

**EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT**

by

FANSEKA GEZANI SAMUEL

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SUPERVISOR:

Professor Juliet Perumal

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ABSTRACT

The 1994 democratic elections marked a great turning point in the history of the South African education system. A call from many politicians and academics for dismantling apartheid education which was racially biased was subsequently made. This was supported by theorists and educational reformers such as Darling-Hammond (1996) and Sizer (1984) who suggested that an educational transformation that would provide South African learners with the necessary knowledge and skills to think critically was required. Following this call, in 1997, a National Curriculum Statement (NCS), with its accompanying assessment policy in a form of continuous assessment (CASS), was introduced in South African schools.

This study focuses on the experiences of secondary schools management teams (SMT) in the implementation of continuous assessment. This study is informed by the findings of Chisholm (2001) and Jansen & Christie (1995) who contend that the hasty implementation of CASS was extremely problematic for school managers. The objective was to explore the role of principals, deputy principals, and heads of departments (as managers of schools) in the implementation of the continuous assessment policy. Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate the kind of support the Limpopo Department of Education provides to the SMT for the successful implementation of CASS.

The study was conducted in six secondary schools in the Malamulele East Circuit, Vhembe District in Limpopo Province in the following schools: Deliwe, Dlayani, Falaza Gembani, Ndhengeza, and Yollisa and it employed a qualitative research approach. Semi-structured individual interviews were used to collect data from principals, deputy principals and heads of departments. In addition, semi-structured focus-group interviews were conducted with heads of departments in order to get in-depth understanding with regard to their experiences when implementing a continuous assessment policy.

This study found that members of the SMT in many secondary schools in the Malamulele East Circuit did not receive training for the implementation of continuous assessment and as a result,

they lack clarity in many critical aspects of this assessment policy. It has further been found that the majority of the members of the SMT lack a conceptual understanding of what CASS is and also the role they are supposed to play in its implementation. Consequently, educators are still relying much on tests to judge the performance of the learners. In the light of this, it is therefore recommended that principals, deputy principals and heads of departments be provided with extensive training which would generate a deeper conceptual understanding of this assessment policy.

KEY WORDS

Continuous Assessment

Learning Outcomes

School Management Teams

National Curriculum Statement

Principal

Educators

Learners

Implementation

Assessment

Learner performance

ACRONYMS

ASS	Assessment Standard
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CTA	Common Task Assessment
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DoE	Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
HOD	Head of Department
LOs	Learning Outcomes
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
NCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team

DECLARATION

I, Gezani Samuel Fanseka, hereby declare that this research study is my own work. It is submitted to the University of Pretoria for the Master's Degree in Education Management and Policy Studies. I declare that the dissertation has never been previously submitted by me for any degree at any other institution. I further declare that the dissertation is my work both in conception and execution and that all the sources used have been duly acknowledged.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother, Nyanisi Maria Fanseka (Vusiwana Nwa' Mhlava) for the vision she had with regard to my future. In her entire life, Nwa Mhlava was a pillar of my strength and a source of motivation to all I have achieved so far, both socially and academically.

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