


Crisis of decolonising education: Curriculum implementation in Limpopo Province of South Africa

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There is a consensus amongst social scientists and public administration practitioners about the importance of decolonising the education system in Africa and South Africa. Decolonising the education system is viewed as a catalyst to create human capital that will promote economic development to end the scourge of poverty. This study was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) as a tool of decolonising from 2014 to 2016. This is a qualitative and descriptive study based on literature, and key informant interviews (KIIs) were used to gather data. This study has, however, found that implementation of CAPS in Limpopo Province is in a state of crisis. While there are many factors that contribute to this crisis, non-delivery of textbooks to schools remains a crucial factor. Civil society and media have been found to be key in playing oversight role in forcing the state to be accountable by taking it to court to deliver textbooks. However, this study recommends that Vhembe district should be used as a model for the province for effective implementation of CAPS.

Introduction

Since the fall of apartheid in South Africa in 1994, the country has implemented a series of curriculum changes in pursuit of improving the education system from the ashes of Bantu Education that was designed for the black majority of South Africa. However, curriculum changes are failing to improve the performance of learners. According to Jansen cited in Mbeki (2011:100), the education system does not show any improvement when compared with the countries of Southern African Development Community (SADC) or Southern African region. The dismal performance of the South African education system does not yield a return on investment when compared with the massive financial investment in its education system (Jansen cited in Mbeki (2011:100). South Africans use the performance of Grade 12 students on the basis of final Grade 12 examinations which are written at the end of every year (Jansen cited in Mbeki 2011:100). This is not only unique to South Africa. A study in India also revealed that results that a student achieves in Grade 12 are more important than the quality of education (Central Advisory Board of Education 2005:12). Grade 12 results are announced in January by the Minister of Basic Education and Members of Provincial Executive Councils (MECs). This, therefore, means that in South Africa, the focus of the education system is the secondary phase, particularly Grade 12. It is a surprise that even when there is a massive financial investment, the education system does not show any improvement. Mason and Todd (2005:4) are of the view that the democratic government that was voted into power after the fall of apartheid inherited the rigid and dysfunctional education system which laid a foundation that was not conducive to learning and teaching in schools as the infrastructure and resources were non-existent. This eroded learning and teaching. The type of education inherited was offered through the Bantu Education system and the curriculum prevented black people from acquiring skills necessary for preparing them for work (Gumede 2012:178). The same education system also created dependency of black people on white people (Tornquist 1999:64), and it is evident even today as creativity is non-existent irrespective of the introduction of a series of curriculum changes in South Africa.

Rodney (2012:3) posits that Bantu Education was offered to perpetuate underdevelopment that runs parallel to development theory which he postulates as a many-sided process that mainly takes place at the level of an individual who matters much in terms of developing the society through education. The aim of the colonial education system which was escalated by the apartheid system was not meant to suit the colonised but the colonisers' interests of creating and maintaining slave and master relations – not serving the society (Rodney 2012:238). This type of education system was used to hold the colonised people in its grip and for squeezing their brain in all forms and content and even destroying their identity (Fanon 1961:169). After the collapse of the colonial empire in Africa and other countries outside Africa in the 1960s, many scholars developed a

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theory known as 'decolonisation' in pursuit of moving away from the economic, cultural and political models of colonial and subsequent apartheid grand theories and steering Africa towards the goal of development. To quote Lumumba in his inaugural speech as elected Prime Minister of Congo in 1961:

History will one day have its day, but it will not be the history that is taught in Brussels, Paris, Washington or at the United Nations, the history which will be taught in the countries freed from imperialism and its puppets. Africa will write its own history, and to the north and south of the Sahara, it will be a glorious and dignified history. (Patrice Lumumba in New Africa 2002:22)

Rodney (2012) contends that Africa should develop its own model of development and not follow the one designed by Europeans. According to him, decolonisation should lead to development which takes place at the level of the individual and the social groups because these are crucial for the development of a society (Rodney 2012). The call for decolonising the curriculum redesign in content and methods has found expression today in South Africa's students and learners. Decolonising would lead to the destruction of the education system which created the environment of dependency of the colonised people of the world which the capitalist system of education sought to inculcate for its own purposes of retaining them as underdeveloped (Fanon 1961). Wa Thiong'o in his book, *Decolonizing the Mind*, is of the view that decolonising would not come cheap (Wa Thiong'o 1981:3). Prime Minister Lumumba after his inaugural speech in which he told that he would use Congo to decolonise Africa was assassinated in his first month of inauguration. Wa Thiong'o (1981) brings forth the dimension that colonial education hinged on languages of the oppressor, namely English and, in the case of South Africa, Afrikaans, which was enforced against black languages. Colonial education destroyed and undervalued the culture, art, dance forms, religion, history, geography, education, orature and literature of the colonised and involved the conscious imposition of the colonial language over that of the colonised. The result of this was that through the influence of the language, the language of the African foreign education, the language of the books read and the language of conceptualisation all these took the form of a foreign language (Wa Thiong'o 1981:16–17). This meant that there was a need to decolonise the language as language became the barrier to learning because language is part of the broader culture and culture is part of history (Wa Thiong'o 1981:15). Therefore, in order to achieve meaningful learning in our schools, total decolonising should take place in all aspects of life from curriculum to language (Foley n.d.). However, this view is opposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO 2014) which demands that curriculums which do not prepare citizens for economic development should be redesigned in content and methods in order to meet the aims of the challenges of the 21st century. South Africa moved from Curriculum 2005 (C2005) to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which had been implemented in 2014, 2015 and 2016. This study discusses Curriculum 2005; National Curriculum Statement

(NCS) and National CAPS. But the 3 years which are the focus of this study (2014, 2015 and 2016) are limited to the period of the implementation of CAPS curriculum since it was implemented in 2014 for the first time.

Research objectives

- To investigate the effectiveness of the implementation of CAPS in Limpopo Province
- To investigate factors that hinder effective implementation of CAPS in Limpopo Province
- To propose recommendations for effective implementation of CAPS in Limpopo Province

Research questions

- Is the implementation of CAPS effective in Limpopo Province?
- What are the factors that hinder effective implementation of CAPS in Limpopo Province?
- What are the recommendations for effective implementation of CAPS in Limpopo Province?

Decolonisation of curriculum in South Africa

Curriculum design and implementation is a global matter not only for South Africa. All societies from the time of Plato have been grappling with designing curriculum that reflected the philosophy of their countries. South Africa became independent in 1994 after the fall of apartheid. Amongst the policies the country sought to eradicate was education policy so that the new education system could reflect the new South African democratic philosophy. Education was prioritised because education has for long been considered the light of any society and also because development cannot be divorced from the influence of societies. In 1996, South Africa adopted a constitution which guaranteed that everyone in South Africa has the right to basic education and that the state should take steps to ensure that this was truly happening (Constitution of South Africa 1996:14).

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) 1994 of the African National Congress (ANC) provided for the establishment of an integrated system of education and training that provides equal opportunities to all South Africans irrespective of their race or colour. Section 33 (3.3.2) of the RDP guaranteed that education should be directed to the full development of the individual and community and must advance the Bill of Rights (ANC 1994:60). The Department of Education (DoE 1996 cited in Department of Education 2001:6) captured the provision of the RDP as follows:

Our vision is of a South Africa in which all people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities which will contribute towards improving the quality of life and build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. (p. 6)

Democratic South Africa inherited about 19 education departments that served every national and ethnic group in

South Africa. A single new curriculum was needed for all the population groups in democratic South Africa. A number of attempts were made to develop and implement one curriculum after the other in order to improve the education system.

Curriculum 2005 and outcomes-based education

According to Jansen (1999:145), former Minister of Education Professor Sibusiso Bengu in 1997 announced the adoption of the school curriculum which was based on outcomes-based education (OBE) in the name of Curriculum 2005. In a quest to break from the apartheid era education curriculum, South Africa introduced Curriculum 2005 which was based on OBE. Curriculum 2005 was a participatory product which involved 'technical committees' and wide consultation, assisted by international leaders in curriculum design. Curriculum 2005 was branded the most progressive education policy at a global arena. Bantu Education curriculum that determined and implemented for black education emphasised rote-learning where learners were expected to regurgitate subject matter during tests and examination. Curriculum 2005 was implemented to decolonise the apartheid curriculum of education. The objective of Curriculum 2005 was to make education learner-centred. Learner-centredness ensured that learners were not confined to examinations but applied the knowledge acquired. Both learners and teachers were participatory in the teaching-learning process. It could not achieve the broader aim of transforming the apartheid education system which comprised 19 curriculum education systems for each ethnic group. Curriculum 2005 with OBE had instead failed to transform the curriculum because of the inequalities that existed between schools as only well-resourced schools were capable of performing better in its implementation (Jansen 1999:179). De Waal (2004:73) in his study found that classes were too crowded in disadvantaged schools to allow for one-to-one interaction between the teachers and the learners. There was a need to transform it so that it could meet those aims and prepare children for social, economic and cultural life. It was amended and amendments resulted in the NCS. There was a need for the creation of a national curriculum framework that would bring together, as Lawton describes, 'those aspects of our culture' (Lawton 1978). According to Chisholm (2005), OBE was fashioned in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Canada and – in limited circles – in the United States.

National curriculum statements 2002

The introduction of NCSs 2002 was a departure from Curriculum 2005 because the latter failed to deliver in spite of the government maintaining that it had been recently reformed. Curriculum 2005 lacked alignment of curriculum and assessment policies. It was difficult to meet deadlines because of the pressure put on teachers to involve learners in learning and teaching. The time allocated could not afford teachers opportunities to do follow-ups on the work learners were supposed to complete. It was then decided to make

policy review which resulted in a set of NCSs. In terms of NCS assessment, standards are prepared for each grade level, in each outcome.

Curriculum and assessment policy statement

A National CAPS is a single, comprehensive and concise policy document that replaced all the subjects listed in the NCS Grades R-12. CAPS came into being as a response to a host of concerns raised by stakeholders in education regarding, amongst others, the administrative burden and lack of clarity in what has to be taught, how it is to be assessed and the general approach to the OBE. Essentially, CAPS is the strengthening of the NCS and it clearly specifies what should be taught and which topics should be covered per subject, grade and quarter of the school calendar year. Du Plessis and Marais (2015) view CAPS as a modification of what to teach and how to teach. Seemingly it was adopted as a result of the failure of NCS when the Minister of Basic Education ordered its review in 2011. The review resulted in amendments which led to the introduction of CAPS. Du Plessis and Marais (2015) are of the view that South Africa still faces serious difficulties with the implementation of CAPS. But their study offers hope in that CAPS provided guidance to teachers on its planning and implementation from topics to assessments with the problem that it does not offer room for creativity to teachers (Du Plessis & Marais 2015:12).

Creativity by teachers is crucial for effective implementation of a curriculum as they have to assist learners to becoming successful in learning by manipulating and exploiting the learning environment to avoid rote-learning. Consistent with this, Jerome Bruner in Clark (2010) sees the role of the teacher as that of translating information in a format understandable and in sync with the appropriate stage of the child in a classroom. The teacher should be able to create an enabling environment conducive to discovering of new ideas by learners (Bruner in Clark 2010). Creativity on the part of the teacher creates a learning environment where both the teachers and the learners are able to engage in a teaching or learning dialogue necessary for effective learning and also expanding their thinking horizon that leads to sharing of learning amongst learners themselves (Bruner in Clark 2010). The results of this interaction will no doubt keep learners and teachers active, resulting in an excellent teaching-learning environment, wherein learning can be fun. Effective curriculum implementation could be negatively affected by late or no delivery of textbooks to schools.

Bongani Nkosi in Mail and Guardian (2014) reported that some schools in Limpopo did not receive textbooks before sitting for their examinations in 2014 and that the department had further missed out on discounts for the 2015 books. This suggests that learners would have no books in the 2015 academic year. However, the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga during the time of announcing 2016 Grade 12 results to the public in January 2017 blamed the policy of progressing (pushing learners who have failed Grade 11 to

Grade 12) as the hurdle to effective implementation of CAPS (Motshekga 2017). But how will learners pass normally if their schools are not provided with textbooks? The study by Musitha and Tshibalo (2016:1) blamed lack of transformation in the leadership on both political and policy making fronts to implement the desires of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Progressing becomes a tool to mitigate failure to deliver textbooks by the DBE while according to the minister progressing means addressing 'quality and efficiency' in education. But psychologists such as Bruner do not concur with the argument that failure is the result of the progressing process. Bruner (1960) offers an interesting hypothesis where he says:

We begin with hypothesis that any subject can be taught in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development. (p. 3)

Bruner argues that progressing learners does not lead to failure as long as teachers are prepared to go back to the basics. He presents a theory of spiral learning where he shows that subject matter should be taught in such a way that learners should grasp any subject matter presented to them as long as the teacher pays an active role in making the subject matter simple to the learner. Hoadley in Mail and Guardian (2015) also argues that progressing of learners from Grade 11 to 12 should be done because the quality of teaching and learning is poor in South Africa. Progressing should be done in anticipation of allowing learners to 'acquire at least some new skills' (Hoadley in Mail and Guardian 2015). Like Bruner, Ursula shows that the problems at Grade 12 start at the foundation phase because that is where everything starts in terms of improving quality of teaching and learning. It should be noted that CAPS has been implemented from the academic year 2014–2016. This article focuses on the 3 years of the implementation of CAPS to evaluate its effectiveness as a South African curriculum credited with the decolonising process.

Theoretical framework

Before we discuss the theoretical framework of this study, a brief conceptual framework of decolonisation as discussed by scholars is provided. The authors embrace this conceptual framework as the study is premised around it. Decolonisation is a variable around which this study revolves. According to Rodney (2012), it refers to the dismantling of the European model of development to enable Africa to design its own model that will benefit it. Fanon (1961) views it as the destruction of the education system which created the environment of dependency of the colonised people of the world which the capitalist system of education sought to inculcate for its own purposes of retaining them as underdeveloped. In Corroborating Fanon, Wa Thiong'o (1981:15) describes decolonisation as the creation of a new society based on its values. UNESCO (2014) demands that curriculum which does not prepare citizens for economic development should be redesigned in content and methods in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Colonialism manifests itself in the type and methodology of its transmission to learners and so the new curriculum should also address language (Wa Thiong'o 1981:16–17).

Decolonisation of the education system in Africa and South Africa in particular is more relevant than at any time particularly as the continent struggles to reclaim its lost glory amongst the global family to promote economic development and end poverty. Africa continues to fight to break the shackles of colonial apartheid and emancipate its people. In order to achieve all this, the continent needs to have an education that is free of the remnants of colonial apartheid. Rodney (2012) posits that Europe underdeveloped Africa. He goes on to argue that European colonialism laid the foundation of neocolonialism in Africa by creating Africa's economy dependent on the international capitalist system. This study is underpinned by the theory of Walter Rodney that Europe had underdeveloped Africa. The dependency syndrome posited by Rodney which created neocolonialism still reigns high on the education system of Africa and South Africa in particular, and this article discusses the education system in South Africa as being heavily influenced by colonial remnants. This article contends that the South African education curriculum will not produce the human capital that will be able to promote economic development that undermines poverty and also emancipates its citizens. Wa Thiong'o (1981) posits that what is needed is that Africa should decolonise its mind and shed the mentality of doing things the same way colonialists did. He set an example when he stopped writing his novels in English and adopted his mother language Gikuyu spoken in Kenya. According to Wa Thiong'o (1981), the language of the education alienates the students who should use it with the disjuncture that goes with dichotomy of language and culture. This article therefore contends that this type of education based on dichotomy cannot be expected to promote development and Rodney correctly posits that it merely promotes underdevelopment. According to Rodney (2012:3), development in human society is characterised by many-sided processes. At the level of an individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Individuals come together in a society and form social groups in order to manipulate the environment for survival (Rodney 2012:3). This article contends that manipulation of the environment as posited by Rodney depends on the quality of education curriculum planned for the nation. The type of education curriculum designed at the moment is not able to develop the requisite skills needed to match any of the former colonising countries. The reason for this as a result is that the South African education system is still dependent on neocolonialism. The example to this assertion is that of the language of instruction in the classroom and also the language used in the textbooks used at schools which is English for all Africans whose mother tongue is ignored in the classroom. Wa Thiong'o (1981) argues that the education based on colonialism is alien to the language which carries with it culture. South African constitution of 1996 has granted all the 11 languages equal status but this is not translated in school curriculum. The failure to implement languages on an equal basis in the classroom to enable students to learn effectively suggests that indeed South African education is still connected with the colonial education provided to Africans whose sole aim was

to produce Africans who were expected to serve the colonial system and subscribe to its values (Rodney 2012). In his own words Rodney (2012) says:

Education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure. . . . The most crucial aspect of pre-colonial African education was its relevance to Africans in sharp contrast with that which was later introduced by colonialism. . . . The main purpose of colonial school system was to train Africans to participate in the domination and exploitation of the continent as a whole. . . . Colonial education was education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment. (p. 263)

In discussing the role of colonial education, Rodney (2012:263) shows that the roots of neocolonialism lie in colonialism.

Rodney (2012:263) further argues that colonial education corrupted the thinking and sensibilities of the African people as it filled them with abnormal complexes which de-Africanised and alienated them from the needs of their environment. Its education system has thus dispossessed and put out of the control of the African intellectual the necessary forces for directing the life and development of the society. In *Decolonizing the Mind*, Wa Thiong'o (1981) posits that the lack of congruency between colonial education and Africa's reality created people abstracted from their reality. Wa Thiong'o (1981) argues that writing in foreign languages perpetuates neocolonialism. This study therefore contends that the inability of the current educational curriculum in South Africa creates the crises of decolonisation within the curriculum education system. This is evident from the results of Grade 12 examinations in South Africa in the 3-year circle of the introduction of CAPS.

Methodology

Scope of the study

This study is limited to CAPS which was implemented in South Africa to decolonise curriculum education system in South Africa after the failure or amendments to the previous two, namely Curriculum 2005 with its pillar of OBE and NCS. The study will only be limited to the period of the first implementation of CAPS, namely 2014–2016, at Grade 12. Performance of Grade 12 learners in the 3-year examination period will be analysed from the national level to the provinces.

Research design

Research design is viewed as the road map that the researcher decides to follow when he or she carries out a study. It is aimed at responding to the research questions as validly, accurately, objectively and economically as possible (Kumar 2014:122). Thyer (1993:94) defines it as more of a blue print or detailed plan for finalising a study and also operationalising the variables to guide the study. Of particular importance, it is necessary to select the study sample, collect data and analyse the results of the study. Kumar (2014:123) illustrates two functions of design, namely the identification and development of procedures and logistical arrangements

required for carrying out the study and also the emphasis of the quality in these procedures to ensure validity, objectivity and accuracy. There are two main research designs, namely qualitative design and quantitative design (Kumar 2014:131). According to Wellman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:6), quantitative design is underlined by a philosophical approach which is known as logical positivism where the emphasis is on objectivity that exists independent of the respondents. This design is based on natural-scientific method in human behavioural research. Qualitative design aims at obtaining information freely from respondents in an open way and the information is analysed and could yield a number of interpretations (Kumar 2014:6). This is a qualitative and descriptive study based on literature and respondents who are invited in SABC Phalaphala FM to send their response to a question posed to them by SABC broadcaster: What do you think were the reasons for high failure rate in 2016 matriculation examination? They responded through short message service (SMS). The question was asked on Monday, 09 January 2017, and the responses were awaited until Friday, 13 January 2017.

Data collection

This study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through responses from 50 respondents from SABC's Phalaphala FM. Secondary data were collected through literature review. These data were available in different platforms such as books, published articles and newspapers.

Data analysis

When the respondents called in to give their responses, the researcher recorded every response on a note book. The collected data from responses were grouped according to classification of responses and analysed, and graphs were created to provide results.

Presentation of results

Figure 1 presents the national performance percentages of Grade 12 results in the 3-year period, namely 2014, 2015 and 2016, of the implementation of CAPS. The purpose is to assess the trend of performance in the examination results.

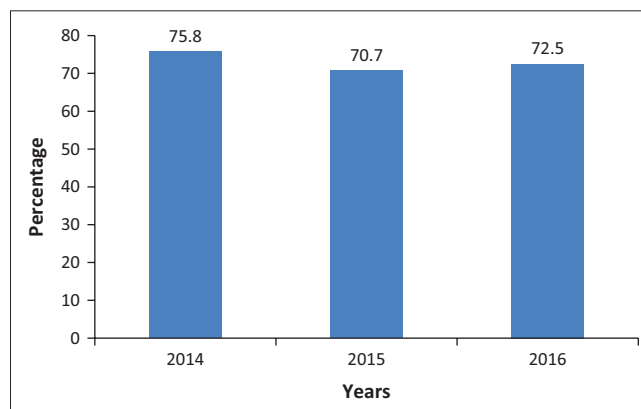


FIGURE 1: Three Year National Performance 2014–2016.

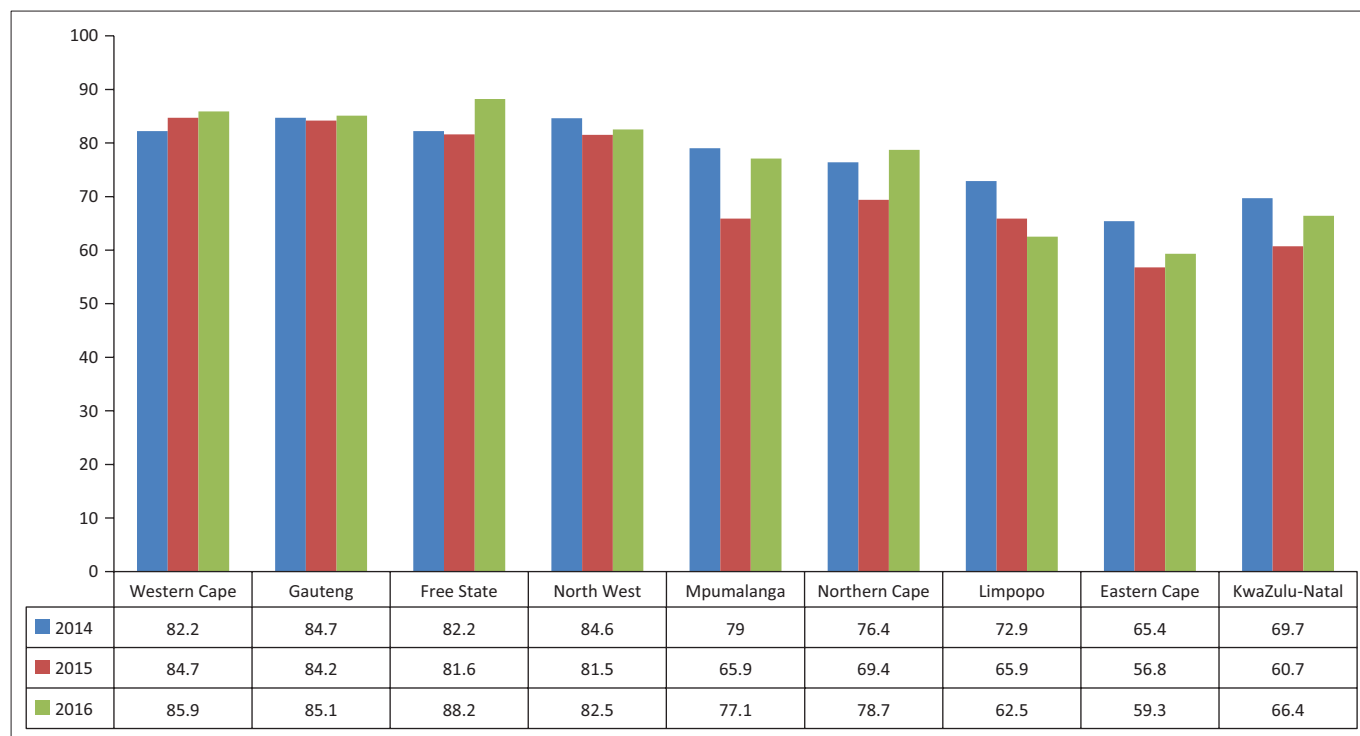


FIGURE 2: Three year performance of provinces.

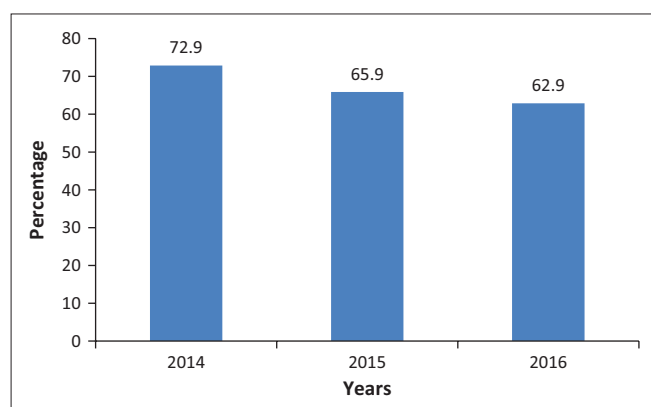


FIGURE 3: Matric results in Limpopo, 3-year performance.

Figure 2 presents the comparison of performance percentages of Grade 12 examination results of the nine provinces. The purpose is to assess the performance of provinces in the 3 years of the implementation of CAPS.

Figure 3 shows the performance percentage of Grade 12 examination results of Limpopo Province in the 3 years of implementation of CAPS.

Figure 4 gives a comparison of the five districts of education in Limpopo. The purpose is to provide best practices of the implementation of CAPS that can be learnt from one of the best performing districts in the province.

Discussion

Figure 1 shows the national results of Grade 12 of the 3-year examination implementation of CAPS which show inconsistencies from 2014 to 2016. In 2014, the results were

75.8% of the implementation of CAPS. In the subsequent years, the results declined instead of building on the 75.8% of 2014. In 2015, the results declined to just 70.7%. This is a decline by 5.1%. Year 3 of the implementation of CAPS in 2016 shows a slight increase of 1.8%. The inconsistencies of the percentage performance which shows a consistent decline could be because of lack of thorough planning by the education authorities and the teachers. This could also suggest lack of monitoring and evaluation of the work in schools. But of particular importance, the question of late or non-delivery of textbooks could be having a big impact, resulting in the undermining of the successful implementation of CAPS as Jansen (1999) has found in his study. Again, the question of progressing of learners who failed Grade 11 and were pushed to Grade 12 renders the results inauthentic, thus rendering decolonising of the curriculum questionable.

Figure 2 shows a 3-year cycle (2014–2016) of the implementation of CAPS in all the nine provinces of South Africa. Western Cape, Gauteng, Free State and North West are consistently the top four provinces while Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal are consistently the worst performing provinces. As the focus of this study is Limpopo, in 2014 the province recorded 72.9% and it was positioned at no. 7 as compared with other provinces. In 2015, it was jointly positioned at 6 with Mpumalanga with 65.9%. But in 2016, the province was positioned at 7 with 62.5%. Inferior performance can be the result of lack of resources since Limpopo suffered from late or non-delivery of textbooks as collaborated by Veriava (2013). Textbooks were delivered through court ruling in Limpopo. It should be clear that successful implementation of CAPS is dependent on the development and delivery of

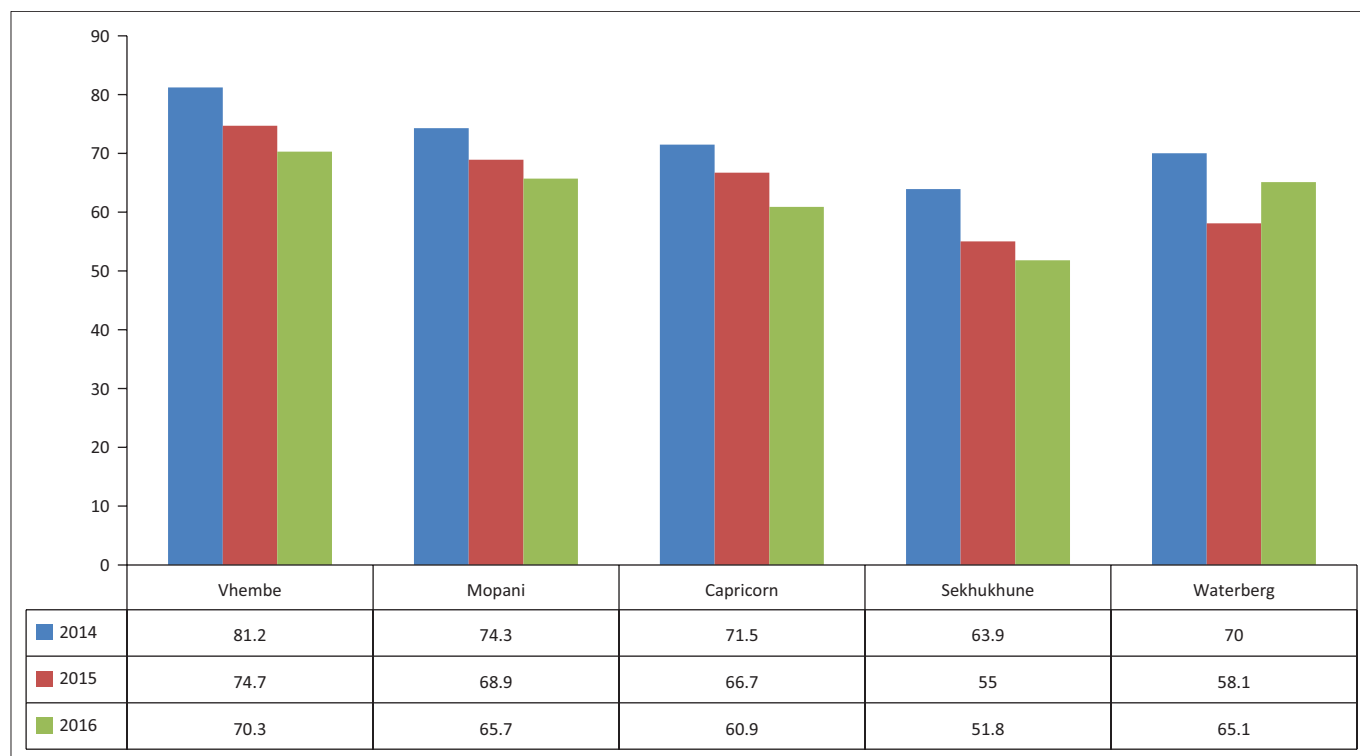


FIGURE 4: Districts performance in Limpopo Province, 3-year performance.

textbooks to enable teachers to deliver on their mandate of providing learning opportunities to learners (Veriava 2013).

Figure 3 shows the performance of Limpopo Province Grade 12 examination in the years 2014–2016. In the first year of the implementation of CAPS in 2014, the province recorded 72.9%. In 2015, it recorded 65.9% which is a decline of 7%. In 2016, the third year of the implementation of CAPS, the province recorded 62.9%. This is a further decline by 3%. This picture does not seem to show that the decline will be arrested anytime soon in Limpopo. The decline shows that implementation of CAPS is a big failure in this province. It is evident that late and non-delivery of textbooks is hampering the successful implementation of CAPS as indicated by the study by Jansen (1999) and Veriava (2013). Eventual delivery sometimes takes place in August when examinations are close. At this time, learners struggle to catch up with lost time. It is clear from Figure 3 that decolonising of the curriculum is a pipe dream in Limpopo. Bruner has argued that any child has the potential to be moulded into a creative and successful student only if the teacher is able to present the subject matter in accordance with the development stage of the learner.

Figure 4 shows the comparison of five Limpopo Districts' performance in the Grade 12 examinations in the 3 years of implementation of CAPS. The interest of assessing district performance is to see which districts are contributing to the dismal performance of the province. The district of Vhembe in 2014 recorded 81.2% followed by Mopani with 74.3%; Capricorn with 71.5%; Waterberg with 70%; and lastly Sekhukhune with 63.9%. In 2015, Vhembe recorded 74.7% followed by Mopani with 68.9%; Capricorn with 66.7%;

Waterberg with 58.1%; and lastly Sekhukhune with 55%. In 2016, it was the same trend as Vhembe recorded 70.3% followed by Mopani with 65.7%; Capricorn with 60.9; and Waterberg with 65.1%. Sekhukhune still took the last position. The statistics here show that all the districts except one have been on a declining trend since 2014. Only Waterberg showed improvement from 2015 where it recorded 58.1% but improved by 7% in 2016. From these statistics of performance, it can be inferred that CAPS is becoming a big challenge for implementation. Since these are the districts of Limpopo, this will suggest that late or non-delivery of textbooks is hampering the implementation of CAPS. It would also suggest that the department is not supporting the schools' cause. Sekhukhune is even worse because since the dawn of democracy all but three MECs have come from the dismally performing district of Sekhukhune. Those who did not come from Sekhukhune were three and they served a combined period not exceeding 5 years. The dismal failure could corroborate the view of the Minister of Basic Education who blamed ineffective implementation of curriculum to progressing learners who did not pass Grade 11. The failure rate shows that there is a poor base laid at the foundation phase and that it is clear that learners are not prepared for Grade 12 examination. The performance shows that teachers are not presenting spiral learning by teaching the subject matter in a way such that learners can grasp any subject matter presented to them, which in turn would lead to independent learning and confidence. It (the performance) corroborates the findings of the Musitha and Tshibalo study in 2016 who found that transformation fails where there is vacuum in leadership on both political and policy making levels to decolonise curriculum.

Conclusion

While this study focused on the implementation of CAPS in the province of Limpopo, Figure 1 has revealed that the implementation of CAPS is a disaster at the national level. There are inconsistencies in relation to results for the past 3 years. Instead of admitting the failure of the implementation of CAPS, as is typical of politicians, blame is levelled on progressing those who were pushed to Grade 12 after failing Grade 11. As for Limpopo Province, which is the focus of this study, it reveals that there is no effective implementation of CAPS in Limpopo Province. Figure 2 shows that Limpopo remains one of the worst performing provinces in the 3 years of the implementation of CAPS. There is a decline in the performance of students as shown by the Grade 12 examination results. Progressing of learners who failed Grade 11 and were promoted to Grade 12 has contributed to the poor performance in Grade 12 and results in poor implementation of CAPS. The major variable that negates effective implementation of CAPS is late or non-delivery of textbooks which are the source of knowledge for the teacher to facilitate learning. But this also means that teachers are not creative and innovative enough to devise other means to help and support learners. But this study has revealed the important role that stakeholders such as Section 27 can play in assisting the success of the effective implementation of CAPS as they continuously approached the courts to force Limpopo Department of Education to deliver textbooks to schools though they would only be delivered almost at the end of the year. Media has continued to be a useful watchdog as it raised awareness about the non-delivery of textbooks. CAPS can be a useful tool to decolonise education system in the whole country if teaching and learning resources can be supplied to schools by education authorities. Education department should allocate budget that is congruent to the schools in the country. Progressing of learners can benefit the learners if they are provided with favourable learning environment as they will be able to grasp and even bridge the gap of the class they have failed. But progressing should not be applied in a blanket way. Schools in Limpopo need more curriculum support as Figure 2 paints a bleak future for the province. However, Vhembe district can be used as a model for the whole province where best practices can be learnt and applied for the whole province. Improvement of results will positively impact the output of quality of education which will empower the individual and the social group to contribute to the development of the society as argued by Rodney (2012).

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Competing interests

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Authors' contributions

M.E.M. collected data through review of literature and Key Informant Interviews and developed the full draft article. M.A.M. designed the study and also offered general reading and made comments during the course of its development by the correspondent author. Both the authors assisted each other in responding to the review comments.

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