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Educators' Preparedness and Implementation of Foundations for Learning Campaign in Foundation and Intermediate Phases in the uThungulu District, KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT This study examined the efficacy of the implementation of the national curriculum innovation, Foundations for Learning Campaign in schools in uThungulu District, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The researchers assessed the level of preparedness of educators in their teaching of basic skills in the classroom and identified gaps in the dissemination and implementation of this curriculum innovation. The paper targeted foundation and intermediate phase teachers from grades 1 to 6 who taught languages and mathematics, and the sample of 120 was purposefully selected as they were the focus of the campaign. Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to collect data, through the use of a questionnaire. The findings revealed that the majority of educators in the sample were inadequately equipped with the necessary skills and expertise to implement the Foundations for Learning Campaign. Since teachers are the key role players in any curriculum implementation process, the researchers recommend that they be more adequately capacitated.

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the level of preparedness of educators within the specific context of the implementation of Foundations for Learning Campaign in foundation and intermediate phases in their teaching of languages and mathematics. The Foundations for Learning Campaign was a four-year curriculum innovation (2008-2011) intended to improve basic language and mathematical skills. The ultimate goal of the campaign was that all primary schools will be expected to increase average learner performance in Literacy/Language and Numeracy/Mathematics to no less than fifty percent, indicating an improvement of between fifteen and twenty percent in the four years of the campaign (Department of Education 2008: 4). However, in the absence of adequate educator preparation, there will be a mismatch between what the campaign aimed to achieve and what actually occurs in the classroom.

In the past decade or more, education review committees (Chisholm 2000a; Chisholm et al. 2000; Department of Education 2001, 2009; Department of Basic Education 2012) have reported that the main difficulties in implementing curriculum changes is the poor preparation of teachers for curriculum renewal. Teachers are in many ways an education system's most crucial resource and the success or failure of any new curriculum depends on their ability to deliver it in the classroom. In as long ago as 1999, Jansen and Christie (236) strongly emphasized that a new curriculum's efficacy depends on the training and support that teachers receive and their ability to mobilise and manage the resources available to them to implement it. The argument is that any curriculum change should prioritise teacher involvement and development.

There is much clear evidence (Fullan 1986, 2007; Goodson 1994; Willis 2002; Kelly 2009; Carl 2012; Almarzroa and Al-Shamrani 2015; Lowe and Appleton 2015; Sika 2015) that curriculum

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innovations that by-pass educators, or that are overly prescriptive, are ineffective and unsuccessful. However, among the many studies (Jansen 1997, 1999; Jansen et al. 1999; Chisholm 2000b; Taruvinga and Cross 2012; Msibi and Mchunu 2013) carried out, both of these aspects appear to have been afterthoughts in the process of curriculum renewal and innovation. Unless teachers are adequately trained, effectively equipped, continuously supported and unless they develop a sense of ownership of the process, the dissemination and implementation of any new curriculum will not work.

Research on curriculum change and its implementation had been a key niche area since the introduction of the post-apartheid education system in South Africa. The ministerial report (Chisholm et al. 2000) on the implementation of curriculum change in the classroom also highlighted threats that faced the implementation process of the designers of Curriculum 2005. Many sources (Jansen and Christies 1999; Chisholm 2000a; Chisholm et al. 2000; Department of Education 2009, 2010; Lelliot et al. 2009; Department of Basic Education 2012) point to the fact that the challenges experienced through previous curriculum innovations have not been adequately addressed. Furthermore, the evidence indicates that there is a shortfall of competencies among teachers to implement curriculum innovations introduced by the national department, yet this has been the main concern for over a decade.

The present study aimed at evaluating the efficacy of implementing the Foundations for Learning Campaign through ascertaining the level of preparedness of educators in their teaching of languages and mathematics skills in the classroom (Literacy and Numeracy). Its objective was to ascertain the views of how educators were prepared in implementing the Foundations for Learning Campaign in foundation and intermediate phases in their teaching of Literacy/Languages and Numeracy/Mathematics skills.

The Foundations for Learning Campaign

Results from both national and international surveys conducted in the past decade painted a bleak picture of South Africa's low levels of literacy and reading proficiency among learners in both the foundation and intermediate phase across schools (Kruizinga and Nathanson 2010; Le Cordeur 2010). These alarming results sparked much concern among many researchers and within the Department of Basic Education (De Witt et al. 2008; Bloch 2009; LeCordeur 2010).

First, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (Howie et al. 2007: 8) revealed that the overall reading level of grade 6 learners was at Level 3 (basic reading). Second, in 2006 more than 30 000 grade 4 and grade 5 learners in South Africa were assessed during the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which is an international comparative study of reading literacy of grade 4 learners that is undertaken in five-year cycles, with 40 countries participating. The South African grade 4 and 5 learners achieved the lowest mean performance scores of all, and these alarming results were reported by Howie et al. (2007: 8).

Third, an additional 2007 survey using a representative sample of more than 54 000 grade 3 learners from more than 2 400 of the country's primary schools participated in a systemic evaluation carried out by the Department of Education. Learners were tested in the written foundational skills of Literacy and Numeracy (Pandor 2008). Some of the key findings emerging from the survey were outlined in the Address at the Foundations Phase Conference on the 30 September 2008 by the then National Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, as follows: the average overall percentage score obtained by the learners in literacy was thirty-six percent and in numeracy it was thirty-five percent. Although the average score in the survey was a little higher than the baseline (in 2001 the results were 30%), the scores remained unacceptably low (Pandor 2008). Both international and national tests results pointed to serious issues of under-achievement among South African learners, resulting in the introduction of the Foundations for Learning Campaign (Department of Education 2008: 4).

The campaign was the Department of Education's strategic response. It was a four-year campaign, which embarked on the goal that by 2011 all learners would be able to demonstrate age-appropriate levels of Literacy and Numeracy in all South African schools. Its intention was to ensure that ultimately learners would acquire and maintain a solid foundation for learning. This campaign culminated with a national evaluation at the end of 2011, which assessed the Literacy

and Numeracy levels of grades 3 and 6 learners in South Africa in order to determine the overall impact of the campaign (Republic of South Africa 2008). However, according to the report on the Annual National Assessment of 2011 (Department of Basic Education 2011), the average national performance of grade 3 learners was thirty-five percent in Literacy and twenty-eight percent in Numeracy, and that of grade 6 learners was twenty-eight percent in Languages and thirty percent in Mathematics.

Studies (Jansen 1997, 1999; Jansen and Christie 1999; Chisholm 2000b; Chisholm et al. 2000; Meier 2011; Murray 2012; Sayed and Kanjee 2013) to understand the issues militating against the accomplishment of the goals and intentions of the Department of Education's innovations and interventions had been conducted since the introduction of the outcomes based curriculum in 1994: Curriculum 2005 (Department of Education 1997); the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education 2002); the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education 2003). However, many challenges regarding teacher preparation for quality curriculum implementation still persist.

Theoretical Framework

This paper centres largely on the post-positivism paradigm, whereby curriculum implementation is viewed through the lens of an adaptive perspective. This perspective encourages an implementation process that enables "policy to be modified and revised according to the unfolding interaction of the policy within its institutional setting" (Berman 1980). According to Cho (1998), this perspective necessitates those in charge of the implementation process actively to involve the educator so as to reduce the inevitable gap that generally exists between the ideal implementation goal and the given local context. This theory recognises that changing individual educators' practice through the acquisition of advanced skills and knowledge through the collective implementation planning process results in an "individual teacher's growth" (Leithwood and Montgomery 1982). Cho (1998) regards this as a process of active negotiation. On the other hand McLaughlin and Marsh (1978) then viewed it as "a new staff development strategy". Thus, within the context of this paper, it is through continuing professional development that an educator can be effectively prepared so as to be able to enhance the success of the implementation process.

Zeiger (2014) affirms that the key aspect to getting educators fully committed to curriculum implementation is to enhance their knowledge of the innovation through training and workshops; however, the argument put forth for quality implementation to be feasible is that continuous professional development strategies must be in place and should appropriately support the implementation. Furthermore, sufficient resources should be available for implementing a new curriculum and educators should be provided with adequate time to prepare and understand the curriculum innovation thereby enabling them to cope with the demands of the curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted a mixed methods design to increase the accuracy of the data and provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon than would be yielded by a single approach, and to avoid the weaknesses and potential bias of a single approach (Denscombe 2008: 272). The quantitative data yielded specific numbers that were statistically analysed, while the qualitative data such as the open-ended questions within the instrument provided a variety of divergent views and different perspectives of the research problem (Creswell and Clark 2007: 71). This approach provided a convergence, elaboration and corroboration of the results than either method by itself. The researchers were provided with an opportunity of comparing the findings from each of the methods and obtained a better understanding and a comprehensive picture of the research problem.

A survey questionnaire was the instrument used to ascertain the level of educators' preparedness for the adoption of the Foundations for Learning Campaign in foundation and intermediate phases in their teaching of Literacy/Languages and Numeracy/Mathematics skills. The questionnaire had closed-ended questions, and used a four-point Likert Scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). It also included open-ended questions, which enabled the respondents to answer freely in their own terms, and to explain and qualify their responses especially with regard to their level of preparedness; this provided further details to

supplement their answers to the closed-ended questions, thus enriching the paper data. The questionnaire contained clear and unambiguous instructions on how to answer the questions and how to complete the questionnaire.

Sampling Procedures

The target population consisted of Foundation and Intermediate phase teachers in the General Education and Training Band of the school system in South Africa. A non-probability sampling strategy was employed, specifically adopting a purposive sampling approach. The paper was conducted in the uThungulu District, one of the eleven district municipalities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in the Lower Umfolozi Circuit, one of the four in the district. A sample of 10 primary schools from Richards Bay and further 10 primary schools from Empangeni was selected. Approximately six educators were chosen from grades 1–6 from each school, forming a sample of 120 in all. Only educators teaching Numeracy/Literacy and Languages/Mathematics were selected, as they were the focus of the Foundations for Learning Campaign.

Each participant signed their consent after reading about the general theme of the questionnaire in a covering letter. The information provided included the researcher's credentials and address; the reasons for collecting the data; and assurance of confidentiality. This ensured that the respondents knew what they were committing themselves to, and confirmed that they understood the context of their replies.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by the researcher through both a closed and opened-ended questionnaire. Closed-ended questions were analyzed through the use of SPSS (originally, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive analysis of the sample data for the 17 items was carried out, using respondent-counting and percentages for the responses to each item. This was then followed by the process of analyzing data for each of the open-ended questions. The qualitative data were organised categorically and chronologically, reviewed and coded for each item. A list of major themes was chronicled. To avoid bias, the number of respondents who marked a particular category was always given together with the reported percentages in brackets. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed, with the aid of frequency distribution table.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The frequency distribution (Table 1) presents data collected by means of a four-point Likert Scale based on 17 questionnaire items. The statistics associated with each statement explicitly show participants' responses to questions about the preparation provided for their implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign in foundation and intermediate phases in their teaching of Literacy/Languages and Numeracy/Mathematics skills. The respondents were requested to rate their responses; 'strongly agree' and 'agree' columns constituted the positive responses while 'disagree and strongly disagree' constituted negative responses.

The responses to item 1 (Table 1) reveal that 1 percent of the educators strongly agreed and 23 percent agreed that the workshops for the Foundations for Learning Campaign was timeously organised. On the other hand seventy-one percent disagreed and five percent strongly disagreed. Thus, as many as three-quarters (76%) of the educators in the sample confirmed that they were not informed in a timely manner about the introduction of the Foundations for Learning Campaign. Several studies explicitly reveal that smooth and successful curriculum change is enormously difficult and time consuming and cannot be accomplished without educators (Goodson 1994; Jansen 1998; Fullan 2007; Carl 2012; Sayed and Kanjee 2013; Sika 2015).

According to item 2 (Table 1) only 1 percent of the educators strongly agreed and 41 percent agreed, whereas 55 percent disagreed and 3 percent strongly disagreed. A total of 42 percent of the educators strongly agreed and agreed that the workshops provided clarity on the goals and objectives of Foundation Campaign. The statistical data showed a variance of 16 percent between participants who affirmed the statement and those that negated it. Thus, in this paper 58 percent of educators in the sample is a significant proportion of those who lacked clarity about the goals and objectives of the Foundations for Learning Campaign. This projection within this statistical summary would have far-reaching consequences in relation to the implementation

Table 1: Preparation for implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign

S. No.	*Item description*		*SA*	*A*	*D*	*SD*	*Total*
1	Educators were timeously informed about the introduction of the Foundation for Learning Campaign so as to understand and accept the curriculum innovation.	N	1	28	85	6	120
		%	1	23	71	5	100
2	The ultimate goal and the necessary objectives of the Foundations for Learning Campaign were clearly outlined during the workshops.	N	1	49	66	4	120
		%	1	41	55	3	100
3	The objectives for the Foundations for Learning Campaign can be classified as SMART, specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic and time bound.	N	0	56	48	16	120
		%	0	47	40	13	100
4	The number of hours or duration regarding the Foundations for Learning Campaign workshops was sufficient for effective implementation.	N	0	10	93	17	120
		%	0	8	78	14	100
5	The workshops were conducted by competent and excellent facilitators who were clear about the challenges of teaching numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages in the foundation and intermediate phases.	N	0	5	96	19	120
		%	0	4	80	16	100
6	I have received adequate teacher training through workshops and developmental programmes on a regular basis by the Department of Basic Education on the Foundations for Learning Campaign.	N	0	10	95	15	120
		%	0	8	79	13	100
7	An on-going series of meetings and workshops were arranged by the Staff Management team to create a culture supportive of change so as to facilitate the implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign at our school.	N	7	47	63	3	120
		%	6	39	52	3	100
8	Educators were provided with opportunities for input, active discussion and were purposely involved before the implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign.	N	4	38	63	15	120
		%	3	32	52	13	100
9	District teacher forums have being established in our district as stipulated in the Government Gazette for the Foundations for Learning Campaign so ideas, experiences and best practice is shared to enhance teaching strategies.	N	0	10	89	21	120
		%	0	8	74	18	100
10	Circuit and District officials have visited our school at least once per term and provided supervised monitoring, support and development regarding the Foundations for Learning Campaign.	N	0	5	84	31	120
		%	0	4	70	26	100
11	With the knowledge and materials I obtained from the training workshops I am able to correct my shortcomings in the teaching of numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages in the classroom.	N	0	46	69	5	120
		%	0	38	58	4	100
12	There are sufficient policy documents, Foundations for Learning Assessment Framework and Foundations for Learning lesson plans in my school to plan and prepare successfully.	N	23	56	38	3	120
		%	19	46	32	3	100
13	I have all the basic, minimum resources listed in the Government Gazette for the Foundations for Learning Campaign to effectively facilitate teaching and learning of numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages in the classroom.	N	15	37	54	14	120
		%	13	30	45	12	100
14	The Foundations for Learning Assessment Framework/ Milestones and lesson plans are clearly defined, simplified, realistic, practical, user friendly and attainable.	N	10	63	38	9	120
		%	8	52	32	8	100
15	The Foundations for Learning Assessment Framework/ Milestones and lesson plans has considerably reduced the amount of planning and preparation required for numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages.	N	6	48	63	3	120
		%	5	40	52	3	100
16	The procedures and process to be followed regarding the Foundations for Learning Campaign are clearly, simply defined and timeously communicated.	N	2	49	67	2	120
		%	2	40	56	2	100
17	The Department of Education continuously monitors the Foundations for Learning Campaign together with the annual standardised assessments at our school which allows them to pinpoint areas of weaknesses and strengths.	N	0	3	97	20	120
		%	0	3	81	16	100

of this curriculum innovation. In their final report, Hipkins et al. (2011) provide an overview of the findings from the Curriculum Implementation Exploratory Studies (CIES) project in New Zealand, which accentuates the fact that lack of clarity, of clearly defined purpose and of explicitness denies teachers the understanding of what they have to do, and thus inhibits successful implementation of an innovation.

The data presented in item 3 (Table 1) show that none (0%) of the educators strongly agreed and nearly half (47%) agreed that the objectives for the Foundations for Learning Campaign could be classified as SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound). However, 40 percent disagreed and 13 percent strongly disagreed that this was not the case. This means that nearly half (47%) of the educators strongly agreed/agreed, and just over half disagreed/strongly disagreed (53%). Research has for a long time shown (Preedy 1989; Fullan 2007; Carl 2012) that curriculum innovations need to be attainable, realistic, practical and of quality, considering time-frames with availability of resources, thus focusing on the context of the schools' "classrooms" where innovations would be implemented, and attempting smaller, less frequent and less ambitious innovations.

Item 4 (Table 1) shows that none (0%) of the educators strongly agreed and 8 percent agreed, while 78 percent disagreed and 14 percent strongly disagreed that the number of hours or duration of the Foundations for Learning Campaign workshops was sufficient for effective implementation. From the data it is evident that a very low percentage (8%) of educators strongly agreed/agreed, in contrast to the very high percentage that disagreed/strongly disagreed (92%). A significant number of respondents held a common view, confirmed in comments in the open-ended section of the questionnaire, that the number of hours or duration of the Foundations for Learning Campaign workshops was not sufficient, and that more time was necessary for effective implementation in the classroom.

Similarly, empirical evidence from a study carried out by Rogan and Grayson (2003) stresses that training teachers is vital for successful implementation, enabling them to understand the necessary changes and put them into practice. In support of this view Lowe and Appleton (2015) assert that teachers can successfully implement the necessary changes if they are given appropriate and adequate training that provides necessary knowledge and skills development. They confirm that adequate and suitable training geared towards curriculum implementation also assists the educator to foster interest and commitment in using the expertise gained.

Inadequately trained facilitators can negatively influence the way in which information is filtered to the educators (Carl 2012; Thompson et al. 2013; Lucas and Santos 2015). Changes of curriculum have to be introduced to the educators effectively for successful implementation. In order for this to take place, Fullan (1992) clearly stipulates that knowledgeable and experienced facilitators are required in subject curriculum disciplinary knowledge as well as pedagogical competencies. Item 5 in Table 1 indicates that a total of only 4 percent of educators strongly agreed and agreed that the workshops were conducted by competent and excellent facilitators who were clear about the challenges of teaching numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages in the foundation and intermediate phases. In contrast, a total of 96 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed. The following issues were identified from participants' comments in the open-ended section of the questionnaire to substantiate the above statistical summary of answers to the question of competency of facilitators. Participants expressed their concerns regarding facilitators' lack of confidence, knowledge, level of preparedness, appropriate communication skills and thorough understanding of the Foundations for Learning Campaign. Their responses further portrayed a lack of assurance and clarity, inability to translate theory into actual classroom practice, and insufficient hands-on experience.

In relation to item 6 (Table 1), none (0%) of the educators strongly agreed and only 8 percentage agreed that they had received adequate teacher training on a regular basis through workshops and developmental programmes conducted by the Department of Basic Education in the Foundations for Learning Campaign. The majority of the respondents (79%) disagreed and 13 percent strongly disagreed with this statement. Evidently, the minority (8%) of the educators strongly agreed/agreed, in contrast to the large majority who disagreed/strongly disagreed (92%). The statistical data together with the comments provided by the respondents pointed to the educators' perceptions that they had not received adequate teacher training through work-

shops and developmental programmes on a regular basis. Furthermore, educators argued that these workshops were only held at the start of the campaign and were once off. The responses of the participants demonstrated explicitly that educators were not engaged on a regular basis in any on-going in-service training programmes to equip them to implement Foundations for Learning Campaign effectively in the classroom. However, research evidence (Carl 2012: 214) reaffirms that professional development programmes can make a real contribution towards effective implementation in the classroom.

Item 7 (Table 1) indicates that a total of 45 percent of the educators strongly agreed and agreed that an on-going series of meetings and workshops were arranged by the Staff Management Team (SMT) to create a culture supportive of change so as to facilitate the implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign at their school. On the other hand, more than half (55%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Educators explicitly stated through their comments in the open-ended section of the questionnaire that, although meetings and workshops were arranged by the Staff Management Team, this was not done on an on-going basis due to a tight schedule, time constraints, other administrative duties and lack of clarity and direction experienced at schools. Carl (2012: 135) strongly recommends that it is necessary for educators to be provided with continuous support and constant monitoring of their implementation progress by the staff management team within the school. Studies by Long and Constable (1991: 104) also acknowledge that a once-off workshop is never sufficient and that what is really needed is frequent contact, follow-up workshops, and the formation of local support groups or clusters together with school-based support from the staff management teams. All of these would seem essential to maximise and contribute to the success of the implementation phase.

In relation to item 8 (Table 1) only 3 percent of educators strongly agreed that they were provided with opportunities for input and active discussion and were purposely involved before the implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign, while 32 percent agreed. In contrast, 52 percent disagreed and 13 percent strongly disagreed. There are much larger differences between agreement and disagreement values, with 35 percent in agreement and 65 percent in disagreement. The following issues were identified from the participants' comments to substantiate the above statistical summary of the question of lack of educator involvement.

A significant number of respondents from the sample collectively presented the view that they were not provided with many opportunities for input and discussion and were simply provided with an overview of the Foundations for Learning policy that was intended to be put into practice in the classroom. Carl (2012: 115) argues that curriculum change endeavours, through dissemination, to get educators involved with a view of satisfying their needs. He states that information needs to be distributed and sufficient opportunities must be created for input by the interested parties, "educators", for these to lead later to positive acceptance and support of the envisaged curriculum renewal. Meaningful curriculum renewal is only possible if there is active involvement by educators.

In item 9 (Table 1) the respondents were asked whether district teacher forums had been established in their district as stipulated in the *Government Gazette* for the Foundations for Learning Campaign so that ideas, experiences and best practice could be shared to enhance teaching strategies. The data presented show that none (0%) of the educators strongly agreed and only 8 percent agreed while 74 percent disagreed and 18 percent strongly disagreed. This means that a low percentage (8%) of educators strongly agreed/agreed, compared to an overwhelming majority who disagreed/strongly disagreed (92%). The majority of the respondents' comments reflected that district teacher forums were not established in their district although it was a stipulation in the *Government Gazette* for the Foundations for Learning Campaign (Department of Education 2008: 22).

According to the frequency of data in item 10 (Table 1), none (0%) of the educators strongly agreed and 4 percent agreed that circuit and district officials had visited their school at least once per term and provided supervised monitoring, support and development regarding the Foundations for Learning Campaign, in contrast to 70 percent who disagreed and 26 percent who strongly disagreed. It is very evident that a much larger difference persists between agreement and disagreement values, with only 4 percent in agreement and 96 percent in disagreement. The

comments provided by the educators overall stated that Circuit and District officials did not visit their schools at least once per term and that no supervised monitoring, support and development was provided regarding the Foundations for Learning Campaign. Educators argued that there are very few such officials, and that because of their heavy workload it was not practical for them to visit many schools.

All curriculum renewal initiatives encounter challenges. However, it makes a difference whether circuit and district officials are prepared to identify them quickly and develop coping measures through supervised monitoring, support and development or whether they avoid facing them. Thus, supervised monitoring, support and development is an essential element of every effective implementation strategy. Altrichter et al. (1993: 176) verify that monitoring does not just fulfil a critical function in identifying problems and failures. It has also a 'constructive' function in multiple respects. Certainly, it is meant to orientate adaptation measures. "Organised effectively, it may provide some emotional support when implementation problems arise and when participants are in danger of falling into the 'implementation dip' into the feeling that situational control is lost among changing circumstances and 'everything is getting worse'" (Altrichter et al. 1993: 176). Moreover, it may give access to good practical ideas which in many schools too often remain unknown Altrichter et al. 1993: 176).

Item 11 (Table 1) reveal that a total of 38 percent of the educators strongly agreed and agreed that the knowledge and materials they obtained from the training workshops enabled them to correct their shortcomings in the teaching of numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages in the classroom. On the other hand, 62 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed. This means that more than a quarter (38%) of educators strongly agreed/agreed, as opposed to nearly two-thirds (62%) who disagreed/strongly disagreed. The following concerns were ascertained from respondents' comments to substantiate the above statistical data in relation the question of adequacy of knowledge and materials acquired during training workshops.

The workshops were perceived to be inadequate and insubstantial as they were not specifically designed to enrich the implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign in relation to teaching of literacy/languages and numeracy/mathematics. Lack of availability of all the necessary materials further questioned the readiness of the implementation process. In substantiating the data presented in numerical form, the narrated statements by the respondents, for example, included comments such as: "The workshops were just in the beginning, by then all the necessary materials were not even available, it never helped me correct my shortcomings in teaching maths and languages; they were not sufficient, in fact too brief, they didn't even discuss the teaching of maths or languages thus it didn't make a difference to my teaching in the classroom." It is significantly pivotal that educators must become fully knowledgeable about the changes in the curriculum content; they must perfect new instructional approaches; they must know how to manipulate the educational environment taking into consideration the backgrounds and learning styles of their learners and, ultimately, they must be able to improve learner performance (Marsh and Willis 2007; Thompson 2013; Yoon et al. 2015).

The responses to item 12 (Table 1) yielded the information that 19 percent of the educators strongly agreed and 46 percent agreed while 32 percent disagreed and 3 percent strongly disagreed that there are sufficient policy documents, Foundations for Learning Assessment Framework, and Foundations for Learning lesson plans in their school to plan and prepare successfully. This means that a relatively higher percentage (65%) of educators strongly agreed/agreed, in relation to a lower percentage who disagreed/strongly disagreed (35%). Although the majority of the respondents did have the necessary documentation, comments suggested that these documents were not received on time and the lesson plans were received on compact disc. This was a major challenge as many schools did not have adequate computers; therefore the process was not user-friendly for all educators. According to Hattingh (1989: 56) there are certain essential logistical elements that influence curriculum dissemination, among which sufficient policy documents, such as the Foundations for Learning Assessment Framework and Foundations for Learning lesson plans, can be classified. The value of these logistical aspects must never be underestimated or put aside, and crucially they need to be made available in a timely manner because they play a vital role during the

dissemination phase, thereby influencing effective implementation. The timely availability and suitability of the necessary documentation is critical in the dissemination phase and should not be neglected as it can hinder the success of the entire process.

Of the 120 respondents in relation to item 13 (Table 1), 13 percent of the educators strongly agreed and 30 percent agreed that they have all the basic, minimum resources listed in the *Government Gazette* for the Foundations for Learning Campaign to effectively facilitate teaching and learning of numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages in the classroom, whereas 45 percent disagreed and 12 percent strongly disagreed. This means that the positive values yielded a percentage of 43 percent of educators strongly agreed/agreed, in contrast to the negative values which yielded a percentage of 57 percent of educators who disagreed/strongly disagreed.

The following issues emerged from the qualitative section of the questionnaire, in which participants commented to substantiate their answers to the close-ended questions. The majority of the classrooms lacked accessibility, availability, affordability, adequacy and quality learner teacher support material to effectively enhance the teaching and learning of numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages. For example, the responses obtained from educators included the following:

Our school is a no fee school therefore it's difficult to buy many resources; with large class sizes, we only have few resources, we try to make do with the little we have, children have to share; even less textbooks, we don't allow them to take readers home, it can get lost and damaged therefore they don't get much opportunity to practice their reading.

Rogan and Grayson (2003) claim that insufficient or poor quality resources have often been identified as undermining the effort of even experienced teachers and can negatively hinder the implementation of curriculum innovations. Furthermore, based on research (Farrel and Heyneman 1989; Carless 1997; Wickham and Verseld 1998; Collopy 2003; Zimmerman and Smit 2014, 2016), in order to facilitate teaching and learning effectively in the classroom it is necessary for the teacher to have adequate learner teacher support material.

Regarding item 14 (Table 1), the positive values yielded a percentage of 60 percent of educators who strongly agreed/agreed, in contrast to the negative values which yielded a percentage of40 percent who disagreed/strongly disagreed that the Foundations for Learning Assessment Framework/Milestones and lesson plans were clearly defined, simplified, realistic, practical, user friendly and attainable. Previous research (Jansen and Christie 1999; Jansen 1997; Department of Education 2009; Murray 2012; Mangali and Hamdan 2015) provided relevant examples of curriculum innovations where educators were not clear about what they were expected to do and what the change meant for them in classroom practice. Interestingly, in relation to these findings from the current study, the respondents were positive with regard to the necessary documentation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign, thus ameliorating the implementation process.

As shown in Table 1, item 15 reveals that 5 percent of the educators strongly agreed and 40 percent agreed, in comparison with 52 percent who disagreed and 3 percent who strongly disagreed, that the Foundations for Learning Assessment Framework/Milestones and lesson plans had considerably reduced the amount of planning and preparation required for numeracy/mathematics and literacy/languages. This means that the percentage of agreement (45%) is lower than the percentage of disagreement (55%). There were both convergent and divergent views from educators as to whether or not the Foundations for Learning Assessment Framework/Milestones and lesson plans reduced their amount of planning and preparation. However, the majority of the educators felt that they still plan and design their own lesson plans to suit the needs of the learners in their classrooms.

For example, a response obtained from one of the participants stated: *"Some of the activities are too complex for the level of the learners in my classroom, do not suit the pace at which I teach, not practical and feasible with the large number of learners in my classroom and the inaccessibility of available resources makes it difficult to implement."* However, on the other hand, a minority of the educators stated that the milestones are very useful as they clearly indicate the expected level of achievement of learners at the end of each term and that they are content with using the lesson plans as these

save them the time and effort it takes to design their own.

Item 16 in Table 1 indicates that 2 percent of the educators strongly agreed and 40 percent agreed the procedures and processes to be followed regarding the Foundations for Learning Campaign are clearly, simply defined and timeously communicated as opposed to 56 percent who disagreed and 2 percent who strongly disagreed. This means that a minority (42%) of educators strongly agreed/agreed, in contrast to the majority who disagreed/strongly disagreed (58%). The comments obtained from respondents revealed that the half-day workshop was not adequate to enable them to grasp all the necessary procedures and processes to implement effectively in the classroom. The respondents further stated that the necessary support from the facilitators, subject advisors and circuit/district officials was not readily available to answer their questions or doubts and that all was not communicated in a timely fashion.

This implies that educators felt they needed more time to learn about the curriculum change and fully understand the procedures and processes, and that they needed more by way of support from those responsible to effect successful implementation. These results support the argument of Ornstein and Hunkins (2013: 225) that educators find it difficult to juggle the task of bringing about change and handling their current responsibilities over a short period; the experience eventually leads to resistance to change and thwarts successful implementation.

From the data in item 17 (Table 1) it is evident that only 3 percent of educators strongly agreed/agreed, in contrast to an astounding 97 percent who disagreed/strongly disagreed that the Department of Basic Education continuously monitors the Foundations for Learning Campaign together with the Annual National Assessments at their school, which allows them to pinpoint areas of weaknesses and strengths. The majority of the comments obtained from the educators explicitly stated that the Department of Basic Education did not continuously monitor the Foundations for Learning Campaign together with the Annual National Assessments at their school, and that not much attempt was made to assist them to improve or enhance learner performance in these specified subjects.

For example, participants' responses from the open-ended section of the questionnaire included: *"The Department has never monitored the FFLC or ANA, we just write the tests and the results are sent to the district office, we don't even receive any feedback regarding the results on time. Nothing much is really done to help us improve our learner's performance with regards to maths and languages, many of our learners also struggle with these tests."*

Despite the foreseeable challenges, without ongoing monitoring and support of the campaign coupled with the Annual National Assessments (ANA), it is not possible for circuit and district officials or teachers themselves to know what action needs to be taken or what improvements are necessary to be put in place to enhance the quality of teaching and learning of basic language and mathematical skills. In light of these findings, the lack of support, monitoring and follow-through could be detrimental to improving basic language and mathematics skills. Research studies have advocated that if curriculum renewal is to enable improvement in learners' learning, it must be maintained and supported over time (Fullan 2007; Taruvinga and Cross 2012; Mchunu and Msibi 2013; Ornstein and Hunkins 2013; Mangali and Hamdan 2015); building a cadre of competent implementers evidently requires both the circuit and district's sustained support.

Interestingly, the findings from the present paper also concur with the Final Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education 2009: 8), which stated that, in every province, teachers indicated that there were several challenges around the role of the district. This was reinforced by numerous electronic and written submissions within that report that there are too few subject advisors nationwide to do justice to thorough and qualitative in-class support for teachers, and many do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to offer teachers the support they require to improve learner performance.

CONCLUSION

In this paper the researchers sought to ascertain the level of preparedness of educators in implementing the Foundations for Learning Campaign, thus establishing the efficacy of the dissemination and implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign. The overall find-

ings revealed that there was a lack of suitability as well as inefficiency in the organisation, planning and programming of training workshops aimed at equipping teachers with knowledge and skills for effective implementation of curriculum change and innovation. The study found that the majority of the educators believed that there was an insufficient level of training for effective classroom implementation, which was exacerbated by inadequate levels of competency amongst facilitators in equipping teachers with appropriate strategies and methods of teaching language and mathematics skills. The findings also revealed that there were insufficient professional development programmes and school based activities to enhance the teaching and learning of basic skills in Languages and Mathematics in the classroom since the launch of the Foundations for Learning Campaign. Furthermore, inadequate supervision, monitoring and support from the staff management team and subject advisors/specialists magnified the challenges facing the implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign in classroom practice. Based on evidence drawn from this research, this paper concludes that the level of preparedness amongst educators was deficient, thereby impeding effective implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper makes the following recommendations based on the conclusions from the research findings.

Feasibility, manageable time-frames, duration and quality of content of the training provided during the dissemination phase needs to be enhanced. The quality of the trainers and availability of training materials must be improved. Ongoing supervision, monitoring and support from the staff management team and subject advisors/specialists are necessary with regard to curriculum implementation. The staff management team within each school needs to devise effective strategies to supervise, monitor and provide necessary support for the implementation of the curriculum at classroom level on a regular basis through lesson observation, monitoring overall planning and preparation of lessons, co-ordination of subject meetings to discuss ways of improving learner progress and instructional practices, workshops, seminars, mentoring and coaching. Subject advisors and circuit officials need to make regular school visits for supervision, monitoring and curriculum support. Professional development programmes and school-based activities need to be designed so as to ensure sustainability. For successful and effective curriculum implementation, professional development for teachers must be part of an ongoing process of quality improvement and not a once-off event.

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