AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
OF TEACHERS IN SELECTED FORT BEAUFORT SCHOOLS.
A CASE STUDY IN THE EASTERN CAPE.

By

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DECLARATION

I herein declare that An Investigation into the Formative Assessment Practices of Teachers in Selected Fort Beaufort Schools is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination purposes to any other institution. All sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Mongezi William Kuze

December 2009

Signature: ___________________   Date: ____________ __
ABSTRACT

South Africa has, since 1994 undergone significant political, social and economic changes and all these changes have had an effect in most of the governmental departments. One department adversely affected in particular, is the Department of Education (DoE). The implementation of a large number of educational policies being developed at national and provincial levels to bring about radical changes, leave much to desire. That has led the researcher to be investigating Teachers’ Formative Assessment Practices in Grade 9 Technology classrooms of selected schools in the Fort Beaufort District of Education.

The DoE had explored ways to better educate learners and to improve the entire school performance, hence the introduction of the new methods of assessment, to quote but one, assessment policy No. 19640 of 1998. The new assessment policy in the GET Band is a means of assessing learners in order to enhance individual growth and development; to monitor the progress of learners; and to facilitate their learning. This policy states that assessment and feedback are integral to the teaching and learning process and policy planners and practitioners must be adequately prepared to implement these policies.

Assessment is the most powerful lever educators use to influence the way learners respond to teaching and behave as learners. It is crucial that
appropriate and effective methods of assessment are employed to ensure effective learning.

Therefore, the study examined, within the interpretive paradigm and taking a constructivist approach, experiences and concerns raised by participants concerning the implementation of formative assessment in the case. In order to investigate teachers' perceptions and the implementation of formative assessment practices, in relation to emerging educational policies, one Grade 9 learning area – Technology - in five schools were purposefully sampled.

Data from the participants were mainly collected employing qualitative methods, being in-depth interviews, observations and document studies. The main findings of the study were that participants’ (School Management Team members, teachers and learners) perceptions were not quite clear pertaining to what formative assessment is all about. They did not know how to implement it in their classes and as a result had a negative impact on them.

This led to recommending that these practitioners must adequately and rigorously be re-trained in implementing the policy. The DoE ought to outsource such trainings to tertiary institution for certification purposes. In future, the DoE should, before implementing any policy, make sure facilitators know the policy, are adequately and thoroughly trained and skilled before embarking on any further training of policy practitioners.
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