A STUDY OF TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS' WORK
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CULTURE
OF LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

BY

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This study is dedicated to my only son: 
Sisekelo Performance Vilakazi.
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SUMMARY

Since the inception of the Outcomes-based-Education system in South Africa, great emphasis has been placed on assessment of learners' performance, as a strategy to ascertain that learners achieved the desired learning outcomes. However, OBE assessment strategies appear to be contrary to traditional evaluation methods, which are characterized as teacher-centred and authoritarian, which promote rote-learning and are obsessed with content, show a lack of integration between education and training, rigid divisions, and involve punitive formal examinations designed to yield high levels of failure. Given the rhetorical framework, OBE, as a paradigm shift, must represent the opposite of negative aspects often found in the education system.

The review of literature on which this research is based emphasized the importance of assessment in not only focusing on what learners can do, but also on developing learners holistically. In other words, assessment in this study required both teachers and learners to regard assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning activities. In this way
learners could demonstrate learned values, skills and knowledge for the promotion of the culture of learning. If assessment is viewed in this light it will not only enhance learning amongst learners, but it will also ensure that learners gain access to further learning.

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

**Hypothesis 1.** An assessment system built upon the traditional evaluation methods has a detrimental effect on the development of the culture of learning in schools.

**Hypothesis 2.** Assessment strategies built upon an Outcomes-based assessment policy are more effective in contributing toward the development of a culture of learning in schools.

The empirical investigation also tested the following Null hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3.** No distinction can be drawn between teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact or influence of traditional evaluation methods and teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact or influence of Outcomes-based assessment strategies on the culture of learning in schools.

The literature survey contributed to the drafting of 84 objective statements. These statements were based on the premise that assessment strategies built upon an Outcomes-based Education policy are more effective in contributing towards the development of a culture of learning than an assessment system built upon the traditional product-driven teaching strategies.

Teachers’ opinions or perceptions were then assessed on these item statements by means of a structured questionnaire. The teachers’ opinions or perceptions were then subjected to investigative factor analysis, and three prominent factors were revealed by the factor analysis. The first factor related to “Outcomes-based-Assessment strategies”, and loaded an eigenvalue of 54.34000251. The second factor was related to “traditional evaluation” and loaded an eigenvalue of 10.8298612. The third factor was linked to “assessment and
its influence on the culture of learning” and loaded an eigenvalue of 7.5540027 from the results of the factor analysis.

The high Cronbach Alpha Reliability correlation coefficient of 0.97 implies that the questionnaire and items were reliable in terms of what they were supposed to measure.

The results of the empirical analysis supported Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, and rejected the null hypothesis, Hypothesis 3.

The limitations of the study are discussed, and a number of recommendations are made for further research. These concern aspects relating to teacher education, how practicing teachers can improve their understanding of assessment, the relationship between formative and summative assessment, and finally, how different assessment strategies should be applied to different learning areas.
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