EXPLORING TEACHER LEARNING IN BUSINESS STUDIES THROUGH THE
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

By

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to explore the teacher learning of Business Studies teachers through their subject cluster in the uMgungundlovu District.

This study explored what and how Business Studies teachers said they learnt in subject cluster and their views on the importance of the subject cluster and how it contributes to their professional development.

This is a qualitative study located within an interpretive paradigm, using the case study approach. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, who were the Business Studies teachers in the FET phase all belonging to the same subject cluster and within the same geographical area. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis. A content analysis method was used to make sense of the data collected, whereby emerging themes were identified and categorised to address three critical questions.

This study used Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge in order to understand what Business Studies teachers reported on what they learnt in the subject cluster, drawing also from the notion of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) of Stoll et al. (2006) to understand their reports of how they learnt.

The findings suggest that teachers engaged in professional development to enable them to deal with the changes in the school environment and in the school curriculum. Their participation in the subject cluster provided opportunities to increase their expertise and knowledge. They reported acquiring mostly general pedagogical knowledge (GPK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). They also indicated that they acquired some subject matter knowledge and knowledge of the context. These Business Studies teachers acquired knowledge by critically interrogating their own practice on an ongoing basis and engaged in collaborative action in order to improve learner academic performance (Stoll et al., 2006). They met more than once a term to reflect on their practice, scrutinize the results of this practice, comparing it to the learners' performance and formulated the best strategies to improve their teaching and learning for the learners' benefit.

This study concludes that teacher learning does take place in this Business Studies subject cluster. As learning does not happen in isolation (Brodie, 2013), participation in this cluster

allowed these teachers opportunities to break down the walls of isolation. They viewed the subject cluster as important and maintained that it contributed to their professional development. This result implies that the Department of Education should strengthen subject clusters as sites of teacher professional development.

DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, in the Graduate Programme in College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, **Thabi Reinette Khuboni**, student number **9706359,** declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

    a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.

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_____   <u>August 2019</u>

Student signature   Date

<u>Supervisor: Dr Cynthia Carol Nonhlanhla Mthiyane</u>

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Signature

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, the late Mrs Sonto Elizabeth 'naShabangu' Mahlangu and Archbishop D.P. 'Paradise' Mahlangu, for giving me an opportunity to receive an education. They gave me my inheritance and my liberation by investing in my education and I will forever be grateful to them for that.

To my parents-in-law, Mrs Thabile Judith Khuboni and Mr Ronald Phumlani Khuboni, for their continuous support when I embarked on furthering my studies and for looking after my children while I spent long hours at the university completing this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ACE   Advanced Certificate in Education

ATP   Annual Teaching Plan

CAPS   Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CASS   Continuous Assessment

CPD   Continuous Professional Development

CPTD   Continuous Professional Teacher Development

DAS   Development Appraisal System

DoE   Department of Education

FET   Further Education and Training

GET   General Education and Training

GPK   General pedagogical knowledge

PLCs   Professional Learning Communities

NCS   National Curriculum Statement

NSC   National Senior Certificate

PCK   Pedagogical content knowledge

PDIs   Professional Development Initiatives

PGCE   Post-Graduate Certificate in Education

POA   Programme of Assessment

SACE   South African Council of Educators

SBA   School-based Assessment

SMK   Subject matter knowledge

TPD   Teacher Professional Development

UKZN   University of Kwazulu-Natal

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the learning experiences of Business Studies teachers through a Business Studies subject cluster in the uMgungundlovu District.

The objective of the study was to explore what and how Business Studies teachers said they learnt in their subject cluster, their views on the importance of the subject cluster and how the subject cluster contributed to their professional development.

This chapter highlights the background and rationale of the study, describing the research problem, and presenting the research questions and the methodology. Moreover, it presents the conceptual framework and the chapter divisions.

1.2 Background and rationale for the study

South African education has experienced enormous change in the efforts by the South African government to address past imbalances. The democratically elected government brought many changes that resulted in both policy change and change in the structures in government departments.

It had to adopt an education system that was made up of eighteen education departments, and that was particularly attentive to different population groups, homelands and provinces. An education system whereby the initial teacher education that the teachers received was distinguished by the race, the type of school and the homeland the school was situated in. These teachers experienced a quality of education that was different.

The government had the task of bringing transformation to the education system of the country in 1994, turning a complex education system into a single national system that would address past inequities and present equal opportunities to all learners as the equal citizens of South Africa.

The transformation process came about when a new curriculum was introduced and teachers were therefore required to acquire new knowledge. To enable them to conquer challenges of

merging new change in the curriculum and teaching a diversity of learners, teachers themselves needed to participate more in professional learning (Jita & Mokhele, 2012).

The South African government, through the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011–2025, acknowledges teachers as agents of change, who contribute extensively to the implementation of the curriculum change and to achieving goals set for learning. However, teachers themselves require support in professional development.

Borko (2004) explains the example in the United States for the provision of opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act introduced in 2001. The NCLB Act stipulated that the states provide high-quality professional development for teachers. In addition, research conducted provided "evidence that strong professional learning communities can foster teacher learning and instructional improvement" (Borko, 2004, p.6). In the South African context, the Department of Basic Education called for the creation of professional learning communities (PLCs).

According to Stoll et al. (2006), there has been more than one way of defining PLCs. Seemingly, a broad international agreement exists that PLCs can be defined as a group of people critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective manner, working collaboratively in growth-promoting ways and collectively thriving for improvement in their instructional practice for the benefits of the learners. Brodie (2013, p.6) concurs that a professional learning community "refers to teachers critically interrogating their practice in ongoing, reflective and collaborative ways in order to promote and enhance student learning".

Furthermore, Botha (2012) explains that PLCs can be a powerful tool that can be used to encourage teamwork between teachers and the school in order to achieve relevant learning outcomes and intervention activities. Jaffar (cited in Brodie, 2013), states that a successful PLC is characterised by teachers having a productive professional relationship with trust, working collaboratively to address certain challenges.

 Botha (2012, p.406) additionally asserts that "the creation of professional communities is a way to build teacher confidence, trust and to provide them with the skills and knowledge for their education professional growth". Changes in the South African political system, as a consequence, brought changes in the education system; the new curriculum was introduced in 1998 with the aim of trying to address imbalances of the past.

Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced with the intention of being fully implemented by the year 2005. Teachers faced challenges with the implementation of this curriculum due to inadequate training. It was then replaced with the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2002 (Bertram, 2011), which also had implementation challenges for the teachers.

According to Ono and Ferreira (2010), challenges teachers faced due to curriculum changes included the Department of Education's (DoE) introduction of the "cascade" model whereby teachers attended training, returned to their schools and shared the knowledge acquired with other teachers. The district trainers did not show understanding of the curriculum themselves and, consequently, the extremely significant information was misinterpreted.

De Clercq and Phiri (2013) explain that a cascade approach was intended to reach the majority of teachers in a short space of time, which became questionable and did not work because teachers found the short timeframe frustrating. Workshops were organised by the district but provided only general information for orientation purposes. Moreover, the education department appeared to be uncertain on how to implement their vision to provide opportunities to teachers who had different development needs (De Clercq & Phiri, 2013).

In 2012 the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) was introduced. This is a single, comprehensive and concise policy document, which replaced the Subject and Learning Statement, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statements Grades R-12. The reason behind the introduction of CAPS was a strategy by the education department to alleviate challenges teachers faced due to curriculum changes. The implementation of CAPS required them to know the content knowledge, how and when the content is required to be taught. Therefore, teacher development became essential.

With the intention of strengthening teacher professional development, the DoE introduced the establishment of PLCs. The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011–2025 clearly describes the PLCs as communities that give support to groups of teachers, the school management team and the subject advisor to collectively establish their own developmental needs and design necessary activities required for their development.

My interest in this study focus is because of my involvement as a Business Studies teacher, and it is the subject I am familiar with. Although studies on teacher learning, professional

development and professional communities have been conducted, through my literature review it became apparent that these did not focus on Business Studies in particular.

As a Business Studies teacher, I have observed teachers faced with difficulties in implementing the new curriculum in their classroom practice and their reasons have varied, ranging from lack of resources such as teaching and learning materials, lack of electricity, and classroom size, to the learners' poor academic performance. My interest developed from a realization of the importance for teachers to become engaged in professional development due to the curriculum change.

There are various professional development initiatives that teachers participate in. Some are organised by the DoE and others are teacher initiatives. The literature reviewed suggests that teachers learn effectively in PLCs. As a result of the DoE recognising the importance of teachers participating in subject clusters, I developed the interest in exploring what teachers say about what and how they learn in a subject cluster, and in particular what Business Studies teachers' views are on the value of a subject cluster and if what they say they learn is applicable in their practice.

A study of the subject cluster was important, because, as a Business Studies teacher, I would be encouraged to interact with other teachers outside my own school environment. I would therefore receive exposure to other professional development activities available to teachers in the same area of my specialisation. Conducting this study would therefore allow me to obtain other teacher learning strategies so that my learners could also benefit.

According to the National Senior Certificate Diagnostic Report 2016, the number of the Business Studies candidates decreased by 12 898, in comparison to that of 2015. The general performance of the candidates also declined in 2016, indicating 73.7% of candidates achieving 30% and above, with 49.5% achieving 40% and above. In comparison 2015, 75.7% of candidates achieved 30% and above and 51.4% achieved 40% and above.

The Diagnostic Report 2018 indicated further decrease in the number of candidates in 2017 by 30 045 in comparison to 2016. The general performance of the candidates again declined in 2017, indicating 68.0% of candidates achieving 30% and above, with 42.7% achieving 40% and above. Teachers have often been blamed in the past for the poor performance of learners in matric and in other examinations.

The findings of this study may lead to more understanding of the role played by subject clusters in teacher learning and teacher professional development. The study may also provide insight into how teachers perceive the clusters and whether they see them as contributing to their professional growth. Such findings could assist the DoE to strengthen the clusters as a mode of professional development. This, in turn, would likely contribute towards improving teaching and learning and learner outcomes.

1.3 Methodology

This is a qualitative study, located within an interpretive paradigm. The purpose of the qualitative research was to give a detailed description relating to people's lived experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005). I chose a qualitative approach because it allowed me, as a researcher, to collect verbal and textual data, and for its suitability in obtaining in-depth descriptions of Business Studies teachers' experiences.

The study being situated within the interpretive paradigm approach allows participants to express their lived experiences and the researcher to gain an understanding thereof. This paradigm was considered suitable for this study because it enabled teachers to interpret and express the experience of their participation in the Business Studies subject cluster. They reflected on their practice and gave their viewpoint on the importance of the subject cluster and the contribution it has had on their development.

I chose a case study approach to conduct this research, which is an in-depth study of a specific case. A case study was relevant because it allowed me to examine the participants lived experiences, and to study real people in real situations. This case study was of a Business Studies subject cluster in uMgungundlovu District and was conducted to obtain the views and experiences of Business Studies teachers. The purpose was to understand teacher learning and is an exploration of teachers' reflections on what and how they learn in their Business Studies subject cluster.

In exploring teacher learning, the following critical questions were answered:

1. What do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?

2. How do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?

3. What are Business Studies teachers' views about the importance of a subject cluster and how it contributes to their professional development?

The data for this study were collected using three research methods: interviews, observations and document analysis.

1.4 Conceptual framework

This study was informed by Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of professional learning communities (PLCs) to develop teacher knowledge of teaching practice. Stoll et al. (2006) provide an understanding of what PLCs are and outline five characteristics.

The five characteristics of PLCs, according to Stoll et al. (2006), are that teachers share values and vision, have collective responsibility to one another, engage in reflective professional inquiry, engage in collaborative action, and both group and individual learning is promoted. In their research, Stoll et al. (2006) identified other characteristics of PLCs such as mutual trust, respect and support among the staff.

Through the literature reviewed, the Business Studies subject cluster could be related to PLCs. I was able to analyse the characteristics in relation to the Business studies subject cluster and establish whether the teachers in my research were critically interrogating their practice in ongoing, reflective and collaborative ways in order to promote and enhance student learning (Stoll & Louis, cited in Brodie, 2013). In addition to Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of PLCs, I used Grossman (1990) to analyse and interpret data on teacher knowledge collected in this study.

Grossman (1990) modified the seven categories of Shulman (1987) and integrated them into four categories of teacher knowledge. These categories are: general pedagogical knowledge (GPK), subject matter knowledge (SMK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and the knowledge of context. For effective teaching and learning, the Business Studies teachers need

more than just the content knowledge of the subject, they require PCK, GPK and knowledge of context, all of which will be discussed extensively in the next chapter.

1.5 Chapter divisions

This study has five chapters which are organised as follows:

Chapter One

This chapter provides an introduction, the background and rationale, a brief description of the methodological approach and the conceptual framework employed in this study. The three critical questions that the research aims to answer and the layout of the study are also given.

Chapter Two

This chapter provides the literature review relevant to the study. It addresses the concepts of teacher professional development and teacher learning and presents the conceptual framework employed for the analysis of data collected, including the four categories of teacher knowledge.

This chapter also provides a detailed discussion of the definition of PLCs, their characteristics, activities and benefits.

Chapter Three

This chapter provides the research methodology, describing and justifiying the research design that is used, and the selection of the participants. Moreover, it describes the research paradigm, and the research and data analysis methods. Issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the limitations of this study are presented, along with gaining access.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four presents the background of the participants, followed by the findings and analysis of data collected in an attempt to answer the three critical questions.

This then leads the study to the concluding chapter.

Chapter Five

This chapter gives a summary of the study and the main findings. It provides the recommendations and also discusses the conclusion of the research.

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the study was introduced. The chapter provided the background, the research questions and the rationale, with the methodological approach, conceptual framework and the chapter divisions.

The next chapter presents an overview of the literature review essential to this study.

<center>**CHAPTER TWO**</center>

<center>**LITERATURE REVIEW**</center>

2.1   Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to relate the study to the relevant literature. I begin by presenting the reviewed literature on the concepts of teacher professional development (TPD), teacher learning and professional learning communities (PLCs). Furthermore, the literature on the general relevance of teacher professional development, and in particular, in the South African context, is presented and models of teacher professional development are also discussed. Furthermore, the teacher knowledge acquired through teacher learning and the approaches to teacher learning are presented.

The literature goes on to provide an understanding of what PLCs are and shows a link between teacher learning and PLCs. I conclude the chapter by presenting the conceptual framework according to Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge and Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion on the concept of PLCs.

As stated in the first chapter, this study seeks to answer the following critical questions:

1. What do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?

2. How do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?

3. What are the Business Studies teachers' views about the importance of a subject cluster and how it contributes to their professional development?

2.2   Teacher professional development

According to Hargreaves cited in Fraser et al. (2007), research suggests that professional development is a significant part of improving school performance. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) assert that thorough research suggests that professional development for teachers is associated with improving learner achievement. Middlewood (cited in Fraser et al., 2007, p.156) distinguished between professional development and learning in this way:

> Professional development is an ongoing process of reflection and review that articulates with development planning that meets corporate, departmental and

individual needs and learning is a process of self-development leading to

personal growth as well as development of skills and knowledge that

facilitates the education of young people.

These concepts explained here relate to this study because the participating Business Studies teachers engage in a process of self-development by their involvement in PLCs as an ongoing reflective practice. In addition, they have obtained tertiary qualifications.

Learning in isolation has been viewed as problematic and the teacher participation in PLCs is seen as one way to address this problem (Fraser et al., 2007), which supports Brodie's (2013) notion of learning in isolation. Lave and Wenger cited in De Clercq and Phiri (2013, p.78), agree, adding that learning "does not occur in isolation but it is socially constructed and specific to the situation in which it is learnt". Professional development is concerned with teacher learning, where they learn how to learn and apply the knowledge in their classroom practice to benefit their learners' growth (Avalos, 2011).

Knight (2002) explains the relevance of professional development, and that teachers need to engage in this, because the initial teacher education does not have the entire propositional knowledge that is required along with the procedural knowledge that they would receive in practice. Due to changes in the school environment and curriculum changes, teachers are expected to comprehend the idea of life-long learning.

2.2.1 Models of teacher professional development

Teacher professional development activities can be presented in various forms and the form or model adopted to deliver the TPD activity depends on the desired outcome. The intention is to help teachers improve their professional knowledge, skills, competence and effectiveness. Kennedy (2005) presents a framework in which the following models of TPD have been identified: training, award-bearing, deficit, cascade, standard-based, coaching/mentoring, community of practice, action research and transformative models.

The TPD training model is one that supports teachers in acquiring or updating their skills so that they are able to show their competencies. It usually involves teachers attending a training session, which is usually facilitated by DoE officials. The agenda and the desired outcome is predetermined by the expert. The award-bearing model of TPD focuses on acquiring an

award-bearing qualification, usually from universities, whereas the deficit model focuses on remedying individual weaknesses.

The cascade model involves teachers attending a teacher professional development programme or activity and then disseminating the information received to their colleagues. The standard-based model involves the assessment and academic reporting on the understanding showed by the students as well as the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn. The learning standard clearly describes what the students are expected to know and competence at specific stages of their education.

The coaching/mentoring model involves a relationship between two teachers, in which one teacher is a novice and the other is more experienced. The TPD happens through dialogue with a colleague. The community of practice model involves more than two people. According to Wenger (cited in Kennedy, 2005), learning within the community of practice happens as a result of the interaction amongst the members of that community.

The action research model involves the participants or individuals themselves, with the intention of improving the quality of their practice. Lastly, the transformative model of TPD involves the combination of the processes drawn from the other models mentioned above. This model recognises various conditions required for transformation. This study focuses more on the community of practice model and refers to this community as the PLC. I analyse what teachers do and the extent to which the cluster participating in this study exhibit characteristics of some of the TPD models described above.

2.2.2 Teacher professional development in South Africa

The South African schooling system continues to face TPD challenges (De Clercq & Phiri, 2013). Post 1994, the democratically elected government made a commitment to equity and to redressing the past imbalances. However, according to Mlambo (2012, p.61):

> After 1990, the new South African government has to a certain extent socially
> transformed the country by introducing many educational policies to address
> the educational imbalances of the past. Nevertheless, the school learning
> environments under which I learned and have taught remain totally different to
> former 'White' schools which have proper infrastructure including libraries,

laboratories, playing fields for all kinds of sporting activities and even swimming pools!

The South African education system is currently facing a shortage of teachers and poor academic performance obtained from national assessments; for example, the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Diagnostic Report 2016 indicated a decrease in the general performance of the Business Studies learners in 2016. According to this diagnostic report, 73.7% of the learners achieved 30% and above and 49.5% achieved 40% and above. Further decrease in the learners' achievement was experienced as indicated in the Diagnostic Report 2018. The table below (Table 1) shows the overall achievement in Business Studies between the years 2013 and 2017.

Year	No. wrote	No. achieved at 30% and above	% achieved at 30% and above	No. achieved at 40% and above	% achieved at 40% and above
2013	218 914	179 329	81.9	127 422	58.2
2014	207 659	161 723	77.9	111 743	53.8
2015	247 822	187 485	75.7	127 453	51.4
2016	234 894	173 195	73.7	116 225	49.5
2017	204 849	139 386	68.0	87 535	42.7

Table 1: Overall achievement in Business Studies

The South African education system introduced legislation and policies to promote quality teaching and learning in South Africa such as the 1998 Development Appraisal System (DAS), which was followed by the Whole-School Evaluation in 2001. De Clercq and Phiri (2013, p.77) explain that "the 1998 Development Appraisal System (DAS) with education departments, aimed at redress and based on the principle of teachers driving their own development. However, it became clear that sufficient, meaningful support to teachers was difficult to mobilise as a follow-up to the 'teacher appraisal for development' exercise". These policies resulted in resistance and were replaced by the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in 2003 (Kempen & Steyn, 2016).

In 2008, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) was given the task of quality assurance on Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) and funds from the DoE. In 2011 the DoE introduced the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011–2025. This framework outlines the fifteen-year roll-out plan as a teacher development strategy to improve teacher education and develop the chances of enriching the standard of teaching and learning.

According to the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2011–2025, p.13:

> National and international research concur that teacher development should be classroom and curriculum focused and concentrate on improving learner understanding and accomplishment. The teacher must be placed firmly at the centre of teacher development activities, not least by establishing PLCs, and developing teacher knowledge and practice standards.

The DoE encourages the formation of the PLCs; however, the framework does not stipulate what teacher learning should take place in the PLCs and how teachers should acquire the learning needed to improve the learner understanding and accomplishment". The planning framework conceptualises PLCs as a long-term system that can be utilized to present opportunities for teachers to acquire knowledge of the curriculum, become competent in their specialized field and professional in their practice. Ideally, the participation in PLCs would present continuing professional development programmes intended to develop teacher knowledge and competency to deliver the content of subject specialization. In this study I focused on a subject cluster as a model of TPD with an aim to understand what teachers say they learn and whether they regard it as an important vehicle for professional development.

The next section discusses teacher learning and the perspectives to teacher learning.

2.3   What is teacher learning?

According to Kelly (2006, p.506), teacher learning refers to the "process by which teachers move towards expertise". Kelly (2006) uses the term "towards expertise" to show that teacher learning does not have an ending, and not the term "to expertise", because the implication would be that there is a destination to the journey of learning. This process will consequently bring about changes in TPD (Fraser et al., 2007).

Adler cited in Borko (2004, p.4), describes teacher learning "as a process of increasing participation in the practice of teaching and through this participation, a process of becoming knowledgeable in and about teaching". Teacher learning involves a process whereby teachers participate formally and informally in learning activities relating to their professional goals to improve their teaching practice (De Vries et al., 2015).

Teacher learning takes place in a range of different ways; opportunities for teacher learning can take place by arrangement or can present themselves by chance. According to Reid's quadrants of teacher learning, opportunities can be categorised as either formal or informal and can be planned or incidental (Fraser et al., 2007). Formal opportunities refer to those opportunities that are clearly stated in detail and are established by agents other than the teacher, whereas the informal opportunities refer to those created by teachers themselves, for example, web networking. The planned opportunities are those arranged in advance, for example, collaborative planning and the incidental opportunities occuring without being premeditated and predictable, for example, teacher conversations over coffee (Fraser et al., 2007).

Teacher learning is essential, since it is linked to improved teacher practice and quality (De Vries, et al., 2015). Furthermore, teachers need to engage in teacher learning to acquire the subject matter knowledge (SMK), general pedagogical knowledge (GPK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to develop and update their knowledge and skills through experience and teaching practice.

A study conducted by De Vries et al. (2015) considered three key learning activities, namely: developing skills and knowledge; reflective action; and collaboration, in relation to teacher learning and practice. The result showed that teacher learning requires active engagement in three learning activities.

Ayers (2016) conducted a study in Economics, a subject related to Business Studies. A study aimed at developing the preservice and inservice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in Economics and according to Ayers (2016) the teachers with low levels of Economics understanding consequently have learners who learn less. In addition, to Walstad and Watts (2015) asserted that research showed that teacher education in Economics is significant for improving learners' learning in the subject. Moreover, learners can learn more from well-trained teachers applying good instructional materials.

Coenders and Terlouw (2015) explain that teacher learning is essential when there is change in the education system, for example: change in the curriculum means teachers have to update their knowledge and beliefs. Teachers, as agents of change, play an important role in implementing a new curriculum. This study explored teacher learning in a Business Studies subject cluster, to establish the teacher knowledge acquired by the teachers in the subject cluster and to determine how that knowledge was acquired.

2.3.1 Perspectives on teacher learning

Bertram (2011) identified two perspectives on teacher learning: the cognitive perspective and the socio-cultural perspective.

2.3.1.1 The cognitive perspective

The cognitive perspective is based on the assumption that teacher expertise is in the mind of the individual (Kelly, 2006), that teacher knowledge, skills and understanding is transferable and can be used in another setting.

The perspective considers that learning is an individual process. Teachers take charge of their learning and "this type of learning is influenced by an individual's existing knowledge and beliefs and is situated in particular contexts" (Kwakman, 2003, p.150). Individuals link the new knowledge that they have learnt to the prior knowledge to make their interpretation of the new concepts easier for themselves. Teachers have to direct their own learning and construct their own knowledge. A change in curriculum requires teachers to engage in learning and acquire new knowledge.

The cognitive perspective on the process of learning has received criticism, because "cognitivism fails to recognise a much closer and more complex relationship where knowing is distributed across teachers, students and resources such as books and computers" (Kelly, 2006, p. 507). According to Kelly (2006), the cognitive perspective was also criticised for assuming transferability, in that the knowledge, skills and understanding acquired in one setting can be transferred to another setting. Research has been conducted "suggesting that knowledge acquired in one setting is seldom used by learners in other settings" (Kelly, 2006, p.506).

Bertram (2011) explains that workshops or courses supported by the cognitive perspective have been used as the main approach to teacher learning with an understanding that the learning that takes place in the workshops would be easily transferable to the teachers' classroom practice. However, that understanding or assumption has proven to be problematic, because the transfer expected seldom takes place. Hence, "in the last two decades there has been growing critique of once-off workshops for teaching" (Bertram, 2011, p.13).

Kwakman (2003, p.150) asserts that "although the aim of learning is ultimately a change in classroom practice learning does not only have to be situated in this setting, as powerful learning experiences are gained outside the classroom as well".

When teachers belong to a learning community they learn best, provided there are supportive working relationships and teachers learn in professional learning communities (PLCs) where learning takes place through experience and practice (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2010). The physical and social context whereby learning occurs is significant. In this study, I looked at the extent to which teacher learning in the cluster showed characteristics of the cognitive view of learning.

2.3.1.2 Socio-cultural perspective

Kelly (2006) explains that the socio-cultural perspective assumes that teacher expertise is connected to a particular working situation, and learning occurs in a professional learning community in which teachers learn a way of knowing and thinking that recognises their school environment and the importance of teacher identities.

The process of learning is social and recognises the role others play in the learning process (Putman & Borko, 2000). Putman and Borko (2000, p.5) state that in the socio-cultural perspective, "interactions with the people in ones environment are major determinants of both what is learned and how learning takes place". According to Resnick (cited in Putnam & Borko, 2000), as long as schools are focusing on educating an individual within the school setting only, that, would insufficient to assist them to become strong out-of-school learners.

Research on teacher learning communities provides evidence that participation in professional learning communities results in instructional improvement and school reform (Borko,2004). In PLCs, learning takes place through collaborative action and teachers learn

from other colleagues. Colleagues can learn from each other through networking, mentoring or coaching (Brodie, 2013).

Bertram (2011) suggests that it might be useful to work with both perspectives of teacher learning: one perspective which acknowledges that teachers learn by acquiring knowledge and skills individually, and another which also develops their competence by participation in PLCs.

The next section discusses the link between teacher learning and PLCs.

2.4   Teacher learning and professional learning communities

In a case study conducted by Hipp et al. (2008), it was shown that when teachers learn collaboratively, there are expectations that increased learner learning will follow from this. Change cannot be achieved individually, but collaboratively and it is enclosed within the day-to-day activities that address learner needs. Once individual teachers identify the learner learning needs, they are able to establish their teacher learning needs and can learn collaboratively from other teachers in their PLC.

Furthermore, according to Brodie (2013), teachers participate in collaborative action not for their individual benefit, but to jointly benefit other teachers as well. However, according to Shulman and Shulman cited in Admiraal et al. (2012), for successful teacher learning and professional development to take place, there has to be willingness from the teachers to learn from each other and to teach one another. Teachers working collaboratively have a collective responsibility (Brodie, 2013).

They learn collaboratively by meeting to discuss their observations of one another's teaching, they share the planning and evaluate teacher teaching (Lovett & Cameron, 2011). In this manner teachers share the skills and knowledge they can apply in their teaching. Consequently, they are given an opportunity to improve their own teaching and learning.

Furthermore, Hipp et al. (2008) assert that teacher collaboration and teacher learning over time will result in sustainability in the PLC itself and brings improvement for the learners. In view of this, there are greater potential benefits when teachers agree to work towards achieving a common goal and a shared vision (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008).

Hope has been placed on PLCs to improve schools, teacher practice and learner achievement. Pepper (2015) conducted a study that supports a similar notion to De Clercq and Phiri (2013), that learning does not occur in isolation. The results from the study conducted showed that, "when the school district, school teachers, and administrators work together in a community of practice, student learning is successful" (p.27). Hence, teachers work collaboratively to improve learner learning (Wells & Feun, 2008).

Wells and Feun (2013) explain that, as teachers collaborate, walls of isolation are broken down and academic achievement is obtained. There is willingness amongst teachers in PLCs to work together and work continuously. In an ideal PLC, there would be trust and openness, and the trust would allow teachers to be open about the reflection of their practice to empower one another and their participation would be professionally rewarding (Pepper, 2015).

In a study conducted by Little (cited in Teague & Anfara Jr., 2012), an inquiry was made into the link between the efforts of the school to improve and how teachers relate to one another and the PLCs. She made the discovery that continuous professional development can be achieved when teachers meet more often and continuously to discuss their teaching practice, when teachers are observed and are given constructive critiques, and when they prepare teaching material together and teach one another the teaching practice. According to Wells and Feun (2013, p.235):

> The literature on PLCs continues to point to the hope that these deliberate learning communities offer hope for improving schools by the internal work among the faculty, both teachers and administrators, to learn together for the purpose of improving instruction, and hence student achievement.

However, there are factors that impact on the effectiveness of the PLCs. Teacher perceptions of PLCs is significant, because their view on their value will motivate teachers to participate in them. Moreover, the school leadership has a responsibility to create opportunities supporting learning and professional development of teachers.

Another factor influencing the functionality of PLCs is team effectiveness. Effectiveness means that the teachers in the PLCs perform according to the objectives and goals set collectively with other team members. Therefore, the team leader must know the goals the PLCs set out to achieve so that the team can function effectively (Pepper, 2015). Teachers in

the PLC, working towards a common goal, need to possess complementary skills and knowledge to share with one another, resulting in team members obtaining empowerment.

Wenger, cited in Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2010, p.80), asserts that a lot of people learn in the PLCs, "and learning happens through experience and practice". People learn in practice (by doing), through meaning (learning is intentional), through learning in participation with others, and through identity (learning and changing who we are).

2.5   Conceptual framework

In accordance with the stated aims of this study, to gain an understanding of business studies teachers' stated reflections on their learning in their subject cluster, and of their views on its importance in contributing to their professional development, I draw on the literature on teacher knowledge. In particular, as a conceptual framework, I employ Grossman's (1990) four categories of teacher knowledge and draw on the notion of PLCs of Stoll et al. (2006) to understand teacher participation in subject clusters.

2.5.1 Teacher knowledge

The concept of teacher knowledge is significant to this study because the study explores what teachers said they learnt in subject cluster. Furthermore, the study explores the various knowledge teachers acquire in professional development initiatives.

Shulman (1987) is the first researcher to identify a knowledge base for teachers in order to establish the knowledge teachers need to know. He divided the knowledge required by teachers into seven categories: knowledge of content; knowledge of pedagogy; knowledge of curriculum; knowledge of learners and learning; knowledge of contexts of schooling; pedagogical content knowledge; and knowledge of educational philosophies, goals, and objectives (Shulman, 1987).

Grossman (1990) re-categorised these seven categories identified by Shulman (1987), merging them into four: general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, subject matter knowledge and the knowledge of context. These were employed in this study to make sense of data collected from teachers' statements on their learning in the subject cluster. These adopted categories of teacher knowledge, according to Grossman (1990), are discussed below.

2.5.2 General pedagogical knowledge (GPK)

Grossman (1990) describes general pedagogical knowledge (GPK) as the knowledge of various teaching, classroom management and assessment strategies. According to Grossman (1990, p.6), general pedagogical knowledge:

> Includes a body of general knowledge, beliefs, and skills related to teaching: knowledge and beliefs concerning learning and learners; knowledge of general principles of instruction, such as academic learning time (Carroll, 1963), wait-time (Rowe, 1974) or small-group instruction (Cohen, 1986); knowledge and skills related to classroom management (Doyle, 1986); and knowledge and beliefs about the aims and purposes of education.

Thus, it can be assumed that teachers acquiring GPK will generally understand their specialized subject, and the skills and knowledge required for how to teach it. Acquiring this knowledge will expose teachers to various teaching strategies, to interpreting and following the annual teaching plan or to setting the pace for their subject as per the policy document.

In other words, GPK allows teachers to acquire knowledge on how to teach and deal with any aspects regarding teaching strategies and classroom management in which they are able to control or discipline the learner and handle matters of the curriculum.

2.5.3 Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)

Grossman (1990) explains that teachers in their practice draw upon the general pedagogical knowledge (GPK) and the subject matter knowledge (SMK). Furthermore, teachers need to draw upon their own knowledge of teaching that subject matter and that knowledge is known as the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Shulman (cited in Grossman, 1990, p.7) asserts that PCK is the knowledge:

> Which goes beyond knowledge of the subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching…Within the category of pedagogical content knowledge I include, for the most regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representations of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations.

Grossman (1990) explains that in the concept of PCK, teachers need to express and develop the subject in a manner that is easily accessible to others. They interpret the specific content and apply this pedagogy in a manner that will make sense to learners. They must draw from their subject matter knowledge, on specific topics, establish learners' prior knowledge and conceptions, and use these to design an appropriate presentation of the content to be learnt by the learners (Grossman, 1990).

Grossman (1990) describes PCK as comprising of four central elements. The first element involves knowledge and belief in relation to teaching the subject at different grade levels. The intended knowledge and beliefs will be shown in the teachers' goals for teaching the specific subject matter.

The second element involves knowledge relating to learner understanding, conceptions and misconceptions regarding the specific topics in subject matter. Teachers must establish the learners' prior knowledge, determine what the learners find easy and difficult, formulate strategies and design appropriate presentations of the topic.

The third element includes the teacher knowledge of curriculum materials available. They are expected to be designers of teaching and learning materials. Lastly, is the knowledge relating to instructional strategies and representation for teaching specific topics. Teachers use different teaching strategies in their practice and they require the PCK to enable them to choose an appropriate strategy that will be effective in teaching that specific topic.

According to Grossman (1990, p.9):

> Experienced teachers may possess rich repertoires of metaphors, experiments, activities, or explanations that are particularly effective for teaching a particular topic, while beginning teachers are still in the process of developing a repertoire of instructional strategies and representations.

These four elements are significant to this study because they form part of teacher learning and professional development.

2.5.4 Subject matter knowledge (SMK)

Subject matter knowledge (SMK) is the knowledge of the subject content that needs to be taught. According to Grossman (1990, p.6), this includes the knowledge of the content of that

particular subject, referring to the SMK as the "knowledge of the major facts and concepts within the field and the relationships among them".

In this study, SMK is significant because it refers to teacher understanding of the basic concepts of their specialization. Understanding these basic concepts and how they are related, equips teachers with the ability to use their SMK for teaching.

Grossman (1990) explains that a lack of SMK may lead to teachers misinterpreting or misrepresenting the content to be taught. Thus, their lack of SMK can affect their classroom practice, and what content they teach and how they teach it.

2.5.5 Knowledge of context

Grossman (1990) suggests that teachers need to understand the context in which they teach so that they are able to adapt to the school settings and to the learners. According to Grossman (1990, p.9), knowledge of context:

Includes knowledge of districts in which teachers work, including the opportunities, expectations, and constraints posed by the districts; knowledge of the school setting, including the school "culture", departmental guidelines, and other contextual factors at the school level that affect instruction; and knowledge of specific students and communities, and the student's backgrounds, families, particular strengths, weaknesses, and interests.

Thus, teachers require knowledge of the physical environment they teach in, knowledge of the specific learners, their backgrounds, families, communities and the socio-economic issues they face. It is essential for teachers to understand this context in which they work, because it will allow them flexibility and adaptability. They will then be able to adjust their teaching methods in the manner that is suitable for the learners to understand the content. In particular, knowledge of context enables teachers to use practical examples to explain the content relating to the context that the learners are familiar with.

The discussion on teacher knowledge is significant to this study because the study aimed to explore what teachers learn and how they learn in subject cluster. Discussing the four types of teacher knowledge will assist in identifying and analysing the knowledge teachers say they acquire and how the knowledge contributes to their professional development.

The next section focuses on the definition of PLCs and provides a discussion of the characteristics and the benefits of these communities.

2.6 What are professional learning communities?

In addition to Grossman's (1990) four categories of teacher knowledge, Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of PLCs is also drawn from. Although other authors of PLCs are drawn from to support the discussion, I used Stoll et al.'s (2006) definition of PLCs as the main definition for this study.

Stoll et al. (2006, p.223) define PLCs as the term that usually refers to:

> A group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way, operating as a collective enterprise.

According to Stoll et al. (2006) teachers critically evaluate their teaching practices continually, meetings are not once-off but ongoing. In this community teachers engage in reflective action and share teaching experiences with one another and work collaboratively to promote learners' learning.

2.6.1 Characteristics of professional learning communities

Stoll et al. (2006) identified five characteristics of professional learning communities (PLCs) that will be discussed below. These are: shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration and group, as well as individual learning in promoted.

2.6.1.1 Shared values and vision

The first characteristic of PLCs that Stoll et al. (2006) identified is that members in a group have shared values and vision. It is significant for these members to have a shared vision, because it ensures that they do not deviate from the main focus, which is learner learning (Stoll at al., 2006). Moreover, the shared values and vision teachers may have are important because an individual teacher's personal independence has the potential to reduce teacher effectiveness within the group, since other group members cannot rely on that specific teacher to fulfil the objectives of the group (Stoll et al., 2006). The members of the PLC with shared values are able to make collective ethical decisions.

2.6.1.2 Collective responsibility

The second characteristic of PLCs identified by Stoll et al. (2006) is collective responsibility. Teachers in PLCs collectively take responsibility for learner learning.

Stoll et al. (2006) suggest that when teachers have collective responsibility they can maintain their commitment to the group. Teachers become accountable and give their fair share of contribution to the group.

2.6.1.3 Reflective professional inquiry

Stoll et al. (2006) identified the third characteristic of PLCs as reflective professional inquiry. Teachers in PLCs enjoy shared personal practice, they engage in "reflective dialogue" and, in a reflective manner, critically interrogate their practice.

They examine and share their practice through observing one another, in joint planning and curriculum development. According to Stoll et al. (2006), teachers share knowledge through interaction, they seek new knowledge and apply that knowledge with the intention of improving learner learning.

2.6.1.4 Collaboration

The fourth characteristic of PLCs highlighted by Stoll et al. (2006) is collaboration. Teachers in PLCs engage in collaborative action, which is their involvement in teacher development activities.

In PLCs they collaboratively analyse the learner assessment tasks. Additionally, they work interdependently to determine student learning. Teachers engage in collaborative action to assist one another and learn from each other. In a PLC, there is a sense of independency amongst teachers, as they link the collaborative activities with the achievement of a shared purpose. In other words, they work towards achieving goals that they would not achieve if they were not involved in collaborative action (Stoll et al., 2006).

2.6.1.5 Group, as well as individual learning is promoted

A fifth characteristic of PLCs highlighted by Stoll et al. (2006) is that both group and individual learning is promoted. Teachers, as learners, engage in collective learning, in which they create knowledge together through dialogue and interaction, debate about issues relating

to their teaching practice, and interpret and share information among themselves communally (Stoll et al., 2006).

Moreover, learning within PLCs transfers from individual learning to collective learning through critical interrogation of their practice and reflective action. King and Newmann (cited in Stoll et al., 2006, p.234) highlight the link between the individual and the collective:

> To be sure, high quality instruction depends upon the competence and attitudes of each individual teacher. But in addition, teachers' individual knowledge, skills and dispositions must be put to use in an organised, collective enterprise. That is, social resources must be cultivated, and the desired vision for social resources within a school can be summarized as professional community.

Both the transfer of learning from an individual to a collective and the creation of knowledge are significant in PLCs. As teachers interact and engage in dialogue, they share and design resources, and get exposure of others' ideas and experiences.

Hipp et al. (2008) explain that, as teachers learn collaboratively, it is expected there will be an improvement in learner learning. Change cannot happen individually or in isolation, but it can happen when teachers work collaboratively. It can be summed up in this way: "the focus is not just on individual teachers' professional learning but of professional learning within a community context – a community of learners, and the notion of collective learning" (Stoll et al., 2006, p.225).

These five characteristics of PLCs explained in this section are used to describe the characteristics of the Business Studies subject cluster studied in this research.

2.6.2 Activities in professional learning communities

According to Lieberman and Mace (2008), evidence exists that when teachers participate in a learning community they learn best. In a study conducted by Wells and Feun (2013), they documented the progress of eight middle schools that were engaged in the process of implementing PLC concepts, identifying the following activities of PLCs, shown in Table 2 below:

Activities in professional learning communities
• Teachers meet with teachers who teach the same course
• Teachers discuss what and when they want to teach
• Teachers determine the most essential outcomes for courses
• Teachers develop common assessments for their courses
• Teachers examine and compare student learning results
• Teachers develop a plan of assistance for the students
• Teachers discuss instructional methods
• Teachers learn something useful from other members
• Teachers change the way they teach, based on their work
• Teachers work to achieve a common goal
• Teachers seek new teaching methods, testing and reflecting on results
• Teachers agree on what a learning community should be
• Teachers agree on the use of common assessments
• Teachers agree on the need to collaborate
• Teachers agree on plans for students who are not learning

Table 2: Activities in PLCs adopted from Wells and Feun, 2013

2.6.3 Benefits of professional learning communities

As Stoll et al. (2006, p. 229) have emphasised, "a key purpose of PLCs is to enhance teacher effectiveness as professionals, for students' ultimate benefit". The benefit of teacher participation in PLCs is that it improves both their teaching practice and learner achievement through a collective searching for ways of improve learning (Botha, 2012).

Darling-Hammard (cited in Well & Feun, 2013, p.236) support this, reporting that "evidence exists that schools in which teachers act in collaborative settings to deeply examine teaching and learning, and then discuss effective instructional practices, show academic results for students more quickly than schools that do not". Therefore, teacher involvement in PLCs gives hope for improved their practice and learner achievement.

Similar to Stoll et al. (2006), Botha (2012) asserts that teacher participation in PLCs can be beneficial in the sense that teachers become learner-centred since the focus is on learner learning, so teaching culture is improved. In addition to this, they receive self-empowerment and continuous learning through collaboration as a result of improvement in teaching practice.

In the study mentioned in the previous section conducted by Wells and Feun (2013), documenting eight middle schools' implementation of PLC concepts, the major benefit of PLC work mentioned by teachers, was sharing. They benefited by sharing of materials, commonly agreeing about lessons, and receiving clarity on the purpose behind the work. Furthermore, they became more exposed to administrative expectation, year-to-year changes that came up and to the use of common assessment.

2.7   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the literature review relating to teacher learning and teacher professional development, in particular, the different types of teacher knowledge required by Business Studies teachers. The conceptual framework was presented, on which the analysis of this study was based. It concluded with a discussion on professional learning communities.

The next chapter presents the research design and the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore what Business Studies teachers in uMgugundlovu District say they learnt in subject cluster and how they said they learnt in subject cluster, also to understand the Business Studies teachers views about the importance of subject cluster and how it contributed to their professional development.

This chapter documents the research design and methodology employed in this study. The chapter commences by giving an explanation of the interpretive paradigm, the research paradigm and approach adopted. This is followed by the process of selection of the participants, an explaination of the research methods and tools employed in data collection, and the procedure followed for data analysis. There is then a discussion on trustworthiness and ethical considerations. This chapter closes with the discussion on the limitations of this study.

The three critical questions this study aimed to answer are:

1. What do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?
2. How do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?
3. What are the Business Studies teachers' views about the importance of the subject cluster and how it contributes to their professional development?

3.2 The research paradigm and approach

Guba and Lincoln (cited in Elshafie, 2013, p.5) define a "paradigm as 'the basic belief system or worldview' which has an impact on the researcher's choice of epistemology, ontology and methodology of the research". Similarly, Willis (cited in Taylor & Medina, 2013) states that a paradigm is a world view, framework or a comprehensive belief system that guides the research. Elshafie (2013, p.5) gives the following explanation:

> Ontology refers to the nature of reality. Guba and Lincoln (1994) mention that the ontological assumptions are concerned with the question 'what is there that can be known?' or 'what is the nature of reality?' Epistemology refers to the

theory of knowledge. In the words of Guba (1990), epistemology asks, "What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?"

Elshafie (2013) identified three major research paradigms, namely: the positivist, interpretive and critical paradigms. This study is located within the interpretive paradigm; however, the positivist and the critical paradigm are briefly discussed, before an in-depth the explanation of the interpretive paradigm and this study focus.

In the positivist paradigm, as Bunniss and Kelly (2010) explain it, the nature of reality is fixed in accordance to the objective truth: "positivists assume that reality is objective and is measurable using properties that are independent of the researcher and his or her instruments" (Nundkomaar, 2016, p.48). In the positivist paradigm, the nature of knowledge is objective and generalisable theory can be created to depict the world accurately. Furthermore, the aim of the positivist researcher is to find what exists through prediction and control and uses scientific methods to develop abstract laws to specify and predict patterns.

In the critical paradigm, the researcher sees reality as shaped by social, political, cultural, economic and other dynamics. The nature of knowledge is mediated by power relations and therefore continuously under review. The researcher believes the world is characterized by unequal power relations. The nature of the approach to research focuses on emancipation. The research is used to visualise how things could change for the better and seeks to represent diverse and under-represented views (Bunniss & Kelly, 2010). The research focuses on bringing social change, so the aim is to critique and transform society to make it more equal and fair. Critical paradigm research may use both the quantitative and the qualitative methods, often in a participatory way.

This study employs the interpretive paradigm to explore teachers' views with the intention of understanding teacher learning and professional development through the professional learning community. In the interpretive approach, participants express their views on their experiences and this allows the researcher to establish a better understanding of their meaning, opinions and views, in this case, of teachers (Mitchell & Jonker, 2013).

According to Taylor and Medina (2013), the interpretive paradigm allows researchers to construct a rich insight into life-world experiences of teachers, learners, school, the classroom culture and the communities in which they operate.

I chose the interpretive paradigm as appropriate for this study, as I was attempting to understand the stated nature of Business Studies teachers' learning and the manner of their learning in the Business Studies subject cluster. I sought to gain an understanding of the researched circumstances from the viewpoint of these Business Studies teachers, who were involved in becoming reflective practitioners, and to gain an understanding of their lived experiences (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Interpretivist philosophy assumes that there are multiple complex realities, and that these realities do not exist independently, but are socially constructed (Elshafie, 2013).

The aim of interpretive research is to understand these complex realities through the social actors. Shar and Al-Bargi (2013) assert that interpretive research aims to explore the individuals' interpretation and understanding of social circumstances. In this research, I conducted observations of the Business Studies subject cluster and interviewed each Business Studies teacher to obtain their individual interpretation of what they said they learnt and how they learnt in the subject cluster.

When conducting educational research, the novice researcher, like myself, must be familiar with all three major paradigms and their underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions (Shar & Al-Bargi, 2013).

Moreover, it is significant for the researcher to know how these assumptions are set forth in the methodology and methods chosen and in the findings of a research study. Each research paradigm has its own ontology and epistemology, which influence the methodology and methods used.

Methodology is the strategy the researcher uses to find the unknown, whereas the methods refer to the data collection instruments. There is a general belief that the paradigms we construct in our minds have a powerful effect, as they have an impact on the manner in which we see the world (Covey, cited in Shar & Al-Bargi, 2013).

This study is qualitative, located within an interpretive paradigm, employing the case study approach. Polkinghorne (2005, p.137) explains that, "qualitative research is inquiry aimed at describing and clarifying human experience as it appears in people's lives. Researchers using qualitative methods gather data that serve as evidence for their distilled descriptions". Qualitative researchers collect textual or verbal data, qualitative data which are collected when the researcher requires in-depth description. In qualitative research, when data are

collected the concern is not with figures or numbers, but instead the concern is getting rich descriptive experiences of the participants. This study explored the participant Business Studies teachers' views about the importance of their subject cluster. I therefore required an in-depth description of how their participation in the subject cluster contributes to their professional development.

Strauss and Corbin (cited in Hoepfl, 1997, p.48) explain qualitative research as, "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification". Furthermore, qualitative research conducts the study through the views and experiences of the participants (Ndemuweda, 2011), whereas quantitative researchers look for clarification and understanding of specific situations. According to Creswell (cited in Makwara, 2015), qualitative research provides room for participants to elaborate on their views and allows the researcher flexibility to alter questions when the need arises. In the context of this study, this allowed me, as a researcher, to probe for in-depth understanding.

I chose a qualitative approach, because collecting data that give full descriptions of the phenomenon are not only significant to me as a researcher, but also important from the readers' perspective. Qualitative research provides detailed and insight into people's experiences of the world and the participants in this study were afforded an opportunity to share their lived experiences in teaching Business Studies. Hoepfl (1997) explains that qualitative research is employed to acquire a better understanding of any phenomenon when not much is known about it, or to acquire new perspectives on the phenomenon in which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information that may be a challenge to convey in a quantitative manner.

The natural setting is used as a source of data in qualitative research, and, as a researcher, I acted as what Hoepfl (1997) describes as the "human instrument" of data collection. Since the setting was naturalistic, I was able to observe and describe the subject cluster, acquiring primary information. I collected this through observations of teacher interaction during the subject cluster meetings and conducting individual interviews.

3.3 Case study approach

I chose a case study approach to make an in-depth study of one particular case, to capture the participants' lived experiences and to study real people in real situations. A case study may refer "to an individual, an event, a social group, organisation or institution" states Jupp (cited in Shar & Al-Bargi, 2013, p.258). It is an approach that applies in-depth investigations into any social phenomenon.

Baxter and Jack (cited in Leonard, 2014) assert that case studies are appropriate when investigating the boundary between a contemporary phenomenon and the real-life context. The contemporary phenomenon I explored was teacher learning. Researchers can use single or multiple case studies. The design type used in this study was a single case design type, because it used a single subject cluster.

It was appropriate to use a case study because it investigated what Business Studies teachers say they learn and how they learn in the subject cluster, and also how this learning applies to their teaching practice. Case study allows the use of different data collection tools, and this study used interviews, observations and document analysis. Using more than one tool to collect data is known as triangulation. The particular case that I studied was a Business Studies cluster located in Siyanqoba circuit (not the real name) in the uMgungundlovu District.

Although case study was viewed as appropriate for this study, there are limitations in employing a case study in research. Leonard (2014) explains that a weakness case studies have is limited generalizability, so findings in case study research cannot be generalized to a population. However, Gomm et al. (2000, p.3) assert that "it is sometimes argued that the aim of case study research should be to capture cases in their uniqueness, rather than to use them as a basis for wider generalization or for theoretical inference of some kind".

Irrespective of the criticism, I believe that a case study was a suitable method to answer the research questions, because I produced data that were collected from direct interaction with the participants and the intention was not to generalize the findings. Gomm et al. (2000) also explain that choosing a case study is advantageous because it allows accessibility. I had access to the unique subject cluster and unique individuals and this would allow the necessary stakeholders to see things through the researcher's eyes. The researcher expresses the Business Studies teachers' viewpoints.

3.4 Sampling procedure

Sampling involves making decisions about the setting, behaviour or people intended to be observed. Sapsford and Jupp (2006, p.26) explain that:

> A sample is a set of elements selected in some way from a population. The aim of sampling is to save time and effort, but also to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of the population status in terms of whatever is being researched.

Makwara (2015) asserts that sampling involves the selection of the unit of analysis from the population to be investigated by the researcher. Furthermore, she explains that the population is a team of people with similarities.

This study was conducted using purposive sampling. I specifically chose which people to include in the sample. According to Polkinghorne (2005), purposive sampling involves selecting people intentionally to learn extensively about their experience. I purposely chose the Business Studies teachers in the further education and training (FET phase to participate in this study.

3.4.1 Subject cluster site

This study was conducted in a subject cluster situated within Siyanqoba circuit (not the real name) in the uMgungundlovu District of KwaZulu-Natal. The subject cluster consists of teachers from schools based in the same geographical area, including the subject cluster co-ordinator. These teachers were teaching Business Studies at the FET phase. The population of the learners they taught was mainly African and the majority were faced with various socio-economic issues, especially poverty, due to their parents being unemployed.

Any Business Studies subject cluster within Siyanqoba circuit could have been chosen for the exploration of teacher learning. However, this particular subject cluster was purposely chosen mainly because of its accessibility. Gaining easy access to the subject cluster and the participants was vital during the data collection stage. Since the schools were within the same geographical area, I was able to make arrangements to meet with the participants outside their subject cluster meetings and it was easy for me to attend subject cluster meetings for observation.

3.4.2 Selection of participants

A total of nine participants were chosen, of which seven were teachers, one was a subject cluster co-ordinator, who was also a teacher, and one was a subject advisor. This subject cluster actually consisted of ten members, but three members were not from the same geographical area and joined this group because they identified more with the schools in this cluster than with the schools in their areas. This brought the total number of teachers to thirteen.

Out of these thirteen members, only eight teachers, together with the subject cluster co-ordinator, were interviewed. The other three members could not commit themselves and, due to time constraints, they were unavailable outside the subject cluster time. The schools were located close to each other for easy access to the participants. I also took into consideration the availability of the participants in relation to time constraints and that the schools were located within a reasonable travelling distance, which made it easy to conduct individual interviews and attend their cluster meetings for observations.

Other stakeholders were interviewed in this study, other than the teacher participants. The cluster co-ordinator and the Business Studies subject advisor were also interviewed for the purpose of triangulation.

Names of the participants and the schools where they taught were not mentioned, and pseudonyms were used for the purpose of anonymity. The participants were all in possession of a formal qualification obtained at a tertiary institution. Their teaching experience and the number of years teaching Business Studies ranged between eight and eighteen years. A detailed profile of each participant is provided in Chapter Four.

3.5 Data collection methods

Individual interviews, observations and document analysis were used as data collection methods.

3.5.1 Interviews

The data collection method chosen for this study is the interview. An interview is a discussion between a researcher and the participant in which the researcher asks particular questions in order to obtain particular information. Kvale (cited in Polkinghorne, 2005)

describes an interview as a "professional conversation". In addition, Polkinghorne (2005, p.142) explains that "the conversation consists of a give-and-take dialectic in which the interviewer follows the conversational threads opened up by the interviewee and guides the conversation towards producing a full account of the experience under investigation".

Conducting interviews allowed me to obtain information and knowledge from the participants, and to discover their perceptions and thoughts. Potter (cited in Polkinghorne, 2005, p.142) concurs that interviewing is a "technique of gathering data from humans by asking them questions and getting them to react verbally". I chose to conduct the interviews because of the advantage that, as a researcher, I was present to clarify questions for my interviewees and was able to ask other questions to find out more information. Interviews allowed for the collection of detailed and descriptive data.

The type of interview used in this study was semi-structured, rather than structured, interview in which a set of predetermined questions are designed in an orderly manner which may require close answers. I decided not to use the unstructured interview in which the topic is introduced and the participants answer as they like, but rather decided to use the semi-structured interview because it allowed some flexibility even though it involved a set of pre-determined questions. It made a provision for additional questions, which allowed probing in seeking clarity about the topic being studied (Nundkomaar, 2016). A semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to rephrase questions if necessary to obtain more detailed information (Makwara, 2015).

The data collection instrument used was the semi-structured interview schedule, which comprised the questions the interviewer used during the interview to explore the topic being studied. According to Hoepfl (1997, p.52):

> Although it is prepared to insure that basically the same information is
> obtained from each person, there are no predetermined responses, and in semi-
> structured interviews the interviewer is free to probe and probe and explore
> within these predetermined inquiry areas.

I designed three different semi-structured interview schedules: one for the teacher, one for the subject cluster co-ordinator and the third for the subject advisor. They are all attached as Appendices F, G, and H. The interview schedule for the teachers has twenty-eight questions, which, are divided under the following sub-headings: biographical information, background

information, what do teachers say they learn in subject cluster, how do teachers say they learn in subject cluster and teachers' views on the value of subject cluster. The questions are structured in such a way that they elicit answers under the sub-headings, as these are linked to the research critical questions.

I structured the interview schedule according to my research questions in the following manner: For the first critical question, what do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?, I designed questions for the teachers to respond about which PLCs they participate in, how these PLCs are formulated, the frequency of their meeting, what contribution the individual teacher makes towards teacher learning and professional development in their PLCs and what they learn from the other teachers in their PLCs.

For the second critical question, how do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster? the teachers responded about what new strategies they learn in their PLCs, how they learn from other teachers in PLCs, what activities they engage in and if the strategies learnt in PLCs are applicable in their teaching practice.

For the third critical question, what are the Business Studies teachers' views about the importance of the subject cluster and how it contributes to their professional development? the teachers gave their perceptions on the value of the PLCs, commented on whether they find useful learning from colleagues, how they benefit from it, and on their likes or dislikes of the PLCs they have attended. In addition, they discussed their overall view of the PLCs and stated whether they consider PLCs to be valuable.

The semi-structured interview schedule enabled me to ask questions generally on the PLCs that teachers participated in. Thereafter, I focused in and probed more regarding activities in the subject cluster. I found it appropriate to use the semi-structured interview to collect data as it allowed me to gain access to the participants' lived experience. By using open-ended questions, the participants were enabled to unpack their experience in a descriptive manner (Polkinghorne, 2005). Furthermore, the method was appropriate because I gained alternative perspectives regarding the experience of the Business Studies teachers in relation to this study. According to Polkinghorne (2005, p.143), "the researcher does not learn more about an experience when a participant's account simply duplicates what the researcher already knows. The most useful accounts describe unexpected and unanticipated aspects of an experience".

I used audio recording equipment to record the interviews with the participants. Prior to their commencement, I had requested permission to record, which had been granted. Although audio equipment has the weakness of possible technical failure, recording the interviews was more advantageous than taking down notes hurriedly, because recordings make it easier for the researcher to concentrate on the interview (Hoepfl, 1997). The recordings were transcribed and analysed. Transcribing means that the original oral form was converted into written form. The conversion of the recorded data into written mode made it easy to read when analysing the qualitative data (Polkinghorne, 2005).

In addition to interviews, I used observations to collect data. I designed an observation schedule to collect more data and to confirm the data provided during the interviews. Document analysis was alsoused as data collection method.

3.5.2 Observations

Observations were conducted to validate the data collected during the interviews. According to Polkinghorne (2005), observation is the method of gathering data through interaction with an object, often another human being. Through observation, the researcher is able to observe the behaviour of the participants and document the properties of this behaviour. Observing the participants in their natural setting is another form of collecting data in naturalistic research (Hoepfl, 1997). Nohiya (2015) concurs that conducting observation allows the researcher an opportunity to collect data from the naturalistic setting.

I conducted observations on two occasions. I observed this cluster in their teacher-initiated content workshop that was held to discuss the Business Studies curriculum. I also had an opportunity to observe a content and moderation workshop organized by the Business Studies subject advisor, which presented me with an opportunity to observe the participants' roles and their engagement on these occasions. Conducting an observation led to more understanding of the context than conducting interviews alone (Patton cited in Hoepfl, 1997).

The type of observation used was a semi-structured observation instead of using a structured observation in which a researcher has an idea of what he or she is looking for. Westover (cited in Makwara, 2015) explains that in the structured observation the researcher will make an observation of what has already been planned. The researcher uses an observation schedule which will have the observation categories planned out in advance.

I decided not to use unstructured observation in which the researcher does not have a checklist to go through, such as ticking of boxes or scoring specific activities the researcher sees happening. In this type of observation, the researcher writes a free descriptive observation of what he or she sees. Instead, I decided to conduct semi-structured observations because data could be collected directly without relying on others' viewpoints. As a researcher, I was able to capture an event in the subject cluster accurately.

I designed an observation schedule under five sub-headings, namely: introduction of the session, organisation of the session, content delivery, assessment knowledge and closing the session. In each sub-heading, I observed both the facilitator's role and the participants' roles.

In the introduction to the session I observed the facilitator's role in opening the subject cluster meeting, stating the objectives and points for discussion as well as the participants' response to the introduction and their interaction. In the organisation of the session, I observed any use of visual aids and hand-outs given to the participants and whether the facilitator created a positive climate. I observed the participants' seating arrangement; in this meeting, the desks and chairs were arranged in an oval shape facing the board. All the teachers had eye contact with one another as well as the facilitator.

I observed the facilitator's communication skill, pace and timing of the content delivery and from the participants I observed what and how they may have been learning. Additionally, I observed the facilitator's assessment knowledge, handling of questions, group support and guidance and individual teacher support. At the closing of the session, I observed the facilitator giving a summary of the points discussed and identifying links with the following session as well participants' response to instructions for a follow-up.

Conducting an observation provided an opportunity to see what the participants could not see. According to Sapsford and Jupp (2006, p.59), "it may require the trained eye of the observer to see the familiar as strange and provide the detailed description required". Patton (cited in Polkinghorne, 2005) explains that the quality of data collected during the observation is dependent on the competency of the researcher: "a skilled observer is able to identify and describe observations that will contribute to a clarified and satiated description" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p.144).

Although it is advantageous to conduct an observation, there are also limitations. Participants may behave differently because they are being observed and they may not give accurate representations of how they behave naturally. This effect is known as the Hawthorne effect.

3.5.3 Document analysis

As described by Polkinghorne (2005), documentary evidence could be in written form, verbal, cultural artifacts or visual such as photographs. In this study, document analysis was employed as a data collection method. Documents analysed included past and current DoE policies, for example, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) documents outlining the Business Studies curriculum. Other documents collected included written materials given to the participants at their meetings such as worksheets with learner activities; revision material which comprised past matriculation examination papers and matriculation examination guidelines; and learners' portfolios that teachers brought for the moderation workshop.

3.6 Data analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (cited in Hoepfl, 1997) define qualitative data analysis as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p.54). Bernard and Ryan (2010) concur that analysis is when the researcher searches for patterns in data or concepts that will find explanations for why those patterns are there in the first place.

In making sense of the data collected, the content analysis method was used for data analysis. Content analysis considers verbal material but may also be used to analyse non-verbal material. Smith (2000) explains that content analysis is often used to analyse written or transcribed verbal material that is usually referred to as 'text'. According to Thayer et al. (2007), content analysis "is a research method that empirically examines the characteristics of messages" (p.268).

I selected a content analysis method to analyse the data in order give in-depth descriptions of the meanings of the participant experiences. This method allowed me to link the common participant descriptions to show their shared experiences.

The interviews conducted with the participants were recorded using the audio equipment. I commenced data analysis by listening to the recordings and, thereafter, I started transcribing the recorded data. The transcribed data were typed and saved on a USB. Once completed, hard copies of the transcribed data were printed and I read them several times to get a sense of the whole interview. The transcribed interviews were labelled as primary documents.

They were analysed for themes and categories. Data were analysed according to the responses received from the research questions. I read the transcribed data several times and identified themes that showed teacher learning in a specific domain of knowledge.

Data collected during the interviews responded to what Business Studies teachers said they learnt and how they said they learnt in subject clusters and to their views about the importance of the subject cluster and how it contributes to their professional development. Once data were collected, I analysed it, interpreted it and then presented the analysis. The data were analysed under three categories which address the three critical research questions. I formulated a content analysis coding system which categorized the data according to the information I needed to discover.

The first category consisted of the responses to the question, what do Business Studies teachers say they learnt in their subject cluster. The data were classified according to Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge. The second category consisted of teacher responses to how they said they learnt in the subject cluster and the data were analysed according to Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of professional learning communities (PLCs). Thirdly, the in-depth teacher views on the value of the subject cluster and whether the it contributes to their professional development.

In addition, I gave an interpretation of what their responses actually mean in relation to teacher learning through the PLCs as significant sites to facilitate teacher learning. I also used my observation notes to create a link between what the teachers said and what I observed during the subject cluster meetings.

The findings are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

3.7 Trustworthiness

The aim of this study was to obtain an extensive understanding of teacher learning in PLCs, particularly the Business Studies subject cluster. Hoepfl (1997) explains that consideration should be given to the reader or audience who will be judging or using the findings of the qualitative research. According to Glaser and Strauss (cited in Hoepfl, 1997), "researcher and readers, 'share a joint responsibility' for establishing the value of the qualitative research product" (p.57). The qualitative study should achieve trustworthiness, which means that "a study embodies the views of the research participants as accurately as possible in the findings" (Lietz & Zayas, cited in Makwara, 2015, p.43).

To ensure trustworthiness of the data, I described and interpreted it in a way that gives truthful meaning by quoting the exact words of the participants. As this study was concerned with obtaining the meanings and lived experiences of the participants, at the data collection stage of recording the interviews, I immediately emailed the recordings to myself for safekeeping in case of data loss or audio recording equipment malfunction. Transcribing the interviews allowed me to get more accurate data than if I had written it as notes during the interviews.

At the data analysis stage, I gave the transcripts to the participants to check whether they accurately reflected what they had said during the interviews. Furthermore, I gave a clear analysis of the data to enable the reader to have confidence in the findings and this I have done by giving in-depth details on how this study was conducted.

The above strategies show the data trustworthiness because more than one data collection method was used, referred to as triangulation, which confirms the data collected. This serves as evidence that the researcher has not made unsubstantiated claims.

3.8 Ethical considerations and gaining access

It is significant that ethical issues are taken into consideration when conducting a research. According to Brevik (2013), "ethics involves making normative judgements according to a standard for what is right and good" (p.9). The researcher needs to obtain consent from necessary stakeholders and also receive an ethical clearance. Sapsford and Jupp (2006) explain that one of the principles of research ethics is that the subject researched should not bring harm to the participants: "research participants are protected from undue intrusion,

distress, physical discomfort, personal embarrassment or psychological or other harm" (p.294).

Furthermore, Sapsford and Jupp (2006) explain the other ethical principle stipulating that nothing should be done regarding the subject of research without the participants' agreement. The researcher should supply adequate knowledge or sufficient information so that the participants know what they are consenting to. This concept is referred to as 'informed consent' (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). According to the University of KwaZulu-Natal Guidelines for Completing Ethics Applications, the informed consent is only valid if the participants understand the information contained in it and the researcher is responsible for making certain that the participants understand. In addition, it should be emphasized that participants grant voluntary consent.

Prior to conducting the research, I applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and permission was granted (Appendix A). Furthermore, I applied for and received approval to conduct research in the province of KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN DoE) institutions from the Head of Department of Education (see Appendix B).

In addition, I drafted a letter for the gatekeepers (the school principals), requesting permission to gain access to the schools to conduct interviews with the Business Studies teachers participating in this study (Appendix C). The University of KwaZulu-Natal Guidelines for Completing Ethics Applications stipulates that where a study is to be conducted in a host organisation (in my case, the school), a letter granting the permission is required from the host organisation. The letter explained the research study and the research questions that the study would address. I communicated with the subject advisor and explained my intention to use one of the subject clusters she is responsible for in the district. I explained the study and the questions the study aims to answer and informed her that I had applied for and obtained permission from both the KZN DoE and UKZN to conduct the study.

The Subject advisor welcomed the request and advised me to contact the cluster co-ordinator and request permission. Fortunately, I was familiar with one of the teachers in that cluster. We recognized each other from when I was studying towards my Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and I was based at her school for my teaching practice in 2010. Lofland

and Lofland (cited in Hoepfl, 1997) believe "researchers are more likely to gain successful access to situations if they make use of contacts that can help remove barriers to entrance" (p.54). Through this teacher, I was able to get in touch with the cluster co-ordinator, who was more than excited to participate in my study. However, she did not want to speak for all the teachers in the cluster group, so I was invited to meet the group to introduce myself and explain my study.

I verbally explained the research study, the data collection methods and that the study would not bring any harm. I explained to the teachers that their names and that of their schools would not be revealed printed and that issues that we discussed in the interviews would remain confidential. Furthermore, Lofland and Lofland (cited in Hoepfl, 1997) explain that it is essential for the researcher to inform the participants about the intention of the study because participants are being requested to "grant access to their lives, their minds [and] their emotions" (p.54).

Out of the population of thirteen teachers, eight (subject cluster co-ordinator included) agreed to participate in the study. The participants signed a declaration (Appendix E) confirming that they understood what was expected from them and that they participated of their own free will. The declaration also stated that the participants could withdraw from the study, should they desire to do so.

3.9 Limitations of the study

Conducting qualitative research allows researchers to acquire different types of knowledge (Hoepfl,1997). This research was based on one circuit within a district, therefore the findings cannot be generalized. However, it was not intended for generalizability, but the aim was to investigate one case in considerable depth. The main aim was to understand the case studied with no interest in empirical generalizability (Gomm et al., 2000). However, data collected from this study may apply to other Business Studies subject clusters in similar environments and teachers in those subject clusters may have experiences similar to the teachers in this study.

As a Business Studies teacher conducting this study, I held a professional position; however, I did not allow my opinions, views and experience to interfere with those of my participants and this minimized bias.

Due to time constraints, I was unable to visit the participants in their classrooms to correlate what and how teachers learn from the individual interviews and how this actually happens in those contexts. To overcome this shortcoming, I interviewed other stakeholders in teacher learning, that is, the cluster co-ordinator, subject advisor and used document analysis to triangulate data.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the research design and the methodology employed in this study. It described the subject cluster used as the case study, the selection of the participants, the data collection methods and the data analysis. Furthermore, the issue of trustworthiness, the ethical considerations adhered to and the limitations were addressed.

The next chapter presents the findings and the analysis of the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore teacher learning of Business Studies teachers through the subject cluster in uMgungundlovu District. This chapter presents findings of the data collected from eight teachers belonging to the same subject cluster, one of which was also the cluster co-ordinator, from eight different schools, and from the subject advisor.

The data presented were mainly obtained from interviews conducted with the teachers, from observations and document analysis. This chapter presents the background information of the teacher participants, and their responses to questions about what and how Business Studies teachers said their learning in the subject cluster.

This chapter also includes the teachers' views on the value of the subject cluster and its contribution towards professional development and on the challenges in teaching Business Studies. Included in this presentation are direct quotations in order to express the participants' experiences so that their voices can be heard. Therefore, this is a qualitative study within the interpretive paradigm.

This chapter provides the findings of the study and also presents the analysis of the data collected in response to following three critical questions:

1. What do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?

2. How do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?

3. What are the views of Business Studies teachers about the importance of the subject cluster and how it contributes to their professional development?

For the purposes of this study, I view the Business Studies subject cluster as a professional learning community in which teachers interact with one another, engaging in different activities in order to achieve professional development. I have used Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge in order to understand what teachers said they learnt in the subject cluster. I also drew from Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of PLCs to make sense of how Business Studies teachers said they learnt in the subject cluster and the activities they

participated in. In addition, I connected Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge with what teachers said they learnt in the subject cluster.

4.2 Background information of the participants

The background information presented in this chapter includes the background of the Business Studies teachers and their schools and that of their subject cluster. This chapter also discusses the challenges that teachers deal with on a daily basis.

4.2.1 Teacher background information

This study involved both male and female Business Studies teachers aged between 31 and 60. The teachers possess a formal tertiary qualification in education. Their teaching experience ranges between 8 and 18 years. While they are currently teaching Business Studies, some have an experience in teaching Economic Management Sciences (EMS), which is one of the commercial subjects within the GET phase and they all teach Business Studies at grade 12 level. The nine participants were provided with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and to protect their identities.

Participant 1: Mrs Mokoena (business studies subject advisor)

Mrs. Mokoena is an African female teacher, aged between 41 and 60. She has a Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree, with specialisations in Economics, Accounting, Business Studies, Mercantile Law and Mathematics Literacy. She has served in the profession for twenty years as a teacher, has taught grades 8 to 12, is currently serving as a Business Studies subject advisor and she has been serving in this position for the past seven years.

Participant 2: Fanelesibonge (subject cluster co-ordinator)

Fanelesibonge is an African female teacher, aged between 41 and 60. She has a Master of Education degree and specialised in English and History. She has served the profession for eighteen years and has been teaching Business Studies since her entry into the profession because her school needed a Business Studies teacher and the post was offered to her. Fanelesibonge has taught grades 10,11 and 12 and is currently teaching Business Studies to grades 11and 12.

Fanelesibonge's school is not much different in comparison to the schools in this subject cluster. According to her:

> *There isn't much difference that I can point out to what one could expect from schools in the township.*

Fanelesibonge mentioned that her school has financial constraints, and although they received a government subsidy, this was not sufficient to cover all the school's needs.

Participant 3: T.O.

T.O. is an African female teacher, aged between 41 and 60. She has an honours degree in management and specialised in Business Studies and Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). She has served the profession for fourteen years and has been teaching Business Studies since her entry into the profession. T.O. has taught grades 8 to 12 and is currently teaching grades 10 and 12.

T.O.'s school is a boarding school that accommodates both day scholars and boarders. In addition to one principal, there are two deputies, 28 educators and three administration clerks. The school management structure employs two housefathers, two housemothers and seven cleaners. T.O. does not express much challenges on the issue of the lack resource.

Participant 4: Za

Za is an African female teacher, aged between 41 and 60. She obtained a Bachelor of Administration degree and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). She specialised in Business Studies and EMS. She has served in the profession for eleven years and has taught Business Studies since her entry into the profession, has taught grades 8 grade 12 and is currently teaching Business Studies grades 11 and 12.

Za described her school as an ordinary township school that experiences insufficient resources, especially textbooks. She mentioned that it is located within a community that cares for the school. She based that conclusion on the fact that although there are security personnel guarding the school, they have not experienced any attempted robberies.

Participant 5: Siphokazi

Siphokazi is an African female teacher, aged between 31 and 40. She has a Senior Teachers Diploma and an Advanced Certificate in Education, specialising in Business Studies, Accounting and EMS. She has served in the profession for fifteen years and has been teaching Business Studies for ten years. She has taught grades 10 to 12 and is currently teaching Business Studies grades 10 to 12.

According to Siphokazi, her school is situated in a township about ten kilometres away from the city centre. Although it is situated in the township, the majority of the learners are from the informal settlements. The majority of the learners in this school are facing socio-economic issues that have a negative impact on both their home and school environments.

There is unemployment in most homes, which contributes to poverty. Due to poverty, there is high absenteeism among the learners, and some who commute to school often find themselves with no taxi fare. Some parents receive social grants, but this is not sufficient to sustain the family.

In addition, there are child-headed homes where learners are orphans who are not only looking after themselves, but also their siblings. There is a lack of parental involvement, as parents do not attend parents' meetings or call in at the school to address their children's misconduct, mainly due to transport costs and illiteracy. Since the school is not a fee-paying, it does buy textbooks and the learners receive free stationery. However, Siphokazi mentioned;

> *We do have resources but not sufficient to make teaching and learning more conducive.*

Participant 6: Mlamuli

Mlamuli is an African male teacher, aged between 31 and 40. He has a Bachelor of Education degree and his specialisations are Business Studies and Computer Application Technology. He has served the profession for nine years and has been teaching Business Studies in those years. Mlamuli has taught grades 10 to 12 and is currently teaching Business Studies to grades 11 and 12.

Mlamuli mentioned that the majority of the learners in his school are from very poor backgrounds. Their families face socio-economic issues such poverty and unemployment, resulting in high levels of absenteeism and, since it is a no fee-paying school, there are insufficient funds to run it, so it often has problems with electricity. The school has rooms that were intended for facilities such as a computer laboratory and a library, but, due to a lack of resources to equip these facilities, they have been turned into normal classrooms used to teach other subjects.

Participant 7: Mkhululi

Mkhululi is an African male teacher, aged between 31 and 40. He obtained a Bachelor of Education degree and his specialisations are Business Studies and Accounting. He has been in the profession for nine years, teaching Business Studies since his entry into the profession. He has taught grades 10 and 12 and is currently still teaching these two grades.

Mkhululi described his school as a performing school in which learners are disciplined and teachers are committed to their school work.

> *This school is performing well considering environment where our learners come from, so this is the one of the best schools where there is potential to perform more better.*

There is a good relationship between the learners, the educators and the school management team. However, Mkhululi did not express much about the issue of insufficient resources.

Participant 8: Salamina

Salamina is a coloured female teacher, aged between 31 and 40. She obtained a Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree and her specialisations are Business Studies and Computer Application Technology. She has served in the profession for ten years and has taught Business Studies since her entry into the profession. She has taught grades 8 to 12 and is currently teaching grades 11 and 12.

Salamina described her school as a performing school in which "*teachers go beyond the call of duty*". She did not mention a lack of resources but said that the school is able to fulfil the process of teaching and learning with the resources they have.

Participant 9: Ndumiso

Ndumiso is an African male teacher, aged between 31 and 40. He has a Bachelor of Education degree and specialised in Accounting, Business Studies and Economics. He has served in the profession for eight years and has taught Business Studies since his entry into the profession. He has taught grades 10 to 12 and is currently teaching Business Studies in grades 11 and 12.

Ndumiso described his school as being no different from any other township schools. According to him, the learners are different from year to year. In some years there are learners who perform very well and, in other years, there are learners with average performance. Ndumiso mentioned that in this school, "*the level of parent involvement is satisfactory even though not hundred percent but is satisfactory"*.

4.2.2   Background information on the cluster

The cluster is situated in the uMgungundlovu District and consists of thirteen schools within Siyanqoba circuit (not the real name). A cluster has been described as teachers from neighbouring schools coming together

to improve the quality of education by sharing resources, expertise and experience among themselves (De Clercq & Phiri, 2013). All the teachers in this subject cluster agree that the Business Studies teachers from different nearby schools come together to form a subject cluster. However, although Siphokazi agreed that the Business Studies subject cluster is formulated according to where the schools are located, she explained that, in her case, her school is in the township, but has been placed in a different circuit due to the geographic area. She joined the Siyanqoba circuit because she shares similar challenges with the teachers in this particular subject cluster

Fanelesibonge, the subject cluster co-ordinator, explained this particular subject cluster:

> *Well, in our cluster we have thirteen schools, eh we we are thirteen, earlier on*
> *I said clusters tend to be formed on a geographical basis, so out of this*
> *thirteen we have ten that really belonging into one geographical area, the*
> *other three, they are outside area. They are supposed to be belonging to other*

clusters, but they felt that they can be comfortable if they work with us, so in

total we are thirteen.

A cluster is made up of teachers teaching the same subject. Among them is a subject cluster co-ordinator chosen by the teachers. According to Fanelesibonge, the subject cluster co-ordinator, there is no system with any particular criteria for choosing the subject cluster co-ordinators, mentioning that in this subject cluster:

It's about a group of teachers who just say, so and so you can be our cluster

co-ordinator. As a result, there ain't any duties written down.

However, her role as subject cluster co-ordinator involves liaising with the subject advisor and the teachers, planning "mini" content workshops, co-ordinating the process of setting the question papers, and preparing for subject cluster moderation.

The subject cluster co-ordinator liaises with the teachers regarding matters specified by the subject advisor as stipulated by the DoE. Mrs Mokoena, the Business Studies subject advisor, is a specialist in Business Studies and she mentioned the duties she performs as the subject advisor. These are listed in the table below.

• Develop curriculum documents in a subject
• Conduct orientation workshops, to discuss content to be taught, assessment tasks, matriculants results and the content gaps highlighted by a diagnostic report
• Conduct content workshops
• Conduct school-based assessment [SBA] Moderation for each term
• Support teachers on methodology
• Workshop novice teachers
• Conduct an assessment development workshop where Assessment Activities are prepared
• Conduct memorandum discussion workshops
• Conduct revision workshops for matriculants
• Conduct facilitation workshops for aspiring lead teachers
• Do curriculum reviews in the district and provincially
• Support teachers through school visits and checking curriculum coverage

Table 3: Business Studies subject advisor's duties

All the teachers in this subject cluster mentioned that they meet at least twice in a term. Fanelesibonge explained that:

> *The plan is that we are supposed to meet at least twice per term, we plan that we must meet at the beginning of the term so that we can discuss how are we going to approach the term, how are we going to do certain topics, assessment and all of that, and then the second time is supposed to be after the assessment, either we are discussing the memorandum for marking or I'm not in this meeting, I'm not including, eh the moderation, because that one is set by the subject advisor, it is known that it has to be in a particular time.*

Moreover, should a need arise for the teachers to meet, she organises a cluster meeting and invites all the teachers participating in the Business Studies cluster. Mrs Mokoena, the subject advisor, has the responsibility of one hundred and fifty-nine schools in the uMgungundlovu District. She explained that each term she has a session with each circuit. She conducts content and assessment workshops for the teachers.

The section below presents data collected from the interviews, observations of the subject cluster meetings and document analysis and is organised to respond to the three critical questions of this study.

4.3 What do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?

In this section, I present the findings on what the teachers in this study said they learnt in the subject cluster. The aim of this section is to answer the first critical question of this study, which is: what do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster? The data presented were collected from individual interviews and observations conducted during the cluster meetings.

Teachers mentioned that they learnt different kinds of knowledge. In making sense of the data collected in response to this question, I employed Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge: general pedagogical knowledge (GPK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), subject matter knowledge (SMK) and knowledge of context. Of the four types of knowledge, teachers mentioned mostly general pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge as the ones they learnt in the subject cluster.

4.3.1 General pedagogical knowledge (GPK)

Teachers acknowledged that in the Business Studies subject cluster, they learnt different teaching and assessment strategies. Grossman (1990) states that GPK refers to the skills and knowledge related to teaching, beliefs about learning and learners and knowledge of general principles of instruction.

The two elements of GPK that teachers mentioned the most, were the teaching and assessment strategies. Teacher participation in the Business Studies subject cluster exposed them to various teaching strategies that were applicable to classroom practice. Mlamuli mentioned that amongst the various strategies learnt:

> *One gets to to choose that, which strategy that he feels that it is best for him, it works better for him to, to, to, to convene the lessons.*

Grossman (1990) states that in acquiring GPK, teachers share different teaching strategies with other teachers. Mkhululi mentioned that, in his participation in the Business Studies subject cluster, teachers assisted each other to develop by learning:

> *How to approach the certain topics and how to conduct i* [the] *revision programmes, so we discuss all those things kwi* [in the] *cluster.*

During the observation conducted, teachers had a common topic that was challenging, year in and year out: the grade 12 topic on legislation. I observed teachers taking turns suggesting various teaching strategies that could be adopted. In acquiring GPK, teachers gain knowledge of general principles of instruction.

All the teachers mentioned that they acquired knowledge on assessment strategies. They made reference to the question papers and that involvement in the cluster enabled them to obtain knowledge on how to set a balanced question paper. For each subject, there is a policy document that stipulates how the assessments should be set according to the cognitive levels. Siphokazi asserted that by getting involved in the cluster she acquired knowledge of setting question papers appropriately in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy. In addition, Mkhululi stated:

> *I learned how to set balanced question papers considering all the cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy and we discussed all those things and then I*

> *learned how to mark the essays, how to mark section B, how to mark section*
> *A, how to analyse all sections and then we learned all those things.*

Moreover, the teachers learnt how to mark accordingly. Siphokazi mentioned that she gained knowledge on how to mark essays. Generally, teachers are required to know how to mark the assessment tasks that they give to their learners. The response received from the teachers suggested that they learnt GPK from the collaborative action of engaging with other teachers in the subject cluster. Mlamuli indicated that he learned about:

> *The way that question papers should be set, like the question paper has got to*
> *balance from section A, section B and section C, that how should one ask*
> *questions, what kind of questions that are lower level, what kind of questions*
> *that are high order level.*

Additionally, teachers acquired knowledge on how to complete the marksheets correctly and received information pertaining to the curriculum. Each subject has its own marksheet designed according to the assessment tasks required to be given to the learners. Mkhululi said that participation in subject cluster:

> *Assist us to make sure ukuthi* [that] *we fill the SBA marksheet correctly.*

The completion of the school-based assessment (SBA) marksheets is the knowledge that teachers must have regardless of their subject specialisation.

Grossman (1990) states that teachers require the knowledge on general principles of instruction. Mrs Mokoena, the subject advisor, mentioned that each term she meets with each cluster and conducts the assessment workshop in order to help "*teachers with assessment skills".* The response received indicated that teachers have exposure to policy expectations and are informed or updated of any changes that are introduced. For example, errata to the Business Studies CAPS document was issued for changes to be taken into consideration. The extract of the errata can be seen in Appendix J.

Mrs Mokoena explained that the teachers are given the following documents to support their teaching: Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), Assessment formal tasks, previous question papers in a document, diagnostic reports, the content supplement booklet, monitoring tools and Continuous Assessment (CASS) grid sheets.

I have observed the Business Studies teachers making reference to the ATP document and according to the ATP in week six of the first term the teachers were expected to have been completed the three topics out of the five topics for the term. Macro Environment: Impact of recent legislation on business, Human Resource Function and Professionalism and Ethics were supposed to have been completed by the week of that meeting in accordance to the completion date set out in the ATP. Other two topics for term one are: Creative thinking and Business Strategies.

Teachers in this cluster were in agreement that the cluster assisted them to acquire what Grossman (1990) refers to as general pedagogical knowledge, which included knowledge of general teaching strategies and addressing issues of assessment.

4.3.2   Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)

Grossman (1990) states that pedagogical content knowledge involves teachers developing and expressing the subject in the way that is easily accessible to the learners. In other words, they interpret the content in the manner that make more sense to the learner. The response received from the teachers indicated that they learnt pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in the Business Studies subject cluster and learnt to deliver the content in a manner that the learners can understand.

T.O. indicated that she learnt teaching methodology in the cluster, while Ndumiso gave credit to the final examination markers for sharing information regarding the teaching strategies. Similarly, Siphokazi elaborated that by participating in the cluster, she learnt how to teach her learners to write a business studies essay to get maximum marks. According to Siphokazi:

> *The educators who normally go to the marking, eh who mark grade 12, they*
> *would come with, eh information and tell us how we should teach our learners*
> *to write essays or to answer questions so that they can get the maximum*
> *marks.*

The Business Studies final examination markers share the information on the criteria and standard of marking applied when marking the learners' scripts. Therefore, teachers receive guidance on how they can teach their learners so that they can achieve maximum marks. Fanelesibonge, the subject cluster co-ordinator, indicated that although she has been teaching

for many years, she still needs help on the methodology and she received that help from the subject cluster:

> *Methodology wise I may have been teaching for so many years, but since, as I have discussed earlier on curriculum change, the approaches to certain topics also change, so I'm, the fact that I've been teaching for so many years does not mean that I know everything, I still have my weaknesses, my challenges, and I still need help from my colleagues, so even in terms of methodology you can get help from the cluster leve, but I would say, that is, I'm reflecting on what is happening in our cluster.*

Teachers need to establish the learners' prior knowledge, what they understand and what they do not, so that they can come up with the methodology that will allow them to deliver the Business Studies content in a manner that the learners will understand. Moreover, teachers must design appropriate and thought-provoking representations of the content to be learnt. Teachers mentioned that various teaching strategies learnt in the subject cluster are applicable in classroom practice. This shows that teachers in the cluster share knowledge of how best to represent the topics in a way that will be comprehensible to the leaners. In other words, they acquire knowledge of how to transform content knowledge so that it can be understood by the learners.

Grossman (1990) identified four components of PCK: knowledge and belief about the purpose of teaching the subject at different grade level; knowledge about learner understanding; conceptions and misconceptions regarding the specific topics in a subject matter; teacher knowledge of the curriculum and knowledge of instructional strategies and representation for teaching specific topics. The response received from the teachers indicated that they gained mainly knowledge of instructional strategies and representations for teaching particular topics and knowledge of learners' understanding of conceptions and misconceptions of particular topics in a subject matter.

Teachers mentioned that they learnt how they should teach their learners to write essays. Learning the methodology to teach can be referred to as the PCK. In addition, teachers can identify what the learners find easy and what they find difficult in a particular topic. Hence, the need to acquire teaching methods that are applicable in their classroom practice. The acquired teaching methodology in the subject cluster allows the teachers to establish the

learners' understanding and misunderstanding. Mkhululi explains that due to his participation in the subject cluster:

> *I benefited a lot because mangabe sihlangene* [when we are together]*, I know how to revise with the learners, how to make sure that the revision is effective, to assess the learners, to communicate it to learners, to give proper feedback to learners.*

Mkhululi received exposure on the methodology to utilize it when conducting revision with the learners. The PCK acquired ensures effective revision takes place. In addition, the above quotation shows that teachers gained knowledge on how to interpret the content to make more sense. Furthermore, learners receive clarity on their misunderstanding of the content, or the manner of questioning, when the teachers give feedback on their assessment.

Although the focus tends to be more on grade 12 when teachers meet in a cluster, my observation was that the teachers believe in the significance of curriculum coverage in grades 10 and 11 in order to prepare the learners for grade 12. Fanelesibonge mentioned that there are topics that had been part of the old curriculum, C2005, and they are still part of CAPS, giving an example of the topic, forms of ownership. Her participation in the subject cluster enabled her to find ways of presenting the topic or *"how to approach it"* in a manner in which the learners can understand:

> *I've worked with curriculum changing, so topic like 'forms of ownership', it sounds like an old topic that should be understood. I think the way that it should be tackled in grade 12 is what is causing a problem. It is not actually the content, the understanding of the topic is the teaching of it, which is posing a challenge on how to go about it.*

The indication I received from the teacher responses is that in the subject cluster they obtain knowledge of the curriculum. Teachers mentioned that they acquired knowledge of the curriculum and the ability to identify and design the teaching and learning materials. Furthermore, they shared the worksheets with other teachers in the subject cluster. In addition, as part of teacher professional development, they scrutinize the textbooks.

Fanelesibonge asserted that CAPS has brought in a lot of current issues which make sense to the teachers and the learners. Due to technology, teachers can gain access to a lot of

information. However, "*that does not help if you go to class because it requires you to understand the methodology that has to be used*". Teachers expressed the significance of knowing the instructional strategies for teaching a particular topic, for example, Forms of ownership.

During the observations that I conducted, there was a great emphasis among the teachers on the curriculum coverage. Two teachers shared concerns regarding their learners' performance and all the teachers engaged in a discussion about the learners' conceptions and misconceptions. Teachers also shared ideas on how to approach challenging topics. Za shared the same view as Siphokazi that there is an understanding among the teachers. She stated:

> *My learners, sometimes you find that learners, you come with their portfolios and your learners performed very badly, they'll motivate you, we motivate each other.*

In their motivation, I observed teachers acquiring knowledge of instructional strategies for teaching that specific topic.

4.3.3 Subject matter knowledge (SMK)

Grossman (1990, p.6) refers to subject matter knowledge (SMK) as the "knowledge of the major facts and concepts within the field and the relationships among them". Subject matter knowledge is knowledge of the subject that needs to be taught. Teachers need to have an understanding of the basic concepts of their subject, in that way they are able to use the SMK for teaching.

The subject advisor mentioned that, as a strategy to assist teachers in dealing with the requirements of the curriculum, she conducts content workshops to help them understand the content. Teacher participation in the subject cluster helped them acquire a deep understanding of the essential concepts of Business Studies. Fanelesibonge, as the subject cluster co-ordinator, also organised "mini" content development workshops for the subject cluster. She stated that:

> *Where we felt we have a need, maybe we wanted to develop ourselves on*
> *certain topics well, on that case we use the documents that we use for our*
> *subjects like the annual teaching plan, the textbooks, and I would say that*
> *because if we meet with the purpose of developing ourselves, the emphasis is*
> *to bring a variety of textbooks so that as we work through we are able to*
> *compare how are certain publishers tackle a certain topic.*

Subject matter knowledge comprises a significant part of teacher knowledge (Shulman, cited in Grossman, 1990). Five teachers mentioned that they acquire SMK by participating in a cluster. Mlamuli explained:

> *Mostly what we do is to enlighten each other about the content, because what*
> *we do get is that there are some challenges as per content understanding.*

Teachers discussed the Business Studies content to ensure that it corresponds with the curriculum document. Subject matter knowledge is significant because it is the root of all the other teacher knowledge. Za and Ndumiso asserted that when teachers have knowledge of the subject to be taught, they are in a better position to scaffold the learners, which means that teachers should be able to build on to learners' prior knowledge. Teachers mentioned that the support received regarding the subject matter goes beyond the subject cluster meetings to the extent that when teachers receive requests to assist others, they come from their own schools to assist other teachers that need help. Mkhululi mentioned that:

> *even the networking takes place 'cause when we are there, we ask each other, "Will*
> *you come to my school to assist me in this topic?" and several teachers came to my*
> *school.*

Although Siphokazi and Salamina acknowledged the teacher discussions regarding the subject matter, they said that for them these were more about the methodology because they were familiar with the content. The novice teachers benefit greatly because of the assistance they receive in this regard. Salamina mentioned:

> *Yes, we do discuss content, but basically, it's about how we how we set tasks, how we teach learners to answer questions. Maybe content, it's because I've been teaching Business Studies for the past ten years and I'm familiar with the content.*

In addition, Siphokazi explained that the SMK possessed by the teachers enabled them to identify or recommend textbooks to use for certain topics, because they know which textbooks explain particular topics best. Acquiring SMK provides the teachers with the ability to establish which textbooks give detailed explanations of the topics so that they can make recommendations to other teachers in the cluster. The SMK is significant because it shows the teacher understanding of the subject, preventing misinterpretations that can arise if teachers misunderstand the content. When teachers acquire SMK, they are able to make sense and deliver the content in a meaningful way, therefore teaching strategies are rooted in it.

Although the Business Studies teachers mentioned that they enlighten each other regarding the content, in an observation I observed the teachers discussing more about the various methodologies to use when delivering the particular content than about learning the content itself.

4.3.4   Knowledge of context

Grossman (1990) states that the knowledge of the context relates to the knowledge of the district where the teachers' schools are situated, of the school environment, of the departmental expectations (policy guidelines), of the specific learners, of the community and of other contextual factors within the school environment that have an influence on teaching and learning. Furthermore, teachers need to extract their understanding from the context in which they are operating. They are required to adapt to their school environment, the learners and draw upon their general knowledge (Grossman, 1990).

All the teachers in this Business Studies subject cluster showed a knowledge of context. Knowledge of context involves teachers' acquired knowledge about the departmental expectations, for example, programme of assessment (POA) as per CAPS. Siphokazi stated:

> *We bring examination guidelines, we bring the annual teaching plan, we bring*
> *CAPS documents and then when we moderate learners' work, we bring the*
> *teacher's portfolio and we bring a sample of a learner's portfolio.*

Furthermore, mentioned that, "*since changing to CAPS from NCS, DoE is providing*
workshops on CAPS, but follow-up must bedone on continuous basis"

All the teachers indicated that they were aware of the factors in the communities and of others within their school environments, which impact on teaching and learning.

Six teachers indicated insufficient resources and they made specific reference to textbooks as the major factor within the school environment which impacted on teaching and learning. However, T.O. and Salamina indicated no issues regarding resources. The sharing of worksheets and revision packages, including past examination papers, was helpful and contributed constructively to the teaching practice of the teachers from under-resourced schools.

During the observation, all the teachers indicated knowledge of context. They showed awareness of the departmental expectations, of their schools, learners and the communities their schools were situated in. However, this was the knowledge the teachers brought to the subject cluster, not what they learnt by participating in it.

4.4 How do Business Studies teachers say they learn in subject cluster?

In this section, I present the data collected on how teachers said they learnt in the Business Studies subject cluster. The findings presented here aim to address the second critical question of this study which is: how do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster? To make sense of data collected in response to this question, I drew from Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of PLCs to comprehend how these teachers said they learn in their subject cluster.

The subject cluster in this study reflected some characteristics of the PLCs in accordance with Stoll et al. (2006); some were mentioned more than others. Teachers said that they acquired their teacher knowledge by collaboration, taking collective responsibility, promoting both

group and individual learning through reflective action. However, not much was said regarding shared values and vision.

4.4.1 Collaboration and collective responsibility

Stoll et al. (2006) state that teachers in PLCs engage in collaborative action which "concerns staff involvement in development activities with consequences for several people, going beyond superficial exchanges to help, support, or assistance" (Stoll et al., 2006, p.227).

Teachers mentioned that they collaboratively engage in the planning and implementing of the curriculum. In the content workshop organised by Fanelesibonge, the subject cluster co-ordinator, I observed teachers making reference to the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), discussing the Business Studies content and the pace at which topics will be taught. The ATP gave guidelines on the pace and, collaboratively, teachers determined the essential outcome they wanted to achieve. Mrs Mokoena, the subject advisor, confirmed that part of the strategy was to get the teachers involved in developmental activities, as she previously stated. She also made reference to the ATP and content supplement booklets to support teachers in their teaching.

Another developmental activity that indicated collaboration in this subject cluster was the setting of common assessment. All eight teachers mentioned that they design common assessment tasks for the learners and the teachers work towards achieving a common goal. They set the question papers collaboratively in the subject cluster, and these are then written by the leaners from the schools participating in this particular subject cluster. Mlamuli said that teachers "*meet as well when we we set the cluster paper that will be written by all the schools involved in the community forum"*.

Setting the question papers collaboratively has helped teachers with the knowledge for setting a balanced question paper according to the Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive levels. Teachers put great emphasis on the knowledge gained in relation to these cognitive levels. Salamina mentioned that her participation in the subject cluster was beneficial because she "*had problems with setting the paper to balance in accordance to Bloom's Taxonomy",* and she used a WhatsApp chat group to ask for help and the other teachers assisted her. The policy document stipulates that the Business Studies question papers must be set according to the cognitive levels, as shown below in Table 4.

Cognitive level		Percentage
Levels 1 and 2	Low order	30
Levels 3 and 4	Middle order	50
Levels 5 and 6	High order	20
TOTAL		100

Table 4: Distribution of cognitive levels

The other developmental activity that teachers mentioned that indicated collaborative action in this subject cluster, was that they assisted each other with how to mark the learner scripts and how to give feedback to the learners. Mkhululi mentioned that in his participation in this subject cluster he learnt "*how to mark the essays, how to mark section B, how to mark section A, how to analyse all sections*". Teachers who normally go to the marking centre to mark the final Business Studies question papers share the information on how teachers can assess their learners in preparation for their final examination. Siphokazi said: "*I know how to teach learners essay in a way that they will get maximum marks.*"

Teachers in PLCs take collective responsibility for the learner learning (Stoll et at., 2006). The Business Studies teachers in this subject cluster demonstrated collective responsibility by the manner in which they engaged in developmental activities with the intention of providing and receiving assistance from each other. Siphokazi stated: "*If I have a problem with this and this and then they will come with different ideas how to deal with that particular problem*." Similarly, Za made a reference to the moderation workshop in which learner portfolios are scrutinized, and if the learners have not performed well, other teachers will collectively come up with ideas on how teachers can assist the learners.

Teachers mentioned that a subject cluster is a safe space in which they can be honest regarding the challenges that they face and receive help from one another in order to develop. Teachers taking collective responsibility for their learners' learning eases the sense of isolation (Stoll et al., 2006). They showed collective responsibility by providing continuous support to particular teachers, even outside the subject cluster, and agreed to visit each other's schools to assist with content taught at a particular time.

This is an indication of subject cluster teachers taking collaborative responsibility for the achievement of the Business Studies learners they teach. Siphokazi affirmed that teachers this by stating that they go an extra mile for their learners:

> *Sometimes they motivate you even if you don't want to work during school*
> *holidays or during, eh weekend, if the, if they tell you the benefits of working*
> *extra hours, then you are motivated, they do that as well.*

Teachers taking collective responsibility in PLCs assists in maintaining teacher commitment and enforce peer pressure and teacher accountability so that teachers can play their part (Stoll et al., 2006). The sense of interdependence exists when teachers engage in collaboration, and there is a feeling that better teaching practice is achieved and that goals would not be achieved without collaborative action in the PLC (Stoll et al., 2006).

4.4.2 Group, as well as individual learning is promoted through reflective action

Teachers, as learners, engage in collective learning, in which they create knowledge together through dialogue and interaction, they debate about issues relating to their teaching practice, and interpret and share information among themselves in the group (Stoll et al., 2006). The responses I received from the teachers and from what I saw in the observations indicated that they provide and receive mentoring from one another in this subject cluster. Mentoring refers to an arrangement in which a more experienced teacher undertakes to assist a less experienced teacher to develop professionally and/or personally.

Although teachers learning as a group is promoted, there is an understanding that they teach different learners and individual learning is thus promoted to equip them with strategies that will be applicable in their classroom practice when dealing with their unique learners.

In this subject cluster, teachers became learners with their fellow teachers (Stoll et al., 2006). T.O. mentioned that in this pcluster teachers assist:

> *To empower and develop each other as educators to implement changes. The*
> *discussion with other teachers involves inducting new educators and*
> *developing them.*

Some of the teachers in the subject cluster had been teaching more than others, so the teaching experience varied among them. They mentioned that these teachers gave advice or guidance to less experienced teachers by sharing their thoughts, opinions and giving recommendations. Siphokazi mentioned that in the subject cluster she "*learnt new teaching strategies by sharing information with other teachers in a cluster*" and her Business Studies teaching experience allowed her to share information on the subject content.

Teachers mentioned that they also learnt how to conduct the moderation of earner tasks and how to complete the SBA marksheets, as individual learning was acquired within the group.

However, I observed that there were teachers who were still learning general pedagogical knowledge, taking into consideration the fact that all the teachers in this cluster had been teaching Business Studies for about eight years, some even for more. Fanelesibonge explained the reason for this:

> *I may have been teaching for many years, but since, as I have discussed earlier on, curriculum changes, the approaches to certain topics also change, so I'm, the fact that I've been teaching for so many years does not mean that I know everything, I still have my weaknesses, my challenges and I still need help from my colleagues, so even in terms of methodology you can get help from the cluster level, but I would say, that is, I'm reflecting on what is happening in our cluster.*

Furthermore, as a Business Studies teacher, I recalled that the moderation tool had been modified (Appendix K). Tasks are moderated by the Head of Department at the school level. The same moderation tool, together with the learner portfolios, must be submitted for moderation at the cluster level. Therefore, teachers need to take careful consideration when moderating the learners' work. Moreover, it made sense that teachers mentioned that they learnt how to complete the SBA marksheets by participating in this subject cluster. This could be due to the change that was introduced in grade 10 in the current year (2018), in which paper one and paper two were introduced. This indicates that the SBA marksheet, which is also referred to as CASS grid sheet, has changed due to change in the mark allocation. Similar change is meant to take place in grade 11 in the 2019 and in grade 12 in the 2020.

Stoll et al. (2006) state that knowledge is acquired collectively through the group interaction, reflective dialogue, and sharing and interpretation of information and that it is distributed

among the teachers. The teachers indicated that in their participation in the subject cluster they engaged in reflective professional inquiry, which means that they critically interrogated their practice. Thereafter, they engaged in reflective dialogue, that is, they entered into discussion in relation to their lived experiences. They shared their personal practice, their skills and the knowledge they can apply in their classroom practice. The trust amongst the teachers enabled them to be open about the reflection of their classroom practice (Stoll et al., 2006). When teachers from several schools share their professional development experiences, that can initiate and sustain very powerful improvement (Guskey, 2009).

Stoll et al. (2006) identified shared values and vision as a characteristic of PLCs. However, teachers in this subject cluster did not mention much regarding shared values and vision. Yet from my observation of the members' interaction, it was apparent that teachers have common values and vision because they did not deviate from the main focus, which is learner learning (Stoll et al., 2006).

In both the workshops that I attended, I observed that at the opening of the meeting the facilitators communicated the objectives of the meeting and gave all teachers an opportunity to add to the points for discussion on the agenda. Teachers were in agreement on the issues brought forward. It is significant for teachers to know that they can count on each other in order to reinforce these objectives of the subject cluster and make ethical decisions regarding teacher and learner learning (Stoll et al., 2006).

All the teachers indicated that there is commitment in this subject cluster to engage in continuous teacher development. Teachers indicated that they learnt in the subject cluster mostly through collaboration and taking collective responsibility by being in a group, but also through individual learning promoted through reflection.

4.5 Teacher views on the value of the subject cluster and its contribution towards professional development

All the teachers mentioned that the Business Studies subject cluster was valuable to them, being both useful and helpful. They said that this was because there was sharing of information. Teachers engaged in reflective dialogue discussing their lived experiences, sharing ideas, and coming up with possible solutions. Mlamuli said:

*I have grown very much because of these clusters and a lot has been learnt. I
have learnt a lot and there is a lot that I did not know that today I can stand
very firm that I, I do understand better than I thought I understood then.*

Teachers said that it was useful because in this subject cluster there was sharing of
experiences and assistance for teacher. In addition, teachers shared information on how to
mark the learners' exam scripts, benefited from shared ideas and interaction with other
teachers. Furthermore, they mentioned that the cluster is valuable because of the continued
intersection with the other Business Studies teachers through the WhatsApp group. This
group allowed them to ask and receive assistance from the other teachers.

From my observations, these teachers view the subject cluster as a platform that promotes
their development in the subject and provides empowerment. Similar, to other teachers in this
cluster, Za's view on the subject is that it is beneficial because the teachers learnt together as
colleagues in the sense that, "*one has their own experience and insight to share and can draw
their own learning from discussion*". Teachers in a PLC become self-empowered and engage
in continuous learning through collaboration (Botha, 2012). This indicates that these teachers
learnt more in this subject cluster than they could have done by learning in isolation.

Fanelesibonge mentioned that, as a cluster co-ordinator, she assumed that the teachers find
the subject cluster useful. She based this assumption on the belief that if they were not
finding it useful, they would not continue attending every cluster meeting, stating that, "*some
of them make suggestions to me as a cluster co-ordinator like 'What if we have a meeting
about this and this,' so to me it shows that there is a value in our meeting, they gain
something*". Furthermore, she expressed her opinion on the purpose of teacher professional
development thus:

*Well, well, well, I would say, eh firstly, I see it as something positive that if you are
professional, not only as a teacher, in any field that you are in, it helps to
continuously improve yourself because we are living in an ever-changing world, so
one needs to be updated with the current issues, more so those that are related to your
profession, eh also it gives you confidence, eh in your teaching if you know that: I
have acquired certain knowledge, certain skills. Eh, you are able to have an opinion,
eh, on issues related to your work and you are able to engage people in confidence
with that, you, you you are not afraid to be a participant in those types of*

discussions, eh but on the other side,it depends on an individual person astohow you value that one eh, if I can make an example, eh I did my Masters and I never placed a value of money on it, which I think that is a hindrance.

She stated that some people are not developing themselves due to the lack of compensation, that is, they are motivated by money. Mrs Mokoena's view of teacher learning and professional development was that, as the subject advisor, she is achieving objectives set for the Business Studies teachers, even though she works under pressure. She stated:

Besides being a district advisor, one is expected to attend provincial meetings, also to attend to other district monitoring activities, and engage schools in projects that are subject related, and they consume a lot of time though they are essential since they support and improve the learner pass rate and performance in a subject.

In order to enhance teacher learning and professional development for Business Studies teachers, Mrs Mokoena said that they have projects such as the grade 11 speech competition and the School Enterprise Challenge which involves schools opening school businesses.

All participants in this study mentioned constructive views on the value of the cluster and its contribution towards their learning and professional development. However, although they portrayed the cluster in a positive light, they also voiced the challenges that they encounter in teaching Business Studies.

Most teachers mentioned these challenges, the common one being the issue of resources. An example was insufficient textbooks. Learning does not end in the classroom, the learners are given tasks to read further on at home in preparation for their next lesson and they are also given activities to complete at home as homework, however, this is not achieved due to insufficient textbooks. Also, Business Studies as a subject is progressive therefore requires learners to be consistent in this subject, content coverage is therefore not achieved within the allocated time.

Photocopying worksheets for homework is a challenge for teachers like Fanelesibonge, because in a big school like hers that accommodates approximately nine hundred learners and has a staff of thirty-three, they have one photocopy machine. The photocopy machine breaks regularly and it pauses in the middle of the copying process.

The teachers have computer labs in their schools but there are no computers, they also have non-functioning libraries. Fanelesibonge explained that:

> *CAPS require schools to have certain resources, eh, you get activities like a learner must go and research and libraries required access to an internet, access to newspapers. If I think broadly, our learners in the townships to a certain extent might be challenged, but then again, they might find ways of working around that. But since we are talking about a curriculum that is applicable in all environments, think of children in a different environment, when they don't have any access to the internet, where they do not have access to those newspapers, social networks and all of that, so at the end of it all CAPS is a very good curriculum, but it is lacking in terms of resources to implement it effectively.*

T.O. and Salamina were the only two teachers who did not mention any challenges regarding the lack of resources. In my observations, Salamina did not have any issues, because she confidently shared the worksheets she had brought with all the other teachers. She mentioned that her school has a ream of paper (500 sheets) as part of the stationery requirements for the learners, that the teachers are allowed to make copies and the number of copies made should be recorded for auditing purposes.

The Business Studies content is complex and the teachers mentioned a challenge regarding the setting of the examination papers. Mkhululi stated that it would help to receive guidelines on which topic essays might be asked in the examinations; that teachers need a guideline for the system used to determine the essays that will be examined. Siphokazi mentioned that schools where there are teachers who are examiners are in a better position, because these teachers can tell their learners which part of the content to pay more attention to:

> *I think for, for, for those schools who have examiners, they, they are likely to perform well, than the schools where there are no examiners. I think maybe the examiners, maybe per circuit or per district we should have a discussion before the exam and tell us where to, to, to, where learners should concentrate more.*

Fanelesibonge, as both a Business Studies teacher and as a cluster co-ordinator, is faced with a struggle. She has a duty to fulfil her obligation not only towards the school where she is

employed, but also to the subject cluster. She co-ordinates the setting of the examination papers for grades 10 and 11 and ensures that it is submitted to the subject advisor. The schools write a common paper for Business Studies for grades 10 and 11, set collectively by the teachers in a cluster. The grade 12 learners' examination is set at national level.

Furthermore, Fanelesibonge ends up working after hours to complete her duties to the school where she is employed and her co-ordinating duties. This is a lot of work, with no remuneration received for the cluster work. In fact, Fanelesibonge feels that, "*part of what we end up doing is what should be done by the subject advisor*".

Mrs Mokoena explained that there are about one hundred and fifty-nine schools that she is responsible for, taking into consideration grades in the FET phase, and she is the only subject advisor in uMgungundlovu District and is unable to meet with the teachers as often as she would like to:

> *Priority is given to underperforming schools, a lot of material is developed for them, and the best schools are somehow neglected, and the following year they underperform.*

Additionally, Fanelesibonge explained that it was a heavy load to carry and that a cluster co-ordinator should not be someone who is fully employed to teach at school level, because it is exhausting and one is left with minimal time to do other duties.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings of the data obtained from the interviews of eight Business Studies teachers, one of which is a subject cluster co-ordinator and the Business Studies subject advisor. The data collected from participants gave evidence that teacher learning opportunities present themselves in various ways. Moreover, teachers participated in a variety of professional development initiatives (PDIs) which included PDIs at the school level and in the subject clusters. The findings revealed that in each PDI there were activities that the teachers learnt from, which gives evidence that teacher professional development takes place.

Data collected in response to activities in the subject cluster indicates that teachers learnt more general pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge than subject

matter knowledge and knowledge of the context. Teachers learnt by engaging in collaborative action, reflecting and constructively scrutinizing their classroom practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore teacher learning of Business Studies teachers through the subject cluster in the uMgungundlovu District. The objective was to get an understanding of Business Studies teacher reports about what and how they learnt in subject cluster and how this contributed to their professional development.

The focus of the study was to answer the following three critical questions:

1. What do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?
2. How do Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster?
3. What are the Business Studies teachers' views about the importance of the subject cluster and how it contributes to their professional development?

Data in this study were mainly generated from the interviews with the eight teachers belonging to a same subject cluster, one of which was the cluster co-ordinator, and from the Business Studies subject advisor. Data were also obtained from, observations and document analysis. Document analysis included documents such as the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) documents outlining the Business Studies curriculum, worksheets with Business Studies learner activities, Business Studies revision material comprisesing past matriculation examination papers and matriculation examination guidelines.

The content analysis method was employed for data analysis, often used to analyse non-verbal material or transcribed verbal material. The recorded interviews with the participants were transcribed, typed and printed. The transcriptions were analysed for themes and categorised, followed by data analysis according to the responses received to the research questions.

This chapter focuses on the discussion related to key findings answering the critical questions of this study. The key findings discussed in Chapter four are discussed, based on the literature

reviewed and the conceptual framework. This is followed by the recommendations and, finally, the conclusion.

5.2 Discussion

This section presents the discussion on the findings under the following sub-headings: teacher learning and professional development in the Business Studies subject cluster; the subject cluster as a professional learning community.

5.2.1 Teacher learning and professional development in the Business Studies subject cluster

Teacher learning, according to Kelly (2006), is a process in which teachers move towards expertise and which will bring change to their professional knowledge. In this case study, Business Studies teachers engaged more in the practice of teaching and consequently become knowledgeable about the subject and about teaching it. As teacher learning is continuous, teachers move "towards" expertise and not "to" expertise. The Business Studies teachers who participated in this study had been teaching for between eight and eighteen years and still found it significant to engage in continuous professional development. This confirms the view that, "professional development is an ongoing process of reflection and review that articulates with development planning that meets corporate, department and individual needs" (Middlewood, cited in Fraser et al., 2007).

The findings from the data collected suggests that teachers need to participate in professional development to enable them to deal with changes in their school environment and changes in the curriculum, therefore they are considered life-long learners.

I have argued, and given reasons, that the Business Studies cluster can be classified as a PLC because it meets the characteristics of the PLC as stipulated in the literature. Teacher participation in the Business Studies subject cluster provided an opportunity to increase their expertise by their acquisition of more knowledge. This includes the novice teachers who do not possess all the propositional knowledge required and the procedural knowledge that teachers receive in their practice.

[73]

Propositional knowledge applies to conceptual discipline knowledge, principles of learner learning in that particular subject and common learner misconceptions. Procedural (or practical) knowledge is the "how to" knowledge that teachers acquire through their practice.

Teachers in this study stated that by participating in the Business Studies subject cluster, they learnt various kinds of knowledge in relation to Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge. Findings of this study indicated that the teachers acquired mostly pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and the general pedagogical knowledge (GPK). However, they also enlightened each other on the subject matter knowledge (SMK) and knowledge of context.

The key finding is that teachers mostly learnt GPK in the subject cluster. They learnt a body of general knowledge and knowledge of the general principles of instruction in accordance with Grossman (1990). For instance, they indicated that by being part of the subject cluster, they gained knowledge of how to set a balanced examination question paper and how assessment tasks should be done according to Blooms cognitive levels, as stipulated by the Business Studies subject policy document.

Moreover, the policy documents require the CASS (Continuous Assessment) grid sheets to be completed in a particular manner. Teachers also said that the cluster co-ordinator keeps them up-to-date with any information pertaining to the curriculum, including how to complete the marksheets correctly.

Teachers also indicated that they acquired PCK by participating in the Business Studies subject cluster, towards the improvement of the manner in which they present the content so that it is easily understood by the learners. According to the them, when they meet in the cluster, they discuss instructional methods and seek new teaching methods and, in that way, they learn something useful from other teachers.

In a study conducted by Makwara (2015), data collected confirmed that teachers working collaboratively developed both GPK and PCK through the sharing of ideas with colleagues, by individual teachers engaging in reflective action, through teachers engaging in classroom practice and in the preparation of teaching resources.

In addition, teachers indicated that they learnt SMK in the subject cluster. Teachers stated that they enlighten each other about the subject content, that challenges in content

understanding do arise and they help each other to address those challenges. In addition, they discussed the subject content to ensure that it is in taught in accordance with the curriculum. Teachers acquiring SMK are able to make sense of and deliver the content in a more meaningful way. However, during the observation of the content workshop I attended, I noted teachers engaging more with the methodology than the actual content in question.

Teachers made specific reference to the topic "Macro environment: impact of recent legislation on business" that presents challenges for teachers and learners. During the observation, I conducted, I observed teachers acknowledging the challenges they encounter with this topic. They then took turns in suggesting methods that could be used, collectively reflecting on their practice in accordance with Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of professional learning communities.

Another finding was that when teachers understand the fundamental concepts of the subject and the relatedness of these fundamental concepts, they draw upon the SMK for teaching (Bertram, 2011). Teacher misunderstanding of these concepts can consequently lead to misinterpretation. These teachers indicated that their participation in the subject cluster contributed to their increased knowledge of context.

Teachers indicated that they acquired this knowledge of the school and community context by engaging in discussions with other teachers in the subject cluster regarding challenges they encountered in relation to their learners. Teacher discussions in the subject cluster about the background of the learners and the community they came from, expanded their knowledge of how to deal with the factors affecting the learners' performance and their behaviour. Teachers shared their challenges and received ideas to overcome those challenges.

The data support the findings of Richmond and Manokore (2010), who argued that teachers participating in professional learning communities are motivated to try new instructional practices, and are urged to share their knowledge, which is strengthened to enable support for the learning of others in the group.

5.2.2 The subject cluster as a professional learning community

Teachers in this study indicated that they critically interrogated their own practice continually, engaging in collaborative action in order to improve learner academic performance (Stoll et al., 2006). They met more than once a term to reflect on their practice,

scrutinize the results of this practice, comparing it to the learners' results and formulating the best strategies to improve teaching and learning.

Teachers mentioned that they were comfortable participating in the Business Studies cluster, viewed the subject cluster as a safe place where teachers were not afraid to discuss challenges they faced in teaching Business Studies. They reflected on their teaching experiences and shared these with other teachers in the subject cluster. In accordance with Wood (2007) and Stoll et al., (2006) teachers participating in the subject cluster engaged in an ongoing collegial dialogue, analysing their educational practice and their learners' work.

The suject cluster in this study has been classified as a PLC because it meets most of the required characteristics of a PLC, the focus being on the learners, on teachers collaborating and taking collective responsibility for the learners they teach and promoting both group and individual learning through reflective action (Stoll et al., 2006). However, nothing much was mentioned regarding teachers having shared values and vision, which is one of Stoll et al.'s (2006) characteristics of PLCs.

Teachers indicated that by engaging in collective learning, they seek knowledge that is applicable to their classroom practice (Stoll et al., 2006), there is sharing of information, collaborative work and commitment to continuous professional development (CPD). Data collected in this study support the findings by Brodie (2014), who identified the following key features of PLCs that support teachers' growth: enquiry, collectivity, safety and challenge.

The subject cluster co-ordinator described the Business Studies cluster as a safe space. According to Brodie (2014), evidence indicates that in PLCs, teachers are safe enough to acknowledge weaknesses in their teaching practice and knowledge. These Business Studies teachers felt safe enough to receive support and challenge each other, and, again according to Brodie (2014), "through this support and challenge, the teachers were able to distance themselves from their current ideas and take new perspectives" (p.236).

Teachers in this study also worked collaboratively in setting the Business Studies examination papers that are written by the schools belonging to this cluster. They indicated that they planned together and, in my observations, they were involved in activities that enhance their professional development such as setting balanced question papers and other activities to improve learner outcomes such as applying suitable assessment strategies.

Mentoring and coaching within the Business Studies cluster played a significant part in professional development. Teachers worked together in order to increase their expertise on particular topics and were in a safe place where they could address the challenges that they came across in their teaching (Thessin, 2015).

Teachers indicated that by participating in the subject cluster, they received coaching on how to set a balanced examination question paper in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy cognitive levels. Stoll et al. (2006), similar to Teague and Anfara (2012), identified shared personal practice as a characteristic of the PLC, referring to mentoring and coaching and peer observation.

In addition, teachers indicated that networking in this subject cluster provided opportunities to conduct peer observation when teachers are invited to visit other schools to provide academic support to both the teachers and the learners. Day and Sachs (2004) state that networking allows teachers opportunities to get exposure to other learning strategies that can result in an improved classroom practice and also at the school level. Teachers mentioned that through the subject cluster they get to meet with teachers from other Business Studies clusters.

There is ongoing interaction amongst the teachers in the subject cluster, and they engage in continuous dialogue outside the subject cluster meetings through the creation of WhatsApp social media groups, showing that "innovative uses of technology to support teacher learning are emerging through professional learning communities" (Booth, 2012, p.1).

The Business Studies teachers indicated that when they encounter challenges they are able to engage with the group, sharing ideas and suggesting possible solutions. In addition, they are provided with opportunities to participate in professional learning and development through online social networking, in accordance with Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2010). According to Booth (2012), teachers extend their communication, collaborative action and the support they receive from one another, minimizes the feeling of isolation.

5.2.3 The value of the Business Studies subject cluster

The data collected suggest that teachers in this study find the Business Studies subject cluster valuable and that their participation made a constructive contribution towards their professional development.

They witnessed growth and better understanding of the subject, working cooperatively and benefitting from sharing ideas, information and experiences through their interaction with other teachers. They also they received assistance from other teachers, which enable them to develop into independent critical thinkers. Furthermore, this subject cluster was viewed by teachers as a safe place where they could express their concerns and frustrations regarding Business Studies as a subject. It was also seen as a place where development and empowerment of teachers takes place.

The view of the cluster co-ordinator was that the consistent attendance, commitment and active participation of the teachers suggested that this subject cluster is valuable. All the teachers responded positively regarding the role played by the cluster co-ordinator. They commented on how active she is in co-ordinating the subject cluster and in teacher development, stating that they can phone her whenever they are experiencing problems, that she has excellent problem-solving skills, and she cascades information to all the teachers.

The subject advisor also expressed a positive view, although she works under pressure. She mentioned that she meets her objectives set for Business Studies teachers. The data collected suggested that teachers in this study find the Business Studies subject cluster valuable and value this subject cluster for its contribution towards teacher professional development.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has inspired the following recommendations, supported by the analysis and the discussion of the findings.

Through the literature reviewed and the data collected, the Business Studies subject cluster has been identified as a PLC. The data indicates that teacher learning did take place in the subject cluster. Therefore, the policy makers and the DoE, since they have encouraged the formation of PLCs through the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2011 – 2025, need to provide a detailed

document or policy that stipulates what teacher learning needs to take place in PLCs. Additionally, they should indicate how teachers can acquire the learning needed to improve learner achievement. That document can serve as a guideline in the formation and the effectiveness of PLCs.

The once-off workshops have been criticised (Bertram, 2011) for the implication of a 'one size fits all' approach. Effective PLCs can be used as a guide for a strategy to provide sufficient training for teachers when the DoE introduces changes in the curriculum. Thebarriers experienced by the schools and teachers in the implementation of such changes can easily be identified and the necessary support provided.

The DoE should encourage all teachers to engage in professional development and provide professional learning opportunities that can result in teacher knowledge. Feedback should be requested from the teachers regarding the learning opportunities presented to them in order to establish the extent to which it addresses their practice needs. This could be achieved by designing a questionnaire distributed to all teachers, preferably with both the close-ended and open-ended questions in which teachers could offer their own opinions and give detailed evaluations of their professional development opportunities.

Lack of resources is still a challenge in some schools and my recommendation to alleviate this is for the DoE to appoint one school within the subject cluster to become a host school where subject cluster meetings are held. Furthermore, this school should be fully resourced by the DoE so that teachers can share teaching and learning materials needed in the subject to obtain learner achievement.

The data collected showed that Business Studies teacher participation in the subject cluster has a positive impact on them. Teachers mentioned the constructive contribution the subject cluster co-ordinator made to their teacher learning and professional development. Therefore, a recommendation is that the DoE acknowledges cluster co-ordinators, offers them attractive remuneration and recognises the fact that they are closer to the teachers than the subject advisor.

Furthermore, DoE policy should stipulate exactly how clusters are formed, taking into consideration the school context. Guidelines should be given for the selection criteria for the cluster co-ordinator, and provision of adequate training for the cluster co-ordinator according to the expectations of the DoE regarding the Business Studies subject, and other duties and

responsibilities. Moreover, it should stipulate the maximum teaching load that cluster co-ordinators should have at their schools and reimbursement should be considered to the cluster co-ordinators for any costs incurred, for example, printing costs.

There is only one Business Studies subject advisor in the uMgungundlovu District, and this posse a challenge, because the subject advisor cannot visit all the schools as often as she would like to. The duties are too demanding and the focus in too much on poorly performing schools, resulting in well-performing schools being neglected. This neglect can result in them performing poorly in subsequent years.

Through the literature reviewed I discovered that although studies have been conducted on teacher learning and professional development, not much has been studied in relation to Business Studies in particular. Therefore, my final recommendation is that further studies and research be done in this regard.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the key issues relating to teacher learning in PLCs and the summary of the study is discussed in this section. It explored what and how Business Studies teachers said they learnt in the subject cluster, their views of its importance and its contribution to their professional development.

The data were analysed using Grossman's (1990) four ceategories of teacher knowledge and employed Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of PLCs. The analysis indicated that teacher learning does take place in this subject cluster and that learning does not happen in isolation (Brodie, 2013), therefore participation in subject cluster allowed Business Studies teachers an opportunity to break down the walls of isolation.

Two perspectives of teacher learning were identified, namely: the cognitive perspective and the socio-cultural perspective. As suggested by Bertram (2011), it might be advantageous to work with both perspectives of teacher learning, which recognize that teachers learn by acquiring knowledge and skills individually and but also develop their competence by engaging in PLCs.

The findings of the study revealed that Business Studies teachers, through their engagement in the subject cluster, acquired GPK, PCK, SMK and the knowledge of context. However,

from the data analysis it emerged that the participants mostly learnt GPK and PCK. The findings of the data on teacher knowledge helped to answer the first critical question of what Business Studies teachers say they learn in the subject cluster.

I employed Stoll et al.'s (2006) notion of PLCs to define these communities and their characteristics. They are characterized by shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaborative learning of their members, and that group learning is promoted as well as individual learning. Business studies teachers learn by continuously and critically interrogating their practice, reflecting and collaborating in a growth-promoting environment and working collectively. The data analysed indicated that the participants view the Business Studies subject cluster as important and that it contributed to their professional development.

Finally, both the literature and the data revealed the significance of PLCs in facilitating teacher learning and professional development. The world is ever-changing and therefore Business Studies teachers need to make certain that they remain updated with the current issues pertaining to Business Studies.

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Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

16 March 2016

Mrs Thabi Reinette Khuboni 9706359
School of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mrs Khuboni

Protocol reference number: HSS/0037/016M
Project Title: Exploring teacher learning in Business Studies through the professional learning communities

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 8 January 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanitities & Social Scinces Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Thabile Mbatha
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
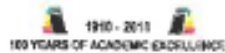Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer khumalo

Appendix B

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane   Tel: 033 392 1004   Ref.:2/4/8/732

Mrs TR Khuboni
1 Norchris Place
Hayfields
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Dear Mrs Khuboni

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "**EXPLORING TEACHER LEARNING IN BUSINESS STUDIES THROUGH THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES**", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1.   The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2.   The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3.   Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4.   Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5.   A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6.   The period of investigation is limited to the period from 29 February 2016 to 30 June 2017.
7.   Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8.   Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9.   Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10.   Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMgungundlovu District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 29 February 2016

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PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 beyond the call of duty
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

Faculty of Education

College of Humanities

University of KwaZulu-
Natal

Pietermaritzburg Campus

GATEKEEPER PERMISSION

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Thabi Reinette Khuboni, I am a Master of Education student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus, South Africa.

I am participating in a research project which is entitled, "Exploring teacher learning and professional development through the professional learning communities".

The study seeks to explore what the Business Studies teachers learn in professional learning communities, how the Business Studies teachers learn in professional learning communities and what the Business Studies teachers' perceptions are about the value and the importance of professional learning communities.

I am seeking your permission to conduct the study with the Business Studies teacher employed at your school. The study requires the participating teacher to be interviewed and no aspect of the research process will interfere with the normal running of the school.

Every effort will be made to ensure that no one will be able to identify the participants or the schools they work in. To protect their identities, I will use a different name during the interview. They will be free to withdraw from the research at any stage without negative or undesirable consequences. All information is only intended for research purposes. The teacher will not be paid for participating in the study. All data recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet in the supervisor's office.

Further clarification can be obtained from my supervisor, Dr Nonhlanhla Mthiyane

Tel: 033 260 6131

Email: MthiyaneN@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics for queries concerning ethics.

Mr Prem Mohun

Tel: 031-2604557

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za.

Yours faithfully,

T R Khuboni

Principal signature: School stamp

Faculty of Education
College of Humanities
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear Participant

My name is Thabi Reinette Khuboni. I am a part-time student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My study is based on teacher learning and professional development through the professional learning communities.

The study will include data collection instruments, interviews and observation. I request your permission to record your interview and conduct an observation. The interview is developed to find out information that could be useful to the project. The interview consists of biographical information, background information, what do teachers learn in professional learning communities, how teachers learn in professional learning communities and teachers' perceptions of the value of the professional learning communities.

During the research and after, I will abide by the following ethics:

- No harm will come to you during and after the project.

- The name of your school and your name will not be printed or mentioned in the project.

- Issues discussed in interviews or observations will not be discussed with anyone besides you and my supervisor.

- You are at liberty to stop your involvement in this project at any time without any negative consequences.

- Your informed consent will be sought before commencing with this project.

- The data collected from this study will be kept in a locked cabinet for three years.

- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

I can be contacted at:

Email: thabik@icloud.com

Cell: 0833059823

My supervisor is Dr Nonhlanhla Mthiyane who is located at the Faculty of Education, Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email MthiyaneN@ukzn.ac.za

Phone number: 033 260 6131

You may also contact the Research Office through:

Mr Prem Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Phone number: 031 260 4557

Thank you for your participation in this project. Your responses are greatly valued. Feedback with regards to the interview and observation will be given to you through a meeting date that would suit both the participant and the researcher.

Your signature below confirms that you have read the above and are willing to participate in this project.

Print Name

Signature   Date

Appendix E

DECLARATION

I……………………………………………………………. (full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

……………………………………….   ……………………..

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BUSINESS STUDIES TEACHERS

TEACHER LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Date of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Greet participant, explain research and its objectives

Informed consent (signature required)

Biographical information:

Gender   _____

Race   _____

Qualification   _____

Age

20 – 30		31 – 40		41 – 60	

Years of teaching   _____

Years of teaching Business Studies   _____

Grades taught   _____

Grades currently teaching   _____

Subjects taught   _____

Subjects currently teaching   _____

Background information

1. When were you appointed to this school?
2. How would you describe this school?
3. What kinds of resources are available at your school?

Professional questions
4. Did you train to teach Business Studies? Where and for how long?
5. Do you think your initial teacher training prepared you sufficiently to teach Business Studies?
6. How did the introduction of the new Business Studies curriculum affect your teaching?
7. Did the new curriculum have topics that were totally new?
8. Due to curriculum change did you have to change your teaching methods? If so, How?
9. How did you deal with the changes?
10. Were you provided any opportunities to assist you to learn and teach new topics, and for how long?

What do teachers learn in professional learning communities?

11. Which professional learning communities do you participate in?
12. How are those professional learning communities formulated?
13. How often do these professional learning communities meet and where do you meet?
14. What is the aim of having a cluster group?
15. What do you talk about in a cluster group?
16. What do you learn from the other teachers in your professional learning communities?

How do teachers learn in professional learning communities?
17. What new strategies have you learnt in the professional learning communities?
18. How do you learn from other teachers in your professional learning communities?
19. Do you find strategies learnt in professional learning communities applicable in your classroom situation?

Teacher's perception and value of the professional learning communities.
20. Do you find learning from your colleagues useful?
21. How do you benefit from learning from other colleagues?
22. What is your overall view on the professional learning communities?
23. What do you like most about the professional learning communities you have attended?
24. What do you dislike about the professional learning communities you have attended?
25. Are there any follow-up sessions by your facilitators to assist you to implement what you have learnt during the sessions?
26. Do you consider professional learning communities valuable?
27. Does what you learn in the subject cluster applicable in your classroom practice. How?
28. Is there anything else that you would like to say that we have not discussed here today?

Appendix G

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BUSINESS STUDIES CLUSTER LEADER

TEACHER LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Date of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Greet participant, explain research and its objectives

Informed consent (signature required)

Biographical information:

Gender _____

Race _____

Qualification _____

Age

20 – 30		31 – 40		41 – 60	

Years of teaching _____

Years of teaching Business Studies _____

Grades taught _____

Grades currently teaching _____

Subjects taught _____

Subjects currently teaching _____

1. When were you appointed to this school?
2. How would you describe this school?
3. What kinds of resources are available at your school?
4. Did you train to teach Business Studies? Where and for how long?
5. Do you think your initial teacher training prepared you sufficiently to teach Business Studies?

6. How long have you been serving as a Business Studies cluster leader?
7. Briefly explain the duties of a cluster leader.
8. Did you undergo any training to become a cluster leader? What kind of training?
9. How many schools in a circuit are you responsible for and how many teachers are you working with?
10. How do you plan for your cluster meetings?
11. When and where do you meet? How often do you meet?
12. What kind of support do you get from the Subject Advisor that helps you to effectively perform your duties?
13. What kind of documents (worksheets, assessment guidelines, etc.) do you give to the teachers to support their teaching?
14. What knowledge (content, pedagogical) do teachers receive from cluster meetings?
15. What learning strategies or methods and activities do you use to engage your colleagues in learning?
16. Which topic in the Business Studies curriculum have you noticed many teachers experiencing problems with? How do you assist in that regard?
17. How do you manage with your teaching duties and with providing services as a cluster leader?
18. What challenges (problems or barriers) do you experience as Business Studies cluster leader in uMgungundlovu District?
19. Do you think teachers find your sessions useful?
20. What is your opinion of the purpose of teacher learning or professional development?

I thank you.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BUSINESS STUDIES SUBJECT ADVISOR

TEACHER LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Date of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Greet participant, explain research and its objectives

Informed consent (signature required)

Biographical information:

Gender   _____

Race   _____

Qualification _____

Age

20 – 30		31 – 40		41 – 60	

Years of teaching   _____

Years of teaching Business Studies   _____

Grades taught   _____

Subjects taught   _____

1. How long have you been serving as a Business Studies subject advisor in uMgungundlovu District?
2. How is Teacher Professional Development in the uMgungundlovu District organized?
3. Can you please describe briefly the duties of the Business Studies subject advisor?
4. How many schools in the uMgungundlovu District are you responsible for?
5. Can you tell me about the Business Studies curriculum changes that you have experienced? (NCS, C2005, CAPS)

6. Which topic (s) in the Business Studies curriculum have you noticed many teachers are experiencing problems with? (If any).
7. How do you assist teachers in dealing with the requirements of the new curriculum?
8. How do you plan and conduct the Teacher Professional Development sessions for Business Studies teachers?
9. How often do you run the sessions?
10. What knowledge (content, pedagogical) do you expect teachers to receive from the Teacher Professional Development sessions?
11. What kind of documents (worksheets, assessment guidelines, etc.) do you give to the teachers to support their teaching?
12. What learning strategies or methods and activities do you use to engage your teachers in learning?
13. What challenges (problems or barriers) do you experience as a subject advisor in the uMgungundlovu District?
14. What is your view of teacher learning and professional development of Business Studies teachers in the district? As a Subject advisor are you achieving your objectives? (Elaborate how.)

I thank you.

Appendix I

SEMI-STRUCTURED OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time began: _____   **Time ended:** _____

Number of people in group observed: _____

Number of females: _____   **Approximate age range:** _____

Number of males: _____   **Approximate age range:** _____

INTRODUCTION OF THE SESSION
FACILITATOR'S ROLE

1. Opening of the cluster meeting
 	
_____
_____
_____
_____
 	
   2. Objectives of the meeting
 	
_____
_____
_____
_____
 	
   3. Points for discussion
 	
_____
_____
_____
_____

PARTICIPANTS' ROLE
1. Participants' interaction _____ _____ _____ _____

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ORGANISATION OF THE SESSION

FACILITATOR'S ROLE

   1. Use of visual aids and hand-outs.

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____

   2. Developing a positive climate.

_____
_____
_____
_____

PARTICIPANTS' ROLE

   1. Seating arrangement

_____
_____
_____
_____

</div>

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CONTENT DELIVERY

FACILITATOR'S ROLE

   1. Communication.

_____
_____
_____
_____

   2. Control pace of delivery and timing

_____
_____
_____
_____

PARTICIPANTS' ROLE

   1. What they are learning?

_____
_____
_____
_____

</div>

2. How they are learning?

_____
_____
_____
_____

ASSESSMENT KNOWLEDGE

FACILITATOR'S ROLE

1. What has been discussed?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Handling of the questions.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Given support and guidance

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Individualized support

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

PARTICIPANTS' ROLE

1. Content knowledge development

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

CLOSING THE SESSION
FACILITATOR'S ROLE
1. Summary of the points discussed _____ _____ _____ _____   2. Identify link with the following session _____ _____ _____ _____
PARTICIPANTS' ROLE
1. Clear instructions for follow-up _____ _____ _____ _____

Appendix J

Page No.	Content to be corrected	Correction
32	Term 1 – Week 11 missing	Insert Week 11 for revision and Term Test as it appears in the Annual Teaching Plan
39	Criteria for successful team performance(recap)	Add: Recap : Team development stages, team dynamics and theories
39	Business sector and its environment	Include; Clarification of the concepts: Business sector and Economic sector
41	• Calculations (interest, etc.) • The difference between compound interest and simple interest	Correction: start with: • The difference between compound interest and simple interest • Calculations (interest, etc.)
41	Investment: Securities	Move Johannesburg Securities Exchange from under Types and place as main heading above Types. It must have a main bullet.
41	Investment: Insurance	Add: Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA)
41	• (Recap the characteristics, advantages, disadvantages and comparison of forms of	• (Recap the characteristics, advantages, disadvantages and comparison of forms of ownership, i.e. Sole Trader, Partnership, Close corporation, Co-operatives, Profit Companies and Non- Profit Companies –

Appendix K

BUSINESS STUDIES MODERATION TOOL

MODERATOR		EDUCATOR	
SCHOOL		SCHOOL	
CIRCUIT		CIRCUIT	
CONTACT DETAILS		CONTACT DETAILS	

TEACHERS FILE	YES	NO	Comments-make note on challenges, examples of best practices
Does the teacher file contain the following? • PACE SETTER/ATP			
• CAPS and POA			
• The assessment tasks			
• Marking tool			
• Diagnostic analysis			
• CASS Grid			
• Class mark sheet			
• Proof of moderation			

INDICATE TYPE OF ASSESSMENT APPLICABLE THIS TERM

TASK	MARKS			MARKS	
ASSIGNMENT	50		CONTROLLED TEST	100	
PRESENTATION	50		MID-YEAR EXAM	200/300	
PROJECT	50		CONTROLLED TEST	100	
			TRIAL	300	

1.1. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES			SCHOOL			CLUSTER/DISTRICT
	Y	N	COMMENTS	Y	N	COMMENTS
a. Do the tasks comply with the current policy/guideline document? i.e. Curriculum and assessment policy statement, CAPS and other supporting documents?						
1.2. CONTENT COVERAGE AND VALIDITY						
a. Does the content tested in the assessment tasks adequately cover the prescribed content in the policy and guideline documents?						
b. Is the scope and depth of the content appropriate for grade 10/11/12?						
c. Do items comply with content, construct validity?						
d. Are task items measuring the content and skills they intend to measure?						
1.3. COGNITIVE SKILLS						

a.	Do the assessment tasks cover low, medium and higher order thinking skills?					
b.	The assessment task covers a minimum of two assessment types, multiple choice question, paragraph, constructed response questions, extended writing question.					
c.	Do the tasks provide opportunities to assess the following intellectual skills: - Critical thinking - Ability to compare and contrast - Ability to translate from verbal to symbolic - Ability to see causal relationship - Ability to express argument clearly?					
1.4. QUALITY OF INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS						
a.	Questions are clear, concise, precise, intelligible and worked using language appropriate to the range of candidates for whom the tasks intended					
b.	Questions can be answered by the majority of candidates in the time allowed					
c.	Repetition of questions from previous examinations is avoided					
d.	Questions do not advantage or disadvantage particular groups of candidates on grounds other than competence in the subject					
e.	Material accompanying the questions, whether text or graphics, is necessary.					
f.	For each question, or part question, is there sufficient indication to the candidate of the length and type of answer required and a clear indication of the allocation of marks available					
g.	All cartoons and illustrations are clear, accurate and legible					
1.5. LANGUAGE AND BIAS						
a.	Is the subject terminology used correctly?					
b.	Is the language appropriate for the level of the candidate?					
c.	Are there any ambiguities in the grammar that might create confusion?					
d.	Does the paper have any evidence of bias in terms of gender issues, race,					

	cultural issues, and provincial and regional bias?					
e.	When passages are used, are the text of appropriate length and are the level of complexity of the vocabulary appropriate?					
1.6. TECHNICAL CRITERIA						
a.	The question paper is complete with relevant marking grid and/or marking guideline.					
b.	The cover page has all relevant details such as time allocation, name of the subject, level of language and instructions to candidates.					
c.	The instructions to candidates are clearly specified and unambiguous.					
d.	The layout of the paper is candidate-friendly.					
e.	The paper has the correct numbering.					
f.	Appropriate fonts are used throughout the paper.					
g.	Mark allocations are clearly indicated on both paper and memo.					
1.7. MARKING GUIDLINE						
a.	The marking guideline/rubric is accurate.					
b.	Marking guide/rubric corresponds with the questions in the paper.					
c.	The marking guideline/rubric makes allowance for alternative responses.					
d.	Marking guideline/rubric facilitates					
e.	The marking guideline is laid out clearly and neatly typed.					
f.	The marking guideline clearly indicates the mark allocation and distribution of marks within the questions.					
1.8 RECORDING OF MARKS						
a)	Are the marks correctly added?					
b)	Are the marks correctly entered in mark sheet (transfer and conversion)?					
1.9 OVERALL IMPRESSION						
a.	The SBA as a whole assesses all tasks and topics of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.					
b.	The tasks are of an appropriate standard.					
c.	Throughout the SBA, there is a balance between the assessment of					

skills, knowledge and values, as required by tasks.					
d. The SBA is in line with the relevant and correct guideline documents.					

DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE	DATE
Educator(s):		
Head of Department:		
Principal:		
Cluster moderator:		
Subject advisor:		

SCHOOL STAMP

Appendix L

Turn It in Report

Exploring teacher learning in Business Studies through the
subject cluster in uMgungundlovu District.

ORIGINALITY REPORT

12%	11%	5%	5%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES