

The Role of School Managers in the Implementation of Continuous Assessment (CASS) in Mopani District

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Abstract

Over the past two decades there has been a proliferation of studies on continuous assessment (CASS) aimed at providing a deep understanding of its merits, and the emerging trends and challenges in CASS. It is clear from the body of literature that the enormous challenges working against CASS implementation override its importance. Some of the challenges enumerated in the literature encompass the teachers' lack of skills in test construction and administration, teachers' attitudes towards CASS approach, poor record keeping, unbearable workloads, large class sizes, and learner absenteeism. Focus group interviews were conducted with a group of principals, deputy principals and departmental heads. Findings show that to address these challenges a radical leadership and management approach is crucial to provide an effective system that provides for optimum utilisation of staff potential hence creating a positive school climate.

Keywords: Continuous Assessment, School management, instructional leadership, staff motivation, radical leadership, parent involvement

1. Introduction and Background

In the South African education system, the Continuous Assessment (CASS) policy was introduced a decade ago by the former Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal. This was a crucial paradigm shift which saw a transition from a norm referenced assessment to a criterion referenced assessment. The importance of this change in the South African assessment policy was internationally documented by a broad body of literature. The essence of continuous assessment is clearly captured by the department of education's *Subject Assessment Guidelines for Physical Sciences, grades 10 – 12 (General)* policy document which states that CASS, through informal daily assessment and the formal programme of assessment is used to:

- develop learners' knowledge, skills and values
- assess learners' strength and weaknesses
- provide additional support to learners
- revisit and revise certain sections of the curriculum and
- motivate and encourage learners (DoE, 2008:1).

The notion is engaged further by Nikto as cited in Adebowale & Alao (2008:4) when arguing that the merit of CASS is that it promotes frequent interaction between learners and teachers. It further enables the teachers to know the strength and weaknesses of learners to identify which learners need a review and remediation. Teacher -learner interactions are essential for learning since they provide an expanded opportunity for remedial programmes. Nikto (ibid) further notes that learners receive feedback from teachers based on the performance that allows them to focus on topics they have not yet grasped.

Despite the generally appreciated advantages of the new CASS policy, its implementation introduced South African schools to enormous challenges which demand that the Education Ministry realign and redefine the roles of school managers. Alausa (2003:3) identified challenges associated with the teacher such as lack of skills in test construction and administration, attitudes towards CASS approach, and record keeping. For successful implementation of CASS policy, Alausa (2003:3) argues that teachers need to give more tests that result in additional marking by the teachers. They are expected to constantly observe learners to see if they are progressing towards the set outcomes. All these could mean more work by the teachers, greater demands on time, and increased responsibility. In their paper

submitted to International Association for Education Assessment (IAEA) Conference in 2008, Kapambwe and Mulenga (2008:6 - 7) identified other challenges which are also common in Mopani District. These were larger class sizes, staffing, remediation and enrichment, pupil absenteeism, teaching and learning resources, teacher networking, monitoring and feedback.

This paper argues that effective school leadership and management can help improve the status of CASS implementation in Mopani District. Most of the challenges facing CASS implementation could be addressed from school leadership and management perspective as they require functions of quality control, learner management, staffing, parent management, staff motivation, conflict management, and so on. The ideal of banking on leadership and management skills of school managers to address the challenges associated with CASS implementation is supported by Myles Munroe (2008:xvi) who articulates “nothing happens without leadership, nothing changes without leadership, nothing develops without leadership. Nothing improves without leadership and nothing is corrected without leadership.

The responsibility of the teacher's leaders is to change things, make things happen, correct things and improve things. These leaders should not only set goals but should also be capable of communicating them effectively to teachers. Harris (2004:13) supports our argument by stating that teacher leaders help teachers to embrace goals and to understand the changes that are needed to strengthen teaching and learning and to work towards improvement. Grant's (2006:512) view supports Harris's (2004:13) assertion, since she states that teacher leadership is required to transform schools into professional learning communities (Grant, 2006:512). In the light of the foregoing, the implementation of CASS has become a crucial educational challenge in the 21st century that calls for school leadership to influence motivations and capacities of teachers, hence transforming schools into professional learning communities in which educators freely teach and learners freely learn. An effective school leadership understands how to transform educational practices and work collaboratively with teachers to achieve team goals and objectives. In citing Crews and Weakley, Normore (2004:2) contends, *“Show me a good school and I'll show you a good leader ... when you poke the inner workings of a successful school, you will find – without fail – a skillful leader who understands how to transform educational practice, not just transact educational business.*

It can be argued from this excerpt that good leaders will always birth good schools. To support this view point, Kruger and Van Deventer (2003: 67) state that effective education cannot be realised without leadership and management. This paper posits that leadership and management form an effective multidimensional approach to dealing with challenges impeding the implementation of CASS in Mopani District. For the purpose of this paper, the following section will focus on the traditional leadership and management roles that create a conducive atmosphere for the implementation of CASS in schools.

2. Conceptual Framework

The logic of school managers involved in the teaching-learning process has become, over the past 15 years, a fundamental part of the architecture of policies in South African education system. The success of every policy largely depends on how much the school managers are prepared to engage in two major roles; that of a school manager and that of a leader of effective teaching and learning. The school manager should become a leader of teaching and learning by setting goals, managing the curriculum activities, supervising, evaluating, assessing, and promoting a sound school climate. This is supported by Mason (2004:21), who states that an instructional leader provides curricular direction for the team inspires and energises the team. Mason (ibid) adds that the instructional leader motivates and mediates educational policy to the team, mentors, supports the team and monitors the process.

In managing instructional programmes, school managers should give guidance to teachers on aspects such as modes of assessment, validity, reliability and objectivity of examinations, marking of papers, administration of internal and external examinations.

3. Management of Parent Involvement as the Role of a School Manager

According to Lemmer and Squelch (1994:93), parent involvement is the participation of parents in a wide range of school-based and home-based activities to improve their children's education. It implies support given to the school which can take the form of cooperation, participation and partnership. The definition is shedding some light on the new partnership in education in which parents and educators are jointly responsible for the education of learners. Without the cooperation between the parent and the teacher, school policies such as CASS policy will fail and therefore learners would be sufficiently taught.

According to Lemmer and Squelch (1994: 93) the benefits of parent involvement include: the improvement of

school performance, reduction of the drop-out rate, a decrease in delinquency and a more positive attitude towards the school. Michigan State University online newsletter unfolds that when parents are involved, learners have higher grades, better test scores, higher graduation rates, better school attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, and fewer instances of violent behaviour (Michigan State University, 2002): *online from* <http://www.michigan.gov/documents>. Since the implementation can be impeded by factors such as learners' absenteeism and high learners' dropout rate, parent involvement can create a climate conducive for the implementation of the educational policies.

4. The Role of a School Manager in the Management of Learners

The implementation of continuous assessment in schools requires a healthy and positive school climate where teachers are free to teach and learners are free to learn. This healthy and conducive environment with positive discipline remains the duty and responsibility of the school and its stakeholders. However, over the past years, schools have been bombarded with numerous cases of unacceptable learner conduct. The Western Cape Department of Education reports that

"Learner behaviour problems have, for years, been a major concern for educators, administrators and parents."
(WCDoE, 2007: 2).

Learners' behavioural problem such as absenteeism can negatively impact on the smooth implementation of CASS in the Further Education and Training Band since there are many tasks or activities to be administered to learners on daily basis. Therefore, the school manager's duties and responsibilities should involve ensuring that all personnel, parents and learners are aware of the policies regarding positive learner behaviour and ensuring that policy regarding disciplinary measures is implemented (WCDoE, 2007:3). Furthermore, the school managers must ensure that learner behaviour and learner issues are discussed regularly during staff meeting and parents' meetings.

The maintenance of discipline in schools does not happen by chance. According to section 8 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, this begins with the adoption of the school's code of conduct. The aim of school's code of conduct is to establish a disciplined and purposeful environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place. Some of the requirements given in A Practical Guide to Understanding and Managing Learner Behaviour with the School Context released by the Western Cape Department of Education is that (1) the school's code of conduct must be drawn up against the background of the school's ethics and take into consideration the particular character of the school and the values and culture of learners and the community, (2) it must be aimed at creating a disciplined and goal-orientated school environment within which quality education can take place, and it must be dynamic and flexible (WCDoE, 2007: 11).

The implementation of CASS requires a healthy and sound environment where the conduct of learners is well regulated through the code of conduct and disciplinary policies. We therefore, maintain that learners who miss assessment tasks without a genuine reason can be dealt with fairly and consistently by school managers when there is a school code of conduct and disciplinary policies which are communicated to the learners through their representatives.

5. The Motivation Role of School Managers

Motivation is usually defined as an internal state that arouses, directs, and maintains behaviour (Wolfolk, 2007: 372). This definition reveals three components of motivation: *arousing human behaviour, directing human behaviour, and maintaining human behaviour*. It is clear from the definition that the ultimate goal of motivation is to keep teachers working towards the attainment of goals or outcomes by energising, directing and maintaining their behaviour. Mason (2004:41), points out that motivation should be understood as a management strategy to persuade people to change, to release staff's trapped potential, to bring out the best in people, to improve teaching and learning and to satisfy a psychological need in an individual for the benefit of both the individual and the school.

Our contention is that many unpleasant problems of CASS implementation developed as a result of the low motivation levels of teachers in schools. The low motivation levels might have been as a result of the interplay of factors mentioned early in this study such as unbearable workloads, class sizes, lack of parent involvement and learners' behavioural problems. Motivation is a natural antidote to low staff morale and is capable of transforming any ineffective organisation into an effective one. According to Kyprianou as cited in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:135) there are three reasons why motivated staff make an organisation more effective:

- Motivated employees are always looking for better ways of doing their job and will usually find them.
- Motivated workers are usually concerned about quality.
- Highly motivated workers are more productive than apathetic ones

Finally, we perceive that the country has failed to equip school managers with adequate knowledge on the theories and practices of staff motivation. Consequently, most school managers fail to encourage their subordinates to work harder, faster, more efficiently and with greater enthusiasm. CASS can be successfully implemented if school managers become aware of basic human needs and motivation theories and processes.

6. The Monitoring and Supporting Role of School Managers

The new assessment policy provides the opportunity for teachers to use different methods and learner-centred techniques. Teachers who are not familiar with these methods will not function until they are trained and have received follow-up support in order to implement these methods successfully. School managers should provide in-school support with regard to the implementation of the new assessment policy. Mason (2004:47-48) posits that the School Management Team (SMT) should, among other things, monitor and support:

- Content teaching to ensure that the content for teaching and learning is in line with the assessment standards
- Integration in planning and presentation to ensure that integration of assessment standards and various methods of teaching are done properly.
- Learning outcomes and assessment standards to ensure that learning outcomes and assessment standards are correctly arranged to allow progression.
- Learner-centred and learner-paced teaching to ensure that teaching pace is determined by learner's learning progress.
- CASS to ensure that assessment is not done once off, like in the form of examination, but it takes place on a continuous basis.

Monitoring and support remains a critical issue in ensuring that the implementation of CASS is successful. This is simply because of two reasons: (a) there is no adequate training for the wide array of assessment strategies used by teachers, which may lead to them using wrong assessment strategies, and (b) teachers need to be taught how to select, modify and develop assessment tasks (IAEA, 2006:4). School managers' constant monitoring and support will ensure that assessment standards are not compromised and an increase in the level of learners' achievement is realised. In this connotation, IAEA's (2006:12) paper suggests that monitoring on the actual implementation of assessment process should cover the following aspects: ensure compliance with policy, ensure assessment tasks are designed in accordance with the subject guideline, ensure assessment tasks are administered in accordance with the principles of good assessment, ensure assessment evidence is marked according to the marking guidelines, and marks are totaled and recorded as per policy. In our opinion, monitoring and support systems seem to be lacking in most schools in Mopani District, teachers who do not perform are condemned in management meetings instead of being supported.

7. Research Problem and Aims of the Research

The research problem addressed in this study is that as a result of lack of training, CASS is not effectively implemented in the Mopani District due to management problems and attitudes of teachers towards it. Emanating from the above background, the research problem was encapsulated by means of the following research questions:

- What is the role of school managers in addressing challenges associated with the implementation of CAAS in the Further Education and Training band in Mopani District.
- Another question is, to what degree do school managers engage in instructional leadership, management of parent involvement, staff motivation, learners' management, monitoring and support?

In line with the central questions, the guiding research sub-questions were:

- What are the requirements for the effective implementation of CASS in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band?
- What are the perceptions of the school managers on the CASS policy?
- What are the problems working against the proper implementation of CASS?
- Which roles do school managers play in the implementation of CASS? What training should be provided to the school managers?

In order to ensure that more data were collected from the participants, there was probing until the interviewers

were satisfied with the quality of information.

8. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The general aim of this research was to establish the role of school managers when addressing challenges associated with the implementation of CASS in the Further Education and Training band in Mopani District. The objectives were to (a) identify the problems working against proper implementation of CASS, (b) determine the perception of school managers on the CASS policy, and (c) suggest a training program that should be provided to the school managers.

9. Methodology

The larger study by Ramalepe (2013) from which this article was drawn employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches which culminated into a mixed method approach with a concurrent strategy of enquiry. In this article a focus group consisting of 13 school managers at different levels were interviewed using probing questions, where necessary, for clarity. The findings in this paper therefore emanate from extensive interviews with the school principals, deputy principals and heads of departments in the Mopani District which is situated in the Limpopo province, a semi-rural area. We were interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions from this sample. Purposive sampling was used to select the information rich respondents, and a simple random sampling was employed to select the schools under study. The details of the sample used in the study appear on table 1 below.

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants

Participant status	Number	Percentage %
Post level status		
Principal	5	38.5%
Deputy Principal	3	23.0%
Heads of Department	5	38.5%
Age status		
26 – 35		
36 – 45	1	7.7%
46 – 55	10	76.9%
55+	2	15.4%
Gender status		
Female	6	46.2%
Male	7	53.8%
School Locality status		
Township	1	7.7%
Town	1	7.7%
Village	10	76.9%
Farm	1	7.7%

A tape recorder was used to capture the responses from the participants and the tapes were later transcribed before being analysed. Once the data was sorted and typed, we read and reread the texts to try and understand the data. Once the data were typed and sorted, a hard copy was printed as the data were saved in a computer as a Microsoft Word document. Inductive coding was used in this study. Data were divided into topics or categories in order to easily work with it. Related codes were then organised and combined into themes or categories. After the categories were established and data labeled, the data were grouped into categories through the process of cutting and sorting.

10. Research Findings

The following themes emerged from the data obtained from interviews and the actual words by the participants have been typed in italics:

10.1 School managers' general perception of the CASS

The findings in this study precisely delineate that the introduction of CASS in schools was perceived by most school managers as a major drawback of the education system in South Africa. When asked whether the introduction of criteria-referenced assessment makes learners to learn better compared to the traditional norm-referenced assessment, 10 out of 13 school managers stated that the criteria-referenced assessment had lowered the standard of education in the country. Some of the reasons advanced for their perception encompassed a wide range of challenges or problems, for instance that CASS increases teachers' workload, CASS does not adequately prepare learners for the future, CASS work given to learners is minimal, and CASS requires expensive resources such as computers and internet. The following responses testify to this:

"No, I wouldn't say it helps, there are some hiccups there and there wherein learners do not read, but in a traditional way of testing learners most of the learners could read but if you check now most learners cannot read and cannot even write. So those are the challenges we are facing in the new curriculum."

The opinions of school managers with regard to CASS could be a possible explanation for the status of its implementation in the district. The school managers' negative attitude towards the criteria-referenced assessment could further explain how complex the problem of CASS is, as it demands a top-down approach. The top-down approach means that the department should invest on developing favourable attitudes in school managers before educators are called to duty.

10.2 CASS training for school managers

Twelve school managers interviewed indicated that they had not received adequate training in CASS. The following response affirmed that school managers had been operating the system without proper or adequate CASS training:

"Ah, training it depends on what you mean by training. Ah, you see sometimes I can sit with you for ten minutes or so giving me information on something you may think that you trained me, but I think the training we received is not I can't call it proper training. Yes, training has been received but you find that eh the training we receive is a one day training that is dominated by lot of talking and lot of other things not concentrating on the CASS itself. But at the end of the day, there is less we benefit from such kind of training. And I think the training is not enough, so to say."

Probing into a few responses by school managers, we enquired how they implemented CASS if not sufficiently trained, the following response came out from one of the participants:

"The implementation is according to a teacher's understanding, well I do implement and do pursue the line that I think is right more especial in my department where in which I, ah draw the lines along which I preferred my people in my department to work along. But really it is up to individual teachers even though we do meet on the departmental meeting we discuss on how best we can implement, actually we always come up with different ideas, so as such I can't say there is a specific way we are pursuing."

From the data it emerged that the department of education had overlooked the aspect of training prior to the introduction of the new assessment policy. The findings also revealed that minimal training which was offered came as one or two day workshops, which means that information was just cascaded on the school managers to absorb. This led to a myriad of frustration for the school managers as they tried to figure out ways to deal with the plethora of assessment policies and guidelines handed down to them to interpret and implement. In trying to implement CASS, monitor and support teachers, the school managers rely on their own understanding of the policy documents. The unfolding data analysis in this theme further revealed that even when training was offered, the majority of school managers were dissatisfied with the competency levels of the facilitators. The following response affirmed to this:

"Ah, you see we have a problem in Limpopo province with regard to assessment or with regard to NCS as a whole. The facilitators or those who were taken to training by the department of education, they are also incompetent to deal with the whole work of the NCS, and as such it remains a problem for the teacher and the very same subject heads or the subject advisors, because at times teachers pose questions to their subject heads and the subject heads will refer those questions to subject advisors, but subject advisors will fail to give answers to those questions,..."

When one school principal was asked how she implemented CASS in her school and if training was insufficient,

she said *"It is a policy, a national one, so even if we have not received effective training we must implement CASS."* This striking revelation could mean that what makes school managers forge through the challenges is out of fear for accountability rather than their understanding of the policy. It could be argued that lack of CASS training directly affected the implementation of CASS.

10.3 Management functions or duties to support the implementation of CASS

The following four sub-categories were considered under this theme:

10.3.1 Management of parent involvement

Findings in this study delineated that the school managers at various levels had more or less similar concerns with regards to parent participation in their schools. Each manager interviewed acknowledged the importance of parents during the implementation of CASS, however, they all admitted that parental involvement was not satisfactory in their schools. One school principal indicated that he had been observing a decline of parent involvement in his school over the past years. The foregoing is illustrated in his comments:

"I am worried about the lack of involvement of parents. And over the years, I have seen it going down and down and down, and I say one thing because really is necessary to say, I have got Afrikaans kids in the school and I have got English speaking kids in the school, and to an extent you find that Afrikaans parents are more involved in school activities, attending parents evenings and whatever, that is something that we need to work hard in developing and addressing in the English speaking communities, really, you find that parent involvement is almost none."

What was revealed from the findings was that some of the impediments to parental involvement encompassed illiteracy, ignorance of parents, and unavailability of certain parents particularly those who worked in the farms. Another participant, the Head of Department said:

"If we are having problems with learners we do call the parents to school and discuss about the problem but we are having the problem of involving them in CASS because most of the parents are illiterate, they don't know what is CASS, if we show them this is what is needed, they don't have any idea. But about the discipline they get involved."

The findings further accentuated that school managers did not have a defined programme for parental involvement. In most schools the involvement of parents was haphazardly done. Most school managers acknowledged that they only invited parents to school when the school was experiencing disciplinary problems with learners or when they were called to collect quarterly progress reports. Another problem that emerged from the findings was that school managers preferred parents' meetings as a mode of communicating with parents. This is in stark contrast with the views shared during the literature review of this study by Lemmer and Squelch (1994: 93) that the benefits of parent involvement ensure that there is improvement of school performance, reduction of the drop-out rate, and a decrease in delinquency and a more positive attitude towards the school. Only one manager indicated that in addition to parents meetings, he used parent-teacher meetings, interviews or the school newsletter as tools to encourage parent involvement.

10.3.2 Support and motivation of teachers

From these qualitative data it emerged that subject meetings, departmental meetings, school-based, circuit-based and district-based workshops and discussions during staff meetings were the major vehicles school managers used to support teachers in their respective schools. It was also worthwhile to take cognizance of the fact that the findings also revealed that four of the five school principals interviewed viewed the support role as the responsibility of the heads of departments and curriculum advisors. Another striking revelation in the findings was that when the school managers were asked about the motivation levels of their subordinates, eleven of them indicated that the motivation level was low and only two seemed satisfied with their staff motivation levels. The two school managers who were quite satisfied with the motivation of their staff were attached to schools which were having good grade 12 results. One deputy principal said:

"The motivation of our teacher has escalated just because of our results which are better. So it is a big challenge because they are afraid to go back, so that's why the motivation is high."

It is apparent from these findings that the motivation levels of educators are dependent on the school's performance in the grade 12 results as one principal commented when the interviewers tried to probe on her responses to find out whether her staff was motivated. She said:

"At the moment no, in our school we only got 14% last year and I was one of the teachers teaching grade 12 then though I was not yet the principal."

The findings also revealed that novice teachers' motivational levels were low as compared to veterans who had been operating the CASS system for a very long time. Although this was the case, no school manager indicated whether his or her school had induction or mentoring programmes to take the new educators on board with regards to assessment. However, school managers believed that the motivation of staff could improve if conditions such as abnormal classes and lack of resources were attended to by the Department of Education as was earlier indicated by Nikto as cited in Adebowale and Alao (2008:4) when arguing that the merit of CASS is that it promotes frequent interaction between learners and teachers.

10.3.3 Learner management

It was evident from the school managers' responses that the new assessment policy was fraught with learners' disciplinary problems. It became apparent from the data collected that school managers were echoing common concerns that there was a high degree of learners' absenteeism in their schools. And this posed a serious challenge to teachers as the majority of learners missed assessment tasks, and most of the time without genuine reasons. It was also revealed that what made matters worse was that most of the formal assessment tasks taken by the learners were common for all schools in the circuit or district. And when a learner missed such a task the teacher was left without a choice but to give the learner the same task or develop another one. The school managers' responses also revealed that learners had developed this tendency of absenting themselves from school during assessment dates in order to get an unfair advantage of seeing the question paper before they could write. The challenge of giving learners another task was that it increased the workload of teachers. The following comment testifies to this:

"I think it is a tendency of learners to miss certain task, and then they know that they will be given chance to write and then in their own time because according to the policy in as far as CASS is concerned learners should not miss one or two assessment tasks, so they just do it deliberately knowing that they will be given another time to come and write. It is a challenge to us teachers because you have to mark ah the work that you have already marked. And then that time could be used for other things."

As to how they dealt with learners who missed assessment tasks without genuine reasons, the school managers indicated that they either called the parents or let them complete declaration forms acknowledging their failure to write a particular CASS task. One school principal said:

"In terms of the policy guidelines wherein if a learner misses tests they have to write in ah... they fill in the forms which are entitled failure to write a test, and then if the reasons are not genuine, then the learner will forfeit those marks on the said task."

Emerging from these data, school managers failed to make reference to South African Schools' Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 in dealing with learners who missed assessment tasks. It was clear that contradictions emerged when the school managers' responses were juxtaposed with SASA in terms of the stipulations of dealing with learner misconduct. Only one school principal made reference to the school's code of conduct which was communicated to the parents. The majority of school managers failed to indicate how the School Governing Body (SGB) was involved in disciplinary cases.

10.3.4 The monitoring of teachers

The findings with regard to monitoring revealed that the responses of school managers did not fairly resonate with contemporary literature. The responses revealed that 12 school managers did not present a clear monitoring system through which they ensured that teachers adhered to the assessment guidelines. Instead they mentioned the provision of policy documents, conducting workshops on CASS guidelines, and encouraging teachers to consult assessment guidelines when they teach and assess learners, class visiting and pre-administration moderation as the way of

monitoring teachers' practices. Only one school principal presented a clear and definite control or check system which is in place in his school, that ensures that his teachers adhered to the assessment guidelines when assessing learners. He first stated that *"Firstly, somebody once said, "In God we trust, on man we check"* And then he presented the two monitoring systems used in his school that ensure that educators don't deviate from the assessment guidelines as they conduct CASS in their classrooms. These comments illustrate how his monitoring system works:

"I receive every single teacher's file at least once a quarter, firstly the preparations, the books, all the assessment goes to the HOD, the HOD will take a sample of books, the preparation file, see all necessary documentation, minutes of subject meetings and all, must be handed in to the HOD, the HOD will then write the report, the last part of the report will be open for the comment by the principal. Then those files come to my office, I look at them in the afternoon or late at night, I go through them all, I sign the script of the children, I check on tests, I check on memos, I in fact go through the files, all of them. And then I sign them, I have a controlled sheet where one can open and see for the past ten years I have signed a particular teachers' files, the new ones and the old ones, there are people who have been attached to the school for longer periods, and then those reports are filed, one in the subject file in my office, one in the teacher's file. Then it is for the HOD, it is compulsory to discuss with the teacher, you know, the report that was written. This is one control mechanism".

The second control system encompassed announced and unannounced class visits and subject meetings. It is imperative to note that this school principal indicated that monitoring teacher's work included checking lesson plan preparations and facilitation of moderation. It is in this vein of argument that the emerging control systems from data collected is viewed as having potential to transforming school into organisations where school managers would be perfectly positioned to control the implementation of CASS in their schools by ensuring that teachers adhered to assessment guidelines. Mason (2004:41), points out as indicated during the literature review that motivation should be understood as a management strategy to persuade people to change, to release teachers' trapped potential, to bring out the best in people.

10.3.5 Resources provisioning as indispensable to the implementation of CASS

The findings in this study explain that the issue of human, financial and teaching resources is indispensable to the implementation of CASS in schools. This was essentially revealed when the school managers were asked as to whether they headed departments in their schools. Four out of five school principals indicated that they headed departments in addition to their principalship duties because of the shortage of HODs in their schools.

Another issue that emerged from the findings with respect to the resources was that some school principals were reluctant to provide educators with teaching resources. The following response by a deputy school principal reiterates this:

"So I think support, support is very important because other principals are not supporting their educators they just say come along with strategies, you see. If an educator might be asking for maybe vinegar to perform an experiment at the school the principal will simply say you have vinegar at home and the vinegar at home is suppose not to be used at the school."

Lack of human, financial and teaching resources poses a serious problem to school managers and impacts negatively on their roles in the implementation of CASS. Provision of financial and human resources is the collective responsibility of the school managers and this role will enable teachers to successfully implement CASS if performed.

11. Recommendations

In order to reassert the value of CASS in the district, challenges working against the implementation of CASS in the Further Education and Training band should be addressed and the role of school managers in the implementation process detailed and clarified in schools. To achieve this objective effectively, this section contains critical recommendations for interventions on the key issues that need to be addressed.

11.1 CASS training and aspects of the future training

Although this study does not suggest that training alone may provide absolute solutions or answers to all the challenges confronting the implementation of CASS in the district, it is seen as a chief cornerstone upon which CASS policy could be

established and effectively implemented. While CASS training might be expensive to roll out in the whole district, it must be considered against the risks and the costs of using ungreased machines which may ultimately destroy the entire system. The training programmes for school managers should be structured in such a way that they cover a wide spectrum of aspects and should be extended from being one or two day programme to a semester programme. The semester programme should be split into two distinct modules, one for the heads of departments and another for school principals and deputy principals. The components of HODs module should address issues such as policy guidelines, creation of positive climate, monitoring and support, while the components for the top management module should deal specifically with issues of human resource management such as staffing, motivation, and conflict management. Alternatively, arrangements could be made with the University of South Africa's Faculty of Education to introduce CASS module in their Advanced Certificate Programme for leadership management. It is important that this module becomes compulsory to all teachers enrolling for the Advance Certificate Programme.

In view of the findings in this study, it could be recommended that the UNISA CASS module suggested above encompasses all the aspects that emerged from the findings such as procedures in moderation, interrogation of different assessment policies and guidelines, recording and reporting procedures and new content. It could also be recommended that these aspects be included in the future district-level, cluster-level and school-level workshops. The training in these workshops ought to be done by competent and accredited companies and not by department officials who lack a deeper understanding and knowledge of CASS. Alternatively, the services of renowned experts may be secured to offer such trainings. In fact, training should be offered by trainers who are familiar with challenges confronting CASS implementation to empower school managers with practical knowledge and skill to ensure smooth implementation in the district schools. Another possible way of equipping school managers with necessary knowledge of CASS is for the district to make arrangements with any accredited training provider offering the Unit Standard 115753 (Conducting Outcomes-Based Assessment) to offer the school managers with a well aligned programme that would, address in depth, the different aspects of CASS.

12. Conclusion

In Mopani district, school managers are relatively untapped sources of the most sought after solution in addressing the challenges associated with the implementation of CASS. In a dispensation when the South African Department of Education is under mounting pressure to improve the quality of education, and when the NCS is under close public scrutiny, district managers should seek to overcome the status quo by using creative school managers more effectively in the management roles postulated in this study. Therefore, training in parent management, learner management, monitoring and support, staff motivation, conflict management, and instructional leadership is required for school managers in Mopani district to address challenges confronting the implementation of CASS. In addition, training should be provided to school managers, particularly school principals in the new management role of providing resources which will make learners learn better and educators facilitate learning and assess better.

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