

Chapter 1

Challenges Experienced by TVET Colleges in Producing Skilled Workforces: Implications for Continuous Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

The post-apartheid education policies were developed to eradicate inequality of learner performance and racial composition of schools and vocational colleges. Vocationalising education is a solution for skills gap. This chapter is based on the study that focused on vocational pedagogic and didactic practices, workshop material and equipment for practical training, work-integrated learning, and integration of theory and practice in vocational subjects. The methodology of collecting data were interviews and observations. The participants of the study were seven lecturers at three TVET colleges, who were selected purposefully. The empirical results from three TVET colleges investigated showed that vocational pedagogy and practical skills training is not responding to the needs of workplaces and leads to the high unemployment of youth. There are no practical activities at the colleges; hence, there is no integration of theory and practicals in vocational subjects. This study found that the curricula offered at the TVET colleges is irrelevant and requires urgent review in order to respond to the current workplace requirements.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The post-apartheid education policies were developed to eradicate inequality of learner performance and racial composition of schools and vocational colleges in South Africa. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provisioning by Provincial Education Departments as employers of educators and college lecturers inherited various levels and patterns of inequality in South Africa (Spaull, 2019). The role of national education (DBE and Higher education) is to develop education policies to continue improving education and training, particularly for the previously disadvantaged communities. The school education and vocational colleges are still experiencing poor teacher levels of content knowledge and pedagogy, and lecturers with no occupational skills competent which compromise the quality of education and skills development. Spaull (2019) argues that there is little gains on any teacher professional development. At school system the Provincial Education Departments are charged with implementing teacher professional development as well as monitoring and evaluation of the professional development of educators in order to improve learner achievement. Over the past 10 to 15 years there has been considerable job done by scholars to describe the perpetuating social and economic inequality caused by educational inequality (Van der Berg, Spaull, Wills, Gustafsson, & Kotzé, 2016) where learner performance still reflect historical patterns of race and privileges. Addressing inequalities in South Africa requires improving performance of learners from poor communities, by further improving continuous teacher professional development (CPD). Tailor (2019) contend that the challenge of reducing educational inequality amount to the challenge of improving the quality of teaching and learning at schools from poor communities.

Despite large budget for education towards addressing inequality of resources, inequality and inequity persist. According to Motala and Carel (2019) some of the causes for poor education are (1) differences in teacher qualifications, (2) inadequate funding for infrastructure (3) physical resources, (4) poor management and leadership. Unequal performance persist between rich and poor schools and learners. As Motala and Carel (2019) argues, in most cases there is correlation between poverty and learner performance. Social equity and education equity should be simultaneously addressed to alleviate or reduce poor quality education and training in lower socio-economic communities (Spaull, 2019). Students from poor background are educationally vulnerable than students from wealthy communities. Education departments inherited vast levels of inequality in learner performance, teaching and learning as well as poor socio-economic status across the provinces. For instance, Limpopo and Eastern Cape have 98% and 96% of no fee schools respectively, while Western Cape and Gauteng have 56% and 48% respectively (Motala and Carel, 2019). In most cases, no fee schools amount to poor quality of

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