

A conceptual analysis of constructivist classroom management

By

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Declaration

I, Victor Justice Pitsoe, declare that

“A conceptual analysis of constructivist classroom management”

is my own work, that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed: _____

V.J. Pitsoe

Date

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DEDICATION

To my late grandmother Sinah Mangena Pitsoe

ABSTRACT

Outcomes-based education (OBE) (at least at a conceptual level) is moving from an instructionist (teacher as transmitter of knowledge) to a constructivist approach (teacher as mediator and facilitator in the construction of meaning). This shift requires teachers that move from a traditional teacher-centred classroom to a learner-centred classroom management approach. The policy originators label this shift as a “paradigm shift”, but in the training of educators in OBE, no training was offered in terms of a new approach to classroom management. In this study I argue that if OBE in the South African context really constitute a paradigm shift, then at conceptual level, it would require a new approach to classroom management. Against this background, the aim of the study is to conceptually interrogate the notion of constructivist classroom management and investigate how classroom management within a constructivist mode differs from traditional classroom management within an instructionist approach.

This study is qualitative in nature and employs conceptual analysis in the form of conceptual historical analysis, conceptual cartography and hermeneutic analysis. The Wilsonian concept analysis was used to examine and distinguish between the defining attributes of the concepts “*instructionist classroom management*” and “*constructivist classroom management*” and their relevant attributes. Also, a typology of non-empirical questions applied to conceptual analysis was used. The Matrix of Paradigmatic Value Systems was used as a tool/lens to categorise “*instructionist classroom management*” and “*constructivist classroom management*” in terms of their paradigmatic roots. Credibility and authenticity was achieved through crystallisation instead of triangulation.

Emerging from the literature and concept analysis, “*instructionist classroom management*” is informed and guided by the traditional paradigm – it is based on a mechanistic worldview. On the other hand, “*constructivist classroom management*” is compatible with the emerging paradigm – it has holistic and artistic features. Traditional classroom management is underpinned by the principles of scientific management whilst constructivist classroom management is informed and guided by contingency approaches to management theory.

Based on the analysis done and the reflection on the data, it is posited that classroom management within a constructivist setting needs to move from traditional to contingency classroom management approach. On the surface, basic management principles such as, planning, organising, leading and control, appear to be similar, but this is a myth. For example, planning, seen from its traditional defining terms, approaches classroom management as a step-by-step process under control and directed by the teacher; and may restrict the degree to which learners become collaborators in the teaching and learning situation. Organising focuses on issues of group work and collaborates learning; control moves to accountability (where learners become part of the development of class rules and partners in ensuring order and discipline); and evaluation moves to ongoing assessment and feedback as a strategy to ensure continuous improvement and the facilitation of the construction of new knowledge. Thus, this study proposes rethinking a set of principles compatible to the emergent paradigm that should not only support the construction of knowledge in the constructivist setting, but also promote collaborative interaction.

Keywords

Instructionist classroom management

Constructivist classroom management

Outcomes-based education

Revised National Curriculum Statement

Curriculum 2005

Constructivism

Policy implementation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1		page
ORIENTATION		1
1.1	Introduction and motivation	1
1.2	The research problem and its setting	2
1.2.1	Motivation for the research and background to the problem	2
1.2.2	Problem statement	6
1.3	Aims of the study	6
1.4	Research methodology	7
1.5	Credibility and authenticity	7
1.6	Concept clarification	9
1.6.1	Outcomes-based education (OBE)	9
1.6.2	Constructivism	10
1.6.3	Instructionist	10
1.6.4	Classroom management	11
1.6.5	Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)	11
1.6.6	Leadership	12
1.7	Limitation of the study	12
1.8	Contribution of the study	13
1.9	Plan of the study	14
1.10	Summary	15
CHAPTER 2		
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS		16
2.1	Introduction	16
2.2	Research design and methodology	17
2.3	The research process	19
2.4	Qualitative research methodology	20
2.5	Research paradigm (philosophy)	22
2.5.1	The concept “ <i>paradigm</i> ”	22
2.5.2	Research paradigm	24

2.5.3	Worldview as paradigm	26
2.5.4	Truth and reality: as seen through mechanistic and holistic worldviews	29
2.5.5	Seeing reality and truth through the humanist lens	35
2.6	Research methods	37
2.6.1	Literature review/ conceptual historical analysis	37
2.6.2	Conceptual analysis	39
2.6.2.1	Definition and description	39
2.6.2.2	Purpose and uses	41
2.6.2.3	Research strategy and techniques/procedures	41
2.6.2.4	Wilsonian concept analysis	45
2.6.2.5	Limitation of the Wilsonian Model	49
2.7	Conceptual cartography	49
2.8	Hermeneutic approach	50
2.8.1	Definition and description	50
2.8.2	Historical background	51
2.8.3	Philosophical background of critical hermeneutics	53
2.9	Conclusion	60

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT 61

3.1	Introduction	61
3.2	Conceptualising instructionist classroom management.	61
3.2.1	The concept “instructionist”	62
3.2.2	The concept “classroom”	64
3.2.3	The concept “management”	64
3.2.4	Defining classroom management	67
3.2.5	Distinctiveness of the classroom management situation	69
3.3	Historical and analytical perspectives on traditional/ instructionist classroom management	71

3.4	Organisational analytical perspectives on traditional/instructionist classroom management	77
3.4.1	Bureaucratization (power and control)	77
3.4.2	Taylorism and Fordism (production, productivity and outputs)	80
3.5	The nature and essence of traditional/instructionist classroom management	82
3.5.1	The origins and characteristic features of traditional/instructionist classroom management	82
3.5.2	Views on traditional (instructionist) teaching and learning	88
3.5.3	Leadership roles of the teacher in instructionist setting	92
3.6	Philosophical approaches to classroom management	93
3.6.1	Teacher power bases	94
3.6.1.1	Attractive/Referent power	94
3.6.1.2	Expert power	95
3.6.1.3	Legitimate power	97
3.6.1.4	Reward/Coercive power	98
3.6.2	Classroom management theories	101
3.6.2.1	Learner-directed management	101
3.6.2.2	Collaborative management	102
3.6.2.3	Teacher-directed management	104
3.7	Models of classroom management	107
3.8	Conclusion	109

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH ON INSTRUCTIONIST AND CONSTRUCTIVIST CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

4.1	Introduction	111
4.2.	Insights on instructionist classroom management texts	112
4.2.1	Cases	113
4.2.2	Findings	118
4.3	Insights on constructivist classroom management: deriving form conceptual analysis of texts	121
4.3.1	Cases	121

4.3.2	Findings	131
4.4	Conclusion	133

CHAPTER 5

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF CONSTRUCTIVIST CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT 134

5.1	Introduction	134
5.2	Conceptual analysis of “constructivism”	134
5.2.1	The concept “constructivism”	135
5.2.2	Historical background of constructivism	136
5.2.3	Philosophical foundation of constructivism	138
5.2.4	Constructivist assumptions on knowledge	140
5.2.5	What are the most widely accepted models/ theories of constructivism?	142
5.2.5.1	Categories of constructivism	143
5.2.5.2	Social constructivism	144
5.3.	Theories compatible with constructivist thinking	147
5.3.1	Complexity and chaos theory	147
5.3.2	Postmodernism	148
5.4	Characteristic features of constructivist classroom management	150
5.5	Organisational perspectives on contingency viewpoint	154
5.6	The roles of the teacher in a constructivist classroom management	156
5.7	Constructivist ideas about teaching and learning	158
5.8	Practical implications of a constructivist epistemology for teaching	163
5.9	Insights from constructivist classroom management	166
5.10	Conclusion	168

CHAPTER 6

POLICY ISSUES: THEORY AND PRACTICE 169

6.1	Introduction	169
6.2	Theoretical perspectives on OBE	169

6.2.1	Defining Outcomes-based education (OBE)	169
6.2.2	The concept “Outcomes”	171
6.2.3	Basic principles of OBE	172
6.2.4	Why so many OBE models?	174
6.2.5	Models of OBE in practice	175
6.2.5.1	Traditional OBE	175
6.2.5.2	Transitional OBE	176
6.2.5.3	Transformational OBE	177
6.2.6	Philosophical background of OBE	179
6.3	Origin and general characteristic features of philosophies underpinning OBE	183
6.3.1	Pragmatism	184
6.3.2	Social reconstructionism	185
6.3.3	Critical theory	188
6.3.4	Behaviourism	191
6.4	Critics of OBE	193
6.5	Insights on the implementation of Policy: theory and practice	195
6.6	Critical Analysis of C2005, NCS and RNCS Policies	200
6.7	Conclusion	204
CHAPTER 7		
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS		205
7.1	Introduction	205
7.2	Findings	207
7.3	Reflections	214
7.4	Implications for future research	218
7.5	Conclusion	218
APPENDIX A: Letter to the supervisor		219
APPENDIX B: Clearance Certificate		220
APPENDIX C: Thesis title		221

REFERENCES 222

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	The research process onion	19
Figure 3.1	Traditional learning	90
Figure 5.1	Learning through discussion and questioning insight (construction of knowledge)	160

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Positivist and Interpretivist/Phenomenological Research Paradigms	25
Table 2.2	Differences between traditional and emerging worldviews	28
Table 2.3	Matrix of paradigmatic value systems	30
Table 2.4	Positivist and post-modern views of reality and knowledge	37
Table 2.5	Typology of non-empirical questions	43
Table 3.1	Matrix of teaching learning approaches	91
Table 3.2	Teacher power bases	99
Table 3.3	Theories of classroom management	106
Table 3.4	Management theorists and management models	109
Table 5.1	Comparison between traditional and constructivist classroom	162

LIST ACRONYMS

C2005	Curriculum 2005
DoE	Department of Education
OBE	Outcomes-based education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement