Creating the Implementation Loop for Quality Teaching and Learning of HIV and AIDS in Schools

Paul Mupa
Faculty of Arts and Education and Quality Assurance Unit, Zimbabwe Open University, PO box 1210
Masvingo, Zimbabwe
E-mail of the author: mupapaul@gmail.com

Abstract
The study sought to shed light on conditions that are needed by schools to become learning organisations and knowledge creating schools for quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS. The study was based on a qualitative paradigm. Purposive sampling was done to select participants from a population of teachers and school heads in primary schools in Zimbabwe. Open- ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were the main data gathering tools. The study strengthens the knowledge of the connections between school conditions and quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS. The study found out that schools teachers and school heads lack knowledge of the subject, they lack commitment to teach HIV and AIDS, the schools lack textbooks and other useful resources and materials to teach the subject, the curriculum is not well spelt out and syllabus documents are not available, if at all they exist. The study recommends education and training of both teachers and school heads, provision of resources, crafting of a relevant curriculum and availing of syllabuses in schools.
Keywords: HIV and AIDS; learning organisations; schools, quality teaching and learning

1. Background

The teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS in schools requires school conditions that create an effective implementation loop within the system. Schools need to be learning organisations that create effective learning conditions. In line with Plato's issue of the allogary of the curve (Boyun, 2010), the prisoners of the cave are like learners who are in darkness and lack quality HIV and AIDS education in schools. The journey out of the cave and up into the light is the task that schools should take to impart quality HIV and AIDS education to learners. The journey out of the cave is instigated in a mysterious moment in which ''someone'' compels one to stand up and walk towards the light. In an educational view, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that conditions that foster organisational learning are created so that there are knowledge gains made by the learners in terms of HIV and AIDS.

Teacher pedagogy in schools needs to be the focus not because the quality of teaching is weak, but because the challenge of primary teaching is great. Quality of teaching removes the valley of dearth between the learner and the matter that is being taught. Peters said that teachers' and students' main concern as participants is the discovery of new knowledge. It is argued that:

> The cardinal function of the teacher is to get the pupil on the inside of a form of thought or awareness....At a later stage, when the pupil has built into [his or her] mind both the concepts and modes of exploration involved, the difference between teacher and taught is obviously only one of degree. For both are participating in the shared experience of exploring a common world. The teacher is simply more familiar with its contours and more skilled in finding and cutting pathways. The good teacher is a guide who helps others to dispense with [his or her] services (Peters as cited in Beckett, 2011, p. 245).

The teacher's teaching conditions are the learner's learning conditions. Such school conditions are needed to give an effective implementation loop for any subject including HIV and AIDS.

For Ladson-Billings, the primary role of relevant teaching is to empower students to examine critically the society in which they live and to work for social change. But Ladson-Billings also cites Eliot Wigginton saying that this form of pedagogy empowers teachers as well.

> Culturally relevant teachers come to participate in a reciprocal relationship with students in which they use their professional knowledge and skills to help students academically, socially, and culturally. In turn, the students can use their cultural and community knowledge to help their teachers more fully integrate into the students' (and their parents' and communities') worlds. The teacher becomes a ''new'' person, made over by the experience of interaction with ''new'' views and perspectives of the world, and comes to believe that she or he can learn from students as well as teach them (Beckett, 2011, p. 252).

In the fight against HIV and AIDS, it is important therefore to reframe and reinvent schools and make them learning organisations in order for learners to gain quality HIV and AIDS knowledge that can stem the tide from society. Reframing schools as learning organisations, where the structures, processes and practices foster

continuous learning of all those involved, should take the centre stage in the learning environment in order to bring about required changes in the system (Silins and Mulford, 2002).

1.1 School as the learning centre

A good school guards, guarantees and improves the quality of education and this includes assessments in three domains: (a) management of the quality of education; (b) the quality of teaching and learning; (c) the quality of outcomes. For quality standards, schools have to observe the following: Quality management, Testing, Teaching and learning, Curriculum content, Learning time, Teaching process, School climate, Pupil support, Output/outcomes, Performance (Hofman, Dijkstra and Hofman, 2008). Tests therefore are a form of quality assurance practice that injects lenses to close the implementation loop or gap of the subject. The school as a learning organisation, is defined by Leithwood and Aitken as quoted in (Hofman, Dijkstra and Hofman, 2008, p. 283) as:

> a group of people pursuing common purposes (and individual purposes as well) with a mutual commitment to regularly weighing the value of those purposes, modifying them when that makes sense, and continuously developing more effective and efficient ways of accomplishing those purposes.

What society expects from the school system is quality education that equips students with knowledge and skills that are useful at present and in the future. The quality of the educational process is thus measured by the quality of the product. In that view, the decrease in the spread of the HIV and AIDS pandemic would be a sign of its effective teaching in schools. If students manage to change behaviour, not changing behaviour from unprotected sex to the use of condoms, but totally abstaining from sex, then it means schools will have played their part of closing the loop.

1.2 Quality in Primary School Education

Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today. Quality education includes:

- adequate resources and facilities;
- content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas asHIV and AIDS prevention.gender, health, nutrition, and peace;
- processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; and
- outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society (UNICEF, 2000, p. 4).

1.3 Organisational learning

Senge (2006) characterised a learning organisation as one that learns, readily adapts to change, detects and corrects errors and continually improves. From the literature on organisational learning, Marks *et al.* (2000, p. 241) have identified the following central concepts associated with learning organisations:

- identifying and correcting problems;learning from past experience;acquiring new knowledge; processing issues on an organisational level; andchanging the organisation.

The emergence of organisational learning depends on the existence of at least three favourable conditions, knowledge, ability and intention (Senge, 2006).

1.4 Theoretical Frameworks: Senge's model of Organisational learning

Senge's (2006) model of organisational learning has been shown to be useful for school development. A central part of Senge's (2006) model is based on the five core disciplines:

1. Personal mastery: Many organisations and individuals live in a self-made web of illusions. Breaking out of this trap is a process of learning.
2. Mental models: We need to clarifydeeply held internal images of the world around us which limit our thoughtsand slow down our thinking processes so that we can become aware of the mental models that they are built on.
3. Shared vision: If the organisation succeeds in transforming the individual visions of its members to a positive, sustainable shared vision, it has set the basis for profound organisational learning.
4. Team learning: if the energies of the members in a team are aligned so that they strive in the same direction, the result is extremely powerful.
5. Systems thinking: Organisations should be seen as open systems in which all parts interact with each other and with the environment.

Systems thinking constitutes the main basis for organisational learning and it has been shown to be associated

with higher organisational performance. There is a certain interdependence between the five disciplines and they need to be seen as a system of interconnected relationships with links to outside organisations (Bui and Baruch, 2010; Lagrosen and Lagrosen, 2012).

1.5 The process model
In the debate for quality in schools, several models are made reference to. This study employs the process model of school education quality. The process enables staff to perform the teaching task effectively and learners to gain fruitful learning experiences easily. Leadership, communication channels, participation, co-ordination, adaptability, planning, decision making, social interactions, social climate, teaching methods, classroom management, learning strategies, and learning experiences are often used as indicators of education quality. The process is transformational and includes management process, teaching process, and learning process (Cheng and Tam, 1997).

1.6 Statement of the problem
There is sustained prevalence of HIV and AIDS in society although schools are teaching the subject. School education is considered as the basis and bedrock for change of human behaviour and societal development. Schools seem to be failing to close that implementation gap. Schools seem to lack the necessary conditions for quality teaching and learning of the subject HIV and AIDS.

1.7 Main research question
What conditions affect schools to become learning organisations for quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS?

1.8 Research questions
1.8.1To what extent does teacher quality influence quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS?
1.8.2 How does leadership commitment influence quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS in schools?
1.8.3To what extent does the availability of resource materials and equipment influence quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS in schools?
1.8.4 How does curriculum quality influence quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS in schools?

1.9 Literature
The engine for quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS is the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter. Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is essential for effective classroom instruction. In addition, they also need information regarding the (a) educational, psychosocial, and medical effects of HIV or AIDS on children and families; (b) universal precautions related to infection control in school settings; and (c) ethical and legal requirements for confidentiality. Moreover, teachers must understand students' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions regarding susceptibility to HIV infection and their socio-cultural attitudes and values as a foundation for developing culturally and developmentally competent curriculum and instruction (Sileo, 2005). When parents send their children to school, they have in mind a teacher who has knowledge of subject matter. Lack of such knowledge brings the school system into disrepute.

It is argued that the education of children merits the highest priority in a world afflicted by HIV and AIDS specifically because a good education ranks among the most effective and cost effective means of HIV prevention (World Bank, 2002). Schools should create the conditions that enable the quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS because society has hope in schools as panaceas to reversing the tide.

Literature points to leadership as the cornerstone of all teaching and learning that takes place in a school. The field of educational leadership has received significant attention due to a growing recognition of the role of effective leadership in improving the schooling experience. The process of curriculum planning and implementation, resource mobilisation and teacher development demands that leadership plans and prepares teachers to be ready to teach new subjects like HIV and AIDS. Research has established a link between effective leadership and enhanced school performance (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins 2008), and writers have argued that schools may not be able to achieve a successful turnaround of learner achievement in the absence of 'talented leadership' (Leithwood et al. 2008: 29). The discourse on effective leadership for school improvement brings under the spotlight the significance of leadership knowledge of the teaching of HIV and AIDS and training programmes that equip leaders with the necessary skills they need to address the current challenges of the pandemic.

1.10 Research methodology

The research was qualitative and followed the interpretivist paradigm. Open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used as data gathering instruments. The population for the study were primary school heads and teachers. Purposive sampling inclusive of sampling by case was done (Patton, 1990) to select school leaders and teachers teaching grades four to seven where HIV and AIDS is taught in the primary schools. The constant comparative method was used in analyzing data in this research. The steps of the constant comparative method were followed as they are outlined by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) as follows:

Step 1: Collecting data from the interview, documents, open-ended questionnaires and recording it, reflecting on it immediately after data collection;

Step 2: Transcribing data verbatim immediately after the interview. Placing additional comments in brackets;

Step 3: Reading through the data and coding of data according to emerging categories;

Step 4: Unitising the data and identifying units of meaning in the context of the research questions and the topic;

Step 5: Identifying provisional categories and sub-categories (The phenomenon represented by a category is given a conceptual name). Matching unitised data cards to category;

Step 6: Refining categories and making a list of key items (main ideas), words and phrases. Doing a literature check to confirm whether the participants' responses during the interview bear some similarities to the research topic and what other respondents conclude in similar studies. This is the final check for trustworthiness.

Findings

Participants were of the view that lack of knowledge and training negatively affects quality of teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS. Respondents had the following to say:

T: The only training I got for teaching HIV and AIDS was through a workshop. As a practitioner, I need a lot of detail to support me to teach the subject effectively

T: Each subject has area has a specific and special way of how to teach it. Without the knowledge of how to teach it, the teaching would be poorly done and in some cases wrong approaches used

H: Dealing with teachers who are not trained in a particular subject is a problem, it really affects the quality of teaching

Teacher pedagogy enhances quality teaching and learning of the HIV and AIDS programme. Specific training in a specific subject is needed if quality is to be achieved. Pedagogy consists of general knowledge, beliefs, and skills related to teaching. It includes knowledge and beliefs of learning and learners, knowledge of principles of instruction such as small group instruction, knowledge and skills related to classroom management and knowledge and beliefs about the aims and purposes of education (Wilson, Shulman &Richert in Kitta (2004). Emphatically, teachers need ways to see into the subject matter through the eyes, hearts and minds of learners.

Lack of knowledge in the subject

Participants highlighted that teachers lack knowledge in the subject area. They had the following to say:

T: Subject knowledge is a pre-requisite for effective teaching and learning otherwise one would just be wasting children's time.

H: Most teachers struggle to teach HIV and AIDS because of lack of knowledge

The kind of content in the plan books observed showed that teachers lacked knowledge of the subject in all cases. Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is essential for effective classroom instruction (Sileo, 2005).

Teachers lack confidence to teach the subject

Participants highlighted that teachers lack confidence to teach HIV and AIDS. They had this to say:

T: It is true that teachers lack confidence and this is negatively affecting the quality of teaching the subject

H: Yes, our teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject. More so, there are very few in-service training programmes to alleviate the problem

Lack of confidence in a subject is a weakness on the side of the teacher and causes disengagement. A disengaged teacher lacks effectiveness in teaching. The need for in-service training is therefore widely acceptable in schools (Walker, Green and Tilford, 2003).

Poor quality of teachers leads to poor quality of HIV and AIDS teaching

Respondents were objective enough to take the position although it points to a weakness related to their practices. They mentioned several factors associated with this situation:

T: Inadequacy of text- and reference books, lack of teaching materials, poor school leadership, low motivation

H: Lack of regular in-service education programmes

H: Some teachers failed in science their O level examinations, yet they are selected to go to colleges to study science which is the foundation for HIV and AIDS knowledge which they would ultimately teach

This research points out that teacher quality and staff developmentare thebedrock in the teaching and learning process. Quality teaching clears the roadblocks for pupils to travel in a smooth road. Lip-service in implementing the subject should not be done at the expense of the learners.Duke in Kitta (2004) argues that for successful implementation of change, there should be good leadership, continuous staff development, talent diversity, a collaborative culture, flexibility and stability.

Poor planning affects quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS programme

Respondents raised the issue of poor planning as central to effective service delivery in the teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS. The following responses shed light:

H: The subject is poorly planned andteachers are not taking the scheming and planning of HIV and AIDS seriously

T: We are just fulfilling the demands of the school that we need to plan the subject but a lot of pretence and lip-service is being done because in my case, I really do not know what to plan

Literature points to the need for professional development to meet proper planning needs. (Craig, Kraft and du Plessis in UNICEF, 2000).

Lack of commitment by teachers affects quality teaching and learning

Respondents noted that teachers lack commitment in teaching the subject HIV and AIDS and this affects quality teaching and learning. They had the following to say:

H: HIV and AIDS is taught in passing and teachers do not teach the subject as per time table, lessons are taught just to fulfil policy demands and meet supervision requirements

T: One really has to commit oneself in the four areas that are examinable, not HIV and AIDS

T: To tell a parent that your child is not able to write a composition or to comprehend a passage but has knowledge of HIV and AIDS, I think you will be in trouble. I just do not commit myself to that subject

Lack of teacher commitment is coming out as an important variable affecting quality teaching and learning of the HIV and AIDS programme in primary schools. It is argued that efficient use of school time has a significant impact on student learning (UNICEF, 2000). Teachers' presence in the classroom represents the starting point.

Teachers' low knowledge levels of the subject affect quality teaching and learning

Respondents were of the view that teachers teach using assumptions because they lack knowledge. Respondents had this to say:

H: Some teachers lack knowledge of what to teach, what to scheme and their teaching is poorbecause they lack information

T: Lack of knowledge results in some teachers ignoring the teaching of the subject

This study brings out clearly that teachers have very little of what to teach as regards HIV and AIDS. Knowledge for teaching a school subject cannot be obtained through scratch means but through syllabuses and relevant textbooks. If teachers lack knowledge of what to teach, then the subject cannot be effectively taught. Silin in Mwebi (2007) found out that teachers were in a "quandary" and "silence" when required to teach HIV and AIDS in American schools. It is suggested that AIDS-related knowledge is still incomplete, and full of misconceptions (Eskander et al., in Surgevil and Akyol, 2011, p. 467).

The subject lacks learning and teaching material and equipment

Respondents raised the issue that the subject lacks teaching and learning material. As such, it becomes the task and responsibility of the teacher to source for these. They had this to say:

T: There is too much burden left to the teacher to look for resources in the name of being resourceful. Yet, the truth is that some teachers do not see the rationale for taking such a stride

T: The HIV and AIDS policy or syllabus lacks detailed information

H: Schools are not doing enough to provide quality equipment and material for teaching the subject

H: School heads do not make an order of equipment and material for teaching HIV and AIDS School committees, you cannot convince them. There is need for a shift in thinking.

In practice it is impossible to teach children about HIV and AIDS in classrooms that lack the essential ingredients for successful teaching and learning about any subject (Global Campaign for Education, 2004, p. 5). It is argued that students' learning, performance and achievement are highly influenced by the availability of adequate teaching and learning resources (Babyegeya, 2011).It is also argued that some education systems face "wholesale systemic decay". Schools lack the basic educational resources like textbooks and classrooms that can make instruction effective and productive (Kwedho, Simatwa and Ondigi, 2010).

Lack of textbooks for the HIV and AIDS programme for students and teachers affect quality teaching and learning

Respondents raised the issue of textbook unavailability as a dominant factor that negatively impacts on the quality of teaching and learning of the HIV and AIDS programme. They had this to say:

T:The books that one finds are not relevant to the Zimbabwean situation.

T: The 'Let's Talk about AIDS' text books that you find in schools are not useful at all. They are content deficient and lack clarity. Teachers end up without information to teach

H: There are no textbooks for students and teachers to use

H: Teachers operate like empty vessels and what more do we expect from learners in such a scenario.

World Bank as quoted in Mupa and Chabaya (2011) argues that books are effective in raising test scores and where there are really no learning materials in schools, virtually no learning takes place. Mutumbuka as quoted in Mupa and Chabaya (2011) notes that the formula of having someone else read to you does not provide pupils with the opportunity to understand concepts and learn effectively.

Even the syllabus is not available in the schools and you see what it means

Respondents raised the unavailability of the syllabus document as a major drawback in providing quality teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS. They had this to say:

T: I have never seen a syllabus for HIV and AIDS ever since I started teaching

T: I am told there is a grade four syllabus from the CDU but I have never seen that

H: There seems to be no definite answer as regards availability of syllabus

The syllabus is the basis upon which all teaching and learning of a subject is based. MOESC outlined the strategic goals and objectives of the HIV and AIDS and Life Skills Education Strategic Plan as to (MOESC, 2002:6):

- provide up to date and relevant information on prevention, impact mitigation, care and support to children that instil values and attitudes leading to positive behaviour change and a reduction in the incidence of HIV and AIDS and STIs;

Teachers cannot implement the goals without proper direction from the authentic and researched syllabus document.

Lack of management support

Respondents pointed out lack of management support as a factor that militates against quality teaching and learning of the subject. They had this to say:

T: The implementation of this subject is crippled by lack of management support from the top

T: Even the school heads are not highly supportive of this programme

T: I do not remember any day when the head observed a lesson on HIV and AIDS in my class and produced a critique

H: Support is lacking across the education sector

Research points to three types of support that promote success: academic, social, and financial (Tinto and Pusser, 2006). The South African Task Team on Education Management stressed that management is important because it provides a supportive framework for teaching and learning:

> Management in education is not an end in itself. Good management is an essential aspect of any education service, but its central goal is the promotion of effective teaching and learning. The task of management at all levels is ultimately the creation and support of conditions under which teachers and their students are able to achieve learning. The extent to which effective learning is achieved therefore becomes the criterion against which the quality of management is to be judged(Department of Education, 1996, p. 27).

Heads lack basic training in leadership development

Respondents raised the issue that HIV and AIDS is not being effectively taught because heads lack basic training in the subject and in school leadership in general. They had this to say:

T: Heads lack training in basic leadership skills

H: You know, it is now more than thirty years since I left teacher training college. Some of these newly introduced subjects are out of my touch. To make matters worse, when the subject was introduced, there were no workshopsto open up our minds. It becomes difficult to make meaningful supervision in an area in which you are blind.

The complex and varied demands made of school heads are encapsulated by Shields as follows:

> Educational leaders are expected to develop learning communities, build the professional capacity of teachers, take advice from parents, engage in collaborative and consultative decision making, resolve conflicts, engage in educative instructional leadership, and attend

respectfully, immediately, and appropriately to the needs and requests of families with diverse cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Increasingly, educational leaders are faced with tremendous pressure to demonstrate that every child for whom they are responsible is achieving success (Shields, 2004, p. 109).

Ineffective leadership supervisory practices and lack of commitment
Respondents pointed to lack of effective supervision and lack of commitment by the head as a factor affecting the quality of teaching of the subject.

T: Monitoring is needed to ensure that the information is imparted and to check that some teachers who are religiously inclined do not thwart the policy objectives

T: School leadership is not monitoring the teaching of the subject at all, it is doing nothing

H: School leadership lacks expertise of supervising the subject. As a result, they avoid making lesson observations for that subject and in that way, the subject suffers guidance

The respondents indicated that heads should exercise their knowledge of HIV and AIDS and all representation, planning, decision making, coordination, resource development, service provision and related functions through their leadership role. School supervision requires legitimacy and authority (Sergiovanni and Starratt in Lee, Ding and Song, 2008).

Lack of professional capacity
It was raised by most respondents that school heads lack professional capacity. The following sentiments shed light:

T: What we see are novices in the field who lack professional capacity and competence in terms of quality supervision.

H: Let me admit that some school heads lack the professional capacity to handle the subject HIV and AIDS. They lack fairness and firmness, tolerance, patience, commitment to work

In the absence of professional capacity among the school heads, there is very little meaningful learning that goes on in the classroom. Professional capacity refers to the ability to manage pupil assessment, knowledge of teacher appraisal techniques, knowledge of pupil teaching techniques, skills for teaching adults, ability to vet teachers' lesson notes, knowledge about leadership, skills for managing people, acquisition of higher academic knowledge, ability to counsel (Oduro, 2003, p. 211).

Curriculum with irrelevant content
Respondents felt that the curriculum seems irrelevant to the needs of students and society.

T: Everyone seems to be sick and tired of hearing about HIV and AIDS. That goes for me as well

H: It is important to make a needs assessment before instructing people to teach a subject so that content becomes relevant and closes the need gap

This finding is in line with what Miremba (2002:300) found in Uganda: "To the majority, the AIDS curriculum delivery was not interesting, the content irrelevant, and its programme aims were thus undermined." In a study in Kenya, the problem of inadequate curriculum materials hampered successful implementation of AIDS education (Kwedho,Simatwa and Ondigi, 2010).

1.11 Conclusions and Recommendations
The study concludes that schools need teachers and school heads who have knowledge of the subject. They need to show commitment to teach the subject, they also need textbooks and other useful resources and materials. The curriculum has to be well spelt out and syllabus documents have to be made available for quality teaching and learning. Staff development programmes and workshops have to be carried out in schools in order to empower practitioners with knowledge and reinvent the schools. Teacher development in teaching the subject HIV and AIDS would go a long way towards quality teaching and learning of the subject. Good teaching becomes the basis of reversing and removing the tide from society. Effective leadership that create school conditions and bring resources for effective teaching of the subject is called for. Schools should develop curriculum that is effective to promote knowledge among learners so that the learners are quite aware of the dangers of engaging in sexual activities.

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