

# From Coherence in Theory to Coherence in Practice: A Stock-take of the Intended, Tested and Taught Mathematics Curriculum in South Africa. Michael K. Mhlolo

## Rationale and background

A closer analysis of current reform in mathematics education in South Africa reveals a unique and purposeful effort to develop students' higher-order cognitive and process skills. It was hoped these would address inequity and injustice for the poor and minority groups. While there is overwhelming support for the principles underlying these reforms implementation has been confounded by lack of alignment between the different curriculum components and as a result the learners from the previously disadvantaged communities continue to be left behind.

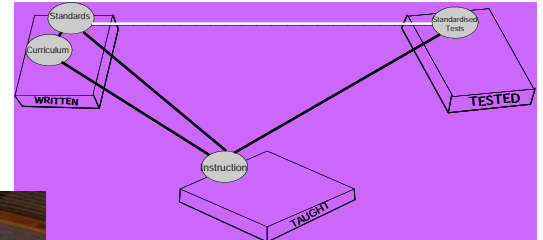
## (Emerging) Findings at a glance

There was a very low (0.2) alignment index between the written and tested curriculum in terms of higher order skills and processes i.e. these were not being tested in the national exams.

Teacher activities and utterances focused more on developing learners procedural rather than conceptual understanding of mathematics.



## Research Design



## Policy and practice implications

In terms of policy, if higher order skills continue to be ignored in the exams then teachers were not likely to be compelled to teach them and the envisaged learner empowerment might not be achieved. For classroom practice, there is need for more research focusing on specific learning outcomes and how teachers could be capacitated in order to be able to translate the vision into reality.

## Aims and objectives or research questions

To what extent are the espoused concepts and skills:

- (a) Tested in the examinations
- (b) Translated into classroom practice

## Publications

Mhlolo, M. K. and Venkat, H. (2009), Curriculum Coherence: An analysis of the National Curriculum Statement for Mathematics (NCSM) and the exemplar papers at Further Education and Training (FET) level in South Africa ARJMSTE 13 (1) pp 33 - 49

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