

REPORT TO CCE ON ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA 2007 – 2008

Secondary Level

Introduction of a new progressive curriculum for Grades 10 – 12 is culminating in the first National Senior Certificate Examinations being written in November and December of this year. Interaction with educators has shown that they are apprehensive and unsure of what to expect. The National Department of Education has made some exemplars available but throughout the country training requests have focused on subject content and assessment. There are sponsored events being organised for learners to help them with their exam preparation, even as late as October.

The weighting of content-related assessment has decreased to between 40 – 50%. Practical scientific inquiry and problem-solving skills in chemistry have a weighting of 25 – 35% and relating science to technology, society and the environment is weighted at 20 -30%. Assessing the latter two components pose a challenge to all concerned.

In-service training for educators

Educator training is still a very active area in education. The emphasis in upgrading of educators has moved largely to formal courses with tertiary institutions, with face-to-face tuition being the preferred mode of delivery. There is also evidence of overseas-funded training projects aimed at both Curriculum Advisor and educator level. It is hoped that the one such intervention will serve as a model for others. Training takes place in three stages:

1. Initial content, IT and learning programme training. Full time, with participants released from normal advisory or teaching duties.
2. This is followed by a period in the field. Curriculum Advisors and educators resume normal duties.
3. Lastly, a period of reflection to consolidate experiences in the first two phases. If the current pilot project with 25 Curriculum Advisors and 50 educators in one province is successful, the model could be adopted in other provinces.

Tertiary education

Developments in the tertiary education sector comprise institutions having to deal with the knock-on effect of the introduction of the new curriculum. Mergers and rationalization of tertiary institutions has been completed and some repositioning has taken place as far as science education is concerned.

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