

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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A Dissertation Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the

**MASTERS DEGREE IN EDUCATION**

in the

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  
(SCHOOL OF EDUCATION)

At the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

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**2021**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my original work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters in Curriculum Studies at the School of Education, University of Limpopo. It has not been previously submitted for any degree at this or any other university, it is an original design and all reference material has been cited and duly acknowledged.



.....

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Student number:

.....17 March 2021.....

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to:

- The Mugari clan, “May our surname prosper and be well known in the future generations to come as resilient scholars”.
- Nkhensani (sister) and George (brother) Mugari, I hope I have inspired you well.
- To my daughter, Kgotso, “this is to encourage you that education is the key to success”.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- First and foremost, I give thanks to the Lord God almighty for blessing me with wisdom and strength to complete this study.
- I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thankfulness to the following people:
  - My supervisor, Ms Modipane M.C. you inspire me in so many ways you can barely imagine. You are truly a role model to reckon with.
  - My fiancé Mr A.N. Mokoena for his love, patience, understanding and a shoulder to lean on.
  - My mother A. Mugari and father E.L. Mugari for their understanding during the time of the study.
  - My lifelong mentor Mr N. Mlilo for his endless words of encouragement. You are the best.
  - Professor S.J. Kubayi for your expertise in editing all my academic work. Thank you.
  - The EDTP SETA for providing funding towards my studies.
  - Lastly, I wish to thank all the personnel at Mogoshi Circuit that is: The Circuit Manager, educators and learners of the schools who willingly participated in this research study.

## **ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS**

This study investigated how educators apply democratic principles and values in their practice after two decades of democracy in South Africa. It dwells on how democratic principles and values are infused into teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom. The study followed an interpretive paradigm using the qualitative approach through a descriptive case study design. Data collection methods used included semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, classroom observations and document analysis. Purposive sampling was used with focus on Grade 10-12 educators and learners from two secondary schools in Mogoshi Circuit of Limpopo Province of South Africa. The theoretical frameworks of the study drew from the Child-Friendly Schools and Social Reconstructionism approach. Emphasis is on the upholding of children's rights, and the, re-dress of educational imbalances. The frameworks also recommend the promotion and integration of democratic principles and values in schools. The study concludes that educators do incorporate democratic principles and values in their teaching, learning and assessment with the promotion of attributes such as participation (dialogue), respect, equity and inclusion which impact greatly on learners' daily lives. However, it is not without fault that certain activities which are not child-friendly are still practised by some educators in some schools as they do not promote democratic principles and values, while some educators do. It was found that democratic principles and values are embedded in schools. However, not all educators are doing this. The study recommends further investigation on the implementation of democratic principles and values for reflection and improvement.

### **Keywords**

Democracy, democratic education, democratic principles and values, classroom practice, educator

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CAPS	: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CFS	: Child-Friendly Schools
DoE	: Department of Education
DoBE	: Department of Basic Education
FET	: Further Education and Training
NCS	: National Curriculum Statement
OBE	: Outcome Based Education
RCL	: Representative Council of Learners
SASA	: South African School Act
SACE	: South African Council for Educators
UNICEF	: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

After two decades of constitutional democracy in South Africa, it is reasonable to expect schools as core institutions in society as a driving force in the promotion of democratic principles and values as reflected in the constitution and all other informing frameworks (Smit & Oosthuizen, 2011). Guided by these democratic principles and values, democratic classrooms need to characterise classroom environments and all other teaching and learning settings. Research studies and other reports seem to suggest that democratic principles and values are not always upheld in schools (Mncube, 2008; Botha, Joubert & Hugo, 2016), even in countries that have adopted democratic forms of government.

Democratic principles and values are emphasised in the South African Constitution (1996) and other informing documents such as the Bill of Rights, the Children's Act and the South African Schools Act (SASA). This suggests that these principles and values ought to be promoted and adopted as a way of life. Democratic practices within the school environment will provide a platform for the promotion of these principles and values (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014), including autonomy, the sharing of power (Sentürk & Oyman, 2014), freedom, justice and equality (Shechtman, 2002). Ferreira and Schulze (2014) indicate that educational initiatives where value education is concerned have so far not yet been fully employed in schools and classrooms. This has prompted me to establish how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in their classrooms with regard to their teaching, assessment, classroom management and learners' learning experiences.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION**

Democratic classroom practices act as a foundation for effective classroom management and student learning (Sentürk & Oyman, 2014). Democracy forms an essential part, especially within democratic dispensations like that of South Africa. How operational democracy is managed and run in schools and classrooms still needs to be further investigated (Durodola, 2009; Joubert, Phatudi, Moen & Harris, 2015). Democratic education cannot be separated from democratic principles and values (Alshurman, 2015) that are taught through the curriculum in subjects such as Life Orientation, for example, where concepts such as constitutional rights and freedom are taught.

My interest and rationale in undertaking this study of how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in the classroom is based on my previous study, where I noticed that educators are not effectively teaching democratic principles and values in the classrooms. Learners seem voiceless in their role of shaping the content and structure of education. As an educator myself, I always wondered whether educators in South Africa infuse democratic principles and values in their practice. While we live in a democratic dispensation, it would appear that principles and values that underpin this democracy are not actively promoted in the classrooms. This could lead to a system of education that produces citizens who do not uphold principles and values. The research topic was worth exploring as democracy has become not only of political importance, but also guides all structures of society in South Africa, such as health, social welfare and education. Democratic principles and values that are practised in the classroom play an important role in creating effective teaching and learning (Mills & McGregor, 2017).

## **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In a democratic country such as South Africa, it is vital that democratic practices form part of formal and informal education. Schools and educators should promote democratic principles and values in teaching, learning and assessment environments. However, it seems that the process of incorporating principles and values in schools and classrooms is slow and almost non-existent in some

school environments. Democratic schooling is important in producing citizens who are conscious of democratic principles and values (Subba, 2014; Alshurman, 2015). Democracy means that there is a shift from a traditional, rigid teaching and learning practice to a collective power and control relationship between the educator and the learner. Democracy is still a limited factor in South Africa (Joubert et al., 2015). In accordance with the constitutional democracy adopted in the country, “doing democracy” should be the current status quo in South African schools. Learners have a role to create processes, structures and content of education. Thus, this study looked at established ways in which educators incorporated and infused democratic principles and values into their classroom practice.

#### **1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

As an educator, I was triggered by the everyday activities I have seen. I have come to the realisation that we are living in a democratic country with policies arguing for democratic principles and values to be installed and practised by everyone for the better future of the country. I noted that there are a lot of different short sightings for the effective implementation towards the proper incorporation of democratic principles and values on the ground. This prompted me to look at the practice of incorporating democratic principles and values by educators in teaching, learning and assessment.

#### **1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to establish how educators at Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa incorporate democratic principles and values in managing teaching, learning and assessment in their classrooms.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions of this study are:

- What are democratic principles and values that educators incorporate into their classroom practice in general?
- How do educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their teaching?
- In what way do democratic principles and values merge in the learning activities?
- How do educators incorporate democratic principles and values into assessment tasks and activities?

## **1.7 ASSUMPTION OF THE STUDY**

The main assumption of the study is that the teaching of democratic principles and values is carried out in all schools. It has now been almost three decades that democracy has landed within the institutions with numerous policies such as SASA, SACE and CAPS to install attributes to educators to apply in their classroom practice. This assumption had to be verified. To this end, questions were created based on how educators applied democratic principles and values in their teaching, learning and assessment in their classroom.

## **1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The study investigated how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practices: a case study of Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The qualitative research approach was employed through a descriptive case study design to yield closeness and to bring in a deeper understanding (Johnson & Christensen, 2014), resulting in innovative knowledge (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The study is divided into the following five summative chapters.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

Chapter one presents the orientation and a brief overview of the research study. This chapter introduces the study by outlining the background and motivation of the study, problem statement, rationale, purpose of the study and research questions. The assumptions of the study were also discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature review**

Chapter two focuses on the literature review from different facets as well as different documents such as theses, dissertations, books, newspapers, online documents journals and articles. The literature review provides a historical overview of democratic education in general as well as in South Africa. It provides a variety of views on democracy in relation to educational practices, as well as attributes associated with democratic principles and values in the classroom. Moreover, it provides a debate on democratic education. The theoretical frameworks which assisted to make sense of the study are also discussed, including how they underpin democratic practices.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research methodology**

This chapter provides a discussion of the choice of research method used to collect data and methods of data analysis. The research paradigm, research approach, research design, selection of participants, and data collection methods including semi-structured interviews, focus-group interviews, non-participant classroom observations and document analysis are also discussed. The data analysis procedure of all research instruments is discussed carefully. Moreover, detailed ethical considerations such as permission, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity are also discussed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Analysis and interpretation of the findings**

This is a section on the presentation of findings. Data collection instruments were analysed and variables compared against one another. The research findings are presented, analysed and reported. This includes interview responses of participants, classroom observations as well as documents. The data is coded and themes generated are explained for better understanding of how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practices when it comes to teaching, learning and assessment.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations**

This chapter provides discussions of main findings. The chapter highlights major conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **1. 9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter presented an overview of the whole study. The introduction, background and motivation of the study, as well as the problem statement, rationale of the study and research questions were discussed. Part of this chapter introduced the role of theories that underpin the study. Key concepts have been defined. In the next chapter, I discuss the literature review of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an in-depth review of literature on democratic education and the infusion of democratic principles and values into the classroom. The literature of the study is extracted from research reports, journal articles and other formal texts. Secondary sources will also be used, but to a much lesser extent. Empirical as well as conceptual studies regarding democratic education will be used. The literature review will focus on the following main areas: 1) the concept of democracy in teaching and learning; 2) the history of democratic education and the basic history of education in South Africa; 3) the rationale of democratic education; 4) the promotion of democratic principles in the classroom environment; 5) the role of schools in promoting democratic learning environments; 6) the development of learning activities for the enhancement of democratic classrooms; 7) teaching, learning and assessment in democratic learning classroom environments; 8) possible ways of incorporating democratic principles in teaching and learning spaces; and 9) challenges of promoting democratic practices. The theoretical frameworks which assisted in giving meaning of democratic principles and values are also discussed.

### **2.2 THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The term 'democracy' comes from the Greek word 'demos' meaning people and 'kratos' meaning 'power' or 'force' (Mathebula, 2009; Alshurman, 2015). Democracy is a form of government where people make decisions and the minority are given a stage to be heard (Morapedi & Jotia, 2011; Sentürk & Oyman, 2014). Hytten's (2017) view is that democracy is a mode of existence such as individual rights. This entails that democracy is practised by citizens. Democracy is an influential system structure upon society wherein fruitful qualities can be adopted (Alshurman, 2015). The basis of this study is to establish how democratic principles and values are incorporated through

teaching, learning and assessment. There are many meanings of democracy. However, in relation to this research study, democracy is discussed in the paragraph that follows.

It is believed by theorists that values are created via the process of enculturation and social construction which are formed by the realities that we experience that motivate our behaviour (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004). Values are basic principles that one believes in and abide by (Bafaneli & Setibi, 2015). Moreover, democratic values are a way of life (Dewey, 1916; Alshurman, 2015). Participation involves communication and dialogue which are vital to democracy because it is what makes 'it' a democracy (Evkuran, 2013). Furthermore, democracy is a system (Ciftci, 2013) and an effective way of living together that is learned (Korkman & Erden, 2012; Bafaneli & Setibi, 2015).

Alshurman (2015) describes democracy as a process which has been shaped and re-shaped over time and is practised as a set of principles and values such as freedom and equality. The democratic principles and values mentioned form the basis of what constitutes democracy, which is to be incorporated in a democratic country such as South Africa. The study investigated democratic principles and values and how they merged in teaching, learning and assessment.

## **2.3 THE HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION**

### **2.3.1 The history of democratic education**

Democracy is a generic term with a variety of views and understanding. Within education, this dates back to the 18th century Rousseau and Dewey's writings. The past cannot be left un-avoided in the place of understanding activities of today or the future. Philosophers such as Plato and Socrates integrated education and democracy (Alshurman, 2015). According to Alshurman (2015), Rousseau's emphasis was on education, showing and instructing people how the

effective integration of an individual in society can be achieved with the aim of social cohesion and rights of others. Undeniably, John Dewey (1859-1952) played a vital role in determining education where individuals are encouraged to participate in society, be responsible, reflective and creative in education. Education to him was a social process development tool where educator and learner boundaries are blurred (Dewey, 1916). This key feature of what makes democratic education where educator and learner boundaries are faint plays an important role in what a democratic education is, and how democratic principles and values of democratic education are managed. Due to the fact that education can happen within and outside formal settings, the term citizenship cannot be ignored as it works analogously with democratic education. It is this history that promoted me to understand how these practices in democratic education can be achieved.

Democratic education involves the need to create active, responsible citizens who will serve their country and contribute positively to the state manifesto as citizenship (Mathebula, 2009; Albuлесcu & Albuлесcu, 2015; Hahn, 2015). A democratic education goes above seeing democracy as a form of government, but as an alternative of added advantage for people staying and working together (Paune, 2018). It is for the same reason why the study aims to find out whether democratic education explained above is indeed practised in schools, where democracy is put in action in classrooms through teaching, learning and assessment.

## **2.3.2 Basic history of education in South Africa**

### **2.3.2.1 The education system in South Africa**

Prior to 1994, the South African education system catered for education for different racial groups that constituted the citizenry of the country (Mathebula, 2009). There were separate systems designed for whites, Indians, coloureds and blacks in the curriculum designed by the National Party which came into power in 1948 (Sisk, 2017). The new South African government which came into power

after apartheid has been putting different initiatives in place to heal and repair the broken education system and to promote a democratic form of education within the country (Sisk, 2017). However, it has been more than two decades since the education system in South Africa has undergone different policy changes in order to meet the desire of the government to move into a more equal, inclusive system (Mathebula, 2009). The Outcomes-Based-Education (OBE) curriculum (syllabus) was created to shift away from a racist, unequal and sexist based apartheid syllabus (Jansen, 1998).

Additionally, Curriculum 2005 of 1997 was known as 'C2005', a curriculum that was intended to build social unity, build economically sound citizens and promote democracy (Nuraan, 2018). It was guided by the White Paper 6 of 1995 on education and training of 1995 and the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996. It aimed to move from a traditional educator-based authoritative teaching and learning to a democratic learner-based facilitative curriculum where an active and creative citizen was encouraged (Mathebula, 2009). C2005 hoped to create global citizens and workers who achieve critical and developmental outcomes. Hoadley (2017) highlights that lack of direct reference to the curriculum had weak framing, and focused on the output rather than substances needed to provide quality content knowledge which was left to the educator's discretion.

However, challenges surfaced which did not meet the desired global economic influence and the healing from the scars of dictatorship, division and colonisation. Furthermore, the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoBE, 2001) served as one of the support documents for educators to strengthen democratic principles and values to South Africans. Due to its on-going failure, the review committee introduced a Revised National Curriculum Statement (RCNS) of 2004 which had a great shift in educator training, learning materials, resources and education departments to promote the values of the community.

Still, efforts created to add on democracy have to bear in mind forces such as political influences that shape and re-shape the education system (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004). Indeed, many scholars are deliberating about the promotion of democracy in the education system rooted in colonial mentality in which the

marks of apartheid with its challenges are still evident today (Mncube, 2008; Mathebula, 2009; Meko, 2018). In a South-African study done by Ferreira and Schulze (2014), it is revealed that there is still a gap between policy makers' intentions and perspectives of educators. Looking through the lens of the Social Reconstructionism approach, schools have to be reconstructed from the bricks up, where cracks created from the apartheid era are still evident till today; thus democracy ought to be incorporated within the teaching and learning curriculum (Mayne, 2014). This past induced me to look at democracy not only as a political influence on policies, but how these policies are practised daily by an educator not only in teaching and learning, but also in assessment.

### **2.3.2.2. The framework modifications in South Africa for the infusion of democracy in schools**

Dr. Carl Sagan (1980) stated, "You have to know the past to understand the present". It is still clear that education has been critically crippled from the apartheid legacy. The timeline then has certain loopholes created in order to build the education system. Education policy has changed a great deal of amounts in order to create a curriculum aimed at encouraging equality, participation, critical thinking, involvement of different stakeholders and decision making. It is no secret that the NCS emerged from the OBE which was formulated in different steps (OBE, C2005, RNCS, 2004; NCS, 2007). The NCS aims at learners' acquisition of knowledge which they can utilise in their own lives and beyond (Kokela, 2017) to form a 'balanced approach' to learning (Hoadley, 2017). The NCS is based on social transformation, providing equal education to all, and engaging in critical thinking with high knowledge and skills (Mathebula, 2009). It specifies policy on curriculum and assessment to be implemented in the schooling division.

In January 2012, yet another amendment to the policy was initiated where a mono comprehensive Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document was created for each subject at Grades R-12 with knowledge-based curriculum focus (Hoadley, 2017; Kokela, 2017). The amendment emphasises educators' subject knowledge and assessment practices (Nuraan, 2018). The

CAPS curriculum aims at assisting learners to acquire knowledge which they can utilise in their own lives and beyond (Kokela, 2017) in order to form a 'balanced approach' to learning (Hoadley, 2017).

The CAPS curriculum is compatible with democratic principles and values of the Constitution of South Africa and those endorsed by Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) framework such as respect, equity, dialogue, learner centredness and inclusiveness. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) is the supreme law of the land and no other law or government action can supersede its provisions. The Constitution was approved by the Constitutional Court on 4 December 1996 and took effect on 4 February 1997 (DoBE, 2019). It is clear that a variety of formulated education curriculum systems emerged in the hope to redress past racial, political and resources dilemma; as a consequence, the education system has been a jungle. It is unmistakable that the divided society with its complexities has to move into an inclusive democracy with its historical context impacting on the product of every generation. Thus, the CAPS document calls for the incorporation of democratic practices in teaching and learning. This history of how CAPS has emerged in the linking of democratic practices in teaching and learning convinced me on how democratic principles and values in the classroom are important.

Additionally, several other important educational frameworks which were created such as the White Paper 6, SASA and South African Council for Educators (SACE) are guidelines that attempt to infuse democracy within a space where unshakable forces constantly shape and re-shape the educational context of educators and learners through their own experiences, opinions and beliefs (James, 2015; Kokela, 2017; Department of Education, 2018). Furthermore, education White Paper 6 guides an inclusive education approach, especially special needs education (DoBE, 2001). It states that all children have the potential to learn given the necessary support. From the documents above, it is obvious that the education system aims to ensure that democracy becomes the central part of planning and teaching within the school. However, the focus of this study was the investigation of democratic principles and values on how policies are connected with practical involvement. This is the enlightenment the study



tended to seek to have investigated whether institutions are democratic and whether they have evolved to accommodate the infusion of democratic practices.

## **2.4 RATIONALE OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION**

### **2.4.1 Why infuse democratic principles in the school institution**

The initiative of any education for democratic education is to involve learners in grooming and facilitating the necessary skills to become citizens who can and will contribute greatly within the society (Waghid, 2005; Pring, 2016). Dewey (1916) discusses education as an initiative that guides and drives development for social functioning in a community. Furthermore, Evkuran (2013) suggests that every society's foundation should be based on certain principles they should live by, where education policies cannot ignore these principles, values and other cultures around them. According to Jotia (2006), democratic models and principles should be the basic foundation of any education as this propels citizens to embrace globalisation, where people are modified to be strong decision-makers and critical thinkers groomed by a democratic institution. These democratic educational institutions should have ways to infuse democratic principles and values merged in their learning; thus this is what this study seeks to find out. The Manifesto argues that education is crucial in preparing citizens with capabilities and skills to engage critically and to act responsibly (DoBE, 2001)

### **2.4.2 The rationale for a democratic classroom**

Democratic practices interrupt authoritarian structures that can disempower learners to reach beyond their potential (Apple & Beane, 2007; Mills & McGregor, 2017), which can also deprive them of skills such as the ability to communicate and to become critical thinkers (Ismali, Kinchin & Edwards, 2017). According to Albulescu and Albulescu (2015), how an individual conducts himself/herself in a society is influenced by values, attitudes, norms, rules and traditions learnt; and

the education system through its educational institutions, which in this case can be done by schools through practices of educators in a classroom environment (Subba, 2014). This is further supported by a study by Ismaili, Kinchin and Edwards (2017) in Egypt, which concludes that learners in a democratic education are placed at the centre of their learning, which empowers them. Shechtman (2002), Subba (2014) and Aasebo (2017) call for democratic principles and values to be incorporated within a democratic classroom for a positive education process. In other words, the classroom is viewed as a vital space where democracy can be understood and infused since all educational activities are done there (Sentürk & Oyman, 2014) through language learning or dialogue (Joubert et al., 2015). The study sought to investigate how the classroom setting acts as a basis of how democratic principles and values are practised. The study sought to examine how these arguments are applied in high schools in Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

#### **2.4.3 Why infuse democratic principles in the school curriculum through teaching, learning and assessment**

Within education, schools have become important existing democratic spaces. Sentürk and Oyman (2014) maintain that in order to live in a democratic manner; educators' routine should involve as well as promote classroom decision-making and cooperation. This is in line with the CFS framework that endorses an inclusive, rights-based and child-centred education (Modipane & Themane, 2014). Putting learners in the centre of their learning will empower them in school and outside the school (Kinchin & Edwards, 2017). Likewise, Pring (2016) points out that such a practice will help deepen reason, question the norm and challenge the current status quo of any society. The results thereof will produce citizens who are critical thinkers aware of political influences on education. It will lead learners to be successful in their future endeavours, and most importantly, produce citizens who reason in the society (Elicor, 2016). It will also create intentional, conscious and caring citizens (Hann, 2015).

'Doing democracy' in schools is paramount. Jotia and Sithole (2016) argue that teaching plays an important role in empowering and emancipating learners who

will later become graduates. Furthermore, academic freedom exists to choose what to teach and what you learn through studying, and knowledge brings about the right to teach and speak freely (Mekoa, 2018). Thus embracing democratic teachings will empower learners who become citizens and who will gain the necessary skills to compete in a global sphere, which is imperative. How these democratic teachings are conducted in schools is what this study seeks to investigate. Nyambe, Kasanda and Lipenge (2018) argue that countries should not be limited in practising democracy, but view it as means to mould and reconstruct learners who are self-conscious. For this reason, how educators implemented democratic principles and values within teaching, learning and assessment practice in the classroom context was studied.

It is evident from different authors such as Hecht (2002), Shechtman (2002), Oswald and Engelbrecht (2004), Kesici (2008), Kocoska (2009), Subba (2014), Venter and Higgs (2014) and Aasebo (2017) that for democratic principles and values to be infused within an individual, democracy and education need to work analogically so as to achieve democratic concepts such as equality, fairness, respect and rights to reality. Different studies have been conducted in different areas from different angles. However, this study is unique as it investigated the extent to which democratic ideals have been related in educational practices through the optics of Limpopo Province, South Africa.

## **2.5 DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN THE CLASSROOM**

### **2.5.1 Educators' beliefs in different classrooms**

In order to infuse certain practices, people's attitudes and actions are influenced by their understanding of values (Bafaneli & Setibi, 2015). Educators' understanding of different values relating them with their own cultural and religious identities will affect the manner in which they live and conduct themselves in the classroom. Subba (2014) further argues that educators are main components who can come up with new ways to decrease the loss of

democratic principles and engagement. It is important that educators' belief systems within their classroom practices are democratically sound to ensure learners are fully taught. This will also ensure that democratic principles are accomplished. Oswald and Engelbrecht (2004) argue that in order to improve the practice of democratic education, a change of mind-set needs to be trained. How well-structured their beliefs are will influence how they infuse democratic principles and values in the classroom.

Ferreira and Schulze (2014) conducted a study in South Africa, which reveals that how educators understand and see the importance of principles and values plays a huge role on how they are liable in a classroom context. However, the study did not assess how they apply these values in teaching, learning and assessment. This study seeks to find democratic principles and values that educators incorporate into their classroom practice in general, rooted in their beliefs of democracy. Hence the educator is the driver towards a democratic classroom (Kesici, 2008). Scholars propose different views and arguments on how well the educator incorporates democratic principles, values and beliefs will determine their application. This study specifically sought to examine these democratic principles and values in terms of whether or not educators apply them in their classroom practice in general, embedded in their views.

### **2.5.2 Curriculum content in the view of democratic education**

Korkmaz and Erden (2012) did a study in Turkey which revealed that an educational environment that bears in mind learners' differences, pace and individuality should form part of the content objectives. Additionally, looking closely at Britain, England, Pring (2016) proposes that any definition of a compulsory curriculum should have certain elements for personal, social and moral development. He argues that educators within any form of curriculum should encourage discussion, so each learner can share their point of view of what matters and relate it to the minimum subject content requirements needed. Moreover, Brough (2012) and Korkmaz and Erden (2012) argue for such a programme to exist, which should have characteristics that support democratic

educational environments via co-constructed curricula by different stakeholders, including learners. This involves a shift from an anti-democratic education system to a more collaborative, shared decision making approach that encourages learners to be active participants in their learning (Kocoska, 2009). This is the very essence that theories such as the Child-Friendly Schools and Social Reconstructionism approach seek to achieve. I concur with the notion that educators should involve their learners thoroughly when it comes to the curriculum. Similarly, a study done by Jotia (2006) in Botswana states that in order for deep democracy's thirst to be quenched, the participation of learners deciding their learning activities should be required. Hence, in the same light, this study sought to examine some of the democratic principles and values of the curriculum, significantly highlighting how democratic principles and values can be merged in the learning activities of the curriculum content.

Furthermore, scholars like Bron, Bovill and Veugelers (2016) maintain that to say a curriculum is negotiated can be achieved by co-creating the curriculum with learners based on certain aims by giving them more freedom of choice when it comes to content design. Equally important, Maphalala (2017) emphasises that learners can contribute as well as be cultivated to construct knowledge and gain skills, values and attitudes to establish achievement. In addition, Pring (2016) argues that learners should be involved in the building of content while at the same time given social roles and responsibilities. Likewise, this paper considered how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in curriculum content through assessment tasks and activities in order to find out the degree to which this is practically possible. Authors argue that a curriculum in the view of democratic education is created together or negotiated by both educators and learners. This includes assessment tasks and activities they intend to do.

Moreover, the CAPS document for learning and teaching in South African schools provides valuable guidelines on principles that should be applied in teaching, learning and assessment.

The principles espoused by CAPS (DoBE, 2011) include the following:

- Social transformation: ensuring that educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided to all sections of the population;
- Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing teaching with principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; and
- Valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the Constitution.

These values have to manifest themselves in the classroom (Nuraan, 2018).

However, looking at the South African education system with its rigid curriculum, strict time frame and proposed teaching content given to educators, Jotia (2006) argues that a lecture-method or educator-centred approach in teaching is evident in delivering content even though student-centred methods are encouraged. Hoadley (2017) argues that the current curriculum is a knowledge-based curriculum, and how educators transact knowledge in the classroom with the learners will realise the teaching and learning sphere. Despite what the CAPS curriculum espouses and what research and findings from scholars discover, this dissertation is limited to finding out how educators incorporated democratic principles and values into their teaching, learning and assessment activities. The study strove to establish how democratic principles and values are infused.

### **2.5.3 Teaching and learning spheres**

Educators are given limited time to cover the entire curriculum in order to prepare learners for their final examinations. This can be strenuous as they do not have the time to listen to all learners' questions and contributions (Jotia, 2006). Looking at the learning environment through a student-centred approach, a study by Brough (2012) done in New Zealand stipulates that a student-centred dominated type of teaching and learning will enhance learner achievement and

encourage learner involvement. Yoldaş (2015) argues that teaching civic education such as political engagement and knowledge in Turkey, for instance, will help empower young citizens who are conscious. He emphasises that learning democracy encourages participation. Morad (2015) articulates that in democratic teaching and learning environments, the key element is the 'voices' of the people involved. According to the Child-Friendly Schools articulated by UNICEF (2012), a context where learners' opinions are to be heard should be created.

Democratic education for South Africans from a post-apartheid means that there is a difference visible from a traditional, stiff practice of teaching and learning to a more shared link in a classroom, which is still a limited factor in South Africa (Joubert et al., 2015). This is further argued by Waghid (2005) for a culture of virtue through the education system where learners can participate in public dialogue about questions of justice and morality. In any case, vanAardt (2016) argues that giving children an opportunity to be heard empowers them. James (2015) and Joubert et al. (2015) suggest that a dialogue should be part and parcel of teaching and learning in the classroom. This, according to Nxumalo and Mncube (2019), has not yet been fully achieved. Looking at the context of Limpopo Province, South Africa, this study uniquely investigated the incorporation of democratic principles and values within the teaching and learning sphere of Mogoshi Circuit. Hence, the study will help fill the existing gap by interrogating educators on how they promote and/or address some of these democratic principles and values in specific classroom situations.

#### **2.5.4 Classroom management and democracy**

Discipline is one of the core values that cannot be separated from cultural values within education (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014). This is achieved by an educator who plays a vital role in the creation and maintenance of a harmonious well balanced context that is supportive and inclusive for all learners for effective teaching and learning to occur (Yoldaş, 2015). The need for a humane classroom management (rules, procedures) at the very beginning will minimise disciplinary actions towards learners throughout the year (Maphalala, 2017). This is

additionally supported by a study done by Overton and Sullivan (2008) in a democratic Australian primary school, which shows that a classroom which includes democratic processes and shares power with learners can cause growth in compliance levels by satisfying learners' needs. The ideal practice of democratic principles and values will assist in the smooth running of the classroom where teaching and learning in a democratic atmosphere can be achieved.

A study done by Maphalala (2017) argues that the education system in South Africa cannot ignore the fact that indigenous knowledge cannot be put aside as if it has no meaning to African societies. The researcher appeals for the need to embrace the value of Ubuntu, which means "You are because I am" (Maphalala, 2017) within an African phenomenon sphere. This will lead towards an effective way of classroom management. Sentürk and Oyman (2014) propose a shift from a strong desire for control, dominant management to a freedom of thought and an environment of dialogue. This study investigated ways in which democratic principles and values merge within classroom environment in order to say that democratic education is taking place.

### **2.5.5 Attributes of a democratic classroom practice**

A democratic educational environment is a home where learners are able to express their ideas without stress because educators and learners have an equal voice (Sentürk & Oyman, 2014). Stitzlein (2017) and Hytten (2017) argue that in the United States, democratic ways of living can be cultivated in schools. These practices involve shared decision making between the educator and learners. Emphasising classroom rules and actions at the beginning of the school year will ensure that learners are held accountable if they do not follow the rules they have created with their educators (Overton & Sullivan, 2008). Findings by Sentürk and Oyman (2014) in Turkey reveal that a democratic classroom involves critical thinking and empowerment.

This leads to learners given roles and responsibilities throughout the year (Maphalala, 2017). Creating a platform where everyone's voice is heard involves



decision making and engagement with classroom activities (Kesici, 2008; Overton & Sullivan, 2008). Learners should be encouraged to participate (Aasebo, 2017). This can be achieved by holding meetings such as morning meetings or classroom meetings once in a while to encourage democracy (Bafaneli & Setibi, 2015). There is a sense of mutual shared goals and responsibility between educators and learners (Ellsworth, 1999; Botha, Joubert & Hugo, 2016) to take decisions and to practise their rights and responsibilities (Alshurman, 2015). Furthermore, encouraging learners to be responsible for everything creates competent, empowered and trusted individuals (Jotia, 2006). This leads to autonomy which is an important tool in life (Evkuran, 2013; Sentürk & Oyman, 2014).

The result thereof is that the collective manner of doing things avoids the authoritative side lining nature of practice (Apple & Beane, 2007). It is important that educators portray such traits within the classroom atmosphere for the betterment of their children. Portraying such proposed traits would require them to be applied through practice in everyday teaching and learning. This is what the study seemed to attest, whether democratic principles and values are incorporated in classroom practice.

Different authors recommend different democratic attributes such as; freedom, justice and equality (Schechtman, 2002), including value thinking (Lipman, 2003) Respect freedom (Ciftci, 2013), dialogue, tolerance and open-mindedness are encouraged (James, 2015). Similarly, Knight and Pearl (2000; 198) present seven attributes of democracy as important knowledge, the nature of authority, inclusiveness, rights, participation in decisions, equality and optimal learning environment. On the whole, these are qualities CAPS wish to achieve and promoted by the CFS framework. This study is unique as it sought to examine how democratic principles and values are incorporated in the classroom practice by educators.

Universal studies show that a democratic learning environment affects learners' humanity and performance, curriculum negotiation, educator teaching and classroom management. This dissertation investigated how educators embrace some of the democratic principles (participation, learner-centredness, and

inclusivity) and values (respect, equity, and cooperation) into their classroom practices when teaching, learning and assessment is involved.

### **2.5.6 Inclusive education and democracy**

In light of the South African Constitution, UNICEF, CAPS, the Manifesto, SIAS (Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support) and the White Paper 6 policies, 'inclusion' should be one of the core ideals of democracy within the school. According to Oswald and Engelbrecht (2004), within a human rights discourse locally or globally, inclusivity is a human right. Similarly, Knight and Pearl (2000) highlight that democracy can also be an approach to achieve democratic community.

When democracy emerged in 1994, the government had to seriously shuffle and reshuffle the curriculum, working to make it as inclusive and equal to all South Africans as possible. Section 29 of the Bill of Rights states that the state may not discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including those who are disabled (disability). The SIAS policy framework approved on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2014 aims to provide extra support to enhance participation and inclusion in schools, and to offer programmes to learners who have been identified and assessed (DoBE, 2014).

All CAPS documents (section 1.3 e) highlight that inclusivity should become a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching at each school. The White Paper 6 (DoBE, 2001) puts emphasis on learners being respected and acknowledged in their differences such as age, gender, ethnicity and language. Each learner is different and learns in diverse ways, therefore enabling education structures and systems that do not disadvantage the learners (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012). Soarses (2013) and Maphalala (2017) propose that educators are to look at each and every individual learner who brings along their own unique experiences. They must be accommodated in the classroom to embrace inclusivity and coexistence among people. This study considered whether such recommendations from scholars were put into practice in the education system, primarily in the classroom system.

Oswald and Engelbrecht (2004) did a study in the Western Cape of South Africa. Their findings reveal that the implementation of inclusive education has its resistance within the execution phase. This may be because educators still require assistance, abilities and guidance to best achieve inclusivity (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012). Inclusivity plays a crucial role according to CAPS, CFS framework, White Paper 6 and the South African Constitution as a core ideal of democracy. However, the studies above make my study of particular interest. The study investigated one of these specific interests, inclusivity of democratic principle into teaching, learning and assessment. It is a unique study as the focus on CFS principles, including inclusivity is established on how educators in the comfort of their daily classroom practice implement democratic principles and values in Limpopo Province of South Africa.

## **2.6 THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

### **2.6.1 The role of schools in a society**

According to Sentürk and Oyman (2014), within education, schools have become important democratic existing spaces. A school is found within a society where it is a society itself; thus a classroom is a small society within the school. There is a need for democracy to be prevalent in schools (Mncube, 2008) due to the fact that the school is forced to constantly adapt to social change and to pioneer curriculum developments. Rapid economy begins with the education system in schools (Albulescu & Albulescu, 2015; Joubert et al., 2015). Any restrictive and rigid form of authoritative education has, for many years, been fought against by people such as Dewey (1916) and Freire (1970). In a study done in Israel, Hecht (2002) reveals that when learners leave school to join the wider society, they have the will to contribute greatly as their interest and well-being is nurtured. In South Africa, the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy fights for this vision of society. This has encouraged the country, where in public schools learners are given roles and responsibilities by the Department of Basic Education, to exercise authority within the environment (Christie, 2008). Moreover, the CAPS document aims to develop learners who will be equipped

with skills and attitudes necessary for meaningful participation in society. Similarly, my belief is that formal schooling should be organised in a way that promotes the type of society in which people, irrespective of their colour, gender and/or socio-cultural backgrounds, are treated fairly without prejudice or favour. However, it is worth noting that such a society cannot be developed in a short space of time as democracy is an ideology which promotes individuality and community at the same time. It is within this context that this study aimed to investigate how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classrooms.

### **2.6.2 Relationship between democratic schools, classrooms and citizens**

Schools are small societies which encompass 'citizens' who share and transform a variety of content through decision, teaching and learning (Sentürk & Oyman, 2014). Every area prepares individuals who will adopt and develop values needed by the society through education; as a result a democratic education is a process that reflects society (Ciftci, 2013). Additionally, schools are regarded as a place to practise and nurture abilities and value experiences that are needed to maintain a democratic society (Bron, Bovill & Veugelers, 2016). Dewey (1916) posits that democratic schools act as a foundation for learners to engage in a way of living that is democratic, crafting experiences in real life that will determine their way of living outside school walls. Moreover, Apple and Beane (2007) propose a democratic way of life to prevail, and for schools to aid as platforms where ethical duties are introduced. Therefore, the term citizenship is used as it encourages participation and loyalty of a citizen. Furthermore, citizenship can be used as a basis of countries' ideologies such as democracy, by way of creating educated learners who will serve their country (Oats, 2015). Undeniably, Joubert et al. (2015) agree that schools are an educational systems that meet the needs of the society. According to Waghid (2005), education has to prepare learners to use knowledge and skills through critical social dialogue as a way of producing quality citizens. Irrefutably, several scholars agree that the duty of a school is to limit the gap between democratic ideals and democratic reality (Apple & Beane, 2007; Paune, 2018). For this reason, the study aimed to

investigate how democratic principles and values can be endorsed to produce responsible citizens in the society.

There are many South African documents (the South African Constitution, SASA, SACE, CAPS, White Paper 6) that serve as guidelines that attempt to infuse democracy within a space where unshakable forces constantly shape and re-shape educational context by educators and learners with their own experiences, opinions and beliefs (James, 2015; Kokela, 2017; DoBE, 2018). The educator who plays an important role of guiding the classroom has to consider the environmental effect. According to Subba (2014), India's political and social existence is endangered when it comes to democratic principles and values where education is involved. Soares (2013) proposes that effective teaching and learning is possible when educators create a community within the classroom. Similarly, Lipman (2003) proposes a classroom to be one which is a community of inquiry, where collaboration, participation, creativity and togetherness of educators and children are embraced in a community. This study investigated whether the relationship between many South African documents and different scholars propose an ideal democratic classroom practice that actually exists to manage teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom.

### **2.6.3 Democratisation in the school communities**

The need to involve learners within the school community can be related to opportunities that they are given to participate in decision making in school governance. Being given a certain role to play leads to democratic principles of participation being expressed to contribute in the educational process (Kocoska, 2009). This can be achieved through the existence of school governance such as learners' parliament in schools (Kocoska, 2009; Mncube & Harber 2010; Smit & Oosthuizen, 2011). This is emphasised by SASA, which mandates that learners form part of the school governance through the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), embroil in the School Governing Body committee and partake in the creation of schools' code of conduct.

Additionally, CFS (UNICEF, 2012) maintains that children have a say in the type of education and the ingredients contained within their education. Several studies argue that the shaping of learners will determine the type of citizens they will be in the community through the influence of school (Christie, 2008). According to literature, the type of pupil is moulded by the indications above. This research study investigated whether such practice indicators like the ones proposed above as forms of means of democratising school communities are actually practised.

Morapedi and Jotia (2011) did a study in Botswana. The reveals that when managed properly in schools (such as RCL), learner leadership can develop learners with skills such as decision making and a sense of independence to produce effective citizens. They argue that learners can be turned into platforms for democratic purposes such as valuing civic culture, voting and continued democracy in schools and society. Similarly, Morojele and Muthukrishna (2011) did a study in Lesotho where children participating in school governance can lead to improvement of skills, participation, dialogue and responsibility. In this way, critical consciousness in learners can be promoted. In addition, Mncube, Davies and Naidoo (2015) and Mills and McGregor (2017) agree that RCL is inclusive in involving learners in schools to be part of the decision making process, hence it is one of the forms of democratic schooling.

One can conclude that legal provisions such as CFS and SASA are designed to assist educators to work hand in hand with learners in order to develop a democratic institution (Pendlebury, 2011). Mncube, Davies and Naidoo (2015) did a study in two large schools in South Africa focusing on school governance, leadership and management of the School Governing Body, as well as RCL involvement in democratic shared decision making, rights and equality. The study revealed that democracy was practised in the two schools. However, there were limitations where the child/learner is proposed not suitable to engage in major decision areas of the school. They conclude that limitations are there but potential of greater involvement and participation is possible. However, in my study I sought to examine how educators brought about these democratic principles and values in the classroom.

Legal documents are available to guide the ideal practices of democracy, yet the applications thereof particularly in the context of Limpopo Province are still yet to be studied. This study seeks to investigate whether such democratic principles and values contained within these legal provisions are practised. The study investigates a particular interest of democracy in terms of 1) principles-participation, learner-centredness and inclusivity; and 2) value-respect, equity and cooperation within schools, particularly the classroom environment.

## **2.7 THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOMS**

Ideologies of democracy are connected to certain models to create networks of inquiry. Lipman (2003) proposes 'reflexive thinking' that makes one acceptable and reasonable as a basis of education. He argues that complex thinking, mainly critical thinking, creative thinking and caring thinking happen as soon as the philosophy which children acquire when a classroom is turned into a community of inquiry is done (Lipman, 2003; Elicor, 2016). Lipman suggests that there is a difference between thinking and thinking well. Critical thinking leads to children creating meaning through interpreting, investigation and handling data to get the best possible answer of an issue. Creative thinking involves the development of thoughts as well as ideas. Lastly, caring thinking is where emotions express decisions either positive or negative, which can be taught (Venter & Higgs, 2014). Community of inquiry involves dialogue between educators and learners, participation and collaborative in the classroom, and creating room for wonder and discovery (Elicor, 2016). How philosophy (critical, creative and caring thinking) is incorporated in a community of inquiry is necessary for democratic citizenship (Venter & Higgs, 2014). This is an important thought as rethinking democracy can be put in action in the classroom. The need for promoting critical thinking, creative thinking and caring thinking creates a shift from installing information to learners into a culture where educators promote rethinking, improve reasoning and judgement.

Rethinking education in such a manner falls in line with CFS shared principles of learner centredness. This entails a shift from an educator-centred to learner-

centred practice through balanced negotiation and dialogue (Elicor, 2016). Upper secondary education set a way for pupils to do and recommend democracy in countries in the post-school education (Kokela, 2017). It is the educator's duty to facilitate values in education (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014). Literature suggests that the construction of knowledge, meaning and reason is solidified in a classroom environment which will lead to the type of by-products that we will have in our constantly diverse humanity. Thus the degree in which educators practise democratic principles and values and putting democracy in action is significant and need further review. In this research, a close focus was on how educators practise democratic principles and values in their teaching, learning and assessment.

## **2.8 TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN DEMOCRATIC LEARNING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS**

### **2.8.1 Classroom based practices**

Classroom rules play a role as they should be created by both educators and learners to foster democratic principles and values such as honesty, inclusivity, respect, togetherness and equity (Sentürk & Oyman, 2014; Albulescu & Albulescu, 2015). If learners do not adhere to rules set out initially, classroom consequences can result in a positive and negative system. Maphalala (2017) claims firstly that positive consequences are achieved through a smile or nodding or verbal praise of good behaviour by learners. Secondly, negative consequences are seen through verbal reprimands, and involve parents through meetings in a corrective and developmental manner to apply on bad behaviour. Moreover, cooperative learning strategies such as group discussion, peer work, debates and role plays can help foster skills such as dialogue to build a respectful togetherness classroom environment (Kocoska, 2009; James, 2015; Maphalala, 2017). It seems that much still needs to be documented about the role played by educators in fostering democratic principles and values either directly through instruction or through classroom activities in South African



schools. Hence, the primary purpose of this study closely looks at how successful educators' role is in installing democratic principles and values within their teaching, learning and assessment practice. In particular, whether such an example of a classroom based context as explained above exists within a specific sub-district in Limpopo Province of South Africa.

### **2.8.2 Ubuntu values through the use of indigenous games**

Interestingly, Nxumalo and Mncube (2019) propose the use of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) to decolonise the curriculum and to educate children about Ubuntu values. In a study done by Nxumalo and Mncube (2019) to illustrate how the Ubuntu philosophy can be taught in the school curriculum using selected indigenous games, it is argued that Ubuntu, which is humanness, stimulates critical thinking, creativity and promote collective values in learners. Inculcating a sense of values at school is intended to help young people achieve higher levels of moral judgement (DoBE, 2001). These collective values are democratic in nature as they are human dignity, participation, respect, solidarity spirit and compassion. These are innovative democratic processes that need to be practised within schools for effective and adequate teaching and development. However, such studies do not elaborate more on the important role that educators must play through their interaction with learners in everyday classroom activities. In this study, I identified through educators' responses if at all they plan for this type of different innovative democratic interests in their lessons, while at the same time trying to push the formal school curriculum. The idea is that educators need to be innovative and be critical thinkers themselves as individuals before they can teach their learners. Significantly, the CAPS document in line with the South African Preamble to the Constitution aims to promote democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights worth learning. As such there are different ways of achieving the aim. In this study, I sought to examine whether democratic values within the instructional pedagogy are applied and practised to achieve this aim.

### **2.8.3 Outdoor learning**

Learning does not only occur within a classroom. In a six year study by Hahn (2015) through the purposefully selection of secondary schools in Denmark, England, Scotland and United Kingdom, she discovered that accomplishments such as learner councils, fundraising and school community are encouraged. She reveals that the only difference is the degree to which such campaigns are given in these different areas to expose learners in the true meaning of democracy. Learners need to be given challenges that will help them discover themselves and prepare their mind-sets for democratic citizenship. Giving them an opportunity to be active and instrumental will give them a feeling of civic duty. Jotia and Sithole (2016) argue that Botswana should make business education compulsory through the use of democratic education. For they believe that such outdoor activities will encourage positive development, and the creation of projects, autonomy, creativity, social participation and gaining of skills which form part and parcel of a democratic sound and of an individual. Masote's (2016) findings in South Africa revealed that school assemblies and reading the bible shape learners character.

### **2.8.4 Impacts on intellectual development**

Democracy education enhances the self-esteem of a learner (Apple & Beane, 2007). Creating a platform for learners bring about interest for them to want to know more, and be involved in their development for better success (Sezer & Can, 2018). It encourages them to strive for greater self-development and empowerment. Pring (2016) argues that schools produce learners who are critical thinkers and are alert of influences in their education. As learners continue to participate and develop, deeper reasoning is achieved. Democratic education boosts self-improvement (Korkman & Erden, 2012) and moral principles (Nxumalo & Mncube, 2019). This leads to a significant contribution to developing strong individuals who become responsible future citizens (vanAardt, 2016).

## **2.9 CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES**

There are a number of challenges faced by educators when they try to incorporate democratic principles and values into practice during teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom (Knight, 2001; Evkuran, 2013; vanAardt, 2016). The challenge in implementing democratic practices involves the shaping and re-shaping of the curriculum where learners are to be empowered through planning and shared decision making (Rose, 2005; Brough, 2012). Over a period of three decades, studying democracy from a grounded theory development taking into account the application of democratic principles into practise, Knight (2000) proposes that an ideal democracy is an unreachable goal. He acknowledges that democracy is continuously developed and redeveloped to become something new. A study in Botswana by Bafaneli and Setibi (2015) reveals that though democratic values by social studies educators are above average, its expectations in promoting values within the classroom are still low. In a similar study in the same country by Jotia (2006), prefects such as RCL are chosen to manage the affairs of schools, but he contends that these prefects are just eyes and ears with no powers. In a similar insight, Kariya (2018) highlights that Japan is also one of the many global countries with difficulties in promoting equality in education at this current phase of globalisation.

Masote (2016) did a study in South Africa where he examined how educators contextualise values in education. Looking closely at 12 Life Skills grade 2 educators, the study found that educators find it a challenge to contextualise and reconcile cultural values as people who are supposed to teach at school. There is a gap relating to cultural differences between educators and learners, which lead to the creation of moral regeneration in the society. This is further supported by Ferreira and Schulze (2014), whose study indicated that; the school was run according to Christian values but had a common occurrence of violence in the society. Social problems in communities influence functionality in schools. Little or no values are taught at home, creating a challenge not only for educators, but also politics in schools. It was found that although educators tried to teach values, they also lacked the understanding of the concept. Educators seemed to be the core element of installing values in education. My study also examined

how educators contextualise values, however, with a focus on grade 10-12 educators with regard to the teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom.

South Africa has undergone a variety of changes, evolving into a democratic society. Due to the democratic changes infused within the education system, certain document guidelines such as SACE, CAPS, SASA, the White Paper 6 and Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy play an important role on how democracy has become a platform for that vehicle. Schools are to draw their policies guided by these documents. According to the South African Council for Educators (2017), an educator is to exercise authority with compassion; no force or shouting, especially swearing at learners, should be done. An educator should avoid any form of humiliation, and refrains from any form of abuse, physical or psychological.

Today, however, this is still a challenge within the South African system, where corporal punishment is still administered. In a recent newspaper report, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) highlights a “rise in incidents of corporal punishment in schools across the country” after it has received reports of physical and verbal abuse of learners in at least seven Mpumalanga schools (Maseko, 2015 in Health 24). Corporal punishment is still used in schools in the Eastern Cape (12.7%), Free State (12.6%), Kwazulu-Natal (10.1%), Western Cape (1.1%) and Gauteng (1.3%) in the form of causing pain or discomfort to learners (Ndlazi, 2018 in IOL). Section 28 of the Bill of Rights protects children from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. It is evident that the democratisation of schools and classrooms is still a big challenge (Jotia, 2006) and collective power sharing is limited in South Africa (Jourbert et al., 2015).

There is a need to shift from the tradition of dominant, passive, oppressed, education roots from the past to a more pupil based education which is active, free, agent of a society inside and outside school. It is against this contextual occurrences of different factors, issues and in-puts that this study on ‘An investigation of how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practices: a case review of Mogoshi circuit, Limpopo province,

South Africa' inspired me to see how far we have come. One then wonders whether practising democratic principles and values can truly be an attainable goal in the classroom setting, or is it just simply a 'pipe dream' in Limpopo Province.

## **2.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theoretical framework is a logical research basis, and forms the tie between practical components and key aspects of the investigation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As a theoretical framework of this study, I refer to the Child-Friendly Schools framework as purported by UNICEF (2012), and Social Reconstructionism as purported by Theodore Brameld (1904-1987) as bases to ground this study.

### **2.10.1 Child-Friendly Schools framework**

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) model was developed by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in Thailand in 1997 (UNICEF, 2012). The CFS concept is a holistic system-wide approach in the promotion of child-friendly schooling and educational quality at the centre of education reform. The concept aims to improve the quality of schooling, promote participation and re-dress educational inequalities (Orkodashvili, 2013). Organic school qualities are based on policies and practices of human rights and child-centred ideologies (UNICEF, 2012). Moreover, concepts such as equality, respect, inclusivity and participation are highly endorsed. According to UNICEF (2012), a Child-Friendly school is more than just a place for formal learning: it is an institution in which all the needs of a learner are met not just the need to be educated, but also the need to be healthy, play, and be protected from harm (Saleem, Shaheen & Zahid, 2020). This is also highlighted in the Constitution of South Africa (1996), which provides for human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justices for the child's best interest. This study uses this framework as

a guide to describe democratic principles and values that educators use in their classroom practice in secondary schools in Limpopo Province.

### **2.10.1.1 How the Child-Friendly Schools framework informs my study**

The CFS concept implies that principles and values should act as a basis of existence and schools, especially in the classrooms where the standard should be generated and maintained. The framework serves as a lens for my study as I look at, but not limited to, shared principles which include participation (dialogue), child-centredness and inclusiveness; and shared values which include a culture of respect, equity and cooperation (UNICEF, 2012). The implementation of CFS in schools can be seen through different policies in education with the same values. These policies are meant to be incorporated and practised within the school environment. According to the CAPS document, one of the principles states that active and critical learning should be encouraged. This in my study implies that learners need to be engaged through participation. Moreover, inclusivity should become the central part of an organisation. The approach in making schools child-friendly promotes democratic principles and values in education to be nourished, where educators are anchors of both spheres. Thus the framework sets as a guide to discovery on how educators through the incorporation of CFS, principles and values can be brought forth in a democratic education in their classroom. It helps me look at how educators apply child-friendly practices in their own schools and be suitable agents of CFS environments (Modipane & Themane, 2014).

### **2.10.2 Social Reconstructionism approach**

Social Reconstructionism is a philosophy founded by Theodore Brameld (1904-1987). The theory arose as a reaction after world-war 2. He looked at a future of society which was better in technology, and where human compassion could be used to develop a better society. Additionally, George Counts (1889-1974) stipulated that education was an important tool to realise the aim of Reconstructionism. Social Reconstructionism is a theory in education which

underpins curriculum making (McGregor, 2019). By focusing on the curriculum approach, a new social transformation, social reform and social order can be created. The aim is to develop a society based on democratic principles and values, where social action on problems could be reformed from the school as foundation (Mayne, 2014). Social Reconstructionism recognises institutions such as schools where educators play a role through education to reconstruct society (Schiro, 2008; 2013). Schools prepare learners to become agents for change, as they reflect democratic ideals. The theory recommends educating problem solvers, and identifying and fixing social issues such as inequality, xenophobia and poverty (Edupedia, 2018). Counts (1969) argues that educators must prepare learners for social change through participation in fields such as technology and science to combat inequity. A Social Reconstructionism classroom encourages learners to discuss issues and to be free to express themselves. It focuses on active learning, cooperative learning, problem solving and critical thinking (Schiro, 2008; 2013). According to Social Reconstructionism, a culture of transformation and redress for a better society ought to be created (Hill, 2006).

#### **2.10.2.1 How Social Reconstructionism approach informs my study**

The main aim of education is to challenge the status quo in societies through school, and to address particular issues for the betterment of society. The South African curriculum promotes education as a tool to advance democracy in society. This is also highlighted in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement document as a principle for social transformation: enabling educational disparities of the past to be redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all (DoBE, 2011). According to several authors, for schools to be effective, they must be preserved as institutions for building civilisation (Mncube, 2008; Sentürk & Oyman, 2014; Joubert et al., 2015). This, in my study, implies that social change to address the past needs to be evident and practised within the school as an institution. In my opinion, to say that change has occurred, certain practices such as corporal punishment or disrespect will not be practised. Each child would be treated fairly and equally.

Moreover, no child, according to SASSA No.84 of 1996, is to be left uneducated; the theory fights against such inequalities. While teaching, educators influence how the children make meaning for themselves through what they learn as the result of being stimulated by the environment in which they live (Schiro, 2008; 2013).

### **2.10.3 Interrelatedness of the two framework**

The Child-Friendly Schools framework and the Social Reconstructionism approach are in line with the literature review as well as research questions. These articulate that principles and values need to be lived experiences to install future leaders and citizens who have values. These lived experiences can be effectively achieved in a child-friendly environment where respect and equity are promoted. The frameworks are based on the vision for 'education for all' by re-dressing the past, where learners are able to express their voices to those who are different and vulnerable in a fair and safe environment. The Child-Friendly Schools framework and the Social Reconstructionism approach reinforce a culture of inclusion, equality, communication and participation as values in education.

Learners need to be taught what it means to treat everyone equally with human compassion. This can be encouraged through the use of classroom activities that inspire them to ask questions and search for any possibilities of social justice, equality and dialogue (McGregor, 2019). These frameworks assisted my study to focus on the role of educators in influencing learners' lives. Through these theories, how the educator infuses democratic principles and values in a free country in order to embrace the spirit of a democratic South Africa is studied. This study investigated the incorporation of democratic principles and values into classroom practices by educators in Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

In this study, how educators incorporate democratic principles and values to develop learners within a small society (school) in order to transform a society,



where learners can recognise what is fair and unfair to them, and their fellow citizens is examined. Several authors like Knight and Pearl (2000), Lipman (2003), Waghid (2005), CAPS (DoBE, 2011), Sentürk and Oyman (2014) and Elicor (2016) argue that respect, participation, equity, inclusivity and child-centredness are part of the vital principles and values.

## **2.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter provided the review of literature on democratic education and democratic practices in education. The practice of democratic principles and values are vital components for classroom engagement, learner achievement as well as the community at large. Therefore, in order to ensure that democracy is practised within the classroom life, democratic principles and values must emerge. The theoretical frameworks used in the study are based on the Child-Friendly School and Social Reconstructionism approach, which aided me to make sense of the democratic principles and values that can be incorporated in schools in Limpopo Province. In the next chapter, I discuss the research methodology of the study.

## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter two provided the literature review on democratic education and the incorporation of democratic principles and values in education in different contexts.

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology of the study. The chapter covers the following: a) research paradigm, b) research approach, c) research design, d) selection of participants, e) data collection and f) data analysis. In addition, trustworthiness of the data and ethical considerations of the study are discussed.

### **3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

A research paradigm is “the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed” (Kuhn, 1970). The paradigm underpinning interpretivism has its foundation in hermeneutic inquiry, which is the study of theory and practice of interpretation (Bowen, 2009). This study was guided by the interpretive paradigm where individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The paradigm relates to constructivism, where I as a researcher attempts to put myself within the perception or thinking pattern of participants to reconstruct the intended meaning (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

According to the interpretive paradigm, situations as we know them are socially created through meanings and understandings (Stake, 2006; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The paradigm relies heavily on naturalistic methods such as interviews and observations to ensure dialogue between me and participants, paving the way for findings to emerge in the research process. Moreover,

document analysis can be a necessary data source that is viable within an interpretive paradigm (Merriam, 1998; Bowen, 2009).

Essentially, the interpretive paradigm leans towards the qualitative research approach where findings cannot be generalised but follow experiences to construct and interpret understanding from the data gathered (Yazan, 2015). This study aimed to investigate how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practice. The interpretive paradigm provided greater clarity on how educators make meaning of phenomena in a specific context aiming for greater understanding. How educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practice is to be seen through experiences of participants (Creswell, 2012). I therefore do not see participants in the study as objects of study but as full participants.

Hence, researchers believe that the interpretive paradigm predominantly uses the qualitative research approach which will be discussed in the next section (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

This study follows the qualitative research mode of inquiry placed within the interpretive paradigm, which is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). In line with the interpretive paradigm, the qualitative research approach attempts to discover or learn more about a topic or phenomenon from the perspective of participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Hence, the interpretive paradigm views the world through participants' understanding and experiences. In this study I sought to understand lived experiences of educators and learners regarding the incorporation of democratic principles and values into the classroom. I found the qualitative research approach best suited for the investigation.

Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015) indicate that research must seek to unearth a remarkable truth of participants' experiences. Moreover, Miles, Huberman and

Saldaña (2014) argue that qualitative research describes how best to understand the meaning of participants. The qualitative approach was selected in my study to acquire in-depth knowledge into how educators in two rural schools incorporate democratic principles and values in their teaching, learning and assessment within their schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, this approach aims to establish how educators can merge democratic principles and values in their classroom practices. Additionally, the qualitative approach provides a source of well-grounded and rich descriptions of process in a local context (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this study, participants were free to express their own views on how democratic principles and values are incorporated into their classroom. During the interaction between me and research participants, participants' world was discovered and interpreted by means of the qualitative approach. The research approach was relevant in my study as I was able to investigate the incorporation of democratic principles and values into classroom practices by educators in teaching, learning and assessment in their classroom. The qualitative approach collects data through the use of words rather than statistics, and hence I gained an in-depth picture of the observed phenomenon (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2014). Moreover, qualitative analytic approaches are about trying to make sense of how participants look at things by making sense in their own interpretive lens (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bowen, 2009; Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015).

This is further reinforced by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) as well as Creswell and Creswell (2018), who show that the qualitative approach may require interviews, focus groups, observations, a review of existing documents, or a number of these. The qualitative approach assisted me to get to the ground and better understand how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in their classroom practice.

The rationale behind the choice of the qualitative research is based on its strengths: it allows people's lived experiences to be discovered, and leads to human interaction (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). I intended to be unbiased

and impersonal in the findings as results are based on ensuring trustworthiness through credibility, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Furthermore, the qualitative research was used as it would provide greater understanding and interpretation of experiences and meanings of educators and learners regarding the phenomenon in this study (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative approach assisted me to discover how educators incorporate democratic principles and values within the classroom practice where teaching, learning and assessment takes place at both secondary schools (Merriam, 1998). Hence, I used this approach to unearth the ways in which educators infuse democratic principles and values in the classroom situation in their daily endeavours.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Case studies serve to address the how and why questions concerning the phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2014; Yazan, 2015). A case study, according to Yin, is holistic, as there is an interrelationship between the phenomenon and its contexts. Furthermore, it avails itself to guide data collection and data analysis. Stake (2006) sees a case study as a method that best fits a programme with four defining characteristics: holistic, empirical, interactive and emphatic. Stake advocates for a case study as a legitimate method in social sciences. It is an empirical based study on observation in the field. Moreover, Merriam (1998) perceives a case study as a thing, single entity, and a unit around which there are boundaries. Therefore, a case study is frequently used in qualitative research due to its intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon (Yazan, 2015). Interpretive research sees research through subject interaction. It is based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds (Merriam, 1998; 2009).

Additionally, Johnson and Christensen (2014) describe a case study in its nature as all-inclusive. It focuses on exploring and investigating existing real life phenomena. Creswell (2014) points out that a case study looks at an in-depth

analysis of one more case. It is a research design found in many disciplines in education. Merriam (1998; 2009) stresses that a case study has certain unique characteristics which are: particularistic (focus on a particular phenomenon), descriptive (yields a rich description of the phenomenon under study) and heuristic (illuminates readers' understanding of a phenomenon).

In this study, I used the descriptive case study design as maintained by Merriam (1998: 2009) in line with the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative research approach. The design emphasises a rich, thick holistic description of the phenomenon under study. This design is placed within the qualitative approach. I used the design to investigate the incorporation of democratic principles and values of the two schools in a rural setting of Limpopo Province. According to Nieuwenhuis (2016), descriptive design brings about closeness and in-depth understanding, resulting in new learning about the real world. Moreover, a case study enables me to witness the effects in actual circumstances (vanAardt, 2016).

A case study approach enabled me to carefully study the information within a specific context, and to find out how educators incorporate democratic principles and values through teaching, learning and assessment in their classroom at high schools.

### **3.5 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

In line with the qualitative research approach, I purposively selected two public secondary schools in Mogoshi Circuit of Limpopo Province in South Africa. I used purposive sampling which allowed me to choose individuals and sites that will help me learn or understand the central matter (Creswell, 2014). Merriam (1998) argues that purposive sampling is an important process of designing the qualitative approach. In this case, participants had the potential and means to provide relevant information on how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in their teaching, learning and assessment. The study was carried out

at two secondary schools that are categorised as quintile 2 in Mogoshi Circuit. The focus was on grade 10-12 classroom.

The study looked at the four aspects acknowledged by Miles and Huberman (1994): (a) the setting (i.e., the selected site area), (b) the actors (i.e., the participants observed and interviewed), (c) the events (i.e., what the actors will be observed or interviewed doing), and (d) the process (i.e., the evolving nature of events by participants within the site).

Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) highlight that boundaries are set to define aspects that fall within the limits and connect directly to research questions of the study. The two schools are similar in that they are both found in rural areas. This is unique as no research has been done in this area of Limpopo Province.

Participants were drawn through purposive sampling as follows: four educators from each school (eight educators) and focus groups of six learners per school (twelve learners) were selected. This resulted in a total of twenty (20) participants. In line with selecting participants for the focus group interviews, each group composed of a mixture in terms of gender in the Further Education and Training phase (grade 10-12). Focus groups tend to bring different opinions together, and to hear different voices of ideas of what democratic education really meant for them (Nicholls, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Four educators selected were from the following streams per school: one Mathematical/Physical Sciences educator, one Social Sciences, one English First Additional Language and one Life Orientation educator. The six learners who participated in the focus group from each school fall under one or more of the above streams. Participants selected for my study, both educators and learners are information rich participants as they were likely to best answer how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into the classroom practice, with focus on the Further Education and Training (FET) phase which is grades 10-12.

In order to maintain anonymity, the schools were named School (S): the first school was named 1 (S1) and the second school 2 (S2). Educator participants of

the study from each school were coded as 'E' for the four educators selected per school. The educators are referred to as educator 1, educator 2, educator 3, and educator 4, coded as E1, E2, E3, and E4, respectively. Furthermore, learner participants from each school were referred to as learner 1, learner 2, learner 3, learner 4, learner 5 and learner 6, coded as L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6, respectively.

### 3.5.1 Summary of the selected area of study

The two schools are situated at Mogoshi Circuit, Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. Mogoshi Circuit is located about 50km west of Polokwane city in Aganang Local Municipality. The two selected schools are described in detail. Due to anonymity, the schools were named School 1 and School 2. Table 3.5.1 below indicates a summary of the two schools in terms of description, location, quintile and number of learners.

	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>
<b>Settlement</b>	Village	Village
<b>Location</b>	Rural	Rural
<b>Quintile</b>	2	2
<b>No. of learners</b>	433	290

*Table 3.5.1: Summary of the two selected schools*

School 1 is situated in a village closer to the main road. In some parts of the building, roofs have collapsed due to the heavy winds but were in the process of repair. The school has an administration block; the principal has an office, and the head department shares an office with one of the senior educators. Educators had offices, but others are located in the one staff room. The trees are plenty and look old. The school is a no-fee school under quintile 2, which means it is a public school where learners are under 1000 in numbers. There is one principal, one departmental head and 15 educators. The schools' vision and mission are visible as you enter the gate.



School 2 is also situated in a village, 11km away from School 1. The school is located between mountains. The ground shows signs of soil erosion due to rainfall. The buildings look new and still intact; the school has an administration block, and the principal has an office, including the departmental head and four educators. Only five educators are located in two staff rooms. School 2 also falls under quintile 2, meaning it is a no-fee school, with learners under 1000 in number. The school's vision and mission are also visible as you enter the gate of the school.

### **3.5.2 Demographic information of educators**

In this research, sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind (Maree, 2016) to understand and gain insight (Merriam, 1998) into the incorporation of democratic principles and values by educators in their teaching, learning and assessment in the FET phase (grades 10-12). I targeted educators who teach in this phase range. I verified this by looking at the subject allocation that each educator taught before the choice of participants to form part of the sample.

The purposive sampling technique was used, and demographic information of educators was obtained in order to establish the following: a) the age bracket of participants; b) their gender; c) highest educational qualifications; and d) work experience.

#### **3.5.2.1 Age of participants**

Table 3.5.2.1 indicates four age categories that were used to gather information from participants. The age distribution of participants varied between 30 and 59 years. Three participants were between the ages of 30-39 years, two 40-49 years, and three were between the ages of 50-59 years.

	<b>Number of participants</b>
20-29 years	0
30-39 years	3
40-49 years	2
50-59 years	3
Total	8

### **3.5.2.2 Gender of participants**

Table 3.5.2.2 below presents the gender distribution of participants. Five were male and three were female educators. The majority of them were male.

	<b>Number of participants</b>
Male	5
Female	3
Total	8

### **3.5.2.3 Educational qualification of participants**

Educational qualifications of participants aided into obtaining special knowledge about the level of knowledge of educators' perspective in infusing democracy in teaching, learning and assessment.

Due to educators' own development and the need to maintain anonymity, pseudonyms and codes of schools and educators showing various educational qualifications are presented in Table 3.5.2.3 below. This shows that most educators are well-qualified. Participants had the necessary skills and content knowledge.

When asked if they would further their education when opportunity avails itself, many educators were against the idea of going further with their study. In my view, an educator is a lifelong learner, where new inventions and policies are constantly modified.

	School 1				School 2				Total
	E1	E2	E3	E4	E1	E2	E3	E4	
Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)	X	X			X				3
Educators Diploma (STD)	X	X							2
Bachelor of Science (BSC)	X			X					2
Postgraduate Certificate In Education (PGCE)				X			X	X	3
Bachelor of Arts (BA)							X	X	2
Bachelor of Education degree (BED)			X			X			2
B.Ed (Honours) degree in education								X	1

*Table 3.5.2.3: Shows various educational qualifications of participants from School 1 and School 2.*

### 3.5.2.4 Years of work experience

Table 3.5.2.4 below presents the teaching experience of participants, which is an important component of educators. The longer the experience, the better equipped the educator is presumed to be in the knowledge of democracy. Two educator participants had 0-5 years of teaching experience, one had 6-10 years of teaching experience and one participant had 11-19 years of teaching

experience whereas two participants taught 20-29 years. Two educator participants had 30-35 years of teaching experience. It is evident that most of these educators have been in the field of teaching for a long time.

	<b>Number of participants</b>
0- 5 years	2
6-10 years	1
11-19 years	1
20-29 years	2
20-35 years	2
Total	8

### **3.5.3 Characteristics of learner participants**

Learners sampled were boys and girls at two secondary schools doing grade 10-12 with similar economic backgrounds. This meant that the two schools shared certain commonalities: learners had both parents, had only a mother or a father, some had no parents or were staying with their grandparents or close relatives like an aunty or uncle. Most learners are from a low socio-economic background where unemployment takes its toll. The learners were within the age group of 15-18 years. They all are taught in a school that offers English as the medium of instruction. Participants belonged to the streams where all learners shared English and Life Orientation, and the other subjects were shared among two or three subjects. For example, some were doing mathematical literacy while others were doing pure mathematics.

### 3.6 DATA COLLECTION

I used semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, classroom observations and document analysis to collect data, which ensured me to draw on various sources of information to interpret the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I was interested in how educators' experiences made sense in the incorporation of democratic principles and values in their classroom practice (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). Merriam (1998) argues that interviews form the most common form of qualitative data collection. Further information was generated from interview responses and observation notes in the reflective journal to interconnect what the data reveal. The data was collected in a natural setting of participants during various times, either during school hours in order to avoid disruptions in teaching and learning, or after school hours. The qualitative approach consists of a variety of data collection methods that I used to gather information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I will discuss each one of these methods in the sections that follow (see Table 3.6: summary of data collection tools, below).

<b>Data collection tools</b>	<b>How the tools assisted</b>
Individual semi-structured interviews	It assisted me to ask each participant structured questions relevant to the topic.
Focus group interviews	It guided me to ask questions and gather insight into how educators met learners when incorporating democratic principles and values
Classroom observations	I was a non-participant observer. It assisted me to look at things not easily seen, and gave a visual understanding of how educators and learners interact in the classroom environment
Document analysis	A variety of policy documents both from

	the government and schools were reviewed looking at principles and values stipulated
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*Table 3.6: Summary of data collection tools*

### **3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are regularly used in research to support information emerging from additional data sources (Maree, 2016). It provides an interactive role where I got to be in close contact with participants; one of the characteristics of a qualitative research approach (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Merriam (2009) attests that semi-structured interviews comprise a mixture of more or less structured questions, with a specific desire of information. This is guided in the interview by a list of questions or issues to be explored.

Semi-structured interviews recognise feelings, emotions and views concerning a specific research subject (Creswell, 2014). The tools used gave participants, in this study educators, the platform to respond to questions on how democratic principles and values are incorporated in their classroom. I continuously involved participants through the use of questioning in an unbiased way, listening attentively to responses and asking follow-up questions (Maree, 2016).

The semi-structured interviews were done in a quiet place such as an office in order to avoid disturbances. I secured appointments with participants beforehand for each session of the interview. The appointments for interviews were scheduled during free periods or after working hours to avoid disruption of the day-to-day teaching and learning activities. This created a stage where participants were allowed to voice their experiences in a free flowing manner. Qualitative research interviews pave the way for participants' sense-making and experiences (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015).

An interview guide (see appendix H) was later used, depending on participants' responses for clues. In order to guarantee the completeness and reliability of

information, interview sessions were tape-recorded according to the participant's approval. The sessions were then transcribed.

The challenge I faced in the study when interviewing educators was that one educator, whose pseudonym was E2 from School 1 did not want to be audio taped. So I was forced to write notes on everything he said during the interview. The research process was slightly derailed as interview recordings and verification of notes with participants can improve the validity of data analysis and reveal things I had not covered during the interview. I learned to tolerate different human personalities bearing in mind the importance of interpersonal relationships. Moreover, listening to participants' requests is good ethics. However, the rest of the interviews went well and I was allowed to audio tape them.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that there are steps to follow in analysing different methods of qualitative data. This involves segmenting and taking apart information like peeling back layers of an onion and putting it back together again. This is in line with the interpretive paradigm where individuals seek out understanding of the world in which they live and work. Through the qualitative research approach, I was able to investigate the incorporation of democratic principles and values into classroom practices by educators in teaching, learning and assessment in their classroom.

This prompted the use of Creswell and Creswell's (2018) interview protocol, as follows:

<b>PHASE</b>		<b>What I did</b>
1	Basic information about the interview	Noted the time, date, place and names of the interviewer (pseudonyms).
2	Introduction	Introduced myself and the purpose of conducting the interview. I gave the interviewee the structure of the interview.
3	Opening question	To make the interviewer at ease, ice-breaker questions were used to open the platform.
4	Content questions	Research sub-questions were asked to better

		understand the phenomenon investigated. Using questions that generated themes in sequence to gain in-depth understanding.
5	Using probes	To gain more information, probes were used for further explanation to a question such as: 'elaborate, is there anything else you want to add'? This enables me to learn more about the topic.
6	Closing instruction	I thanked the interviewee, stop recording and assured them that confidentiality will be maintained.

*Table 3.6.1: Interview protocol when conducting interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).*

While semi-structured interviews were successful, I faced challenges in school 1 when one educator decided not to be part of the study on the day of the interview. She decided to withdraw and gave no explanation and did not want to give reasons. It made it very challenging to find another participant. As a result, I had to set up another time to interview a participant who willingly volunteered. Other than that, interviews were helpful in all the two schools to bring meaning into how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in their classroom practice when it comes to teaching, learning and assessment.

### **3.6.2 Focus group interviews**

In line with the interpretive paradigm and following the qualitative research approach, I used focus group interviews which have been identified as some of the most suitable data collection tools. A focus group interview, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018), is when a researcher interviews participants in a group of 6 to 12 participants, which allows for control over the line of questioning. The focus group involved six learners from the FET phase (grades 10-12) from



each school. The mixed in grade level ensures that opinions, thoughts and experiences of learners were prompted. This allowed the learners to widen their range of responses and to share their details of experiences, providing rich information (Maree, 2016). The interviews in both schools took place in a board room for about 50 to 60 minutes during sports period which was before their late afternoon study commences. Audio recording during the setting was utilised to bring value towards data collection and credibility to the study (Maree, 2016).

Due to the learners' own development and the need to maintain anonymity, each school was coded with 'L' for the six learners selected from each school. Learners who participated in the focus group interviews are referred to as learner 1, learner 2, learner 3, learner 4, learner 5, and learner 6, coded as L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6, respectively. This study revolves around their opinions on how they view the merging of democratic principles and values when it comes to teaching, learning and assessment in their classroom environment.

Although the focus-group interviews were successful, I faced challenges when interviewing the whole group of learners at once in the FET phase (grades 10-12). As a result, two of the learners were not there during some parts of the interview as they were summoned by one educator during the interview slot. Learners in School 1 were called upon during the time they were booked. They were called deliberately to go and write corrections for a previous test, but later came back again to join the interview. However, learners in School 2 were completing a formal practical that was supposed to have been administered the day before. Other than that, the focus group interviews were helpful in all the two schools to bring meaning into how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in their classroom.

### **3.6.3 Classroom observations**

Observations were done in the classroom as one of the ideal data collection tools for interpretive paradigm and in line with the qualitative research approach. I was a non-participant observer in this study. Observation is when I take notes and observe in a structured way the events in the research area as they unfold

(Maree, 2016). I used classroom observation schedules such as appendix J to assist me in order not to lose focus by collecting unnecessary information to compromise the analysis (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Classroom observations enabled me to observe and record participants' behaviours and activities methodically. I was a complete observer in the sense that I observed the classrooms without participating to record information as it happens in the observation and be more objective (Nicholls, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This allowed me to observe what people were doing and to witness participants' actions in their 'natural setting'. It enabled me to see what people are reluctant to talk about.

I used classroom observations to watch the behavioural patterns of learners and educators inside the classroom for a full one hour (60 minutes) to identify democratic principles and values that could have emerged during their interaction and anything else that might pop up but important towards the study's findings. This served to identify visible emerging patterns from the generated codes. Moreover, I was able to view the relationship that transpired between learners and educators. How educators infused in practical form their understanding of what democratic values in their teaching, learning and assessment will be discussed fully in the next chapter.

#### **3.6.4 Document analysis**

Document analysis is one of the data collection methods used in case study research (Merriam, 1998).

Maree (2016) defines document analysis as a data gathering technique that assists to shed light on the phenomenon considered through written communication. Documents can either be public records (newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports) or personal documents (personal journals, letters, diaries) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Records that are found in schools tend to provide better understanding of a setting. Thus, document analysis allows information to be extracted from relevant documents.

In this study, public records like the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, the school assessment policy and lesson plans served as documents which were analysed in order to get an understanding of democratic principles and values that were incorporated into educational practices. CAPS documents were used as evidence to check whether educators followed guidelines stipulated in the documents. The Manifesto contained details on how democratic values can be contextualised in education. The Assessment policy was used to check whether any form of democratic principles and values were stipulated. Lesson plans were studied together with observations to establish if democratic principles and values were evidently infused into teaching and learning practices.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

I used Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyse data from semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews as well as document analysis (Bowen, 2009) to analyse data obtained from records in order to investigate the incorporation of democratic principles and values into classroom practices by educators. The qualitative approach involves a process where a more focused re-reading and reviewing of the data helps to uncover themes relevant to a phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). Merriam (1998) emphasises the importance of the process of thematic analysis and triangulation as significant in ensuring the quality of a study by means of data collection and data analysis as a systematically detailed chain of evidence in an interpretive paradigm.

#### **3.7.1 Thematic Analysis**

Collection and data analysis form the basis for the effective answering of research questions (Creswell, 2014; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014; Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). As a result, I began data analysis immediately after data has been collected. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), qualitative analysis is an on-going process, where there are no strict boundaries

between data collected and making sense of that data. An in-depth analysis on the incorporation of democratic principles and values by educators into their classroom practices was implemented in relation to the FET (grade 10-12) Phase.

The study adopted Braun and Clarke's six step-by-step guide in following the Thematic Analysis strategy. Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework of analysing data covers the following procedure: familiarising oneself with data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and generating a report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a method that identifies, analyses and reports patterns or themes within data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:10), "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set". I used Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyse data in order to investigate the incorporation of democratic principles and values into classroom practices by educators.

Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) attest that qualitative data analysis is a process of simplifying abstract data and of transforming it into stronger data, which involves identifying themes and patterns by creating themes or networks in order to display it easily for better organisation of information and subsequent conclusion. Similarly, Mncube and Harber (2010) uphold that data analysis is a process of mass ordering, structuring and meaning of data. Creswell (2014) points out that data analysis involves breaking apart data and placing it back collectively once over again.

I analysed the data while collecting it. Therefore, unanswered questions that remained (or new questions that might come up) were addressed before data collection was completed. Data processing and analysis was on-going.

In this study, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were transcribed and analysed, and the information was categorised into themes and sub-themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) propose thematic analysis as a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The rich data was organised and described in detail. I further interpreted various aspects of the research topic. I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six-phase Thematic Analysis

strategy of analysing data (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015) presented in Table 3.7.1 below.

<b>Phase</b>		<b>What I did</b>
<b>1</b>	Familiarising oneself with the data	The information gathered was transcribed, read through the data, type it, pause the recording, read the data again. I noted items of interest, what was common, familiarisation notes.
<b>2</b>	Generating initial/preliminary codes	Coding is organic, with a list of codes from the data; I was subjective as I held to the underlying data.
<b>3</b>	Generating initial themes	Themes were generated from similar codes clustered together. I reviewed the coded data to identify potential themes from interviews and focus groups. Therefore I looked for repeated codes from the data collected, and I clusters them together from a similar 'big' code to a theme.
<b>4</b>	Reviewing initial themes	This involves in-depth code; I had to ask myself whether this is a theme, does it hold quality, and does it hold enough meaning to call a theme; thus refining and developing themes through coding.
<b>5</b>	Defining and naming themes	Themes and categories were generated. I created themes from the data. Each theme has a short description and themes were refined.
<b>6</b>	Producing the report	The order of which to present my themes. I then relate analysis of themes which were relevant to the research question into how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classrooms in the secondary schools, Limpopo Province, South Africa. For wider context, literature review was related to analysis.

*Table 3.7.1: Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six-phase Thematic Analysis strategy of analysing data (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015).*

### 3.7.2 Document analysis

Data were gathered from the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, assessment policy and lesson plans. I analysed the documents using Bowens' (2009) document analysis. This was done in order to provide data on the context within which research participants incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practice. Moreover, the documents provide what Bowen (2009) calls supplementary research data, which is in line with the research approach. Furthermore, this type of analysis is a way to verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources, ensuring a means of triangulation.

The procedure followed when analysing data is presented in Table 3.7.2 below.

Phase		What I did
1	Skimming	I read the CAPS, Manifesto, assessment policy and lesson plans with the aim to get the overall picture (superficial examination)
2	Reading	I did a thorough examination of the documents in order to understand how educators can incorporate democratic principles and values within their classroom practices.
3	Interpretation	I then interpreted the documents in relation to the incorporation of democratic principles and values by educators into their classroom practices.

*Table 3.7.2: Document Analysis (Bowen, 2009)*

### 3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In order to maintain accuracy and consistency in a research study, trustworthiness or qualitative validation is key (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study on how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in secondary schools of Limpopo Province ensured trustworthiness through the

following criteria: credibility, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **3.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility in qualitative research refers to finding out that results are credible or believable from the viewpoint of participants in the research (Creswell, 2013). This means that the aim of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomenon of interest from participants' understanding. In this study, I used the following strategies to enhance credibility. During the data collection procedures, each participant was informed of the purpose and procedures of the research before the actual interview. The participants' responses were transcribed verbatim. Each participant was given their own copy of the transcript to check for validity, which most scholars (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Durodola, 2009; Creswell, 2013) refer to as member checking. I re-looked at the raw data and checked that the findings on the report are reflective. I spent ample time with participants when I was collecting data and repeatedly observed and interacted with them. Using multiple methods of data collection through different instruments enabled me to cross-validate responses from findings. In other words, I constantly applied certain strategies to look for accuracy of findings (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **3.8.2 Dependability**

Dependability was achieved through auditing (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) argues that dependability results can be subject to change and instability. Dependability therefore looks at how consistency and reliability of the research is maintained (Masote, 2016). In this study, I aimed to avoid making mistakes when abstracting information by checking transcripts. By gathering records and interpreting findings, I made sure that the information was recorded, and what is reported as findings on the results bring value to researchers, clients and practitioners (Nicholls, 2009). I compared the results

from interviews with the classroom observations and documents to see if they come together upon the same findings.

### **3.8.3 Confirmability**

Findings will be related only to the study and not to the bias, motivation and view of the researcher (Durodola, 2009). To ensure that the data relates specifically to how educators incorporate democratic principles in the class, I engaged with the audit (give to an external editor) in a manner that the reader should be able to confirm and accept the findings. Moreover, different data approaches were collected at different times through semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, classroom observations and document analysis (Merriam, 1998). I used triangulation to establish validity to ensure trustworthiness of the research. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), triangulation means linking analysis with findings from a variety of data sources. This further demonstrates trustworthiness. Masote (2016) acknowledges that it is vital to find out whether the data obtained ties in with other general findings of other studies. Thus, a diversity of data sources was added to findings to build a more argumentative view of themes. This means that comparing and contrasting my findings with other findings will serve as evidence supported by reliable sources derived from writings (Nicholls, 2009). Triangulation validates the findings of the study (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Findings will be vital to curriculum advisors and policy makers to enable room for the incorporation of democratic principles and values into the curriculum with regards to teaching, learning and assessment. Findings will also reduce theoretical and practical gaps in the implementation of democratic education. The present study is significant as its interpretations and recommendations will contribute to the body of knowledge on what more can be done that will help



other researchers and the Department of Basic Education on how educators can incorporate democratic principles and values in their classroom in public schools. Moreover, it will add in the building of theories on the creation of classrooms and learning environments.

### **3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations were perceived. Ethical issues are important in today's research (Creswell, 2014). Ethical practice is vital as it ensures respect for participants' privacy (Durodola, 2009). It provides research that has a truthful report, that reflects participants' responses, and that is not personalised or plagiarised for my interest (Creswell, 2012). Before conducting the study, it is important to seek and to be granted approval by the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee (see ethical clearance certificate in appendix A).

Moreover, permission letters were also sought from relevant authorities: the Department of Basic Education at district (the Department of Basic Education approval letter in appendix B) and Circuit levels (see the Circuit Manager's approval letter in appendix C) as well as principals from the two selected schools, including learners, educators and parents/caregivers. The principals of the schools were contacted telephonically to make arrangements to explain the study and how it was to be conducted. All the above authorities granted approval letters to me before the commencement of the research.

Participants were given explanations for the reasons of the study, and that their participation is voluntary, as they were not in any obligation and could withdraw at any given time. They were further informed of the study methods used to collect data and the manner in which the outcome would be published. They were provided with consent forms to sign. Consent forms for those who were under 18 years old were signed by the parent/guardian of the participant. Ethical procedures were monitored throughout the study so that issues of confidentiality and privacy of participants were protected. Privacy of participants will not be

revealed, and anonymity will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms instead of participants' real names. This will protect and guarantee participants' identity, ensuring them anonymity and equal treatment. This also included the identity of the schools to avoid any unfair criticism and assumptions, with the use of 'School 1' and 'School 2', instead of schools' names.

### **3.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

Chapter 3 presented a summary of how the research study was conducted. The research paradigm, research approach, research design, data collection instruments and analysis were discussed. The discussion was based on how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in the two selected secondary schools in Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province of South Africa. Through the interpretative paradigm, I was able to understand the phenomenon regarding how educators fit in democratic principles and values in their classroom practices. In the next chapter, I analyse and interpret the study findings.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter three I provided a comprehensive discussion of the research methodology that I used in the study.

In chapter four, I present the analysis and findings of the study. The chapter discusses: 1) data management and analysis; 2) data presentation and interpretation of findings from interviews, classroom observations and document analysis; 3) overview of research findings; and 4) the summary of the chapter.

#### **4.2 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS**

The purpose of this study was to establish how educators at Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa incorporate democratic principles and values in managing teaching, learning and assessment in their classroom practices. In the discussion, I present findings from the analysis organised into categories and themes as guided by the research questions (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). Findings from the data collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, classroom observations and document analysis are presented separately.

This research study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What are democratic principles and values that educators incorporate into their classroom practice in general?
- How do educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their teaching?
- In what way do democratic principles and values merge in the learning activities?
- How do educators incorporate democratic principles and values into assessment tasks and activities?

In accordance with the qualitative research approach, the data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stages of Thematic Analysis. The data was coded and organised into themes. Coding is a process of organising data into themes through the refinement of codes (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). I captured important data in relation to the research question asked, and looked for patterns.

#### 4.3 PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section, I present findings of the study separately in terms of themes according to the data collection methods that were used which are: semi-structured interviews (appendix H), focus group interviews (appendix I), classroom observations (appendix J) and document analysis. The discussion of findings is substantiated by direct quotes from interview transcripts which were recorded and transcribed to verify their authenticity.

#### 4.4 FINDINGS FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS

Semi-structured interviews were prepared and organised as was explained in chapter 3. The interviews were conducted with eight (8) educators; four from each of the two schools. The educators (E) are referred to as educator 1, educator 2, educator 3 and educator 4; coded as E1, E2, E3 and E4. The findings were organised according to the themes and sub-themes generated from interviews, as represented in Table 4.4 below:

Theme 1	Sub-themes
The meaning of democracy in education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators' understanding of democratic education</li> <li>• The effects on classroom context</li> </ul>
Theme 2	Sub-themes

Incorporation of democratic principles and values in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Understanding democratic education in the school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and learning activities</li> <li>• Accommodation of different learning styles</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 4</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Democratic use of instruction in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators' facilitation of lessons</li> <li>• Challenges of integrating democratic principles and values</li> </ul>

*Table 4.4: Themes and sub-themes generated from semi-structured interviews.*

#### **4.4.1 THEME 1: THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION**

##### **4.4.1.1 Educators' understanding of democratic education**

In order to understand what democracy in education meant for educators, the following question was posed: In your view, what is democracy in education? From the responses, participants expressed different understandings of democracy in education. Some educators were of the opinion that democratic education entails certain characteristics such as equality, freedom, mutual understanding and democratic rights in the classroom. The participant's responses were as follows: S1E2 said: *"Equal rights of education as they are in class"*. In addition, S1E1 said: *"It is like teachers and learners must come up with their own way of learning and teaching, just like there should be mutual understanding"*. While S2E2 said: *"It is just a matter of where in you interact with learners freely, where you express your views and you give the knowledge and they ask questions freely, without any disturbances without any interactions of some sort"*.

However, some do seem to look at democratic education in a different way, where education has a set of rules to follow or as a guide to show you what to do. This is what S2E1 said: *“I think it means principles of demo and rules should be followed by all costs in education”*. While S1E4 referred to it as: *“Mmhe the way I understand it, it’s that on my view democratic education you exercise whatever education requires you to do. Not go suprisa ke something or someone else”*.

This implies that the use of policies such as CAPS, school policy or any policy within the education sector that needs to be followed, is what defines democratic education. Moreover, the CFS shared principles and values in schools can be seen through different policies within the education sector that contains the same characteristics. These policies are to be engaged and practised in the school environment.

The reason could be that most educators view democratic education as a guide on how interactions in terms of democratic meaning could be put into implementation.

#### **4.4.1.2 The effects on classroom context**

Regarding whether their classroom management style was democratic, participants expressed different views. From the eight participants, the majority of them stated that they use a democratic style of management.

This is what S1E1 said: *“Yes. Learners need to understand first the main purpose is to everyone must be such that everyone must be able to grasps information in relation to his ability or her ability”*. And in agreement S1E2 said: *“Yes. To give each and everyone a chance to express himself the way we are doing things”*.

Participants believe that learners should be involved in their classroom to form part of the lesson. By implication, making all learners feel like they are a big part of the classroom encourages inclusion.

One participant, S2E3 even went further to say: *“Yes. Ehh honestly kids love me in a good way of cause. Unlike other teachers, I am not much of a tyrant, we run the class together”*. He believes that his learners love him, and he strives to be a role model to all as he does not run the class alone, but “run the class together”.

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoBE, 2001) aspires for an open society, where respect and responsibility is nurtured in the classroom. This might imply that decision making in the class forms part of schooling. This concur with authors such as Mills and McGregor (2017) and Mncube, Davies and Naidoo (2015) with respect to the promotion of dialogue and responsibility.

This finding relates to the Social Reconstructionism approach as learners are treated equally. This encourages the need to work together. Learners are free to socialise and the promotion of freedom is heartened.

In contrast with the finding above, two participants had different views. One participant indicated that being democratic in the classroom will depend on the challenges that may arise in class. This is what S1E1 had to say: *“It depends on the lesson, the topic”*. Furthermore, S1E4 expressed a different view from the rest and stated that *“No, I believe learners should be put straight by beating”*.

This is in contrast with the Social Reconstructionism approach, in terms of which redress in society ought to be created, where the school context plays a significant role. Moreover, CFS helps me look at how educators can apply child-friendly practices in their schools in promotion of a CFS environment.

This implies that although we are in a democratic era, not every educator caters for a democratic style of managing the class as learners need to be disciplined in order to keep order in the classroom.

#### **4.4.2 THEME 2: INCORPORATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES IN THE CLASSROOM**

Regarding the question about the incorporation of democratic principles and values in the classroom, the study found that democratic principles and values

in the classroom play an important role in creating citizens who would be conscious of their surroundings and promote lifelong living of these principles. The findings are presented in terms of how educators incorporate democratic principles and values through their teaching, learning and activities in their assessments.

#### 4.4.2.1 Teaching

Regarding their teaching practices, participants expressed various views on how democratic principles and values can be incorporated in teaching. The most common expression is the participation of learners when teaching is widely used. S1E1 stated: *“It depend on the lesson, the topic. If it says the learners must be able to participate in order for the learning to be successful”*. And in agreement, S1E2 said: *“Look at the learners from different background, check the learners, as they are from different cultures, give them a room to participate in the way they learnt from home so I can interact together in the classroom”*.

The majority of participants argue that depending on the type of lesson topics, attributes such as respect can be seen, and treating them all equally is as important. S2E1 stated: *“When teaching I must make sure I accept all my learners as they are, physically, intellectual etc and then I must treat them all equal”*. Also, S2E4 support: *“I make sure that all the learners respect one another, in case they are reading or they are speaking. No body must laugh to; nobody must laugh at other learners”*.

S2E3 further indicated that as an educator, sometimes when teaching the content of the day, you can also teach them other hidden curricula that emerge to remind them of the importance of values: S2E3 stated:

*“Well usually when I am in class teaching I install little things like values such as being inclusive. You need to understand that your fellow learners might be different. We had a case where the learner come with some bands from church and some learners laughed and I told them you can’t*



*do this. When I am teaching I always remind them of things like xenophobia, that we do not need this kind of things. Simply because you are black doesn't mean you are less better than white people. I always tell them this kind of things when I teach".*

In relation to the theoretical frameworks applied in my study, the need to reinforce a culture of inclusion, communication and participation as values in education is promoted. Masote (2016) highlights culture and tradition as social factors that influence values in education. The findings above endorse participation, respect, equality and inclusivity, which are characteristics of theories of this study.

This in my view could mean that educators do their best to involve learners as they teach. There seems to be a shift by educators dominating the classroom more often, and involving learners. This encourages inclusivity which, according to CAPS, should become a central part of teaching at school.

In contrast, one participant differed as he maintains that certain characteristics are not actually upheld, especially when teaching adolescents. Thus, sometimes incorporating them is not realistic. This was confessed by S1E4: *"Their some of challenges you meet actually when it comes to teaching, rea kwana. Sometimes you forced to actually apply corporal punishment. In that case, principles actually are sadi obeya akere".*

This seems to be a contradiction with the theoretical frameworks of the study. The Social Reconstructionism approach attests that re-dressing the past and promoting a fair and equal treatment for learners in a safe environment should be a vision in education for all. Moreover, the CFS advocates for learners to be treated equally in a safe child-friendly environment at all times.

This assertion for me shows that even though the participant was truthful and admitted that teaching secondary school learners in their current stage of life is a challenge, adhering to democratic principles and values when teaching is not easy. This is contrary to the CFS for equal rights to all. For the participant was honest and did not value some rights of the children.

#### 4.4.2.2 Learning

Most of the participants expressed similar views of encouraging participation and expression of learners when incorporating democratic principles and values into learning.

S1E2 said: *“Most of time, I put the learners in the centre, given plenty of time to express themselves. Throw them the topic before integration with them. In groups to learn whatever is recorded on the day”.*

And in agreement S2E2 said:

*“When learning through interactions with them, remember in my lesson, I would be first telling them about... By saying today our topic about human rights, and therefore hear from them what is it they know in a summary before I move on. They will share with me what they know and in the process I share with them what I know.... Because the aim here is I give information and they give me what they know. In that way I think it is democratic because they are free to express themselves and am free to also give them my knowledge”.*

The Child-Friendly Schools promotes shared principles of participation leading the way for dialogue and expression by the child. This in my study indicates that learners need to be engaged through participation. This is in line with what Waghid (2005) and Yoldaş (2015) state as a culture of participation in learners.

The finding above, in my view, could mean that learning means learners are involved and gain knowledge. They are engaged in different ways so they can feel free to express themselves and be able to learn.

#### 4.4.2.3 Assessment

The question whether or not democratic principles and values are incorporated into assessment practices, appeared as a challenge as most

participants had to re-ask the question a few times for clarity. Nonetheless, various views were given where assessment, according to participants, moved from simple to complex, or as a way of using Bloom's taxonomy as a checklist of what was taught, or the administration of monthly and fortnightly tests.

This is what S2E2 said: *"Ya assessment, e.g. being guided by policy document or textbooks. I will just say go to activity what what and do that activity, which would be related with what we discussed in class. I will refer them to the textbook with regard to assessment"*.

The reason the participant said this is that educators were confused regarding how democratic principles and values could be integrated into assessment. In my opinion, this finding could also mean that educators see assessment as a mere tool of assessing what learners have been taught in their classroom activities.

Indeed, it was a challenge for most participants as some associated assessment only with the giving out of activities. They could not link democratic principles and values with assessment even after I had re-explain the question. However, it seemed that only two participants were able to link assessment with the democratic principle and value attributes. S2E4 pointed out that: *"I allow the learners to use their own way of thinking, their own way of writing so that we can access and come together as a group to discuss what is more valuable, what is more of a fact or the opinion we can use in everyday life and not only in class. Thank you"*.

As one of its principals, the CAPS document encourages active and critical learning where a learner can apply knowledge through assessment for achievement. Learners need to be engaged through participation, which is a vital principle in terms of the Child-Friendly Schools model.

The reason participants thought of assessment in this manner could be because assessment can bring about group work or team work. This might in turn encourage collaboration of individuals.

In a unique response, S1E3 referred to assessment as feedback which plays a role in guiding learners of what is considered wrong and what is considered right. S1E3 openly shared her story as follows:

*“I remember when I marked paper 3 ... marking essays. Then I would comment, a learner chooses a topic talking about ‘when I was at the schools gate’, and then something happened. Then they talk about an accident, the school gate and the main road. She was kind of in favour of the taxi driver, to a drunken motorist. The two clashed the car and the taxi. The drunken was at fault. When I marked her work I even wrote a paragraph or two saying ‘do you have a license my little girl? I can see you don’t have a license, the drunken had the right of way, the taxi driver didn’t have the right of way. The drunken even broke the law, do not drink and drive. The taxi driver was a careless driver, he just went into the wrong without looking and the drunken had the right of way. I even asked her ‘oow you know road accident fund. You are the traumatised and the police even come there and take you to back into the classroom? That you haven’t received any eer. Eer counselling. Having er I think when we assess, we should comment on such things”.*

The Child-Friendly Schools and Social Reconstructionism approach look at the provision of educational quality that promotes education reform and improve the quality of schooling. Concepts such as equality, critical thinking, compassion and moral values are some of the qualities needed to embrace the spirit of a democratic education.

This finding could mean that S1E3 believes that assessment is not only limited to English paper 3 learners’ essays, but also what you teach them from their written work. This implies that replying and commenting on learners’ work can help teach them the importance of looking at a situation not only in terms of a single view, but as a whole.

#### 4.4.3 THEME 3: UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

In this section, I explain the theme understanding democratic education in the curriculum from the perspective of educator participants. The sub-themes that were generated from theme 3 will be discussed under the following: teaching and learning activities; and accommodation of different learning styles.

Through their mixed responses, participants' showed diversity in their understanding of how the integration of democratic education and curriculum can merge. Generated from the research question whether educators give learners an opportunity to negotiate the curriculum with them in class, the participants indicated that:

S2E2 said:

*"Yes, yes this is where in you find the learners question how we assess them. Because you find that they sometimes each and every lesson we assess them and they ask why are you assessing us in each and every lesson. I say no, this one we guided remember by CAPS so we must teach you and thereafter you understand what I taught you. This is where is we negotiate. I make them understand that it is important to assess and in that way they understand".*

S2E4 concurred: *"Yes they do have, hence we have the policy document by the Department, the Curriculum Statement, which is for the National Assessment. They have need know all those aspects they need to assessed on, so they can be in a position, they be ready for the examination, and all the tasks they do in class, at home or examination. Thank you".*

CFS attests for values to be practised in schools through the guidance of polices. These policies, which are meant to be incorporated and practised within the school environment, embody CFS qualities, which advocate for active and critical learning where the child becomes the central part of education.

Some of the participants' responses indicate that they believe that the practice of a democratic education is integrated through the use of the CAPS document. This implies that the CAPS document embodies democratic principles and values that give rise to democratic education that can be applied.

However, in contrast, some participants do acknowledge that the curriculum is non-negotiable with the learners. The following educators reflect this: S1E1: *"No, the curriculum is not a question of negotiations with learners. It's just that the Government is responsible for the curriculum, so the teachers and the learners are just to learn what is set"*. Similarly S1E4: *"No, I teach subjects not language. I won't introduce a chapter that won't be in the exam"*. This is in contrast with what the literature indicates that curriculum negotiation and freedom of choice should be maintained (Bron, Bovill & Veugelers, 2016) as well as learners can contribute to the curriculum (Maphalala, 2017).

The Child-Friendly Schools and Social Reconstructionism approach promote education as a tool for social change, address educational disparities and provide equal educational opportunities for all.

I find that some participants expressed diverse ideas of what curriculum negotiation with their learners can be. Other participants explained it as learners who group themselves to go and discuss their content on their own. Yet others explained it by a simple question of why they are assessed using textbooks, while others as the need to follow the CAPS document. This implies that some educators do not seem to be sure or unsure about what it means to negotiate the curriculum.

#### **4.4.3.1 Teaching and learning activities**

Regarding learners' expectations to reach their goals and being able to develop themselves in the process, there was a difference in opinions as

some participants responded that goals can be achieved through the use of activities and tasks given to learners. Some participants had antagonist thoughts, where learners fail to see the importance of writing.

Some participants responded that they do want their learners to reach their goals through group work activities and tasks given to them. S2E4 said: *“Their goals, yes when achieve something in class I tell them to applaud one another, I give them like incentives in a way of giving them certificates, at different times like in the term we award them, like certificates and trophies to be the best in class. Thank you”*. Similarly, S2E1 said: *“I think they are growing or developing. Since well, because of mixing them even those who catch slow would have reached an extend to catch up. So those who are faster will help them reach the work, to catch up their work”*.

The theoretical frameworks of this study reinforce a culture of participation and inclusion of the child. This can be stimulated through the use of classroom activities that will motivate them to ask questions and to search for any possibilities of social justice and equality, establishing dialogue.

This implies that learners can reach their goals when they are engaged with different forms of assessment activities, which can sharpen them to become better individuals.

In opposition, some participants disagree, arguing that learners are unable to see the importance of teaching and learning activities given to them. S1E2 remarked: *“No, mostly through the teachers who give them support. Own is different as some are too lazy to do their work. Nowadays, kids needs to be checked timeously, whether they do their work or not”*. And S1E4 supported and said: *“No. most of the learners, most of them don’t want to learn but follow the procedure, cram pass forget”*.

Participants’ differences regarding whether learners can develop their own learning could mean that some educators believe encouraging classroom activities ensures that learners can study on their own, while some participants believe that this leads only to laziness by learners. Perhaps, not

all learners are willing to comply in terms of doing activities that would develop them and help them achieve their goals.

#### **4.4.3.2 Accommodation of different learning styles**

Regarding the question of accommodating different learning styles, participants responded differently. Some participants believe that they do cater for all learners in their teaching, while others are of the opinion it will depend on the type of lesson they are going to have.

Some participants agreed that the type of learning style followed in that specific lesson would depend on the topic or subject that will be dealt with. This statement is supported by S1E2, who said: *"It is challenging. I do try my level best to accommodate the different styles, as things have changed. Learners of this days differ from before, e.g. motion pictures, technology advanced"*. Similar, S2E2 said: *"Ya I do make use of discussion question and answer style. I would have all my learners participating and say 'Lerato can you give us the answer'".* While S1E4's commented: *"I use the chalk. I do not have videos. I do practical's e.g. I use learners as tools"*.

This finding concurs with the framework of the study, the Child-Friendly Schools and the Social Reconstructionism approach, which argue that principles and values need to be lived experiences, where all learners are treated fairly.

The reasons why participants say educators' teaching methods depend on the knowledge they plan to teach for the day could be because topics and subtopics differ in terms of the best approach of teaching and learning used for better effectiveness of the lesson.



#### 4.4.4 THEME 4: DEMOCRATIC USE OF INSTRUCTION IN THE CLASSROOM

With regard to the democratic use of instruction in the classroom, two subthemes have been generated and are discussed in this section. These subthemes are educators' facilitation of a lesson and challenges of integrating democratic principles and values.

##### 4.4.4.1 Educators facilitation of a lesson

Regarding the question of educator's facilitation of the lesson, the study found that six of the eight participants agreed that we are in a democratic era in the country where facilitation of a lesson should be the mandate of any lesson.

Majority of the participants believe that lessons should be facilitated. This statement is supported by S1E2, who said: "*I facilitate with the learners being centred in the lesson. Learners learn to work on their own, engaging one another in the form of debate, doing group work, teaching one another*".

This is in line with the theoretical framework of the study, where the well-being of the child is at the centre of education, thus child-centred ideologies set the foundation of the practice.

This implies that majority of participants facilitate their lessons and promote learner-centredness in the classroom environment. This leads to the concept of 'child-centred' teaching in what the Manifesto calls a mechanism to gain respect and discipline in the classroom (DoBE, 2001).

However, two participants highlighted that it would depend on the situation at that moment. Learners need to be disciplined for the sake of functionality of the classroom. S2E3 highlighted the following: "*Bit of both. I prefer facilitating but at the same time they are troublesome kids in the class. If you dictate they seem to be obeying the rules, but if you dictate overly it might end up not helping them*".

The theoretical framework of the study aims to improve quality of schooling, promotion of equality and participation for the child's best interest.

Although it would be ideal for educators to always facilitate their lessons, two participants argue that the situation of what would be currently happening within the classroom would need to be assessed first. This may likely mean that some educators look at the condition of the classroom, and then come up with a solution that best fits the circumstances. This implies that a learner-centred approach is not used every day in the classroom.

#### **4.4.4.2 Challenges when integrating democratic principles and values**

Regarding the question of challenges that educators face when incorporating democratic principles and values in the classroom practice, the study found that there are a lot of problems that arise that can hinder the integration of democratic principles in the classroom.

It was mentioned by one educator that his classroom style of management is not democratic. Under Theme 4.1.1.2, which looks at effects in classroom contexts, the educator mentioned that learners are given too much rights. Another participant's responses seem to highlight the same issue. The responses illustrate this. S1E1 explained that: *"Challenges are that learners tend to be more free in such that what they have to do they ignore it because of the freedom given"*. S1E2 said: *"Indiscipline learners. They are abusing their rights and say they no longer need punishment which will make them no longer fearful"*.

S1E3 raised this story:

*"Mmhe ok the learners take it for granted its freedom of learners. Yesterday I even asked them do you want to be in a lesson of this short story, the fair coat. They said yes, I asked where's your work, your book, they think even when they don't have classwork's or homework's they should. It is their democratic right to be in the classroom. They say mam"*

*you cannot send us outside the classroom; it is not allowed by the Department of Education. I ask them do you see the Department of Education here now, they say no. So do they say you may not do anything? But no they say you cannot take me out of the classroom. These are the challenges”.*

CFS recommends a right-based, inclusive education where concepts such as equality, respect and participation (dialogue) are highly endorsed. The school is not simply a place for formal learning, but an institution for grooming responsible citizens who are transformed to be cooperative, free, educated and who treat everyone with compassion in a safe environment.

This finding could mean that some learners take advantage of not doing their class activities. This might be because they are given too much freedom of expression, which can lead to problems when managing teaching, learning and assessment.

Additionally, giving learners too many rights, one participant S1E4 pointed out: *“There’s a lot of challenges, lack of equipment. E.g experiments to perform most of the schools lack equipment’s. Most of them smoke do substance end up affecting ability bringing disrespect”.*

Social Reconstructionism fights against inequalities by re-dressing the past and providing enough resources for each child.

Lack of resources in some schools can pose as a challenge. Moreover, maybe there is some lack of respect by some learners due to smoking which might lead to disciplinary challenges.

#### **4.5 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

Focus groups were conducted with six learners in each group from the FET phase (grades 10-12) from each of the two schools. The group interviews were carried out during sports time, before the commencement of afternoon studies.

The learner participants from each school were referred to as learner 1, learner 2, learner 3, learner 4, learner 5 and learner 6; coded as L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 and L6, respectively. Findings from focus group interviews are captured in Table 4.5 below, and then a discussion of each theme follows.

<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Incorporating democratic principles and values in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Instruction in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom atmosphere due to instruction</li> <li>• Culture of respect and interaction.</li> </ul>

*Table 4.5: Themes and sub-themes generated from focus group interviews.*

#### **4.5.1 THEME 1: INCORPORATING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES IN THE CLASSROOM**

Regarding whether educators incorporate democratic principles and values in the classroom practice during teaching, learning and assessment/tasks, participants expressed different viewpoints. With the aim of discovering learners' understanding of how democratic principles and values can be infused in their daily classroom routine with guidance of their educators, one theme and three subthemes were generated.

#### 4.5.1.1 Teaching

A variety of views were given by participants from the two schools. When looking at School 1, they seemed to be very negative in their responses to this question. S1L5 said: *“Sometimes they are treating some other learners unfairly. Uumh by they ask a question, so, so if a learner is not like in top 10 of, ya they won’t give him/her attention like the other one in top 10 or top 5, that’s how I see things.”* This is supported by S1L6, who said: *“If outside of the class you grumpy like how they see you badly, in class they won’t mind your answers. They won’t pay attention to you or listen to your answers. No they judge you. If you’re naughty, in class they won’t pay attention to your answers and opinions”.*

These comments made me assume that educators were not practising democratic principles and values in their teaching. The learners’ tone showed anger in how educators taught them. I had to pause the recording and explain to them how democratic principles and values can be integrated in a positive light. After giving them a few minutes or so to reflect on the question, S1L6 responded: *“Depends on who is teaching the class. Some teachers don’t treat us the same, those who pass well are the ones who get the teachers support mostly than any other learners in the class”.* S1L4 added that: *“Sometimes they do extra classes and Saturday classes. We get the same level so no one is left is behind. Some respect us, some do not answer their cell phones when they’re in class, they leave them in the staff room”.*

In my view, the reason why participants gave negative remarks could be because there might not be a good relationship between educators and learners in this school. Even after pausing the recording for a few minutes, and re-explaining the question to them as I thought they did not understand it and therefore needed guidance, it seemed to participants that there is some sort of favouritism of learners happening when educators are teaching.

In contrast to findings in School 1, participants in School 2 had something positive to share. They argued that their educators are always prepared before each lesson; they are encouraged to participate and are part of the lesson when teaching is taking place. This was established by responses from S2L2, for

example, who said: *“The teachers provide each and every student with a chance to speak what they know and what they don’t understand, and whatever they did not understand they should just ask”*. S2L1 explained that: *“Basically when they are teaching they incorporate with us for them to know if we are on the same pace with them and for them to know if we understand what they are teaching us or not”*.

Child-Friendly schools encourage principles of participation by the educator and learners. This inspires dialogue where a culture of freedom of expression by the child is promoted. The Social Reconstructionism approach attests for a culture where cooperation and team work by educators and learners promote a lifestyle where coordination is promoted. This is further confirmed by several authors (Soares, 2013; Nyambe, Kasanda & Lipenge, 2018). Learners are involved as they could voice out what they do not understand in the classroom.

This finding could mean that learners in School 2 are able to voice out to their educators what they do not understand during teaching and learning. They are able to express themselves and be part of the lesson. Sezer and Can’s (2018) findings revealed that democratic participation plays a major role in effective teaching and learning in schools. While learners in School 2 had most positive things to say, in School 1, only a few learners are given an opportunity to be part of the lesson. It could be because there is no positive relationship between learners and educators.

#### **4.5.1.2 Learning**

How learning appears to take place means different things to different participants. Some responses were negative while others were positive. Participants revealed that learning could take place in the classroom environment or at home through activities given to them in the classroom. This is revealed in what S1L3 and S1L5 said in line with School 2. S1L3 said: *“To finish the syllabus. Sometimes there’s noise so you can’t read. Some learners make*

*some noise. In maths they do not assist you to summarise your work, they only give you a few steps that are in the textbooks. Ya they need to explain more in Sepedi*". S1L5 supported and said: *"At school we do not have enough time to learn because there's too much of distraction of noise, behaviour, ya sometimes you have to. The need to make it more easier by speaking the mother tongue cause some learners do not understand they are still left behind"*.

This implies that participants keep on indicating that they needed to be taught more in their Home language which is Sepedi, presumably for better learning despite the fact that the medium of instruction is English.

Learners in School 2 also had similar responses to that of School 1. This is with regards to noise in the classroom done by other learners which can also disturb effective learning. S2L3 said: *"Most learners in class when the teacher is teaching, they don't listen, they disrespect the teacher also they don't do their school work, also they make noise or maybe a learner cracks a joke in class even when the teacher is in the classroom then they laugh. E.g they call each other's names"*. This was confirmed by S2L4, who said: *"Most learners when the teacher is teaching they don't pay attention e.g. disrespectful. A bitsa maina a go se botse"*.

It is evident that learners are concerned by classes that make noise. This could be an indication that discipline in some classes is still a problem as it could hinder learning. This could imply that respect as a quality is not adhered fully by all learners.

Although responses from focus groups were negative, one learner did point out that they are allowed to ask questions when they do not seem to understand anything. S2L1 revealed that: *"When we learn without our teachers presences, we are actually allowed to ask them questions where actually don't understand"*.

The theoretical frameworks advocate for learners to feel free and to ask questions to search for possibilities. Learners are able to express themselves in a safe and fair environment. Studies indicate that when learners participate, it creates room for discussion and expression of ideas (Knight & Pearl, 2000; Alshurman, 2014; VanAardt, 2016).

#### **4.5.1.3 Assessment/tasks**

It was challenging for learners to answer the question regarding assessment as it took a few minutes for them to reply. I had to re-explain to them what this could mean. Focus group participants in School 2 were not sure how to respond; so they opted to give me their notes that they had made prior to the interview after the interview session had ended. In School 1 some participants highlighted that they are encouraged to understand better through activities. This is what S1L4 and S1L6 had to say. S1L4 said: *They treat us fairly when it comes to assessment. When you don't do things they ask you to do them, they give you a chance, like maybe twice or thrice.* S1L6 said: *I think it is good to give us tasks you should do at school or at home in groups. They also have to, to assist us to understand more, to have more knowledge.*

The theoretical framework advocates that every child should be treated equally and experience democratic principles fairly.

This implies that the participants in School 1 believe that they are treated fairly; even the use of group work is encouraged.

#### **4.5.2 THEME 2: INSTRUCTION IN THE CLASSROOM**

With regard to the democratic use of instruction in the classroom by educators, two subthemes were generated and are discussed in this section. The subthemes that fall under the theme 'instruction in the classroom' are: classroom atmosphere due to instruction and culture of respect and interaction. Participants had to share their concerns in terms of what they face daily.



#### **4.5.2.1. Classroom atmosphere due to instruction**

All participants from both schools expressed similar views that attest to the positive light of educators when it comes to managing the classroom and giving positive advice. S2L4 stated: *“Yes because some teachers like say come to school wearing a proper uniform, don’t come to school late. We must study”*. S1L3 confirmed that educators showed signs of care. S1L3 said: *“They give us different questions, explain our answers how you get it, we give our own opinion”*. Supporting her participants, S1L4 stated: *“They do, sometimes before we do corrections; they make us do corrections by ourselves. To share our minds before they come correct our answers. This could be because this encourages anatomy with less reliance on the educator. S1L6 exclaimed: “It is good because it helps when learners do some works on their own. It shows that there’s progress on our class”*.

The theoretical framework argues for a child to be safe, and for the equal treatment of all in a safe environment. This implies that learners from both schools believe that most of their educators care and respect them. Maybe educators are really concerned about their learners’ wellbeing.

#### **4.5.2.2. Culture of respect and interaction**

With regard to how participants perceive their interactions between themselves and educators, it seems participants in School 1 revealed negative comments, while they had contrasting views in School 2.

S1L3 said: *“Other subjects we do the same thing, we do not choose”*. They argued that whatever you are given, you must do it. So there is little room for negotiation. This is supported by S1L4, who said: *“They give you the formulas they the teachers have”*.

However, School 2 participants had contrary views. The participants seem to engage their learners as they are given a platform to participate. S2L3 said: *“Yes*

*they give us opportunities also they are patient, e.g. raising our hands gives us opportunity to ask questions where we don't understand". They appear to be able raise questions and have an opinion of their own. S2L4 gave an example and said: "Yes because they ask questions after the lesson. They give us opportunity to participate in class, e.g. raising our hands and giving an opinion of something is just happened".*

This finding implies that some learner participants in some schools are given room to interact with their educators while participants in other schools are not fully given or have limited space for negotiation.

#### **4.6 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

Using a non-participant classroom observation schedule, I analysed data to ascertain corroboration and contradiction that have occurred. Findings from classroom observations are revealed in Table 4.6 below. This is followed by a discussion of each finding.

<b>Educator-learner behaviour</b>
<b>Classroom assessment tasks</b>

*Table. 4.6: Summary of classroom observations findings*

##### **Educator-learner behaviour**

Regarding what I observed when it came to the behaviour of participants in this study, not all educators in the two schools have the same culture of conduct.

All participant educators greeted the learners as they entered the classroom. Some of these participants even informed the learners of what to know by the end of the lesson. These are the lesson's aims and objectives. The learners

seemed to be on their best behaviour and showed respect towards their educators. In all the classes observed, there did not seem to be any form of ill-discipline from the learners as everyone seemed to be paying attention. In one class in School 2 where a grade 10 class was observed, they seemed rather shy to say something in my presence. S2E2 seemed to encourage the involvement of learners. Even though at the beginning of the lesson learners seemed too afraid to participate, it seemed after a long while that they came to grips with the idea of having a 'visitor' and started engaging with the lesson. I noticed during the classroom observations that educators seemed to have mastered the question-answer learning style, where the educator asks questions and learners answer.

The theoretical frameworks reinforce a culture of respect, inclusion, communication and participation as values in education, where educators are agents of maintaining this standard in education.

This implies that how educators incorporate democratic principles and values is seen in the behaviour of the educator with his/her learners in the classroom environment. This seemed to encourage learner participation and engagement as the order of the day in line with CAPS (DoBE, 2011), enabling learners to feel free and to be part of the lesson (Kocoska, 2009; Elicor, 2016), creating a child-friendly environment (UNICEF, 2012).

Sadly, during one of the classroom observations, participant S1E2 contradicted the ideals of democratic principles and values, leading to unfair practices. Grade 12 learners were reduced from 46 to 16 in the classroom. At the beginning of the lesson, before he could explain the concepts that had to be taught that day, the educator told them to leave the classroom. The following transpired: He entered the classroom and greeted them. He asked all the learners who did not have their Life Orientation textbooks to get out of the class so he could be left with those who had textbooks. As learners started leaving the classroom, different reactions by learners could be seen where some were laughing, others were embarrassed and several of them looked disappointed. He then continued with his lesson like nothing was wrong. The educator continued to teach while those who went outside were making noise and shouting. He pretended that he could

not hear them and went on with his lesson. Throughout the teaching, he seemed to dominate as he would make statements that were relevant in everyday life examples, enabling him to laugh, making the learners to laugh as well. He barely asked those who remained in the classroom any question as he continued to teach. It was evident that learners in School 1 had a more negative vibe towards their educators during the focus group, probably due to the domination of the educators.

This goes against the Child-Friendly Schools and Social Reconstructionism approach, where a vision of education for all is upheld. The educators' role is to provide a child-friendly environment where human rights are not cast aside, but embraced in installing democratic principles and values for the future citizens in this democratic country we call South Africa.

This implies that learners' rights to education and freedom from either physical or emotional harm is not always upheld in the classroom. It was unmistakable that various policies that govern conduct and the treatment of democratic values were violated. The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoBE, 2001) wishes to flesh out imbalances of any form of discrimination, and to grip the essence of a democratic South Africa where every learner is equal. Learners were asked to go out because they had forgotten their Life Orientation textbooks, intentional or unintentionally, at home.

### **Classroom assessment tasks**

Regarding classroom assessments that educators had to give their learners, almost all educator participants gave their learners work to do either at home or during the class.

From what I have observed, most of the educator participants seem to use the 'question and answer' style to assess knowledge that learners already had, including during teaching and learning. This promoted their participation as they had to answer the educators. Furthermore, this created a dialogue and a platform for learners to voice out their opinions about the topic under discussion. Most educators tried to involve as many different learners as possible, calling

those who did not want to answer by names so that they can answer the questions.

All educators seemed to have given the learners homework to go and do at home in their activity books from their textbooks, or to do it in class in pairs or in groups. What was also unique from what I observed with mathematics/mathematical literacy educators was the way they seemed to teach their learners. Assessment seemed to be evident throughout the whole lesson where the educator was more hands-on, in the sense that he or she would explain a concept, do examples of the concept/sum, then provide feedback to learners.

The theoretical framework advocates for democratic human principles and values to be imbued into their learners and be practised in schools. Thus, assessment can be used to install certain democratic characteristics such as participation and equal treatment in a safe environment.

This finding might reveal that assessment is not only limited to assessing learners what to write, but also democratic traits such as respect for one's work, participation and collaboration.

#### **4.7 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

The documents reviewed are represented in Table 4.7 below. These serve as documents analysed using Bowen's (2009) document analysis which were consulted in order to give a better understanding of democratic education and its incorporation in educational practices by educators in the FET phase (grades 10-12) into their classroom practices.

<b>Document reviewed</b>	<b>The reason</b>
Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)	To check whether educators followed guidelines stipulated in the documents.
The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy	It holds great details on how democratic values can be contextualised in education.

Assessment policy	To check whether any form of democratic principles and values were stipulated.
Lesson plans	To be studied together with the observations to establish if democratic principles and values were evidently infused into teaching and learning practices.

*Table 4.7: Summary showing documents reviewed in the study*

Documents were analysed using Bowens' (2009) document analysis to provide data on the context within which research participants incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practice. It was important to recognise the key features identified by Child-Friendly Schools and Social Reconstructionism approach where democratic principles and values within the framework were discussed. The finding is that the analysis enabled me to determine how these crucial attributes were applied in the two schools selected for this study. Some educators might apply these attributes while others do not.

I asked educators for a copy of lesson plans administered on the day of classroom observation. Those who were able to provide the objectives, outcomes and tasks from lesson plans were given and then studied. The lesson plans provided, including classroom observations, made it possible to examine the degree to which educators practise what it is written. Through the lesson plans, I looked at their teaching approach to find out if it is in line with the interpretation of lesson objectives and assessments. However, some educator participants failed to provide lesson plans but rather gave me page numbers from the textbook of the lesson they focused on.

#### **4.7.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement document**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document is abstracted from the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12, where each CAPS document is created for each subject area. However, the aims and

principles remain the same (DoBE, 2011). The CAPS document aims to produce learners who are not merely passive listeners, but are active in identifying and solving problems using critical and creative thinking. Moreover, it aims to create learners who work in groups and communicate effectively. These are attributes that need to be practised in the daily teaching and learning of democratic South African schools. The CAPS document is relevant in the incorporation of principles and values as it serves as a guide to educators who are to apply this policy document in practice in their daily lives.

#### **4.7.2 The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy**

It is a policy document created in an effort to flesh out the South African idea in the education arena (DoBE, 2001). The document suggests how life in the classroom can incorporate ideals and concepts of democracy, Ubuntu, respect and reconciliation by educators. The curriculum intends to instil knowledge, skills and values in learners by infusing the culture of human rights in the classroom; with reconciliation as a crucial value in healing and schools being one of the places to redress this. This is in line with the Social Reconstructionism approach, which seeks to redress imbalances of the past, and to unlock the full potential of learners who will become responsible citizens. Respect is an important precondition for communication, for team work and productivity in schools. This is in line with the CFC framework, where within this study a culture of participation, respect and inclusiveness should be what educators apply in their everyday teaching, learning and assessment. Moreover, equity to promote equal access and social bonds in schools promotes participation, debate and discussion. In my opinion, teaching democratic principles and values creates learners of sound mind; and learners who do not treat these principles and values as an afterthought but apply them in their daily lives. My study aimed to investigate how educators in their teaching, learning and assessment embodied principles and values in government policy documents in their everyday classroom living.

### **4.7.3 Assessment policy**

The National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12 and CAPS also provide a framework for assessment which is based on the principles of Outcome Based Education for Continuous Assessment policy (DoBE, 2012). In this study, both schools had the assessment policy to guide educators on testing, assessment and evaluation. Assessment can be done formally and informally as educators engage in classroom interactions. Assessment plays a crucial role in the progress of the individual child and will determine the outcome of each learner. The policy encourages educators to stimulate thoughts in learners, to inspire them to ask questions, promote discussions and become critical thinkers. This ensures that learners are able to voice out their opinions and to participate. When learners contribute in class, it leads to a dialogue where teaching and learning is stimulated through the use of assessments.

### **4.7.4 Lesson plans**

Several lesson plans collected after and during the classroom observation lacked important details such as lesson objectives, learners' activities and educators' activities. Although educator participants carried with them textbooks or question papers as a basis for the day's lesson, it was difficult to understand the quality of the lesson as lesson plans were poorly written.

## **4.8 SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The study found that the incorporation of democratic principles and values in Mogoshi Circuit of Limpopo Province differed from educator to educator and school to school. This study found that participants do not fully practise everything that they shared during interviews.



#### **4.8.1 The meaning of democracy in education**

Educators expressed different views. It became clear that some were of the opinion that democratic education involves certain concepts such as equality, participation, freedom, inclusion, mutual understanding and democratic rights in the classroom. However, some participants see democratic education as a set of rules to follow or as a guide in relation to school policies such as the CAPS document. The majority of educators believe that they are democratic in their classroom contexts. Findings from document analysis are in agreement with those from interviews.

However, two participants were opposed to democratic values in the classroom. According to them, it would depend on the challenges that may arise in class. One participant was even honest and admitted that he sometimes used corporal punishment to maintain order in the classroom. This indicates that not all the documents analysed in this study are in line with certain methods practised by some educators. This is in contradiction to what democratic education for South Africans from a post-apartheid really means: where a collective power and control relationship between the educator and the learner should not exist (Joubert et al., 2015).

#### **4.8.2 Incorporation of democratic principles and values in the classroom**

Regarding the incorporation of democratic principles and values in the classroom, participation by learners is commonly encouraged by most educators. Certain attributes such as respect, equality and inclusivity emerged.

Participation was one of the most voiced out democratic principles and values by educator and learner participants. This encourages dialogue where a culture of expression by the child is promoted. Findings reveal that there is a partial agreement between the documents as analysed. This finding can relate to some of the classroom observations where I witnessed participation, collaboration and co-operation amongst participants in some of the classes observed.

In contrast, one educator participant differed as he highlighted that sometimes one cannot actually maintain a democratic status especially when teaching adolescents. Thus incorporating democratic principles and values all the time is not realistic. Corporal punishment and other tactics such as favouritism among the learners are still used. This can be supported by some learners who highlight that not all educators treat them fairly. This finding is inconsistent with the maintenance of a safe child-friendly environment proposed by the Child-Friendly Schools and the Social Reconstructionism approach. Furthermore, this finding violates Section 28 of the Bill of Rights from maltreatment, abuse or degradation.

The literature (including government policies) states that democratic principles and values should be incorporated in the classroom environment. The findings of this study reveal that there seems to be inconsistencies that exist between the practices and activities aimed at achieving an effective demonstration of democratic principles and values.

#### **4.8.3 Understanding democratic education in curriculum**

This study found differences in responses from educator participants. This shows that there is diversity in their understanding of how the integration of democratic education and curriculum can merge. Some participants argue that the CAPS document embodies democratic principles and values that give rise to democratic education. This is in line with the documents as analysed. However, in conflict with this finding, some participants acknowledge that the curriculum is non-negotiable with the learners.

Moreover, some educator participants attest that how learners can reach their goals by engaging in a variety of curriculum assessment activities can help create better individuals. In opposition, some participants disagree as some learners seem to be unable to see the importance of teaching and learning activities that they are given. Thus, not all learners are willing to comply with activities that will develop them and help them to achieve their goals. This is in line with what some of the learner participants shared, that some classes are

problematic due to refusal to do school work and disrespect by some learners. This indicates that certain democratic principles and values are not practised by some of the learners in schools.

There could also be that curriculum negotiation and involvement in what learners are taught is limited. Some educators believe that curriculum negotiation it could be done in groups, or simply informing the learners what they need to know regarding their academic work. However, some educators do acknowledge that the curriculum cannot be negotiated with the learners, but it is something that needs to be applied in everyday work. This is in contradiction with literature that argues that learners' contribution to construct knowledge by being hands on in creating the curricula empowers learners and aids in self-empowerment (Maphalala, 2017; Pring, 2016). My findings reveal this is not necessary the case with every educator.

#### **4.8.4 Democratic use of instruction in the classroom**

The majority of educator participants believe lessons should be facilitated. This is in line with the theoretical frameworks of the study, where child-centredness acts as the foundation of classroom practices. However, two of the educator participants emphasised that this would depend on the conditions of the classroom environment where if learners need to be disciplined for a proper classroom to take place, then this should be so. The CFS and Manifesto documents recommend a rights-based education which, according to educators' experiences, comes with freedom for learners. At the end, some learners, according to most of the educators, end up taking advantage by not doing their school activities and at times being disrespectful. Likewise, in one of the classroom observations, an educator, through his instruction, chased away more than sixty percent of the learners who were issued with textbooks, but had decided not to bring them along to school on that day. This act is in violation of the documents analysed in the study and contradicts findings from interviews with the educator.

#### 4.9 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Educator participants were of different views on how democratic principles and values can be incorporated in everyday activities, while others were in conflict. They were aware of democratic values being promoted in their everyday learning either through knowledge that we are living in a democratic country or the CAPS document that is used daily for lesson preparations and engagement with the content. Most educators revealed that in their everyday teaching, they usually ask learners questions which they had the answer to, thus leading to learner participation in class. This was also seen in most classrooms observed. However, the finding above is not without contradictions. Findings reveal that some educators today still use certain practices which do not comply with democratic education. They further indicate how learners can still be kicked out of the classroom during contact time, or how educators apply corporal punishment to ensure that teaching takes place.

Regarding learning, the finding reveals that most educators from the two schools investigated did engage their learners and put them at the centre of learning. Some educators seem to give learners a platform where they can express themselves so their voices can be heard. This leads to participation (dialogue). Moreover, team work and cooperation is promoted in most classes observed. Nevertheless, what was observed in one lesson revealed that by instructing them to leave their classrooms, learners were deprived of learning. This goes against the frameworks of the study, Child-Friendly Schools and Social Reconstructionism approach in the sense that educators do not fully adhere to children's rights, promote learner centredness and create a safe democratic environment for all children.

Regarding assessment, six out of eight educators seem not to be aware of the link as to how democratic principles and values can relate to activities. These educators saw it as simply a tool of assessing content that is taught after the lesson has been presented. However, only two of the educator participants linked the ideas and saw assessment as a tool that encourages learners to use their own thinking, teaching them what is right and what is wrong through

feedback in what they write. Educators argued that democracy does come with challenges where learners are given too many rights. The finding reveals that the incorporation of democratic principles and values in schools can be a great challenge than what is written in black and white (policies).

Learner participants from the two schools showed different expressions during interviews. Some of the learners in School 1 were constantly negative in their responses when they shared their daily classroom experiences. This might be because there is no good relationship between the educators and the learners in that school. Despite the differences that seem to be evident in learners' focus group interviews, findings reveal that democratic principles and values are being implemented. This is done by the involvement of learners through participation, a platform to express their views and ask questions where they do not seem to understand. However, not all learners in both schools get the same treatment due to some factors such as behavioural issues influencing outcomes. The above findings reveal that learners either feel being part of the lesson or not, depending on educators' conduct. This was also observed in some classes.

#### **4.10 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter presented analysis and interpretation of findings from semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, classroom observations and document analysis. It is found that how strongly the educator values democratic principles will impact on whether he/she incorporates these principles and values in the classroom. In the next chapter, I discuss summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter four provided a discussion of data presentation and interpretation of findings. The chapter analysed and discussed the following: semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews solicited from participants, classroom observations and documents. Each theme and sub-themes generated has considered the actual and ideal practice of how educators incorporate democratic principles and values.

This chapter present discussions of main findings and a summarised discussion. These findings relate to how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in their classroom when it comes to teaching, learning and assessment. The following sections are presented, namely: 1) background, 2) summary and interpretation of research findings, 3) concluding remarks, 4) contribution of the research, 5) limitations of the study, 6) recommendations and suggestions for further studies. Lastly, the chapter ends with a conclusion about findings.

#### **5.2 BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this study was to establish how educators incorporate democratic principles and values in managing teaching, learning and assessment in their South African classrooms, focusing on secondary schools around Mogoshi Circuit of Limpopo Province. It was expected that since we have been living in a democratic country for more than 26 years, educators have been applying democratic principles and values in their daily lives. Thus, educators and learners' experiences were explored to determine how democratic principles and values can be achieved. Through the lens of a qualitative research approach which is in line with the interpretive paradigm, a descriptive case study was used. Participants consisted of four educators and focus group interviews of six

learners from each school. In addition, lessons were observed in order to discover elements that emerged from both educator and learner participants in order to identify values and new skeletons that might surface.

### **5.3 SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In this section, findings are interpreted based on the purpose and research questions of the study. The purpose of this study was to establish how educators at Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa incorporate democratic principles and values in managing teaching, learning and assessment in their classrooms. Research questions were formulated to better understand how educators infuse democratic principles and values in the study. These were: 1) what are democratic principles and values that educators incorporate into their classroom practice in general? 2) How do educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their teaching? 3) In what way do democratic principles and values merge in the learning activities? 4) How do educators incorporate democratic principles and values into assessment tasks and activities? The findings were categorised to answer the research question with the aim of fulfilling the purpose of the study. In the section that follows, findings of the research study identified certain components.

#### **5.3.1 Democratic principles and values that educators incorporate into their classroom practice**

Regarding democratic principles and values that educators generally incorporate into their classroom practices, the following is discovered. The educator participants consistently referred to democratic principles and values such as equality, participation (dialogue), freedom, respect, fairness, decision making, mutual understanding and democratic rights in the classroom. These are some of the qualities embodied in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DoBE, 2011) document, which is used by educators in the classroom. Literature reveals that learners can express their ideas without fear, create

shared equal voice (Mncube & Harber, 2010; Senturk & Oyman, 2014) and take part in decision making (Knight & Pearl, 2000; Mncube, Davies & Naidoo, 2015). Educators understood the rights of a child to be the influence of democratic education practices. They also viewed democratic principles and values embodied within democratic education as a set of rules to follow or as a guide to show you what to do from the Department of Basic Education. This finding is similar to Senturk and Oyman (2014), where a political system influences the structure of daily life practices.

Although educators are stressed about the child having equal rights in education, in one classroom observation, I witnessed the contrary. The study revealed that while educators complained about learners given too many rights, some never mentioned their own responsibilities. An educator removed most of the learners from the classroom during a lesson because they had intentionally or unintentionally left their textbooks at home. When I enquired about the reason for removing learners from the classroom, the educator told me that the learners are always taking advantage, and say they have rights even if they are wrong. Similar to a study done by Alshurman (2015), the sample studied found that democratic values are often misused by learners and educators. In my research this was due to educators who argued that democratic education leads to lack of discipline. This then is in violation of the CFS, whose aim is that children should be taught in a child-friendly school environment where learners are the centre of education (UNICEF, 2012).

### **5.3.2 Democratic principles and values incorporated in teaching activities**

It became clear when looking at educators teaching democracy that, they did not necessarily focus on democratic principles and values to be taught in their subjects as a topic. They did, however, provide a number of strategies which most believe will depend on the specific subject lesson or topic that has to be learnt on the day. My findings reveal that most participants believe that their learners should be involved in their classroom to form part of the lesson: by implication, making all learners feel like they are a big part of the classroom. This is also emphasised by Mncube, Davies and Naidoo (2015) and vanAardt (2016),



who argue that the opportunity created by educators is to give learners a platform to participate.

The majority of educator participants believe that they do facilitate lessons. This can be done through discussion of question papers, practicals, the question and answer style of teaching, and the use of technology such as PowerPoint. As the educator asks questions, learners participated by replying, thus expressing themselves. This is in contradiction with some studies where the democratic classroom is not limited only to the question and answer style, but creates citizens who will be conscious of the surroundings, and who promote lifelong living of these principles; a process that has to do with moral development based on culture and tradition as embedded in the country's Constitution (Kocoska, 2009; Yoldaş, 2015; Masote, 2016).

From the classroom observations, I noticed that most educators respected the learners and treated them equally. Educators asked questions and learners answered. When every learner is included and accommodated, inclusion and diversity is maintained. It is important to include all learners because the Child-Friendly Schools and the Social Reconstructionism approach reinforce a culture of inclusion as values in education (UNICEF, 2012; Schiro, 2013). Encouraging learners to participate during teaching and learning by asking them questions is widely used by educators. This is a similar finding by Bafaneli and Setibi (2015), who uses an inquiry method of teaching, where learners are encouraged to explore, ask questions and share ideas. This is Ciftci's (2013) finding, that democratic teaching is effective and increases students' attitudes positively towards the lesson.

This is also in line with the CAPS (DoBE, 2011) document analysed in this study, where inclusivity by educators shifts from dominating the classroom and often involves learners. This applies to the Child-Friendly Schools and Social Reconstruction, where reinforcement of a culture of inclusion, equality, communication and participation in education is supported.

The findings above are in line with what most learners in focus group interviews said. They revealed that they were encouraged to participate and become part of

the lesson when teaching takes place. Learners were involved as they could voice out what they did not understand when the educator is teaching (Nyambe, Kasanda & Lipenge, 2018). They were given an opportunity to become part of the lesson. Soares (2013) believes that through instructional sites like the classroom where teaching takes place, learners' voices and acceptance for a more social interaction is a good democratic practice in schools. This encourages less movement from an authoritative type of teaching to a learner-centred type.

Sometimes hidden curricula emerge. It is not only in the formal school curricula where democratic principles and values are taught. Some educators do remind learners about social issues that form part of their daily living such as cultural differences and xenophobia. Learners are encouraged to respect and care for other people despite where they come from. This finding recognises the need for transforming our society through compassion. This is in line with the Social Reconstruction approach where focus on curricula endorses the creation of a new social transformation (Mayne, 2014; McGregor, 2019). Masote's (2016) findings make known that educators and learners have different understandings of values in education. My study revealed how schools play a vital role in creating future citizens that are responsible and recognise their rights. The school is best place to teach these shared democratic principles and values to the young for a changed society.

However, teaching learners in a secondary school is not as easy as it may be for everyone. A few educator participants believe that being democratic in the classroom will depend on challenges that may arise. The finding revealed that not every educator uses a democratic style of classroom management to manage their classroom. Literature shows that educators need to shift from a strong desire for control to a freer dialogue environment (Sentürk & Oyman, 2014). In my research, challenges of the day to day activities faced by educators will determine how well democratic principles and values are practised during lessons.

One educator did reveal that it is not always all the time that certain principles are upheld; thus incorporating them tends not to be realistic. Even though it is not

allowed, corporal punishment is still practised in some schools. This means that an authoritative style of teaching in some schools still applies. This is in line with Morojele and Muthukrishna (2011), who argue that hierarchical and authoritarian management styles can become a key barrier. This is in contrast with the analysed document, the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoBE, 2001), which attests that educators need to instill good moral values in learners. These include respect, care, equality, being friendly and working together to combat disciplinary issues in the classroom. These are the same qualities recommended by the Child-Friendly Schools and the Social Reconstruction approach.

Jotia (2006) argues that educators should model democracy regardless of the subjects they are teaching. This is a requirement. It is frequently claimed in literature that educators have difficulty in structuring learning environments that encourage reflexivity and provide challenging and active learning experiences (Durodola, 2009; Ferreira & Schulze, 2014). However, in my engagement with educators, the use of democratic management in the learning context depends on the challenges of the day.

### **5.3.3 Democratic principles and values merging in learning activities**

Regarding democratic principles and values that can be generally incorporated into learning practices, learners must feel free to express themselves in their learning as their voices are involved (Kocoska, 2009; Morad, 2015). Learning in democracy encourages participation (Yoldaş, 2015), creating what Waghid (2005) proposes as a culture of participation in public dialogue. Integrating learners within discussion of topics creates a shift towards putting them at the centre (Manifesto, DoBE, 2001). Research findings and earlier discussions indicated that educators played a significant role in engaging learners through participation. Through the use of the question-answer style, educators encourage learners to contribute their inputs. VanAardt (2016) proposes that this empowers learners rather than make them remain passive.

Some of the educator participants in my study strive to become role models by 'running the class together' with the learners. This encourages learners to take

responsibility for their learning as they form part of a team with guidance and confidence from their educators. Literature reveals that this encourages an open society, where respect and responsibility are brought to life in the classroom (the Manifesto, DoBE, 2001; Mills & McGregor, 2017).

The finding is further enforced by learner participants who acknowledge that they are encouraged to ask questions in class. It is strongly believed that this inspires discussion, participation and expression of ideas by the learners during teaching and learning (Knight & Pearl, 2000; Alshurman, 2014; vanAardt, 2016). This is in line with vanAardt's (2016) finding that making children feel harmless encourages their will to participate. This finding is also in agreement with the CFS shared principles which include participation (dialogue) and inclusion.

Encouraging activities by educators ensures that learners can study on their own, enabling them to have autonomy in life. Furthermore, learners are encouraged to do activities with other learners so that they can help one another. This leads to group work and cooperation. These are some of the most important democratic principles and value qualities prompted by the Child-Friendly Schools and the Social Reconstructionism approach. The CAPS, assessment policy and Manifesto documents analysed in this study attest for learners to develop on their own and to assist one another, leading to self-development, participation, team work and cooperation. This is further concluded by Korkmaz and Erden's (2012) findings, that a democratic educational learning should centralise learners' interests, needs and strengths.

However, to some educators, administering effective learning activities can be a challenge; and adhering to democratic principles and values is not easy. During one of the classroom observations, an educator threw learners out of the classroom for being incompetent because they left their textbooks at home. This is similar to Bafaneli and Setibi's (2015) study, which revealed that some undemocratic traits were observed where learners were thrown out of the classroom due to misbehaving. This seems to be a trend in schooling. Moreover, this concurs with Nxumalo and Mncube's (2019) argument that an authoritative teaching style is still applied by some educators.

Concerning learners' focus group interviews, I noticed that some of them in one school had a tone of neglect and anger towards how learning differed from one educator to another. According to the learners, there seemed to be favouritism of educators towards some of the learners who are considered top of the class. Learners' attitude towards their view of democracy influenced by the educator will shed either a negative or positive result. An outcome of a sour relationship is prevalent. This made me assume that not all educators were practising democratic principles and values in their teaching and learning.

#### **5.3.4 Democratic principles and values incorporated into assessment tasks and activities**

Regarding classroom assessments that educators give their learners, most educator participants viewed assessment as merely a tool of assessing what learners have been taught in the classroom. This is in line with the CAPS document, which determines minimum outcomes and standards as well as procedures for the assessment of learner achievement (DoBE, 2011). CAPS also aims to produce learners who analyse, solve problems presented through participation and critically evaluate information. Brough (2012) attests that by slowly increasing levels of inclusion, learners gained the confidence and competence to work collaboratively.

This is further reinforced by learner participants, who acknowledge that completing tasks individually or as groups encourages cooperation and team work. CAPS (DoBE, 2011) aims to 'produce learners who work effectively with others as members of a team'. This can be accomplished by giving them activities to do in groups. According to a study by Bafaneli and Setibi (2015), group discussions were perceived by respondents to be very instrumental in the promotion of democratic values. This is similar to my study where participation by learners through individual or group work is highly promoted. Moreover, learners who do certain activities by themselves encourage autonomy in the individual. As they have to account to how they obtain a certain answer to a question, learners are promoted to critically think about ideas. This brings closer a vision of formally

legislated documents (CAPS, the Manifesto) that dream of a society where educators instill in learners principles that will assist them to participate and strive for social justice and human dignity. This is in line with the Social Reconstructionism approach where learners are not just mere individuals but members of a society who help one another.

The study revealed that assessment is also used as a platform to provide constructive feedback and teach learners moral judgement. Some educators comment on the work done by learners and help them see a scenario given in their tasks and activities not only in a single view, but as a whole and to become critical thinkers.

In most of the classroom observations, I noticed that during the lesson, learners were encouraged to participate. It did seem that the level of engagement differed with learners depending on the educator. This could be in a good or bad way towards their educators and the lesson's direction. Ciftci (2013) did a similar study that look at the precipitation of learners' attitudes towards their subject and their perception of democracy. It is revealed that where there is a positive relationship, learners' perceptions of democracy towards the lesson will also be positive, leading to more involvement in their school activities.

Most educator participants recognise that many of their learners fail to see the importance of activity tasks given to them. Therefore, some learners are unable to grasp the need for education, and become lazy and ineffective, with the aim of cramming what they were taught. They then pass during grading time and forget what they need to know. This finding is in contrast with Kesici's (2008) and Overton and Sullivan's (2008) studies, which revealed that giving learners responsibility to construct their individual voices, and to develop by themselves through their classroom activities creates a democratic education.

### **5.3.5 Hindrance of democratic principles and values**

Despite findings about democratic principles and values, challenges of integration in the classroom cannot be ignored. It was evident that educators faced a number of challenges in their incorporation of democratic principles and values in the classroom. Most educators in the study were certain that what is referred to loosely as 'child rights' undermine adult authority, leaving them feeling 'powerless'. This then leads to lack of respect from some learners, which further leads to discipline problems in the classroom. This is a similar finding by Alshurman (2015), in which educators argue that democratic education leads to lack of discipline and to a decline in academic standards. This is further revealed by learner participants, who argue that when learning takes place, a lot of learners tend to make noise, which is an indication of discipline being a serious problem that can disturb learning in both schools.

A decline in societal values in the literature was confirmed by my findings, namely a decline in moral standards in society, which acts as a hindrance in schools (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014; Masote, 2016). Educator participants mention that social ills such as smoking of substances lead to disrespect by learners in schools. Furthermore, educator participants mentioned that lack of resources in some schools is still a problem, concurring with Durodola's (2009) findings that public school educators are under-resourced.

## **5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The conclusions of the study are derived from the purpose and research questions. The study concludes that certain educators in secondary schools of Limpopo Province do incorporate democratic principles and values in their classrooms while some educators do not.

The study reveals that some educators consider democratic principles and values when teaching, learning and assessing their learners in the classroom. It

is strongly believed by some educators that a limit of rights to learners needs to be imposed. In order to avoid issues such as discipline that may arise due to what they call 'giving learners too much rights', certain authoritative styles in the classroom still prevail. However, some educators in both schools believe that democratic principles and values implemented within their classroom ensure that learners know the difference between what is considered right and what is considered wrong.

This study discovered that democratic principles and values that are widely incorporated by educators include participation (dialogue), respect, equity and inclusion. It is frequently claimed in the literature that the need for democratic education in schools need to be practised in order to instill appropriate values for young citizens (Sentürk & Oyman, 2014; Aasebo, 2017; Hytten, 2017; Meko, 2018). In my engagement with educators and learners, democratic principles and values could be taught either when teaching, learning and through assessment in the classroom. Additionally, based on learners' experiences, educators do try their best to incorporate them through participation and dialogue in order to better understand the lesson.

This study revealed that educators' role is to nurture the children and install democratic principles and values that will alter the school society and, in the long run the whole society. In my study, how democratic principles and values are installed by educators will affect how learners see the world. This could be either in a negative or positive light.

The study reveals that besides the need to implement democratic principles and values embedded in prominent documents: CAPS, SASA and the Manifesto, remains a challenge. Through the qualitative approach using a descriptive case study, I was able to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, democratic principles and values are embedded in the schools that I visited. However, not by all the educators. This is similar to studies that have found that there is a lack of or a limit of democratic principles and values being practised in schools (Jotia, 2006; Jourbert et al., 2015; Paune, 2018).



## **5.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH**

The study outlined how democratic principles and values by participants are incorporated in the classroom by looking at teaching, learning and assessment. The findings will decrease the theoretical and practical fissure by putting democratic education into practice. The findings of the study also added to the theory of incorporation with regard to democratic principles and values in secondary schools.

## **5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

I identified the following as limitations of the study: participants who did not wish to participate might have been able to shed more light. The research is focused mainly on two schools at Mogoshi Circuit of Limpopo Province, therefore, cannot be generalised to the whole province, or its findings may not be true for all the remaining eight provinces; but adds more information towards the province. This is a limited population consisting of four streams per school mainly: one Mathematical/Physical Sciences educator, one Social Sciences, one English First Additional Language and one Life Orientation educator, and may not represent other stakeholders from other streams. Focus groups were limited to six learners per school, and thus may not represent all secondary schools in Limpopo Province, South Africa. During the focus group, few learners were disturbed as they came late during the interview due to assessment tasks that they had to complete despite securing an appointment with them.

## 5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the study revealed that some educators do incorporate democratic principles and values in the classroom in schools, some educators do not. The need to create child-friendly school environments where democratic principles and values are applied is an important aspect that needs to be attended to immediately.

- A balance in maintaining a democratic atmosphere, and learners being given ‘too much rights’ as perceived by educators need to be struck. Therefore, it would be important to conduct research on how learners can effectively be reminded of their responsibilities and limitations.
- Discipline in both interviews and observations seem to be a serious problem which is kept on being mentioned by participants. More research needs to be done on how discipline can be effectively applied in democratic education. Such a study could assist in developing practical policies based on stakeholders’ perceptions.
- Schools should promote child-friendly practices and the Department of Basic Education could supply printed posters to educate learners about democratic principles and values that are promoted with duties of rights that come with them.
- Educators need to know more about democratic principles and values incorporated within teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom, and how they can contribute to schools and to the society.
- Educators should constantly take it upon themselves to enlighten learners about democratic principles, values and qualities which they want to see in their learners in their daily conversations. For example, respect, collaboration and equity.

- Instead of using other harsher means of correction to maintain order and discipline in the classroom such as corporal punishment or chasing learners out of the classroom, the school could develop policies to guide against this.
- The study also recommends that those who provide educator training for both in-service and prospective educators structure their curricula in such a way that educators are highly empowered to deal with discipline issues in a democratic classroom.
- Existing literature (CAPS, SASA) in schools is available that aims to promote democracy education; however the influence of social issues does play a role in the school. This need to be addressed further through the involvement of the Department of Basic Education and other relevant stakeholders.

## **5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

Studies focusing on democratic principles and values can be done with educators to determine the best way of further incorporating these practices in their classroom. The Department can do further research to find gaps between what is written in policies such as CAPS, SASA and what is best practised in relation to democratic principles and values in education. Factors contributing to the provision of democratic principles and values in education in public secondary schools can further be investigated. Enforcing discipline in South African schools is riddled with social problems as an infringement of learners' democratic rights. A democratic education which was for mutual respect between learners and educators is good. But what are implications for learners' academic success in the selected schools. What does the implementation of democratic values in the classroom or the lack thereof tell us about the power relations in schools.

## 5.9 CONCLUSION

In line with the research questions of this study, I arrive at the following conclusion: the study presented the incorporation of democratic principles and values by educators in the classroom when it comes to teaching, learning and assessment. Findings reveal that the two secondary schools at Mogoshi Circuit highlight that there are various (teaching, learning and assessment) ways in which educators can incorporate democratic principles and values in their classroom. It is evident that how educators promote attributes such as participation (dialogue), respect, equity and inclusion in their classroom setting will impact on learners' daily lives. However, it is not without fault that certain activities that are not child-friendly are still practised. Some educators in schools do not practise democratic principles and values while others do. Nevertheless, what is required is emphasis by educators of how best to achieve even a greater impact towards learners in producing responsible citizens who are critical thinkers. It has been concluded that educators are largely democratic in their practice despite some inadequacies. After all, the way they install democratic principles and values in their classroom will contribute to how learners contribute to the society.

One recommendation based on the findings of this study is that educators must promote democratic principles and values in their classroom to address challenges that lead to the non-effective implementation of democratic principles and values. The study also recommends that the relationship between educators and learners should be entrenched in order for the former to instill democratic principles and values to the latter.

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**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 5 April 2019

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/77/2019: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** An investigation into how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practices: a case study of Mogoshi circuit, Limpopo province, South Africa.

**Researcher:** XP Mugari  
**Supervisor:** Mrs MC Modipane  
**Co-Supervisor/s:** N/A  
**School:** Education  
**Degree:** MEd

**PROF P MASOKO**  
 CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0910111-031

**Note:**

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

*Finding solutions for Africa*

2019-04-09

**LETTER OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: THE PROVINCIAL  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



Dear **THE PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

My name is Xitshembiso Petunia Mugari and I am a student doing a research study towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies at the University of Limpopo. I am conducting a research study with the following title: **AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**. I hereby request for your permission to conduct this research in some schools in Mogoshi Circuit.

The main purpose of this study is to establish how educators at Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa incorporate democratic principles and values in managing teaching, learning and assessment in their classrooms.

The research will involve educators and learners. Data will be collected from 2019 in the following manner:

- **Four interviews from four different streams with each educator** participating in the research. Educators will be selected from the following streams per school: one Mathematical/Physical Sciences educator, one Social Science, one English First Additional Language and one Life Orientation educator. Semi-structured interviews will be used to determine educators' perspectives of the way in which democratic principles are incorporated within teaching and learning. The interviews will be audio taped.
- **Classroom observations.** I will observe how educators incorporate democratic principles and values with regard to teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom environment. The research will not disrupt the classroom setting or take part in the activities of the lessons in any way.
- **Document review.** Such as lesson plans, assessment questions (learning activities) and school policy.
- **Focus group interviews of six learners.** The interviews will be audio taped

Participation will be voluntary and no payment or fee will be made. Everyone is free to accept or refuse to take part. Those who accept to be part of the research and later changes his/her mind is allowed to withdraw at any stage without being forced to give any reasons or interrogated with questions.

No harm towards any of the schools or participants will be involved in this research. The researcher will also not interfere with any class activities during lessons. A follow-up interview to comment on the findings will be requested.

Confidentiality and privacy of participants will be protected. The participants will be given explanation for the reasons of the study, and that their participation is voluntary. They will be provided with consent forms to sign. Anonymity will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms instead of participants' real names. This



will protect and guarantee the participants' identity, ensuring them anonymity and equal treatment.

If you still have any questions or in need of clarity regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at any of the contact information given above.

Yours sincerely



9 April 2019

.....

.....

Ms XP Mugari

Date

Supervisor



9 April 2019

.....

.....

Ms MC Modipane

Date



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 9711  
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Tel: 015 285 7300  
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DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
**CAPRICORN POLOKWANE DISTRICT**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Ref : 2/2/2  
Enq : Mogotlane HM  
Tel No.: 015 285 7410  
Email : [MphaphuliAJ@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MphaphuliAJ@edu.limpopo.gov.za)  
Date: 28 May 2017

To : Ms XP Mugari  
University of Limpopo  
Faculty of Education  
Private Bag X1100  
SOVENGA  
0727

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN CAPRICORN NORTH DISTRICT, MOGOSHI CIRCUIT.**

**Title: "an investigation into how educators incorporate democratic principles and values into their classroom practices: a case study of Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa".**

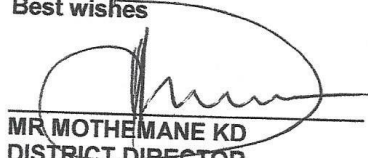
1. The above matter refers.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a research has been approved.
3. The following conditions should be considered
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implication for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the circuit offices and schools concerned.

Cnr Blaauwberg & Yster Street, Ladanna

"We Belong, We Care, We Serve"

- 3.3 The conduct of research should not in any way disrupt the academic programs in schools.
- 3.4 The research should not be conducted during examinations especially the fourth term.
- 3.5 During the study, research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
- 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with Department.
- 4 Furthermore you are expected to produce this letter at schools/offices where you intend to conduct your research as evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
- 5 The Department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wish you success in your research.

Best wishes

  
MR MOTHEMANE KD  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR

  
DATE

Cnr Blaauwberg & Yster Street, Ladanna

"We Belong, We Care, We Serve"

2019-04-09

**LETTER OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: CAPRICORN DISTRICT/ MOGOSHI CIRCUIT**



Dear CAPRICORN DISTRICT/MOGOSHI CIRCUIT

My name is Xitshembiso Petunia Mugari and I am a student doing a research study towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies at the University of Limpopo. I am conducting a research study with the following title: **'AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA'**. I hereby request for your permission to conduct this research in some schools in Mogoshi Circuit.

The main purpose of this study is to establish how educators at Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa incorporate democratic principles and values in managing teaching, learning and assessment in their classrooms.

The research will involve educators and learners. Data will be collected from 2019 in the following manner:

- **Four interviews from four different streams with each educator** participating in the research. Educators will be selected from the following streams per school: one Mathematical/Physical Sciences educator, one Social Science, one English First Additional Language and one Life Orientation educator. Semi-structured interviews will be used to determine educators' perspectives of the way in which democratic principles are incorporated within teaching and learning. The interviews will be audio taped.
- **Classroom observations.** I will observe how educators incorporate democratic principles and values with regard to teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom environment. The research will not disrupt the classroom setting or take part in the activities of the lessons in any way.
- **Document review.** Such as lesson plans, assessment questions (learning activities) and school policy.
- **Focus group interviews of six learners.** The interviews will be audio taped

Participation will be voluntary and no payment or fee will be made. Everyone is free to accept or refuse to take part. Those who accept to be part of the research and later changes his/her mind is allowed to withdraw at any stage without being forced to give any reasons or interrogated with questions.

No harm towards any of the schools or participants will be involved in this research. The researcher will also not interfere with any class activities during lessons. A follow-up interview to comment on the findings will be requested.

Confidentiality and privacy of participants will be protected. The participants will be given explanation for the reasons of the study, and that their participation is voluntary. They will be provided with consent forms to sign. Anonymity will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms instead of participants' real names. This

will protect and guarantee the participants' identity, ensuring them anonymity and equal treatment.

If you still have any questions or in need of clarity regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at any of the contact information given above.

Yours sincerely



9 April 2019

.....

.....

Ms XP Mugari

Date

Supervisor



9 April 2019

.....

.....

Ms MC Modipane

Date

## APPENDIX D

2019-04-09

### LETTER OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS



Private Bag X1106  
Sovenga, 0727  
South Africa

Dear Principal

My name is Xitshembiso Petunia Mugari and I am a student doing a research study towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies at the University of Limpopo. I am conducting a research study with the following title: **'AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA'**.

I hereby request your permission to conduct this research in your school. The research will involve educators and learners. Data will be collected from 2019 in the following manner:

- **Four interviews from four different streams with each educator** participating in the research. Educators will be selected from the following streams per school: one Mathematical/Physical Sciences educator, one Social Science, one English First Additional Language and one Life Orientation educator. Semi-structured interviews will be used to determine educators' perspectives of the way in which democratic principles are

incorporated within teaching and learning. The interviews will be audio taped.

- **Classroom observations.** I will observe how educators incorporate democratic principles and values with regard to teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom environment. The research will not disrupt the classroom setting or take part in the activities of the lessons in any way.
- **Document review.** Such as lesson plans, assessment questions (learning activities) and school policy.
- **Focus group interviews of six learners.** The interviews will be audio taped

Participation will be voluntary and no payment or fee will be made. Everyone is free to accept or refuse to take part. Those who accept to be part of the research and later changes his/her mind is allowed to withdraw at any stage without being forced to give any reasons or interrogated with questions.

No harm towards the school or participants will be involved in this research. The researcher will also not interfere with any class activities during lessons. A follow-up interview to comment on the findings will be requested.

Confidentiality and privacy of participants will be protected. The participants will be given explanation for the reasons of the study, and that their participation is voluntary. They will be provided with consent forms to sign. Anonymity will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms instead of participants' real names. This will protect and guarantee the participants' identity, ensuring them anonymity and equal treatment.

If you still have any questions or in need of clarity regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at any of the contact information given above. Should you wish your school to participate in the research, please sign on the



form in the next page as a declaration that you give permission for the research to be conducted in your school.

Yours sincerely



.....

Ms XP Mugari

9 April 2019

.....

Date

Supervisor



.....

Ms MC Modipane

9 April 2019

.....

Date

## **DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PRINCIPAL**

In terms of the ethical requirement of the University of Limpopo, I now request you to complete this form as an indication of your permission for the educators and learners at your school to voluntarily participate in this research.

I..... (principal) have read the letter and understand the terms involved. I hereby been given full knowledge of the procedures and activities involved in the following research titled:

### **AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

The following researcher Ms XP Mugari from the University of Limpopo is conducting research on the above mentioned topic. The research forms part of the requirements for MEd (Masters) in Curriculum Studies. Information will be collected by means of semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and document review. No payments or harm will be associated with the participants who volunteer in this study. All participants will agree to the following:

- I cannot be forced to participate in this study.
- The discussion may be audio tape-recorded with my permission.
- I have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time.
- I have the right to decline to answer questions that I am not comfortable with.
- I will remain anonymous and my names will be kept from public knowledge.
- Any information that I reveal during the process of this study shall remain confidential, shall only be used for the purpose of this research and for publication in Ms XP Mugari's dissertation and relevant publications.
- I grant permission for any information that I reveal during the interview process, with the understanding that data collected will remain in

possession of the interviewer, Ms XP Mugari and her supervisor, Ms MC Modipane.

I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this consent form.

**Grant** permission

Do **NOT** grant permission

For Ms X.P. Mugari to conduct the research in my school

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

Researcher



9 April 2019

.....  
XP Mugari

.....  
Date

Thank you for your time.

2019-04-09

## LETTER OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: THE EDUCATORS



Private Bag X1106  
Sovenga, 0727  
South Africa

Dear Educators

My name is Xitshembiso Petunia Mugari and I am a student doing a research study towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies at the University of Limpopo. I am inviting you to volunteer to take part in this research. The title of the research study is **'AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA'**.

'.

I would be grateful if you could participate in the study by giving me your precious time. Data will be collected from 2019 in the following manner:

- Four interviews from four different streams with each educator participating in the research. The interviews will be audio taped.
- Classroom observations for lessons where I will not take part in any activities of the lessons

- Document review such as lesson plans, assessment questions (learning activities) and school policy.

- Focus group interviews of six learners. The interviews will be audio taped

Your participation will be voluntary and no payment will be made. If you agree to take part in the research, but later change your mind, you will be allowed to withdraw at any stage without being forced to give any reasons or interrogated with questions.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured.

If you still have any questions or in need of clarity regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at any of the contact information given above

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely



9 April 2019

.....

.....

Ms XP Mugari

Date

Supervisor



9 April 2019

.....

.....

Ms MC Modipane

Date

## **DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT: EDUCATOR**

In terms of the ethical requirement of the University of Limpopo, I now request you to complete this form as an indication of your permission to voluntarily participate in this research.

I, .....have read the letter and understand what the study is about. I hereby give permission to voluntarily participate in this research study with the following understanding:

### **AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

The following researcher Ms XP Mugari from the University of Limpopo is conducting research on the above mentioned topic. The research forms part of the requirements for MEd (Masters) in Curriculum Studies. Information will be collected by means of semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and document review. No payments or harm will be associated with the participants who volunteer in this study.

My rights as participants:

- I cannot be forced to participate in this study.
- The discussion may be audio tape-recorded with my permission.
- I have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time.
- I have the right to decline to answer questions that I am not comfortable with.
- I will remain anonymous and my names will be kept from public knowledge.
- Any information that I reveal during the process of this study shall remain confidential, shall only be used for the purpose of this research and for publication in Ms XP Mugari's dissertation and relevant publications.

- I grant permission for any information that I reveal during the interview process, with the understanding that data collected will remain in possession of the interviewer, Ms XP Mugari and her supervisor, Ms MC Modipane.

I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this consent form.

**Give** my informed consent to participate in this research

Do **NOT** give informed consent to participate in this research

Signature participant..... Date.....

Signature of Researcher



Date: 9 April 2019

Thank you for your time.

2019-04-09

**LETTER OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: THE PARENT/GUARDIAN**



Private Bag X1106  
Sovenga, 0727  
South Africa

Dear Parent/Guardian

(only for learners who are below the age of consent, that is, below 18 years of age)

I am Xitshembiso Petunia Mugari, a student doing a research study towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies at the University of Limpopo. I am requesting your consent to have your child to participant in the research I am currently doing in schools at Mogoshi Circuit. The title of the research study is **'AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA'**.

Data will be collected from 2019 in the following manner:

- Four interviews from four different streams with each educator
- Classroom observations for lessons
- Document review
- Focus group interviews with six learners per school.



You are assured that the identity of the school and the participation will be confidentiality at all times and anonymity guaranteed. The participation will be voluntary and no payment or fee of any sort will be made. I will also not interfere with any class activities during lessons. Participation does not involve in risks to your child. If you allow your child to take part in the research, but later change your mind, your child will be allowed to withdraw at any stage without being forced to give any reasons or interrogated with questions.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely



.....  
Ms XP Mugari

9 April 2019  
.....  
Date

Supervisor



.....  
Ms MC Modipane

9 April 2019  
.....  
Date

**DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN**

In terms of the ethical requirement of the University of Limpopo, you are requested to complete the following section:

I, ..... have read this letter and understands the terms involved.

On condition that my child’s information is confidential at all times and anonymity guaranteed. My child should be safe and not be involved in any risk and that participation is voluntary and he/she can withdraw at any stage without being forced to give any reasons or interrogated with questions. I hereby **(mark what is applicable)**

**Give** consent for my child to participate in the research

Do **NOT** give consent for my child to participate in the research

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

2019-04-09

## LETTER OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: THE LEARNER



Private Bag X1106  
Sovenga, 0727  
South Africa

Dear Learner

My name is Xitshembiso Petunia Mugari and I am a student doing a research study towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies at the University of Limpopo. The title of the research study is **'AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA'**.

I am inviting you to volunteer to take part in this research. The research will involve six learners in a focused group interview. Data will be collected from 2019 in the following manner:

- Four interviews from four different streams with each educator participating in the research. The interviews will be audio taped.
- Classroom observations for lessons where I will not take part in any activities of the lessons
- Document review
- Focus group interviews of six learners. The interviews will be audio taped

Your participation will be voluntary and no payment will be made. Participation will not involve you any harm. If you agree to take part in the research, but later change your mind, you will be allowed to withdraw at any stage without being forced to give any reasons or interrogated with questions. The school identity and the participants will be confidential and anonymity will be assured.

The interviews will be carried out between the researcher and the six participants in a private area. This will give you a platform to be free and safe to give your views. Views given will be strictly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research only.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely



9 April 2019

.....

.....

Ms XP Mugari

Date

Supervisor



9 April 2019

.....

.....

Ms MC Modipane

Date

## **DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT: LEARNER**

In terms of the ethical requirement of the University of Limpopo, I now request you to complete this form as an indication of your permission to voluntarily participate in this research.

I, .....have read the letter and understand what the study is about. I hereby give permission to voluntarily participate in this research study with the following understanding:

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EDUCATORS INCORPORATE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES INTO THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF MOGOSHI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

The following researcher Ms XP Mugari from the University of Limpopo is conducting research on the above mentioned topic. The research forms part of the requirements for MEd (Masters) in Curriculum Studies. Information will be collected by means of semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and document review. No payments or harm will be associated with the participants who volunteer in this study.

My rights as participants:

- I cannot be forced to participate in this study.
- The discussion may be audio tape-recorded with my permission.
- I have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time.
- I have the right to decline to answer questions that I am not comfortable with.
- I will remain anonymous and my names will be kept from public knowledge.
- Any information that I reveal during the process of this study shall remain confidential, shall only be used for the purpose of this research and for publication in Ms XP Mugari's dissertation and relevant publications.

- I grant permission for any information that I reveal during the interview process, with the understanding that data collected will remain in possession of the interviewer, Ms XP Mugari and her supervisor, Ms MC Modipane.

I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this consent form.

**Give** my informed consent to participate in this research

Do **NOT** give informed consent to participate in this research

Signature participant.....

Date.....

Signature of Researcher



Date: 9 April 2019

Thank you for your time.

## SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

- **Tools:** Audio tape, desk and chairs, pen and notebook.
- **Preparation:** In an empty office or classroom at school, preferably after school.

**Researcher:** Good day, how are you? I am interested in finding out how you as an educator infuse democratic principles and values within your classroom practice in terms of teaching, learning and assessment. I have a number of questions to ask you. Please be free and open.

**The questions of the interview are categorised into three sections:**

### Questions

#### **Section 1:**

##### **A) What does democracy in education mean?**

1. In your view, what is your understanding of democratic education?
2. How do you incorporate democratic principles and values in your classroom when managing:
  - 2.1 Teaching?
  - 2.2 Learning?
  - 2.3 Assessment?
3. Do you use a democratic style of management? YES  or NO . Please elaborate on how your classroom management style affects the classroom?

#### **Section 2:**

##### **B) Curriculum**

1. Do you give learners an opportunity to negotiate the curriculum with them in class? YES  or NO . Elaborate

2. Do you give learners a chance to reach their goals in different ways and at different times?
3. Through teaching and learning, are your learners developing on their own way and learning who they are as individuals?

**Section 3:**

**C) Instructional:**

1. Do you as an educator facilitate or dictate the lesson?
2. As an educator who is constantly in class, how do you accommodate different learning styles bearing in mind the democratic way of teaching and learning?
3. What are the challenges that you face when incorporating democratic principles and values in the classroom practice?
4. Is there anything else you want to add?

At the end of the interview, I thank the Educator and stop recording.



## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS: FOCUS GROUP

- **Tools:** audio tape, desk and chairs, pen and notebook.
- **Preparation:** In an empty office or classroom at school, preferably after school.

Interviews will be conducted with six learners in a group from grade 10, 11 and 12.

**Researcher:** Good day, how are you? I am interested in finding out whether democratic principles and values are there within the classroom experience. I would like to ask you a few questions. Please be free and open.

**The questions of the interview are categorised into three sections:**

### Questions

#### **Section 1:**

##### **A) Your view on democracy in education**

1. In your view, what is meant by democratic education?
2. From your point of view, do educators in your school incorporate democratic principles and values in the classroom practice during:
  - 2.1 Teaching
  - 2.2 Learning
  - 2.3 Assessment/tasks
3. Do educators use a democratic style of management? YES  or NO . Please explain how the educator's classroom management style affects the classroom?

#### **Section 2:**

##### **B) Curriculum**

1. Do educators give you as a learner an opportunity to participate and be part of the curriculum in class? YES  or NO . Elaborate

2. Through teaching and learning, are you developing in your own way and learning who you are as individuals? YES  or NO . Explain.
3. Do you think what you are learning is inclusive of the outside world of knowledge? How?

**Section 3:**

**4. Instructional:**

1. Do the educators in your school facilitate or dictate the lessons? Do you feel like you are part of the class? Is there a culture of respect and do you interact in class?
2. Do you think that educators accommodate different learning styles, bearing in mind a democratic way of teaching and learning towards all learners?
3. What are the challenges that you think educators face when incorporating democratic principles and values in the classroom practice?
4. Is there anything else that you want to add?

At the end of the interview, I thank the learners and stop recording.
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<b><u>OBSERVATION STEPS:</u></b>	
<b><u>Step 1: Before the lesson</u></b>	
<b>Details of how the classroom looks like</b>	
<b>Arrangement of learners</b>	
<b><u>Step 2: During the lesson</u></b>	
<b>Introduction of the lesson</b>	
<b>Materials availability</b>	
<b>Teaching style</b>	
<b>Learning style accommodation</b>	
<b>Variety of strategies</b>	
<b>Classroom tasks/activities provided</b>	
<b>Principles and values evident during the lesson</b>	
<b><u>Step 3: Conclusion</u></b>	
<b>Meet the curriculum expectation</b>	
<b>Classroom management style</b>	
<b>Educator discussion</b>	



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School of Languages and Communication Studies  
Private Bag x1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 3707, Fax: (015) 268 2868, email:kubayij@yahoo.com

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15 March 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**SUBJECT: EDITING OF DISSERTATION**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled 'The incorporation of democratic principles and values into classroom practices by educators in Mogoshi Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa' by Mugari Xitshembiso Petunia has been copy-edited, and that unless further tampered with, I am content with the quality of the dissertation in terms of its adherence to editorial principles of consistency, cohesion, clarity of thought and precision.

Kind regards

Prof. SJ Kubayi (DLitt et Phil - Unisa)  
Associate Professor  
SATI Membership No. 1002606

*Finding solutions for Africa*

