for teachers. School-focused CPTD models must continue to exist as such programmes drive forward professional development for teachers that builds on collaboration, collegial interactions and the fostering of relationships.

Thirdly, given that teachers complained about the travel costs to central venues which were far from their schools, it would be desirable for the relevant authorities to come up with an implementable transport policy for teachers attending CPD programmes outside their places of work. At the time of this study, no policy for funding travel for teachers attending out-of-school CPD was in place in South Africa. It is recommended that this particular issue be dealt

with by the education authorities as a way of correcting its systems for CPTD implementation and for motivating teachers to be more actively engaged with CPD programmes.

Finally it was also noted above that lack of furniture was reported as a major constraint against CPD participation by teachers, as most participants complained about the inconvenience of standing for many hours at workshops. Under these circumstances, it is recommended that the Department of Basic Education come up with an effective policy for rural infrastructure development, specifically for the CPD of teachers in the long term; while a short term policy measure would be to earmark some community halls in designated places with furniture for all CPTD programmes.

LIMITATIONS

The researchers would like to highlight a few limitations that were encountered during this study. With so many interview postponements resulting from delays in negotiating suitable times, the researchers found themselves under pressure while they attempted to obtain data from the participants. This situation may have impacted on the quality of data obtained.

There was an observed fear amongst participants over their participating in the study and how their voices may be interpreted. Although the researchers dealt with the issues around ethics and assured the participants of their full protection, the researchers observed that some of the participants may have had their personal reasons to be cautious about the kind of information about their situations they were prepared to give to us. The researchers could not determine how this situation may have impacted the quality of the participants' responses.

As this study had a qualitative design, the researchers would like to caution our readers about generalising the findings. The aim of qualitative research study is not to establish data for generalisation. Given the sample size of the current study, it is advised that the results of this study not be generalised either within or outside of the context of the study.

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