

## Teachers' Experiences Regarding Continuous Professional Development and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

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**ABSTRACT** South Africa has undergone different curriculum changes with the aim of improving the standard of the education system. This article reports on qualitative research used to explore the experiences of teachers in rural areas in South Africa's Limpopo province regarding Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The findings from the research suggest that proper planning, preparation, implementation and support of CPD for teachers are needed when a new curriculum is introduced. The teachers felt that the time allocated to CAPS training was too short, the trainers were not knowledgeable and teachers received little or no support after training. Teachers, however, commented favorably on the usefulness of the material during the training. The paper recommends that more monitoring and evaluation from the district and provincial office are required to enable teachers to deliver quality education after CPD.

### INTRODUCTION

The South African education system has experienced different curriculum changes to improve the quality of education. The persistent poor academic achievement of school learners has forced the government to undertake a number of initiatives to improve the quality of schooling in South Africa. Previous curriculum changes seemed ineffective as learners kept on performing poorly in national school assessments and also in international comparison achievement tests such as the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (Howie 2001) and those of the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) (Moloi 2005). The poor performances drew widespread criticism (Jansen and Christie 1999; Potenza and Monyokolo 1998; Taylor and Vinjevoold 2003). Schwab and Sala-i-Martin (2011) reveal that of the 144 countries that were surveyed worldwide on the extent of their staff training, South Africa achieved 26<sup>th</sup> position. However, in terms of the quality of the education system and the quality of Mathematics and Science education, it holds 140<sup>th</sup> and 143<sup>th</sup> positions, respectively. In another study, South

Africa was ranked last out of 12 participating African countries on Grade 4 learners' achievements in Numeracy and Literacy (Van der Berg and Louw 2006).

The concerns that the curriculum was failing disadvantaged learners led to the replacement of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) from 2010 onwards (Department of Basic Education 2011). The rationale behind this study was to examine if the in-service CAPS training supported the delivery of quality education, which could level the playing fields between advantaged and disadvantaged learners.

Policy is normally intended to bring about a significant positive change in teaching and learning and have a positive effect on learner achievement. According to Mestry et al. (2009), improving the quality of teachers has a positive influence on the quality of learners' achievement, and the overall performance of the education system can be improved by improving the quality of teachers through professional development programs.

Teachers must be fully involved and informed about any change that could affect their teaching and learning in schools. CAPS has necessitated a new continuous professional development (CPD) initiative.

After training teachers, the authorities need to monitor and evaluate the practices of the trained teachers. If teachers do not implement the new teaching strategies wholeheartedly, the predominant intentions of the government to

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effect quality education will continue to be just a dream. In their efforts to emulate the education models of developed countries, policymakers need to be careful if their intentions are to attain international standards of education.

It is imperative to understand what CAPS is. According to Themane and Mamabolo (2011:8), CAPS seeks to systematically provide content and knowledge to satisfy the specific aims of the curriculum. Curriculum policy and guideline documents seek to address concerns of transition between grades and phases, assessment (particularly continuous assessment) and learning and teaching support materials (textbooks). CAPS, together with learner resources, aims to provide similar learning outcomes per subject across all socio-economic groups.

The monitoring and evaluation step in CPD consists of support and feedback provided to teachers and students to ensure the completion of a successful training process. Quality education is enhanced by respecting and considering the challenges teachers face, such as lack of support and feedback from authorities as they implement the new curriculum. Sometimes, the resources in rural schools are so poor that this hinders the implementation of the curriculum. How do teachers face these infrastructural challenges although they are empowered to teach according to the new curriculum policies?

Moodley (2013) conducted a qualitative study at a primary school to determine how CAPS is implemented and how it affects teaching and learning. Data collected from focus group interviews and document analysis revealed that, while teachers welcomed the introduction of CAPS for its clarity, structure, clear guidelines and time frames, they experienced challenges related to the quality and amount of training, inadequate resources, increased workload and the rapid pace of teaching required by the curriculum on teaching and learning.

For professional development to be effective, considerable teacher training that is well-organized and focused on content and pedagogy time is required (Guskey and Yoon 2009). The purpose of this paper is thus to explore how teachers in the rural province of Limpopo in South Africa experienced CAPS training.

### **Curriculum Change and the Professional Development of Teachers**

Curriculum change is very important in improving the quality of education (Taole 2013).

There have been many curriculum changes in South Africa since 1994. When a new topic is added, teachers usually feel uncertain about their level of content knowledge (Henze et al. 2008). Teachers have to transform the knowledge they gain from training into a simpler form that can easily be understood by learners. Ramnarain and Fortus (2013) asserted that there is a need to investigate the relationship between educators' content knowledge on new topics and how they reorganize and reconstruct this knowledge. If change is not properly planned and executed, it will lead to unsuccessful implementation.

Countries like Finland, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, the USA and Australia have undergone comprehensive curriculum reform. Although the presenters visited teachers in these countries at schools periodically over a three-year period to observe how they implemented the new curriculum and to offer support and advice where needed, the teachers in Jamaica, for example, still complained that these methods of training did not prepare them adequately to successfully implement the curriculum (Herbert and Rainford 2014).

In South Africa, the adoption of the new curriculum changes was politically motivated to remove the curriculum followed under apartheid, and it followed curriculum changes in other developing and developed countries (Van Rooyen and De Beer 2006). CAPS was introduced with the idea of supporting teachers by lightening their workload, simplifying terminology and reducing the portfolio files of learners and teachers.

Kriek and Grayson (2009) suggest that teachers need professional development on content knowledge, teaching approaches and professional attitudes. According to Lewis and Day (2004), CPD helps to refresh and increase the subject knowledge of teachers and to maintain their interest in the teaching profession. Singh (2011) comments that, although a formal structure for the professional development of teachers exists, implementation has been a problem.

### **Objectives**

To understand the experiences of teachers regarding CPD in CAPS, the following research questions guided the paper:

- ♦ What are teachers' experiences regarding the duration of CAPS training?
- ♦ How knowledgeable and prepared were the CAPS presenters?

- ♦ What types of material were provided during training, and were they useful?
- ♦ What kind of support did teachers receive after the training?

### Theoretical Framework

The theory that guides this study is Guskey's model of the five levels of professional development evaluation. The theory can be used to assess and improve professional development programs. Guskey (2000) mentions that in most professional development activities, evaluation is mainly left to the experts, whereas it is an important aspect of the whole professional development process. According to Guskey (2000), evaluation helps answer questions such as the following:

- ♦ Is the program achieving the expected outcomes?
- ♦ Is the current program better than the previous one?
- ♦ Is it worth the costs?

Good evaluation provides information that is significant and can be used to make relevant decisions about the professional development processes (Guskey 2000).

Guskey's theory is built on the belief that professional development evaluation can determine whether the planned activities could lead to the desired goals and purposes. Guskey developed the following critical levels of professional development evaluation, that is, participants' reactions, participants' learning, organizational support and change, participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and student learning outcomes (Guskey 2000).

The first level is the most common form of professional development evaluation, and studies participants' reactions to the professional development experience by measuring educators' initial satisfaction with the experience. The second level examines the new knowledge and skills gained by the participants, who must give an indication of how they can use what they have learned and apply it in a typical classroom. The third level focuses on the organization's accommodation, advocacy, facilitation, support and recognition. This level shows that even if all the individual facets of professional development are handled appropriately, any form of professional development can be negatively affected if the organization lacks support and

change. The fourth level focuses on the use of new knowledge and skills by participants. What is assessed at this level is whether the new knowledge and skills gained by participants have an effect on their professional development practice. The fifth and last level (student learning outcomes) focuses on whether the professional development activities had an effect on the learning outcomes. The outcomes include the cognitive outcomes, affective outcomes and psychomotor outcomes.

This paper focuses on the first four levels of Guskey's framework.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

This paper is located in the interpretivism paradigm. Qualitative research is often associated with interpretivism and "the aim of understanding the subjective meaning of persons in studied domains is essential in the interpretive paradigm" (Goldkuhl 2012: 4). Interpretivism means that people want to understand the social world by giving meaning to it (Creswell 2007). In this study, interpretivism was employed to interpret the data collected from the interviews, as well as the observations of the participants in order to understand their experiences of their professional development in CAPS.

Data was collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews consist of a set of pre-determined open-ended questions with other themes emerging from the interview dialogue (DiCico-Bloom and Crabtree 2006). These data collection methods were chosen because conversations between researchers and participants allow maximum interaction and give the participants more space and freedom to express their opinions and views. To understand the experiences of teachers regarding CPD in CAPS, 12 teachers were interviewed and observed in their classrooms.

#### Research Site

The study was conducted in a circuit in a district of the Limpopo province. Limpopo consists of five district municipalities. There are eight secondary schools in this circuit. The circuit was declared one of the underperforming circuits in

the particular district, but since 2013, the circuit has improved in performance from a sixty-one percent pass rate in Grade 12 in 2013 to 70.15 percent in 2014.

The reason for selecting this site was that it would be convenient, as it is close to one of the researchers' place of residence and minimized travel expenses. Since the specific researcher is familiar with the area and the schools, it also minimized the time spent on identifying schools to participate in the research. It also provided easy access to the sites. The schools were selected based on their socioeconomic status. Most of the schools are in a disadvantaged area and learners depend on the government's feeding scheme for meals at lunchtime. The criteria for selecting the schools were that the educators should have been exposed to the different curriculum changes and should also have attended CAPS training.

The data obtained from the interviews enabled the researchers to articulate items related to the experiences of teachers regarding CPD in

CAPS. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the sample.

### Sample

The study was conducted with teachers who have been in the teaching profession for a considerable time, have experienced different curriculum changes and have attended CAPS training.

Table 1 shows that the teachers were selected from the Mathematics and Science departments for the subjects of Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences and Geography at Further Education and Training (FET) level. Most schools offer these subjects.

The teachers were observed in their classrooms to see how they understood and implemented CAPS after the training. Observation requires the researcher to look and listen, and then to present his or her version of what it is he or she sees and hears (Henning et al. 2004). The study used non-participant observation, since the researcher only observed the educators while they presented their lessons in class.

**Table 1: Sample characteristics of the participants**

<i>School</i>	<i>Educator</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Teaching experience</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Subjects offered</i>	<i>Grades offered</i>
A	A1	Female	24 years	STD	Life Sciences Life Orientation	10, 11 and 12
A	A2	Female	20 years	STD, BEd (Hons)	Geography English	10, 11 and 12
A	A3	Male	27 years	STD, HED	Geography Social Sciences	9 and 10
B	B1	Male	30 years	STC, BA (Hons)	Physical Sciences	10, 11 and 12
B	B2	Female	20 years	STD, ABET, NS (Hons)	Life Sciences Agricultural Sciences	10, 11 and 12
B	B3	Male	31 years	STC, BA	Geography Social Sciences	8, 9 and 10
C	C1	Female	20 years	STD, BA,BA (Hons)	Agricultural Sciences Life Sciences	10, 11 and 12
C	C2	Female	27 years	STD, HED, BEd (Hons)	Life Sciences Natural Sciences	9, 11 and 12
C	C3	Male	30 years	PTC, NPDE,ACE	Physical Sciences Mathematics	10, 11 and 12
C	C4	Female	29 years	STD, BA,BEd (Hons)	Geography	10, 11 and 12
D	D1	Female	20 years	STD, ACE	Physical Sciences Natural Sciences	8, 10, 11 and 12
D	D2	Male	26 years	STD	Agricultural Sciences English Literature	10, 11 and 12

*Legend:* ABET = Adult Basic Education and Training, ACE = Advanced Certificate in Education, BA = Bachelor of Arts, BEd = Bachelor of Education, B Ed (Hons) = Bachelor of Education Honours, HED = Higher Education Diploma, NS (Hons) = Natural Sciences Honours, NPDE = National Professional Diploma in Education, PTC = Professional Teachers' Certificate, STC = Senior Teachers' Certificate, STD = Senior Teachers' Diploma

### Data Analysis

Analyzing the data involved transcribing the interviews and observations, then coding the transcriptions to develop similar themes and patterns, and sorting the data to address the research question. Because different codes emerged from the transcriptions, it was important for the researchers to ensure that the codes were related to the research questions (Henning et al. 2004). The audio recordings were transcribed into text. From the text, similarities and relations (codes, categories and patterns) emerged and data was analyzed according to these similarities and relations.

### Trustworthiness of the Data

Trustworthiness of data demonstrates and communicates the rigor of the research processes. The use of various approaches increases trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell 2007). Data collected using different collection instruments enhances the credibility of the data. During interviews, prompting questions such as, “*Do you really mean...*” were asked. The researchers also performed member checking to confirm if what was transcribed during the interviews was what the participants meant to convey. The analyses of both the interviews and observations are believed to increase the credibility of the data.

### Ethical Considerations

Maree (2016:298) argues, “*It is essential that the researcher should follow and abide by ethical guidelines throughout the research process*”. Permission was first obtained from the University’s Faculty Ethics Committee before embarking on the process of collecting data. The researcher was also granted permission by the Limpopo Department of Education to conduct the interviews and observations at the selected schools in the circuit. This was followed by obtaining permission from the circuit manager, then the principals of the selected schools.

## RESULTS

### Experiences of Teachers Regarding the Duration of the CAPS training

The participants articulated their experiences regarding CAPS as a new curriculum, their

understanding of CPD and their experiences regarding the duration of the CAPS training. Most teachers who were interviewed believed that curriculum change is necessary to improve the standard of the education system. They believed that they needed to be developed and empowered in order to deal with the changes. Teachers with more teaching experience felt more frustrated about CAPS as a new curriculum because they felt they were being moved from one curriculum to another. It was apparent that change fatigue had set in due to the numerous changes in curriculum over the years.

The teachers viewed professional development as a way in which they could develop themselves by attending workshops and upgrading their studies in the fields they are teaching. In this way, new knowledge and skills were introduced, while teachers strove to improve the knowledge and skills they already have. As Du Plessis (2013: 74) puts it, “*A new curriculum will have little impact until educators have had time to understand and assimilate it.*”

A participant said:

*I can say that the time was very short because they used to train us for maybe three days, which is as things were supposed to be, maybe they were supposed to train us for three months or a month, but they train us for three days, which is very short (A1).*

Other educators supported this by mentioning:

*You see that one I don’t think is enough. With me, I went for only three days. A lot of things have been said there which I think the facilitators just forced those things to be covered within those days, though I could see that the time was not enough, so maybe they had their own reasons, did not have time, a lot of things were happening, but the time really is not enough (A3).*

*It is not right, too short, in most cases they want to cover a long scope in a short period of time and sometimes you are attending the training from 12:00 to 14:00, so it is not enough (B1).*

It can be concluded from the statements above that the time allocated for training was probably insufficient, especially because CAPS is a new curriculum. The educators felt they could not learn everything in the allocated time.

Most participants felt that not enough time was spent on the training and it was too short for them to understand everything on which they had to be trained. The participants felt that

the presenters were forced to cover a curriculum in too little time and that there was not enough time for interaction, and for questions and answers.

### **What are the Experiences of Teachers Regarding the Quality of the CAPS Presenters?**

Some participants expressed the opinion that preparation depends on what you are going to present and that a presenter can prepare himself or herself to reduce the number of questions. In this way, the presenter will be seen as being well prepared.

As explained by two of the educators:

*I think preparation depends on what you are going to say or if you are aware of what you are going to say. I can say they were prepared, but being prepared and not knowing what to say is like not being prepared. It's a problem. I can say if someone gives me a paper and says you are going to present this somewhere, then I can make some plans maybe to present it in a way that there is a limit of questions. You can be clever in this preparation so that you are not caught (B2).*

*If someone does not know, you can't tell if he or she is prepared or what happened. Even they need more time to be trained before they come to train other educators (C3).*

The statements above show that the participants were not convinced that the presenters were well prepared, although they presented what they had to. Regarding the knowledge of CAPS by the presenters, the participants believed that the presenters did not understand what CAPS entails. This was clear when the presenters were unable to answer some of the questions posed during the training. The training sessions were held during school holidays or on Saturdays, and trainees felt disrespected. Some felt that they were wasting their time with untrained presenters who knew very little about the subject matter.

### **What Are the Teachers' Perceptions of the Use of Material, and New Knowledge and Skills Acquired from the Training?**

The participants were more positive when asked this question. The educators also men-

tioned the introduction of the "new" CAPS textbooks as a good move. They saw these textbooks to be straightforward, as the learners could use them with little assistance from the educators. What transpired was that the CAPS textbooks were designed to act as pacesetters or work schedules, as they showed exactly which topic to teach and when. In this way, learners could easily follow which chapter or section they were supposed to be learning in a specific week. The educators also mentioned that the textbooks came with activities, so that the learners could test themselves after studying a particular topic. Comparing the CAPS textbooks with the previous ones, it became clear that the educators thought that the "old" textbooks were not user-friendly, since the sections to be followed were mixed up in these textbooks. There was no order. The participants were more impressed with the CAPS textbooks than with the previous textbooks, and also mentioned that the CAPS textbooks were relevant to the current situation.

*If you look at CAPS, it is more like the preparation, textbook, pacesetter, they are going hand in hand, isn't it? (A3).*

Teachers saw the South African curriculum as moving back and forth. Most of them were comfortable because they felt they were going back to the old curriculum that they knew well. The participants felt that the CAPS training was important, especially with regard to new topics where their knowledge needed to be refreshed. The training was helpful in revising those topics. There was evidence that the teachers were confident that they understood the subject content they were presenting. They were very enthusiastic about the departmental learners' workbooks that supplemented the training. They felt that they did not need to prepare because all the hard work had been done for them. This made them feel somewhat relieved. Despite the confusion about curriculum changes, the good thing about CAPS is that the teachers felt that they were returning to the old curriculum that they were used to.

*I am little bit confused. It's confusion, but at the same time, what can I say, I am glad, because I am returning to my style. I was not comfortable with the new curriculum (B1).*

Although CAPS confused and frustrated educators, there was an understanding that a new curriculum was needed since the main aim

of changing the curriculum was to improve the standard of the education system, and South Africa, as a country, needs change.

### **How Do Teachers Perceive Professional Support After the Training?**

The participants indicated that visits by the officials were very limited. When asked how often officials visited them, some educators responded:

*Not even once, just meet with them during training workshops, but at school, never. No support, they just write the report and they give me the copy and take the report (B1).*

When they did come, they wanted to check the teachers' and learners' files, as well as the learners' books to see if the learners had been given activities and what types of activities they had been given. It was evident from the observations that teachers continued to implement CAPS, although there was very little if any monitoring and support from the Education Department and that teachers mostly used their own judgment when implementing CAPS.

### **Observations**

The following findings emerged while observing the educators' teaching and perusing the teachers' files:

- ♦ The educators were confident when presenting the lessons.
- ♦ The educators showed significant understanding of the subject being offered.
- ♦ The educators actively involved the learners during teaching and learning.
- ♦ There was continuous assessment, either oral or written.
- ♦ The educators moved around to check when learners were busy writing and gave comments where necessary.
- ♦ There was very little evidence in the educators' files to show that there was a visit from the Education Department after they had attended CAPS training.
- ♦ Educators continued implementing CAPS although there was very little monitoring and support from the Education Department.
- ♦ Educators used their own judgment when implementing CAPS.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Duration of CAPS Training**

Unless teachers have had enough time to understand and assimilate a new curriculum, it will have little impact (Du Plessis 2013). According to Taole (2013), training is still the most viable and suitable route for informing teachers about developments in the curriculum.

Teachers felt unable to handle new information and therefore wanted more training. It is also stated in the literature that teachers need more time than is currently allocated to understand new concepts, learn new skills and try new approaches, and integrate them into their teaching practice (Cambone 1995; Corcoran 1995; Troen and Boles 1994; Watts and Castle 1993). The empirical data indicates that teachers believed the CAPS training was very brief and they could not learn everything they had to in such a short period of time. There seems to be a need for proper planning when a new curriculum is introduced.

### **Quality of CAPS Presenters**

The quality of the presenters can affect the training for a new curriculum either positively or negatively. The literature shows that if effective training and development are made available to the presenters, they can become more competent (Stout 1993). Not all trainers have experience in the type of training needed. It becomes the responsibility of the organization (the provincial education departments) to provide further relevant training to the already experienced presenters (Wills 1998). It was also reported during the implementation of the NCS Policy that most departmental officials have inadequate experience and knowledge of policy issues. Many curriculum advisors do not have enough knowledge and skills. This could have a negative effect on the support they offer to teachers (Department of Education 2009). According to Taole (2013), to avoid misinterpretation and misinformation of the policy document by teachers, presenters should be properly trained.

### **Quality of Training Material**

The provision of relevant material could support effective training in a new curriculum. Data

from the study indicated that relevant material was brought to the training, especially the CAPS documents, to which the presenters kept referring in their presentations. It seemed that the teachers were excited that the work was already planned so they did not have to roll out worksheets when they got back to school.

### **Monitoring and Support by the District and Department**

According to Taole (2013), monitoring and support is very important to ensure that a new curriculum is successfully implemented, and the Senior Management Team (SMT) and curriculum advisors should monitor and support educators during the implementation of a new curriculum. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000) see monitoring and support in the context of class visits, which give the SMT an opportunity to observe the educators' work, provide motivation and exercise influence. In this way, educators have the opportunity to talk and learn about the problems they encounter in practice.

Monitoring determines the successes, deficiencies and challenges that educators encounter. Bantwini and Diko (2011) argue that the district officials' contributions are likely to help determine whether educational reform will succeed or fail. Some of them see their job description and the management structure as a handicap in the type of support that they should offer educators. Bantwini (2009) shows that, in some cases, educators are just given the policy documents to study and are expected to apply the information in the classroom. This has caused confusion as teachers often misinterpret the policies.

Lack of support from the district personnel has been compounded by a lack of school subject area committees to ensure that educators assist one another with the challenges they encounter in their respective subject areas (Bantwini 2009). According to Brynard and Netshikhophani (2011), the activities of curriculum advisors are not well coordinated between the district and circuits. Some of the curriculum advisors serve as coordinators at both district and provincial level, and together with those based at circuit level, are expected to assist with training and support in the implementation of a curriculum.

### **Factors Hindering Monitoring and Support**

The literature reveals that monitoring and support have always been a problem in the implementation of a new curriculum.

#### *Understanding the New Curriculum*

School principals, as managers of schools, should also be trained in a new curriculum so that they can offer the necessary support to educators. Du Plessis (2013) focuses on educators' experiences of curriculum change and reports that some principals, being school leaders themselves, did not receive CAPS training.

Studies indicate that many curriculum advisors do not have the knowledge and skills required to offer support to educators. Taole (2013:44) says, "*The trainers need to be properly trained to avoid misinformation and misinterpretation of the policy documents by educators.*" It is a problem for curriculum advisors to offer support to educators when the educators themselves do not understand the new curriculum after training.

#### *Lack of Subject Knowledge by Curriculum Advisors*

Curriculum advisors are unable to offer enough support to educators because of inadequate knowledge of the subject matter. Lack of content knowledge by the educators inhibits curriculum advisors from offering full support where needed. Support cannot be effective if educators are teaching subjects for which they were not trained. Educators who teach a subject in schools must be supported by experienced educators, educational researchers, advisors and inspectors (Ellis 2007). In the Sciences stream, the Department of Education is blamed for not providing schools with adequate support material like science equipment. According to Bantwini and Diko (2011), most schools cannot afford to purchase science equipment to support effective teaching and learning at schools. Without the equipment, practical demonstrations for educators lacking understanding in the field cannot be done effectively. In professional development, educators develop their pedagogic content knowledge, which could be outside their subject specialization.



### ***Workload of Curriculum Advisors***

The literature reveals that the workload of the curriculum advisors is one of the factors that impede support for educators. This workload is a result of a shortage of human resources in schools. According to Bantwini and Diko (2011), this prevents officials from servicing schools and educators effectively, and the lack of human and material resources has a negative effect on the implementation of a new curriculum. The district officials to school or educator ratio is unrealistic. The officials are responsible for a large number of schools, to which they must provide support with professional development on the new curriculum. They must monitor and provide support for the implementation process (Bantwini and Diko 2011).

### **CONCLUSION**

The results revealed that the CPD of teachers is very important so that they can continuously develop themselves academically, as well as professionally. This is done, among other things, by attending workshops, seminars and conferences to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to improve the standard of the education system. In their study, Mestry et al. (2009) showed that by improving the quality of educator performance through educator professional development programs, the overall performance of the education system can be improved.

Teachers are faced with multiple challenges, such as the time allocated to training, presenters' understanding of the new CAPS policy and the type of support teachers receive after training. Although teachers believed that the workshops, seminars and conferences helped them improve their knowledge and skills, the training was inadequate and there were problems in implementing the new curriculum. The departments of education and the teachers should work together and commit themselves to designing a new curriculum to make the implementation a success.

The concerns about the shortcomings of the initiatives by the Department of Education to train teachers in a new curriculum suggest that the Department should carefully plan the whole process until it is effectively implemented in schools. The results point out that CAPS training

is failing due to poor trainers, too little time for training, no follow-up after training and the large workload of curriculum advisors.

Some teachers suggested that the training should last for at least three months, or even as long as the training in the former colleges of education, which was three years.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The planning of CPD needs to be carefully considered to ensure the building of confidence and enthusiasm in teachers. Teachers should not be considered to know nothing in their subjects. Teachers need to know that they are considered efficient deliverers of the curriculum. They need to be respected and acknowledged. If proper communities of practice are set up by the districts for every 10 schools in close proximity to one another, subject advisors need to be available on a monthly basis to monitor, support and evaluate the work of the communities.

Challenges that teachers face need to be taken seriously. Quarterly assessments in the form of subject assessments between schools should be set by the district office. This will ensure that the curriculum is implemented and evaluated on a regular basis.

Weaknesses in teaching can be detected on a quarterly basis, rather than at the end of a phase. It is easier to nip the problem in the bud than to wait for a national assessment and then be dismayed by the learners' performance.

District officials need to plan and group schools according to geographical surroundings and set assessment activities in the subjects. They should not only be the initiators of CAPS training, but also the motivators of the implementation of CAPS training. It is recommended that there be more involvement on the part of district and provincial officials in the monitoring, support and feedback of curriculum development to ensure quality education in South Africa.

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