Leading Through Challenging Times

ROLE OF TEACHER AGENCY

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Exploring teacher agency as leadership as a lever for creating innovative learning environment in quintile 1-3 Schools in Limpopo
Introduction

• A VUCA world – the norm
  • The anxiety and excitement of an ever-changing world,
  • The opportunity for growth and risk or regression,
  • Stagnation the poor cousin to innovation

• The role of education Today
  • Knowledge economy
  • Skills development

• Implications on teaching and learning
  • What is the Expected Result
  • The role of the Teacher
SA Current State Of Education

Curriculum Coverage - Learning losses have been the worst for the poor
- 80% of the school’s year learning was lost in 2020
- 54% of contact time was lost

Educational Recovery during the pandemic
- 83% of teachers said they were on track with curriculum coverage in 2021

Digital Divide
- 83.5% of private school learners continued with school with no disruptions
- 67.1% of public-school learners continued with school with no disruptions

Research by Stellenbosch University economist Anna Orthofer delves into precisely these effects and finds that wealth inequality in South Africa is staggering. The wealthiest 1% owns 67% of all the country’s wealth, the top 10% owns 93%, the remaining 98% of South Africa owns a paltry 7% of the country’s wealth.
Teacher as Leader

Teachers as the best resource that the learner has
What Is Teacher Agency?

• It is a teacher’s ability to actively shape their work in order to successfully progress the challenges they encounter and or enhance curriculum delivery for the attainment of desired learning outcomes.

• Agency is grown through a complex interplay of a teacher’s qualities as an individual and the school conditions in which he/she operates.

• Teacher agency is not something that teachers inherently have but it is something they do or achieve.

• Agency is essential when addressing pedagogical challenges.
The Teacher’s Expected Result

Knowledge
“What we know and understand”
- Interdisciplinarity
- Traditional (i.e., Mathematics)
- Modern (i.e., Entrepreneurship)
- Themes (i.e., Global Literacy)

Skills
“How we use what we know”
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

Character
“How we behave and engage in the world”
- Mindfulness
- Curiosity
- Courage
- Resilience
- Ethics
- Leadership

Meta-Learning
“How we reflect and adapt”
- Metacognition
- Growth Mindset

Collaborator

Civically Engaged

Problem Solver

21st Century Learner

Innovator

Globally Aware

Information Literate

Sandbox Project

© Center for Curriculum Redesign
Teacher Agency Framework

Mark Priestley, Gert Biesta, and Sarah Robinson in their publication ‘Teacher Agency – An Ecological Approach’ identify three dimensions:

- Influences from the past (agency is rooted in past experiences)
- Orientations towards the future (agency implies an ability to envisage multiple future possibilities)
- Engagement with the here and now (agency means taking action)

Practical-evaluative
- Cultural
  - Ideas, values, beliefs, discourses, language
- Structural
  - Social structures (relationships, roles, power, trust)
- Material
  - Resources
  - Physical environment

Iterational
- Life histories
- Professional histories

Projective
- Short term
- Long term
Role Of Teacher Agency In Turmoil

- Capacity of people to act upon their ideas and plans to transform current thinking or practice
- Create learning environments that facilitate knowledge interaction and transfer during COVID-19
- Adaptability in changing environments
- Solve problems such as connection issues, lack of resources and low engagement through self help
- Support colleagues and network struggling to interact and engage learners.
- Digital competence and conditions for online teaching
Blended Learning

• Traditional learning takes place in a classroom setting. Teacher moderates and regulates the flow of information and knowledge. The child deepens their knowledge through written exercises at home.

• Distance learning is where learners and teachers are separated by geographical or temporal distance, a form of mediated learning which can be achieved using a combination of technologies.

• Pandemic has required a combination of both from teachers and now more than ever teacher agency is paramount.
How To Establish Teacher Agency In Our Schools

• Listen to educator’s voices and promote choices for professional learning.
• Create a continuous learning culture.
• Recognize that educators are agents of their professional growth and must drive their own learning.
• Involve educators in the planning, delivery and assessment of professional learning.
• Provide time and space for educators to learn collaboratively.
• Involve educators directly in data analysis and encourage them to pursue professional learning that aligns with instructional needs.
• Leverage educators’ relationships to build strong learning communities.
• Develop professional learning systems that provide educators with the structures and support needed to advance teacher agency.
Reference List


