PRINT: ISSN 0975-1122 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6322
International Journal of
EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

Full text open access online (Since 2009)
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PRINT: ISSN 0975-1122 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6322
Int J Edu Sci, 55(1): 1-16 (2026)
DOI: 10.31901/24566322.2026/55.1.1483

Marking Time: Reimagining Administrative Efficiency in South African Classrooms through Local Innovation

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KEYWORDS Assessment Practices. Classroom Efficiency. Digital Tools. Educator Well-being. School Innovation. Workload Reduction

ABSTRACT Teacher administrative workload, particularly assessment marking, remains a persistent challenge in South African classrooms, limiting instructional time and affecting professional well-being. This study aims to examine the nature of this burden and assess the potential of a locally developed marking application to reduce it. A mixed-methods design was employed, comprising a descriptive survey of 60 educators (40 teachers and 20 heads of department) and semi-structured interviews with 30 participants, including school leaders, district officials, and union representatives. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analysed. Findings indicate that teachers spend considerable time on marking and perceive the application as significantly reducing marking time, improving instructional focus, and alleviating workload pressure. The study concludes that context-responsive educational technologies can enhance administrative efficiency and strengthen teacher capacity in resource-constrained school environments, while supporting more effective teaching and sustained learner engagement outcomes.