

ABSTRACT

This study examined factors which affect the practice of history teaching in grades seven to nine in traditional grammar schools.. The factors examined are the teachers Concept of history, the type of curriculum, the teachers' methods of instruction and how they impact on pupils' interest in the study of history. The study sought to answer pertinent research questions.

1. What is the nature of the history curricula in the sample of schools?
2. Are the teachers' methods of instruction consistent with those of traditionalist or progressives?
3. Are the teachers' methods of instruction consistent with their espoused philosophy?
4. Is there a significant difference in the Practice of history teaching in urban and semi-urban schools?
5. Is there a relationship between teaching experience and method of instruction?
6. Is there a significant difference in the Practice of History teaching in the urban and semi-urban schools?
7. What is the influence of teachers' methods of instruction on pupils' attitude to history?
8. What levels of objectives are reflected in the teachers' evaluation instruments?

The data were collected by means of questionnaires and observation. Questionnaires were administered to fifteen teachers of history and two hundred and seventy four grade nine students from four traditional high schools.

The Data were analysed using the means and standard deviation of each item, and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was applied to test the relationship between teachers' methods of instruction and pupils interest in the study of history. The 'T' test was used to determine the difference in attitude between students taught by traditional teachers and students taught by progressive teachers.

Findings

The curricula for the four schools, varied in terms of structure, content, and intent, and were informed by both the specialist and broadfield concepts of curriculum development.

There was evidence of process-oriented and product-oriented curricula. The former emphasised the teaching of concepts, intellectual skills and attitudes, while the latter had as its main concern the acquisition of factual information and was informed by a concept of learners as passive, rather than active participants in the learning process.

The curricula for the four schools varied in the extent to which they were planned with clearly defined objectives for the teaching and learning of history. Two of the schools had clearly defined objectives which were expressed in behavioural terms; that is, instructional intent and the criteria for assessing acceptable performance were clearly defined. While the other two schools had stated objectives, the objectives were not clearly defined.

All the teachers claimed to subscribe to a progressive philosophy of teaching, but neither the

students' rating of methods by which they were taught, nor my observation of the teachers' classroom practice supported their espoused philosophy. Teachers tend to rely on traditional teaching strategies which focus on the product rather than the process of learning.

While there was no significant difference in the teaching strategies/methods used by teachers in the urban and semi-urban schools, in one school (semi-urban), there was greater harmony between teachers' espoused philosophy and practice of history teaching.

The students' attitude to the study of history was positive for the most part, but this positive attitude was not influenced to any significant degree by the teachers' instructional method. When Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (analysis) was applied to test the relationship between teachers' methods of instruction and pupils' attitude to the study of history, a value of .1154 was computed, showing a relationship that was not significant.