

Alleviating the Intensification of Educator Workload through Internships: The Relieve Educators Administrative Demands (READ) - Model

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ABSTRACT In this paper the researchers report on the findings of a descriptive survey study aimed at establishing the perceptions of purposively selected South African educators (n = 300) from the Gauteng Department of Education regarding their workload linked to curriculum demands. In addition, the researchers report on the extent to which the Department of Education supports educators in fulfilling their duties and if internships could be a possible solution to alleviate the intensification of educators' workload. The findings revealed that educators are burdened by an increasing administrative and professional workload for which limited support is provided. Based on the findings, a novel approach that centers on the use of internships to assist educators in dealing with workload demands is recommended. The implementation of the recommended Relieve Educators' Administrative Demands (READ) model is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure that all South Africans receive flexible lifelong learning, education and training of high quality (Department of Education 1999), certain specialised duties and responsibilities are allocated to educators in an equitable manner. According to the Personnel Administration Measures that were introduced in 1999 (PAM) (Department of Education 1999) the core duties and responsibilities of educators are school-specific and varied.

Educators' administrative duties comprise the following: co-ordinating and controlling all the academic activities of each subject/learning area; remaining informed about current developments in education; collaborating with other educators; participating in departmental committees; maintaining contact with sporting, social, cultural and community organisations and having contact with the public and parents on behalf of the principal. Professional duties include, for example, class teaching and organising extra- and co-curricular activities.

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According to the Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education 1998a) South African educators are also expected to comply with seven roles of an educator. These roles will be clarified in one of the subsequent sections. The fact that educators are increasingly burdened by excessive amounts of administrative and professional duties is highlighted by national and international research (Easthope and Easthope 2000; Bennell 2004; Orsini 2004; Butt and Lance 2005; Chisholm et al. 2005; Ingvarson et al. 2005; Grantham 2006; Sheppard 2008; Van Tonder 2008; Dale et al. 2009; Briggs 2010; Sugden 2010; Crotwell 2011; Abbas and Roger 2013; Akkermans et al. 2013; Brauchli et al. 2013; Parizo 2013). Although the cited studies emphasise the alarming effects of increasing workload in terms of educators leaving the profession, burnout, absenteeism, a lack of accountability and motivation to teach, no sustained approach to deal with the increase in workload could be found.

This research aims to extend current research in South Africa by suggesting a novel way in which internships can alleviate the workload, caused by increasing administrative and professional duties, of educators.

The Duties of South African Educators

South African educators have to fulfil seven roles which comprise administrative and profes-

sional duties (Department of Education 1998a). One of the seven roles of an educator is to be a classroom administrator, responsible for filling in registers; completing stock lists; drawing up class budgets; compiling work reports and checking marks. Vinjevold (2009) and Oswalt et al. (2013) argue that the administrative burden of educators is too great and MacFarlane (2005) asserts that educators spend less than half the working week on real teaching, as administrative tasks encroach into teaching time. In a study done by Mouton et al. (2013) more than three-quarters of educators indicate that their workload has increased considerably since 2000, with 90 percent ascribing this increase to the demands of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Much of the paperwork that educators are required to do is designed to ensure that teaching and assessment occur regularly. Educators are also required to indicate the completion of certain assessment standards, specify which outcomes have been addressed and record marks in detail (Department of Education 2005b).

Apart from the administrative role, educators also have to fulfil the role of a mediator who needs to mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners (Department of Education 2000). As an interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials, the educator must understand and interpret learning programmes, design original learning programmes, identify the requirements for a specific context of learning and select and prepare suitable textual and visual resources for learning (Department of Education 2000). Educators should also act as leaders. This involves managing learning in the classroom, carrying out classroom administrative activities efficiently and participating in school decision-making structures (Department of Education 2000). As a scholar, researcher and lifelong learner educators are expected to pursue their own on-going personal, academic, occupational and professional growth (Department of Education 2000). The community, citizenship and pastoral role requires that the educator should practise and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others. Within the school, the educator must demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for learners and must respond to the educational- and other needs of learners and fellow

educators (Department of Education 2000). Assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process. As assessors, educators need to understand the various purposes of assessment, including identifying the needs of their learners, planning learning programmes, tracking learner progress, diagnosing problems and helping learners to improve their work, judging the effectiveness of the learning programme and assessing their own teaching. Finally, the role of learning area/subject specialist requires being well-grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods and procedures relevant to the educator's field of specialization (Department of Education 2000).

According to Potenza (2002) these roles are all part of the foundations of teaching. However, against the background of a heavy administrative and professional workload, it is questionable whether educators will succeed in fulfilling these seven roles. An evaluation of the different roles that educators have to fulfil clearly indicates that the roles involve a number of core duties that impact on their workload. The amount of paperwork has a negative effect on the execution of classroom instruction and reduces the time available for classroom instruction (Vinjevold 2009; Chisholm and Wildeman 2013). The behaviour of learners sometimes affects the execution of administrative duties. According to the researchers' experience, educators find it difficult to complete registers, compile work reports and record marks when learners misbehave or do not attend classes. Maintaining good order in the classroom is one of the most difficult duties educators are faced with. This duty has become more difficult over the past few decades as young people's attitudes towards those in authoritative positions have changed dramatically (Murphy 2006; Mouton et al. 2013).

The Chisholm report on South African educators' workload (Chisholm et al. 2005) emphasizes that the majority of educators in South Africa experience multiple, complex and constantly changing requirements regarding teaching and learning, marked on the whole by large classes with diverse teaching and learning needs as well as an unbearable increase in workload. The low levels of support from the Department of Education regarding the manner in which the recording and reporting of learner performance should be documented, often leads to educators' distress/anxiety when executing their ad-

ministrative activities (Abbas and Roger 2013; Herrington 2014; Khan et al. 2014; Samela-Aro and Upadyaya 2014; Yorimitsu et al. 2014). Educators are overwhelmed by the various prescribed ways of compiling documentation as this absorbs a lot of teaching time (Chisholm et al. 2005; Van Tonder 2008). In the researchers' opinion, educators experience pressure from all stakeholders, especially from the Department of Education and parents to be very accurate in the recording process. Recording of learner performance is a continuous process, which means that educators spend a lot of time on this administrative duty, leading to a decrease in teaching time and an increase in workload. The reporting of learner performance leads to distress when executing administrative activities (Ingvarson et al. 2005; Van Tonder 2008). With larger classes, reporting learner performance becomes more difficult. Educators do not have the time to administer these reports during school hours, which means that they have to do it after school hours. This might overlap with their extra-curricular activities and might lead to less time with their families. Extra-curricular activities also require administration. For example, educators who are coaches of sport teams have to plan and organise sport tours and league games. This might lead to less teaching and spare time.

The above scenario clearly reflects the intensity of educators' workload as postulated by Larson (1980), Apple (1986), Hargreaves (2005), Abbas and Roger (2013), Herrington (2014), Khan et al. (2014), Samela-Aro and Upadyaya (2014), Yorimitsu et al. (2014) in the following way:

1. Intensification leads to reduced time for relaxation during the working day, including 'no time at all' for lunch.
2. Intensification leads to lack of time to re-tool one's skills and keep up with one's field.
3. Intensification creates chronic and persistent overload (as compared with the temporary overload that is sometimes experienced with meeting deadlines). This reduces areas of personal discretion, inhibits involvement in- and control over longer-term planning, and fosters dependency on externally produced materials and expertise.
4. Intensification leads to reductions in the quality of service as corners are cut to save time.
5. Intensification leads to enforced diversification of expertise and responsibility to cover personnel shortages, which can in

turn create excessive dependency on outside expertise and further reductions in the quality of service.

6. Intensification creates and reinforces limited preparation time.
7. Intensification is voluntarily supported by many educators and misrecognized as professionalism.

Literature makes it evident that the execution of administrative and professional duties becomes increasingly complex and difficult for South African educators. In the researchers' opinion, educators are overwhelmed by the unbearable increase in their administrative workload. When educators have to perform administrative and professional duties without the required support, it can affect teaching and learning negatively (Van der Westhuizen 2002; Bubb and Earley 2004). In October 2002, the Secretary of State in the UK, Estelle Morris, stated that a tired teacher is not an effective teacher (Khan et al. 2014). Tired teachers cannot focus on what is most important – teaching.

Given the background scenario, the researchers explored the use of internships to assist educators with the increase in workload.

The Use of Internships to Alleviate Educators' Workload

According to Billet (2001) and Nkabinde et al. (2013) the increasing importance of practical work experience gained through internships cannot be overemphasized since, in recent times, there has been significant reliance on acquiring practical skills in the workplace. Internships are provided by many organisations in order to induct beginners into diverse professions and careers (Matters 2002; Nkabinde et al. 2013).

In the context of education, Knemeyer and Murphy (2001) describe internships as work programmes that are designed to supplement a student's academic coursework. Nkabinde et al. (2013) define an internship as a triangular relationship entered into by three parties, namely the student, the university and the school. All three parties collaborate to define the internship relationship in terms of the expectations of each party, the duration and the assessment criteria. This offers each party the potential to benefit from this unique educational opportunity (Sujlal and Singh 2010). Internships can be a win-win proposition for students, education institu-

tions and educators (Domask 2007). According to Nkabinde et al. (2013) an internship provides for connecting the academic environment with practice, evaluating the course content of curricula, linking students to work experience and job opportunities, thus engaging and empowering them.

According to Davies (2012), there are numerous benefits in implementing a student teaching internship. Two of the most important benefits are the classroom teaching experience and the chance to work together with experienced educators who act as mentors. In addition, the interns see how a school operates, get feedback on their teaching skills, learn how to discipline learners, attend meetings and serve as part of an educational team (Goldhaber et al. 2014). Nkabinde et al. (2013) argue that internships provide opportunities for undergraduates to apply what they have learnt at university. They get an opportunity for on-the-job training and real-life job experience (Goldhaber et al. 2014). Such students are more aware of needs and expectations and are better equipped for employment.

Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) state that four dimensions of teaching, namely a technical, an intellectual, a socio-emotional and a socio-political dimension, underpin an internship. The dimensions that are experiential and project-based in nature consist of a mixture of classroom learning, real world insights and opportunities to reflect upon theory and practice. Abroad, internships are used to assist final year undergraduates in education to move smoothly from being a student to being an educator (Goldhaber et al. 2014). Many universities in Australia and the UK provide internship opportunities across faculties. Often, teacher education faculties use internships as assessable components of their final practical evaluation (Clarke et al. 2001; Nkabinde et al. 2013; Goldhaber et al. 2014).

The research method that was employed to determine educators' perceptions about the nature of their administrative and professional duties and the support that they require to manage their teaching task successfully is discussed in the next section.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study followed a positivist research paradigm with a quantitative approach. The posi-

tivist research paradigm was selected for this study as it best suited the objective nature of the research that was undertaken. The researchers wanted to objectively determine the perceptions of teachers regarding the nature of their workload as well as the support that they require to manage their teaching task successfully. A descriptive survey research strategy was therefore utilized.

Research Participants

The population of the study comprised educators from both township schools (50%) and ex-model C schools (50%) in the Further Education and Training (FET) band in the Sedibeng West District (D8) of the Gauteng Province. As it was not possible to conduct the research with the entire population, a sample was identified. From a total number of 1200 educators, a sample of 300 (n=300) willing educators from both township (n=150) and ex-model C schools (n=150) was selected purposively to take part in the research. The sample was heterogeneous in terms of gender, age, teaching experience and culture.

Research Instrument

The researchers developed a close-ended, Likert-scale questionnaire that to gather information regarding the educators' perceptions of the nature and extent of their professional and administrative workload as well as the support that they require to manage their teaching task successfully. Participants had to respond on a scale that examined frequency of occurrence which ranged from "always" to "almost never". Group administration of the questionnaires was employed in order to ensure a high return rate.

In order to ensure validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted to prove that it was valid and reliable. The questionnaire was piloted with a sample of educators from township schools (n = 25) and ex-model C schools (n = 25) that did not take part in the actual study. Reliable Cronbach alpha coefficients were noted for the different questionnaire items.

Data Analysis

As the study was a first exploration by the researchers in the particular education district,

the aim was not to compare viewpoints of educators from township and ex-model C schools or to gain a deeper understanding of the responses.

RESULTS

Tables 1 and 2 report the descriptive data obtained for educator perceptions regarding the increase in their professional and administrative workload as well as the support that they require. The interpretation of the data is based on clustering the “always” and “often” and the “sometimes” and “almost never” responses in terms of their prominence in contributing to an increased workload.

Table 1 presents the educators’ perceptions in relation to the extent to which core duties influence their professional workload as well as the support that they require. According to Table 1, the majority of participants indicated that the amount of paperwork (part of their execution of administrative duties) occupies an extensive amount of time. This response could suggest that the amount of paperwork to be completed reduces the time that educators have available to spend on preparation, marking, assessment and dealing with learner behaviour (Chisholm et al. 2005; Mouton et al. 2013). Meaningless paperwork therefore could deprive educators of spending more time on what really matters, namely teaching and learning.

Many participants felt that dealing with learner behaviour is problematic. Dealing with disruptive behaviour of learners could also hamper educators in delivering effective teaching and assessment in class. Only 6 percent of the participants indicated that learner behaviour does not play an important role in their administrative

duties. This response could be linked to the fact that educators do their marking and preparation after school hours.

According to Table 1, the majority of participants felt that large class sizes contribute to their administrative workload. The researchers are of the opinion that the larger the class size the more difficult it becomes to control learners’ behaviour and disciplinary problems occur more frequently.

The data showed that most educators are concerned about the increase in their workload. A workload audit by NASUWT (2008) also indicated that, in rank order, the ten top issues contributing significantly to an increased educator workload are lesson planning; teacher assessment; inspection; class size; target setting; meetings before and after school; administrative activities; coursework annotation; school self-evaluation; and cover of absence.

It is disturbing to note that educators receive minimal support from the Department of Education in performing their administrative duties. In South Africa, the Department of Education has been criticised for a lack of training to prepare educators for the implementation of the NCS (Pithouse 2000; Smit 2001; Greenberg et al. 2013; Mouton et al. 2013). According to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (Department of Education 1999), educators may be required to attend programmes for on-going professional development up to a maximum of 80 hours per annum. It is specified that these programmes should be conducted outside of the formal school day. The workload of educators therefore includes carrying out core duties during a formal school day (with or without contact with learners) as well as outside the formal school day (Department of Education 1999). Educators

Table 1: Influence of core duties on professional workload: Educator perceptions

	<i>Always</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Sometimes</i>		<i>Almost never</i>		<i>Missing</i>	
	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>		<i>4</i>			
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Amount of paperwork	87	34	111	43	52	20	6	2	1	1
Behaviour of learners	50	20	82	32	108	42	17	6	0	0
Large class size	104	40	90	35	50	20	13	5	0	0
Support from the DoE	73	28	81	32	79	31	23	8	1	1
Recording of learner performance	76	29	109	41	51	20	20	7	1	1
Reporting of learner performance	62	24	117	46	58	23	20	7	0	0
Extra-curricular activities	50	20	103	40	79	30	25	10	0	0

need support in respect of their administrative duties as these activities impact on classroom management (Van der Westhuizen 2002; Greenberg et al. 2013). Government has to commit itself to a significant reduction in educators' workload and at the same time raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning (Bubb and Earley 2004).

Assessment is one of the core duties of an educator. The data revealed that the responses regarding recording and reporting of learner performance concur. The majority of educators viewed recording and reporting as duties that contribute largely to a heavy workload. Recording and reporting demand high levels of accuracy from educators. This puts pressure on educators and leads to distress. In a previous study (Van Tonder 2008) educators indicated that the time spent on assessment and evaluation increased excessively. Some of the educators felt that they spent more time than usual on assessment and evaluation. Continuous assessment is a critical component of the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 (General). It involves a process of continuously collecting and interpreting evidence in order to determine learner's performance (Potenza 2002; Kruger and Van Schalkwyk 1997; Van Tonder 2012). The range of assessment forms each consists of a specified number of activities that educators have to assess. It seems that continuously having to assess and evaluate learners' work in a prescribed way has increased educators' workload dramatically.

The majority of the participants indicated that they spend a lot of time on extra-curricular activities. The researchers are of the opinion that the time educators spend on extra-curricular activities overlaps with the time they spend on

preparation and planning, which makes it impossible for educators to work effectively.

The data also revealed that educators experience difficulties with executing professional activities. Larger classes make it difficult to control learners' unruly behaviour. Misbehaviour of learners must be recorded and reported to different stakeholders and it leads to an excessive load of paperwork in addition to the paperwork of recording and reporting learner performance (Murphy 2006; Mouton et al. 2013). Educators need support from the Department of Education in this regard. The data, however, revealed that this support is not provided. The indication is that educators have to fight the paper battle on their own. This could lead to anxiety as well as a decline in a high performance work culture.

Table 2 presents educators' perceptions in relation to the extent to which core duties influence their administrative workload as well as the support that they require. The data revealed that the participants feel that having to control the behaviour of learners has an influence on the execution of their professional activities. According to the researchers' experience, educators find it difficult to complete registers, compile work reports and record marks when learners misbehave or do not attend classes. Murphy (2006) also states that maintaining good order in the classroom is one of the most difficult duties that educators are faced with. This duty has become more difficult over the past few decades as young people's attitudes towards those in authoritative positions have changed dramatically (Murphy 2006; Mouton et al. 2013).

According to Table 2, the majority of participants agreed that large classes have a negative

Table 2: Influence of core duties on administrative workload: Educator perceptions

	<i>Always</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Sometimes never</i>		<i>Almost</i>		<i>Missing</i>	
	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>		<i>4</i>			
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Amount of paperwork	133	51	71	28	47	18	5	2	1	1
Behaviour of learners	55	22	77	30	103	40	22	8	0	0
Large class size	113	44	78	30	50	20	16	6	0	0
Support from the DoE	55	22	101	39	73	28	28	11	0	0
Recording of learner performance	95	37	78	31	60	23	23	8	1	1
Reporting of learner performance	55	22	119	46	64	25	19	7	0	0
Extra-curricular activities	42	16	111	43	75	29	28	11	1	1

effect on the execution of professional activities. The data correlate with the Chisholm report (Chisholm et al. 2005), namely that the majority of educators in South Africa experience multiple, complex and constantly changing requirements regarding teaching and learning, marked on the whole by large classes with diverse teaching and learning needs.

Most of the participants revealed that the low levels of support from the Department of Education regarding the recording and reporting of learner performance often lead to anxiety when executing their professional activities. Educators are overwhelmed by the various prescribed ways of compiling documentation as this absorbs a lot of teaching time. The researchers are of the opinion that educators experience pressure from all stakeholders, especially from the Department of Education and parents, to be very accurate in the recording process. Recording of learner performance is a continuous process, which means that educators spend a lot of time on this administrative activity, leading to a decrease in teaching time and an increase in workload (Van Tonder 2012).

According to Table 2, 68 percent of the participants indicated that reporting of learner performance leads to anxiety when executing their professional activities. With larger classes, reporting learner performance becomes more difficult. Educators do not have the time to compile these reports during school hours, which means that they have to do it after school hours. This

might further overlap with their extra-curricular activities and might lead to less time with their families.

The majority of the participants indicated that extra-curricular activities cause distress when executing professional duties. According to the researchers' experience, extra-curricular activities also require administration. For example, educators who are coaches for sport teams have to plan and organise sport tours and league games. This might lead to less teaching and spare time because educators sometimes have to make arrangements regarding sport events during school hours and have to train sport teams after school hours during their spare time.

Based on the data, the researchers are of the opinion that educators are overwhelmed by the unbearable increase in their administrative and professional duties.

Table 3, presents a comparison of the data gathered from the educators' perceptions in relation to the extent to which their core duties seem to influence their administrative and professional workload. The comparison is done to establish whether core duties have the greatest influence on the administrative or professional workload of educators.

The data indicated that educators are involved in executing the listed core duties on a frequent basis. It is important to note that the standard deviations were small, indicating that there was not much of variability among the perceptions of the educators.

Table 3: Comparison: professional and administrative workload

		<i>n</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>Effect</i>																																																																									
Amount of paperwork	Professional	257	1.91	.795	4.105	0.000*	0.251	Large																																																																									
	Administrative	257	1.70	.834					Behaviour of learners	Professional	257	2.36	.868	0.000	1.000	0.000	None	Administrative	257	2.36	.912	Large class size	Professional	257	1.89	.890	0.282	0.778	0.010	Small	Administrative	257	1.88	.934	Support from DoE	Professional	256	2.20	.957	-1.987	0.048*	0.094	Large	Administrative	256	2.29	.926	Recording of learner performance	Professional	256	2.06	.899	0.356	0.722	0.020	Small	Administrative	256	2.04	.983	Reporting of learners performance	Professional	257	2.14	.873	-1.307	0.192	0.045	Small	Administrative	257	2.18	.853	Extra-curricular	Professional	256	2.30	-.895	-1.208	0.228	0.055
Behaviour of learners	Professional	257	2.36	.868	0.000	1.000	0.000	None																																																																									
	Administrative	257	2.36	.912					Large class size	Professional	257	1.89	.890	0.282	0.778	0.010	Small	Administrative	257	1.88	.934	Support from DoE	Professional	256	2.20	.957	-1.987	0.048*	0.094	Large	Administrative	256	2.29	.926	Recording of learner performance	Professional	256	2.06	.899	0.356	0.722	0.020	Small	Administrative	256	2.04	.983	Reporting of learners performance	Professional	257	2.14	.873	-1.307	0.192	0.045	Small	Administrative	257	2.18	.853	Extra-curricular	Professional	256	2.30	-.895	-1.208	0.228	0.055	Medium	Administrative	256	2.30	-.895								
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*Statistical significance: $p \leq 0.05$

With regard to the involvement of educators in paperwork and receiving support from the Department of Education statistically significant differences are noted. The data further indicated that the amount of paperwork involved in fulfilling administrative duties is significantly greater than the amount of paperwork linked to fulfilling professional duties. Similarly, statistically significant differences are noted between the support provided by the Department of Education in terms of fulfilling professional and administrative duties. It is evident that the Department of Education is more supportive regarding the fulfilling of professional duties. The data also revealed that the administrative workload of educators is the area in which they require most assistance.

Table 4, reports the data regarding educators' perceptions of the extent to which the implementation of an internship could make their workload more manageable. According to Table 4, the majority of the respondents felt that the use of internships could make their workload more manageable. The data indicated that internships might be a solution to reduce educators' administrative workload. The use of internships could lead to a situation where more teaching and learning time will be available.

Table 4: The use of internships to make workload more manageable

	<i>f</i>	%
A lot	169	66
Some degree	57	22
Nor much	15	6
Not really	16	6

The responses of educators regarding the support that interns can provide to reduce their workload are summarised in Table 5. The number of responses noted for each of the items, are reported as frequencies. Based on the responses, the researchers argue that internships can support educators with a wide variety of administrative and professional duties which would enable them to spend more time on teaching and learning.

It is clear from the aforementioned responses, that the majority of educators were in accord that the use of an internship could benefit them in respect of their professional and administrative duties. The data indicated that educators

Table 5: Type of support provided by internships

	<i>f</i>
Playground supervision	153
Exam invigilation	153
Standing in for educators who are absent on a short-term basis	111
Photocopying	168
School detention	153
Assessment (Marking)	106
Stocktaking	157
Distribution of subject-based resources	121
Classroom display	138
Subject classes	84
Filing	160
Filling in registers	164
Extra-curricular activities	156

feel that student interns will be able to assist significantly with photocopying, filing, filling in registers, stocktaking, exam invigilation, playground supervision, school detention and extra-curricular activities. The researchers concur with Jackson et al. (2006), Bradley (2007), Pomaki et al. (2010), Nkabinde et al. (2013) and Goldhaber et al. (2014) who posit that internships is a way to provide support to educators.

The findings from an analysis of the data gathered in this research as well as the findings from the research of Easthope and Easthope (2000), Bennell (2004), Orsini (2004), Butt and Lance (2005), Chisholm et al. (2005), Ingvarson et al. (2005), Grantham (2006), Sheppard (2008), Van Tonder (2008), Dale et al. (2009), Briggs (2010), Sugden (2010), Crotwell (2011) and Abbas and Roger (2013) provided a rationale for exploring the merits and benefits of the use of internships where student teachers act in a supportive role as assistant educators.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this exploratory research confirm the findings of large-scale studies conducted for example, by Chisholm et al. (2005), Dale et al. (2009) Crotwell (2011), Abbas and Roger (2013) and Goldhaber et al. (2014). Irrespective of the type of school, all South African educators appear to concur that their workloads have increased since the implementation of the NCS (Easthope and Easthope 2000; Bennell 2004; Orsini 2004; Butt and Lance 2005; Chisholm et al. 2005; Ingvarson et al. 2005; Grantham 2006; Sheppard 2008; Van Tonder 2008; Dale et

al. 2009; Briggs 2010; Sugden 2010; Crotwell 2011 and Abbas and Roger 2013).

Many studies highlight the intensification of educators' increasing workload and the fact that it leads to educators leaving the profession, a higher scale of absenteeism, less accountability and motivation and burnout (Jackson et al. 2006; Bradley 2007; Samela-Aro and Upadyaya 2013; Herrington 2014; Khan et al. 2014; Yorimitso et al. 2014). The findings of this research corroborate with the findings of the above researchers in that educators indicated that they are involved in performing their required core duties on a more continuous basis, their workloads have increased enormously since the implementation of the NCS, more educators leave the profession, there is a higher scale of absenteeism, there is less accountability and motivation and many educators suffer from some form of burnout.

The findings of this research also add to current literature. South African educators indicated that they find it very difficult to cope with the amount of paperwork involved in specifically, their administrative duties. They also revealed that they do not receive sufficient support from the Department of Education. They were more positive about the support that they receive in fulfilling their professional duties. The data also indicated that the administrative workload of educators is the area where they require most assistance.

The findings of this research further add to available literature by making it evident that educators can be supported by student interns. Educators revealed that interns will be able to assist significantly with photocopying, filing, filling in registers, stocktaking, exam invigilation, playground supervision, school detention and extra-curricular activities. It became clear that they do not foresee that student interns will be able to support them to the same extent with teaching and assessment.

Based on the findings of this research as well as existing literature, it is recommended to implement the Relieve Educators Administrative Demands (READ)-model to relieve South African educators from an increase in their workload.

Different open and closed management models guided the conceptualisation and development of the READ model. An open model considers that outside factors can have an impact

on the model development process (Nadler 1989; Souls 2009). A closed model is based on the assumption that all inputs can be identified and all the possible variables built into the model (Nadler 1989; Souls 2009; Van Tonder 2012).

According to the open Adaptive Management Model, the external environment affects the teaching and learning environment. Economic, social, political and physical conditions influence the effectiveness of the learning environment (Martin et al. 2013). Nadler (1989) Souls (2009) and Martin et al. (2013), propose an open model that considers external factors during its development. The READ-model acknowledges physical, social, economic and political conditions and suggests feedback as a necessary component for reporting on any shortcomings, obstacles and deviations during the implementation of the model.

The PIRI model (Brits 2010) is a closed-model that involves four phases of continuous planning, implementation, review and improvement. All stakeholders involved in the implementation of the READ-model are regarded as part of the internal environment, namely the Department of Education, District officials, tertiary institutions, schools and school principals, educators and interns. All stakeholders will participate in different ways in the four phases suggested by the PIRI model.

In the Reflexivity model, individual and organisational values are linked (Jonker and De Witt 2006; Souls 2009; Langley et al. 2013) and the importance of value-driven goals as well as the development of all aspects of organisational performance, in working towards alleviating educators' workload, are emphasized.

The 7-S model (Waterman et al. 1980) is an open model that focuses on the management of strategies, systems and structures. The educational environment of the 7-S model also consists of so-called hard elements, such as structures, systems and strategies that are feasible and easy to identify. The four soft elements (style, staff, skills and shared values) are difficult to describe since capabilities, values and elements of corporate culture are continuously developing and changing and are highly determined by the people in an organisation. Although the soft elements are below the surface, it can have a great impact on the hard elements (structure, systems, and strategies) of the organisation (Waterman et al. 1980; Bhattacharyya

2013). For example, some people in the organisation do not see the need for changes in management structures. The continuously developing and changing style, staff, skills and shared values included in the 7-S model are also characteristics of schools as organisations. Therefore this model corresponds well with the structures in the READ-model. These soft elements can have an enormous impact on the hard elements in the educational environment. Educators' skills and values differ a lot, for example, according to the empirical data some educators did not see the need for interns.

All the models that inform the READ-model have been applied with success in various or-

ganisations (Waterman et al. 1980; De Bono 1990; Jonker and De Witt 2006; Brits 2007; Bhattacharyya 2013; Langley et al. 2013; Martin et al. 2013).

Internships provide possibilities for connecting the academic environment of the students with practice (Domask 2007; Nkabinde et al. (2013). The researchers recommend that the suggested internship model focuses primarily on the administrative and professional activities that student educators' can perform on behalf of educators. In this way, the workload of educators could be alleviated.

The READ-model consists of four phases, namely, planning, implementation, review and improvement (Fig. 1).

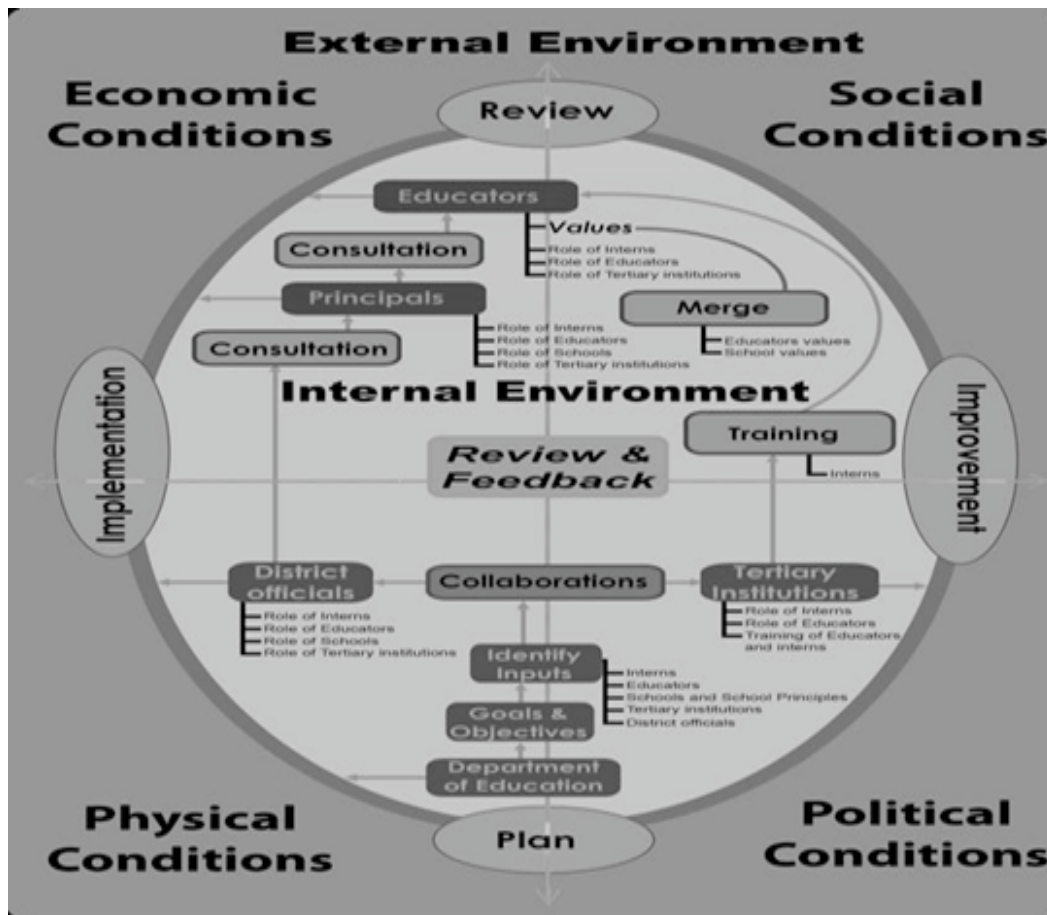


Fig. 1. A model to relieve South African educators from the administrative demands generated by the implementation of the NCS

Phase 1: Planning

The Department of Education as the primary stakeholder in the planning phase should consider the following steps:

- ♦ Consider the external and internal environment and develop a vision and direction to provide the context for planning. The internal environment is constantly influenced by economic, political, physical and social conditions in the external environment.
- ♦ Determine objectives that have to be achieved in terms of relieving South African educators' from the administrative demands generated by the implementation of the NCS.
- ♦ Identify inputs from district officials, tertiary institutions, schools and school principals, educators and interns.
- ♦ Develop strategies to achieve the set objectives.

Phase 2: Implementation

The implementation phase refers to the phase where all the stakeholders (the Department of Education, District officials, tertiary institutions, schools and school principals, educators and interns) are deployed in order to achieve the goals and objectives set during the planning phase.

The Department of Education collaborates with District officials and clarifies the role of interns. The role of District officials in the implementation of the READ-model will be determined by the Department of Education. Discussions will then be held with District officials. Similar discussions, focusing on the training of interns and educators, the role of educators, schools, school principals and tertiary institutions will then follow. District officials consult with school principals and school principals enter into consultation with educators to explain the role of interns as well as their role in the implementation of the READ-model. During the implementation, it will be important to merge the schools' values with the values of educators.

Before the READ-model can be implemented the Department of Education also collaborates with tertiary institutions involved in the training of interns and educators. These collaborations will focus on explaining the roles of interns and educators.

Phase 3: Review

During this phase, the implementation of the READ-model is evaluated against the objectives that were set during the planning phase. The Department of Education reviews the process at District offices and tertiary institutions. District officials are responsible for reviewing the process at schools and school principals review how educators implement the model. The review process is developmental and any shortcomings, obstacles and deviations from expected levels of achievement are reported. This information feeds back into all other phases.

Phase 4: Improvement

Based on the identified shortcomings, obstacles and deviations remedial action is taken. If the implementation of the READ-model does not achieve the set goals and objectives the process has to be reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Planning, implementation, review and improvement occur in a continuous cycle to ensure the successful implementation of the READ-model.

CONCLUSION

Previous research projects on the impact of the implementation of the NCS on the workload of educators in South Africa, do not propose strategies for alleviating educators' workload.

This study differs from previous studies that mainly highlight the increased workload of educators and its detrimental effects related to stress, absenteeism, commitment, job satisfaction and the importance of providing support to educators. This research extends previous research by proposing internship as a possible solution to alleviating the intensification of educators' workload. The researchers will report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the READ model in a next paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers propose an internship model to address educators' increasing workload that could be considered and applied in national and international contexts. The internship model now needs to be placed into the context of a long-term intervention in schools to assess its bene-

fits and to gather data that could lead to refinement and adaptation of the model. It is essential that Departments of Education are informed of the importance of social support as significant predictor of educator work engagement and commitment, and the extent to which an internship model fulfils the possibility of providing social support to educators.

The researchers motivate the recommendation to implement the READ-model because it:

- ♦ Combines the strengths from different models which could provide a stronger basis for yielding success.
- ♦ Proposes a clear course of action,
- ♦ Recognises that change requires a shift in the boundaries of the thinking genre of educational managers.
- ♦ Focuses on goal-orientated activities that support organisational policy to increase organisational performance.
- ♦ Links organisational and individual values reflexively.
- ♦ Argues for the effective management of strategies, systems and structures to support staff in the execution of duties.
- ♦ Promotes social support to promote work engagement and work commitment.
- ♦ Supports continuous evaluation and improvement for sustainability.

LIMITATIONS

It should be noted that this research was by no means without limitations, one of these being that the study was confined to only one Education Region (Sedibeng West district (D8) of the Gauteng Province) and only quantitative in nature. As a result, the findings based on this research study might be construed by some critics to be one-sided and not representative of the views of the majority of educators in South Africa. However, the data support and add to the findings of large-scale studies conducted in South Africa and abroad.

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