



Instructional Supervision Strategies Employed by Heads of Department in Map Work Teaching: A Case Study of uMgungundlovu District, South Africa

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Abstract

Map work is an essential component of the geography curriculum in South African schools. Despite its importance, it remains a challenging area for many teachers, resulting in learners performing poorly in it. Heads of department (HoDs) are considered the ideal school-based leaders to facilitate instructional improvement for enhanced learner performance. The purpose of this study was to examine the strategies used by HoDs to support Grades eight and nine Social Sciences teachers in map work teaching in uMgungundlovu District, South Africa. The study used a qualitative case study design. Eight HoDs, eight Social Sciences teachers, and documents used by the HoDs and teachers were purposively selected. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to generate qualitative data that were thematically analysed. The study found that HoDs use the inspection-based, traditional supervision strategies. It is recommended that the Department of Education should establish professional development policies aimed at capacitating HoDs in instructional supervision. School-based instructional leaders should promote collaborative supervision as the effective strategy to improve instruction and enhance learner performance.

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Introduction

At the turn of the Century, world-wide interest in educational reforms and school accountability foregrounded learner performance as the main criterion for assessing educational quality (Pan et al., 2015). Associated with this, various map work studies which focus on learner performance and teacher map work knowledge have been conducted. In Turkey, Yalcinkaya and Karaca (2021) analysed studies that were aimed at improving secondary school learners' map skills. The finding was that learner performance in map skills increased. Sahin (2021) explored Social Sciences teachers' perceptions of map work and their teaching practices in Turkey. The study found that teachers' perception of map work was limited to map reading skills. In Nigeria, Shamble et al. (2023) examined secondary school learners' map reading performance consequent to the use of active learning strategies. The finding was that active learning strategies improve learner performance in map reading. In South Africa, Kwayi (2022) explored the difficulties teachers encounter when teaching map skills to Grade six learners. The study established that teachers lack sufficient map work knowledge. Recently, Schoeman and Chidzungu (2025) assessed the potential of short learning programmes in improving

Geography teachers' map work content knowledge. The finding was that the programmes improved teachers' map work content knowledge.

According to Ramsaroop (2018), teachers' poor map work knowledge is one of the reasons learners perform poorly in map work. Tsakeni and Jita (2019) assert that learner performance improves because of the support school leadership provide to teachers. As school-based instructional leaders, Heads of Department (HoDs) are responsible for supporting teachers to improve instruction for enhanced learner performance (Harju, 2020). Kubheka et al. (2025) examined HoDs' instructional leadership experiences in Gauteng schools, South Africa. The findings were that HoDs coordinate the curriculum, supervise teachers, and monitor learner performance. Although Ncokazi and Agyeman (2025) found that instructional leadership is significant in improving instruction, several authors maintain that empirical research has not generated sufficient insights on the role played by the HoDs in facilitating instructional improvement (Kubheka et al., 2025; Mahome & Mphahlele, 2024; Malinga et al., 2021). Map work remains a challenging area for many teachers, resulting in many learners performing poorly in it (Kwayi, 2022; Ramsaroop, 2018). The objective of the study was to examine instructional supervision strategies used by HoDs to facilitate map work teaching. The research question that this study sought to answer was: What strategies do HoDs use to facilitate instructional improvement for enhanced learner performance in map work?

Literature Review

Instructional supervision

Instructional supervision includes all school-based strategies conducted to facilitate instructional improvement for enhanced learner performance (Agus et al., 2025; Zewdu, 2018). Monitoring, mentoring, demonstration, induction, coaching, and workshops are some of the strategies used by the HoDs (Edo & Uba, 2019; Mapane, 2017; Nnebedum & Akinfolarin, 2017; Ntsoane, 2017). Monitoring involves an on-going strategy whereby HoDs conduct lesson observations and offer feedback aimed at improving instruction. Mentoring is a strategy through which an experienced and knowledgeable teacher guides a novice teacher or a veteran but under-performing colleague. Demonstration includes actions of a skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced teacher displaying teaching strategies to lesser skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced teachers to improve their teaching (Nnebedum & Akinfolarin, 2017). Induction entails all the processes involved in guiding novice teachers adjust to the teaching profession. Coaching is a professional nurturing relationship in which experienced, skilled, and knowledgeable teachers share their skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values with less experienced, skilled, and knowledgeable ones to enrich their self-confidence to promote instructional improvement (Mapane, 2017; Ntsoane, 2017). A workshop is a temporarily formed platform in which teachers meet and share ideas to gain skills and knowledge they require for their professional development (Edo & Uba, 2019).

Instructional supervision evolution

Instructional supervision evolved from being conducted through inspection, an autocratic and hierarchical supervision approach for controlling instruction to being practiced in a collaborative manner aimed at improving instruction for the benefit of the learners (Agus et al., 2025; Glanz, 2018). Collaborative supervision developed because

of the limitations of the traditional, hierarchical approach (Agus et al., 2025). Through collaborative supervision, teachers and supervisors cooperate to improve lesson planning, classroom management, instruction, assessment, and teacher professional development (Agus et al., 2025; Siti et al., 2025; Wahyuningsih et al., 2026). In a study that investigated the application of collaborative supervision and its contribution to improving teacher performance, Wahyuningsih et al. (2026) found that collaborative supervision was implemented through collaborative planning, lesson observation, feedback, and follow-up sessions. According to Agus et al. (2025), collaborative supervision is more effective in facilitating instructional improvement than the top-down, inspection-based traditional supervision approach.

Numerous studies indicate that instructional supervision results in teachers' instructional improvement and learners' enhanced performance (Aldaihani, 2017; Eugenio, 2025; Paiste et al., 2026). According to Paiste et al. (2026), instructional supervision is particularly effective when it is conducted through mentoring, positive feedback, and reflective dialogue. Other studies indicate that there are instances when instructional supervision results in minimal or no impact on instruction and learner performance. In such cases, supervisors either practice the traditional approaches to supervision or they dedicate much of their time performing administrative duties (Dewado et al., 2019; Eshetu, 2020; Farchi & Tubin, 2019; Terra & Berhanu, 2019). Given that different instructional supervision strategies have different impact on instruction and learner performance, this study examined the strategies used by HoDs to support map work teaching.

Theoretical Framework

The study drew on Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership theory to understand the strategies used by the HoDs to facilitate instructional improvement for enhanced learner performance. Instructional leadership is a school-based leadership theory for supporting teachers to improve instruction for enhanced learner performance (Pansiri, 2008; Robinson, 2007). The conceptualisation of instructional leadership evolved from a hierarchical, top-down perspective to an indirect, collaborative one (Kim & Lee, 2020). Hallinger (1983) developed the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale, which was later used to develop the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) instructional leadership model (Pan et al., 2015). This model consists of three dimensions, which are defining school vision, mission, and goals; managing instructional programme; and developing the school learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The model is invaluable for understanding how instructional leaders facilitate teaching because it entails what instructional leaders do to improve instruction. The second dimension, specifically, includes the strategies used by instructional leaders. HoDs, as instructional leaders, develop departmental goals and policies aimed at improving learner performance; manage instructional programmes by supervising teachers' work and learners' work; and promote the school learning climate by supporting teachers on current approaches to instruction, by protecting instructional time, and by facilitating teacher professional development (DBE, 2022; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Kubheka et al., 2025).

Methodology

This study was underpinned by the interpretive paradigm, and the qualitative case study was used as the research design (Appanna, 2022; Creswell, 2014). The study was conducted in public secondary schools of uMgungundlovu District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Population and Sampling

The study population included HoDs, teachers, and documents that were used by the HoDs and teachers in the 128 schools of uMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal. A purposive sampling method was used because it allows for the selection of participants with in-depth knowledge of the researched phenomenon (Chai et al., 2021). The sample for this study included eight HoDs and eight Social Sciences teachers from eight schools. One HoD and one Social Sciences teacher were chosen from each school. Only the HoDs who supervised map work teaching were selected, and only senior Social Sciences teachers were chosen. The sample also included the Senior Phase Social Sciences Curriculum Policy Statements (CAPS) document; HoDs' and teachers' files; minutes of departmental/subject meetings; and learners' workbooks.

Data Generation

The data generation methods used were the semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. The interviews allowed for the elicitation of much information from the participants (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017; Ruslin et al., 2022). Documentary analysis facilitated data generation from the context within which the participants were found (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Dalglish et al., 2020). Two different interview schedules were used. One was for the HoDs and another one was for the teachers. With the participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to avoid missing some of the information given. The interviews were conducted in schools, in venues suitable to both the interviewees and the interviewer. The interviews lasted between 40 minutes and 60 minutes. To generate data from documents, the study employed the approach proposed by Dalglish et al. (2020). This approach involves a systematic procedure for collecting documents to acquire information that is essential for answering the research question (Dalglish et al., 2020). The HoDs' files and the minutes of meetings, more than the other documents, contained much of the information relevant to answer the research question.

Data Analysis

The study used the thematic analysis approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Accordingly, the audio-recordings of the interviews were listened to several times before being transcribed verbatim (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each transcript was read more than once for data familiarity (Byrne, 2022). Data from the transcripts were coded. After which the main theme and sub-themes were developed and reviewed (Byrne, 2022). Data extracts that capture the essence of the themes were used in the final report (Braun & Clarke 2006; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Congruent with the approach proposed by Dalglish et al. (2020), all the documents were thoroughly read. Data extracts from the documents were used to evaluate the information participants gave during the interviews.

Ethical considerations

Data collection began after the Institutional Research Ethics Committee from a South African university issued an ethical clearance certificate (Reference Number: IREC 238/22). The permission to conduct this study in uMgungundlovu district was received from the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department. Authorisation to conduct this study was also received from the principals of the schools identified for this study. The participants were informed of the nature of the study and their role in it. Issues of informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were explained. All the participants read and signed consent forms, understanding that they were not obliged to continue participating. To maintain confidentiality, data were anonymised.

Findings

In the section below, the schools are abbreviated as SCH1 to SCH8, the HoDs are referred to as HOD1 to HOD8, and the Social Sciences teachers are named SST1 to SST8, respectively. Participants reported various strategies used by HoDs to support teachers improve map work teaching. The main strategies identified were lesson observations; checking teachers' and learners' work; and extra-tuition.

Lesson observations

All the HoDs reported that they conduct lesson observations. Whereas many of the observations were formally organised and announced to teachers in advance, some were not. The participants indicated that many of the formally organised lesson observations occur because of the requirements of the Quality Management System (QMS). Some HoDs indicated that teachers' attitude towards lesson observations vary. While some teachers have a positive attitude towards them, others are either indifferent, or they display a negative attitude towards them. Despite teachers' varied attitudes, HoDs reported that they conduct them and highlight their importance in improving instruction.

When HOD1 was requested to comment on her role as a HoD, she stated:

We also do class visits. When I am visiting a teacher, I just observe and note down whether the teacher is seeking help or not. After that we also do one-on-one just to give an educator encouragement, and even the educators are allowed to say whatever they would like to be helped with (HOD1).

In the extract above, HOD1 provides an example of lesson observations that are formally organised, where teachers are informed beforehand. After observations, during a feedback session, teachers get motivated and are at ease to express how they would like to be supported. HOD1 was then requested to comment on learner performance in map work, and she commented:

Huh...fortunately, in our third Term I visited Social Sciences educators who were doing map work. I was extremely impressed when I was there in the classroom because in Grade 8, they were doing calculations. They were doing distance and area. Then in Grade 9 that is...Miss X is teaching Grade 9. What I found there, Miss X was teaching them the calculations in gradient. I was surprised to see that even Grade 9 now is doing gradient, but they were happy – they were comfortable (HOD1).

In the extract above, HOD1 reports on a class observation that was conducted without the teachers' prior knowledge. SST1 confirmed the types of class observations her HoD conducts. She stated:

She didn't give notice. I saw her getting in...Yooh...sometimes it is uncomfortable, and I feel like she doesn't trust me, but she explains that it is not that she doesn't trust me, it's just that she wants to find out that we are doing our work... [Laughter]... Sometimes she tells us that "I will visit you" so that we organise everything (SST1).

HOD1 uses the unannounced class observations to monitor the work of the teachers. Although SST1 sometimes feels uncomfortable with such visits, the open lines of communication between her and her HoD make her develop a positive attitude towards class observation.

When HOD6 was asked if he conducts class visits, he responded:

Yes, I do. We have a programme called QMS that has been introduced by the department whereby the departmental head, at some point, must do observations on teachers and try to score marks and discuss the scores, and develop an educator (HOD6).

The aspect of teacher development mentioned by HOD6, in the extract above, is corroborated by SST6 when reporting that she finds lesson observations particularly useful as they motivate her to do even better in her instructional practices. SST6 stated:

We do have a QMS. So yeah, that's another way he likes to check up on us, and he would come to class, and he would sit, and he will observe and just keep quiet and listens to you while you are teaching. Then you get feedback in terms of how you were doing in class and maybe you need to improve here and there, and stuff like that. So, you have one-on-one, so to say...yeah (SST6).

The participant was then probed if she found the one-on-one meetings useful or not, and she responded:

Very useful because sometimes...you know teaching is a stressful job, and to have somebody who is a leader and is down to earth and is encouraging then it does something to you as a teacher. You just...you become motivated, yeah (SST6).

During the feedback sessions, the encouragements offered by the supervisor motivate the participant to do better. Whereas SST6 displayed a positive attitude towards class visits, other teachers in the study were reported to be either indifferent or to be negative towards the visits. When HOD7 was requested to comment on teachers' attitude towards class visits, she indicated that teachers do not display any negative attitude thus:

They don't have a problem because when I visit them, I normally tell them that I will be looking for the annual teaching plan, the lesson preparation, and the learners' exercise books. So, I don't just visit them unaware. Then when I come to the classrooms, they are quite aware...they don't give me any negative attitude (HOD7).

The participant reports that she informs teachers about class visits in advance and that they do not display any negative attitude towards them. However, she does not indicate that the teachers show any positive attitude towards class visits. Apparently, in her case, they may as well be indifferent towards the class visits. Unlike HOD7, HOD6 provided a clear response when requested to comment on teachers' attitude towards class visits. He stated:

It depends on the individuals. Some of them don't like it. Some of them don't feel comfortable but it's a matter of, "you have to do it." But some of them don't like it and it's a matter of telling them that it is something that they must do, and its main aim is for development purposes (HOD6).

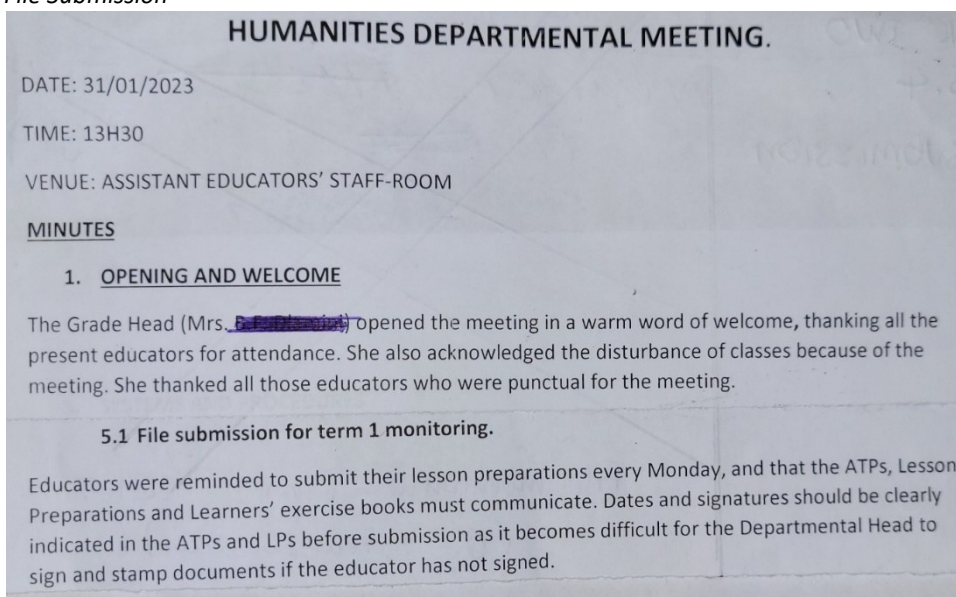
Irrespective of teachers' attitude towards lesson observations, HoDs conduct them. Part of the HoDs' responsibilities is to conduct lesson observations because they are an essential component of the QMS.

Checking teachers' and learners' work

All the participants reported that HoDs check teachers' files and learners' exercise books. In the teachers' files there are: Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs), Programme of Assessments, lesson plans, including CAPS documents. In the learners' exercise books, HoDs check learners' map work activities. Most participants reported that both the teachers' files and the learners' exercise books were checked regularly. However, SST3 reported that the frequency in which teachers' files were checked depended on HoDs' schedules. The participants further indicated that the checking of teachers' files and learners' exercise books was meant for HoDs to ascertain if teachers were up to date with their work or not, and whether what and how the learners were taught was aligned with the CAPS document or not. Figure 1 below depicts an extract from SCH7 departmental meeting minutes.

Figure 1

File Submission



The above extract indicates that teachers' lesson plans and learners' activities should correspond with teachers' ATPs, which are aligned with the CAPS document. The CAPS document spells out what is to be taught and how it should be assessed. These documents assist by ensuring that the content that needs to be taught is covered within a specified period.

To establish how HoDs check teachers' work, it was inquired from HOD1 if she had a program to monitor teachers' work. She responded:

Oh yes, we have! We check the work...we check prep, ATPs, learners' work...huh...but we have a schedule. Every second week of the month, we check prep and ATPs – if they've covered the work...when I am checking learners' work, I check how many activities because they are supposed to do at least three or two activities per week because they have...three periods per week. I know they must do three activities, giving those small questions (HOD1).

The extract above indicates that the HoD checks teachers' work fortnightly, and that the HoD is primarily concerned with curriculum coverage and the number of learners' map work activities done. The frequency in which teachers' work is checked by HOD1 is corroborated by SST1. When asked how her HoD ensures that she teaches all the map work topics she is supposed to teach, she responded: *"Twice a month she checks my lesson plans and signs that I taught all the lessons that I must teach, and she signs the ATP"* (SST1).

The participant was further asked how her HoD ensures that the map work content she teaches is CAPS compliant. She responded: *"I think she uses those lesson plans that I submit...and then every time before they write a test, I submit the question paper to her, and she checks if it is correct or not"* (SST1).

The participant was then requested to comment on how she felt being monitored by HOD1, and she responded:

I am comfortable because at the beginning of the year we know that our HoD will check our work. I know what she wants, and I know what she will do, and then if there is anything wrong, she will comment, and I must correct it (SST1).

In the extracts above, SST1 reports that her HoD does not only check her lesson plans and her ATP, but she also attaches her signatures to them. In addition to that, her HoD meticulously checks question papers before they are written by learners. This signifies the thoroughness with which these documents are checked. The participant also indicates that she is comfortable with how her HoD monitors her work because her HoD clarifies what she expects of them, as teachers. Therefore, SST1 feels comfortable with her HoD's monitoring strategies because they enable her to improve instruction.

Whereas many HoDs, like HOD1, reported that they check teachers' and learners' work fortnightly and appeared concerned with the quantity of learners' map work activities, few HoDs, like HOD2, reported that they do the checking weekly and prioritise the quality of learners' map work activities. When HOD2 was explaining how he checks learners' map work class activities, he stated:

Every Friday I will take a sample of learners' – their exercise books, just to make sure that the teacher adheres to the annual teaching plan and the learners do and understand those activities, and looking at the quality of those informal

activities because some teachers, maybe for two weeks, deal with low order questions without looking at the middle as well as high order questions (HOD2).

When checking learners' exercise books, HOD2 wants to find out if teachers cater for learners' different cognitive levels in the map work class exercises. Whereas the CAPS document sets out how the range of cognitive levels should be catered for in formal assessments, HoD2 appears to want learners to get used to the style of questioning stipulated in the policy document even in informal assessments. This may enhance learners' performance in formal assessments. The Senior Phase Social Sciences CAPS document (DBE, 2011) stipulates that 30% of the questions set in formal assessments should assess learners' knowledge and recall skills; 50% should assess comprehension and application skills; and 20% should assess learners' analysis, evaluation, and synthesis skills. This means that the assessments should consist more of the middle order questions than questions from each of the other cognitive levels.

In addition to his concern for the presence of questions from the different cognitive levels in learners' map work class activities, HOD2 expressed his concern about the number of map work class activities learners write per week including the number of Social Sciences periods teachers have in their personal timetables per week. When SST2 was asked how her HoD ensures that the map work content she teaches is CAPS compliant, she responded:

He makes sure that I follow the ATP. Yes, he checks the number of assessments that I do in a week, and he makes sure that my periods are in line with the CAPS document and the subject policy, yeah (SST2).

The Senior Phase Social Sciences CAPS document stipulates that there should be three periods per week. Consequently, three map work class activities per week are recommended. HOD2 also ensures that teachers have three Social Sciences periods in their personal timetables per week and that learners are given three map work class exercises per week.

Whereas many participants reported that teachers' files are regularly checked, SST3 explained: *"They check teachers' files weekly. Huh...and sometimes monthly, depends how the HoD schedule is. So, normally here in school they check ours weekly"* (SST3).

It appears that, to some HoDs, file checking frequency may not be as important as curriculum coverage. When SST6 was asked how her HoD ensures that she teaches all the map work topics, she explained:

By checking up and then he checks to say, "Are you still moving together with the ATP, are you still..." because ATP works week by week. So, week by week this is so much work you should have covered. So, we sit down and have a meeting where each teacher brings their ATP. We sit down; we look at the learners' books. "How many topics have you covered," and if you are left behind then he would say, "Please push..." ... [Laughter]...push is the language (SST6).

The above extract indicates a type of a HoD that is more concerned with curriculum coverage. SST6 indicates that her HoD continuously pleads with them to improve curriculum coverage. The participant was then requested to furnish additional comments, should there be any, on how her HoD monitors and supports her in map work teaching. She commented:

I think our HoD does the most, there is nothing I would add or take away from what I've said. One, he is a patient boss... [Laughter]...he is a patient man. So, he is gentle towards us you know – but at the same time he wants his work to be completed. He wants his work to be completed. I am not saying by saying he is a gentle boss we all just do whatever we want. No, he wants his work to be completed but the way he goes about it, he is...he has humanity (SST6).

HOD6 is described as a patient, gentle, and firm leader who is interested in work being completed. SST6 repeats that her HoD wants “his work to be completed” to emphasize that her HoD is primarily concerned with curriculum coverage.

Extra-tuition

Conducting extra tuition entails teaching learners using time in addition to the instructional time stipulated in the CAPS document. The CAPS document allocates three hours per week for Grades 8 and 9 Social Sciences. The participants in the study reported that they conduct extra lessons, mostly on the advice of their HoDs, to teach all the map work topics as set out in the CAPS document. When SST3 was asked how his HoD helps him with curriculum coverage improvement, he responded:

Huh... it is this monitoring system they are using as they check our files weekly. So, it helps them to see whether you are behind, or you are up to date with the ATP. If you are not up to date, they do intervene and sit down, and you tell them the causes of the delay. But at the end of the day, we try to go an extra mile and conduct extra classes (SST3).

The primary reason for conducting extra classes results from teachers not being up to date with the ATPs.

When SST2 was asked how her HoD assists her regarding curriculum coverage, she responded:

He encourages me to...yes...if maybe there were days when I was absent, that I do extra classes. Sometimes if there are teachers who are absent, I use their periods to cover up...[Laughter]... Yes, sometimes I come on Saturdays, especially for calculation work because it needs more time because, you know, the periods are just one hour. So, it takes a lot for learners to understand the steps (SST2).

SST7 expressed similar sentiments when asked how her HoD assists her regarding curriculum coverage: “That occurs a lot, not only in Grade 9 but also in Grade 12. When you are behind, she advises you to use extra classes. Either morning classes or the afternoon classes” (SST7).

The extracts above indicate that, in addition to being conducted in the mornings and in the afternoons, extra lessons are also conducted during school hours to facilitate curriculum coverage. This ensures that all the topics in the subject are taught and learner performance may be enhanced.

Discussion

Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) second dimension of instructional leadership involves supervising and evaluating instruction. HoDs conduct class visits to supervise and evaluate classroom instruction. The study found that HoDs conduct lesson observations to offer teachers map work teaching support for enhanced learner performance. Since the Senior Phase Social Sciences CAPS document stipulates that map work should be taught during the first Term, HoDs conduct map work lesson

observations during the first Term. The majority of HoDs insisted that they conduct lesson observations to develop teachers, not to check their mistakes. This is confirmed by Glanz (2018) when referring to the clinical supervision model. HOD1 highlighted the value of post-observation discussions and indicated that they enable her to provide teachers with constructive and supportive feedback. Research studies conducted by authors like Baffour-Awuah (2011), Glanz (2018) and Lyonga (2018) attest to this.

Although the HoDs emphasised that they conduct lesson observations to develop teachers, the study found that teachers' attitudes towards class observations vary. This finding is consistent with the findings of Nyathi (2020) and Ngakane (2021), respectively. Nyathi (2020) explored teachers' experiences of the Integrated Quality Management System in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The finding was that some teachers have a negative attitude towards lesson observations. On the other hand, Ngakane (2021) examined the effectiveness of the methods of assessing teacher performance in Northwest province, South Africa. The finding was that there were some benefits associated with teacher assessment. Such 'benefits' may have appealed to teachers. Consequently, teachers' attitude towards the assessments associated with lesson observations were most probably positive. HOD6 mentioned highlighting the importance of lesson observations, especially to teachers with a negative attitude towards them. Thus, the HoDs displayed a serious commitment to using lesson observations to facilitate instructional improvement. This finding is in line with that of Javadi (2018) in a study that examined HoD leadership in Malaysian secondary schools. The study found that not only were lesson observations conducted but they were meticulously managed in all the schools. The HoDs in the present study do not only conduct formal lesson observations in fulfilment of the QMS requirements but they also conduct informal lesson observations to ensure that teachers are always offering learners quality map work instructions. Moreover, they continue conducting lesson observations irrespective of teachers' varied attitudes towards the observations.

Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) second dimension of instructional leadership also includes monitoring learner progress. The participants reported that HoDs check teachers' and learners' work to ascertain if teachers are up to date with curriculum coverage or not. This finding is consistent with Lyonga's (2018) study, which examined the effect of supervision strategies on teacher performance in Cameroon. The finding was that regular checking of teachers' work had a positive impact on teachers' performance. However, the findings of the present study are incongruent with those of Ubogu (2024). The author examined the effectiveness of instructional supervision in Nigerian secondary schools. The finding was that the work of teachers was not regularly checked. Participants in the present study reported that HoDs check teachers' and learners' work to ascertain if teachers are up to date with curriculum coverage or not; to establish the appropriateness of teaching methods employed; and to ensure that the map work content knowledge learners are taught is aligned with the CAPS document. While some participants indicated that the HoDs were more interested in curriculum coverage than on the quality of the work done, HOD2 indicated that he was more interested on the quality of instruction given to learners. He mentioned that he encourages teachers to develop learners' different cognitive levels and set assessments that are of high standard.

The third dimension of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model involves protecting instructional time. The study found that HoDs protect instructional time by encouraging teachers to conduct extra lessons. Conducting extra lessons entails teaching learners using time in addition to the formal instructional time. Many participants indicated that extra lessons are conducted to improve curriculum coverage for enhanced learner performance. This finding is consistent with a Chinese study by Fu et al. (2023), which found that extra lessons result in improved learner performance. The present study also found that the formal instructional time was insufficient for teaching map work, especially map work calculations. This finding corresponds with Bukaliyo's (2022) study in Zimbabwe. The finding was that extra lessons are used to make up for insufficient time during formal instruction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study found that HoDs monitor teachers by conducting lesson observations and checking teachers' and learners' work. The HoDs also encourage teachers to conduct extra-tuition to improve curriculum coverage. The idea behind curriculum coverage improvement is that learner performance may be enhanced when learners are taught all the content knowledge they should learn. The Department Education should organise ongoing curriculum implementation and instructional leadership development programmes for HoDs to strengthen their instructional supervision strategies. School-based instructional leaders should promote collaborative supervision as the effective strategy to improve instruction and enhance learner performance. The study highlights the dominance of the monitoring, hierarchical strategies in the supervision of map work teaching. This is an essential contribution to the efforts to improve teaching and learning outcomes in map work within South African schools.

Study Limitations

This was a small-scale qualitative study conducted at selected public secondary schools of uMgungundlovu District in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The methodology used allowed for in-depth examination of the strategies used by HoDs to support teachers in map work teaching. The findings cannot be generalised because the methodology foregrounded participant subjectivity and used the purposive sampling method. However, the findings are transferable to similar contexts. For future research, it is suggested that a similar study be conducted on a macro-scale using mixed methods for the generalizability of the findings.

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