




Teaching Experiences with Overcrowded Classrooms in Primary Schools in the Or Tambo Coastal District of South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper was to explore teaching experiences with overcrowded classrooms in primary schools in OR Tambo Coastal District of South Africa. The paper took on a subjective exploration approach in which a contextual investigation configuration was embraced. Unstructured interviews were used to gather data. The paper's overall findings indicate that teachers' experiences with overcrowding in their classrooms are "stressful." The overcrowding of a classroom has been identified as a stressful environment by teachers themselves. Inadequate classroom space, health and safety concerns, a lack of learner-teacher interaction, and disruptive behaviour were some of these conditions. Inadequate teaching time, an increase in workload, and emotional and psychological issues were also experienced by teachers. The research also reveals the factors that contribute to stressful experiences namely, Discipline, limited space, and insufficient resources. Additionally, the findings demonstrated that teachers use individual resources and collaborate with one another to manage classroom overcrowding. The paper recommends that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) builds more classrooms and puts in measures to ensure that the ratio of teachers is always below 1:30 in order for teachers to teach students without the stress of facing overload. This article adds to the existing literature on employee welfare in the South African educational system.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper aimed to ascertain the teaching experiences in overcrowded classrooms in South African primary schools. It is impossible to stress how important education is in South Africa, and every teacher aspires to be an expert in their field. Nevertheless, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) "requires a high standard of techniques from its employees, and as a result, makes many changes to the educational system that result in overcrowded classes.¹ Teachers often experience fatigue if there

¹ Dlova. "The Causes of Stress as Perceive by Senior Secondary School Educators in Butterworth Education District (M.Ed. Dissertation) Mthatha." *Walter Sisulu University*. (2009).

are overcrowded classes. As a result, they can develop the tendency of skipping classes so that they seek medical attention in dealing with their stress.

The phenomenon of overcrowded classes can also relate to student ill-discipline, negative attitudes, and misbehavior. Learners are at the adolescent stage, so they have their own way of interpreting things which can be difficult to deal with in terms of disciplinary or behavioural problems. Nomtshongwana and Buka support this claim by stating that overcrowded classes, unlike large classes, have now become a normative phenomenon and a sociocultural encounter in both developed and developing countries, including South Africa.²

According to Ntunta and Willem, the problem of overcrowded classes was the test that option al schools in Gauteng looked at. According to their investigation, the wonder of overcrowded classes contributed to the frustrations of teachers and managers because it directly affected the restraining of students who were battling for limited resources, such as seats, latrines, learning material, and other resources.³ According to De Lannoy and Hall, considering the information base of the DBE, South Africa encountered an expansion in the Learner Educator Ratio (LER) for customary schools between 2000 and 2004 but is yet to see a reduction in the LER incompletely because of the consideration of instructors utilized by School Governing Body (SGB).⁴ The author however posits that what Lannoy and Hall state may doubtlessly not be the situation in recently burdened schools in South Africa. SGBs in many schools cannot stand to enlist teachers, because of the high pace of joblessness and the financial status of South Africa.

According to the DBE, in 2014, KwaZulu-Natal's state-funded schools had a pupil-teacher ratio of 30.4:1. The learner-teacher ratio was said to be 30.4:1 in the Post Provision Norms plan. Teachers in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal area are suffering because of overcrowded classrooms, which is a cause for concern. According to John, in certain schools in the Eastern Cape, teachers are seated three or four to a workstation intended for two, which hinders traffic flow in the classroom and necessitates extraordinary movement tactics. In one Eastern Cape school, there were just 24 instructors to serve 1,300 students.⁵

The South African Democratic Teachers Union's common secretary, Thabo Sematie, has declared that more than 15 schools in North West Province are overcrowded.⁶ As a result, it is up to the teachers to manage the situation of packed classrooms. For some teachers, this is a problem since it causes a lot of problems in the classroom.

The large number of teachers quitting their jobs in primary schools and reports from others about their lack of passion for teaching prompted this inquiry. The authors thus set out to investigate teaching experiences in overcrowded classrooms in primary schools in OR Tambo Coastal District of South Africa. The following study objectives were developed to accomplish the drive of this paper:

1. To determine teachers' experiences on causes of overcrowded classrooms.
2. To ascertain strategies that can be used by teachers to manage overcrowded classrooms.

The study begins with a literature review on the causes of overcrowding, and the coping mechanisms that have been adopted by other regions. It then presents the data from the field study, analyses it to ascertain the impact of overcrowded classrooms and then offers recommendations to address the challenge.

² Thanduxolo Nomtshongwana and Andrea Mqondiso Buka, "Teachers' Experiences on Stress during COVID-19: A South African Case Study," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (January 11, 2023): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2023411>.

³ Ntuta, N and Schurink, W. "Towards Sustaining Performance in a Gauteng Secondary School." *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 8 (2010). 10.4102/sajhrm.v8i1.191.

⁴ A De Lannoy and K Hall, "Education-Learner to Educator Ratio," *Children Institute, www.childrencount. Ci. Org. Za/Indicator. Php*, 2012.

⁵ V. John, "Forgotten Schools of the Eastern Cape Left to Rot," *Mail and Guardian* 8 (2013).

⁶ John, "Forgotten Schools of the Eastern Cape Left to Rot."

Causes of Overcrowding in South African Schools

The introduction of free, compulsory education and the beginning of democracy, which resulted in the repealing of the Group Areas Act resulted in overcrowded classrooms. The government also introduced the School Nutrition Programme (SNP) where learners are fed daily in low economic areas. With the high rate of unemployment, poverty and child-headed families, this programme might be the only hope for learners to receive decent food at least once a day and thus encourage them to attend school. However, this seeming good has rather contributed to the problem of overcrowding of schools in South Africa.

Hachem and Mayor state that in the United States of America, overcrowding is a genuine test in many educational systems, especially in downtown areas, where an absence of space for new development is higher than normal and financing for such development is restricted.⁷ South Africa differs from the USA as space is accessible, particularly in provincial and municipality schools, but there is an absence of the necessary finances to build new structures to meet the increasing rate of enrolment. Learners are, therefore, forced to learn in cramped spaces with no planning for the building of new structures, for example, libraries, gym rooms, laboratories, and storerooms. In research on the connection between overcrowding and learners' learning, it was found that in schools located in deprived areas, a lack of classrooms can adversely affect learning.⁸

Ganimian and Murnane contend that, given the high number of students per teacher, there is no opportunity for teachers to identify students with challenges so that they can be assisted.⁹ Tenorio agrees that teaching in overcrowded classrooms prevents the teachers to address specific questions and concerns of affected learners.¹⁰ Preble adds teachers battle to have one-on-one coordinated sessions with all the learners because there is insufficient space to deal with every individual learner. This may influence the nature of instructing and learning as it may be difficult to distinguish learners with learning challenges.¹¹

Another issue that may add to a shortage of resources is the redeployment of teachers and the reorganisation of schools. According to research done in India by Tan, teachers were assigned to areas where there was purportedly a shortage.¹² This was directed by the Department of Public Instruction to guarantee that teachers were distributed across the schools. Teacher redeployment was applied in India, according to the learner-student ratio which was viewed as a basis. For instance, if a teacher has less than forty learners, that teacher would be redeployed and sent where he/she was required.¹³ What was to befall the helpless learners who were left without a teacher essentially because there were less than forty? The inconsistent distribution of human resources left teacher associations baffled by this action. Strikes and protests were held at the Department of Education's offices to express their displeasure.¹⁴ These teachers were clearly redeployed to guarantee a fair arrangement but there was no reasonable strategy with regard to who might care for learners when their teacher was placed elsewhere because they were less than forty in number. The probability is that they would be taken care of by another teacher whose number of learners was over forty and, in this manner, cause overcrowded again, or learners being left unattended because of badly planned redeployment.

⁷ H Hachem and P Mayor, "Overcrowding in Schools: Why Is It a Huge Issue," Retrieved September 28 (2019): 2020.

⁸ Department of Education of the United States of America, 2010.

⁹ Alejandro J Ganimian and Richard J Murnane, "Improving Education in Developing Countries: Lessons from Rigorous Impact Evaluations," *Review of Educational Research* 86, no. 3 (2016): 719–55.

¹⁰ Encarnacion Hidalgo Tenorio, "Critical Discourse Analysis, an Overview," *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 10, no. 1 (2011): 183–210.

¹¹ Brian C Preble, "A Case for Drones," *Technology and Engineering Teacher* 74, no. 7 (2015): 24.

¹² May Tan, "Mathematics and Science Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding the Teaching of Language in Content Learning," *Language Teaching Research* 15, no. 3 (2011): 325–42.

¹³ Andrew J Martin and Rebecca J Collie, "Teacher–Student Relationships and Students' Engagement in High School: Does the Number of Negative and Positive Relationships with Teachers Matter?," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 111, no. 5 (2019): 861.

¹⁴ The Times of India City. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/archive/year-2013.cms>

Obi et.al., state that the practice of teachers' redeployment in Nigeria was intended to change the shortcoming in circumstances whereby teachers tend to work in metropolitan zones.¹⁵ Charles's findings indicate that the bunching of teachers in metropolitan areas impeded education in outlying areas. The Nigerian government to ensure quality teaching and learning decreed that each school ought to have at least eight educators regardless of the topographical area of the schools.¹⁶

Coping and Managing Overcrowded Classrooms

There are numerous difficulties related to overcrowded classrooms; be that as it may, teachers have discovered approaches to adapt to these difficulties. Osai, et.al., emphasizes the importance of getting acquainted with learners to better understand them. Using story time meetings to become more acquainted with students, these scholars claim, is a helpful technique.¹⁷ This creates an atmosphere of engagement and significance in the classroom. A method of improving learning in enormous class sizes that Bonwell and Eison recommend is active learning. Learning is centered on learner action and commitment here.¹⁸ In addition, active learning can be anything that involves students doing things and thinking about what they are doing, such as using technology where students will be interested in participating in teaching and learning.

Johnson and Christensen note that one approach to managing large classes is through cooperation where learners collaborate to achieve shared goals. When students work in groups, it is easier to manage assignments in crowded or large classrooms since it is easier to control students.¹⁹ Gibbs, Jenkins and Alan also add that if the end goal for a teacher is to deal with the difficulties of an overcrowded classroom, they must utilize group techniques.²⁰ Despite this, Jansen claims that many South African teachers are failing in this regard.²¹ This argument implies that a lot of work is a valuable method for managing overcrowded classrooms, however, it is not suitable for every teacher. Various methodologies work for various people. Teachers need to investigate various alternatives and see what works best in their circumstances.

To help control the commotion levels in an overcrowded classroom, Thompson recommends establishing rules early in the school year.²² Schedules are significant in an enormous class and in this manner, learners ought to be instructed how to get into a routine and do what they should do from the get-go in the year.²³ Teachers face numerous challenges when classrooms are overcrowded.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper, inductive reasoning was used to understand the phenomenon surrounding teachers and learners. Thus, a case-study research approach was chosen. Eight primary school participants, made up of eight teachers from four different primary schools in the sub-district, were selected using the purposive sampling method. Participants were chosen from overcrowded schools because they were in the best position to provide information about the investigation. To get more in-depth views on the

¹⁵ I E Obi et al., "E-Learning Readiness from Perspectives of Medical Students: A Survey in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice* 21, no. 3 (2018): 293–300.

¹⁶ A. Charles "The evolution of a migraine attack - a review of recent evidence." *Headache*, 53(2), . (2013): 413–419. <https://doi.org/10.1111/head.12026>; Joycelyn Adwoa Osai et al., "Teachers' experiences With Overcrowded Classrooms In A Basic School In Ghana," *International Online Journal of Primary Education* 10, no. 1 (2021): 73–88.

¹⁷ J.A.Osai, K.D.Amponsah, E. Ampadu, and P. Commey-Mintah, "Teachers' experiences with overcrowded classrooms in a basic school in Ghana." *International Online Journal of Primary Education (IOJPE)*, 10(1), (2021); 73-88.

¹⁸ Charles C Bonwell and James A Eison, *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom*. 1991 ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports. (ERIC, 1991).

¹⁹ R. Burke Johnson and Larry Christensen, *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches* (London; Sage Publications, 2019).

²⁰ Graham Gibbs and Alan Jenkins, *Teaching Large Classes in Higher Education: How to Maintain Quality with Reduced Resources* (Routledge, 2014).

²¹ Jonathan D Jansen, "Image-Ining Teachers: Policy Images and Teacher Identity in South African Classrooms," *South African Journal of Education* 21, no. 4 (2001): 242–46.

²² Steven K Thompson, *Sampling*, vol. 755 (John Wiley and Sons, 2012).

²³ Thompson, *Sampling*.

difficulties of teaching in overcrowded classes in primary schools, face-to-face in-depth individual interviews were conducted. The authors choose a small number of participants because conducting individual interviews takes time. The research process and ethical concerns were discussed at an online meeting using Team-viewer prior to the interviews. The verbatim responses of the participants interviewed were captured using an audiotape. The transcript was reviewed manually, and the words were put into a Microsoft Word document in the English language. The interviews were conducted using English only.

The researchers looked over the data and familiarized them with it before completing the analysis. The researchers also thoroughly reviewed the data and gave in-depth explanations of what participants had stated. The information was then coded, categorized, and grouped into topics. The authors then sought the services of an independent coder to code and categorize the data. Based on research objectives, raw text codes were categorized and grouped into themes. The coding was done to assess the trustworthiness and credibility of the data authors analysed. The researchers integrated their disagreements and differences in the categories, codes, and themes to construct final and uniform categories, codes, and themes.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Causes of Overcrowding in Schools

The following is the presentation of data from teacher responses in the form of themes:

- **The Large number of learners**

One of the issues teachers mentioned was the large number of learners in the classrooms as compared to the actual number classes are supposed to accommodate. There were the same views when participants were asked - What is an overcrowded classroom?

P1 - *A class with more pupils than the stipulated teacher-pupil ratio (1:30). When you teach, you do mark than individually. I do not reach individual learners per period. You may only attend to fewer learners when it comes to lessons.*

P3 - *An overcrowded classroom is a classroom where the learner-teacher ratio is more than 1:33. There are more students than usual in the classroom, which is unusual. I can also describe it as a class full of desks which are more than the capacity of the class.*

The researchers were interested in finding out the impact of an abnormal number of learners in the classroom. The participants were asked how the abnormal number of learners in the classroom impacted their your teaching? The findings showed that teachers cannot move around in class, and some were not sure whether the learners at the back heard them properly.

P4 - *The uncontrollable class sometimes makes you lose your temper. Some learners can dodge the class because the teacher does not know who is present or absent in their class.*

P5 - *If a classroom is too full, it signifies that the number of students is more than is ideal, which hinders the teaching-learning procedure. In my class three learners are using one desk, moving in between the desks is impossible for me because there is no space.*

P6 - *The impact of the abnormal classroom is when a classroom has many learners, many desks, and plenty of charts. In other words, it is a congested class where an educator is unable to move around and cannot reach all learners. I am unable to give individual attention where it is needed.*

- **Grouping learners**

Data gathered revealed that the classroom atmosphere is not favourable for both teachers and learners. There were different views when participant were asked - How do you teach overcrowded classes?

P1 - *I end up grouping them according to how they sit in each classroom, which sometimes presents difficulties in their performance, and the stress is transferred to me eventually. Each one teaches one*

strategy that works for me. Extra class will make them more attentive and participative for you will know each learner.

P4 - It is difficult to teach them because the desks do not allow me to walk around. In most cases, I finish my lesson without knowing whether they understood my lesson. I teach them with the hope that they do understand because even their classwork books cannot determine the exact feedback, so it is difficult to finish marking them.

P6 - I often stand in front of the class (move from corner to corner). I also ask learners to come in front of a presentation. Sometimes I group them, giving them group work so that they can learn to work together. But the overcrowded classroom is a serious problem because most of the time you deal with those learners that are in front of you, and it is difficult to maintain classroom control.

- **Discipline**

One of the issues teachers voiced was the ill-discipline of learners who cannot concentrate and not attending the classrooms without enough reasons that resulted in them feeling exhausted. They were asked - What are the challenges associated with overcrowded classrooms?

P4 - The challenges of the overcrowded classroom are ill-discipline, lack of individual attention, and uncontrolled temper tantrums. Fewer tasks on my periods, due to more explanation of the topic being taught and feedback to be given within the timeframe.

P6 - Some of the learners cannot concentrate or participate fully because of the lack of discipline, and too much noise. Because of overcrowding, some did not even bother to return the work and it is difficult to notice what is happening in class.

- **Limited Space**

One of the other issues teachers voiced was inadequate space in their classrooms.

P1 - "Space is so limited that there can never be any arrangement as there is no space for desks and chairs. Bayapakishana nje". (... They are just squeezed against each other).

P3 - Most learners at the back do not pay attention to the teacher whilst the teacher is busy teaching. If they are making noise, it makes it difficult for you to teach since there is a lack of space to move around.

P9 - If you are not able to move around the class, learners tend to dodge by not returning the books. I cannot apply individual attention because the class is full to its capacity, there is no neatness in the class.

- **Unfavourable classroom atmosphere**

Field data revealed that the classroom atmosphere is not favourable for both teachers and learners. The same views were expressed when teachers were asked - What are your experiences with overcrowded classrooms?

P2 - I found that there is little/no attention given to the teachers by the learners. You must always raise your voice as if you are in a meeting situation and it is irritating when pupils raise their hands to say, "We cannot hear what you are saying, sir."

P5 - Teaching is not effective, and it is also affecting the results of performing learners and even the ones who are struggling do not have enough time to express themselves.

Strategies that can be used by Teachers to Manage Overcrowded Classrooms

● Assistance from colleagues

Data revealed that teachers get acquainted with teaching overcrowded classes from the tips they receive from their colleagues and their experiences. There were different responses when this question was asked - Where did you get the experience that you can use in overcrowded classes?

P1 - *As a person of my kind, I always share what I have experienced, and by so doing I get assistance from my colleagues who also had the same problems. I, therefore, cope with the situation and find it easy to overcome any challenge I ever faced. The support that I get from my school management, my colleagues, and the challenges that are faced day to day in my work helps me to get the experience I have now.*

● Teacher training and professional development

Information uncovered that the peculiarity of overcrowded classes has impacted the expert advancement of teachers. Due to issues with discipline, a lack of support, and a lack of resources, they are unable to design engaging lessons. Teachers believe that this has affected their professional development and that they were not well trained to deal with this situation. How do you cope with overcrowded classrooms?

P1 - *"I cannot give my best. I was not trained to cope with this kind of situation. The department needs to provide workshops for teachers who deal with overcrowded classes."*

P2 - *It is not easy for me to cope but I do lesson preparation differently so that the lesson preparation will accommodate all the learners. But there is a need for proper training on how to deal with overcrowded classes. The circumstances forced me to be familiar with this situation. I decided to mark one group today and focus on the other rows in the subsequent days. They even mark themselves sometimes, but we need training so that we can deal with this situation.*

P4 - *"I have not been trained for this. I don't like teaching because of this, and I'm considering quitting."*

P5 - *I think grouping them helps me a lot. Each group has a leader, who reports back to the class after the activity. Group members are responsible to rectify mistakes before the class does so. This makes them attentive all the time.*

P8 - *Due to my working experience, I do have strategies for dealing with overcrowded classrooms, and grouping learners help me so much. I divide them into groups, and working together in groups assists me so much.*

P10 - *Potential teachers must be prepared to deal with overcrowded classrooms at teacher education institutions. A major test is difficult to deal with. You are out of options; You must accept it and instruct.*

● Individual attention

Data processed revealed that teachers used different strategies in their classrooms like grouping them, attending classes even on weekends and giving each learner a name tag. There were different views when this question was asked - What strategies do you use?

P2 - *Grouping strategy but individual submissions. Going around in your classroom is worth much so that you come across each learner by eye contacting them.*

P3 - *I am using different methods, for example, I use the discovery method, question, and answer method in the same lesson.*

P4 - *I have decided to improvise by attending with them during the weekends. The afternoon classes just give them more time. During the week, they mark each other (exchange books).*

P5 - *I use different teaching methods, for example, a question-and-answer method, and a discussion method.*

P6 - *The classroom should be set up strategically, with multiple levels of activities, the same concept taught in different ways, and personalized attention provided.*

P10 - *Each learner is having a name tag. I let them do a presentation and peer assessments.*

- **Assisting Slow Learners**

Processing the data reveals that every educator employs a few strategies. It was discovered that they do not group the slow learners together, but they try to give each learner individual attention. and if the question-and-answer method does not work, teachers switch to letting the learners present answers and come up with their own ideas. Are your methods effective?

P3 - *Yes, they do work because I had picked up slow learners. I assess them and mark the assessment and have time to do remedial teaching. As a result, they pass with 80%.*

P4 - *Sometimes these strategies work and sometimes they do not work. If the question and answer do not work, I change and let the learners discuss and come up with answers.*

P7 - *They do. My Grade 4's are still curious. They all want to be marked and the work noted by the teacher. Having the feedback helps to control and they want to have corrections.*

P9 - *Indeed, when I show the entire class, everyone learns, and those students likewise get the potential chance to get a hand on anything they missed when I offered individual consideration.*

- **Putting in Extra Effort**

According to the data, teachers are under a lot of pressure to teach, and they need to go above and beyond for their students. What impact have your experiences had on how you teach?

P1 - *Due to a lack of resources, I am having trouble covering some of the topics in a timely manner. I also need to take additional classes to cover these topics, and all that work made me feel stressed and exhausted.*

P2 - *It gave me a lesson that as a teacher you should work the extra mile just for the benefit of learners. You should sacrifice your time and money and check your own issues that resulted in stress.*

P4 - *Teaching is not effective in overcrowded classrooms, when asking questions orally, not every learner gets the chance to answer that question which makes me tired because I must repeat everything I do.*

P6 - *Many learners in the class are pushed by feedback to work more and improve. As a result, they can perform better and improve their attitude.*

P9 - *It has helped me to learn to deal with learners with different abilities, and to discipline learners. Also, how to deal with learners with different socio-economic backgrounds.*

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the data in relation to the objectives of the study. The research objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Examine the classroom overcrowding experiences of teachers.
2. To discover methods that educators can employ to manage classroom overcrowding.

Examining teachers' experiences with overcrowding a classroom

This study has revealed the various experiences of teachers in overcrowded classrooms. Some of them are: more students as compared to teachers, indiscipline, limited space, and insufficient resources. This demonstrates that students and teachers will be unable to perform to the best of their abilities for as long as there are disruptions to teaching and learning. This confirms Tenorio's position that a larger number of students in a class pushes the instructor-to-student ratio higher, which is a threat to educators.²⁴ If there are more students in each class, teachers won't be able to work more closely with each student because there won't be enough room for them to move around and talk to each other individually.

Methods that educators can employ to manage classroom overcrowding.

The second objective of this study was to identify strategies that educators can employ to manage classroom overcrowding. The various responses have shown strategies that teachers can use to manage overcrowding in their classrooms. These include using the grouping strategy but individual submissions, assistance from co-workers, teacher education and professional development, and going the extra mile to realize their vision. The responses of teachers demonstrated that they could investigate issues brought on by overcrowding in classrooms. They could have offered helpful hints that teachers use to manage classrooms with too many students. An educator stated that social activity work is beneficial since it makes it easier to check work and establish guidelines. In addition, educators mentioned their efforts to design activities so that students are as closely connected to one another as possible from the very beginning of the activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study showed that there are indeed more learners in the classrooms of the OR Tambo Coastal District than the required number. Thus teachers find it difficult to move around the classroom. The DBE is advised to build more classrooms and ensure that the ratio of teachers must be below 1:30 for teachers to teach students without the stress of facing an overload.

It was found that the classroom atmosphere is not favourable for both teachers and learners. The lack of space in the classrooms makes it difficult for both teachers and learners. It is recommended that DBE organizes specialized development training sessions for teachers on how to instruct in overcrowded classrooms. To minimize the damaging effects of overcrowding and empower teachers in such classes, School Management Teams need to take responsibility and initiate more problem-solving initiatives.

It was also revealed that teachers in overcrowded classrooms face issues of discipline among the students. It is, therefore, recommended that the DBE comes up with new ways of overcoming ill-discipline by providing a code of conduct for students. It is essential that teachers commit to their strategies from the first day of the school year and implement them consistently. When implementing discipline-related strategies, teachers must also consider and respect the multicultural nature of their classrooms. The concept of discipline and acceptable discipline strategies differs from culture to culture, and teachers should recognize this fact when teaching students from different cultures.

From the data collected, teachers were using various measures to manage their overcrowded classrooms. It is recommended that for teachers feel free from the stress of overcrowded classrooms, the DBE must employ assistant teachers and provide schools with enough resources like online learning where teachers can use their spare time to contact those students who need assistance. Overcrowded classrooms require exceptional organization from teachers. At all times, they must be well prepared. Trial and error are the best way to develop a fluid system that maximizes their student's time. Schools must examine the use of procedures aimed at improving the conditions under which teachers are provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to better adapt to an overcrowded classroom.

²⁴ Tenorio, "Critical Discourse Analysis, an Overview."

CONCLUSION

The paper explored teaching experiences in overcrowded classrooms in a primary school in OR Tambo Coastal District of South Africa. The field data revealed that teachers face challenges in overcrowded classrooms, which included instructional, discipline, management, and assessment challenges. However, some teachers deal with these challenges differently. Some use story time meetings, cooperation, and learning together to accomplish shared goals. It was also revealed that handling assignments in crowded or large classrooms is easier when students work in groups since it's easier to control them. Teaching in overcrowded classrooms can be difficult due to the ill-discipline of students, limited space, and inadequate resources. As a result, disruptions in teaching and learning will prevent students and teachers from performing to their full potential. As a solution to these challenges, the authors recommend teachers implement their strategies consistently from the first day of school. Multicultural classrooms must also be considered when teachers implement discipline-related strategies. Stakeholders should also assist in the construction of more schools and educating more teachers to fill the gap. This would go a long way to ensure that teachers are able to perform their duties efficiently and students get the best out of the education system.

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