DSPACE

https://dspace.org/

An illuminative evaluation of the standard 7 and 8 expressive arts curriculum in Malawi.

Chirwa, Grames Wellington

2015-05-19
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/17806

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

The objective of educational innovation, wherever it takes place, at school or at national level, is to improve current practices. In its recent attempt to improve the quality of education in Malawi, the national government in 2001 embarked on curriculum reform and adopted an Outcomes Based curriculum which was implemented in 2007. The design features of the Malawi Outcomes Based Education were influenced by South Africa's Curriculum 2005.

Following the implementation of the curriculum reform, the purpose of this study was to investigate the enactment of Expressive Arts, its theme-based design and content, facilitative pedagogy and continuous assessment in a selection of six state primary schools – three urban and three rural in Zomba district where teachers were first trained to teach Expressive Arts. The study is framed by the theory of Illuminative evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976) and Productive Pedagogies (Lingard *et al.,* 2001). Following a qualitative research design, data were collected through observation and post-observation interviews. Data analysis showed limited productive pedagogies in most lessons. The majority of lessons were characterised by lower intellectual quality, a focus on instrumental knowledge, integration at a superficial level, dominance of communalising practices, gendered practices, prevalence of localising discourses and a pedagogy aimed at national examinations.

The overall picture from these findings is that classroom atmosphere in the twelve classrooms gave students limited opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills, values and attitudes required for them to actively participate in the changing Malawian context and to be able to compete successfully in other contexts. It appears that dominant pedagogic practices in the Expressive Arts classroom serve to position learners in parochial orientations and issues. Therefore, there was an obvious discrepancy between the state's intended curriculum and the teachers' enacted curriculum.

The implications of these findings for Malawi education have been raised. The most salient of these implications include the need for Malawi Institute of Education, the main change agent of primary school curriculum in the country, not only to consider revising the Expressive Arts curriculum but also to focus on the development of teachers in line with their needs for deeper content knowledge and productive pedagogic strategies.

Keywords: Expressive Arts, curriculum evaluation, Illuminative evaluation, Productive Pedagogies, instructional system, learning milieu, intended curriculum, enacted curriculum.