

Flipping Regulated Quality Assurance Perception in Occupational and Vocational Learning: An Industry Perspective

Dr. Jason Le Grange

The

Institute for Upskill and Development

Cape Town, South Africa

Abstract

The research considers quality assurance practice in occupational and vocational learning, not from the perspective of educators and quality assurance experts but rather from the workplace, which employs learners who exit the national summative assessment and that is impacted by already employed learners who have to attend the assessments. It analyzes quality assurance, and more specifically regulated quality assurance in education, which has very specific requirements in the assessment management process. National or agency developed policy defines and expects that the quality assurance of a summative assessment is administered and managed according to a set of criteria or guidelines. In South Africa there is a formal system in place which will assess the occupational ability of a candidate in terms of published national standards and outcomes. This validation of the learners' skills, like that of trades, provides an opportunity for specific sectors to improve the learning and development within it, as well as to ensure the integrity of the associated body of knowledge. The research identifies the many benefits to this system – a learning pathway for new learners and an opportunity for formal recognition of existing candidates already in the workplace. Through a critical evaluation of the assessment components within currently registered qualifications it is noted in some cases that a practical assessment task is required which requires the learners to demonstrate their competence in that task. For those learners who are employed and want to be recognized

for their knowledge and skills partaking in this assessment would be a requirement for purposes of credits and certification. The research considers the tension between quality assurance practice, which follows certain processes to ensure the quality and validity of the assessment and the workplace that is challenged during the assessment process as staff are not available to fulfill the basic functions of work. The 'flipped' approach explores how the workplace, specifically in the wholesale and retail sector, considers and recommends criteria and guidelines for the regulated summative assessment process in order to inform quality assurance bodies of their needs from the perspectives of how national policy impacts on their operations.

Keywords: quality assurance, occupational learning, assessment models