EVALUATION OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: PERSPECTIVES ON

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN SIYABUSWA CIRCUIT-

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

by

HLANYANA ANDRIES TSHEHLA

Dissertation

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

In

CURRICULUM STUDIES

In the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

(School of Education)

At the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SUPERVISOR: **Prof. MJ Themane**

DECLARATION

I HERBY DECLARE THAT THE DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO, IS MY OWN ORIGINAL WORK AND HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN SUBMITTED TO ANY OTHER INSTITUTION. I FURTHER DECLARE THAT ALL SOURCES CITED OR QUOTED ARE INDICATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED BY MEANS OF A COMPLETE LIST OF REFERENCES.

………………………………….. …………………………………

SIGNATURE   DATE

(MR H.A. TSHEHLA)

DEDICATION

I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO MY LATE PARENTS, JACOBUS KGALABI AND DORCAS MATJIA TSHEHLA FOR THEIR INSPIRATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT. THIS STUDY IS ALSO DEDICATED TO MY WIFE DEBORAH QUEEN, MY SONS AND GRAND CHILDREN, OARABILE AND RELEBOGILE FOR THEIR LOVE, SUPPORT AND PATIENCE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

The effective delivery of quality education depends, to a greater extent, on the quality of teachers. These teachers need to keep pace with the continuous growth of professional knowledge, skills and competences. This study evaluates teacher development programmes in Siyabuswa Circuit, Mpumalanga Province. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is one of the initiatives that support and improve teacher knowledge and competences. Hence this study seeks to obtain teachers' perspectives of the PLCs as a teacher development programme. This will probably shed more light into challenges faced by teachers in participating and benefitting from these developmental programmes. Scharmer (2009) states that when a new development unfolds, people may respond to it in two ways: they muddle through or fight back. Scharmer's Theory U is thus reflected upon in this study as well to help explain and clarify these perspectives so that appropriate strategies can be found to improve teacher development and quality performance in turn.

Key concepts

Programme evaluation, Teacher professional development, Professional Learning Communities, Theory U, Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development.

TABLE ON CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Education systems and departments experience challenges in the implementation of teacher development programmes that support curriculum delivery and enhance professionalism worldwide (Zarrow, 2016). Gore, Lloyd, Smith, Bowe, Ellis and Lubans (2017) observed that every year millions of dollars are invested in teacher development programmes, yet there is very little impact of these programmes on education delivery. When introducing and implementing the Information Communication Technology Programme for Training Teachers in Africa, Unwin (2013:37) also shared frustrations with its implementation. He, in fact, termed the challenge "a gulf between rhetoric and the reality of classroom practice". Apparently, teachers trained in this programme did not implement it for the intended benefit of the learners. The implementation of the new National Curriculum in South Africa has been a challenge, and many teachers are still struggling with this programme until today. Education authorities and activists, however, continue to innovate and initiate new programmes to improve teacher knowledge and professionalism.

International teacher development is seen as key to quality curriculum delivery. Stoll (2006:76) captured it well by declaring it as a "hot topic" in many countries. Seemingly this is related to the general belief that teacher development programmes could have the capacity to build and sustain improvement in schools. South Africa as a developing country is desperately exploring ways and means to improve the quality of education provisioning. This is done through several reforms and related initiatives ranging from curriculum reforms to teacher development and support programmes.

In 2011, The Department of Basic Education of South Africa developed the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTED). This framework, among others, provided for the establishment and implementation of PLCs by teachers. These PLCs are intended to create networks and collaborations among teachers to help them enhance their knowledge, skills and pedagogical competence.

The PLCs were formally launched in South Africa in 2015. However, this initiative does not seem to bear fruit. My assumption is that the problem lies with how teachers perceive and conceptualise this programme. Therefore, the study seeks to explore how teachers perceive the PLCs as a developmental and support programme. This will make the implementation of the PLCs successful and improve the quality of education delivery as anticipated.

1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vinz (2015) explains that researchers develop theories to explain phenomena, draw connections and make predictions. In this study, I intend to clarify and put into perspective teacher development and its connection to teacher and learner performance. International studies show that many education systems are still searching for an understanding of the lifeworld in which they live and work (Creswell, 2007). People develop their own subjective meanings which are varied even where the environment is the same. My intention in this study is to collect teachers' perspectives of teacher development and package it in a more structured manner.

I therefore opted for Scharmer's (2009) Theory U, which draws from the fact that the world is going through an era of intense conflict, institutional failure and painful endings or results, but fortunately, there is always hope for new and better beginnings. I believe that following the path of the U-theory will effectively illuminate critical areas of the teacher development concept, identify and eliminate barriers to the implementation thereof.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The performance of the education system as seen through learner performance is still a challenge in South Africa, as contained in the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 South Africa country report (DBE, 2018). The national matric pass rate was just around 75% (75.1%-2017) and rose to 81.3% in 2019. The TALIS report, however, further highlighted that the percentage did not include the learners who dropped out of school between Grade R and 12. This therefore illustrates how concerning learner performance is in South African schools.

Various assessment projects such as the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) study also confirm the poor performance of the

South African Education system as compared to other countries. SACMEQ IV (2017), in fact, found South Africa to be performing below the centre point in reading and Mathematics. The study identifies, among others, quality teaching which determines quality learning; socio-economic as well as geographical location (rural or urban), as factors that affect the performance of learners in schools. This assertion seems to be in synchrony with the National Development Plan-Vision 2030, which declares teachers as central to education and teaching (Department of Education, 2011). The Department of Basic Education attempts to respond to these views through numerous teacher development initiatives and programmes. We also know that education as one of the national priorities receives a huge allocation from the national budget. For instance, according to the Basic Education Department Budget Vote 2019/20, the overall 2019/20 budget allocation for the nine provincial education departments was R256.7 billion, an increase of 6.9% from the 2018/19 overall adjusted allocation. However, learner performance and quality education provisioning does not seem to be congruent with these initiatives and resources. There have been efforts to find an explanation why teachers do not seem to respond and implement these teacher development initiatives and programmes effectively. Numerous studies, such as a study done by Mtetwa, Chabongore, Ndemo and Maturure (2015) in Zimbabwe examines features of continuing professional development of school Mathematics teachers. Sabah (2014) also did a similar study in Saudi Arabia and found similar trends. Zarrow (2016), who undertook a similar study in the United States of America, identified similar challenges that corroborated these findings from developed countries. This study aims to bridge the gap on this matter. This study seeks to explore teachers' perspectives and to hear their voice on the implementation challenges around teacher development programmes. The focus is on the implementation of the Professional Learning Communities programme.

1.4. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Teacher Development Programmes: these refer to variety of programmes and initiatives designed to respond to and address teachers' learning and professional development needs according to the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (2011). A broader view of this concept is captured by Mansour, Albalawi and Mcleod (2014), who view these programmes as planned opportunities and activities

that are designed to enhance lifelong learning among teachers and their learners. They emphasise that these processes should be directed by and dependent on a particular content; that they are continuous, and teachers must be active role players. Teachers need to drive their own development. A similar view on this concept is held by Uralbaevich (2016), who view these programmes as some of the possible ways of assisting with the improvement of the professional growth of teachers. The author further insists that for the programmes to be effective, they must provide timely assistance to teachers, and advance their personal and practice ideals.

Professional Learning Communities: Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is one of the teacher development programmes that is being embraced globally to improve education systems and processes. Many authors, as observed by Brodie and Borko (2016), have different perspectives and definitions of what Professional Learning Communities are. However, many seem to agree on the fundamental elements of these structures. These include collaboration, networking, regular engagement and working groups among teachers. This is to promote professional growth and to improve teaching and learning. A lot of work has already been done around these concepts by authors such as Hord (1997), DuFour (2004), Thompson (2004), Senge (2006) and many more. However, many countries are struggling to implement this potentially useful support structure, including developing and reforming countries like South Africa.

In the South African context, these are **"**groups of classroom teachers, school managers and subject advisors who participate collectively to determine their learning and developmental trajectories and to set up activities that will drive their development." (Integrated Strategic Planning Framework Teacher Education Development, 2011:14). PLCs provide a platform for teachers to identify their challenges, and to interact and network with other teachers who might have similar challenges, and then together explore responses and solutions to their challenges. These are not permanent structures. As soon as the challenge is addressed, they disband. Members may join and work with different colleagues in future, depending on common challenges that they encounter or identify.

Siyabuswa Circuit: This is an education field office of the Nkangala District in Mpumalanga Province. It serves as the closet point of contact between the schools and the Department

of Education. Thirty-eight schools depend on this circuit for information, administrative services and professional support (National Education Policy Act, 1996).

The circuit in located in the rural township on the Western part of Mpumalanga Province. It was part of the former Kwa Ndebele Homeland in the previous political era. The place is located about 100 km northeast of Pretoria along the R573 (Moloto) road. Many teachers live in and around Pretoria and commute to work in Siyabuswa, and back to their homes in Pretoria. Many of these teachers use public transport (buses) which run on predetermined scheduled time. These schedules are not flexible and cannot be negotiated to fit in with school programmes.

Siyabuswa is a multi-tribal territory dominated by the IsiNdebele and Sepedi-speaking people. During the previous political era, there was ugly violence (black on black) which badly divided this community. There are still remnants of such tension even in schools, though very subtle. However, the township is making progress and notable development economically and socially.
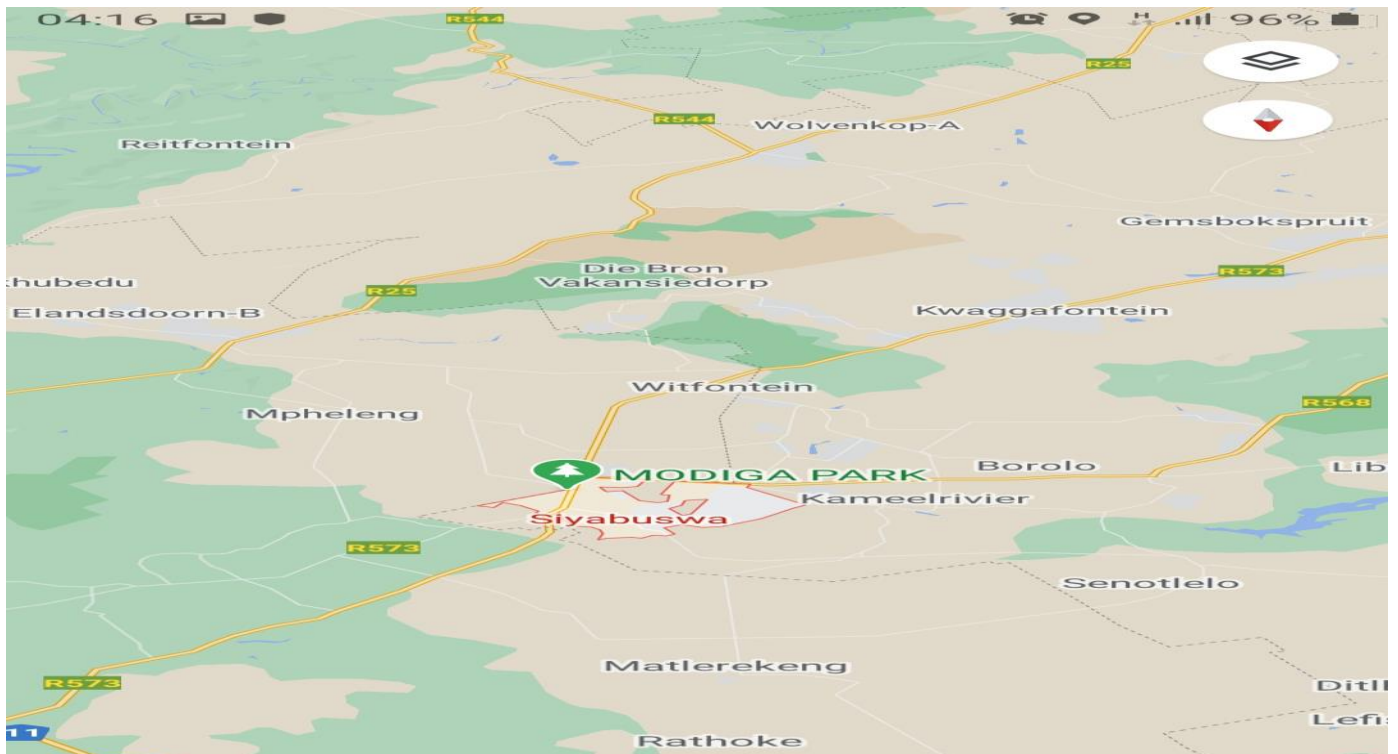
Figure 1: Siyabuswa Township and neighboring villages
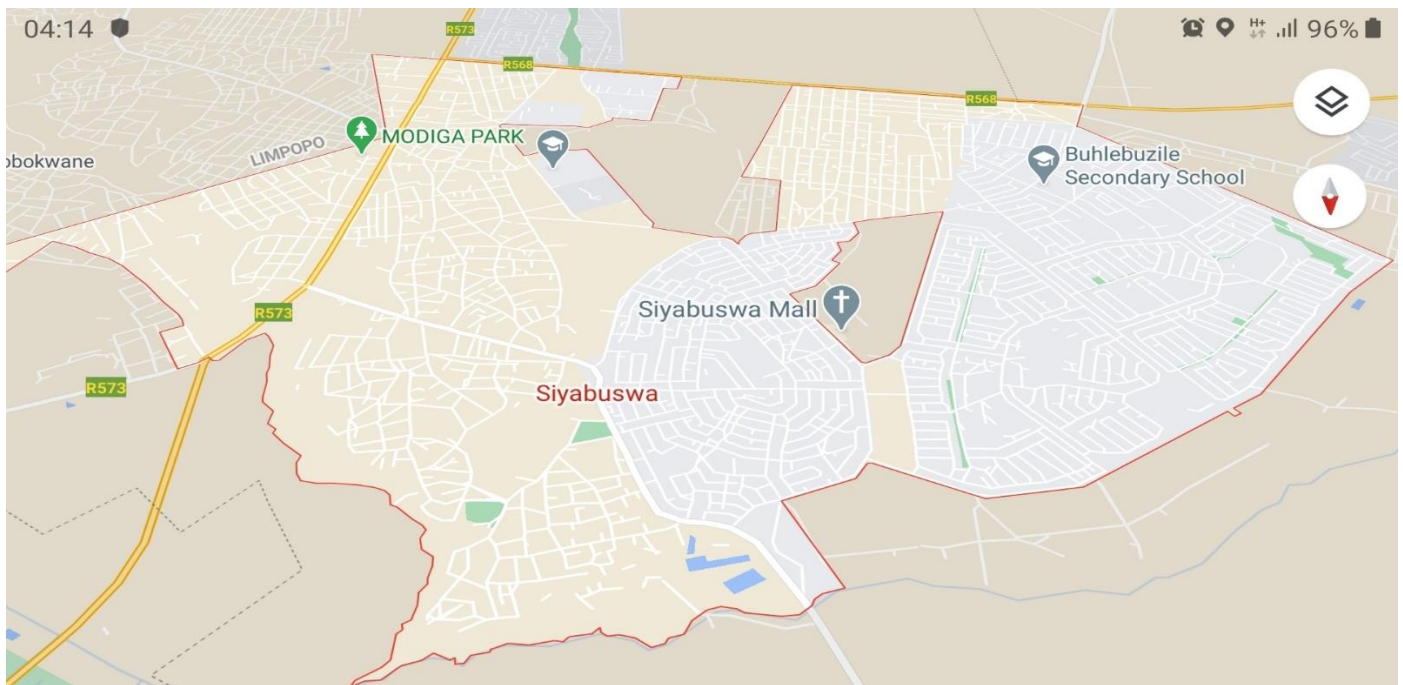
Figure 2: Siyabuswa Township along R573 (Moloto Road)

1.5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND THE RESEARCH QUESTION

1.5.1. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions in Siyabuswa Circuit within Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province on the implementation of Teacher Development programmes.

1.5.2. Objectives of the Study

i.   To identify and describe challenges that inhibit the implementation of Teacher Development programmes successfully

ii. To determine teachers' views regarding Professional Learning Communities as a Teacher Development programme.

iii. To empower teachers to benefit from continuing professional development programmes

iv. To find strategies that promote effective implementation of Teacher Development programmes

1.5.3. Research question

To achieve this purpose, I asked the following question:

What are challenges relating to the implementation of teacher development programmes to empower teachers in Siyabuswa Circuit of Mpumalanga Province?

To unpack the research question, I asked the following sub-questions:

- What are challenges affecting teachers' participation in teacher development programmes?
- What are teachers' views on Professional Learning Communities as a teacher development programme?
- What are benefits of participating in development programmes for teachers?
- How can teacher development programmes be effectively implemented to improve teaching and learning?

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1. Research Design

According to Creswell (2014), the purpose of qualitative studies (methodology) is to explore and understand the meaning that participants or individuals ascribe to a social phenomenon. In this study, therefore, the exploratory qualitative research methodology will be adopted. I believe that this qualitative approach will make it possible to gather in-depth understanding of teachers' behaviour, attitudes and reasons that may lead to poor implementation of developmental programmes meant to improve their performance. Hence, the research design of this study will be exploratory, descriptive and contextual as informed by the aims and objectives of the study.

1.6.2. Sampling

The target population of participants in this study consists of teachers from Siyabuswa Circuit in Mpumalanga Province. The circuit consists of 38 schools catering all Phases and grades. The purposive sampling strategy was used to select schools representing four schooling Phases: Foundation Phase (Grade 1-3), Intermediate Phase (Grade 4-6), Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) and Further Education and Training Phase (Grade 10-10). I selected these schools from the cluster that represented the total geographical area of the circuit.

Three teachers from each of the four schools were then selected for individual interviews. I selected these teachers through purposeful sampling using the random selection technique. For instance, the selected teachers were those who attended the PLCs advocacy campaign earlier than others did. Twelve teachers participated in the study.

1.6.3. Data Collection

I used English as a medium of communication during the collection of data of this study. Data was collected from the twelve teachers through a semi-structured interview. A questionnaire (attached as Appendix 3) was employed to guide the interviews. I sought permission from the teachers to use a voice recorder as well as to capture the process and responses from interviews. Written responses would also be accepted in order to capture as much information as possible.

1.6.4. Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this study was guided by the thematic content analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Through this form of analysis, the data collected from the interviews was analysed to identify patterns. These patterns were then developed and packaged into themes. I then located such themes against the various concepts on the U-shaped pathway as espoused by Scharmer (2009)- (Figure. 4). This was intended to explain teachers' behaviour and perspectives on continuing development, and to create the appropriate social reality that would guide and improve the implementation of teacher development programmes.

The thematic content analysis follows a six-phase process.

The process started with familiarisation with data. During this phase, I read the interview responses and where applicable listened to the voice recordings as well. I supplemented this process with my own observation notes so that I could make sense of the data and thus pick up patterns thereof.

The second phase was to generate themes. This entailed the development and packaging of data that seemed to be making visible patterns. These organised patterns were then developed into codes.

During the third phase, I started working on the themes to identify those that would better explain the phenomenon. Those that work were then used to analyse the codes.

The fourth phase entailed searching and locating the data on the Theory-U. The purpose was to support or refute proposals from the theory. Where applicable, I would expand and revise these processes as we picked new developments.

During the fifth phase, the refined themes were clearly defined and structured accordingly. The essence and relevance of the themes became visible at this stage so that preliminary pronouncements could be made.

In the sixth and last phase, I reviewed the final themes and started writing a report. The process included decisions on the themes so that only those that closely assisted with answering the research questions were retained and further refined.

A final dependable and valid report was then be developed and presented (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1.7. QUALITY CRITERIA

In my study, I used the four criteria identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as quality criteria:

1.7.1. Credibility

I drew the judgement of the credibility of this study from participants' point of view. Trochim (2006) asserts the view that it is correct and proper for participants to judge the credibility of the results of a study. To ensure the quality of the data collected, I used multiple data collection techniques. Participants were allowed ample time and space to express themselves on the issues.

1.7.2. Dependability

This study sought to ensure that there is consistency in terms of contexts and processes of engaging participants. I took care to eliminate contextual factors that may unduly influence the results of this study. Where unexpected, changes and circumstances occurred during the study. Such changes and developments were recorded and mediated upon appropriately.

1.7.3. Confirmability

TALIS (2018) directs that we must confirm and verify that respondents themselves produce and shape the results. It should not be the researcher's results. That is what determined the confirmability of the study. Hence, engagements and processes relating to this study were verified and recorded progressively throughout the study.

1.7.4. Transferability

Trochim (2006) maintains that the results of a good study must be applicable in other similar contexts. Hence, the context of this study was well-defined and located so that the findings thereof could represent and apply to other schools in and other education circuits, especially in Mpumalanga Province.

1.8.   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was intended to shed more light on the challenges around the implementation of teacher development programmes that should improve teaching and learning in schools. The study tried to get the perspective of teachers who are the actual recipients of these programmes. The voice of these teachers was also significant as they are the practitioners of teaching and learning. Hence, they become central to quality curriculum delivery and improved learner performance in schools. Information gathered through this study will also assist with proper planning and deployment of resources that will benefit the education system and the whole country.

1.9.   ETHICAL CONSIDERATION
1.9.1. Permission to conduct study

There are many stakeholders in the education system. Sometimes there is contestation over processes, which may lead to conflict. Hence, I sought permission to do this study in schools within Siyabuswa Circuit in Nkangala District office. This is the next line of authority between the circuit and the provincial office (Annexure 1). I also sought ethical clearance from the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee before I conducted the study and interviewed teachers. The ethical clearance certificate was duly granted.

1.9.2. Informed consent

It was also proper to get the acceptance of the identified teachers to participate in the study as respondents. These teachers needed to understand that this would be a voluntary

exercise as per Annexure 2. I assured the participants that the study would in no way affect their positions or functions as employees of the Department of Education. I appraised them with the processes, including the questionnaire (annexure 3) so that they could make informed decisions whether or not to participate.

1.9.3. Anonymity

I assured the participants that their identity will remain anonymous**.** This clause was included in the letter of request for their participation in the study**.** They were given individual numbers for the purpose of identifying them and packaging their inputs accordingly.

1.9.4. Confidentiality and Privacy

I will take every step and precaution to respect and make sure that responses from participants are treated with confidentiality and for the sole purpose of this study.

1.10. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the background to the study, formulated the problem statement, and defined key operational concepts that I used in the study. I also indicated the purpose of the study and posed the research questions. The research methodology was highlighted. I then stated the quality criteria and closed the chapter with ethical issues that I took into consideration. The next chapter focuses on the literature review as well as the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Gay (1992) views literature review as being about summarising and analysing documents that are relevant to the study topic. This view might be too simplistic and narrow. Analysis as an element of this view adds value and stretches this concept a bit further. However, a more comprehensive view is that of Creswell (1994), who includes the purpose of summarising and analysing these documents as a review process. The purpose of reviewing literature thus includes determining and assessing what has been done and found about the topic so that I can determine gaps in that field so that my study becomes purposeful. I will gain more insight and clarity relating to it, and become grounded and relevant. This is affirmed by McMillan and Schumacher (2006), who view literature review as a means of shedding more light and illuminating a research topic.

In this study, I will review relevant literature relating to the evaluation of teacher development programmes. The study will use Professional Learning Communities, being one of the teacher development initiatives to collate teachers' perspectives. Teachers are key in this study because they are central to the provision of quality education (Darling-Hammond, 2000). They require skills, competences, knowledge and capacity to achieve these ideals. Hence, teacher development becomes an important element of the professional being of teachers. The Department of Education, its partners and stakeholders all put efforts and resources to support and develop teachers so that they can improve their practice and in turn provide quality education. This study seeks to evaluate whether these initiatives do make a difference.

2.2. CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE MAIN THEMES OF THE STUDY

2.2.1. EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES

Evaluation is one of the most complex and least understood terms (McMillan & Schumacher, 2000). However, familiar concepts such as observation, measuring, judging, determining value etc. are largely associated with evaluation. In this study, I seek to evaluate the implementation of teacher development programmes with reference to Professional Learning Communities. Evaluation in this context means to measure and

judge whether teachers implement support and developmental programmes. This would then lead to improvement in their practice and provision of quality education.

On the other hand, Wall and Walz (2004) view evaluation as a purposeful, systematic and careful collection and analysis of information used for the purpose of documenting the effectiveness and impact of programmes, establishing accountability and identifying areas needing change and improvement. This view complements the complex nature of evaluation (McMillan, 1965). This study will therefore explore how the education system, particularly in Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province incorporates these elements in their professional development packages. This will assist me with understanding how the implementation of these programmes is faring in schools.

Kreber and Paula (2001) identified six approaches to programme evaluation. The first approach focuses on participants' perceptions/ satisfaction of a programme. The participants would get the opportunity to reflect on their experiences relating to a developmental programme that they underwent. They therefore become an integral part of the processes, and their role is well defined. They share the responsibility of the success or failure of the programme. In this study, I seek to find reasons and issues from teachers, which may affect their implementation of the Teacher Development Programmes that they undergo.

The other five approaches mentioned by Kreber and Paula (2001) seem to be focusing on factors outside participants. In other words, the implementation is evaluated in terms of teaching and learning, teaching performance, students' perceptions, student learning and culture of the institution. These points would then exclude the voice of teachers, which is critical if we really must improve the implementation of these programmes. I believe that focusing on this approach will close the gap between the actual implementation challenges on one side, and those challenges assumed and pre-conceived by administrators on the other side.

Aims of Evaluation

It seems that generally, districts and circuits do not give much attention to evaluation as part of the teacher development programme. This is often attributed to administrative and management tasks that overwhelm these districts and circuits. Some districts even cite

shortages of funds as a factor in this case. These views, however, do not justify the absence of evaluation activities in development programmes. Powel, Anderson, Fitzgerald and Taylor (2013) reckon that the omission of this important element weakens the meaningful implementation of these development programmes.

The primary aim of evaluation of a programme is to provide valid, reliable and useful information to review and refine the programmes we are implementing. The Ministry of Education noted this in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) South African Country Report (2018) as well. In my study, the evaluation of the implementation of teacher development programmes has the same intention. The emphasis, however, will be the perspective of teachers. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2019) shares the same sentiment by declaring that the implementation of programmes may not be successful unless teachers are involved (in both design and implementation). Hence, I believe their perspectives will help design and implement a credible and sustainable support and developmental programme.

The Benefits of Evaluation?

The nature of evaluation of programmes is that it takes time and resources. Perhaps that is why many programmes in the education system are rarely evaluated. We normally take teachers through quick short courses or workshops; sometimes two-hour sessions and end there. There is no feedback or follow-up afterwards to support implementation. Raphael and Puma (2001) noticed these trends and demonstrated how important evaluation is. Among others, they indicate that proper evaluation can lead to improvement of the programme and the ultimate outcome. In this case, this will amount to quality education delivery.

Many studies dealt with evaluation of the impact of teacher development programmes. This includes the OECD, TALIS and related reports. Researchers such as DeSimone (2009), Darling-Hammond, Hayler and Gardner (2017) etc. concur. However, in the study, I intend to evaluate the implementation of the development programmes from teachers' perspectives. Maybe I could find something with the teachers, the programmes, or even the mode of delivering these programmes, which will explain challenges with the implementation of these programmes.

Forms of Evaluation

Understanding the different features of evaluation will assist with guiding the design and direction of developmental programmes. The Minister of Basic Education in South Africa declared at the TALIS (2018) that engaging teachers in the design of such a change would boost the successful implementation of change in the education sector. Hence, my argument is that we need to give teachers space through study to give their perspectives around the implementation of their own developmental programmes.

Hamilton and Chervany (1981) observed that evaluation could be designed with an intention to determine the needs of participants. Such needs could include knowledge and skills that participants have or need to learn. This will in turn inform the type of programmes and activities that they require to perform their duties effectively. In many cases, we overlook this form of evaluation. Providers seem to assume that they know what participants need and thus design programmes for them. I suspect that this could somehow affect the ultimate implementation of the programme because it might not be appealing to teachers whose needs we do not accommodate.

2.2.2. TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry of Education in South Africa concurs with the OECD (2018) on the role of professional development among teachers. The Ministry accepts that South Africa, like many other countries, need teachers who are appropriately equipped to meet the growing needs and challenges of the country. The dire need for suitably qualified teachers is addressed in South Africa's National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DoE, 1996). This article attempts to address the problem of how Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD), as stipulated by the National Policy Framework, is implemented to create a collaborative learning culture in schools. In this study, teacher development, also referred to as professional development, will be in accordance with these prescripts.

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development also provides for the establishment and implementation of Professional Learning Communities. The actual concept will be detailed here-under. Suffice to state here that Professional Learning Communities also provide platforms for professional development among teachers. The formal advocacy of these Professional Learning Communities in

Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province started in 2014. Through this study, I will engage teachers on the implementation of this programme. The aim is to examine how they implement the professional programmes and what challenges there might be.

Teacher Development Programmes are a variety of initiatives and training programmes designed to respond to and address teachers' learning, and professional developmental needs as espoused in the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DBE & DHET, 2011). Such programmes range from those that the Ministry of Education design and deliver internally, to those that education partners and stakeholders develop and deliver to teachers. The Framework clearly delimitates roles and functions that different structures play in teacher professional development. It breaks the professional life of a teacher into the Initial Teacher Education and Training (Pre-service) and Continuing Professional Development (In-Service). There seems to be more challenges with the implementation of the second phase. Hence, my interest in this study is around this phase. My literature review reveals many other perspectives and definitions of professional development worth exploring.

It is important to precede the following definitions of professional development by exploring the caution sounded by Evans (2002). The researcher mentions professional development, teacher change and teacher learning as concepts that look similar but are different. He cautions against using these words loosely and interchangeably because strictly speaking, they are not operationally synonymous. It becomes clearer to me when he says, for instance, professional development describes the process while teacher change relates to product. Teacher learning then carries both the process and product. However, in the study I opted for professional development as operationally used in the department, particularly the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development.

Kelly (2006) dwells much on teacher learning. He, however, concedes that professional development is more operationally friendly and broader. In fact, he clearly alludes to the fact that professional development leads to learning. Continuing professional development, according to Kelly, refer to planned activities leading to teacher learning. Relating to Evans (2002), this would mean that professional development is a process, and teacher learning is a product. I identify myself with this notion although I prefer the simpler and noncomplex definition of professional development as alluded to above.

Opfer and Pedder (2011) see professional development as a very important means of improving and raising teachers' content knowledge; and this translates into improved classroom practice. They also declare that this is essential for improving learner performance. This is largely the operational definition of professional development that we hold in the Department of Education generally. Linking it to the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development, this would be the In-service stage, which is correctly called Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD).

Zarrow (2019) seems to be reconciling the above mentioned and many other definitions of professional development. According to Zarrow (2019), professional development is an ongoing, planned process. He adds that conditions are that it must lead to growth, be purposeful and ultimately lead to observable change in teachers. Knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired should translate into learner performance. However, critical to his definition is that the acquired knowledge and skills must be applied. That is implementation and that is where challenges are. Hence, the focus of this study is on evaluating the implementation of professional development programmes.

To put professional development in a proper perspective, Birman, Desimone, Porter and Garet (2000) attempted to identify key factors. Factors such as the form, duration, participation, content, active learning and coherence as illustrated hereunder.

Form refers to the type of professional development, for example, workshops. More often than not, such workshops take a lecture approach where teachers remain passive. There is little time for engagement and full participation by teachers. Hence, effective learning that leads to meaningful change does not take place.

Duration means the amount of time spent on a particular professional development activity. Apparently, Birman et al (2000) concede that more time spent on an activity promotes more focus and more opportunities for learning. Due to time constraints, in the Department of Education in Nkangala District, many professional development activities are scheduled for approximately 2 hours. It will be interesting to evaluate and determine the implementation and impact of programmes run in this fashion.

Participation in professional development programmes also depends on the target group. It might be a homogeneous group, for example, teachers from the same school, teaching

the same subject or teachers from different schools teaching different subjects. There should, however, be a common aspect that characterises the group where, for instance, only numbers are taken into consideration, and the quality and success of the activity may be compromised. Many departmental invitations to workshops would indicate that two teachers per school are invited to attend a curriculum workshop. That may not be enough to strengthen the programme.

The focus of the activity of the professional development programme could be content knowledge and skills for teachers. This should be pronounced so that participants can be identified and selected appropriately. We can put a homogeneous group together for an activity. This will add value to the next concept, namely, active learning, according to Birman et al (2000). Lastly, professional development activities must be coherent and fit into the bigger picture. This can then effectively address teachers' goals and needs while meeting requirements.

Hunzicker (2010) and many other researchers support the notion that professional development plays a very crucial role in the education system. This researcher, however, draws attention to the challenges and barriers that confront professional development initiatives. They lament, among others, the common practice of taking teachers out of the classroom for a workshop. This is indeed a form of professional development, but challenges related thereto are a disturbing. For instance, some teachers would worry about the learners and the scope of work for that whole day. In such cases, attendance of this workshop becomes nothing but compliance.

The nature and method of these workshops need attention. We do have scenarios where a group of teachers would sit still and listen to a speaker (expert). These are termed presentation style workshops and are also called "one shot-sit and get" workshops (Hunzicker, 2010). This point was picked much earlier (Sikoro & Alexander, 2004). They observed that the rapid education reforms demand new approaches to professional development. Their input was that professional development workshops need to be thoroughly planned, focused and ongoing. This dispels of the culture of simply reporting about numbers of attendees as many district facilitators do. It is then that we can evaluate appropriately and meaningfully evaluate the implementation and impact of these professional development programmes.

In the Department of Education in Mpumalanga, this culture seems to be the preferred and most popular style. Many facilitators and district-based practitioners deliver professional development programmes in similar fashion. It could be because of time, resources (financial) and other constraints. However, it becomes difficult for the participants to benefit and ultimately implement these programmes effectively. Hence, Hunzicker (2010) notes that it will make more sense for such programmes when learners make learning part of their daily experience. Teachers can then approach learning with clear goals in relation to their experiences in real life situations.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2005) holds a similar view, that many professional development programmes and events are inappropriate, thus affect the impact of such programmes in terms of quality output. This could include the size, scope or structure of the programme. We do often witness practices where up to 100 professionals are put in a venue, and an expert delivers a linear presentation for periods ranging from an hour to over six hours. Added to this in many cases, the scope of the presentation may not be speaking to either the professional needs of this audience, or their scope of work. Lastly, such presentations are rigid and seldom allow interaction, reflection or evaluation by the affected and relevant participants (OECD, 2005). At the end, participants will have great difficulties implementing the lessons learnt from such sessions. Will that be their fault?

The difficulty in implementing these professional development programmes is also noted by Zarrow (2016). This researcher implies that participants are not supported to implement new practices learnt. He submits that teachers may understand and embrace the ideas and strategies from the workshop but still fail to implement them. To this researcher, the missing point towards effective implementation is support or lack thereof. He contends that if there was follow-up support after workshops, chances of successful implementation would be greater. This does not happen very often. Therefore, the fault in this case may not be with the participants. I think there is something that these participants can do to deal with this impasse. The focus of this study will then be on those challenges that are with and within the participants that affect the implementation of programmes.

Scharmer (2009) observed that we need to find creative ways of moulding, bending and transforming old patterns of thinking, conversing, and dealing with challenges that would fit in with the realities of today. This study will therefore also reflect on his Theory-U theory

model in order to illuminate the blind spots of teacher development and to uncover the issues from teachers' perspectives that affect their own development.

My interest in this approach is that many authors as demonstrated by Hunzicker's view above seem to focus on issues outside the participants themselves. Kennedy (2005), for instance, looks at what he calls power relations that could impact on these professional development programmes. This seems to be close to what I am exploring. Kennedy argues about the perceptions of participants towards a programme. The participant takes accountability for the success or failure of their own development. The U-Theory can then help locate where the participant falls short, so that an appropriate intervention comes into effect.

Barriers to Professional Development

A lot of work has gone into evaluating the implementation of professional development. Many researchers have identified various barriers. In this study, I intend evaluating the implementation of professional development from the perspective of teachers. This view seems to be supported by Avalos (2011), who contends that professional development demands that teachers must be involved cognitively and emotionally in these activities. The level of their cognitive and emotional development therefore plays a key role in delivering quality professional development. The absence of these qualities will then compromise the positive implementation and impact of their professional development. In this study, I will explore, among others, teachers' convictions and beliefs towards professional development (Avalos, 2011).

A more holistic account for lacking professional development is illustrated by Bertram (2011). The researcher submits that professional development must be located and supported by organised and functional schools. It is then that the type of knowledge that the teacher needs to acquire is determined and well located. The teacher plays a role in his or her own development and the system is supportive towards that course. Bertram (2011) therefore concludes that professional development initiatives are not effective partly because they are not focus. Research on what teachers need in terms of knowledge and learning must inform the development of many professional practices. This study could locate these aspects from teachers' perspectives.

Models of Professional Development

To clarify continuing professional development further, Kennedy (2005) proposes and illustrates several continuing professional development models. The purpose and intention of these models is to put professional development in context. This will help with understanding the nature of this development. Key to that would also be how to use the knowledge acquired through continuing professional development effectively. The table below illustrates six models that are commonly used.

MODEL	CHARACTERISTICS	CAPACITY	SHORTFALL
Training Model	- Delivered to teacher by expert - Agenda is predetermined - Delivered off-site	- Provide teachers with skills - Cost effective and saves time	- Participants play a passive role - Lacks connection to classroom context - Disconnects with essential moral purpose
Award Winning	- Emphasis on completion of award-bearing programmes - Validated externally (e.g., by University)	- Provides quality assurance and continuity - Focus on classroom practice	- Control by validating bodies - Lacks values and beliefs
Deficit Model	- Address a deficit in teacher performance - Form of intervention to improve performance	- Remedy weaknesses in performance	- Not address root cause of poor performance - Attributes poor performance to individuals
Cascade Model	- Individuals attend event and disseminate information to other colleagues - Skills and knowledge focused	- Handy where resources are limited - Opportunity to share learning among colleagues	- Lacks participation, collaboration and ownership - Little focus on attitudes and values - Focus on "what and How" – not "Why"

Standards-based	- Nationally agreed standards are used to demonstrate skills - Focus is on coherence and standardisation	- Strong central control - Quality Assurance - Measurable standards	- Restrictive central control - Restricts teachers own developmental needs
Community of practice	- Two or more people involved in interactive learning - Promote understanding and tuning knowledge - Development of repertoire, style and discourse	- Mutual engagement and learning - Combination of knowledge to create new knowledge	- possible influence by dominant of wisdom by individuals

Table 1. Drawn from: Models of Continuing Professional Development: a framework for analysis by Aileen Kennedy.

The analysis of these models will shed some light on the perceived purpose of professional development and what influences its implementation, for instance, power relations, control, individual and profession-wide autonomy etc. The nature of a model could affect the effective implementation of a continuing professional development programme. For instance, a cascading model may not achieve the desired outcomes where individual skills and knowledge must be developed. This is so because the original concepts may not reach the next level as initially crafted.

The first model identified by Kennedy is the training model, which is supported by Kelly and McDiarmid (2002). It is evident that this is the popular form of professional development in many countries. The focus of this model generally is to impart skills and equip teachers with competencies. In this model, an expert determines the agenda and delivers the completely predetermined package. This approach may affect the effectiveness of this model. This is so because the expert might miss the real issues required by the teachers for their development. Hence, the ISPFTED strives to close this gap by declaring that teachers must be at the driver's seat of their own development. I concur with Hoban (2002) that this is a useful model, particularly when introducing new knowledge. In this study, my focus will be to hear how teachers perceive this model.

Secondly, there is the award-bearing model, which entails programmes of study that are validated by, for example, universities. Whoever validates such a programme would then exercise control and determine the nature and outcomes of such programme. The voice of participants in such programmes is rarely heard, even where the programme does not fully address their needs. The model is, however, very reliable because it is structured and largely standardised. Hence, it is easily measurable and traceable.

The third model is the deficit model. The purpose and nature of this model is to address and close gaps (deficit) identified in a participant, for example, a teacher's performance. The model promotes relevance in addressing needs. It may, however, prove to be costly when the system faces large numbers of participants. It may also be difficult to define what constitute performance, especially in a school, so that this model can identify and address the deficit in the performance of participants.

The cascade model (fourth) occurs when some participants attend an event, for example, training where after these attendees disseminate the information to other colleagues at their respective constituencies. This model is ideal especially when dealing with large numbers and with limited resources. This model, however, limits participation, collaboration and ownership, especially for those who do not attend the original event. This model also ignores the importance of attitudes and values in teacher learning and development. At the centre of this model is the transference of skills and knowledge as broadly as possible with minimum costs.

The fifth one is the standard-based model. The model calls for the setting of standards so that the demonstration of professional learning and actions conforms and measures up to these standards or competences. The model seems to be advocating the narrow path of teacher learning and development. Participants may not express themselves fully and influence their own learning and development. The bright side of this model is that it promotes uniformity. Participants receive the same content consistently, because the structure, language and other aspects used are predetermined and generally common to all.

The community of practice is the sixth model reflected upon here-in. The strength of this model, according to Boreham (2000), is that it draws more from the existing knowledge of

individual participants as well as the combination of knowledge from several individuals. The model is not only strong on knowledge generated, but also on rich relations as well as connections developed among participants.

There are other models as well, around continuing professional development. However, I selected the six above to shed more light into knowledge acquisition through individual and collective development so that we can account for the success or failure of the implementation of professional development.

2.2.3. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Curry (2008) observed that schools as intellectually engaging places for learners cannot function effectively without teachers who are equally engaged in learning, thinking, reading and discussing. One platform from which teachers can be involved in this engagement are the professional learning communities (PLC). There are many documented theories and structures of PLCs. However, the common aspect seems to be the aim of this structure. Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace and Thomas (2006) state that the PLCs are aimed at enhancing teachers' effectiveness as professionals who will ultimately benefit learners and improve their achievement. The implementation and composition of these PLCs varies from one country to another and from one education system to the other. Huffman (2015) noted that the definition of a PLC is always linked to its cultural and organisational context.

Kaplan (2008) describes one form of a PLC as implemented in the Florida State of the United States of America. The PLC in this case is established for the same aim, namely, to improve teacher learning and effectiveness. However, their PLC intends to develop a team of selected teachers to share perceptions of, and understandings about the theory and practice of writing instruction. In other words, the PLs are not open to all. Secondly, teachers do not initiate and drive such PLCs. These structures also focus on a particular project, i.e., theory and practice of writing instruction. This project is initiated externally. This is unique.

In the State of Ohio in the United States of America, Doolittle, Sudek and Rattigan (2008) define a seemingly different structure of a PLC. In this case, the authorities initiate the PLC at a particular institution called a Professional Development School or even a classroom within a school. Then this PLC coordinates and blends expertise and resources for the

purpose of supporting and achieving the complex mission of teaching and learning. Notably with this form of PLC is that the size and numbers do not matter. For instance, all staff members became members of the PLC. The menu or content thereof is predetermined and packaged accordingly. Again, in this case the role and influence of the individual teacher is limited. It seems to take away the notion that teachers are effective in driving their own learning and development.

A study conducted in Israel by Schechter (2012) perceives PLCs as structures that facilitate collaborative learning among professionals in their common environment. The study indicates that this collaboration cuts across all levels. For instance, in a school, teachers can participate in a PLC to address problems that affect teaching and learning. On the other hand, principals of a circuit or district can meet on their own regularly to address school-management and leadership challenges that are common to them. These types of PLCs seem to be more relaxed and safer from possible domination and influence by authorities. Professionals will be able to oversee their own learning and influence their own development appropriately.

Che, Lee, Lin and Zang (2016) record a more comprehensive concept of a PLC in Taiwan. They list common elements of such structures that make them unique. Some of the elements are that these structures emphasise and influence improvement of work, realisation of shared goals and collective responsibilities. They also collaborate in research, enquiry, and examination of aspects of their work. Central to the operations of PLCs is the emphasis on shared practices, reflective thinking and colleagueship. The authors do declare that these elements sometimes make the PLC look like team-building. However, they hasten to indicate that PLCs are much broader and cut across both educational and business practices as well. This seems to be a more general understanding of the form of a PLC in many countries, including South Africa.

In South Africa, the Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training capture the concept of Professional Learning Communities in the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Techer Education and Development (ISPFTED). The ISPFTED, as a product of thorough consultation, becomes a stronger integrated national plan for teacher development in South Africa (DBE & DHET, 2011). This plan emphasises the importance of a well-coordinated plan and programme of teacher learning and

development. One provision of this plan was therefore the establishment of Professional Learning Communities. This intention of the Department is to provide yet another platform for teachers and related professionals to engage regularly with each other and other specialists so that they can improve their own subject knowledge, teaching and assessment skills.

In the South African context, these groups of classroom teachers, school managers and subject advisors participate collectively to determine their own learning and development. They are platforms for teachers to set up activities that will drive their development as contained in the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DBE & DHET, 2011).

Learning communities are best defined as "ongoing groups…who meet regularly for the purpose of increasing their own learning and that of their students" (Lieberman & Miller, 2008). These communities play an important role to encourage and support professionals to examine their practice, try new ideas and reflect together on what works and why it works. It also gives them the opportunity to collectively construct and share new knowledge (DBE & DHET, 2011). This is reflected in the theme for the South African Teacher Development Summit of 2009, which stated that teachers must be in the driver's seat of their own development. The South African model further declares that these teacher development initiatives must connect with student learning. In other words, professional development through PLCs improves educator effectiveness, which is demonstrated largely through learner performance.

In terms of research literature on PLCs, these structures have the potential to contribute immensely towards improved teacher and learner learning, morale and development. The idea of teachers working collaboratively is not completely new. There are numerous demonstrations of excellent collaboration among education professionals, particularly teachers. However, there seems to have been no systematic and structured way of implementing this collaborative approach. Hence, the conceptualisation of Professional Learning Communities in terms of the ISPFTED (DBE & DHET, 2011).

The ISPFTED represents the PLC as an instrument that would help in strengthening teacher professionalism broadly. The South African Education Department then gives

further effect to the PLC. The Department states that it also aims at establishing subject-based and issue-based PLCs (DBE, 2015). The Department then guides and supports teachers to initiate and sustain their own PLCs effectively. This makes the structure of PLCs in South Africa to be unique and slightly different from others elsewhere. Here, it is apparent that teachers drive and influence their own learning and development.

To explain the South African PLCs in finer details, DBE (2015) defines the component words as follows:

The word Professional in PLC require members to develop a professional attitude by, for example, focusing on the interest of the learners and supporting their learning. The work of these professionals is supported by knowledge and research. Members are expected to contribute to knowledge through research and own enquiry.

L- in PLC stands for learning, which then signifies that the core of this structure is learning for learners and learning for teachers (professionals) as well. Research towards the knowledge and practice is the basis of these processes of learning and practice.

Then lastly, there is the word community (the C in PLC). Learning takes place more effectively when it takes place within a group of professionals collaborating for a common course: that is a community. The epicentre of this breakdown is the teacher and the learner, i.e., the teacher learns so that the learner can learn even better.

This study seeks to engage teachers in their understanding and implementation of PLCs. This will assist with the evaluation of the implementation of their professional development in general.

2.3. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have explained professional development and professional learning communities, which are a component thereof. The inclusion of professional learning communities in this study is to illustrate and clarify the nature of professional development among teachers in South Africa. Professional development is a much broader concept. The aim of this study is to explore challenges and issues affecting the implementation of teacher development programmes. The focus will be on the perception of teachers in Siyabuswa Circuit within Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province towards the implementation of Teacher Development programmes. I purposefully selected Professional Learning

Communities as one of the Teacher Development initiatives to capture teachers' perspectives towards professional development as the focus of this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

One of the important steps in conducting research, according to Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018), is to design the research. The research design, according to them, is like a blueprint that would help the research process. There are several approaches to formulate and develop a research design, which I explored in this chapter. Confronted with these many approaches as a researcher, I could have lost track and direction of what I intended doing. Hence the blueprint or roadmap herein.

In this chapter, I will describe and discuss the research process underlying this study. This process will give the rationale and clarity my choice of the research paradigm, research approach and design, as well as the sampling of participants and data collection. I will also include in this chapter, quality assurance and ethical matters. The chapter will serve as a map that represents the structure of a particular territory, without which the traveller may be misinformed and led astray (Hofstee, 2006). This means that the research methodology must strengthen my conclusion about the research problem that I posed at the beginning of the study.

3.2. METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

In this study, I intend to use the exploratory qualitative research methodology. I am drawing from Creswell (2014), who declares that the focus of qualitative studies (methodology) is to explore and understand in depth, the meaning participants or individuals ascribe to a social phenomenon. I believe that the qualitative approach will make it possible for me to gather in-depth understanding of teachers' behaviours, attitudes and reasons that may lead to poor implementation of developmental programmes, primarily because these programmes are meant to improve their performance. Hence, the research design in this study will be exploratory, descriptive and contextual as informed by the aims and objectives of the study.

I will use English as a medium of communication during the collection of data for this study. I will collect data from the participants through a semi-structured interview. I designed and will use a questionnaire (attached as Appendix 3) to guide the interview process. I will also seek permission from teachers to use a voice recorder and to capture the process and

responses of the interviews. Written responses will also be accepted to capture as much information as possible.

In analysing data in this study, I will be guided by thematic content analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Through this form of analysis, the data collected from the interviews will be analysed to identify patterns. These patterns will then be developed and packaged into themes. The themes will then be linked with the threshold of Theory-U (Scharmer, 2009) as an attempt to explain teachers' behaviour and perspectives on continuing development in order to create the appropriate social reality.

Thematic content analysis follows a six-phase process.

The process starts with familiarisation with data. During this phase I will read the interview responses, and where applicable, listen to the voice recordings as well. My own observation notes will supplement this, so that I can make sense of the data and thus pick up patterns thereof.

The second phase will be to generate themes. This entails the development and packaging of data that seem to be making visible patterns. These organised patterns will then be developed into codes.

The third phase will be to start working on the themes to identify those that will better explain the phenomenon. Those that work will then be used to analyse the codes.

The fourth phase entails searching and locating the data on the Theory-U. The purpose will be to support or refute what is proposed by this theory. Where applicable, I will expand and revise these themes as I pick up new developments.

During the fifth phase, the refined themes will be clearly defined and structured accordingly. The essence and relevance of the themes will become visible at this stage so that I can make preliminary pronouncements.

The sixth and last phase will entail reviewing the final themes and writing a report. The process will include decisions on the themes so that only those that closely assist with answering the research questions are retained and further refined.

A final dependable and valid report will then be developed and presented (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.3.   RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Research as a means of constructing and shaping social reality has grown and developed over time. Dash (1993) submits that during the process, many theoretical questions emerged as people developed concepts and interpretation around social reality. It is out of this phase that research paradigms evolved (Dash, 1993). Within the broad research scope, there are many concepts and terminologies used by different authors referring to similar things. For instance, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2006) and probably other authors refer to paradigms as philosophies, while Mertens (1998) uses the concept theoretical framework. Many other authors use this terminology the same way.

A paradigm is a concept that is widely used by different researchers in different contexts to refer to the same meaning. Guba and Lincoln (1994) provide the basic meaning of the word when he traced it to its Greek origin: that it is "paradeknyai" which means showing things side by side. The elements of paradeknyai are patterns or examples of something or of a thought, as well as ideas of a mental picture. It is, however, quite necessary to consider the contextual meaning of this concept and how researchers use it.

Hofstee (2006) presents a paradigm as a way of looking at something. This way of looking at something then constitutes a system of beliefs, ideas, values and habits, which become a way of thinking about the real world. For instance, if you believe that the world is flat, it will influence your views and ideas when looking at issues in the world. This will be different from somebody who believes the world is round. I will illustrate the different types of paradigms after considering other perspectives on this concept.

In another context, Mertens (2005) argues that a paradigm is a theoretical framework. This framework influences the way we study information and interpret information. This then provides me with the rationale and motivation of which methodology, literature and research design will best suit my research.

Another perspective provided by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) indicates that a paradigm consists of assumptions, concepts and propositions that provide an orientation to our thinking and research. Closely related to this is the version given by Cohen and Mannion (1998) to the effect that paradigms motivate the undertaking of a study from a philosophical point of view. This view goes further to indicate that a paradigm grounds or validates our

belief about the nature of knowledge, methodology and criteria. I, therefore, from the above illustration view a paradigm as a foundation of my research.

It is through a carefully selected paradigm that I was able to make sense of teachers' professional development implementation issues and view the challenges thereof in a particular way. The other benefits of a research paradigm include the fact that it helps shape my perspective and understanding of how things are connected. It also influences how I see teacher professional development in a broader and more relevant sense (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The choice of a paradigm for my study therefore becomes critical, as it helped me in determining the nature and direction of my research.

Hofstee (2006) identifies four research paradigms, namely, the Functionalist, Interpretive, Radical Humanist and Radical Structuralist. On the other hand, McKenzie and Knipe (2006) list the paradigms as Positivism, Interpretivism, Transformative and Pragmatic. Dash (1993) adds Anti-Positivist to the fold, and Sunders, Thornhill, Saunders and Lewis (2006) brings in Objectivism, Subjectivism and Realism as other paradigms. It is therefore important for me as a researcher to identify a paradigm that best suits my study so that I can be well grounded and not confuse the reader.

A brief definition of these paradigms will assist in identifying and justifying my choice of a suitable paradigm for my study. I may use only four of the above-mentioned paradigms that seem common to all to demonstrate my point, namely, positivism, Interpretivism, radical Humanist and radical structuralism.

According to Dash (1993), the positivist paradigm is a scientific way of generating knowledge. This paradigm relies on observation and reason as a means of understanding human behaviour. Hence, experiments are a common feature of this paradigm. In other words, what cannot be tested and proven according to a set of rules and standards may not be valid. The paradigm is therefore in synchrony with the objective and quantitative research design.

The second paradigm is Interpretivism. Mertens (2005) refers to this paradigm as constructivism. The paradigm indicates that knowledge and reality are socially constructed. Creswell (2003) has the same view and further clarifies that the creation of reality relies on participants' views as well as their background and experience. This also influences the

research design. The paradigm presupposes a subjective and qualitative method of data collection.

The Radical Humanist paradigm is concerned with changing the status quo (Burrel & Morgan,1979). The paradigm, as they put it, seeks to elevate humans above the existing social patterns so that they can realise their full potential. This will spiritually liberate the humans and release them from being bound by any of the human created frameworks or rules. This paradigm embraces subjectivism as well and works well within the qualitative milieu.

The fourth paradigm illustrated here is the Radical Structuralist paradigm. Here the concern and approach are power relations and patterns of conflicts (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The intention of research in terms of this paradigm is fundamental change. This fundamental change is informed by an analysis of power relations and conflict within a particular organisation or relating to a particular phenomenon. This paradigm therefore relates well with the objective perspective, according to Burrell and Morgan (1979), and probably relies on the quantitative data collection techniques.

All these paradigms may have a role in this study. However, the nature and scope of my study requires me to select the interpretivist paradigm with the related design and perspectives. In deciding upon this paradigm, I considered the purpose of this study, which falls within the social sciences. The interpretivist paradigm seems to be sufficiently representative of the wider literature that support the purpose of this study, which is to evaluate the implementation of teacher development programmes through teachers' perspectives. I also considered the fact that the scope of this study directly involved and affected my intended audience or participants as practitioners. Therefore, the interpretivist paradigm would give them platform to share and express their perspectives sufficiently.

3.4.   RESEARCH APPROACHES

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) submit that it is important to have knowledge of the different research approaches or traditions. This will enable the researcher to structure the study in terms of design so that it becomes easy to address possible constraints such as limited access to data or lack of prior knowledge of the subject.

In a metaphor of onion rings, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2006) place data collection and data analysis at the centre of the research process. This seems to imply that all other processes revolve around or are influenced by the way the research data and research analysis are going to be conducted. Working from the outside ring to the inside one to the core of the onion the process encompasses the following:

The first ring represents the research paradigm e.g., positivist, interpretivist, radical structuralist, or radical humanist et cetera. The second ring represents the approach, which is the choice between inductive and deductive approaches or sometimes a combination thereof. Then the third ring is constituted by a selection of strategies, for example, an experiment, case study, ethnography et cetera. This is followed by the choice of methods where the researcher decides whether to use mono-, mixed or multi methods. Finally, the centre of this research process is the technique and procedures of data collection and data analysis (Saunders, Lewis &Thornhill, 2006).
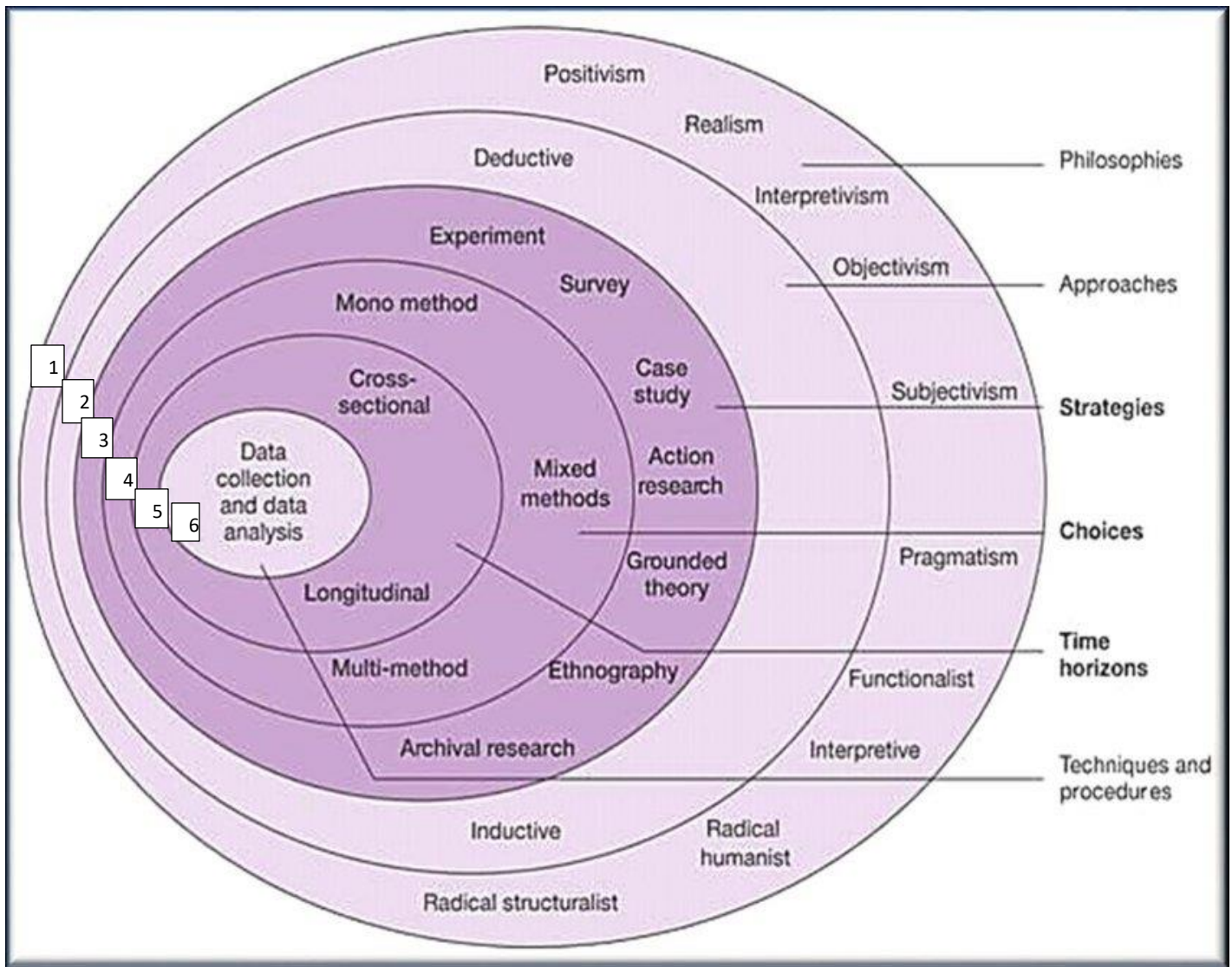
Figure 3. Research Onion.

No	Item	Components
1	Philosophies	Positivism, Realism, Interpretivism, Objectivism, Subjectivism, Pragmatism, Interpretive Radical Humanist, Radical Structuralist
2	Approaches	Deductive, Inductive
3	Strategies	Experiment, Survey, Case Study, Action Research, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Archival Research
4	Choices	Mono Method, Mixed Methods, Multi Methods
5	Time Horizons	Cross Sectional, Longitudinal
6	Techniques & Procedures	Data Collection and Data Analysis

Source: Mark Saunders, Phillip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill (2006)

In this study I chose the qualitative approach. This choice was done after exploring the various strategies, techniques and procedures that are connected to the study as represented in the onion ring illustration above. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2006), the qualitative approach occurs when the researcher already has a theory or hypothesis. Then the researcher designs a strategy to test that theory or hypothesis. This approach works well with the positivist paradigm. Collins and Hussey (2003) support this by stating that the positivist paradigm, which is scientific in nature, tests theory through observation and measurement. In other words, data collection and data analysis should confirm and support an existing theory or hypothesis.

There are notable advantages associated with the qualitative approach as identified by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2006). One advantage of the qualitative approach is that it promotes an understanding of the way in which humans interpret their social world. This is so because there are no existing frameworks and theories that will channel and restrict the participants. Secondly, this approach also permits and promotes alternative explanations. This is important because participants are human beings with their own thinking, perceptions and experiences.

 The choice of an approach, according to Hakim (2000), is centred on the needs, interests and preferences of the researcher. In this study, I opted to employ the inductive approach, which will go along with my preferred Interpretivist paradigm, and culminate into qualitative data collection and data analysis.

I do realise that the qualitative approach may protract my study, I, however, consider the fact that this approach will go a long way in helping me to harvest rich ideas from participants. As Creswell (1994) argues, great ideas emerge gradually over time. I am also conscious of the risks involved with this approach. For instance, this freedom of expression by participants may lead to irrelevant and not so useful data being submitted as responses. This will not only delay the study but will also contaminate the data and influence its analysis.

3.5.   RESEARCH DESIGN

The intention with the research design, according to Sileyew (2019), is to provide an appropriate framework for a study. A very significant decision in the research design

process is the choice made regarding the research approach, since it determines how I will obtain the relevant information for the study. However, the research design process involves many interrelated decisions.

Creswell (2003) views research design as a means to address the planning of an enquiry or study, and designing a strategy to investigate, explore, describe or even explain something. This process includes the review of literature and empirical investigation. During the literature survey, the researcher analyses documents containing information relating to the stated problem. In this study, I analysed documents relating to the implementation of professional development of teachers as well as teachers' participation in professional learning communities. I then engaged the sampled teacher population as part of the empirical research. To achieve this, I used mainly the qualitative method and related processes.

According to Creswell (2003), the focus of qualitative studies (methodology) is to explore and understand the meaning participants or individuals ascribe to a social phenomenon. In this study, I therefore adopted the exploratory qualitative research methodology. The research design suited to this methodology is the case study. This is so because my intention was to do an in-depth study of factors affecting the continuing professional development of teachers so that concomitant obstacles thereto can be identified and removed.

The case study limits the focus to a smaller territory, which in turn increases professional intimacy and interaction with the subject. I was then able to derive more information that is valuable through this approach. As Dash (1993) puts it, the case study strategy deals with the world of everyday. Here the interest lies in the interpretation of people to make sense of a particular social setting.

Cruz (1998) concurs and elaborates further by implying that this study fits in with the epistemological approach. Employing this approach will illuminate the difference between knowledge and opinion or the difference between good reasoning and poor reasoning. This will then curb generalisation and control biased assumptions in the process of this study.

I believe that the qualitative approach will make it possible for me to gather in-depth understanding of teachers' behaviour, attitudes and reasons that may lead to poor

implementation of developmental programmes meant to improve their performance. Hence, the research design in this study will be exploratory, descriptive and contextual as informed by the aims and objectives of the study.

3.6. SAMPLING

Data collection in this study was done among teachers and school managers. This constituted the population of the study. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002) noted that the population must have specific characteristics that separate them from others. They argue that a population is the totality of persons, events, organisation units and case records in which the research problem is concerned. For instance, in this study, the population is all the teachers and school managers within Siyabuswa Circuit in Mpumalanga Province. However, I sampled those who would participate because not every teacher or school manager could participate in the study.

According to Shipman (1997), a sample is a selection of a few representatives of a population. The purpose is to get an idea or information that the larger population would provide if opportunity allowed. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002) concur and add that these representatives can also be viewed as a sub-set of measurements drawn from the broader population, which is of interest to the researcher. In purposive sampling, according to Patton (1990), the researcher must identify participants who are information-rich and who promise to be knowledgeable about the phenomenon of the study.

I conducted this research in Siyabuswa Circuit, which is one of the biggest and more diverse circuits in Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province. There are subject advisors and officials of the Teacher Education and Development unit who service the circuit. These officials are stationed at a teacher development centre within the circuit. There is also the Circuit Manager who also plays a role in teacher development, over and above the leadership and administrative responsibilities of the office.

The target population of participants in this study consisted of teachers from Siyabuswa Circuit in Mpumalanga Province. The circuit consists of 38 schools catering all phases and grades. The purposive sampling strategy was used to select schools representing four schooling phases that is Foundation Phase (Grade 1-3), Intermediate Phase (Grade 4-6), Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) and Further Education and Training Phase (Grade 10-12). Such

schools will be selected from the circuit cluster that will represent the total geographical area of the circuit. Three teachers from each of the four schooling phases will then be selected for individual interviews. I will select these teachers through purposive sampling, using a random selection technique. For instance, the selected teachers will be those who attended the PLCs advocacy campaign earlier than others did. Twelve teachers will participate in this study.

3.7.   DATA COLLECTION

Hofstee (2006) declares that academics and academic writers prefer the intellect to determine and support their opinions - as against a situation where feelings determine and support opinions. This is so because with intellect, evidence persuades and shapes the opinion. This evidence usually takes the form of data. The data will be analysed, and the analysis thereof will be used to substantiate a point. Correct analysis allows the researcher to make a strong case of the study.

According to Terreblanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006), many research projects are not restricted to one data collection technique, although there will always be one or two main techniques that form the basis of the project. In this study, I relied mainly on the Interviews and the Extended Literature Review (Hofstee, 2006).

Through the interviews, I tried to elicit information from a limited number of individuals who I presumed to have the information I sought. I found this technique an excellent way of getting people's opinions, desires and attitudes towards teacher development programmes, especially professional learning communities. It is also a useful way to elicit facts-driven information freely from participants (Hofstee, 2006).

The Extended Literature Review was the other technique that I found relevant and useful in this study. As Hofstee (2006) said, it provided an overview of what is already known generally about teacher development and professional learning communities. Although this technique does not produce anything substantially new, it goes a long way in producing a new perspective on what was done already in this field of study. This technique also opens a platform to explore various specialties, schools of thought and debates so that we can determine whether the field under study is over- or under-studied as well as highlight areas that still needed attention.

I therefore found it imperative to integrate these two techniques because of the nature of my study. Although the area of teacher development is widely researched, the actual perspectives of teachers may not be equally explored. I hope that revisiting the area of getting teachers' perspectives would help generate new ideas and illuminate the dark areas around the concept.

I used English as a medium of communication during the collection of data of this study. I collected data from the twelve teachers through a semi-structured interview. I also designed a questionnaire (attached as Appendix 3) to guide the interview process, though not slavishly restricted to the questions and issues there. Important as well is that I sought permission from the teachers to use a voice recorder as well to capture the process and their responses. However, there would be those who would object or be uncomfortable with recordings. This I welcomed as another observation that added value to the study. Written responses were also accepted so that as much as possible could be captured. This is so because, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the primary data for qualitative interview, as is the case in this study, are verbatim accounts of what went on in the actual interview session.

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

According to Hofstee (2006), the important element of data collection lies in analysis, and that the data collected would not have meaning in and by itself until it is analysed. The analysed data becomes useful when substantiating a point; in other words, it becomes strong evidence for the case. Data collection is, therefore, glued to data analysis as part of the study. In fact, Terreblanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) state that the two phases overlap into each other in such a way that there is no boundary. There is no point at which data collection stops and data analysis begins. Obviously, data collection would come first and gradually fade out as data analysis gradually fades in.

In this qualitative study, the interpretive analysis is key. Terreblanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) noted that the purpose of interpretivist analysis is to provide "a thick description" of the phenomenon. This they argue would then put real life events and the study (phenomenon) into some perspective – more than just a copy of the original concepts and phenomenon. It also puts the researcher closer to the data collected to promote empathetic

understanding. At the same time, the researcher is placed far enough to look at and see the issues in a new perspective.

The analysis of data in this study was therefore interpretivist and guided by thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this form of analysis, the data collected from the interviews will be analysed to identify patterns. These patterns will then be developed and packaged into themes. Such themes will then be located within Theory-U (Scharmer, 2009) as an attempt to explain teachers' behaviour and perspectives on continuing development. This will create and guide a pathway of dealing with new teacher development initiatives and the emerging social reality.

The process of thematic content analysis follows a six-phase process. The process starts with familiarisation with data. During this phase, I will read the interview responses, and where applicable, listen to the voice recordings as well. My own observation notes will supplement this, so that I can make sense of the data and thus pick up patterns thereof.

The second phase will be to generate themes. This entails the development and packaging of data that seem to be similar in intention and scope.

The third phase will be to start working on the themes to identify those that will better explain the phenomenon. I would then use those that work to analyse the codes.

The fourth phase entails searching and locating the data on the Theory-U. The purpose will be to support or refute proposals from the theory. Where applicable, I would expand and revise these new themes as I pick up new developments.

During the fifth phase, the refined themes will be clearly defined and structured accordingly. The essence and relevance of the themes will become visible at this stage so that I could make preliminary pronouncements.

The sixth and last phase will entail reviewing the final themes and writing of the report. The process will include decisions on the themes so that only those that closely assist with answering the research questions are retained and further refined.

A final report which is dependable and valid will then be developed and presented (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

3.9.   QUALITY ASSURANCE MATTERS

It is important to protect the validity of this study by recognising and representing the data and participants' perspectives very well. The threat to this process would be when I pose my framework or meaning instead of that of participants. Therefore, in this study, I submitted and followed the four criteria identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as quality assurance criteria:

3.9.1. Credibility

The judgement of the credibility of this study was drawn from participants' point of view. Trochim (2006) asserts the view that it is correct and proper for participants to judge the credibility of the results of a study. To ensure the quality of the data collected, multiple data collection techniques were employed. Participants will be allowed ample time and space to express themselves on the issues.

3.9.2. Dependability

This study sought to ensure that there is consistency in terms of the context and processes of engaging participants. I would take care to eliminate contextual factors that may unduly influence the results of this study. Where unexpected changes and circumstances occur during the study, I would record and mediate upon such changes and developments. To represent participants' perspectives further, I would also do "member check". According to Merriam (1998), this is a process of taking data and tentative interpretations back to the participants for verification and checking if they are plausible. I would contact the participants and confirm, and if need, be correct some interpretations to their thoughts and views.

3.9.3. Confirmability

Statistics Solutions directs that there must be confirmation and verification that it was the respondents and not the researcher who influenced and shaped the results of the study. That is what determines the confirmability of the study. Hence, throughout the process of this study, I would verify and record all engagements and processes.

One big threat to the quality and confirmability of qualitative conclusion is the selection of data that suits me as the researcher and my existing theory or preference about the

phenomenon. This is biasness. To eliminate it, a process of triangulation is applicable. Conrad and Serling (2006) define triangulation as a process of obtaining information from a wide and diverse range of people and settings using several resources, cross checking and verifying sources of information widely. In this study, I triangulated by using both the Extended Literature Review as well as Survey-Based Research. This included interviews and questionnaires to eliminate bias.

3.9.4. Transferability

Trochim (2006) maintains that the results of a good study must be applicable in other similar contexts. Hence, the context of this study will be well-defined and located so that the findings thereof can represent and apply to other schools in other education circuits, especially in Mpumalanga Province. I noted that teacher development in general and professional learning communities are global concepts. I would therefore strive to align this study with worldwide concepts and trends so that my findings are also widely applicable.

3.10. ETHICAL MATTERS

According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002), it is important for a researcher who employs human beings as subjects of research to take extreme care to avoid any form of harm to them. The researcher needs to respect their rights, needs, values and desires. In this study, I made effort to comply with this ideal as guided by the ethics policy of the University of Limpopo and the research community in general.

3.10.1.   Permission to conduct study

There are many stakeholders in the education system. Sometimes there is contestation over processes, which may lead to conflict. I therefore obtained permission to do this study in schools within Siyabuswa Circuit from both Nkangala District office as well as the Circuit Office itself. The district is the next line of authority between the circuit and the provincial office (Annexure 1), while the circuit is the next authority responsible for schools. I also sought clearance from the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee before I conducted the study and interviewed teachers. An ethical clearance certificate was duly granted.

3.10.2. Informed consent

It will also be proper to get the acceptance of the identified teachers to participate in the study as respondents. I therefore approached the teachers as participants, in person and discussed the aims and processes of this study. I made them aware that their role in this study is voluntary. They therefore had the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the processes. I lastly appraised them with the processes, including the questionnaire (annexure 3) so that they could make informed decisions to participate or not.

3.10.3. Anonymity

I observed the right of the participants to remain anonymous. Hence, I assured them that I would not disclose or share their identity, particularly on what they submitted even if it is contestable and contrary to my beliefs or theories. This clause will be included in the letter of request for their participation in this study. They will each get an individual number as their code/ pseudo name for the purpose of identifying them and packaging their inputs accordingly. This would effectively conceal their identity and those of the institution where they are attached.

3.10.4. Confidentiality and Privacy

The confidentiality clause is inserted in all the letters of request to do the study, including the written request to participants. I also showed the participants my ethical clearance certificate from the Ethics Committee. I explained to them what it entails regarding my dealings with them. They therefore were aware that they have a recourse in case I violated their confidentiality and right of privacy through this study. I therefore, committed myself to take every step and precaution to respect and make sure that I treat responses from participants with confidentiality and for the sole purpose of this study.

3.11. CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on research paradigms, approaches, design, data collection and analysis as well as ethical matters. I attempted to explore, analyse and interpret these research processes to assist with the evaluation of the implementation of teacher development programmes in general and professional learning communities. What emerged from this engagement is the intertwined nature of the research processes. For

instance, no single paradigm or data collection technique can work independently. The researcher may not just choose one paradigm or method and leave out others. There is always room and a role for one or more other techniques or methods to supplement the main one. Hence, although the qualitative method is the preferred method, quantitative elements also feature in this study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data, which I collected through interviews and document analysis. I interviewed 12 respondents from four schools. These were four school management teams (SMTs) members and eight post level one teachers. I also engaged three teacher development practitioners who service and support these teachers and schools in terms of teacher development programmes.

The aim of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions in Siyabuswa Circuit within Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province on the implementation of teacher development programmes. The implementation of Professional Learning Communities as one of the teacher development programmes was the reference of this study.

The participants' perceptions of this issue was reflected against teacher development as conceptualised in the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2006) and the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DBE & DHET, 2011). These two documents seek to structure and guide teacher development though it is not strictly prescriptive.

The aim of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa is to equip teachers so that they can undertake their essential and demanding tasks and enable them to continually enhance their professional competence and performance (DoE, 2006). The other compelling consideration with this policy is the notion that teacher education and development works best when teachers themselves are integrally involved in their own development in a coordinated system (DoE, 2006). Hence, I viewed the teachers' perspectives based on these elements of the policy.

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development is a coordinated national plan developed at the national teacher development summit of 2009 (DBE & DHET, 2011). The aim of the plan is to improve the quality of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of teachers and teaching. According to this plan, teachers are firmly at the centre of their own development. In fact, the theme of the teacher summit of 2009 was that teachers are at driver's seat of their own development. In this way, the plan delinked development from reward and remuneration. I therefore

expected the respondents to demonstrate their role and contribution in their own development.

I then triangulated their perspectives with the thresholds of Theory U Scharmer (2009), namely:

- Downloading: where the respondents would view the world through their own habits of thoughts.

- Seeing: At this point, respondents would suspend their judgement. This will enable them to see the world of reality with fresh eyes. They are said to be influenced by the voice of judgement (VOJ).

- Sensing: this is where respondents would demonstrate connection with the new field or concept. The boundary between the observer and the observed collapses. The focus is re-directed. The influence here is the voice of cynicism (VOC).

- Presencing: this is the point at which the respondent would connect to the deepest source and thus begin to learn and see the future and benefits of development. It is the beginning of "letting go of the past and letting come" of the new. The voice of fear (VOF) becomes the influence at this point.

- Crystallising: respondents would take a position and begin to develop their own vision and intention. They begin to make sense of their world. They enact and internalise the essence of development.

- Prototyping: respondents enter a phase of exploring the future. They apply the new knowledge to challenge the world. In their own setting, respondents use the new knowledge to create and develop new strategies and ways of doing things. It is at this stage where they embody and internalise the new practices.

- Performing: this is the stage where the new knowledge acquired is demonstrated. Respondents implement the new knowledge through innovation and the creation of new infrastructure and strategies.

The first two thresholds, namely, seeing and sensing, are on the downward side of the U process. The other two thresholds, namely, crystallising and prototyping are on the upward side of the U process. This means that the process of learning and development requires one to download and drop some habits, elements and practices, and embrace new approaches and habits to learn and develop. To access the upward thresholds, participants

need to approach the process with an open mind, open heart and open will. This will begin to address the questions, who is myself, and what is my work? See diagram below.
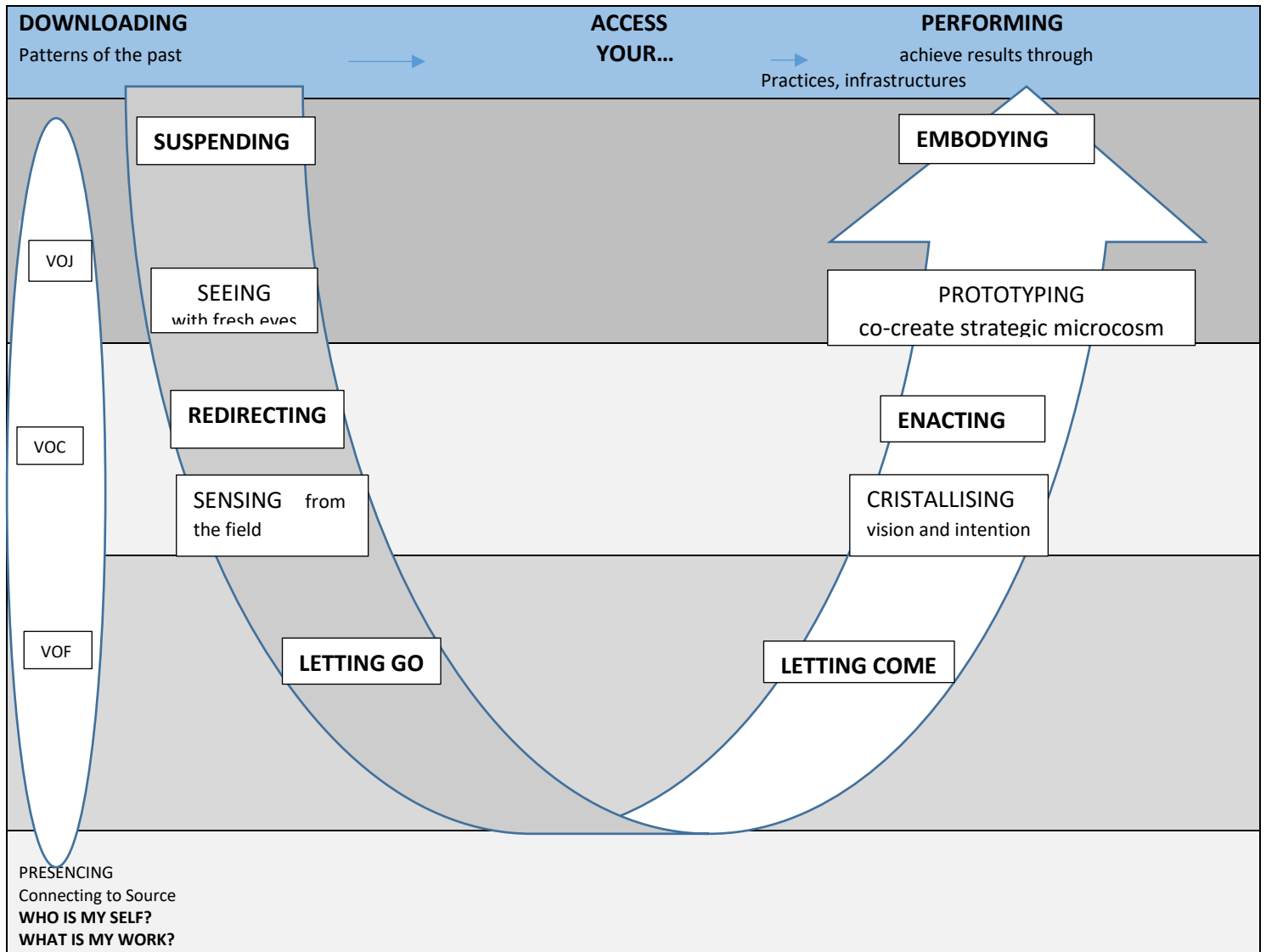

Key: VOJ-Voice of Judgement;   VOC-Voice of Cynicism;   VOF- Voice of Fear

Figure 4. Fighting the Three Enemies: VOJ, VOC, VOF

4.2. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

The questionnaire was administered in four schools covering the four phases, namely, Foundation Phase (F/P), Intermediate Phase(I/P), Senior Phase(S/P) and FET Phase. Twelve respondents participated in the study as follows:

School Phases	Principal	HoD	PL1	Female	Male
Foundation Phase	0	1	2	2	1
Intermediate Phase	1	1	1	3	0
Senior Phase	1	2	0	2	1
Further Education & Training	1	1	1	1	2
Totals	**3**	**5**	**4**	**8**	**4**
Years in service	0-10	11-20	21-30	31+	Total
Number of Respondents	3	2	7	0	12

Table 2.: Participants distribution

4.3. RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

a) Theme 1: The teacher development programmes concept.

The teacher development programme contemplated herein is in terms of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa mentioned above. The other compelling consideration with this policy is the notion that teacher education and development works best when teachers themselves are integrally involved in their own development in a coordinated system. (DoE, 2006). I therefore expected that teachers would shape and inform the programmes that are meant to assist and support them. They could do this through needs analysis processes such as the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS)

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DBE and DHET, 2011) also gives more clarity on what teacher development programmes are. According to this plan, teachers are firmly at the centre of their own development. They must give direction on what programmes are relevant to them, instead of just receiving predetermined packages, some of which may not address their actual needs.

In their responses, none of the participants specifically mentioned these two important policies. They, however, mentioned concepts and phrases contained in the policies and related guiding imperatives. This may give the impression that they do not see teacher development as a structured entity with a strategic intention to improve the quality of education. The participants were sometimes general, and others struggled to provide clear responses with confidence. At times, they would mention popular concepts without clarifying or showing in-depth understanding. I, herein below, attempted to capture the responses verbatim from participants as far as possible.

To the question: "What is your understanding of teacher development programmes?" I recorded the following responses:

S-(1): Teacher Development is aimed at developing the skills of educators. Continuing Professional Teacher Development stands for development. Development must be curriculum focused for example, through PLC (Professional Learning Communities), teachers collaborate for development in challenging areas. This helps them to be on the same level of understanding.

S-(2): Teacher development programmes are a good thing because they can keep up with curriculum development. This will help us better teaching. We can also move with the changing world. We can develop and gain more knowledge (know everything). It is not only about further studies. It means workshops, subject, date, and related sessions. Development is very good as we do further studies through contact sessions, internships and workshops. My own development is studying for an honors degree.

S-(3): Teacher Development programmes are focusing on ways to develop teachers in terms of the way they impart knowledge to the community, for example, furthering the studies, workshops where teachers come together. At school level there are staff meetings through which teachers gain knowledge and departmental workshops.

B-(1): Teacher development programmes means classroom visits and support by HoD and peer group. It starts with self-evaluation where a teacher identifies weak points. Outside the school, it means workshops with other colleagues like IsiNdebele and IQMS.

B-(2): Teacher Development assures better teachers. It is done through improving qualifications and registering with institutions, as well as motivation by other departmental

officials. It also means gaining knowledge from other structures such as Skills Development Unit. I have been involved in teacher development when I studied with Unisa and Potchefstroom University. I am also involved in community motivation and other refresher courses.

B-(3): Teacher Development means development of teachers through further study, upgrading qualifications and attending workshops.

IKA-(1): Teacher development programmes are designed by DBE and SACE to ensure teachers are always relevant to the latest demands on teaching and learning. To make teachers to be always standardised and to be able to respond correctly to these changing worlds. As teachers, we must be equal to the task, or you might find your qualifications outdated. For you to say I am well developed it is when you can make use of any recent tools and you are fully equipped and familiar with the policies, because policies in education are also changing. Sometimes we change policies completely sometimes we amend, but key is that you are relevant; you know what the dictates to you as a teacher are. Be up to date with the latest requirements of teaching fraternity, or else we might face challenges where teachers are teaching things that are outdated and do not move with the speed of the outside world. The learners must be equal to the demands of life outside schooling.

IKA-(2): Teacher development programmes are offered to teachers for development in terms of curriculum. It must be beneficial to learners so that they teach learners appropriately with better knowledge. It allows teacher to attend workshops and on curriculum, and to develop themselves by taking other courses off duty. For instance, the department offer different school programmes that teachers might attend during holidays. On that, I have attended English that was offered by the University of Potchefstroom. They were teaching us about how to offer the language during teaching. Different methods that we might use during teaching and how to encourage these learners about the language.

IKA-(3): Teacher development programmes are used to empower teachers in the subjects in which they are teaching and the curriculum – just to update them. And, also, they give teachers more information in case they need to be updated in terms of the ATP of different subjects. There are Subject Advisors who facilitated these programmes. At school we have got Heads of Departments – so usually they do conduct school-based workshops whereby

they also update the teachers in that particular department about the ATPS, about filing, about lesson plans – in fact all activities The Subject Advisors usually issue a programme before to invite teachers of different subjects. The Subject Advisors are also available and can be called to help. Teachers also assist each other (within the school and with neighboring schools).

RAM – (01): These programmes are developed to assist teachers to be able to be more effective in their career of teaching. The examples are the workshops whereby we are developed in certain perspectives or aspects.

RAM – (2): It is a programme whereby educators are assisted in terms of where they come across challenges in the curriculum. Example, workshops – workshopping teachers, let us say regarding computers. Most of the teachers are not computer literate. They normally call us at the teacher's centre to develop us about computer. At the teachers' centre, there are normally CIs. The CIs issue out information so that we can go and attend workshops at the teachers' centre.

RAM – (3): It is used to help the teachers about the subjects they are teaching. It quips them with the relevant information to help learners at school. It also assists us how to assess these learners and how to follow the policy as it is – so it helps a lot.

b) Theme 2: Relevance and importance of teacher development programmes

The other compelling consideration according to the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, as mentioned above, is the notion that teacher education and development works best when teachers are integrally involved in their own development in a coordinated system (DoE, 2006).

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development emphasises that teachers are firmly at the centre of their own development (DBE & DHET, 2011). They are in the driver's seat of their own development. The plan also guides that there are three types of approaches to continuing professional development. These are teacher initiated, school initiated and externally initiated programmes.

Responses from teachers show that they have diverse understanding and practices relating to participation in teacher development programmes. There seems to be no record of the

developmental path or framework they followed. There is no demonstration of a developmental profile over time. Nine of them do not seem to be driving their own development. They seem to rely more on the initiatives of others. They mainly attend workshops, meetings and sessions organised by, for instance, subject advisors as part of their development.

To the statement: "Please share your experience regarding teacher development programmes", I recorded the following responses:

S-(1): On a monthly basis, educators from different schools meet in PLCs. They target and focus on the most difficult area with the aim of empowering mostly the new educators.

S-(2): Yes, I am involved in teacher development. For instance, I attend meetings to plan and share with others as an Economics, Environmental and Agricultural Science teacher. I am assisted by the Subject Advisor and my Head of Department on Subject Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) and curriculum related matters as well as administration work. I also attend external workshops like content workshops, safety workshops and CPTD sessions. These workshops come from outside. I also outsource or get another teacher to help me with my work if need be.

S-(3): Yes. I have attended the above programmes (categories). Now (currently) I am not involved in/ with any institution. I am doing my own initiative or own development through my own funding. I am not so sure about the formal programmes. There are cluster meetings where learning (knowledge) is gained. Learning can be informal, for example, learning from parents, which is very important. This is the beginning of learning and helps when dealing with behavioral challenges from home. Some do not see the value of teacher development and are just relaxed. Some therefore attend workshops for compliance.

B-(1): I think the TD programmes has many disadvantages like time consuming and late coming and late start. Learners are left alone for example, lose an hour. Sometimes educators 10 educators from the same school go to workshop. The positive part of it is that I improved my punctuality and give information to others.

B-(2): I went through teacher development for instance when I attended the workshop bout Leave Measures conducted by the Circuit Manager. I also attended the Code of Ethics (CoE) workshop conducted by the SACE (South African Council of Educators)

ambassador. The attitude at my school for teacher development is helpful as visible changes are there.

B-(3): I think attending workshops improves teachers' approach and strategies to teaching. For instance, it helped me with paragraph writing in Grade 7. I learned to introduce it early in the year.

IKA- (1): Secretary of (teacher union branch): We have seen numerous reports and complains that we (teachers), did not want to develop ourselves; however, can't we have another way of doing the administration part of this teacher development? We forget and are we not moving with the expected speed, and we are afraid that if we do not have the collected points on record we might lose our jobs- anxiety and skepticism. Teachers are reluctant to do it holistically, but they also feel that the issue of scoring is a push factor that you must do so that they do not lose their job. I have learnt a great deal - I have been attending workshops ever since we started- I was part of the NTA as an adjudicator. I am full of energy to motivate others.

IKA-(2): These programmes were so much interesting, and they equipped us as teachers because when we came back from such programmes, we were so knowledgeable that we can share with other colleagues who were not part of the programme. They were not so difficult because we were doing group work and sharing. Even assignments we were doing in groups. We were able to visit other schools to do some of the assignments given during the programme. The programmes were offered far away. So, we were able to work together in doing some of the assignments that were given. We were encouraged to teach those learners in a way that they are assisting each other in group work. It was more familiar or easy to share to the learners that learning together is much easier than learning individually. Other teachers were able to do as well. For some who did not go there. We were able to bring them on board to be able to share this information.

IKA-(3): My experience regarding teacher development programmes is that as a Mathematics teacher we used to have 1 + 4 Mathematics workshops every Monday. At school, the Mathematics teachers need not have a period on Monday so that they can be able to attend that workshop. At the workshop, teachers are empowered to with different topics in Mathematics where they have challenges. These challenges or topics are

identified then the Subject Advisor will arrange those workshops so that the teachers are authorised on that content in the different subjects. It was, however stopped. Maybe they realised that most problems have been eliminated. Maybe there was another reason why these workshops were needed and conducted. At school level, even the performance is slightly better although it is not so good. There are no complaints because teachers know that that on Mondays, they don't have periods and must attend that workshop.

RAM – (1): This teacher development programmes assist us a lot. Maybe if you are experiencing a problem regarding teaching and learning, we have Curriculum Implementers who assist us a lot. They also develop us. After a workshop, coming out of the workshop, you gain a lot of things and get clarity on things that you do not understand.

RAM – (2): Experience: while I was at an institution, before I became the principal, I had a problem here and there in terms of Mathematics. Then, I did not want to miss any programme regarding Mathematics at the College. Then I was assisted a lot because I did not have a basic at secondary. I started doing Mathematics at the College and proceeded with the Wits and TUT. I was very challenged because this needs a background. So since attending the workshop at Mpumalanga University, the workshop became very much useful. I did my Mathematics up to JC (Standard 8), but former Standard 9 and 10 I did not. But when I was doing my diploma at college, that is where I wanted to do Mathematics, even though one lecturer said you won't manage but I said give me a chance. Then I was able to get 70%. Then I also went to Wits university further and I obtained 70 % plus. Then I went to TUT doing honors in Mathematics and Science. That is where I experienced a very serious challenge because the standard was very high. But I managed to complete. While I was at college, my major subjects were Biblical Studies and Afrikaans. So, while studying those subjects were phased out at school. Then I had to extend by a year, taking another new subject. I extend a year to take new subject – start afresh because I realised it was going to be difficult for me to fit into the system. Then I started taking Mathematics and Biology. I went further doing commerce. I have also done commerce at TUT- while I was already a teacher. 2010 I completed my ACE in Commerce at TUT. 2012 I completed my honors in Mathematics and Science. I was working in Johannesburg then I quit, and I went back to school. I was almost thirty when I went back to school to Grade 12. Then from

Grade 12, I went to do policing. When I was a student police, I quit then I went to Ndebele College.

RAM – (3): The good thing about it is that we get more information about what we do here at school. They equip us a lot, but the challenge is that sometimes they are set in such a way that you go to the workshop and lose some of the periods – in that way it is difficult to cover the curriculum. They (workshops) are conducted at 12h00 sometimes 13h00. The CI sometime allow us, if we have a problem, you call them. Others come, others you call and wait. Sometimes there is a subject with no CI. The educators do not go to the workshops. They do not know how to handle the subject. As a HoD, you need to help them. We do have a programme. We usually have a phase meeting. We talk to teachers then show them how to do this and that. Those who have challenges, you iron them out. We do get support like this one called by SACE although it is called sometimes, they do call us and remind us about the policies – to say how to behave as an educator. The Circuit Manager usually come to school and assist us a lot. He checks our work and then helps us where there is a problem; and provide guidance. Another NGO from KZN once came here and talked to us about drugs, explained to us how these drugs affect the learners and us. In addition, how to help those who are addicted.

c) Theme 3: Scope and content of teacher development programmes

The scope and content of many teacher development programmes seem to be predetermined and in packages. In many instances, this content does not address teachers' developmental needs. Hence, they do not relate with such programmes or apply them to improve their practice. They do not embrace these programmes as their own means of development. Some even forget the programmes after dully attending workshops. Attendance, therefore, becomes a matter of compliance. In such workshops, the presentation style as illustrated by Hunzicker (2010) is used. This is where the teacher sits still and listens to the experts. Such programmes are just associated with the organiser or facilitator of that programme. The position and role of teachers in such programmes is not visible.

In this regard, the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) as one of the teacher development programmes was put into perspective. Learning communities are best defined

as "ongoing groups…who meet regularly for the purpose of increasing their own learning and that of their students" (Lieberman & Miller, 2008). These communities play an important role to encourage and support professionals to examine their practice, try new ideas and reflect together on what works and why. It also gives them the opportunity to collectively construct and share new knowledge (DBE & DHET, 2011).

This intention of the Department with PLCs is to provide yet another platform for teachers and related professionals to engage regularly with each other and other specialists so that they can improve their own subject knowledge, teaching and assessment skills.

 In the South African context, these groups of classroom teachers, school managers and subject advisors participate collectively to determine their own learning and development. They are platforms for teachers to set up activities that will drive their development as contained in the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DBE & DHET, 2011).

When asked to share their views on Professional Learning Communities, participants responded as follows:

S-(1): For instance, as an Accounting teacher, I experience challenges with some topic. For example, Creditor's Reconciliation. I then get help from educators with experience. Also, when I was given the mandate to prepare from a question paper and come and conduct a lesson, I engaged other educators with my own preparations. My experience is that PLCs are developmental. Even if I know the topic, I can learn new tactics on how to approach the topic. There is always continued contact or engagement among teachers and many teachers respond positively. We have also established a WhatsApp group to continue to contact each other. We have PLC-Cluster in the circuit, of 8 schools (8 educators –all Accounting teachers across the Grades).

S-(2): Professional Learning Communities – What is that? (Interviewers explain). I have never done that before. I however link with other teachers through technology, like Facebook and YouTube where I take my challenges and get responses. I am teaching Mathematics Literature, which is not my area of specialisation. So, I link with others in the group. I also joined the e-learning programme (Vodacom) and download lessons even from YouTube. I am not sure.

S-(3): Yes. In Professional Learning Communities, teachers are coming together, helping one another to make learning easier; as in the earlier mentioned workshops. They promote unity, sharing and team teaching. The school can also outsource teachers to clarify some topics. We are participating in PLCs although unaware some of us. There is value in PLCs, but they need monitoring and evaluation as well as follow up on training. The same with CPTD- there is no monitoring and follow up. There must be rehearsals as some of the things are forgotten.

B-(1): I never attended the Professional Learning Communities programme. I never heard about it. (After explanation by the interviewer)- We do it even if it is not called PLC. It helps a lot with knowledge, experience and advice.

B-(2): I did attend a PLC workshop, which is about helping each other across the schools. If only this can be done regularly (for example, monthly). Unfortunately, there are no follow-ups and monitoring after the workshops. The implementation therefore is difficult.

B-(3): PLC-Never heard of that. Working together is however encouraged in workshops for example, on map work.

IKA- (1): Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is the best, a good programme. So far so good. Going forward if schools can take advantage of that programme, lot of ills in schools will be solved. For instance, typically in our area we should have challenges such as theft. Our resources are stolen from time to time. It then prompts that as a cluster we decide what do we do – those who do not have challenges- help us. That is already one lap of Professional Learning Communities. In schools, there is a problem of safety now. We have seen it on national TV and over the radio. A stranger can just walk in and go to a teacher, take out a gun and request you to give them the car keys. We do not have hired security personnel. The person who is opening the gate is a General Assistant. They must leave their work to come and attend to you.

IKA-(2): PLC – it is a programme also offered to educators in order to equip them within their profession so that they can be in line with what is transpiring especially in curriculum and learning areas. It is a programme that is offered by the experts so that they put these educators aware of what is needed especially in curriculum and learning areas in schools.

The experts would share the information to us as educators so that we impart this knowledge to other educators - so that this curriculum becomes simpler.

IKA-(3): Professional Learning Communities – this one is almost related to that one of 1 + 4. It was presented to us and there were similarities because in different subjects, you identify a topic that is giving you some difficulties and from there you check with the neighboring schools – people who are sharing or teaching the same subject, so that you assist one another. Then this one I do not think it is implemented because we did discuss about it, but when we check we find that it is almost related to that one. That one the person who was mainly giving the information was the Subject Advisor - so in this one you share with the colleagues in the neighboring school. The cluster one come from the top the top, this one it is initiated by the teacher. The PLC I am not going to say much about this – but it does assist. Not aware. We used to implement this, but we were. It was more of a cluster where we get some topics and get some other colleague to assist in those topics.

RAM – (1): I do not have a clear idea about this one (PLC). I do not remember attending a workshop on PLC. Maybe if you can give me an example. (Example was given). Oh yes, I do understand. Maybe it was for me a big word but when you explain it, I do understand. I have attended such workshops. They tell us if you have a problem, you should work as a team – it is teamwork. You can even invite the neighboring schools and consult with them so that you can share ideas for the development of our learners. I usually consult the HOD from my neighboring school if I experience a challenge in certain things, to get clarity. It is highly beneficially. I gain a lot of information and clarity in some of the things I do not understand. Other teachers take it very well. They do understand because they even say to me when they are experiencing a problem. "How can we go about consulting teachers from other schools and the Curriculum Implementers? It is working.

RAM – (2): PLC. I am familiar with that. But I only attended, I think once or twice. At the teachers' centre, they called us, and we were workshopped, but I did not grab it. The facilitator is a very good presenter, but I think it is with me- my understanding. I did not understand it very well. I though PLC is a matter of involving other stakeholders (formal network). Then I realised here I am not ion the correct path- the way I understand it - (the concept was explained). I am a good listener. I heard you. I also noticed that if you are a

manager, you must manage with policies. Then I enrolled with Law (LLB) hoping that I would get assistance. I found something related to the school law – Law of School.

RAM – (3): PLC. I attended a workshop about it. I can't remember well but it is about how to develop each other, and how to establish those PLCs in our schools.it was very informative because there are things that we take for granted but at the end of the day we realise that if we can follow this PLC correctly, we can go somewhere involvement- ah! Not yet. We did establish PLC – the problem is we attended these workshops once or twice. There was no one to help us. I think it is a good thing, but it must be nurtured because when the department called that workshop it was a long time ago. I don't even remember some of the things, but I do remember attending that workshop. It was for us to establish them in our schools. There is no after care and even the time is not sufficient.

D) Theme 4: Resource provisioning and management.

The Integrated Strategic Policy Framework for Techer Education and Development (2011) directs that the Department of Basic Education and its provincial structures have the responsibility to provide for and manage teacher development activities. The teachers' responses suggest that there are challenges relating to a structured system of resourcing teacher development at the local level. Teachers sometimes miss on critical programmes because of lack or shortage of basic assistive resources.

S-(1) indicated that there could be a plan to identify challenges and work with other teachers, but the challenge is sometimes transport to attend sessions with other teachers. The school tariff is too little (to compensate for the use of own transport).

IKA – (2) has the same view and illustrates that other challenges are, for instance, when we were called to attend outside our vicinity to be able to travel where the programme is offered, we found some challenges there.

The transport challenge also affects the subject advisors when they are supposed to provide on-site support. RAM – (03) submits that they (Subject Advisors) say their challenge is transport. The department does not give them transport. If they are coming this side, there must be somebody who is coming and then they group together – not when you want them.

e) Theme 5: Time frames and management

The respondents indicate the challenge relating to time allocation for teacher development programmes. This is against the fact that they have a full schedule for the core business, namely, teaching and learning.

B–(S) submitted that there is a circuit policy that states that meetings and workshops should be scheduled to start on or after 12H00. This, however, limits the amount of time for the workshop/ training, especially because commuting teachers would have to leave shortly as per their means of transport. Besides, this would still affect the contact time of learners due to travelling. S-(1) supports that view by declaring that the main challenge is leaving the children during contact time to attend a programme. RAM – (01) argues that with all these commitments, time becomes a challenge because people are busy.

RAM – (2) sees time as a challenge because time given to workshops is not enough. You are called to a workshop, and you are given limited time. This is so because others must leave because they are commuting. The quality and impact of the programmes is, therefore, compromised.

The general impression is that the issue of time needs serious attention so that the programmes are not just organised for compliance.

f) Theme 6: Organisation and management of the programmes

Teacher development programmes as policy driven initiatives seem not to be structured and systematic. At times, these important programmes seem to be incidental and just once off exercises.

B – (2) noted that some of the workshops are badly organised and irrelevant. For instance, when addressing performance or under-performance of a school, some teachers are just taken to workshops even if their subjects did well. In such cases, the programmes are not responding to the actual needs of the teachers. Instead, they cause more damage professionally.

What seems to be a serious concern with the teachers is the lack of follow-up or aftercare support. This compromises the effective implementation of the programmes that will assist the teachers to deliver quality education. The following respondents attest to this point:

S– (1): There are challenges with continued support. B (1): After the workshops, there is no follow up visits. B – (2): Some of the challenges are that there is no follow-up on the workshops. RAM – (3) And there are few CIs who come to our school. After the workshop, it is the end of the story. They do not do a follow-up. But some do come but most of them don't. Their challenge, they say is transport.

There is also concern on the status and weight of the programmes. This relates to the planning and administration of the provisioning of the programmes. B – (2) noted that there is no leadership provided. It is the system that frustrates the provision of teacher development programmes. This is illustrated by, for instance, the following submissions:

C – (S): The other challenge is that this is not formal, for example, no certificates, hence the programmes are neglected. There is no measure for the programme (not measurable) and there is no reward. B – (1): And holding parallel meetings. Some people disappear from the meetings and there is no punishment. RAM – (01) Coming together sometimes there are other problems. You find you have an appointment and the person changes at last minute – and say I won't be available; I am sorry for inconvenience.

g) Theme 7: The role of teachers in their own development

There are cases where teachers themselves frustrate and compromise the implementation of teacher development programmes. This could be their state of readiness and willingness to learn or just negative attitudes towards the processes.

B - (3) observed that the challenge is that many of us are working for pay. We are not in the field to build the nation. There is no leadership provided. Many of us are ignorant of thigs and do not want to help. We are not even interested in knowing each other.

B – (1) submits, "I am not active in PLC because of my health issues" but then proceeds to argue that teachers want monetary incentives. The real issue seems to be incentives – specifically money.

IKA – (3) sounds more introspective by declaring, it could be sometimes you have a programme then you sit with the problem for a long time without knowing how to sort that problem. This is, somehow supported by RAM – (2) who says, what I found is, we are afraid to be known by others that we are lacking somewhere. That is a challenge. I do not want

other people to notice that I have a challenge. It must be with me. RAM – (2) and S–(2) also observe similar traits. They noted that some teachers are shy to come forward and share or present, but the subject advisor is there to help. Some see it as a waste of time (attitude) and want to be in the classroom teaching.

In these cases, the challenge is from within the individual. One remote, but interesting observation is by RAM – (3), who says, the only attitude I had, was an individual problem: age problem- one is too old and resist change. You must follow them bit by bit and encourage them.

Theory – U	Corresponding Responses
• Downloading: where participants would view the world through their own habits of thoughts.	When defining teacher development, the respondents advanced their own views without referring to policy imperatives and other guidelines.
• Seeing: At this point, the participants would suspend their judgement. This will enable them to see the world of reality with fresh eyes. They are said to be influenced by the voice of judgement (VOJ).	Participants acknowledge that there is value and opportunities with teacher development programmes. They also acknowledge the role and value of other role players, like Subject Advisors. They accept that it is better to work with others as well.
• Sensing: this is where the participants would demonstrate connection with the new field or concept. The boundary between the observer and the observed collapses. The focus is redirected. The influence here is the voice of cynicism (VOC).	Participants appear to be eager to drive their own development. For instance, some indicate that they identify their own needs and proceed to organise interventions, such as workshops and teacher exchange programmes. They work with their fellow colleagues to tackle developmental issues. They also show own initiative by inviting Subject Advisors to assist them on site.
• Presencing: this is the point at which participants would connect to the deepest source and thus begin to learn and see the future and benefits of development. It is the beginning of	From their submissions, some respondents do show some knowledge and awareness of teacher development programmes. During discussions, they develop interest and even make very useful inputs. They seem to know what challenges they

"letting go of the past and letting come" of the new. The voice of fear (VOF) becomes the influence at this point.	are facing and have an idea of how to deal with such challenges.
• Crystallising: participants would take a position and begin to develop their own vision and intention. They begin to make sense of their world. They enact and internalise the essence of development.	Participants have ideas of how to initiate, implement and sustain teacher development programmes. One respondent shared how he registered for different fields of study with institutions to empower himself. He did post school Mathematics, then Commerce and ultimately Law (RAM- 2).
• Prototyping: participants enter a phase of exploring the future. They apply the new knowledge to challenge the world. In their own setting, the respondents use the new knowledge to create and develop new strategies and ways of doing things. It is at this stage where they embody and internalise the new practices.	Although participants have strong opinions and ideas on how to promote and implement Teacher Development programmes to benefit them. These opinions, however, do not seem to translate into something substantial in their schools. That is where the implementation gap seems to be. The knowledge and theory are there but the practice is lacking.
• Performing: this is the stage were the new knowledge acquired is demonstrated. Participants implement the new knowledge through innovation and the creation of new infrastructure and strategies.	The performance of teachers cannot be justifiably attributed to teacher development programmes. There is no clear and visible connectedness between the implementation and subsequent application of structured teacher development programmes on the one hand and the improvement of quality of teaching and learning.

Table 3: Theory U perspectives.

4.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I presented findings from the data collection, and discussed the themes. The seven themes were teacher development programme concepts; relevance and importance of teacher development programme; scope and content of teacher development programmes; resource provisioning and management; timeframes and management; organisation and management of programmes; and the role of teachers in their own development. I then also slotted some of the responses against the Theory-U pathway. The following chapter discussed the findings and conclusions as well as recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the findings from the data collected through interviews and document analysis. This chapter focuses on the discussion of these findings as well as the recommendations for further research and implementation. I structured the chapter as follows: firstly, the summary of findings is given; secondly, the discussion of individual themes is presented; and thirdly the conclusion and recommendations are given.

The study focused on the evaluation of teacher development programmes. The Department of Education in South Africa concurs with OECD (2018) on the role of professional development among teachers. The department accepts that South Africa, like many other countries, needs teachers who are appropriately equipped to meet the growing needs and challenges of the country. The dire need for suitably qualified teachers is addressed in South Africa's National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DoE, 1996). This article attempts to address the problem of how Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD), as stipulated by the National Policy Framework, is implemented to create a collaborative learning culture in schools. In this study, teacher development, also referred to as professional development, will be in accordance with these prescripts.

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development also provides for the establishment and implementation of Professional Learning Communities. The actual concept will be detailed here-under. Suffice to state here that Professional Learning Communities also provide platforms for professional development among teachers. The formal advocacy of these Professional Learning Communities in Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province started in 2014. Through this study, I engaged teachers on the implementation of this programme. The aim was to see through the programme how teachers implement professional programmes and what challenges there might be.

The aim of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa is to equip teachers so that they can undertake their essential and demanding tasks, thereby enabling them to continually enhance their professional competence and performance (DoE, 2006). The other compelling consideration with this policy is the notion that teacher education and development works best when teachers themselves are

integrally involved in their own development in a coordinated system (DoE, 2006). Hence, I viewed the teachers' perspectives based on these elements of the policy.

This study aimed to identify and bridge the gaps on this matter. It sought to explore teachers' perspectives and to hear their voice on the definition and implementation challenges around development programmes. The focus will be in the implementation of the Professional Learning Communities programme.

5.2. SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

I used chapter 1 to introduce the study and to outline the background of the topic, research question and the problem statement. The problem statement explored teachers' perspectives and examined their voice on the implementation challenges around teacher development programmes with reference to the implementation of the Professional Learning Communities programme. This statement was also stated with the aim of the study, research methodology and delimitation of the study. I also took into consideration the significance of the study and the limitations thereof.

In chapter 2, I outlined what I found with literature review. The literature I explored and reviewed reveal that the challenges relating to the implementation of teacher development programmes as well as the benefits thereof are universal. It revealed that teacher development programmes become more effective when teachers become involved in determining the nature and content of these programmes. On the other hand, the education system has a duty to guide and direct the implementation of these programmes.

There are, however, ongoing challenges facing education systems regarding the effective implementation of these programmes. This includes lack of proper planning, support structures and follow-up care or monitoring. The critical challenge revealed by literature is that teacher development programmes do not seem to hit the target in terms of improved professionalism and performance of teachers as well as learner achievement. More work is, however, undertaken to shape these programmes and to improve implementation. The education systems realised that teachers need adequate training and capacity to lead and implement transformation within the education sector.

In the third chapter, I dealt with the issues of research design and methodology, population and sampling, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness and ethical consideration. I

explored and defined the data collection approaches and opted for a mixed method approach. A sample of twelve teachers from four schools was chosen for this study. I conducted semi-structured interviews with these teachers, guided by a pre-designed questionnaire.

I did data analysis and interpretation in chapter four of this study. I conducted the interviews per appointment with participants. I used the questionnaire to guide the discussions and recorded the responses accordingly. I also used the Theory U processes to understand and interpret the responses from participants. The findings of the research study highlight that the implementation of teacher development programmes need to be better structured and systematised. The role of relevant structures also needs to be clarified and followed up so that there is accountability and sustainability. Teachers have a role in their own development and are equally accountable.

5.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The aim of this study was to evaluate teachers' perspectives on teacher development programmes with reference to Professional Learning Communities as one of the programmes. I did this study in Siyabuswa Circuit of Mpumalanga Province. The study followed the qualitative research approach in which semi-structured interviews were conducted. The study yielded four main findings, which are: a) lack of understanding of what teacher development programmes are; b) poor organisation and implementation of teacher development programmes; c) lack of guidance and commitment and; d) lack of continued monitoring, support and maintenance. I also used Theory U model to shed more light into this matter.

5.4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Sikora and Alexander (2010) submit that teacher development must have a purpose, and lead to recognisable change in teachers' knowledge, attitudes and skills, which will ultimately improve learning. Teacher development programmes should, therefore, embrace principles of adult learning, for instance, collaboration and the desire to apply new skills and knowledge. They indicate factors such as form, duration, participation, content focus and coherence as key elements for successful teacher development programmes. It is against this background that I arrived at the conclusions discussed below.

5.4.1 Lack of understanding of what structured teacher development programmes are.

The study established that teachers define teacher development programmes in general terms. For instance, when asked what teacher development programmes are, they responded by saying they are programmes to develop teachers. They do not refer to policy prescripts, guidelines and frameworks that are the basis of these processes. Hence, we miss the idea of teacher development as a structured and coordinated support system.

I would expect teacher development programmes to provide timely assistance to teachers and be advance personal and practice-oriented elements. However, from the study, there was no evident link between the programmes attended by the teachers and their performance as well as the performance of the learners. The performance of teachers still depends, to a large extent, on individual initiatives. The district and the Department of Education have the personnel and resources to coordinate and continue to support teachers through structured teacher development programmes.

The management of time allocated to teacher development programme is also a challenge. The implementation of teacher development programmes cannot be of a one-time and short-term nature. It emerged from the research project that the time allocated for these programmes does not take into consideration the size, scope and structure of such programmes. Hence, a workshop to introduce a complex curriculum concept would be scheduled for 12h00. At 14h00, commuting attendants would leave and the session would be closed. This does not give teachers enough time to reflect on the content and concepts, ask questions, and engage with their colleagues to share views and ideas. Going back, the teachers find it very difficult to implement the programmes.

The district officials and other officials or facilitators of teacher development programmes do not plan for and provide continuing support for the implementation of these programmes. Teachers go to the training sessions, learn new ideas and techniques. They, however, still need ongoing support on site so that they can implement the new ideas efficiently and effectively. It is hard for them to implement the ideas without ongoing support and back-up from the experts. Sometimes it might even assist to link these teachers with their colleagues in a structured network like PLC.

The policies and guidelines on teacher development provide for processes such as Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) to determine the developmental needs of teachers. Such processes ensure relevance of the programmes in addressing the professional areas of need of teachers. This process did not come out clearly in this study. The result of this challenge is that many programmes, some even in conflict, compete for the attention, time and energy of teachers. Hence, the resources channelled to these programmes do not translate into the anticipated outputs like enhance teacher performance and learner achievement.

5.5. THEORY-U ISSUES

Scharmer (2009) represents the process of social reality creation in a U-shaped model. Five movements follow the path of this U as discussed earlier in this study, in which I traced the teachers' perspectives through the U path against these movements. The path moves from downloading on one side to performing at the end of the process.

Downloading: this is where the respondents would view the world through their own habits of thoughts. When the teachers gave their perspective on what teacher development programmes are, they each drew from their experiences without bothering to refer to universal prescripts and guidelines. This would be the beginning of the journey provided they start moving along the U path.

Co-Initiating: At this point, the respondents would suspend their judgement. This will enable them to see the world of reality with fresh eyes. They are influenced by the voice of judgement (VOJ). When sharing their experiences, the respondents indicated that they believe there are opportunities out there in terms of teacher development. They also acknowledge the role and value of stakeholders and other role players such as subject advisors. They recognise the positive impact of working collaboratively with others. This indicates movement along the U path.

Co-Sensing: This is where the respondents would demonstrate connection with the new field or concept. The boundary between the observer and the observed collapses. The focus is re-directed. The influence here is the voice of cynicism (VOC). At this stage, the respondents begin to drive their own development. For instance, they would initiate their own training session or register themselves with training or academic intuitions for

development. Some take the initiative of inviting subject advisors to come and assist them on site. They also link with fellow teachers to tackle developmental issues.

Co-Presencing: this is the point at which participants would connect to the deepest source and thus begin to learn and see the future and benefits of development. It is the beginning of "letting go of the past and letting come of the new." The voice of fear (VOF) becomes the influence at this point. Participants demonstrated their own initiatives in, for instance, voluntarily registering with institutions to address some of their needs.

Crystallising: Participants would take a position and begin to develop their own vision and intention. They begin to make sense of their own world and circumstances. They internalise and enact the essence of development. This is where teachers demonstrate taking charge of their own development. Hence, participants mentioned their own initiatives and networks as a way of improving their performance.

Prototyping: participants enter a phase of exploring the future. They apply the new knowledge to challenge the world. In their own setting, they use the new knowledge to create and develop new strategies and ways of doing things. It is at this stage where they embody and internalise the new practices.

Performing: At this stage, participants will demonstrate the newly acquired knowledge. They implement the new knowledge through innovation and creation of new infrastructure and strategies. One participant, RAM-02 demonstrated this aspect so well. He shared that through continuing teacher development, he successfully moved to become a Mathematics teacher. He had initially done Mathematics up to Grade 10 (then Standard 8). However, in response to emerging educational demands of the country, he accepted the challenge and switched to Mathematics and Science.

The finding, in line with this model, is that in terms of teacher development, ten of the twelve teachers are still at the downloading side of Theory U. They view the world with their own habits of thoughts. They seem to try to define teacher development programmes to fit in with what is familiar and comfortable to them. They are spread over the first two movement of the U path, namely, co-initiating and co-sensing. At these levels, they are said to be influenced by the voice of judgement and the voice of cynicism. Hence, in their engagement and response, they dwell much on what others, for instance, subject advisors do for them,

as well as what is not going right with the programmes. There is very little that they say about their role in driving their own development. It becomes easier for them to demonstrate the challenges of implementation of these programmes. They do mention some positive elements of the programmes to demonstrate awareness. They can further exploit and build on these aspects.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the finding of this research project, I submit the following recommendations:

There are clear policies and guidelines that direct and structure teacher development activities. The district, circuits and schools should follow these guidelines so that they implement teacher development programmes effectively and productively. This will improve accountability and eliminate the wasteful deployment of resources and time.

Every teacher has his or her own individual needs and circumstances. They also experience reality differently and have many different learning styles. Teacher development programmes must therefore respond to the individual circumstances of the teachers. The needs analysis processes must be followed so that the programmes are appropriately informed and relevant. Every teacher will benefit from this programme and be able to implement it effectively.

There must be a clear plan for teacher development programmes. This includes the deployment of resources such as finances, time and human resources. When programmes are evenly spread over a period, teachers and schools can plan and budget for participating teachers. There will be no clashes over who attends which programme. Facilitators can determine appropriate and enough time for the programmes well in advance.

It is important to provide follow-up after training teachers. They will do well if they are supported during implementation. Facilitators must arrange ongoing support during implementation. The teachers need practice and ongoing coaching to master the new skills and strategies. During this support period, the teachers will benefit from the feedback given and will be confident to take the baby steps under the expert's watch.

Teacher development programmes are implemented better within a coordinated system. There are many service providers driving very important programmes. However, these programmes must be coordinated and structured accordingly. Through proper coordination

and classification, different programmes addressing different professional needs will be arranged correctly. This will cater for the holistic professional development of the teacher, and the developmental priorities of the whole system will be met.

Teacher development is a process that unfolds over a period. It is therefore necessary to establish a system of regular structure support over a period. Teacher development should be a continuous exercise integrated into the professional processes of the teacher. Such continuous developmental activities should preferably allow teachers to learn and develop within their day-to-day environment. This will address the concern over the lost contact time as well as travelling and related costs.

5.7. CONCLUSION

It is expected that both teachers and learners should benefit from teacher development programmes. The primary intention with these programmes is a systematic development that is intended to maintain, improve and broaden the relevant knowledge and skills of teachers. Well-coordinated and implemented programmes will greatly assist teachers with professional capacity in their area of practice. It is, therefore, important to plan, coordinate, resource and implement these programmes effectively and systematically. Effective and correctly implemented teacher development programmes should promote, assist, support and enhance teachers' practice and learner achievement. This can hopefully revive a positive attitude and motivation among many teachers and maintain quality teaching and learning which we aspire to. Quality teachers guarantee success. This then translates into high learner performance and demonstrates great return on investment in terms of resources. It is critical for teachers to play a key role in driving their own development. Teachers should be consulted in determining their own developmental needs. It is from this process that relevant and appropriate programmes are developed and implemented. The core of teacher development processes lies on their ability to reflect on their own practice. Their quest to address the questions, what, why and how things unfold within their own practice inspire them towards life-long learning and development. In that space, they develop passion, learn easier and implement effectively.

REFERENCES

Abutabenjeh, S. & Jaradat, R. 2018. *Clarification of research design, research methods and research methodology: A guide for public administration researchers and practitioners*. Mississippi. SAGE.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C. & Razavieh, A. 2002. *Introduction to research education*. California: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Avalos, B. 2011. Teacher professional development in teaching and teacher education over ten years. *Teacher and Teacher Education Journal,* 27(1): 10-20.

Bertram, C. 2011. What does research say about teacher learning and teacher knowledge? Implications for professional development in South Africa. *Journal of Education,*52 (3): 4-20.

Birman, B.F., Desimone, L., Garet, M.S. & Porter, A.C. 2000. Designing professional development that work. *Educational Leadership*, 57 (1): 23-55.

Bolam, R., McMohan, A., Stoll, L., Thomas, S. & Wallace, M. 2005. Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities. *Journal of Educational Change*. 79 (3): 109-163.

Boreham, N. 2000. Collective professional knowledge. *Medical Education*, 34 (5): 20-43.

Braun, V. &. Clarke, V. 2012. *Handbook of research methods in psychology: Thematic analysis*. USA: APA.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Quality Research in Psychology*, 3 (1): 119-170.

Brodie, K. & Borko, H. (eds.) 2016. *Professional learning communities in South African schools and teacher education programmes*. Cape Town: HSRC.

Burrel, G. & Morgan, G. 1979. *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London: Heinemann.

Che, P., Lee, C., Lin, H. & Zang, C. 2016. Factors that develop effective professional learning communities in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 28(1): 150-164.

Cohen, L. & Manion, L. 1994. *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge.

Collins, J & Hussey, R. 2003. *Business research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Conrad, C.F. & Serlin, R.C. 2006. *The SAGE handbook for research in education: Engaging ideas and enriching enquiry*. London: SAGE.

Creswell, J. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches, 4th Edition*. London: Sage.

Creswell, J. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches, 4th Edition*. London; Sage.

Creswell, J.W. 1994. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*, 4th Edition. London: Sage.

Creswell, J. 1994. *Research design. qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* London: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. 2003. *Research design: Quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study*. Nebraska: Lincoln.

Cruz, M. 1998. *Modelling Epistemic and ontological cognition: Philosophical perspectives and methodological directions*. UK; Tailor and Francis.

Curry, M. 2008. Critical friends' groups: The possibilities and limitations embedded in teacher professional learning communities aimed at instructional improvement and school reform. *Teachers College Record*, 110 (5): 201-250,

Darling-Hammond, L.M., Hyler, M. & Gardner, M. 2017. *Effective teacher professional development. 2018 report.* Learning Policy Institute.

Darling-Hammond. 2000. Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 66 (5): 1-8.

Dash, N.K. 1993. *Election of the research paradigm and methodology*. Manchester: IGNOU.

DBE and DHET. 2011. *Integrated strategic planning framework for teacher education and development*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

De Simone, L.M. 2009. Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward conceptualization and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(1): 35-70.

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B. & Delport, C.S.L. 2002. *Research at grassroots: For social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria. Van Schaik.

Department of Basic Education & Department of Higher Education and Training. 2011. *Integrated strategic planning framework for teacher education and development in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Basic Education. 2011. *Professional learning communities guidelines for south African schools*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Basic Education. 2015. *professional learning communities: A guideline for South African schools.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 1996. *National Policy Act*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 1998. *Employment of Educators Act No 76*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 2007. *National Policy Framework on Teacher Education and Development*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Doolittle, G., Sudeck, M. & Rattigan P. 2008. *Creating professional learning communities: The work of professional development schools*. Ohio: Routledge.

DuFour, R. 2004. *What is a professional learning community? educational leadership*. Illinois: Adlai Stevenson.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Lowe, A. 2002. *management research: An introduction.* London: Sage.

Evans, L. 2002. What is teacher development*? Oxford Review of Education*, 28 (4): 13-40.

Fetters, M.D., Curry, L.A. & Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Achieving integration in mixed methods designs – principles and practices.* Nebraska: Lincoln.

Gay, L.R. 1992. *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. New York: Merrill-MacMillan.

Gore, J, Lloyd, A., Smith, M., Bowe, J., Ellis, E. & Lubans, D. 2017*. Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching: Results from a randomized controlled trial of quality teaching rounds*. NSW.

Grissom, J, A. and Young, P. 2015. *Improving teacher evaluation systems: Making the most of multiple measures.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. *Handbook of qualitative research. competing paradigms in qualitative research.* USA: SAGE.

Hakim, C. 2000. *Research design: Successful designs for social and economic research.* London: Routledge.

Hamilton S. & Chervany N.L. (1981). *Evaluating information system effectiveness. Comparing Evaluating Approaches*. JSTOR.

Hoban, G.H. 2002. *Teacher learning and educational change. a systems thinking approach.* Maidenland: Open University Press.

Hofstee, E. 2006. *Constructing a good dissertation: A practical guide to finishing a Master's, MBA, or PhD on schedule*. Johannesburg: EPE.

Hord, S.M. 1997. *Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement*. Austin: TX-SWED Laboratories.

Huffman, J.B. 2000. *One school experience as a professional learning community: Planning and changing.* Maryland: Scarecrow*.*

Hunzicker, J. 2010. *Effective professional development for teachers: A checklist*. Illinois: Routledge.

Imenda, S. 2014. *Is there a conceptual difference between theoretical and conceptual frameworks?* KwaDlangezwa: UKZN.

Kaplan, J.S. 2008. *The national writing project: Creating professional learning community that supports the teaching of writing*. Ohio: Routledge.

Kelly, P. & McDiarmid, G.W. 2002. Decentralization of professional development: Teacher's decisions and dilemmas*. Journal of In-service Education,* 28 (1): 20-35.

Kelly, P. 2006. What is teacher learning? A socio-cultural perspective. *Oxford Review of Education,* 34 (32(4): 505-519.

Kennedy, A. 2005. Models of continuing professional development: A framework for analysis*. Journal of In-Service Education*, 31(2): 235-240.

Kreber, C. & Paula, B. 2001. Impact evaluation of educational development programs. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 6.

Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. 2008. *Teachers in professional communities: Improving teaching and learning.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. 2011. *Learning communities: The starting point for professional learning in schools and classroom*. New York: Teachers' College Press.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

McKenzie, N. & Knipe, S. 2006. Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods, and methodology*. Issues in educational Research*. New South Wales. Charles Sturt University.

Mansour, N., Albalawi, A. & Macleod, F. 2014. Mathematics teacher's views on CPD provision and the impact on their professional practice. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*,17(12):81-133

McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S.S. 2006. *Research in education. evidence-based inquiry, 6th Ed.* Boston: Pearson.

Merriam, S.B. 1998. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D.M. 2005. *Research methods in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London: Sage.

Opfer, V.D., Pedder, D. 2011. The influence of school orientation to learning on teachers learning change: School effectiveness and school improvement. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(1): 3-24.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2005. *Teachers matter: Attracting developing and retaining effective teachers*. Paris: OECD.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2019. *Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS) 2018 South African country report*. Pretoria. DBE.

Patton, M. 1990. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park: SAGE.

Powell, M.A., & Anderson, D., Fitzgerald, R. & Taylor, N.J. 2013. *Family matters*. Oslo.

Raphael, J. & Puma, M. 2001. *Partnerships for evaluating standards-based professional development for teachers*. Washington DC: The Urban Institute.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2006. *Understanding research philosophies and approaches*. Essex: Prentice Hall.

Scharmer, O. 2009. *Theory-U. leading from the future as it emerges.* San Fransisco Berret-Koehler.

Schechter, C. 2012. The professional learning community as perceived by Israeli school superintendents, principals and teachers. *International Review of Education, 58 (6): 50-96.*

Senge, P.M. 2006. *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Shipman, M. 1997. *The limitations of social research*. Longman: New York.

Shulman, L.S. & Shulman, J.H. 2004. How and what teachers learn: A shifting perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36 (36): 1-44.

Sikora, D. & Alexander, L. 2010. Creating meaningful professional development. *Journal of Family and Consumer Science,* 22 (2): 47-52.

Sileyew, J.S. 2019. *Research design and methodology. text mining analysis, programming and application.* Cape Town: University Press.

Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality IV. 2017. Botswana.

Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A. & Thomas, S. 2006. Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change.*7(1). 221-258.

Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). 2018. *Teachers and school principals lifelong learners.* Paris: OECD.

Terreblance M., Durrheim, K. & Painter, D. 2006. *Research in practice. applied methods for social sciences.* Cape Town: UCT Press.

Thompson, S.C. & Christman, J.B. 2004. *Professional learning communities, leadership, and student learning.* Florida: Elsevier.

Thornhill, A., Saunders, M. & Lewis, P. 2009. *Research methods for business students.* Essex: Prentice Hall.

Trochim, W. 2006. *Qualitative Validity.* USA: Atomic Dog Publishing.

Trochim, W.M.K. 2005. *Research method: The concise knowledge base.* USA: Atomic Dog Publishers.

Unwin, L., Jewson N. & Hughes, J. 2013. *Communities of practice*: *Critical perspective.* London: Routledge.

Ural, K.J. 2016. Innovative forms of teacher continuing professional development in the system of additional professional education. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in education Sciences*, 4 (8).

Wall, J.E. & Walz, G.R. 2004. *Measuring up: Assessment issues of teachers, counsellors, and administrators.* Austin: Tx-Pro-ED.

Zarrow, J. 2016. *Strategies for better teacher professional development.* Bethel: US Global.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

The District Director: Nkangala District

Building 5 Government Building

Kwa Mhlanga

Dear District Director

Request for permission to conduct research interviews in Siyabuswa Circuit

It would be appreciated if the District Director grants me permission to conduct research interviews and to administer a questionnaire in four schools in Siyabuswa Circuit within Nkangala District. I am currently studying towards a Master of Education – Curriculum Studies. My dissertation topic is EVALUATION OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: PERSPECTIVES ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN SIYABUSWA CIRCUIT-MPUMALANGA. The aim of the study is to explore perceptions of teachers in Siyabuswa Circuit within Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province towards Teacher Development programmes. Professional Learning Communities as one of the Teacher Development initiatives will be the focus of this study. Four schools will be selected through the cluster sampling strategy that will represent the total geographical area of the circuit. Three teachers from each of the four schools will then be selected for individual interviews. A total of twelve teachers will participate in the study.

It is also important to make recommendations to educational managers on effective educational management strategies to improve the implementation of supportive teacher development programmes which, in turn, will improve effective curriculum delivery and enhance learner performance.

Informed consent will be obtained from all participants and all data gathered will be held in confidence and be used strictly for research purposes.

Your favourable consideration in this regard would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully. HA TSHEHLA

9.2. APPENDIX 2

Mr./Ms./Dr……………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………

Dear Sir/ Madam

<u>Request to participate in a research process.</u>

My name is HLANYANA ANDRIES TSHEHLA. I am currently studying towards a Master of Education – Curriculum Studies. My dissertation topic is **EVALUATION OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: PERSPECTIVES ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN SIYABUSWA CIRCUIT MPUMALANGA.** The aim of the study is to explore perceptions of teachers in Siyabuswa Circuit within Nkangala District of Mpumalanga Province towards Teacher Development programmes. Professional Learning Communities as one of the Teacher Development initiatives will be the focus of this study.

I would therefore like to request you to participate in this research project as a respondent.

Please not note that this will be voluntary exercise and you are under no obligation as a professional to participate in the study.

The information given will be treated with utmost respect, confidentiality and privacy for the purpose of this study only. Your identity will be kept anonymous.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Kind regards

HA Tshehla

9.3. APPENDIX 3

Interview questionnaire.

Topic	**IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: PERSPECTIVES ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN SIYABUSWA CIRCUIT-MPUMALANGA**
Candidate	HA Tshehla O824597819 Htshehla1@gmail.com
Supervisor	Professor MJ Themane
Proposed Qualification	M.ED: Curriculum Studies
Institution	University of Limpopo

Respondent Number	
Gender	
Race	
Disability (Y/N)	
Position/ Post level	
No.Years in service	
No. Years in current position	

What is your understanding of Teacher Development Programmes?	
Please share your experiences regarding Teacher Development programmes	

Please share your views on Professional Learning Communities	
What are your challenges in participating in Professional learning communities?	
How can the implementation of Professional Learning Communities and other Teacher Development Programmes be improved and sustained?	