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The use of Kolb's lenses to explore Social Sciences curriculum implementation in South African schools: teachers' perspective on pedagogy and content.

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Abstract

The social science curriculum serves as a key foundational subject to prepare learners who intend to further their studies by having History and Geography as specialized subjects. The success of the subject curriculum depends on the accomplishment and applicability of the subject policy objectives. However, despite the need to make the teaching and learning of the social science curriculum relevant, pedagogy and practice remain a challenge to meet the skills and values of the curriculum. Hence, this study explored teacher's experiences of the Social Sciences curriculum in South African teaching and learning through Kolb's experiential learning. Through Kolb's experiential theory, the proponent emphasizes stages that need to be followed for content and pedagogic aspects of the subject. A qualitative approach with a case study design was adopted. Interpretive paradigm was used to look at teachers' experience in the Social Science curriculum. Data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews with thirteen teachers. A thematic approach was used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that teachers lack pedagogies competencies for delivering Social Sciences teaching. The study concluded that teachers need to have knowledge and understanding of Social Sciences content to execute their key responsibility (teaching). Proper pedagogies such as small groups, discussion, and problem-solving should be incorporated into the subject to enable all learners within a band to understand the content taught. The study recommends Kolb's stages of experiential learning be adopted to expose teachers to diverse ways that learners learn when executing a Social Science curriculum/lesson.

Keywords: Curriculum, Learning content, Pedagogy, Practice, Social Science, Teacher's perspective

Introduction

The Social Science curriculum internationally is taught with a focus on the concepts of the best teaching practices through the learning dimension (Alazmi, 2022). The emphasis is on the citizenship reflected in the curriculum and deeper concerns about the digital resources that highlight the practices of social, economic, and cultural aspects of the teaching practice. The practice is on pedagogies that address the cognitive, socioemotional, and behavioural needs of the learners. Additionally, to advance the learners' knowledge and skills in the community. In South Africa, the Social Science curriculum is meant to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for self-fulfillment and meaningful participation in society (Department of Basic Education, 2011). However, the South African curriculum continues to face challenges with many curriculum reviews from one angle to another, confusing most teachers and learners. Mukondeleli (2017) asserts that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced to address all the issues of knowledge and skills to produce critical thinkers in South Africa. However, most of the learners were unable to understand the writing of the subject activities during class time. This was because they were not yet acclimatized to assessments administered during Social Science classes. The changing or review of the curriculum kept on addressing the point of critical thinking of learners in Social Science classes. Teachers were unable to interchange teaching pedagogies to produce learners who were creative and innovative

(Govender, 2018). Most of the teachers continued to face confusion with complicated planning requirements and administrative burdens in their classroom with the above-mentioned subject, which requires more than a theory to be understood by individual learners irrespective of their differences (Rob & Rob, 2018).

According to Bloch (2009), the monitoring of learning Achievement in schools shows South Africa performing 48% versus Tunisia with 78 % and Mauritius with 61 % in literacy. This shows that South African learners in terms of reading sources in Social Science perform poorly. Proper usage of teaching pedagogies in the classroom across the country is not being strengthened (Good & Lavigne, 2017). Furthermore, in provinces such as Eastern Cape and Limpopo, learners perform poorly with language, which is the building block of teaching and learning Social Science. Hence, this paper aims to use Kolb's lenses to explore the Social Science curriculum about pedagogy and practice. The paper further intends to address the following question: how can the challenges of teaching and learning of Social Science in South African curriculum be reduced? This empirical paper first describes the background and problem statement to give an insight into the issue identified by the researchers. Additionally, the paper describes the theoretical framework used as the lens for the study. An overview of teacher's perspectives on pedagogy and practice of Social Science curriculum from different countries in the education field is outlined. This is followed by the methodology that was used to conduct the study. Findings and recommendations are also presented.

Background of the study

The study conducted in China on ''Reform of teacher education: A survey of policies for systemic change. Teachers and teaching" emphasize that teachers are the developers of their curriculum rather than the recipient of curricula discussed and implemented by hierarchical leaders instead of the teachers being responsible for the content to be taught and teaching pedagogies (Ye, Zhu & Lo, 2019). However, every pedagogy to be applied in the classroom was decided by individual teachers attached to the subject. This was done to stress the significance of critical thinking on individual learners (Atwa, Sulayeh, Abdelhadi, Jazar & Eriqat, 2022). According to Xue and Lingling (2018), the traditional pedagogy used in China was changed to cooperative learning to make learners keep up with the modern ways of living and appliance of different practices applied during the teaching and learning of Social Science. Additionally, the knowledge and skills necessary for participation in modern life, based on trade, political, and other social matters, that involve the country, were outlined. However, critical thinking emphasized teaching and learning, which made learners in China keep their country developed (Wu, 2023).

The study conducted in Turkey, which is classified as one of the developed countries in Europe, reveals that teaching Social Science is more on teacher-centered pedagogies (Bourn & Soysal, 2021). The study is supported by scholars like Ozdemir (2012) which reveals that in Turkey, 90% of learners believe the work done by teachers should be assertive, not passive. Moreover, Ozdemir (2012) asserts that teachers still use traditional ways of teaching which encourage rote learning in Turkey. According to the researcher's understanding, learners are not taught for excellence but for performance. However, this shows how teachers do not understand pedagogies to be employed when teaching Social Sciences. Additionally, Social Science teaching compromises the intellectual level of learners in the teaching and learning process within the classroom. However, traditional teacher-centered instruction decreases learner participation and discourages a good flow of learning (Filiz & Altun, 2014). Furthermore, researchers like Incekara (2010) assert that teachers and learners face shortages of classrooms and textbooks to accommodate Social Science teaching, leading to poor performance as teaching and learning require more than what many schools can afford.

In Zambia, a study conducted by Musonda (2019) on the use of active pedagogical approaches in teaching civic education in selected secondary schools of Kasama and Luwingu districts argues that teaching should be more demanding to depend more on effective individual learners' efforts, possessing or modelling the nature of active teaching and learning. This requires incorporating pedagogies and adjusting teaching styles or pedagogies, knowledge, and skills, for the development and creativeness of learners. Therefore, it is revealed that Zambian status in teaching and learning remains stagnant due to the tendency of teachers who believe that being able to explain the learning content of the subject taught leads to expected results (Zulu,2019). Nevertheless, it is the incorporation of pedagogies such as whole-class discussion, cooperation, and problem-solving that will enable learners to understand the concepts prescribed in Social Sciences (Musonda, 2019).

Additionally, Michelo (2022) states that the observed gaps in entry progress escalate the matter of teaching pedagogies not being applied properly in the education sector. The selection and recruitment of teachers relevant to teaching the subject are not properly addressed, which leads to low contribution on teaching Social Science. However, if teachers are unable to fulfill their duties regarding the content taught, learners' performance will surely be compromised. Haamoogan (2017) further agrees with the above view on the recruitment practices of selected and hired teachers, which are cardinal to learner performance and teaching-learning.

In South Africa, a study by Sefhedi (2019) on Promoting critical-analytic thinking through teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles in a rural school argues that teachers use different pedagogies that are inappropriate for teaching and learning Social Science. This shows how it contributes to international and national problems but is more challenging in South Africa. In Social Science teaching, teachers use poor teaching pedagogies, which discourage learners from participating in the lesson. Du Plessis (2016) asserts that poor pedagogies used in teaching and learning Social Sciences are deductive pedagogies that tend to be more teacher-centered, and learners' participation becomes limited. Teachers do more work in the classroom and limit learners' engagement on significant concepts to be addressed.

Jaiyeola (2020) further argued that the characteristics of deductive and content-based pedagogies allow learners to become passive, and unable to approach examination questions. Additionally, the syllabus is rigid, and the responsibility of learning remains with the teacher instead of the learner. This shows how traditional pedagogies of teaching slowly affect individual learners in different classes. Moreover, learners tend to resort to copying or discussing the question paper during a formative assessment, because of a lack of foundational content given to learners. On the other hand, some learners tend to dislike the subject because of the gaps identified during the teaching and learning (Milner, 2021).

Felix (2024) further argues that where telling pedagogy dominates, learners are likely to be passive listeners in the classroom. Even during an excursion, learners still encounter problems in responding or participating in the fieldwork. Richardson and Lyytinen (2014) assert that the telling method was used during Bantu Education, which discouraged learners from being role players and controllers of the lessons in their classroom. This affected the people of the country in South Africa due to the language used in teaching and learning Social Science. Revision of curriculum introduced in the country is unable to deviate from traditional method to discussion and collaboration emphasized by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, with a standing view that learners should be critical thinkers not passive audiences in the class (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Boettcher and Conrad (2021) posit that most Social Science teachers are caught up in the traditional teaching pedagogy, where learners listen to the content delivered during the lesson. However, these poor teaching pedagogies deprive learners of fully accessing all the content of the Social Science curriculum. Teachers rely more on the notes prepared and textbooks, which dictates to learners that they are never given opportunities to ask questions or do abstract thinking. Zulu (2018) further adds that with poor teaching pedagogy, learners copy notes from the boards without understanding the content written on those boards, which leads to memorization and rote learning that makes most learners fail the formative and summative examination from district or provincial education. Teachers who use traditional pedagogy believe or assume learning takes place when they take more time to explain or emphasize concepts. Unfortunately, it is not done that way because learners tend to be distracted or engage in unnecessary conversation, leading to arguments.

Literature review

Numerous practices help execute the quality of Social Science teaching. A term used to emphasize that learners should be provided with opportunities to achieve their goals with excellence through teaching and learning pedagogies outlined in lesson plans (Giroux, 2024). Policy documents further state that "every learner should have a quality textbook and neatly kept a notebook and be provided with content aimed at developing the appropriate skills, concepts and values" (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

According to Asman (2019), policies should contain teaching pedagogies to execute the aims and objectives mentioned in the policy document. Teachers need to be conversant with the pedagogies relevant to the topics taught in Social Science to refrain from applying bad practices and a high percentage of failure rate from learners in the senior grade. Scholars like Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron and Osher (2020), the aim of education in teaching and learning Social Science includes reinforcing the teaching and learning culture by allowing individual growth to make an appropriate judgement on social structure. Furthermore, to contribute to current information and integration of experiences on learning to society.

Social Science teaching and learning in China were expected to be new or reformed, emphasizing practice rather than theory. Liu and Xu (2011) argued that even though China had to shift learners from theory to practice, learners still needed to respond to the world with the acquired knowledge from the classroom, requiring teaching pedagogies to produce innovators. The belief of the "new curriculum" was for learners to move from previous ideas about knowledge delivered by teachers and focus on teaching and learning on performance than competency (Wang, 2019). However, some learners were still focused on the old ways of dealing with teaching and learning activities.

The challenges that teachers in Turkey face are the lack of implementation of different teaching pedagogies during Social Science teaching (Kotluk & Aydin, 2021). The influence of traditional pedagogy used by teachers in Turkey influences learners and gives negative thoughts about teaching and learning Social Science. Most of these learners tend to rely more on teachers for all information regarding the subject taught in the classroom (Alsaleh,2020). On the other hand, learners continue to have attitudes towards learning the subject because of the pedagogies used in their classrooms (Kotluk & Aydin, 2021).

Musonda (2019) argues that teaching and learning Social Science should have exceptional performance emanating from pedagogies used in different lessons for the subject. This simply means that proper teaching pedagogies should be implemented during the Social Science lesson. However, teaching and learning in Zambia is only based on traditional pedagogy, not a collaboration of different pedagogies to execute learning. Mambwe (2020) emphasizes that learning should be a process that involves the accumulation of knowledge through different pedagogies, not a monologue teacher-centered pedagogy, but in Zambia teacher-centered pedagogy is dominant. Michelo (2022) argues that teachers in Zambia do not have progress but stagnate, because the foundation of learners' is invisible. Most learners progress from one grade to another without a proper monitor to ensure they receive proper supervision on their potential or abilities that could level up their performance.

West (2023) added that in South Africa, most teachers are still using the traditional teaching pedagogies in Social Science as a subject. These teachers use the telling pedagogy, whereby a teacher delivers the content using oral presentation instead of using small group and discussion pedagogy. This telling pedagogy encourages learners to memorize and not to be critical or innovative. The poor teaching pedagogy used by teachers dispatches learners' enthusiasm regarding the subject content. For example, teachers tend to read events on the timeline in History classes, according to events and years. As a result, learners tend to feel bored and sleep because it resembles storytelling (Storr, 2020).

Problem statement

The curriculum of Social Science in South African schools has not been stable but keeps on changing. The changes that emerge affect teachers to master its delivery due to constant changes. The new amendments in Social Science integration are good for learners but teachers fail to cope with such emerging transformation (Nkosi, 2021). The adaptability of teachers is not convincing in subjects such as Social Science most of the teachers fail to move from the old practice (Maepa, 2017). Researchers like Taylor (2019) have shown that most of the secondary school teachers in South Africa lack the deep content knowledge needed to effectively teach social science curricula. The gap on lack of such insights about proper pedagogies and practice in the Social Science curriculum plays a huge role. Hence, the study uses Kolb's lenses to explore the Social Science curriculum in South African schools to get insights from teachers on its pedagogies and practice.

Theoretical framework: Kolb's experiential learning

This study is informed by the experiential learning theory of Kolb (1984). This theory was applied to provide an understanding of theories and concepts relevant to the explorative study of the Social Science curriculum about pedagogy and practice. The researchers selected the theory to provide more understanding of how teachers interrelate the Social Science curriculum with the teaching pedagogies into practice to accommodate all learners with their differences. In the context of teaching Social Science, the theory outlines how teachers should apply different pedagogies in the Social Science curriculum. This was done to address pedagogy and practice in the Social Science curriculum because most teachers are not prepared to teach the subject curriculum and rely on one pedagogy when teaching instead of interchanging pedagogies (Giroux,2024). Therefore, teachers are not prepared to execute the aims, objectives, and principles to produce learners who critically respond to the questions asked during assessment (Department of Basic Education, 2011). However, the preparation of quality teachers in the Social Science curriculum becomes a challenging task for the leadership of the school regarding the pedagogy and practice.

Kolb's experiential learning theory further views learning as an integrated process, including curriculum, pedagogies, and practice for teachers to execute teaching, and learning in the educational field or institution (Omoro, 2014). According to Kolb (1974), learning is how learners integrate knowledge in various stages. One variable cannot operate on a single axis at the same time (think and feel). In the context of Social Science teaching, curriculum, pedagogy, and practice (teaching and learning). Mutsheleni quoted in Malatji and Singh (2017), learners should think critically and give their views on how their feelings unfold on the content delivered in Social Science teaching.

Methods

This qualitative study was directed by the interpretivism paradigm for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon which led to insight of reality (Khan, 2014). The interpretive paradigm enabled the researchers to get the reality from teachers' perspective about the Social Science curriculum about pedagogy and practice in South African schools. The explorative case study design of four secondary schools in the Capricorn District, South Africa was used. The population of this study was 200 teachers in the district. Thirteen teachers were purposively selected based on their knowledge of the study topic. Hence, the focus was on the teacher's perspective of the Social Sciences curriculum about pedagogy and practice. The teachers chosen in four schools were selected as Social Science is offered in Grade 8 and 9 in Secondary school. Individual Semi-individual structured interviews were used as data collection instruments with selected 6 male and 7 female teachers. The data collection method used helps the researcher to gather teachers' perspectives on the Social Science Curriculum. Data was analyzed through a thematic approach. The process involved familiarizing oneself with data, generating the initial codes, searching, and reviewing themes, and defining with involvement in naming the themes to generate or produce the report. This paper is generated from a master's dissertation, ethical issues were approved by the University where the study was conducted, and permission to conduct the study was granted by the Limpopo Department of Education together with the schools under the study. Participation was voluntary and participants were informed of the right to withdraw from the study. Codes were used to protect the identities of schools and during the presentation and analysis of findings. The teacher's responses were coded numerically.

Results

The purpose of this study was to use Kolb's lens to explore the Social Science curriculum about pedagogy and practice. Evidence generated from data revealed that teachers lack an understanding of pedagogies to be used when teaching Social Science content in schools. Moreover, digital resources and support should be core needs in the Social Science teaching and learning classroom. The three themes are Inadequate knowledge and understanding, lack of digital resources, educational specialist support, and workshops varied in Social Sciences curriculum in South African schools of teaching and learning. The codes mentioned below represent the following participants:

- P1-teacher 1
- P2-teacher 2
- P3-teacher 3
- P4-teacher 4
- P5-teacher 5
- P6-teacher 6
- P7-teacher 7
- P8-teacher 8
- P9-teacher 9
- P10-teacher 10
- P11-teacher 11
- P12-teacher 12
- P13-teacher 13

Inadequate Knowledge and understanding

The teacher disclosed that Social Science requires good background knowledge to execute the subject's mandate without the knowledge teachers have limited awareness of available options. The teacher also revealed that he used to do research before the lessons to be able to teach the subject. In support of the above view, the participant said, P1: *"Teachers need to be trained before teaching the subject, but if not, they will not have the knowledge to teach the subject"*. The teacher's view above emphasizes that Social Science requires people who specialize in the subject to have proper knowledge and understanding imparted to learners. The Social Science sections require trained teachers who are well-informed to teach the subject. By the above statement, most of the learners are compromised by a lack of knowledge from teachers who are not well prepared to teach the subject.

The participant further mentioned that teachers who lack knowledge on the subject would not teach any content relevant to Social Science because under-preparedness levels continue to be among those specific teachers. Another participant said, P2: *"Most of us are more competent in Geography knowledge but the history section is perceived as comprehension"*. According to the participant's view, most of the teachers in the school perceive History as a comprehension section. This is because the structure of summative questions that are more source-based than text-based. In the various schools, teachers who are allocated Social Science specialize in the Geography section only.

Lack of digital resources

Teaching and learning require teaching instructional materials that serve the purpose of teaching in educational fields. Unfortunately, teachers cannot access support materials such as laptops and projectors due to a lack of funds in various schools. These disadvantage learners in learning Social Science due to features of Geography as well as the occurrence of events in History. The participant on the question of lack of resources replied by saying, P3: "*Digital resources are what we lack in our school because we only have one projector and globe. "*P10: *"Lack of resources leads to poor performance, especially in Geography section"* P12: "*There is a great impact of resources on teaching and learning of Social Sciences due to lack of classroom and textbook in these schools, there is no class to accommodate all learners".* Teachers lack resources such as projectors and globes to make teaching and learning of the subject easier. The teacher gave practical examples of a globe, where a learner was asked about a globe representing the world. The main aim is to check the prior knowledge, but due to the unavailability of such resources, learners cannot get the answer correctly.

At the school, teachers only rely on one globe which is always not available to all teachers. The participant further emphasized that whenever one requires a social science projector to teach the Geography section, the projector is used either by Life sciences or physical sciences teachers. To support the views mentioned above on lack of resources and effects, another participant stated that, P4: "*It affects teaching negatively because our learners are many and textbooks are not enough for all learners".*P11: *"Lack of resources is there because in my class learners do not have textbooks and we did not have proper training of the subject".*P13: "*Learners are failing because of the lack of Social Sciences textbook".* Failure of teachers to have supportive teaching and learning instructional materials creates more problems for the educational institution. Social Science is a subject that requires more technological resources to support both teachers and learners in the field of education.

Educational specialists support and workshops

Lack of support from educational specialists plays a significant role in teaching Social Science in schools. This is revealed by numerous topics and sub-topics that make up the content taught in the classroom. These shows how teachers require educational specialists and workshops per term. The provision of such support will serve the teaching of Social Science as a subject. However, the participant had this to say, P5: *"The Curriculum Advisors come to school to demand the class activities not to support Social Science teachers."* According to the participant, educational specialist demands numerous activities that make up assessments given to learners. The participant further claimed that the provision of support to teachers should be a visit to classes and observation on how teachers teach content in the classroom. The views reveal the real reflection of how teachers approach the lesson in the classroom. The participants also revealed that educational specialists should support teachers by suggesting pedagogies that can work best for teaching and learning the subjects.

Based on teachers' views, it was felt that educational specialists visit their schools, but do not provide enough support to individual teachers. Lack of proper support to teachers affects their level of competency. In support of the above views, another participant said, P6: *"We are not getting any support from curriculum advisors or the Department in general".* The teacher stated that the Social Science teachers in the school where he works have never received any support from the educational specialists. According to the teacher's view, P9: "*We teach Social Science according to our knowledge, without an idea of what kind of outcomes to expect*". This reveals how the subject is taught based on the teacher's knowledge, not through the guidance of policies and support of educational specialists.

The absence of support from the Department of Basic Education and educational specialists on the subject plays a key role in teaching and learning. Another participant stated the following regarding the question on the support received from educational specialists, P7: *"I have never received any support on teaching Social Science, and I think the support needed by teachers in workshops.* P8: *"We don't get any support in our school, because social science is not taken seriously, and this affects the performance of learners".* The teacher revealed that he never received any support from the appropriate expert (Educational Specialist) in Social Science teaching. As a result, he taught the subject without knowledge of what was expected from him as a teacher. This clearly shows how much the subjects have various challenges than one could ever imagine. The Social Science classes are not taught to a good standard due to a lack of support from subject experts. The participant further mentioned that lack of support plays a significant role in the Social Science field because the results are not impressive. This shows that a poor pedagogy leads to deficient performance. The lack of support from all stakeholders towards the education institution plays a key role within the schools as well.

Discussion

The results of this study are based on the following three main sub-themes: Inadequate teacher’s knowledge and understanding, digital resources, and lack of educational support.

Inadequate teacher’s knowledge and understanding

The study revealed that teachers could not approach teaching and learning of Social Science properly because they were never trained to teach the subject. They further feed learners with information to memorize and recall during assessment (Huang, 2016). This reveals that most of the teachers who are responsible for this subject fail to teach and use pedagogies to their best level due to a lack of understanding. Researchers such as Storr (2020) argue that most teachers still use traditional teaching of Social Sciences. Most teachers are unable to teach the subject according to the outline provided by Annual teaching plans. The failure of not being able to teach the subject appropriately disadvantages learners’ who are in that grade. Nind (2020) supports the idea by stating that subject knowledge is significant when teaching Social Science. To keep the lesson interesting to learners, how subject knowledge is presented should be effective in the classroom (Asmas, 2019).

Most of these teachers even lose motivation to approach teaching and learning due to a lack of consistency and misunderstanding of the content (West, 2023). Hence, the approach to both the content of the subject and the implementation of pedagogies on teaching becomes a challenge to teachers. This is because Social Science pedagogies postulate a passive approach rather than nurturing creative thinking (Wilson & Conyers, 2020). To revive the teacher’s motivation for pedagogy and practice, Kolb’s experiential learning theory (1984) encourages teachers to use an accommodating style to select available knowledge prescribed in the curriculum of Social Science to read and understand before it can be taught to learners in the classroom.

Digital resources

A shortage of digital resources such as projectors, laptops, and globes that serve the purpose of teaching and learning the subject contributes negatively to the learning. Additionally, resources such as the printed documents used for question papers across the grades fail to accommodate all learners within schools in Capricorn District. However, some schools allow learners to share photocopied papers in groups of 6 (six), due to the lack of a photocopy machine. The issue can only be addressed by the availability of enough printing machines within the schools. Viegas, Pavani, Lima, Marques, Pozzo, Dobboletta and Alves (2018) support the findings that a lack of resources such as laboratories and machines results in negative performance. These challenges were found to degrade Social Science teaching and learning because learners are unable to observe the phenomena presented. The theory of Kolb (1984) confirms the findings by stating that diverges learn through listening and observing. Therefore, challenges to lack of teaching and learning tools disadvantage learners who are willing to read and understand the learning content. This is also supported by Hlatshwayo (2021) who emphasizes that a classroom that lacks proper resources discourages teachers from teaching and learners perform poorly.

The study further revealed that Social Science teachers lack support from the school, the Department of Basic Education, the educational specialist, and the school management team. This is regarding the guidelines on how to approach the content of teaching and learning of Social Science (Asmas, 2019). Teachers in the same field also fail to collaborate with other teachers in the subject to make progress in teaching and learning. Santoro (2021) argues that system failure also undermines teacher morale and hinders teaching and learning influenced by authorities. The Department of Basic Education seems to have neglected the subject, which is the foundation of Geography and History in the FET phase. This is revealed by the number of workshops financed for Social Science and question papers available on the websites, which are for only grades 10-12. Furthermore, the FET phase classes are perceived to be more significant than the senior phase of Social Sciences. Zhao and Liu (2020) argue that teachers and learners should be provided with the resources to free learners from traditional problem-solving tactics and provide personalized, accurate practice material to improve teaching.

Lack of educational Support

Lack of support to teachers on Social Science create gaps in teaching and learning of the subject. These are observed from technological constraints, physical resources, negative attitudes of learners, and lack of parental interest and involvement in children's learning play a key role (Malatji, Mavuso & Malatji, 2019). This study revealed that teachers do not teach the Social Science curriculum appropriately in other sections due to a lack of support from all the stakeholders. Additionally, the failure of consistent visits by educational specialists hurts teaching. To support the findings, the theory of Kolb (1984) confirms that learners are different, and as a result, they learn differently. In line with this, Asmas (2019) is of the view that teachers should make use of teaching pedagogies that accommodate different learning styles. The discussion could be between teachers and senior educational specialists on issues of teaching and learning Social Science.

On the other hand, workshops are not adequately scheduled due to attendance during working hours. Chew and Cerbin (2021) argue that problems in supporting teachers often combine to make teachers ineffective in teaching of Social Sciences curriculum. Hence, the educational specialists require Social Science teachers per school to attend a workshop, but only one teacher is selected to represent all social science teachers (West, 2023). This shows that teachers are not well-supported but expected to execute the mandate of teaching and learning in the absence of workshop training provided to all the teachers. Kolb (1984) argues that for teachers to be supported, reflective observation needs to be applied by the school management team to allow teachers to thrive in teaching the content of social sciences.

Implications of Kolb's theory into the study

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) offers valuable insights into the exploration of curriculum implementation in social sciences education. Below are some implications of using Kolb's lenses when teaching Social Science.

Concrete experience: Teachers' firsthand experiences with the curriculum can inform their understanding of effective pedagogy. Observing how students engage with social sciences topics helps tailor teaching methods.

Reflective observation: This lens encourages teachers to reflect on their practices and student interactions, promoting continuous improvement in curriculum delivery.

Abstract conceptualization: Teachers can develop theories or models based on their reflections. This may involve adapting content to better fit the diverse backgrounds of students.

Active experimentation: Teachers can apply new strategies or content adjustments in real classroom settings, assessing the impact on student learning.

Diverse learning styles: Kolb's theory emphasizes different learning styles (converging, diverging, assimilating, accommodating). Understanding these can help teachers design more inclusive and effective social sciences curricula that cater to varied student needs.

Pedagogical strategies: By applying Kolb's lenses, teachers may explore various pedagogical approaches, such as project-based learning or collaborative group work, which can enhance engagement and understanding in social sciences.

Content relevance: The theory prompts educators to consider the relevance of content to students' lives and communities. Teachers can use their reflections to integrate local history or social issues, making learning more meaningful.

Professional development: Implementing Kolb's lenses can guide professional development initiatives, encouraging teachers to share experiences and strategies. This collaborative approach can foster a community of practice focused on enhancing social sciences education.

Assessment and feedback: Teachers can use Kolb's framework to develop formative assessments that focus not just on content knowledge but also on students' processes of learning, promoting a deeper understanding of Social Sciences.

Using Kolb's lenses provides a structured way for teachers in South African schools to reflect on and improve their practices in Social Sciences curriculum implementation. It emphasizes experiential learning, accommodating diverse learning styles, and fostering meaningful content relevance, ultimately enhancing both pedagogy and student engagement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the critical need for enhanced pedagogical competencies among teachers to effectively deliver the Social Sciences curriculum in South Africa. Despite the curriculum's importance in preparing learners for specialized subjects like History and Geography, challenges persist in aligning teaching practices with the curriculum's skills and values. By utilizing Kolb's experiential learning theory, the research underscores the necessity for teachers to deepen their understanding of Social Sciences content and adopt varied pedagogical strategies. Implementing approaches such as small group discussions and problem-solving activities can significantly enhance student engagement and comprehension. Ultimately, adopting Kolb's stages of experiential learning offers a framework for educators to better address the diverse learning needs of students, ensuring a more relevant and impactful Social Sciences education.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

Professional development programs: Implement targeted professional development initiatives that focus on enhancing teachers' pedagogical competencies in Social Sciences. These programs should include training on diverse instructional strategies that align with Kolb's experiential learning stages.

Collaborative teaching practices: Encourage collaborative teaching approaches, such as co-teaching and peer observations, to facilitate the sharing of effective pedagogies among educators. This collaborative environment can foster continuous learning and improvement.

Curriculum workshops: Organize workshops centered on the Social Sciences curriculum to deepen teachers' understanding of content and pedagogical strategies. These workshops should emphasize the practical application of Kolb's experiential learning model.

Feedback mechanisms: Establish regular feedback mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of teaching strategies employed in the Social Sciences classroom. This could include student surveys and peer reviews to inform ongoing pedagogical adjustments.

Mentorship programs: Create mentorship opportunities where experienced teachers can guide less experienced colleagues in effective Social Sciences teaching practices, focusing on the application of Kolb's theory in lesson planning and execution.

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