



Curriculum in Umalusi research: the CAPS in context

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Curriculum in Umalusi research

- Drive behind Umalusi research has been a quest to understand the standard of the 'matric', the SA school leaving certificate
- Research focus extended from the assessed curriculum to the relationship between the assessed curriculum and the intended curriculum
- The intended curriculum moved centre stage at the change from the Senior Certificate to the NSC – standardization concerns
- Benchmarking – *Learning from Africa and International Qualifications* reports - qualification

Responsibilities around curriculum

- NEPA and SASA state that the Minister of Education determines minimum norms and standards for education through policy – curriculum and assessment
- Long title of General and Further Education and Training Act describes the Council as having *to provide for control over norms and standards of curriculum and assessment*
- Progressively taken on this responsibility – request to quality assure the CAPS

The CAPS in context

- South African education emerged from a very long period of curriculum neglect in 1994
- The new democratic state made sweeping reforms in terms of education, not least of which was to replace 16 Departments of Education with one, and 16 matrices with a single set of national exams in 2008.
- Curriculum 2005, approved 1997, implemented January 1998
- Revised National Curriculum Statement GET, completed 2002, implementation 2004
- RNCS FET, developed in 2002, implemented 2006

The CAPS in context (2)

- July 2009, Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, appointed a panel to ‘investigate the nature of the *challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of the RNCS* and to develop a set of recommendations designed *to improve the implementation* of the NCS.’
- Third set of reforms in a decade: curriculum a ministerial prerogative rather than the steady, ongoing work of the national department.
- Dada *et al.* Final report, October 2009

Dada report, 2009

- ‘Considerable criticism of the RNCS’
 - Teacher overload
 - Confusion and stress
 - Widespread learner underperformance
- Key areas
 - Curriculum policy and guideline documents
 - Transitions between grades and phases
 - Assessment, especially continuous assessment
 - LTSM
 - Teacher support & training for curriculum implementation

Dada recommendations

- Five-year plan
- Streamline and clarify policies
- Clarify the role of subject advisers
- Reduce teacher administrative workload
- Simplify and streamline assessment
- Transition from Grade 3 – 4 addressed
- Centralized catalogue of LTSM (textbooks)
- Teacher training to be subject specific and targeted

Dada findings

- Great deal of inequity in provision requires 'strong leadership from the centre to address unequal levels of provision'
- Teachers are change weary and their confidence compromised – authority of teachers in classrooms to be re-established
- Report argues for greater alignment in curriculum processes – Curriculum standards specify the intended knowledge; assessment standards exemplify level of cognitive demand and progression; LTSM and training provide teacher support. All to be tightly coupled.

Dada: Curriculum policy and its delivery

- Document proliferation – national, provincial and district level - focus on teachers designing own programmes
- Lengthy documents, repetitions, inconsistencies, and different versions of the same documents
- Lack of alignment between curriculum statements, assessment tasks and subject assessment frameworks and guidelines
- SO, ‘discrepancies in, and repetition of information... must be resolved’

Dada curriculum requirements

- National policy in plain language
- A minimum number of design features
- Content, concept and skill requirements specified per subject per phase from Gr R – Gr 12
- Pace (through time allocations) and appropriate methodologies specified
- Assessment requirements included
- Same team of subject experts to oversee documents from Gr R – Gr 12 to ensure coherence
- Readily available to all

Levels of Curriculum

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
SUPRA	International	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common European Framework of References for Languages
MACRO	System, national	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core objectives, attainment levels• Examination programmes
MESO	School, institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School programme• Educational programme
MICRO	Classroom, teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching plan, instructional materials• Module, course• Textbooks
NANO	Pupil, individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal plan for learning• Individual course of learning

From “Curriculum in Development” – Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development

Curriculum representations (SLO)

Forms		
INTENDED	Ideal	Vision (rationale) or basic philosophy underlying a curriculum
	Formal/ Written	Intentions as specified in curriculum documents and/or materials
IMPLEMENTED	Perceived	Curriculum as interpreted by its users (especially teachers)
	Operational	Actual process of teaching and learning (also curriculum in action)
ATTAINED/ ASSESSED	Experiential	Learning experiences as perceived by learners
	Learned	Resulting learning outcomes of learners

Dada delivery requirements

- Strong campaign to launch new documents –clarify status of documents as policy
- Documents to be ready by Sept 2010 for implementation in 2011
- Role clarification at national, provincial and district levels w.r.t. Curriculum production, dissemination, monitoring and support of implementation (especially subject adviser's role)
- Planning: teacher file with annual work schedule, assessment plan, assessment tasks and memoranda; textbook; record of learners' marks

Assessment recommendations

- Consistent grading descriptors across phases
- Regular, external, systemic national assessment
- National testing to replace common tasks of assessment at Gr 9 in Mathematics, Home Language and English FAL; progression dependent on 40% pass in HL and English FAL and 50% in Mathematics
- Promotion and progression requirements clarified
- Reduction in number of projects
- Clear, subject-specific assessment guidelines; Gr 4 – 9 50:50; Grades 10 – 12 25: 75 (Year: exam mark)

Curriculum structure and design

- Brief – ‘not the curriculum that was under review but its implementation’
- Problem areas identified: articulation between Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase; between GET and FET
- FP – IP: two significant challenges
 - 3 learning programmes to 8 learning areas (9 in effect as all take two languages)
 - ‘The change to English as language of instruction in Grade 4 (for the vast majority of learners) and preparedness for this’

Subjects for SP and Gr 10 - 12

Senior Phase		Gr 10 – 12 (FET)	
Home Language	5 hours	Home Language	4.5 hours
First Additional Language	4	First Additional Language	4.5
Mathematics	4.5	Mathematics	4.5
Natural Sciences	3	Life Orientation	2
Social Sciences	3	A minimum of 3 subjects selected from Gp B (3 x 4hrs)	12
Technology	2		
Economic Management Sciences	2		
Life Orientation	2		
Creative Arts	2		
	27.5		27.5

Quality assuring the CAPS

- Focus of the review was/is intended to be on implementation challenges
- Present part of the research focuses on the intended curriculum – its vision and formal/written manifestation
- What has changed for the better in the CAPS?
- What has been lost/ may have been lost in these changes?
- Not merely a ‘repackaging’ – some radical departures i.t.o languages and number of subjects
- Check assumptions made in the rearticulation

In closing

