

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to explore the relevance to the workplace of the Further Education and Training college curriculum in electrical subjects. The study uses a combination of interviews, questionnaires and document analysis to collect data. The study was carried out in Johannesburg and Germiston, and involved six learners, four training managers, three educators, a curriculum developer and an education specialist.

Educators noted that there had been no changes in the curriculum for a considerable period, and felt that there was a need for change. They mentioned in particular the absence of practicals as a cause for concern. The curriculum developer agreed that there had been no substantial curriculum change. He cited report 190/191 and the FET Act of 1998 as contributing to the stagnation in the curriculum.

Employers continue to recruit learners from the FET colleges, but do not feel that they have been fully equipped for the workplace. The colleges provided only the basics, and training continued at the workplace. Colleges play a vital role in qualifying learners for a trade. One of the entry requirements for trade test is that candidates have N2, which is only obtainable at FET colleges.

Learners were divided on the question of whether or not the FET college empowered them to cope in the world of work, with some, but not all, expressing satisfaction. This response was understandable as the electrical field is very broad, and companies operate on various levels within the field.

In the electrical field, FET colleges have adopted a technocratic approach to the curriculum, characterized by inflexibility and stagnancy. New curricular approaches beckon with the government's recapitalization plan for the FET colleges.

Key words: Vocational education; curriculum development; workplace education and training; Further Education and Training colleges.