

ENRICHING MY TEACHING IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
TO GRADE FOUR ISIZULU SPEAKING LEARNERS: A TEACHER'S SELF-
STUDY

BY

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DEGREE

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IN THE

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

EDGEWOOD CAMPUS, DURBAN

DATE: JUNE 2019

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I, Rejoice Khanyile declare that

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Protocol reference number: HSS/1428/017M

Project title: Enriching my teaching in English First Additional Language to Grade 4 isiZulu speaking learners. A teacher's self-study

Approval Notification - Expedited Application In response to your application received on 18 August 2017, 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.

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Yours faithfully



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Dear Miss Khanyile

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE
INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: "**ENRICHING MY TEACHING IN ENGLISH
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LEARNERS. A TEACHER'S SELF-STUDY", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of
Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

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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.

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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 10 July 2017 to 09 July 2020.
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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.

Ndondwane Primary School



Dr. EVNzama

Head of

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This is to confirm that the dissertation written by Joyce Mthembu titled 'Emerging Trends in English First Additional Language for Grad, Four University Level : A Textbook' was copy edited for layout (including numbering, pagination, bolding and formatting of text and tables), grammar spelling and punctuation by the undersigned. The document has been thoroughly proofread and a number of additional corrections are advised.

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I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ, for giving me life and strength to complete this enormous task.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to conduct a self-study of my practice as a teacher to explore ways of enriching the process of teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English. I therefore, aimed to better understand and evaluate my relationships with my grade 4 learners and to improve my teaching practice. Adopting a sociocultural theoretical perspective on teaching and learning helped me to understand that learning is culturally and socially constructed, which means that it is important to pay attention to learners' social and cultural backgrounds and circumstances, so as to draw on what they already know from social and cultural interactions. The first question that guided my research was: *How have my lived experiences contributed to how I teach IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English?* This question helped me to look back at my personal history and the way I learnt English and how I teach in English. My second research question was: *How do learners experience and respond to my teaching in grade 4 classroom?* In exploring this research question, I presented work that was constructed with my learners and made use of ideas and reflections my by learners in the classroom. This allowed me to interpret how they experienced my teaching. My third research question was: *How can I further improve my teaching to IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners?* In responding to this research question, I reflected on my teacher learning as I explored a variety of teaching approaches to enhance my learners' understanding of the learning content presented to them in English. I was the main participant in the study, working with my 38 grade 4 learners and my three critical friends who were also studying towards their Masters' Degree in Curriculum Studies. Data were generated using nine research tools: a) artefact retrieval; b) reflective journal writing; c) memory drawing; d) collage; e) metaphor drawing; f) curriculum policy, g) photographs; h) lesson plans; and i) audio recording of lessons and conversations. From my self-study research, I discovered that teaching learners in a language that is not their home language requires them to learn the language as much as they are learning the content, which results in them taking longer to learn than the language speakers. Therefore, in my planning of activities I should be aware of this and make them relevant to context. That I need to create a learning environment that speaks to their needs and not only what I aimed to achieve.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
EFAL	English First Additional Language
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
FAL	First Additional Language
HL	Home Language
KZN	KwaZulu- Natal
HoD	Head of Department
LI	First Language
L2	Second Language
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MEd	Master of Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PIRLS	Progress of International Reading Literacy Study
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SMT	School Management Team
SSA	Substandard A
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION TO MY SELF-STUDY JOURNEY: AN EXPLORATION OF MY PRACTICE AS A PROFESSIONAL TEACHER

1.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to conduct a self-study of my practice as a teacher to explore ways of enriching the process of teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English. As an IsiZulu speaking teacher in an English medium primary school with learners whose home language is IsiZulu, I observed that grade 4 learners struggle with teaching and learning content presented to them in English. They fail to comprehend instructions, answer oral and written questions in English, as well as express their thoughts when prompted to do so. Mostly, they respond to English questions in their mother tongue. Therefore, this inspired the current self-study of my practice as a professional teacher. The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of how to enhance the teaching and learning process in English for IsiZulu speaking grade four learners.

This chapter provides the background to the self-study, outlines the rationale, further gives a brief discussion of the methodological approach employed, highlights the research questions that guide the study and the theoretical framework that underpins the study, followed by the key concepts that emanate from the study, and concludes with an outline of the chapters in this dissertation.

1.2. Background information

I teach in English in response to the Language in Learning Policy Department of (DoE, 1997) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011) which stipulate that teaching and learning in the foundation phase (grades R, 1, 2 and 3) should be in the learners' home language, and English which is their second language should be used for teaching learners from grade 4 until they finish school. The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) of South Africa (DoE, 1997) is based on additive multilingualism and promotes using the learners' mother tongue together with an additional language, which is English. The main objective is to elevate the importance of indigenous languages while also promoting the use of English as the commercial language (Steyn, 2017). In support of the LiEP of South Africa, Taylor and von Fintel (2016) argue that the mother tongue or First Language (L1) instruction in the child's early grades has a significant role in improving English acquisition in

grades 4,5 and 6. This is also supported by the notion that teaching learners in their home language (L1) until they have achieved a certain level of academic proficiency prepares them for second language learning Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000); hence, the reason why most African learners in South Africa are subjected to a schooling system which exposes them to learning in English in grade 4. With necessary support, the transition from learning in L1 in the lower grades to learning in L2 in grade 4 results in learners experiencing additive bilingualism with positive consequences in their literacy development Lipka and Siegel (2007). However, through my observation, I argue that introducing English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in grade 4, where learners must adapt to the transition of subject teaching by different teachers for each of the six subjects, is a very challenging aspect.

August and Shanahan (2006) shared that the Advisory Panel on Language Policy views the use of L1 in the foundation phase as the basis for learning of another language. In the South African context, learners are initially taught in their mother tongue and consequently introduced to learning in English, their second language in grade 4 (DBE, 2011). According to Cummins (2000), the introduction of learning in a second language is necessary for enhanced cognitive, linguistic and academic development. As a result, learners in grade 4 classrooms not only have to learn the subject matter, but also cope with language comprehension. Taylor and Prinsloo (2005) point out that language is the major factor which affects learners' school performance. Correspondingly, Cummins, Mirza and Stille (2012) postulate that teachers' and learners' ability to use the LoLT has an influence in the learners' scholarly achievement.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessed Grade 4 learners' performance in forty schools, and South Africa achieved the lowest. This might be the result of the fact that language has an impact on learner's performance because many learners, especially from rural areas are taught in a language that is not their L1 (Prinsloo, 2009). In addition, Prinsloo (2009) further alluded on the definition of literacy by UNESCO findings by Progress in International Reading Literacy Study on Grade 4 performance which is below the benchmark, possible reasons for poor performance and suggestions on how literacy can be strengthened. Correspondingly, Postma and Postma (2011) agree with Manyike and Lemmer (2014) when stating that Black South African learners perform poorly in annual National School-leaving Examinations and Annual National Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (Motshekga, 2011) or as part of International Benchmarking Assessment (PIRLS) (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012) because of the language barrier.

According to Benson (2009), learning in L2 benefits the learners if they were introduced to L2 at the right age of about 10 years. In correspondence, Yule (2016) maintains that the ideal age for learning in a second language is between the ages of 10 and 16 years. However, South Africa follows an early exit policy from learning in L1 at the age of 8 years in grade 3. This shows that grade 4 learners' cognitive level is not yet ready for them to be introduced to learning in the medium of their L2. They still lack metacognitive skills to understand and use the language effectively for academic purposes (Yule, 2016). Additionally, most of the children from rural areas, where I work, are not able to learn English from interaction outside the classroom, since they do not reside with English L1 speakers. They are only exposed to the language in the classroom and through television, which is very limited as they play with their peers, do their homework and have early nights. All this has an impact on their understanding of the teaching and learning content which is presented to them in their L2.

1.3. Rationale of the study

In this self-study research, my enactment of the intended curriculum as a teacher was examined, motivated by observations of deteriorating levels of learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content presented in English. It was also disturbing how teachers have resorted to code-switching as the only available teaching strategy to assist learners with understanding the content. Although code-switching is important to enhance learners' understanding, I noticed that it is used excessively, which leads to learners' failure to answer questions independently in English. Through comparing results from qualitative and quantitative data in his research, Mveli (2018) also concluded that most grade 4 teachers experience difficulty in using English as LoLT, and thus prefer to use African languages to teach African learners. I am a grade 4 teacher in a rural primary school where most of the learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and thus, only a few of their basic needs are met at home. I teach IsiZulu Home Language, English First Additional Language, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences/Technology and Life Skills of which Grade 4 teaching and learning content is covered. I am expected to teach the five subjects in English, which is my learners' second language (except for IsiZulu Home Language).

Hence, through self-study as a research method, I identified how I use a variety of teaching approaches to allow for opportunities of effective learning to take place. Engaging in this study was intended for my development from being a novice to an expert in my teaching practice, and thus changing my identity (Kelly, 2006). Through this study I was in pursuit of what Kelly

(2006) refers to as teacher identity, which takes place through participation in social situations (Wenger, 1998). I had to change my approach in order to facilitate my learning, like enacting the intended curriculum, interpreting my role as a teacher, my intentions and beliefs, and be willing to listen to my critical friends and learners as participants in the study (Samaras, 2011).

In this self-study, I engaged fully in the course of "knowing-in-practice" to allow full participation in my learning (Kelly, 2006, p. 510). The lessons I taught my learners, their reflections on these, as well as my own (see Chapter Four), and the discussions with my critical friends and supervisor created a platform to learn. Kelly (2006, p.510) defines "knowing-in-practice" as a "constructive process from which those involved internalise their experience of participation". Similarly, the collaborative actions with my learners and critical friends as I explored new ways of teaching in English to IsiZulu speaking learners, were intended to bring about my knowing-in-practice.

As mentioned before, the National Department of Education (DBE, 2011) views the introduction of English in grade 1 as "additive bilingualism" (p. 9), which is building the strong literacy foundation in the home language and building first additional language on it. This additive bilingual approach assumes that children start school competent in their home language. However, with African languages and English there are major differences, and therefore the possibility of a transfer is limited since the language structures of African languages and those of English are different (DBE, 2011; Ellis, 1996; Kilfoil and Van der Walt, 1997). This therefore, suggests that the department of education assumes learners in grade 4 have acquired sufficient vocabulary for using English as the medium of instruction.

Grade 4 teaching and learning program requires that learners acquire necessary vocabulary, concepts and terminology on which their future learning will be built. While assisting these learners in their endeavours to acquire these concepts and terminology, the fact that they are still new in learning in English (EMI) should be considered, since they have been taught in their L1 in the previous grades (DoE, 1997; DBE, 2011). As their teacher, I am tasked with ensuring that instructions and classroom activities are given, as well as explanations to advise them what they should do to improve their understanding. It is important to ascertain that my learners are relaxed yet focused for them to participate in classroom practices and activities to develop their learning of English First Additional Language (EFAL), as Modupeola (2013) advises. Opportunities should be created for effective communication using both home language (HL) and EFAL to support their communicative skills (August & Shanahan, 2017).

These grade 4 learners need to acquire basic language skills (DBE, 2011). They are also expected to obtain a higher degree of English reading competence, since they are now reading to learn, not learning to read as they were doing in the previous grades (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2008). I must teach them to read for meaning, to interpret what they are reading, to do analytical and critical reading as Hungi, Mankuwa, Ross, Saito, Dolata, Cappelle, Paviot and Vellien (2010) suggest.

In my experience as a grade 4 teacher for 23 years, these expectations have proven difficult to meet as indicated **in** the background of this study. I have had different experiences of how grade 4 learners dealt with learning in English. The changes, like the introduction of Outcome Based Education (OBE) (DoE,1997), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (DoE, 2002), Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) that have been taking place **in** the education system have brought different experiences of how grade 4 learners learnt their subjects using English as a medium of instruction. When I started teaching, learners were introduced to English as early as grade 1. That gave them enough background of English required to understand the learning content because home language and English were given equal weight (English was allocated equal time as home language). With the introduction of Outcome Based Education in 1998, a major change happened in the teaching and learning of English second language. The Department of Education placed emphasis on the home language **in** the foundation phase and very little time was allocated for English. Thus, learners were deprived of developing English "communicative skills and concepts that would prepare them to engage with subject matter presented in English in grade 4" (DBE, 2011, p.18).

I was there before the introduction of OBE, NCS, RNCS and CAPS, and continue to be a part of the teaching fraternity. I have observed complications emerging as a result of changes. Grade 4 teachers begun searching for possible solutions to the problem of learners' failure to understand the learning content in English. One part of the solution was code-switching, because this seemed to assist learners in understanding the learning content presented to them in English. Bloomberg (2004) defines code-switching as the interchanging of two languages together while speaking. In my observation, code-switching was used excessively resulting in learners' failure to answer questions independently in English. Correspondingly, the Annual National Assessment (Motshekga, 2011) which showed that from Grade 4 through to Grade 6 marks tended to dip remarkably confirmed this observation. This decline in marks was related to learners' poor comprehension of what they had learned. This was supported by Annual

National Assessment (ANA) 2013 Diagnostic Report (DBE, 2013) which analysed the learners' scripts based on comprehension, language and writing. The analysis showed that grades 4 and 5 had an average of 28% in English, which showed very poor performance (DBE, 2013). Not only did these learners lack basic literacy skills and language forms, but they found it difficult to make meaning of what they were reading (Madiba, 2013). This made learners fail to understand the learning content presented to them in English. The greatest difficulty was in responding to questions on writing and presenting, as well as on the language structure and conventions. It was apparent that most Grade 4 African learners had not reached the required level of English proficiency (Mweli, 2018) which made them fail to understand the learning content presented to them in English.

This suggests that literacy development in South Africa still faces a massive challenge. Reszke (2011) argues that it is the English language teacher's most important role to affect quality language learning experiences and to facilitate learning that is transformative. This therefore, challenged me as a grade 4 teacher, to identify ways of exposing my learners to various teaching strategies to allow opportunities for effective learning to take place.

1.4. Methodological approach

The methodological approach and process is discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this dissertation; however, a synopsis of the methodology is provided hereunder. A qualitative approach was employed because it "gives voices to participants and probed issues that lie beneath the surface of presenting behaviours and actions" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2002, p. 219). When choosing a qualitative approach, I believed that the in-depth data generated through exploring my past and present teaching and learning experiences would enable me to understand how to enhance my teaching practice. Correspondingly, Nieuwenhuis (2010) postulates that qualitative research pays attention to meanings and explanations of human participants or systems in their natural settings during investigation. Hence, engaging in a qualitative study allowed for a deep exploration of my social situations. This study gives descriptive and clear data about my personal and professional learning and teaching. Its qualitative nature enabled the exploration of my personal history and to learn from my learners' perceptions. The aim of this self-study was to gain an understanding of how I could improve teaching in English to grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners.

According to Cardetti and Orgnero (2013), self-study is described as a means of improving one's teaching practice and their professional development. In addition, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) outline the purpose of self-study as developing an understanding of one's teaching practice that benefits both the self-study researcher and others in the teaching fraternity. Therefore, in this study, my teaching practice and issues that have emerged while trying to understand the challenges faced in implementing the curriculum as descriptive data, would enhance my learners' learning in English as the first additional language.

Furthermore, the self-study approach allowed for the questioning of my teaching practice from personal experience, observations, working with my critical friends and attempting innovative teaching strategies to improve teaching as suggested by Samaras (2011). One such learning opportunity came from an observation that was made by a critical friend after I had presented my teaching process. In her response she noted and shared that *'You seem to have a need for your learners to always get it right. Is that not problematic?'* Based on this comment I was able to step back and reflect on what it was that she was telling me and self-introspect as to what might be the causes for that need. Thus in the process my professional growth and practice was facilitated. Research shows that the use of self-study dates to the 1960s when students used it to complete tasks that were set to diagnose if each acquired knowledge in their individual paces (Loughran, 2007).

According to Samaras (2011), self-study is characterised by questioning one's own practice from observation and personal experiences, having critical friends to work with and attempting innovative strategies of teaching to improve learning. In addition, Madondo (2014) defines self-study as a self-reflection journey. Self-study, therefore, allowed me, as a teacher researcher to reflect on my teaching practice by examining personal and professional experiences in my classroom context. The aim was to understand what worked and did not work (Samaras, 2011) as well as to improve my teaching practice through self-study (LaBoskey, 2004).

1.5. Research questions

This self-study was guided by three research questions which are as follows:

- (i) How have my lived experiences contributed to how I teach IsiZulu speaking Grade 4 learners in English?**

In engaging with this research question, I reflected on my personal history with family, school, teacher training college and early teaching experiences. The main aim was to learn how these

experiences have influenced the way I teach IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English. A selection of significant artefacts (Mitchell, 2011) assisted with the construction of my personal life history as reflected in Chapter Three. Correspondingly, I made use of a personal journal (Pithouse, 2011) my feelings and thoughts. I also recognised the role played by my family, my teachers and my critical friends (Samaras, 2011) to further explore this research question.

(ii) How do learners experience and respond to my teaching in English in the grade 4 classroom?

In exploring this research question, covered in Chapter Four, I presented work that was constructed with the learners and made use of ideas and reflections made by my grade 4 learners in the classroom. To get an idea of how my learners experienced and responded to my teaching, I used their journal entries (Pithouse, 2011), where my learners reflected freely on the lessons that we did together. I also used learners' work in the form of classwork, homework and assessment as data to respond to this question. The way they responded to the activities that I gave them allowed me an opportunity to engage in teacher learning (Kelly, 2006) .

(iii) How can I improve my teaching to IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English?

This research question is addressed in Chapter Five where I reflect on my teacher learning as I explore a variety of teaching approaches to enhance my teaching in English to IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners. To further address this self-study research question, an explanation of how I can enact the intended curriculum (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009), which is the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) was provided. I drew up lesson plans that allowed for interaction between the learners and I, and between the learners themselves. I created a cognitive climate (Kelly, 2006) in which my learners and I acquired knowledge and skills in one setting and use them in other similar situations (Chambers, 2001).

1.6. Through the lens of sociocultural theory

My teacher learning

This study used the sociocultural lens to organise my classroom context into the one where a more capable person, being myself, would work with a less capable one in order to promote ability to solve problems leading to enhancement of learning (Vygotsky, 1997). Hence, this self-study focused on my practice as I enact the curriculum and teaching in English to IsiZulu

speaking grade 4 learners. This facilitated my learning of how I can effectively engage my learners through various inventive ways of teaching for effective learning. Kelly (2006) defines "teacher learning, in a socio-cultural perspective", as the "process by which novice teachers move towards expertise" (p.505). Even though I have 23 years of service as a teacher, I argue that with the South African education curriculum constantly being reviewed and revised, I find myself in a state of constantly seeing myself as a novice teacher. With multiple curriculum-related change reforms aimed at democratising education and eliminating inequalities in the education system, it is not easy for me to claim that I am an expert teacher. I am still in the process of learning and adapting to changing roles from being the source of knowledge to being the facilitator towards learners learning, to my own learning, learning relevant processes and terminology. Teacher learning requires that I constantly work with people around me; my colleagues, subject specialists and my learners. Learning has become my culture to improve my teaching. This suggests that sociocultural theory does not only talk to my learners, their learning and learning context, but it also speaks to me, their teacher, and my own learning.

According to sociocultural theory, language is fundamental to learning (Wertsch, 2007). The learner acquires skills and knowledge that stem from their culture and society (Lantolf, 2000). Correspondingly, Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman (2015) affirm that knowledge and skills are mediated through interactions between the learners and their social environment or culture, and those interactions occur between the capable others, like teachers, peers and parents, and the learners in the educational social context. Thus, the sociocultural theory assisted me with the ability to look at myself within the social context in which I work; people I work with and the availability of resources I could use to learn from my own practice. That assisted me in my quest to move from being a novice to an expert in my teaching practice, and thus changing my identity (Kelly, 2006). By so doing, I was going to pursue and trying to find what Kelly (2006) refers to as teacher identity. Wenger (1998) notes that teacher identity is only possible when an individual takes part in activities happening within the society. In my endeavour to change from the apprentice to knowledgeable teacher, the sociocultural theory allowed me to engage in learning to find my identity. I learnt to change the way I had been doing things in order to facilitate my learning, like enacting the intended curriculum, interpreting my role as a teacher, interpreting my intentions and beliefs, and be willing to listen to my critical friends and my learners as participants in the study.

My interaction with my learners, colleagues, critical friends and supervisor, what Kelly (2006, p.510) refers to as "knowing-in-practice", allowed me an opportunity to learn what I needed to correct and improve in my teaching practice. It also motivated me to continue doing what I was doing correctly even if it was more demanding and somehow time consuming. That dynamic relationship between my learners' and my conceptual and physical resources provided the foundation for a more critical view of my learning and my learners' learning (Kelly, 2006). Similarly, I was learning alongside my learners, allowing my expertise to grow through exploring opportunities for developing my teacher-knowing-practice (Kelly, 2006).

Teaching and learning

Sociocultural theory assisted me in explaining how my learners learn and acquire knowledge, and how grownups and other children in their environment assist in facilitating their learning (Bankovic, 2014). I was able to view my learners as dynamic partakers in their learning process in their own environment and culture, which I believed facilitated their development, as advised by Anning, Cullen, and Flear (2008). This suggested that engaging with the sociocultural theory in my classroom helped my learners to achieve the necessary communication skills through the curriculum. They were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through classroom activities as the curriculum unfolded. Learners were enabled to construct their own learning. Furthermore, my learners and I were encouraged to construct our understanding through interaction with our learning environment using intentions and agency inherent in us as postulated by Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000).

Similarly, Hall and Walsh (2002, p. 187), assert that "language development begins in our social world, constituted by a varied mix of regularly occurring goal-directed intellectual and practical activities". Through our repeated participation in these activities with others who were more knowledgeable or expert, we transformed the specific means for realizing them into individual knowledge and abilities. According to Behroozizad, Nambiar, and Amir (2014), language learning is greatly dependent on the classroom's social life. Hence, Vygotsky (1980) sociocultural theory promoted a learning context in which, I, the teacher, acted as a facilitator for meaning construction during the instruction process in which the effective interaction between the learners and I, and among the learners was promoted.

1.7. Key concepts

The main objective of this study was to perform a self- study of my teaching focusing on how I could enrich my teaching practice to ensure that my grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners understood the teaching and learning content taught in English. The key concepts that informed this study were: language of learning and teaching, intended and enacted curriculum. In this self-study research, I gave details of how I enacted the intended curriculum in order to enhance my teaching.

1.7.1. Language of learning and teaching (LoLT)

The language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is defined as the language that is used for every teaching and learning taking place within and outside the classroom (Department of Basic Education, 2011). As mentioned before, in the South African context, teaching and learning in the foundation phase (grades R, 1, 2 and 3) takes place in the medium of their L1 and from grade 4 upwards, either English or Afrikaans becomes the LoLT, as stipulated in the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) (DoE, 1997). However, English has been given preference as LoLT for most schools, since schools were given the right to choose their LoLT by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996a) and the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b). In this work, the language of learning, which is English from grade four. This is what as a teacher I am expected teacher to use as a mode of communication and teaching in grade four. It is this language of teaching and learning that I aimed to improve as I taught my grade four learners in English, which is not their mother tongue. This with the prospect of improving my day to day practice as a foundation phase teacher, teaching grade four.

1.7. 2. Curriculum

Marsh and Willis (1995) define curriculum as the totality of learning experiences offered to learners with an intention of attaining general knowledge and skills. Additionally, Kerr (1999) views learning of students guided by the school as the curriculum. One would say that curriculum is all learning offered at the school. Thus, classroom practice becomes the pivotal point for curriculum delivery and learning. According to Graham-Jolly (2003), curriculum refers to the formal academic program that a school provides and is reflected in subjects on the timetable. Curriculum is guided by policies such as accountability, policies covering standards, assessment, and professional development. To understand curriculum, one must make a distinction among these curriculum layers or representations: intended curriculum and enacted curriculum (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009).

Intended curriculum refers to content of the course or programme, which includes printed course material and other resources, as well as the national curriculum standards, which specify the grade-specific objectives for which learners should achieve and understand (Prevost, Nathan, Stein, & Phelps, 2010). For example, Social Sciences curriculum will include the printed course materials and other resources, as well as national and state curriculum standards, which state the grade-specific objectives for what learners must realize. To put it in simpler terms, Porter and Smithson (2001) view the intended curriculum as the insight and proficiencies which are achieved through the enacted, assessed and learned curriculum. This encompasses what the teachers must teach to learners, guided by the prescribed framework. Furthermore, Hoadley and Jansen (2009) postulate that the intended curriculum in the South African context is defined as the official document prescribed by the Department of Education. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is a vertical curriculum which has all subjects differentiated from each other and is content-based. This suggests that teachers are expected to implement this curriculum as it is (with very limited or no opportunity for flexibility to contextualise their lessons), since they are given specific content and time to teach their subjects uniformly. Since this was a self-study, where I aimed at improving my actual practice of implementing the curriculum in English, which is a second language for the learners. The official curriculum thus played a pivotal role, as it is where all lessons taught for purposes of this study were drawn from.

1.7.2.2. Enacted curriculum

This is the real interaction between teachers and learners taking place in school, as understood by the teachers who are the implementers of the curriculum. Enacted curriculum is known as taught program of study or syllabus. It is the actual specific content that teachers teach, and learners learn during teaching and learning process. Prevost et al. (2010) postulate that enacted curriculum is dynamic, and it also varies from teacher to teacher, and even changes across classrooms that are taught by the same teacher as the specific interactions change with different students. In simpler terms, one would define enacting the intended curriculum as implementing alterations according to what learners can relate to, adding material for the benefit of the learners and coming up with innovative ways of teaching to enhance learners' understanding of the intended curriculum. Enacting the intended curriculum should be done with the curriculum goals and objectives in mind to avoid derailment. Porter and Smithson (2001)

further categorise enacted curriculum into instructional practices and instructional content. For purposes of this study it was my enactment of teaching the grade four curriculum to learners in a second language which is English. As I explore innovative ways of teaching Zulu speaking learners content in a language that is not theirs. Therefore, the Curriculum and the Enacted curriculum became important concepts for this study.

1.8. Conclusion and overview of the dissertation

In this self-study research, I looked at my own practice as a teacher, motivated by witnessing the deteriorating learners' level of understanding the teaching and learning content presented in English. I was also disturbed by the way we as the teachers, have attempted a variety of intervention strategies including code-switching, which has been utilised excessively leading to learners' inability to answer questions independently in English. I decided to conduct this study because I wanted to come up with ways of exposing my IsiZulu speaking learners to various teaching strategies to allow opportunity for effective learning to take place.

In Chapter One of the study, I give the description of the focus and purpose of my self-study research (Samaras, Hicks & Berger, 2004) and further explain the rationale for doing this study. I then provide the background information leading to my decision to conduct the study. The three research questions that guide this study are also outlined. I present myself as a teacher and a researcher in the study and then allude on the key concepts and the theoretical perspective that underpins the study. I briefly introduce the methodological approach employed in the study and conclude by giving a description of how this dissertation will be structured.

In Chapter Two, I give a detailed discussion of my self-study research process, as Samaras et al. (2004) advise. In my discussion, I provide a rationale for choosing self-study as a research methodology suitable for this study. The interpretivist paradigm presented in the study allowed me to discuss my research context and the selection of participants. I further detail my data generation strategies and data sources. I give a detailed explanation of data analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, I describe the challenges I encountered during the research process and how I overcame them. Finally, I highlight how I handled ethical issues and trustworthiness of the study.

In Chapter three, I present details of my lived experiences as a learner and a teacher teaching IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English. To help recollect those long-forgotten memories, I used a variety of strategies such as memory drawings and artefact retrieval to engage the

reader to relive, imagine and feel the experiences of my personal history and my learning journey. The main aim was to get a better understanding of how my lived experiences contribute to how I teach. Hence, I had to recall and relive all the memories of my past learning experiences both as a learner and a practising professional teacher in response to my first research question: *How have my lived experiences contributed to how I teach IsiZulu speaking Grade 4 learners in English?*

In Chapter Four, I engage with the second question that guides the study: *How do learners respond to my teaching in English in the Grade 4 classroom?* In so doing, I represent the data generated in my Grade 4 Social Sciences classroom and explore how I can enact the intended curriculum using lesson plans, learners' work and learners' reflections to improve my teaching practice. I also identify and discuss issues that emerged from my memory stories, which are significant to my learning and my teaching. I further describe how I used various teaching strategies to enhance my teaching. Finally, I highlight the key lessons learnt about teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English.

Chapter Five is the final chapter of this self-study dissertation where I conclude by presenting a reflective view of the dissertation by explaining what is covered in the previous chapters. I reflect on what I have learnt from the study in response to the third and final research question: *How can I improve my teaching to IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English?* I further reflect on what I have learnt from the study; my personal-professional learning and my methodological learning. I also highlight my theoretical learning, my original contribution and how I plan to move forward.

1.9. Conclusion

This introductory chapter provided the detailed discussion of the background of this self-study research. It also outlined the rationale for engaging in this self-study research and the methodological approach employed in the study. The research questions that guide the study and the theoretical framework that underpins the study were highlighted. The chapter further gave details on the key concepts that emanate from the study and concluded with an outline of the chapters in the dissertation. The most significant lesson I learnt from doing this chapter is that it is very important to keep the background and the rationale for the study in mind since it helps in directing the study towards the required outcomes. It also assists with phrasing the

research questions and choosing the suitable methodological approach and a pertinent theoretical framework to underpin the study.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, is a methodological chapter. It gives a description of my self-study research process where I detail my reasons for selecting this methodology, location of the study and the selection of my research participants. A discussion of my role as a participant and a researcher in the study is also outlined. The chapter also provides the description of data generation tools, challenges encountered during data generation process and an explanation of how issues of trustworthiness were addressed is given.

CHAPTER TWO

MY PERSONAL HISTORY SELF-STUDY JOURNEY

2.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this self-study research was to conduct a self-study of my practice as a teacher to explore a variety of ways of enriching the process of teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English. In the previous chapter, chapter one, I provided the purpose of this self-study research. Furthermore, I outlined the rationale for taking this journey of self-reflection and stated the three critical questions that guided the study, the theoretical framework that underpinned the study, as well as the methodological approaches employed in the study. The chapter concluded with an overview of the dissertation.

This chapter, chapter two, provides a description of my self-study research process. Firstly, the research methodology employed in the study and my reason for selecting this methodology is discussed as well as the location of the study and the selection of the research participants. In addition, my role as the researcher and a participant in the study is discussed in depth. Thereafter, the description of self-study data generation tools and the challenges encountered during the research process shared. Finally, the chapter provides an explanation of how I addressed issues of trustworthiness in the study.

2.2. Research methodology

The methodological approach employed in this study is a self-study (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, Samaras, 2010). According to Cardetti and Orgnero (2013), self-study is described as a method of improving a person's teaching practice and one's professional development. Hence, the self-study was found to be suitable because I wanted to study my own professional practice to improve the way I teach. In addition, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) outline the purpose of self-study as developing an understanding of one's teaching practice that benefits both the person involved in the self-study and others in the teaching fraternity. In this study, I used my own teaching practice as descriptive data and I also used self-study in relation to my teaching practice, which has emerged from my attempts to understand the challenges faced in implementing the curriculum as intended, thus enhancing my learners' learning in English first additional language.

According to Samaras (2011), self-study is characterised by questioning one's own practice from observation and personal experiences and attempting innovative strategies of teaching to improve learning. Therefore, this self-study research enabled me to reflect on my own personal professional experiences and learnt from them to improve my understanding in enhancing my teaching of grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners in English (LaBoskey, 2004) with the help of my critical friends and learners. In addition, Madondo (2014) views self-study as a reflective journey. Self-study, therefore, allowed me, as a teacher researcher, to reflect on my teaching practice by looking at my personal and professional experiences in my classroom context. I sought to understand what works and does not work in my teaching practice as advised by Samaras (2011). Through self-study, I was able to look at what I am doing in class rather than what others are doing. Below are the critical identifying features of self-study, as postulated by LaBoskey (2004), which provided a clear guide to understand the process before embarking on the journey:

2.2.1. One's own practice is the main focus of self-study

Practitioners whose practices are being studied are the ones who initiate and carry out self-study. This suggests that a person who experiences challenges and is concerned about their practice, and wishes to get an understanding so as to improve, takes an initiative to engage in self-study (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015; Nilsson and Loughran, 2012). Thus, I wanted to be more informed about problematic aspects of my practice which normally remained hidden from my understanding and reflections. This was also prompted by critical incidents like my learners' inability to understand the teaching and learning content presented to them in English, their second language.

This self-study was about me as an educator and a researcher. I studied my professional teaching practice since I had identified some areas which needed special attention in order to facilitate improvement. However, the self was not the only focus of the study, the professional context was also taken into consideration as the aim was improvement. Feldman (2003) stipulates that self-study offers the researchers an opportunity to utilize what they have experienced as data for their research. Similarly, in the study, I reflected on my personal experiences and teaching strategies with the aim of enhancing my teaching. Conducting a self-study research gave me an opportunity to try out new strategies for teaching grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners in English as well as contribute to the knowledge generated to the teaching profession. LaBoskey (2004) asserts that a self-study focuses on what is happening in the

classroom context, using the teacher's language, while also drawing on academic and professional language as possible. Hence, through studying my personal experiences and my teaching practice, I wanted to clearly understand what was happening in my using the required language and also considering emotions that transpired during the research process.

2.2.2. Self-study is improvement aimed and it uses collaborative interactions

Another distinguishing attribute of self-study is that it is improvement aimed (LaBoskey, 2004). It pays attention to the improvement of an individual teacher, both at a personal and professional level (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Hence, in this study, I engaged in understanding my educational context and practice in teaching grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners in English aiming to improve the quality of education that I offer to my learners. In addition, LaBoskey (2004) affirms that self-study seeks to develop both the individual practice and the school environment. Thus, the aim was to find better and effective strategies for teaching grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners in English which would also help my colleagues in school and other teachers to improve their teaching. Correspondingly, Hamilton, Smith, and Worthington (2008) assert that self-study can help raise certain questions towards educational change for teachers who seek to improve their teaching practice. Furthermore, Hamilton and Pinnegar (2009) affirm that self-study involves the person himself or herself, their actions and ideas. This study, therefore, focuses on the core processes of my educational practice, involving questions such as "How can I further improve my teaching in English to Grade 4 learners?" Hence, this study is improvement aimed since it offers opportunity to initiate the implementation of the positive change in teaching.

2.2.3. Self-study as an interactive process

Self-study is a collaborative process (LaBoskey, 2004). Even though the term, self-study itself may seem to be specific to one person, approaches which assists in reflecting on one's self to exploring practice, interactions during research and the checking with others are a requirement in self-study. Social interactions in self-study research help in avoiding dangers of individualism and reflection, and allow the process of public debate (Kelchtermans & Hamilton, 2004). Collaborative interactions in self-study also helps in reframing of assumptions underlying practices (Fletcher & Bullock, 2012). This study does not only focus

on the researcher as a teacher, but it also involves learners in developing innovative strategies to improve practice in teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English in order to generate their responses about the teaching process in English. Masinga (2009) affirms that responses from learners can assist in teacher learning. Hence, I worked closely with my learners to learn from what they say about my teaching. LaBoskey (2004) further states that analysis of self and transformation tools should be integrated. This is because teaching is about personal and professional being. Therefore, in this study, I reflected on past experiences and interacted with them in order to give meaning to the present and future.

According to Hamilton et al. (2008, p.21), self-study's interactive element offers the researcher an opportunity to "focus on self, engage in reflection through interaction with critical friends and self, and ultimately improve practice". In this study, I interacted with my critical friends who encouraged my critical thinking, gave feedback on my teaching and suggested new teaching strategies to improve my practice. My interaction with critical friends through emails, telephone conversations and meetings (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011) and then transcribing these conversations as data to articulate, reconstruct and represent personal experiences in our practice as teachers was crucial. In addition, the review of literature also assisted in the engagement of a deeper understanding of my teaching practice.

2.2.4. Self-study favours qualitative research methods which is evidence-based

Data generated in self-study research is associated with what one has experienced and practices as a teacher and a researcher (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). Self-study researchers use every method available to attain necessary evidence and to understand their practice. No method or approach is singled out and prescribed for self-study data generation, but self-study researchers employ conventional research methods and strategies of empirical-analytical and/or qualitative interpretative research. This includes interviews with critical friends and learners (Northfield & Loughran, 1996), audio and videotapes of instructional activities (Berry, 2007), as well as evaluation, assessment, results, feedback and observations (Bair, Bair, Mader, Hipp, & Hakim, 2010). Self-study research uses various approaches, like collage (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2009), memory drawings (Samaras, 2011) or poetry (Hopper & Sanford, 2008) to map, analyse and present personal experiences as data. Combining various methods and strategies (triangulation) in a self-study research allows the researcher to capitalise on the strengths of each method (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). Additionally, Pithouse (2004) maintains that using a variety of strategies empowers self-study researchers with the ability to

study their selves and individual experiences from different points of view. Using different approaches allowed for the identification of strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and researcher. Correspondingly, LaBoskey (2004) affirms that self-study researchers use different approaches to generate useful information for better understanding of their practice. In this self-study, different qualitative approaches to generate data were used, which assisted with evidence of my past learning experiences, past teaching experiences and my present practice of teaching grade four IsiZulu speaking learners in English. Therefore, my personal journal and memory drawings were useful in providing information about my experiences of learning in English.

Learners' work, curriculum policy, lesson plans and learner journals also offered ideas for my professional development in teaching. Artefact retrieval was used to reflect on objects that would trigger certain memories and the interaction with critical friends provided feedback on how I could improve on my practice.

2.2.5. Trustworthiness in self-study research

Every self-study research begins with an individual's experiences and a need to understand those lived experiences (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). In order to articulate, represent, analyse and report personal experiences as data, trustworthiness, integrity, authenticity and credibility become criteria to validate self-study research (Feldman, 2003). The "degree to which other practitioners or researchers turn to or rely on, and use the concepts, methods and inferences of a practice as a source of their own theorizing, research, or practice" is referred to as trustworthiness (Mishler, 1990). In this self-study research, I combined various data generation methods and strategies in order to get an opportunity to study myself, my experiences and practice, and used qualitative approaches, which assisted me with evidence of my past and my present learning and teaching experiences which gives trustworthiness to the study.

2.3. Research setting

This study was conducted in my class, Grade 4A, at Peace and joy Primary School north of Empangeni in KwaZulu Natal. The school is in the rural area, where both stock and crop farming are practiced. The school's learner enrolment is 563, with a principal, two HoDs and 18 Post Level 1 teachers. The educator-learner ratio is 1:40. It is a mainstream government school where English is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) from grade 4 upwards. The school falls under quintile 2 in the National Norms and Standards for School

Funding (NNSFF) (RSA1996). According to the NNSFF Act (1996), quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools are schools in the poorest communities. This means that this school is one of the poorest, affected by the community's high level of unemployment and low level of education. Learners do not pay school fees and the school is highly dependent on government funding and feeding scheme. The infrastructure is inadequate; it has very limited teaching aids, and no playgrounds for learners to engage in any form of sporting activities. The school does not have a library for learners to access reading material to facilitate their learning in English and both teachers and learners still use pit toilets. The community which is serviced by the school, is poor and struck by droughts, and violence which emanates from stock theft. This has a negative impact on the school since it gives rise to absenteeism and a drop in the learner enrolment. A drop in the school ' s learner enrolment suggests a drop in the number of teachers employed. Despite their low level of literacy and unemployment, parents try their best to be involved in their children's education, like, when they must ensure that their children are safe on their way to and from school, and even inside the school premises.

2.4. Research participants

Because of the nature of the research method, self-study, employed in this study; I (the researcher) was the principal participant for the study. As I examined my enactment of the intended curriculum, intending to enhance my practice, I retraced and re-examined my own personal history. As part of my learning, I used part of my history and journey of learning to develop new strategies, as I aimed at improving teaching grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners in English. I planned lessons, teaching and learning activities; taught the lessons; observed and recorded my learners' responses; also kept a record of my feelings, experiences and responses in a personal reflective journal. Even though the study was a self-study, I worked with my grade 4 learners. This was a group of 38 learners comprising of 20 boys and 18 girls aged between 9 and 11, all IsiZulu speakers and not exposed to a variety of resources to support their English language learning. They had been learning through the medium of home language and they were being introduced to English as the medium of instruction that year.

2.4.1 Critical friends

For the purpose of this research, I worked with my critical friends. Samaras (2011) explains critical friends as a learning community with trusted colleagues who ask questions for clarification of the research and offer different points of view in a productive manner. Through

my critical friends, I gained a "new perspective in understanding and reframing" my ideas about my research (Samaras, 2011, p. 281). We had regular meetings in the form of a cohort that our supervisors created for us to share ideas after looking at each other's work. We questioned each other's ideas for the sake of improving our research. For an example, when I was not certain about structuring my lesson plans in such a way that would allow me to do things differently, my critical friends helped me with questions, which helped me come up with innovative ideas. Consequently, my critical friends were experienced qualified professional teachers who were also studying towards their Masters' Degree in Curriculum Studies. One critical friend was a school principal, another was an HoD and the other a Post Level 1 educator. My supervisor and another lecturer who was supervising my critical friends helped us with leading questions which facilitated our discussions. My critical friends brought new ideas, beliefs, thoughts and experiences which helped me rearrange ideas, which improved my research (as shown in Chapters Three and Four).

McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) argue that critical friends assist in listening and giving necessary support; critiquing, analysing and evaluating in order to ensure trustworthiness of the study. Correspondingly, Samaras et al. (2004) affirm the collaborative nature of self-study research. Hence, my critical friends and I journeyed together through the shared encounters of my learners' experiences; offering support, advice, as well as a shoulder to lean on when needed. There were times when we laughed together whilst sharing the effect of our research journey on our lives within our different school contexts (Vilakazi, 2013). To illustrate, when we were struggling with presenting data that we had generated in our first lessons, as we felt things did not go well, one critical friend reminded us not to expect to see immediate outcomes and that this a part of a journey that we were still embarking on. This afforded us an opportunity to move forward with our work knowing that we had each other to keep us focused and rational about our experiences. learners had responded to our teaching. This taught me to give attention to every activity that I and my learners engage in to improve my practice. Through working with critical friends, I got an opportunity to create an informed self that can interact with other practitioners in ways that promote and promote learning for self and others as asserted by Tidwell, Heston, and Fitzgerald (2009). I was working closely with my supervisor and another lecturer in the form of a cohort they had created for us to share ideas. Our supervision sessions were very lively which developed trust among us and made it easier to take opinions, critiques and suggestions on how we could proceed with our studies from one another as suggested by Costa and Kallick (1993).

2.5. Data generation

Pithouse (2004) maintains that for self-study researchers to study their selves and individual experiences from different viewpoints, a variety of research methods must be employed. In addition, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) affirm that different qualitative research strategies must be used to generate data for self-study. It is for this reason that I employed a variety of data generation methods to re-examine my curriculum enactment in English to IsiZulu speaking learners as advised by LaBoskey (2004). The sociocultural theory guided me in identifying a variety of data sources that were going to allow for my teacher learning and knowing-in-practice as suggested by Kelly (2006). These various data sources were used to maintain the quality and trustworthiness of the study (LaBoskey, 2004): personal journal, learner journals, artefact retrieval, curriculum policy, lesson plans, learners' work, collage-making, drawings and audio recordings of lessons and collage presentation (as shown in Table 2.1). Using different data generation methods also allowed for a deeper understanding and illumination of the phenomenon under study.

Table 2.1: Data generation table

Research Question	Data generation activities	Data Source
How have my lived experiences contributed to how I teach in English to IsiZulu speaking Grade 4 learners?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I wrote about my personal history of how I learnt in English. 2. I collected objects that triggered my memories of my learning. 3. I created memory drawings and metaphor drawings. 4. I had discussions with my critical friends. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflective journal entries. 2. Artefact retrieval and journal entries 3. Photographs 4. Memory drawings and metaphor drawings. 5. Audio-recorded discussions

<p>How do my learners experience and respond to my teaching in English in my Grade 4 class?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learners were asked questions where they had to respond orally and in written form. 2. Learners were asked to sing songs about the learning content. 3. Learners were asked to work in groups to construct their own sentences. 4. Learners were asked to make journal entries to reflect on how they felt about class regarding me as their teacher. 5. I audio- recorded six Social Sciences lessons in class in order to reflect on my teaching. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My learners' responses to questions asked. 2. Learners' work. 3. Learner journals. 4. Audio-recordings of the lessons. 5. My personal journal.
<p>How can I improve my school?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I had discussions with critical friends before and after the lessons I taught. 2. I read what my learners had written in their journals about my teaching. 3. I listened to audio-recordings of the lessons that I taught. 4. I designed my lesson plans differently from the normal ones. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learners' responses to lessons using learner journals. 2. Audio-recordings of the lessons I taught and discussions with critical friends. 3. Lesson plans.

2.5.1. Personal journal

A personal journal is defined as a tool for writing that provides a space for the writer to disclose and reflect on their feelings and personal viewpoints (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). According to Lyons and LaBoskey (2002), a personal journal is a book where a teacher researcher writes his/ her accounts through personal experiences and testimonies. Hence, through my personal journal I explored my emotions and experiences of my teaching practice. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) further maintain that a personal journal is a writing space where the researcher

can expose their own emotions and points of view. In my journal, I reflected on my experiences to fully realize my potential of teaching IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English, which is their second language, while meeting curriculum expectations. I also reflected on my own past experiences as a learner, a teacher and researcher, as well as emergent feelings of my learners' work and observations of my teaching and classroom activities, areas where I excelled and areas where I need to improve. I also reflected on my thoughts about innovative strategies to improve my teaching practice. I wrote freely, without fearing anyone's opinion because the data in my personal journal was going to assist me in enhancing my practice. Daily entries in my journal had dates and venues to assist me in remembering ideas and issues discussed as suggested by Madondo (2014).

I recorded and documented my thoughts, feelings and emotions from that moment throughout the study; when I had to plan my research proposal, narrate my personal stories, attending supervision sessions, meeting my critical friends, planning my lessons, generating data from my learners and writing my dissertation. This allowed me to uncover aspects of myself, understand them, whilst also learning from them. The following is an example of my personal reflection:

I never thought I would spend the whole night planning a lesson. This is very painful because I have been a teacher for 23 years, and I have never taught an unplanned lesson. Does this mean I have not been doing justice to my learners? I understand that my lessons have to be different from the usual ones, since I have to improve the way I teach, but why is it taking me this long? I am so angry when I think of the drastic measures I have had to apply (including punishing my learners unnecessarily when they showed that they had not understood what I had been teaching to them) to cover the prescribed curriculum while putting too much pressure on my learners. My learners were very active and interested in my first research lesson. I must maintain the momentum by all means. (Journal entry, 29 August 2017).

2.5.2. Artefact retrieval

Artefacts are objects that "come from our past and are often found in file drawers and dusty boxes which can offer tangible evidence of the realities of teaching and learning" (Allender & Manke, 2004, pp. 20, 21). Furthermore, artefacts carry personal memories and they evoke personal narratives when they are analysed to answer certain questions about their significance to the one who possesses them (Mitchell, Theron, Smith, Stuart, & Campbell, 2011). Allender and Manke (2004) further describe artifact retrieval as a tool which enables us to make connections with our past experiences. It improves one's self-understanding, which leads to both personal and professional development (Cole, 2011). It stands to reason that we maintain the emotions we had through the things we keep. It is for this reason that I used artifact retrieval

to retrace my personal history. To retrace my personal history, I looked for artefacts that represented my journey of learning in English, my second language.

This research journey required that I looked for artefacts from my personal history and from my past learning experiences that had significance in my learning in English, my second language. In Chapter Three of this study, detailed accounts of how I used artefacts such as family photographs are provided. These photographic artefacts were significant tools which assisted me to reminisce about my past which had to do with my learning in English. These photographic artefacts represent memories of how I learnt, with the full support of my loving and caring family. I also retrieved images and pictures, old photographs, report cards and books that were no longer used but kept in storage boxes, old exercise books and letters to help trigger the memories of my past learning and teaching experiences. I retrieved objects that I had long forgotten about that have to do with my learning in junior primary school, senior primary school, secondary school, college of education where I trained for teaching, universities where I enrolled to further my studies and objects from my teaching practice.

2.5.3. Curriculum Policy



Figure 2.1: Picture of curriculum policy documents that guided my teaching and learning processes

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (DBE, 2011) guides the teaching and learning processes in South African public schools. It is therefore important that I know and understand the content of the curriculum policy as guidelines that promote aims and objectives

of the official implemented curriculum (Williams, 2014). The South African Curriculum Policy stipulates that children from grade 4 onwards be taught in their additional language, which is usually English, First Additional Language (Department of Education, 2011). This requires that grade 4 learners acquire necessary English language competence in order to meet the requirements of learning their subjects through the medium of English FAL.

In this self-study research, I used the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document for planning my teaching and learning activities. I kept in mind that my grade 4 learners were in their infancy stage in as far as learning in English was concerned, since the curriculum policy was demanding that they were taught in their home language, IsiZulu, from grade R to grade 3. The teaching, learning and assessment activities I designed for my learners were being guided by the curriculum policy (see Chapter Four).

2.5.4. Learner journals

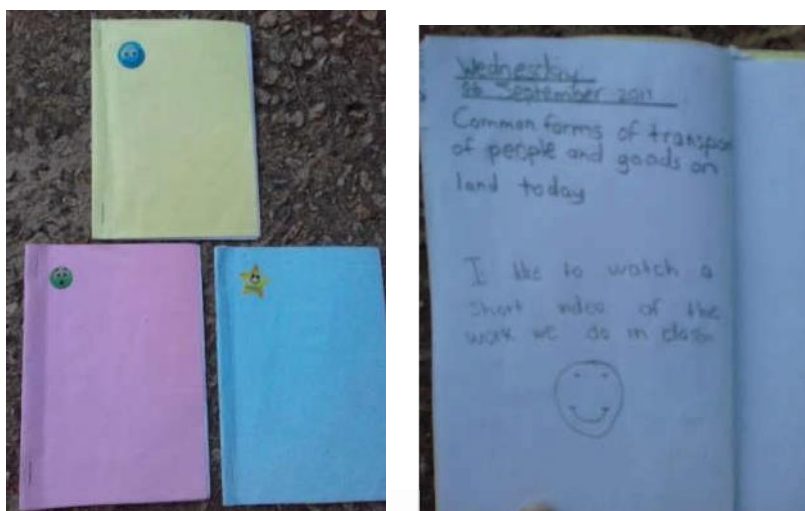


Figure 2.2: Samples of learner journals on which learners reflected on my teaching

According to Zaragoza and Vaughn (1995), a learner journal is a handbook where learners document their experiences, thoughts, emotions, feelings and ideas to assist the teacher in improving his/ her teaching practice. My grade 4 learners were therefore given *AS* exercise books to use as their journals. I requested they capture things which had been learned and evaluate actions tried as well as the results in their journals. In that way, learners were given an opportunity to write freely, without the fear of being corrected and without having to follow certain rules as Pithouse (2011) postulates. My learners entered in their journals what was taught, how they felt about the content and the teaching process. Learners reflected about me as the teacher and my teaching. Their reflection allowed for the identification of mistakes made during my teaching and I was offered an opportunity to correct those mistakes. Learners also reflected about the facial expressions presented when I talked to them which allowed me to link those expressions with my emotions. This provided an opportunity to learn what went well in my teaching and what needed to be improved. Learners were asked to make daily entries in their journals and to add dates and venues in their entries to facilitate remembering.

In this study, journal writing was an activity for the whole class because I wanted all my learners to get an opportunity to reflect on their learning. I gave them a maximum of 4 minutes after each lesson to write in their journals before they could forget what happened during the lesson. That assisted them in dealing with their feelings and emotions while allowing me to see where I need to improve and where I was successful in my teaching practice. Since I was not expecting all my learners to write sensible sentences, I allowed those who could not write to use images like faces to show how they felt. Descriptions of how learners' reflections were used in the study is provided in Chapter Four.

2.5.5. Memory and metaphor drawings

According to Weber (2008), drawings assist us in connecting images in our minds, our thoughts and ideas. It is for this reason that I used memory drawings to trigger lived experiences, memories of certain people or things or events that have somehow faded in my mind in order to relive my past emotions, feelings, thoughts and ideas (See Chapter Three). Therefore, the drawing that brought back exciting memories is that of my early morning journeys with my mother. It reminded me of the quality time spent with my mother chatting about my school work, and how much my parents were involved in my learning. That drawing got me thinking how lucky I was to have uneducated parents who would do anything for me to be educated. I also made the drawing of my teacher, Uncle Sir, which reminded me of different people who

made my learning in English possible and easier. The drawing of my SSA teacher helped me remember vividly how we were encouraged to learn a second language at an early age. In addition, (Mitchell et al., 2011) state that the biggest role that drawings play in self-study is that of connecting the parts of one self. Using drawings therefore activated the visualisation of my thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions, to make associations and connections and then put them on paper. I used drawings when I could not find artefacts related to my narratives in the storage boxes and file drawers.

Pithouse (2011) defines a metaphor drawing as a way of uncovering meaning of a certain experience or situation. Therefore, I created metaphor drawings of a three-legged pot and a bridge (see Chapter Five) to help me expose the meaning of my lived experiences and the way I learnt from people around me. The drawing of a three-legged pot allowed me to look deeply into the importance of the connection between me as a teacher, my learners and their parents, while the drawing of a bridge speaks to the support necessary for effective learning.

2.5.6. Photographs

Photographs assisted with recalling my personal history in terms of my learning and teaching (see Chapter Three). The photographs were images of significant people who made my learning in English possible. I also took photographs of my learners performing some learning activities and the work that learners did, from which I had to learn. I ascertained that I abide by ethical guidelines when I took those photographs. I avoided taking photographs that showed people's identities, unless I had obtained consent to do so (see Chapters Three and Four). I used my cellular phone to take photographs that helped in creating a visual record of the experiences with a focus of improving my teaching practice. Since self-study is evidence-based, photographs also provided evidence of the activities conducted with my learners.

2.5.7. Collage making



Figure 2.3: Picture of the collage created to narrate my personal history

In Figure 2.3 I worked with my supervisor to sequence ideas to make sense of my personal history. Gerstenblatt (2013) postulates that collage making gives the researcher an opportunity to imagine, explore, analyse and interpret reality in different dimensions. Similarly, my first art work was to create a collage to narrate my personal history. This assisted me to tell my story, since it triggered memories of my lived experiences as a learner, teacher and researcher and helped me narrate them to my supervisor before writing them on paper. My supervisor assisted me with guiding questions in order to narrate my story logically while looking at my collage. Raht, Smith, and MacEntee (2009) define collage making as "a creative art-based method in which separate images are cut from magazines, newspaper articles, and/or books and glued together to create a new image" (p.229). I engaged in collage making to reflect on past experiences, both personal and professional.

I also used this art form of collage making which was a group activity to allow my grade 4 learners to paste pictures on the paper to use their imagination in a way that makes meaning to me, the researcher (see Chapter Four). Learners had to look for pictures collected by each member of the group to decide which best describe their experiences, as suggested by (Masinga, 2012). In addition, Simmons and Daley (2013) maintain that collage making gives participants a wonderful chance to take their time playing creatively to make an expressive symbol. Since my learners enjoy active learning, I noticed that collage making allowed them

to display their creativity and celebrated their achievements in a relaxed and playful atmosphere after I had demonstrated to them.

2.5.8. Learners' work



31 August 2017
Stock farming in South Africa

Animals	Products
Cattle	meat, milk, skin
Goats	meat, milk, skin
Pigs	meat
Sheep	meat, milk, wool, skin
Poultry	Meat, eggs, feathers

Figure 2.4: A sample of a learner's work showing learners' gradual understanding of instructions given in English.

As a teacher and a researcher, I worked with my grade 4 learners as participants in the study. I used the CAPS (Department of Basic Education, 2011) document to design my teaching, learning and assessment activities for my lessons to be in line with the requirements of the national curriculum. Learners' responses to the activities given to learners were recorded in their classwork exercise books, homework books, assessment books and portfolios. This was utilised during data generation and analysis. I observed daily activities to see if learners finish the tasks given to them, whether they understood what was taught, to check if there is any improvement in their work after my intervention strategies, and to keep track of my learners' progress. It depended on what was planned to be observed at given times.

2.5.9. Lesson Plans

Jones (1998) stipulates that lesson planning is the living evidence of much deeper and reflective activity. This suggests that lesson planning is a key feature for every successful and effective teaching and learning. In addition, Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005) define a lesson plan as a work plan, which directs the teacher to the kind of material he or she must teach to learners. This therefore, suggests that a lesson plan serves as an instrument, which provides evidence of what the teacher is going to be doing in class.

In my lesson plans, I included a creative process that provided a framework for purposeful teaching and learning. Hence, my lesson plans included learning outcomes, objectives, resources and activities that addressed those learning outcomes and objectives. Full details of the use of lesson plans to generate data are given in Chapter Four of this study. My lesson plans provided me with flexibility to teach according to my individual methods of organisation and my learners' needs. Since the main objective of this study was to improve my teaching practice, the lesson plans did not only direct my teaching and learning activities, but also helped me organize learning content, resources and assessment activities.

2.5.10. Audio Recording

I audio recorded discussions with my supervisor, my critical friends, and the lessons with learners in the classroom. The rationale for these audio recordings was to listen critically and to engage with what was discussed and what happened during my teaching. Listening to audio recordings enables one to pick up significant information one might have missed out during interaction, such as emotions from the varying tone of participants' voices as they spoke and explained during the actual interaction (Masinga, 2012). Hence, listening to audio recordings of the discussions with my supervisor helped to structure my thoughts before putting them on paper and to identify what I had learnt from every activity engaged in. In the same way, the audio recordings of the discussions I had with my critical friends assisted me with ideas on how I could improve teaching in English to IsiZulu speaking learners. Furthermore, listening to my audio recorded teaching and my learners' responses to questions asked, helped to make meaning of the lessons taught and to improve on my teaching.

2.6. Data representation

The narrative style was used to represent rich data produced by intentionally recalling past experiences from family life to my early teaching practice (see Chapter Three). I chose the narrative style to share my research journey in a clear and evocative way, and also allow the reader to relive the experiences with me, as suggested by Richardson (2003). The data were generated through my journal entries, memory drawings and artefact retrieval (as discussed above) to respond to the first research question: *How have my lived experiences contributed to how I teach IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English?* These data sources assisted me in constructing my personal history presented in Chapter Three.

I examined the generated data and coded them with colours. Coding is a "process of reading carefully through the transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units" (Nieuwenhuis, 2010, p. 105), as well as identifying themes that emerged (see Chapter Four). Likewise, while examining the generated data, I carefully analysed them for coding to appear as there was no prior identification of codes. In interpreting the data, an inductive approach with inductive codes was used. This was guided by the theoretical framework (details are provided in Chapter One). According to Nieuwenhuis (2010, p. 107), inductive codes are "developed by the researcher by directly examining the data". Nieuwenhuis (2010) further explains that the researcher lets codes emerge from the data when using inductive approach. Thus, I searched for these "emerging patterns, associations, concepts and explanations" (Nieuwenhuis, 2010, p. 107) while interpreting my memory stories with the intention of constructing meaning and understanding for the fulfilment of the purpose of the study.

I used different highlighters to colour-code sections of my memory stories that were significant and relevant to my research topic. These sections of my memory stories were grouped accordingly after identifying emerging issues. Going through this inductive data coding was not an easy task, as I had to read my memory stories repeatedly to make sense of them and to identify key emergent issues. I discovered from these memory stories how my past and present teaching and learning experiences shaped the professional teacher that I am today; thus, capacitating me with various teaching strategies I could use to teach IsiZulu speaking learners in English. While colour-coding, I realised some significant issues about my personal experiences that I had not mentioned. Going back and forth with my personal experiences helped in ascertaining that the issues I had identified reflected in Chapter Three. Samaras et al. (2004) advise self-study researchers to pay attention to emotions in personal history self-study to learn something new from those emotions. Hence, the deliberate re-examination of my personal history revealed various emotions which assisted in dealing with the day-to-day challenges encountered in my classroom context. The issues identified through inductive coding are presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

2.7. Making meaning of my lived experiences

The process of data analysis and interpretation in this study involved an ongoing process of making sense of the data, through continued reflection and a search for a deeper understanding.

The main objective of analysing and interpreting data is to identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and possible strategies that could be used to enhance my teaching in English to IsiZulu speaking grade four learners. This process of analysing and interpreting data could be defined as a "zooming in approach" (Chang, 2013) which involves asking systematic questions and writing notes that become useful in compiling the final research report (Creswell, 2015). Likewise, being guided by the sociocultural theory, I used the data generated from my lived experiences and through interactive discussions with my critical friends to make sense of my past experiences. My critical friends were helpful in addressing challenging questions related to my data generation and interpretation process. This collaborative process was used to get further meaning to personal history stories, as suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (1990).

An inductive approach was used for the analysis and interpretation of data guided by my research questions. When using the inductive approach, data was grouped according to issues that emerged as I interacted with data (Ndaleni, 2013). Working with my critical friends (Samaras & Roberts, 2011) to draw on the data generated helped to respond to my research questions as Ndaleni (2013) suggests. They also helped in identifying various aspects of the data. Inductive approach allowed for the opportunity to look at patterns, group similar items together and categorise data accordingly. Since my critical friends were experienced qualified professional teachers who were also studying towards their Masters' Degree in Curriculum Studies, they were able to share ideas on how to face the challenges encountered in the self-study research. We were also able to share what we were learning about self-study and the challenges experienced in our teaching practices. It is through this interaction that I found ideas which assisted with analysing my personal history, through asking questions on what was discussed. Their positive criticism and inquisitive minds provided clarity in analysing the data.

Data that were analysed also came from documents like my personal journal, learner journals, samples of learners' work, collages and lesson plans, as explained previously. A document analysis was conducted as well as what emanated from discussions with my critical friends. In so doing, I was analysing for connections to existing literature (Samaras, 2011) and research questions. Emerging themes and patterns were identified and described as highlighted by Turner (2010).

2.8. Ethical considerations

It is important that all research studies follow certain ethical principles (Samaras, 2011) which include anonymity, confidentiality and privacy. To fulfil this requirement, I engaged my participants who were grade 4 learners and my critical friends on what their roles in this study would be. They were further provided with clear explanations of what the research requested of them, to allow them to make an informed decision to voluntarily participate. They were also provided with a letter of consent (see Appendices C and D). Since I was working with children, parental consent was also sought (see Appendices A and E). To ensure that every parent or guardian was informed about the research, letters were drafted in English and IsiZulu. Since all the learners in Umfolozi Circuit are English Second Language learners, it was assumed that their parents or guardians could be as well. I gave my learners learner participant assent where they had to indicate by ticking the relevant emoticon to show if they were happy or not to participate in the study (see Appendix A). Permission to conduct this study was sought from all gate keepers who were the Department of Education, principal of the school where the research was conducted and the participants' parents/ guardians (see appendices A to B). Bartlett and Burton (2006) suggest that the above-mentioned ethical issues should be taken into consideration whilst conducting the research project.

It was vital that all participants were informed comprehensively about the research and what roles they would be required to play in the whole process before the commencement of data collection in the study. Once these expectations had been outlined, participants (with the help of parents/ guardians) made an informed decision about whether to participate in the research (Lichtman, 2010). All participants were made aware that they could freely withdraw at any stage of the research.

Confidentiality and anonymity for all participants in the research was ensured through use of pseudonyms when referring to the school and learners in the research report in order to protect them. A concerted effort was made not to intrude on teachers' time and space (Lichtman, 2010). I was mindful of the times the learners were available for making reflections after every research lesson, and the times my critical friends were available for interactive discussions; I structured my time accordingly with the assistance of the cohort meetings set by our supervisors.

2.9. Trustworthiness

As a self-study researcher reflecting on myself, the importance of trustworthiness was critical. According to Feldman (2003), "proving that the findings of educational research are true is highly impractical, however, they need to be credible- we should be convinced that they are true." (p. 26). Feldman (2003) further argues that the accuracy of what we see cannot be guaranteed in self-study research, since self-study researchers engage in a reflective process, focusing on themselves and their own teaching practices. It is for this reason that I needed to consider trustworthiness issues. Thus, I used a variety of self-study methods to get a better understanding of what I intended to explore in the study, as highlighted by A. Samaras and Roberts (2011). Personal journal, learner journals, learners ' work, lesson plans, curriculum policy, drawings, photographs, artefact retrieval, audio recording and collage making were used to generate data for the current self-study. Varathaiah (2010) asserts that these strategies would help in finding an illuminated perspective on the focus for the study.

I worked closely with my critical friends who listened and gave necessary support, critiquing and evaluating in order to ensure trustworthiness of the study as recommended by Jean McNiff and Whitehead (2012). Feldman (2003) further suggests that a detailed description of how data was collected must be given. Hence, the details of my research methods were provided in the text. Furthermore, I triangulated data sources to represent the self-study and provided evidence value of the things that changed in my professional practice. Additionally, clear details of the analysis and interpretation process used were provided. This study was a small in-depth study conducted in my Grade 4A classroom. The findings from this study can therefore not be generalised to any other context. However, other teachers can benefit from the insight and issues highlighted on the teaching of IsiZulu speaking learners in English.

2.10. Research challenges

Self-study strives at the development of both an individual teacher's practice and the school environment (LaBoskey, 2004). Thus, finding better ways of teaching my grade 4 learners could contribute to my empowerment, colleagues at my school and other teachers who experience challenges with teaching content in English to other language speakers.

Some parents did not allow their children to be part of the study, but due to the large number of learners (40) in my class, even if ten of them did not participate, I was still able to use the remaining learners as sources of data since I was integrating teaching with my study. The only

changes were in the methodologies, but the content remained the same. Time was also a challenge since the pace of the learners was an existing problem, although I was working with the same content and the same time frame, activities that needed additional time were done thirty minutes after the last period in the afternoon and thirty minutes before the first period in the morning. I also gave learners simpler (but not lowering the required standard) activities for them to finish the tasks in time.

The fact that data generation was limited to only one person (the researcher) was also a challenge. However, I had to draw on other perspectives through interaction with my critical friends and learners' reflections on the lessons done for the research process. Another challenge was my dual position as a researcher and a participant in the study. I moved back and forth preparing for the data generation process, giving my learners an opportunity to reflect on their journals, making entries on my personal journal and reflecting on my teaching in order to overcome this challenge. I shared my lived experiences throughout the study, some of which were unpleasant to relive due to their sensitive nature. Those experiences unleashed many feelings and thoughts that I had deliberately chosen to forget. Recalling such memories and writing them down brought back sadness and anger, which made me cry, and I would feel better afterwards. Other thoughts and feelings brought a smile to my face and made me wish they would remain the same. However, I realised there were some issues which emerged through my personal history that still require attention in order to be resolved so that I could become a better person. Writing about myself was also a challenge. It was hard for me to change from being the experienced teacher that I had perceived myself to be and become a learner. I had to be prepared to learn from my past experiences to improve my practice.

2.11. Conclusion

This chapter, provides a detailed discussion of my self-study research process. In the discussion, I provide a rationale for choosing self-study as a research methodology suitable for the study. The interpretivist paradigm presented in the study allowed me to discuss my research context and the selection of participants. A detailed discussion of my data generation strategies and data sources as well as an explanation of data analysis and interpretation were provided. Furthermore, the challenges encountered during the research process and how I overcame them were also discussed. Ultimately, ethical issues and trustworthiness of the study was highlighted.

The significant lesson learnt from this methodology chapter is the role played by learners in the data generation process cannot be overlooked. It was vital for to scrutinise even the minute

details of what learners entered in their journals; even their handwriting had a significant meaning from which I could learn how they reflect on the content taught, the way it was taught and their feelings regarding how I could teach it. Writing this methodology chapter highlighted and proved that there are still memories from past learning experiences which are hard for me to relive. This has taught me to be cautious when dealing with my learners so that they will not count me as part of their unpleasant experiences, as well as change what I can to promote active learning in my classroom. The following chapter, presents details of my lived experiences as a learner, and a teacher teaching IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English. To help recollect long-forgotten memories, various strategies such as memory drawings and artefact retrieval were used to engage the reader to relive, imagine and feel the experiences of my learning journey.

CHAPTER THREE

DOWN THE MEMORY LANE OF JOYS AND DISCOVERIES

3.1. Introduction

In this research, I conducted a self-study of my professional practice to explore how I can enrich my teaching as I teach my IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English. Alternative strategies that can be useful in improving my teaching were also explored in order for my IsiZulu speaking learners to understand what I teach them in English. In chapter two, a detailed exposition of my self-study research process was provided. It stated the reason for choosing a self-study a suitable research methodology for the study; gave a description of the research context and participants; provided a description of data generation strategies, data sources, data analysis and interpretation; discussed the challenges I encountered during the research process, how they were addressed, and how the ethical issues and trustworthiness of the study were handled; and finally, highlighted the most important lesson learnt from writing the methodology chapter.

This chapter, Chapter Three, addresses the first research question underpinning the study: *How have my lived experiences contributed to how I teach IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English?* In responding to this research question, I recall my past lived experiences at home, primary school, secondary school, teacher training college and further education. I also bring back memories of my early teaching experiences from which I learned. The use of some artefacts like drawings and pictures helped stimulate and trigger memories of my learning in English from IsiZulu speaking teachers and other people as well as learn how to improve my teaching practice. The main aim of remembering and reliving my past experiences of learning in English is to enhance and improve my teaching.

3.2. My family life tied together by love

When examining my current self, I see an amazing, independent, proud and experienced professional woman who wears a smile through thick and thin. I smile when I think of my personal and my professional achievements, my family and how far I have come (see Figure 3.1). The family photograph in figure 3.1 was taken in 1994 when I took my maternal grandmother, my mother and two aunts out for lunch after receiving my first service bonus cheque. That was the most incredible experience for all of us. Where I am today is because of

the journey that I have been through, growing up in a loving family and learning to stand on my two feet.



Figure 3.1: My first service bonus cheque, my first family outing

My family played the greatest role in building and shaping the person that I am today. Mortimore, Davies, Varlaam, and West (1983) define a family as a significant organisation in shaping the child's behaviour, since the child's home background and parents' attitudes greatly influence that behaviour. Correspondingly, Root, Hastings, and Maxwell (2012) affirm that positive results, including greater social competence and psychosocial functioning of children are associated with effective parental support. My supportive parents created an emotionally secure environment, in which I was encouraged to express my needs and health complaints, which resulted in my social competence and a positive self-esteem. I was very fortunate to grow up in an extended family with my maternal grandparents and aunts. I was told that my paternal family was not supportive of my parents' relationship after my mother's first child's disappearance. The child had an albinism condition; she went missing at the age of three and has never returned home. My paternal grandparents were convinced that the child's disappearance was because of my mother's negligence and they started despising her. Because my father wanted to save his marriage, he asked his father-in-law (my maternal grandfather) to give him a plot to build a house for his family.

My mother and I went to stay with my maternal family, while my father worked in Johannesburg. He would send money so that my mother would facilitate the building of our

house. When the house was completed, my mother went to stay in it with her younger sister, as I remained with my maternal family. At the time, I was the only grandchild in the family. Since Albinism was regarded as a shame, everyone in the family decided never to talk about the loss of their child. I believe it is for this reason that my grandparents wanted to share the responsibility of raising me with my mother, since they were also close neighbours, sharing almost everything they had. This shared responsibility resulted in having two significant women in my life; my mother and maternal grandmother.



Figure 3.2: The two inspirational women in my life, my mother and grandmother

My mother was the first born in her family. She was very strict; she wanted everything to be done accurately and orderly, and she was very involved in my education. According to Homby and Lafaele (2011), parental involvement in their children's education is central to effective education, and this is true for children of all ages (Epstein, 2001). My mother was not employed, but she had to do something to contribute towards supporting her family. She sold fruit and vegetables at the bus rank in town. She was fond of waking up at four o'clock in the morning to prepare for her daily bus trip to town before she could knock on my grandmother's house where I was staying. My mother would warm my bath water in a primus stove, bathe me, and give me something to eat, dress and take me to school. She did this every school day and was never late, irrespective of the weather conditions. She would leave me at the school gate and rush to catch her bus to town. My mother was a hard-working person and did not allow her little formal education to make her feel less important. She was always hopeful that one

day things would work out for the better. She did all she could to ensure that my grandparents noticed her efforts and willingness to please them as they were taking care of her children. She would always bring fresh fruits for my grandmother as a token of appreciation.

Clark (1984) maintains that parents should be willing to be actively involved in either school based or home-based education of their children, not only getting their children to school and shifting the parenting role to the teachers. My mother had very little formal education (she had only primary school education), but she was determined to see her children graduate. She would go an extra mile to ensure that I had everything that was needed at school and did not miss any school work. She returned home at six in the afternoon on week days and four o'clock on Saturdays. The only full days she spent at home were Sundays and public holidays. She would go to church every Sunday morning and do the washing and cleaning thereafter. She spent most of her free time with my grandmother chatting about family issues and how they could support the children. My mother loved helping my grandmother in the fields and the vegetable garden and I would be around to bring some items to them, like seeds, seedlings and drinking water or fetching water from the river to water the crops.

Fox and Olsen (2014) define parent engagement as the parents' behaviours, values, attitudes and activities that promote the child's academic development, learning ability and educational outcomes. It is this engagement that assisted in my academic achievement. My mother was a very diligent and dedicated person who would give herself time to talk to her little girls. She would look at my school work in order to give assistance where it was needed, especially with spelling words and reading activities both IsiZulu and English when I was still at junior primary school. We would do simple spelling words since she did not know difficult words. She could not tolerate laziness and postponement, and expected me to do exactly what she wanted me to do at the time she had said so. Fox and Olsen (2014) further affirm that a child's learning outcomes improve when parents engage with their child's learning at home by talking about their school work, their educational expectations, and by assisting with reading and mathematics activities. My mother had an eye for good work. When I got all the spelling words correct and read the passage correctly, she rewarded me with some of the fruit that she sold. That motivated me to do reading at my own time before I could read for her. I also practised writing spelling words on my own before writing them for her.

As for my grandmother, she was a very kind and loving person who would do anything to see her family happy and united. She was illiterate, but she could tell the time from the analogue clock that was hanging on the wall. The funniest thing about that is that she could not read the same numbers if they were not on the clock. She told us that grandfather was the one who taught her the clock. My grandmother, a house wife, was kind enough to look after me, carry me on her back and feed me throughout the day from when I was a year old when my mother had to find ways to put food on the table. I was like my grandmother's last born, although hers was fifteen years older than me, living with relatives on the other side of our town. That showed much of a sacrifice. Fortunately for her, my grandfather and aunts were very supportive too. Every morning, my grandmother would prepare something for me to eat before the family headed to work in the fields, ploughing, hoeing, or harvesting, depending on the season. She would choose a safe spot for me to sit, eat, sleep and play under the tree in the field as she did her day's work.

We had a lovely vegetable garden near the river. My great teacher, my grandmother, taught me to plant seedlings, water them every afternoon and to take care of them by weeding and using insecticides and pesticides to control insects and pests. When the vegetables were ready for consumption, we would eat fresh produce from our garden and my mother would take some and sell at the bus rank. I learnt at an early age that one must work hard for every reward and that I should give my all to anything that I do no matter how small it may be. I am the eldest of five siblings, all sisters and no brothers. The informal education that I received at home prepared me for school life. Despite the lack of formal education, my grandmother played a major role in shaping my character and identity. As the eldest child in the family, I had responsibilities assigned to me with regards to house chores. When I came back from school, I had to take off my school uniform, wash my under wears and socks before I could eat and wash the bowl I was using. I would then play with my younger sister. Most of the time, we would play school, where I would be the teacher and she would be learner. I had the chance of imitating what my teacher did and said in class.

Since there was no boy child in my extended family, I was taught to do both girls' and boys' duties. Just like any other girl in the area, I was expected to fetch water from the river every afternoon during weekdays, as well as morning and afternoon during the weekends. I also had to collect firewood for cooking daily. I had to wash the dishes and three-legged pots at the age

of seven. My aunts, who were responsible for cooking and dishing up, did not allow me to play when there was one dirty dish or pot in the hut we used as a kitchen.

My maternal grandparents had plenty of livestock (cattle, goats and chicken), which made our family one of the fortunate families in the area. Our oxen would till the land in spring, and we would enjoy fresh produce in summer. Milk and maas (fermented milk) were always available and would be given to our neighbours who were not as fortunate as we were. I had to ensure that my grandfather's goats were all back and safe in their kraal in the evening before asking my mother to help me with my spelling words and reading. The herd's boy needed assistance on taking the cattle to the dipping tank every Wednesday morning. I had to help him with that before preparing for school, otherwise our valuable cattle would have been infected with ticks and fleas.

There was an older boy who came daily to take maas for his family as they did not have cows. He would assist me with my school work every afternoon after his responsibilities for the day, like washing his school uniform and helping his grandfather with his goats. He was at the senior primary school and was familiar with my work; I still remember him imitating my teacher's voice when giving instructions. He assisted me with English reading, spelling and dictation, and multiplication tables. He would ask for my English book, open any page and ask me to read while he was listening. He would then ask for my spelling words, given by my teacher, and tell me to memorise them and write them down. That was a very difficult exercise, but I did what I could. We would then recite the multiplication tables together before he went back home.

In winter, we would enjoy fresh vegetables from our garden. Before we could enjoy our produce, we were taught to do our part as children. My younger sister and I would fetch water from the river to fill in the containers that our grandmother gave us and water the vegetables. We had to collect kraal manure so that she would fertilise our vegetable garden. Since I was a little older, I had learnt how to water the seedlings with necessary care and showed my younger sister how to do it.

3.3 Uneducated, yet optimistic of the future

Both of my parents received formal education, but did not finish school. Their level of education had very little influence on their views of whether they had necessary knowledge and skills to engage in various aspects of parental involvement in my education (Green,

Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). My father was not always around since he worked in Johannesburg to support the family financially. He would visit home occasionally and depended on my mother and my maternal grandparents to raise his kids and introduce them to school and church life, which they did successfully when I look at the person that I am today. At home, I had a very strong support system. My sisters and I continued to stay with my maternal grandmother until she passed on. We would go to our parents' house to do some things and then come back. Our parents did not have a problem with that because they knew we were taken care of since we were the only children that our grandmother had. My two aunts got married and we stayed with our loving grandmother. My grandmother wanted me to study nursing after matric so I could work in our local clinic. She would tell me stories about how some girls in the area had managed to improve their family lives and how she had been dreaming of having one big house with modern furniture of that time and modern cooking stoves and pots (no more three-legged pots). She had planned for my mother to be a nurse, but she did not finish school. My mother, on the other hand, wanted me to study teaching. She used to say I was good with the children as she noticed the way I related to my younger sisters.

We had to help our aunts when they were cleaning at home. It was our responsibility to ensure that the chickens were fed before they were locked in their cages to avoid theft. My mother had two other girls after my younger sister who all stayed with our grandmother, whom we also had to take care of. We had to play with the younger siblings to keep them busy so that they would not cry for attention. We also had to feed them when they were hungry, because my grandmother brought food for them from the fields. We used to play school, where I would be the teacher and they would be my learners. I would greet them in English and tell them how to respond, and then teach them IsiZulu and English recitations, poems and songs that we did in class with my teacher. I would also do rote counting with my younger siblings.

3.4. A helping hand from above

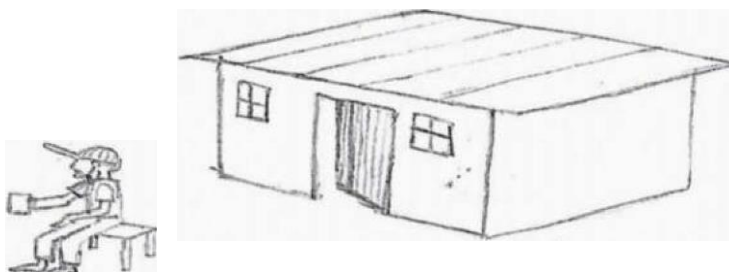


Figure 3.3: Memory drawing of a new member of our family, my Std. 3 teacher, Uncle Sir, next to his two-roomed house

At some point, one of my Standard 3 (now grade 5) male teachers came to stay in one of the two roomed houses at my grandparents' home. We used to call him 'Uncle Sir'. He was friendly but very strict and disciplined. He became just like a member of our family and my parents trusted him. My grandfather had passed on and I think that my grandmother saw this young man, my teacher, as the necessary male figure and source of authority in the family of females only, since we did not have any uncles. My teacher was a very good humble person, but short tempered, strict and would not tolerate disobedience from anyone. He was newly appointed in our school. I do not know why he chose to stay at my grandparents' house because other teachers stayed in the school cottages. He was given a two roomed house to stay in, but he did not cook there, instead he ate with us. I assumed that he could not stay in the cottage because he would be forced to cook for himself, which I thought he could not do.

Uncle Sir expected me to be home before he arrived in the afternoon for me to assist my grandmother with the house chores before looking at my school work. He insisted that I told him first what we did in class before he could ask questions and help me. He wanted us to talk in English, which made our conversations tense and formal. He would pretend that he did not hear what I was saying or say "Pardon!" when I asked in IsiZulu. I would quickly change to English. When I said something wrong, he would correct me. If I struggled with saying what he wanted me to say, he would let me practise it until I got it right before he could help me.

Seeing that as a challenge, I asked my grandmother to allow me to move into my parents' house. Her response was a big "No". At first, I hated that man for changing my home into a school, but I then began to realise that he was helping me and so I had to get used to speaking English at home.

He was of great help with my spelling words, which my mother could not do with me, my reading, sentence construction, and paragraph writing. We began with stories I read from the story books to writing about simple things that happened at home and at school. He marked all the work that he had given to me and gave feedback. My mother was very happy because she could not help me with my work as it was a bit difficult for her. This could be a result of her limited education and the language of instruction, which was English, that she could not understand.

My teacher, Uncle Sir, introduced me to reading an English Bible. He brought an English Bible home and I had to read a verse every time we held our evening family prayers. He would interpret the verse in IsiZulu to other family members. He also brought English story books with stories we normally told in IsiZulu. Those story books had pictures to help with understanding. It was so interesting to read those stories even though they had tough English words; my teacher was there to explain what they meant. He asked my mother to buy me an English dictionary and taught me how to use it. He was there when I needed someone who understood the assignments that were given to me and would further clarify them to me.

My teacher, Uncle Sir, wanted me to read what I had written in order to ascertain that I would be able to read it correctly to the person I had written it to and that I would be able to give an explanation of what I had written should I be asked to do so. My teacher taught me how to look at the audience I would be delivering a speech to and how to make an argument in a debate. He always told me I was good with words and that I would make a good lawyer. All those comments helped boost my confidence. Each time I asked him for assistance, he would insist that I ask in English, otherwise he would not help me. He laughed when I used an irrelevant word, which taught me to prepare before going to him; he would then tell me what I was supposed to say. My teacher would not allow me to ask for assistance when he was already in bed. That taught me to prioritise my school work and to be disciplined. He loved working with children. He stayed with us for six years and then went back home. The way he related to children motivated me to finish school and study teaching.

3.5. My junior primary education experiences

When I started school, the school was far from home, about four kilometres. To add on the pain of having to wake up very early, having to walk a long distance and arriving back home in the late afternoons was during the time when young children were abducted and thrown into an unknown red car. Most of the parents could not allow their children to go to school for the fear of their children's lives. Parents were forced to walk their children to school because there was no form of transport at that time.



Figure 3.4: Memory drawing of the precious moments of my mother walking me to school

My mother would bath me, walk with me and leave me at the school gate every morning. My mother's late arrival in the afternoons at home deprived her of the opportunity to talk, laugh and play with her kids. The fact that I was staying at my grandparent's house and not my mother's could also easily lead to lack of communication and building of mother-child relationship. The morning walks with my mother provided quality time for us to talk about almost everything from school work, life at home and at school. We would talk about things that I liked, what I did not like, what I would change if I could and what I would love to have one day. I would ask her some questions which she sometimes saw as silly and unnecessary and make some requests. My mother would also rebuke me when I had done something wrong in her absence because my grandmother, aunts and my teacher, and neighbours who went to the same church with my family would tell her.

I learnt that my mother was not a loud person, but I could tell when she was angry or disappointed with what I had done. During our morning walks, she would tell me how annoying it is when children try to deny the wrongs they have done. She would teach me to apologise instead of denying. I would do that even when I knew I was not wrong in order to get my loving mother back again. My mother helped me memorise my recitations, action rhymes, poems, bible verses and multiplication tables. While we were walking, I would give her my book and ask her to see if I was reciting correctly what was written. She would correct me if I had made a mistake. Our morning walks provided my mother with an opportunity to tell me how much she loved me and how much she wished I could finish school and become a teacher who is dedicated to help children. She would tell me messages from my father (from letters he had written to her). My mother would laugh out loud when I sang to her, missing the lyrics, especially English songs, but she would reward my singing with pocket money or a fruit from those she would sell.



Figure 3.5: Drawing of my very strict SSA teacher at school

Due to the school's enrolment and buildings, Sub Standard A's were accommodated at the old church building next to the school. The inside of the church building was dark because it had very small windows and the floor was polished using cow dung. The roof had leaks and therefore learners were dismissed during rainy days. The whole school would assemble every morning for prayers and announcements which were made in IsiZulu. Learners who were using the church building would march on a line to their classroom singing songs like "We are marching in the light of God". We would sing in unison and march like soldiers as our teacher had taught us.

During teaching and learning, teachers gave learners English vocabulary in preparation for learning in English in the senior primary school. Inside and outside the classroom we were given English instructions, but teachers would use gestures and code-switching to ensure that we follow the instructions correctly. Learners arrived in the classrooms before the teachers in the morning. We had strict instructions that on our arrival we recited poems, action rhymes, recitations and multiplication tables before the teachers could come and do what they had planned for the day. One of those poems and action rhymes is presented as follows:

Joe

Hi, my name is Joe

And I work in a button factory

And my boss said to me

Joe, are you busy?

I said No

Push that button with your right hand

.. .left hand, right foot, left foot, shoulders, head, body, knees

Hi, my name is Joe

And I work in a button factory

And my boss said to me : Joe,

are you busy?

I said, yes, do it yourself!

(Adopted from English Made Easy, SSB).

Most of the teaching and learning took place outside the classroom. I think it was because visibility in the classroom was poor, and in summer days it was too hot and stuffy. Our teacher would ask bigger boys to take her table and chair to a flat place under a big tree near our classroom, while learners sat on their benches. Our teacher used a portable chalkboard which was placed on a wooden stand. She would use it for writing spelling words, IsiZulu and English, and mathematics sums. We had a water bucket in which we washed our hands before touching reading books or our slates and then used our uniform to dry them up.

Most of the activities that we did outside class were like playing for us; we enjoyed our learning because we learned as we were playing. When our teacher wanted us to write spelling exercises and mental sums, we had to stand up back to back, little scattered under the tree so that we would not copy from one another and write on our slates. During recitations, poems and action rhymes, we had to stand up as the whole class in two's or one by one, depending on what our teacher wanted. The same thing would apply for reading. Only story-telling, which was in IsiZulu, was individual work. During cold, windy and rainy days, teaching and learning took place inside our classroom even though our teacher did not like it because of her poor sight. She would take the chalkboard closer to the door or not use it at all because it had a dark green colour and therefore hard to see in a dark room. When it was time for us to write, the teacher would only say "On your knees". That called for us to kneel, put our slates on the benches and write.

Our classroom had some drawings and old posters which were seldom used. Those were drawings and posters taken from our English story books which were meant to help us with vocabulary because they were labelled, although the classroom condition was not supportive of this. Every item in the classroom was labelled in English to assist those who could read to see how those words were spelt. Our teacher had a box of flash cards with English words. She would let us take any card and read it to the class, those were our spelling words too.

In the second term I was promoted to the bigger school to do Sub Standard two because my teacher saw that I could read, write and do what was expected of me without failure. This is because my mother taught me everything that was done in class, and the work that she knew

we were going to do. That way I was ahead of other learners who only met school work in class. The school principal told my mother that I had been promoted to the next class and that she had to continue helping me with school work. That was very exciting, since I was learning in a proper school environment. Our classroom was well ventilated, we had desks with book shelves where we kept our slates, we sat in pairs and we had a big chalkboard mounted on the wall.

The school environment was conducive to teaching and learning. It had teaching aids like charts and posters which facilitated our English learning. The school yard had trees under which we normally did our physical education, story- telling, spelling and dictation (when the teachers had to ascertain that we were not copying from one another). In my final year of junior primary, when I was doing Standard two, I had a snake bite on my left foot. This happened after school when we were climbing trees picking up guavas. Other children ran to tell teachers who were staying in the school cottages and they rushed me to the clinic which then called an ambulance and took me to the hospital. The teachers had to walk four kilometres to report the incident to my grandmother. I had to remain in hospital for about three months. No schooling was available at the hospital in those days, hence, I had to repeat the class because I had missed most of the work in my absence. In hospital, we had picture books, toys, crayons and other writing material to play school, but there was no formal schooling. When I was discharged from hospital, I could not walk long distances and therefore I could not go to school.

3.6. My senior primary school experiences

My senior primary school was near my junior primary school. This is where I experienced a different style of teaching and learning. Teachers had specialisation subjects. In Standard three (now grade 5), I was taught by five different teachers and all subjects were taught in English except IsiZulu and Religious Education. The number of subjects had increased, which placed a heavier load on us. The way my senior primary school teachers, mostly male, taught us promoted rote-learning. They expected us to memorise and recall everything they wrote for us as notes. We were not given an opportunity to think and analyse the learning content. All the learners who were good at memorising got first positions and the teachers would call them smart.



Figure 3.6: The medal I got in Standard 5 (Grade 7), for being the best achiever in class

We still had poems, action rhymes, recitations, memory verses and multiplication tables which we had to recite every morning and after breaks as part of our learning. Most of these were done in English. The vocabulary and language structure we acquired from those activities assisted us when we had to construct our own sentences during creative writing and answering content-based questions. Our English language teacher would give us the topic we had to write about. We first had to write about things that we knew and then move to what we had to imagine. He would then give us a list of vocabulary words to use. We were also given pictures that guided our writing. For some difficult topics, our teacher would give us jumbled sentences to form correct sensible paragraphs, or sometimes, incomplete sentences to complete.

To instil the culture of learning in English, our teachers would ask us to translate the news we had to read from an IsiZulu newspaper that they brought the previous day specifically for us to read and write in English. We were also expected to listen to IsiZulu news on our radios at home and come back with the English version of what we heard from the news. That was very challenging since most of us did not have radios at home, but our teachers wanted it done or else we would face the consequences. This activity was done on a weekly basis. There were some difficult English books that we had to read and try to retell what the book was about. What I notice now is that all our teachers were like English language teachers because they would insist that we use the language accurately. Even in their marking, they would underline

grammatical errors and subtract marks. There was no lenience in terms of grammar even when they were marking content.

Our teachers also organised debates and speech days for us in the senior primary school. Such competitions would be within the school and then inter schools. In cases where the topics were unfamiliar, the teachers would give us key vocabulary lists to use. This prepared us for the common examinations that were written at the end of Standard 5. It was the culture of our community that children of the same standard would be grouped together to do the work that was done at school. As mentioned before, I had an additional advantage of having a teacher who was staying at our home. I would approach him for assistance where it was needed and would write my work and ask him to mark it. I liked his marking because of the comments he made through feedback. In cases where I could not understand what he wrote, I would ask him for clarity. He did not do the work for me, but looked at my efforts and then corrected where I was wrong.

3.7. My high school learning experiences

The foundation I got from primary school prepared me for high school. I could easily adjust to high school leaning in English. In addition to huge amounts of work, teachers were different from those I knew from primary school. Their teaching strategies were more complicated; teachers were very quick in their teaching in English, and did not take notice of whether we had understood what they were saying or not; there was no code-switching, their focus was on covering the prescribed syllabus and the use of teaching aids was very minimal. They would just give us a topic and allow us to elaborate on it, either as classwork, group work or homework. The use of English was compulsory for both learners and teachers which gave us practice since all learning was through the medium of English.

To promote the use of English as the language of teaching and learning, the school had designed a policy of English speaking within the school premises. Any learner who was caught speaking IsiZulu within the school premises was entered in the list of IsiZulu speakers and would get punished on Fridays. Corporal punishment was administered in those days. Rote-learning was discouraged at high school since we were encouraged to think critically, write long essays, give descriptions and explanations using our own words. When marking our work, teachers focused more on content than on grammar, in contrast to what I experienced in my senior primary school.



Figure 3.7: A picture with one of the monitors who enforced the use of English within the school premises

3.8. My teacher training college experiences

My teacher training college experiences were characterised by anxiety, excitement and curiosity. I had received three letters confirming my acceptance at three institutions and had to make a choice. Two were in busy townships and one was in a quiet rural area. I chose the one in a rural area because I thought I would easily fit in, since I was familiar with rural life. Upon arrival at the college, I was caught by surprise because the place was completely different from what I had in mind. Students and lecturers were coming from all over the country; there were even White lecturers who could not understand a single word that was not English. The teaching and learning resources had to be created by students themselves. We had a lot of teaching practice sessions in preparation for our actual teaching. The college had modern technology to facilitate learning. It did not take me very long to adjust to college life which was full of excitement.

In our Subject Didactics classes, we were taught how to teach in English to IsiZulu speaking learners. Our lecturers emphasised the use of teaching aids to facilitate learning. We were given topics to teach and asked to design our own teaching aids such as charts, flash cards, bringing in real objects and using gestures. We had to teach the lessons we had prepared to other fellow students who would act as students from the grade which the lessons were prepared for, in order for them to critique constructively thereafter. Our lecturers discouraged code-switching and expected us to explain in English, re-explain and make use of drawings to allow learners to discover things on their own.

3.9. My early teaching experiences

I acquired my first teaching post in 1994 at a combined farm school starting from SSA to Matric. Most of the learners were farm workers' children who stayed in different local sugar cane farms. They were blacks, coloureds and Indians. The school was under the Department of Education and Training (DET). This suggests that the school was more resourced than any other school in the area since it was run provincially. Other schools were under the Department of Education and Culture. The DET was a system of education for blacks that was designed by the apartheid government of the National Party to segregate people based on race and therefore that resulted in inadequate distribution of resources to blacks and Indian institutions as compared to white institutions (Kallaway, 2002). My workload included teaching Standards 6 and 7 Mathematics, General Science and Physical Science.

Teaching all my subjects in English was not much of a problem because most of my learners understood. Only a few immigrants experienced some difficulty understanding English. Most of the immigrants came from Mozambique with their parents to work on the farms. Since their home language was Portuguese, the school organised extra English classes for those learners. I had learned innovative strategies at teacher training college to help my learners understand the teaching and learning content easily in English. I used those strategies, since I could easily remember them. Most of my learners were good at answering oral questions but they would misspell most of the words they had to write. They had expected me to mark them correctly and overlook spelling and grammatical errors when marking content exercises. I had to explain to my learners the importance of accurate writing. I did not get offended when I overheard them calling me "Miss Perfect" because I expected them to strive for perfection. I was young and enthusiastic and wanted to ensure that I made comments for each work presented to me whether as group work or individual work. That kind of feedback allowed my learners to look at their work against the comments I made and make corrections as required.

That year, 1994, the country's education system underwent massive changes to redress the apartheid legacy. OBE, referred to as Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was implemented in 1998. The role of Curriculum 2005 is depicted as follows:

The curriculum is at the heart of the education and training system. In the past, the curriculum has perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and has emphasized separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood. It is therefore imperative that the curriculum be restructured to reflect the values and principles of our new democratic society (Department of Education, 1997, p.2).

Our school had to undergo several changes as teachers attended workshops on OBE. I had to go and teach at a senior primary school because of my qualification. No teaching post was available at local senior primary schools. So, I had to take one in which I had to teach grade ones. The thought of teaching the grade ones was very frustrating for me, since I was qualified to teach senior primary school learners. To me, teaching grade ones was more of a learning experience than a teaching one. I attended OBE workshops for the foundation phase. Seeing that my choices were limited, I had to get assistance from senior foundation phase teachers who could not imagine how I could possibly fill the gap between the grades I had been teaching and grade one. I am uncertain of how I managed to teach those learners for the first two years.

By the third year I had developed an interest and love for the young children who forced me to put aside my English and focus on teaching in their home language. That school was different from my former combined school in terms of resources, since it was one of the poorest rural schools with the poorest infrastructure, including the school buildings. The community serviced by the school was struck by droughts, poverty and crime including hijackings, theft and burglary. These social ills affected the school's enrolment. Members of the community who could afford to relocate did so, taking their children with them. This exodus, mostly in urban schools resulted in a drop in the school's enrolment which brought about the declaration of surplus teachers. Teachers were then subjected to multi-grade teaching, which was a monster on its own because teachers had never done it before and they were never involved in multi-grade teaching and learning. Hargreaves (2001) defines multi-grade teaching as teaching children in a setting in which a single teacher has sole responsibility for two or more grades of learners simultaneously. Multi-grade teaching was new in our district; thus, the district officials had no idea of how they could assist the teachers; tertiary institutions in the country did not equip aspiring teachers with skills to teach multi-grade classes.

I was given four days to make a choice, whether to combine grades 1 and 2 or declare myself surplus, both choices were not easy for me. What I could see is that the school did not have the potential of growing as a result of geographic and social conditions of the area it was servicing. If I were to stay, it would mean I would be stuck in multi-grade teaching without sufficient knowledge of how to go about doing it in a way that would be fair to both grades. If I were to choose declaring myself surplus, it would mean I had to join the pool of other surplus teachers who were awaiting their placement. I became anxious of going to a new school with the new

principal and colleagues, as well as the thought of being declared surplus again should the school experience a drop in its enrolment.



Figure 3.8: Grades 1 to 7 teachers! How are we going to manage? Laughter was our only medicine

Eventually, I chose to remain in my school and multi-grade. The most unfortunate part of this multi-grading was that the principal was a grade teacher herself. She would always complain about time to do her office work and submissions. I found this very disturbing because she would ask me time and again to assist her with office work, leaving my grade ones and twos unattended. She would sugar-coat her disturbances as capacity building, yet I knew that the school had very slim chances of getting a HoD post because of its size. I embraced all those challenges as my opportunities of growth and gaining experience. The community that was serviced by my school was also affected by violent crime. It had become common that classes would be disturbed by juveniles demanding cash, cell phones, jewellery, bags and other possessions from teachers using guns, knives and pangas. Those attacks were reported to the departmental officials who did nothing to protect the teachers. At one point, I was hit on my head with the gun handle, because I did not have enough cash for them, and lost consciousness at school right in front of my grade I learners who could not do anything to help me. Upon my discharge from the hospital, I applied for a transfer for my safety which was not approved. Resignation was not an option since I had a family to support. The school relocated to another area which was safer. School enrolment was still an issue, and teachers had to continue with multi-grade teaching.

3.10. Conclusion

While providing a close examination of my teaching practice, this reflective study presents educational memory stories of my learning experiences. The purpose of this self-study research included exploring alternative strategies that can be used to improve my teaching in English to my IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners. Hence, in this chapter memory drawings, artefact retrieval and my personal history were used to recollect my memory stories. The chapter presents my family life, my junior and senior primary school and my high school learning experiences, my teacher training college experiences, my early teaching experiences and finally further education experiences. My main aim was to get a better understanding of how my lived experiences contribute to how I teach. Hence, I had to recall and relive all the memories of my past learning experiences; both as a learner and a practising professional teacher.

The next chapter, gives a detailed account of what was learnt from reflecting on my personal history, how I used a variety of teaching strategies to enhance my teaching to IsiZulu speaking learners in English in response to the second research question: *How do my grade 4 learners experience and respond to my teaching in English?*

CHAPTER FOUR

LEARNING FROM MY PERSONAL HISTORY

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter Three, I revisited my lived educational experiences in order to discover what I could learn from these, in response to my first research question: *How have my lived experiences contributed to how I teach IsiZulu speaking Grade 4 learners in English?* This study sought to explore my teaching practice and how my IsiZulu speaking learners experience my teaching in English. I also aimed to explore different strategies that could be used to improve my teaching practice. This provided an opportunity to trace back most important events which assisted me with my learning. Those memory work stories depicted how my formal and informal educational experiences from primary school to my early teaching experiences unfolded. Strategies like memory drawings, artefact retrieval, collage making story-telling and journal writing allowed me to get an understanding of experiences which encouraged me to move forward and understand why my learners find it difficult to make sense of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English.

In this chapter, I identify and discuss four issues that have emerged from my memory stories that are significant to my learning and my teaching of IsiZulu speaking learners in English, which is their second language. These issues are: (a) Learning from parental involvement (b) Learning from the impact of teacher expectations on learners (c) Learning through exploring the environment, and (d) Learning from enacting the intended curriculum. I further revisit data generated in my grade 4 classroom in responding to the second critical question: *How do learners experience and respond to my teaching in English in the Grade 4 classroom?* In exploring this research question, I present six Social Sciences lessons that I taught, and reflections made by my grade 4 learners in the classroom. The first three are Geography lessons on food and farming in South Africa and then three History lessons on transport on land. I also expand on the modification process of my lesson plans to incorporate all the necessary aspects as per curriculum requirements. I further describe how I used various teaching strategies and learning activities to enhance my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English, drawing on principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as explained in chapter one of this dissertation. I conclude the chapter by highlighting the key lesson learnt about teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English.

4.2. Key insights that emerged from my memory stories

My personal history that I shared in chapter three, presented four key learnings that I deemed as important insights that could assist me in improving my practice. To analyse my personal history, and gain these insights, I created a collage (figure 4.1) that embodied my learnings. These being 1) Learning from parental involvement; 2) Learning from the impact of teacher expectations on learners; 3) Learning through exploring the environment and 4) Learning from enacting the intended curriculum. After creating the collage, I then met with my supervisor and presented it to her.



Figure 4.1: Collage representing my learnings gained from my personal history.

4.2.1 Learning from parental involvement

As I engaged in introspection into my lived experiences with my parents, I realised that my parents played a fundamental role in promoting and supporting my learning and building the person that I am today. As I reflect on my past, I notice how my life was moulded and nurtured by my parents, particularly, my maternal grandmother and my mother, who were my pillars of strength. From childhood, I would proudly say that my parents were actively involved in all aspects of my social, emotional and academic development. My maternal grandmother was illiterate and my mother had only primary school education, but that did not deter them from having great expectations about my academic future.

What my maternal grandmother and my mother did for me corresponds with Toren and Seginer (2015) conceptualisation of parental involvement which is:

"a multidimensional construct, including parental aspirations, future plans for their children, educational decision-making, and support with school work, parental knowledge and parental participation in school work" (p.812).

Likewise, through looking back at my experiences as a child in the most capable hands of my parents, their involvement contributed effectively to my school success. Even though they did not do much to helping me with homework and school work, just instilling the love of school, investing their time, attention and resources in my education so that I could perform well was useful. That on its own showed their involvement in my learning. That teaches me that as much as I am dealing with my learners, I also engage parents in their children's learning. That also teaches me to view my learners' homes as the first school that all learners attend as parents actively engage with children on their development. I must consider my learners' parents, who they are, and that their role does not only entail helping them with homework and school work, but also offer other support, like when I ask them to bring pictures or newspaper cuttings to class, their parents assist them in obtaining these items. Also, when there are practical projects that I want my learners to do over a period their parents assist them.

As a teacher, it is imperative to redefine what parental involvement is and what it really entails. This was realized after reflecting about how my maternal grandmother was involved in my learning, without having to help with my homework or school work, since she was illiterate. From the little that my grandmother had, she made sure that she provided for my school needs.

Correspondingly, Mante, Awereh, and Kumea (2015) affirm that it is the parents' role of providing environmental, economic and social needs of a child, which has an impact on the child's academic life. This shows that even if my learners' parents are not able to help them with homework or school work, they do support them in one way or another. Their availability when needed also needs to be acknowledged and appreciated.

4.2.2 Learning from the impact of teacher expectations on learners

Looking back at how Uncle Sir (the teacher who stayed with us at my grandmother's house) treated me at home and at school makes me realise that he had very high expectations for me. In as much as he was helping me with my multiplication tables, reading, spelling and writing in English, I could not understand as a child why he would want me to remember and know everything he had taught me. To me, as a child, he was strict, rigid and pretending like he was never a child at some point. I realised that he had created his perfect child in me in his mind.

He would not allow me to make mistakes and learn from them, he wanted his voice to be the only source of authority and the only source of knowledge. As a child under his direction, I always wanted to do the opposite of what he expected of me, but always got the same results. Having experienced that with Uncle Sir, I learnt that there is always more than one way of getting the required results.

In my classroom, when I teach content, I try not to impose rules on my learners in order to get results. I develop my own methods of dealing with my learners, and allow frequent opportunities for interaction for my learners to connect with the teaching and learning content. I allow my learners opportunities to interact with one another in their groups. I believe that is where they develop English language proficiency necessary for their learning. To me, unlike Uncle Sir, vocabulary development through peer discussions is an intentional purpose for every content lesson, because I understand that English is not my learners' home language. (August & Shanahan, 2017) suggest that teachers present new terms in context, talk about them with the learners and then request that learners use them in their conversations in order to facilitate their vocabulary acquisition. Correspondingly, in preparing my lessons, I wanted to engage my learners in a way that is relaxing, where they would enjoy learning because I did not want to be rigid and not ready to accept comments, concerns and complaints from my learners. Although "Uncle Sir" had good outcomes, I also understand that outcomes can also come from a different approach.

4.2.3 Learning through exploring the environment

From retracing my past experiences, I have become conscious that the environment plays a vital role in a child's learning. Yildmm and Akamca (2017) view learning environment other than the classroom as the "activity based, integrative and stimulating environment that provides children with emotional experiences and chances for working freely" (p.1), as they offer children an opportunity to develop skills like making interpretations, measuring and observing. Likewise, I noticed that children acquire an open perspective about things that surround them outside when I applied outdoor education. Taking my learners to learn outside the classroom taught me that another way of teaching something to someone is to make them manipulate things.

In recalling my past experiences, I have realised how important it is to provide opportunities for my learners to go out of their classroom to learn through exploring their surroundings. My grandmother did not know anything about what I was learning in class, but she would always

give me a chance to manipulate things when we were working in the vegetable garden or in the fields. She would engage me in activities like bringing in the cupful of seed, the handful of seedlings and making rows and lines in the plots that we were working on. That taught me the skills of measuring and organising things. It also helped with oral vocabulary development. Thus, when I think about planning my lessons, I want my learners to do things practically, to touch them, feel them and manipulate them.

4.2.4 Learning from enacting the intended curriculum

Reid (2005) defines curriculum as an official document which provides a clear definition of what teachers are expected to teach and what learners are expected to learn. Likewise, when I reflected on what I have been teaching recently, how the content was delivered, I have learnt that the Social Sciences curriculum is meant for all South Africa's Grade 4 learners regardless of their context. The intended curriculum (what the learners should be learning, and the teachers should be teaching), CAPS, for Grade 4 learners demands that they are taught in English, which is the medium of instruction for learners from Grade 4 upwards. The curriculum does not take into cognisance the fact that my Grade 4 learners have been using their home language, IsiZulu, in the previous grades as required by the language policy, which means that their English vocabulary is still very limited.

As a teacher, knowing my learners' level of understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English, I had to interpret the intended curriculum and make decisions while I was planning for classroom instruction. That was in accordance with what Remillard and Heck (2014) consider as the planned curriculum. This allowed me to look at my school context, my learners' needs and my previous teaching experience, and then came up with my planned curriculum. I wanted my learners to understand the teaching and learning content and be able to answer questions in English. The new teaching strategies that I employed were very different from the way I had been doing things before. Since I was intending to improve my teaching practice, I had to put the intended curriculum into action by changing the way I delivered the teaching and learning content through interaction between learners and with me as their teacher. This is what Prevost et al. (2010) regard as the enacted curriculum. Enacting the intended curriculum allowed me an opportunity to look at my own teaching practice and learn from my learners, which resulted in their understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English.

4.3. Putting the study into curriculum context

To enhance my teaching practice, I used the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) as the official prescribed curriculum. Jackson (2008) maintains that any definition of a curriculum is based on a person's understanding, ideas and their personal reasoning. Hence, in this study, I used Schubert's definition of curriculum (Connelly, 2008). He views the intended curriculum as stipulated goals, learning activities and evaluation, whilst taught curriculum is composed of what the teacher adds to the intended curriculum, what we call the enacted curriculum (Connelly, 2008). In enacting the intended curriculum, my planning and teaching were being guided by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (Department of Education, 2011), which guides the teaching and learning processes in South African public schools. The South African Curriculum Policy stipulates that children from grade four onwards must be taught in their additional language, which is English in the context of my school (Department of Education, 2011). This requires that grade 4 learners acquire necessary English language competence in order to meet the requirements of learning their subjects through the medium of English FAL.

To plan for teaching and learning, I used the English First Additional Language and the Social Sciences Policy (CAPS) documents. Also, while planning the lessons, I kept in mind that my grade four learners were learning in English for the first time. From grade one to grade three, they had been taught in IsiZulu, which is their home language. I structured my teaching and learning activities in a manner that allowed my learners to draw from what they experienced in their daily lives using their existing vocabulary and building new concepts from their existing knowledge, from songs they sing, poems and games they play. Assessment activities were designed in a way that encouraged my learners to think and recall in a relaxed atmosphere that allowed them to learn from one another.

The data collection took place in the third term of the school year. Content and concepts that were covered in Social Sciences- Geography section Grade 4 were: People and food, ways of farming, crop and stock farming, processed and unprocessed foods (DBE, 2011). For the purpose of this study, three one-hour lessons were conducted with my learners. Those lessons were taken from the themes; ways of farming, and crop and stock farming. The policy recommends that pictures of different crops, animals, types of food that people eat, and people working in farms be utilised as resources to facilitate learning. In order to be in line with what the curriculum expects, I had to build on that as well as come up with my own resources so as

to enhance my teaching. In my lesson plans, I included a creative process that provided a framework for purposeful teaching and learning. Hence, my lesson plans included learning outcomes, objectives, resources and activities that addressed these learning outcomes and objectives.

Contents and concepts that were covered in the third term Grade four Social Sciences- History section were Transport on land, Case study: Environmental damage: exhaust fumes in a big city, transport on water, and transport in the air. The focus was on how transport has changed people's lives over time on land, water and in the air (DBE, 2011). For the duration of the study, which took three History lessons, the concept of transport on land was covered.

4.4. Using Social Sciences lessons to generate data

Jones (1998) stipulates that lesson planning is the living proof of much deeper and reflective activity. This suggests that lesson planning is a key feature for every successful and effective teaching and learning. In addition, Spratt et al. (2005) define a lesson plan as a work plan, which directs the teacher to the kind of material he or she must teach to learners. To plan for the lessons I provided in this study, I included a creative process that provided a framework for purposeful teaching and learning, guided by English First Additional Language and Social Sciences policy documents. Hence, my lessons included learning outcomes, objectives, resources and activities that addressed these learning outcomes and objectives.

My lesson plans provided me with flexibility to teach according to my individual methods of organisation and my learners' needs. Since the main objective of this study was to improve my teaching practice, my lesson plans did not only direct my teaching and learning activities, but also helped me organise learning content, resources and assessment activities. While in the process of creating the lesson plans, I met up with my critical friends in our cohort, where I shared my process of planning the lessons. Through my critical friends I was able to shape and rethink some of the idea I had planned. Such as with some of the activities, where it was suggested that in my thinking of these activities I must ask myself if, as a child, would I be able to do it. This made me realise the importance of always thinking about the abilities of my learners. My lesson plans acted as the basis of every activity that took place during the teaching and learning of Social Sciences. I also noted some of the details of my teaching in my personal journal to identify areas in my lessons to guide me in following lessons according to the

experiences of my teaching in class, which needed to be changed or corrected. I also further clarified some tasks in my lessons being guided by my learners' needs.

Table 4.1. Lessons table

LESSON	TOPIC
1	Ways of farming
2	Stock farming in South Africa
3	Crop farming in South Africa
4	The steam engine and the train
5	The motor car
6	Common forms of transport of people and goods on land today

4.4.1. Lesson 1: Social Sciences (Geography) Ways of farming - unfolding

Geography curriculum aims to develop learners who are curious about the world they live in. This could be achieved through the attainment of skills like asking questions and identifying issues, discussing and listening with interest, collecting and referring to information (Department of Basic Education, 2011). I introduced my learners to songs and games before and after the lessons to capture their attention and to reinforce what they had been learning about. I wanted to relate the new learning content to their existing knowledge, since most of the songs we sang were familiar to my learners. The language games that the learners played were at their level and therefore enjoyable to them. This was based on the choice of songs I made, as I chose songs that have been in existence for a long time and have been enjoyed by children throughout past generations, such as 'old MacDonald had a farm'.

4.4.1.1. Reflection on the lesson plan

Understanding the core role of a lesson plan as directing the teacher to the most pertinent material to be taught to learners, I constructed detailed lesson plans in which I developed my own understanding of what it means to teach grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners in English. My lesson plans provided me with flexibility to teach according to my individual methods of organisation and my learners' needs. Since the main objective of this study was to improve my teaching practice, my lesson plans did not only direct my teaching and learning activities, but also helped organize learning content, resources and assessment activities. This lesson plan had

to act as the basis of every activity that I and my learners were going to engage in. Creating the lesson plan for my first lesson was very different from what I normally do. The following extract from my personal journal describes the challenge I faced:

Preparing this lesson plan was very challenging for me. I had to put aside the lesson plan template that I was familiar with, because it was not going to yield required results. I felt somehow puzzled, not knowing where to start. I understood that I had to give full details of how the lesson was going to be structured so as to enable me to get enough data that was required; it was my first time to take almost three days to finish planning for a lesson. Instead of rejoicing and celebrating my achievement of getting the lesson plan done, I began to worry about the remaining five lesson plans that I still had to create (My personal journal entry, 27 August 2017).

Preparing, collecting and creating my lesson resources were not easy tasks either. I had never thought I would use many teaching aids in one lesson; this was because I wanted my IsiZulu speaking learners to understand the teaching and learning content that was presented to them in English. I wanted my planning and my teaching to be different from what I used to do. At one point I felt discouraged because the resources I wanted to use were hard to get, but my critical friends motivated me to go on.

4.4.1.2. Introduction of the lesson

To introduce the lesson, I gave my learners pictures showing different ways in which people get their food, marking pens, strips of paper and English-IsiZulu dictionaries. I then asked them to write captions for each picture in the form of sentences. This activity was done in six mixed ability groups, each group having six members. I gave one group of learners the picture below (See Figure 4.1) and asked them to write a caption for the picture. The learners had to write English captions. I explained to them that they could use any dictionary to look for words that could assist them in their English sentence construction. That helped stimulate their thinking and memory. I encouraged mixed ability groups to facilitate peer teaching and assessment. I prepared rewards for groups that did their work accurately and timeously. That motivated all the groups to focus and work together for the benefit of every group member.

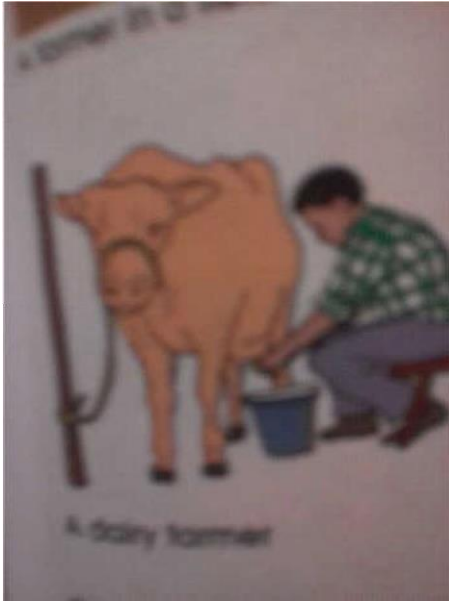


Figure 4.2: Example of pictures that were given to learners to identify ways in which people get their food

One group agreed on their sentence as a caption for the picture and wrote it down. Their sentence was "*Hunters get their food from animals*". The second group's caption was "*People kill wild animals for their food*". They asked me to choose the correct one or the one I liked the most. I told them that both captions were correct and that I loved them both. The two groups clapped hands showing excitement. I had rewards for groups that presented correct English sentences. This motivated all the groups to work together in order to come up with correct sentences. When all the groups had written their sentences, I requested that they display their sentences on the classroom wall and read for the class. We edited the sentences together, and my learners were very excited.



Figure 4.3: Examples of sentences that groups constructed with the help of the pictures and dictionaries

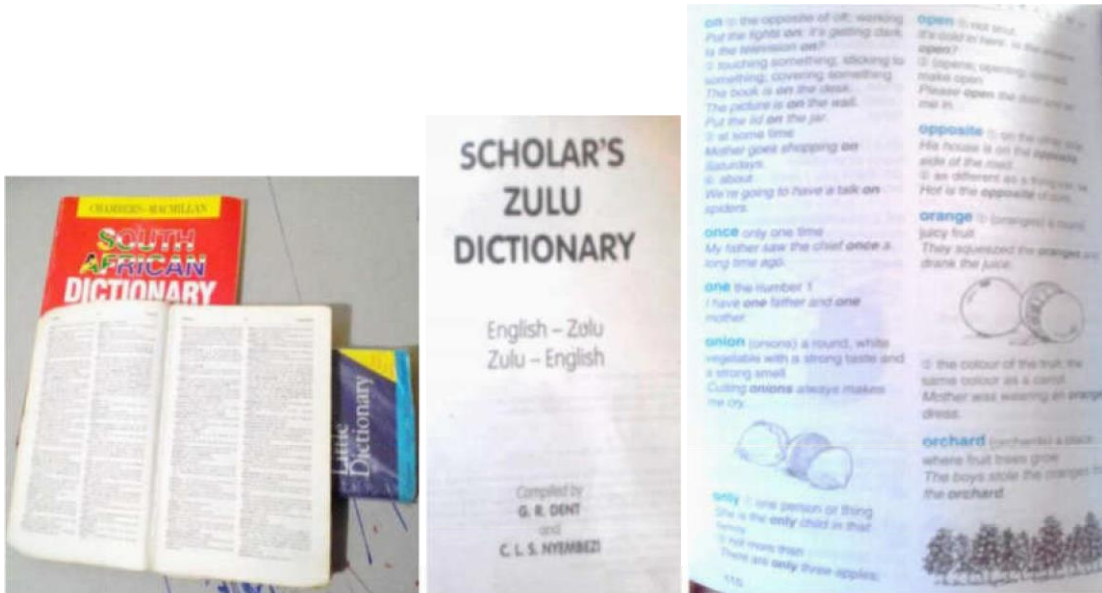


Figure 4.4: Dictionaries that assisted my learners to construct their own sentences

4.4.1.3. Content delivery and learner activities

I put a poster of a big scale farm and a poster of small-scale farm on the wall and asked my learners to make a comparison of what they saw in both posters.

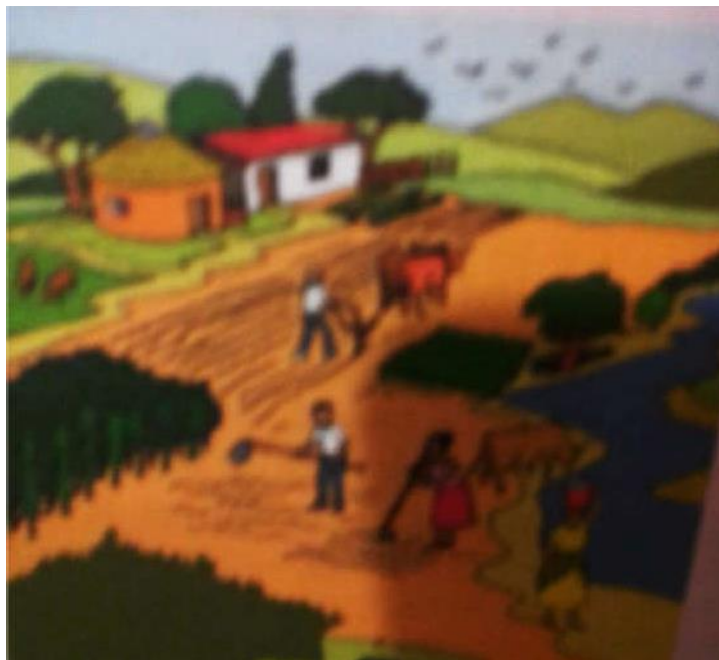


Figure 4.5: Poster of subsistence farming

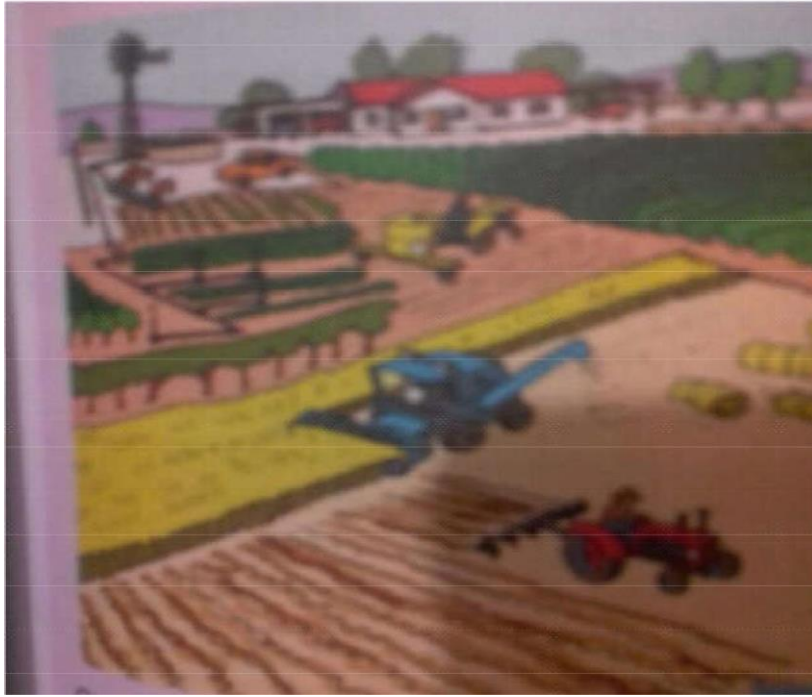


Figure 4.6: Poster of commercial farming

I thought the learners would show interest and curiosity when I asked them to look at the two posters and explain what was different and what was the same. Seeing that they did not understand the instruction because it was in English, I explained to them in IsiZulu. I expected the learners to respond in English, but I also allowed them to use home language because I could see that they were struggling with the responses. Learners gave different responses, such as:

"Mam, we see animals in the two pictures". Normy's response trying to compare the two posters showed me that she had very little interest in what was taking place. To her, there was nothing different in the posters.

Mandy said, *"We see plants and animals, and men"*, without giving the posters any thought.

One learner said, *"Kuyafana"* (meaning "There is no difference"). None of the responses was closer to what I expected from the learners. They started to talk to one another about other things not related to what I had asked, which showed me that they were bored because they did not understand what was expected of them. I heard the following shouts:

"Sicela ukudansa Miss!" (meaning, "Can we dance, Miss!" Most learners shouted in unison. At first, I felt offended by their action, I was also disappointed. However, some thought came to my mind, reminding me that the method I was using had nothing new and innovative; instead, it was just uninteresting. I realised that I had either to rephrase my question or to change the strategy completely. Fortunately, I had anticipated that my learners would be more interested in what I was going to play on the Bluetooth speaker than what I was going to ask from them.

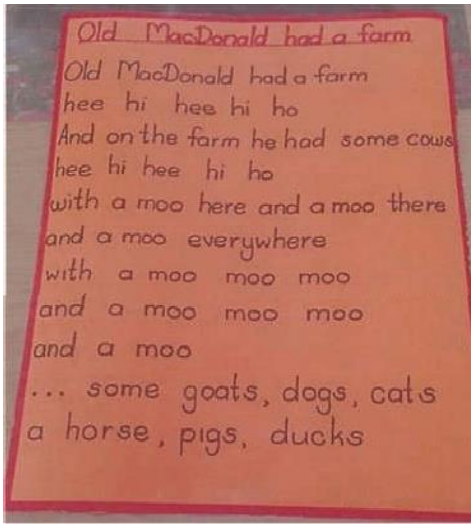


Figure 4.7: The song that taught learners farm animals and noises

I put the chart with the song "Old MacDonald had a farm" (See Figure 4.7) on the board and gave each of the six groups two pictures of farm animals that are in the song. I asked the learners to sing the song (they had sung it before) and show pictures that go together with the song. Pictures were labelled to assist learners with vocabulary. This went on until all the pictures of the farm animals in the song were shown.



Figure 4.8: Example of how learners showed pictures of animals that go with the song

I then gave all the five groups A4 paper, pencils and boxes of crayons to draw one farm animal and crops that are grown on a farm, or school garden or at home. To facilitate interaction between my learners and peer assessment, I gave my learners more group work and organised group activities being guided by one of the principles of interactive learning which requires learners to solve problems, work together, examine problems from different perspectives, become responsible for their own learning process and becoming aware of their role in the instructional process. My role was thus, to create a learning environment that supported the acquisition of communication skills in order to be able to enact the intended curriculum.



Figure 4.9: Example of drawings learners made in groups

All the groups were excited about drawing, but I could hear some individuals complaining that they could not draw. Others responded to their cry reminding them that they had to choose those who were able to draw; theirs was only to tell them what they had to draw since that was group work. I heard comments like: *"Kuthiwe asikhethe oyedwa ozodwebela i-groupyethu. Uyakwazi uNani ukudweba. Asitshela yena ukuthi adwebe ini."* (This would be translated as:

"The teacher said we must choose one to draw for the group. Nani can draw. We must tell him what to draw.") I learnt from my learners' comments that they had started to enjoy the activity that they were doing.

Drawing went on quietly again, I monitored how my learners communicated in English. All the groups were keen to present what they had drawn. I introduced the terms "subsistence and commercial farming" with reference to animals and crops that the groups had drawn. These terms and their meanings were written in the vocabulary list for the learners to refer to.

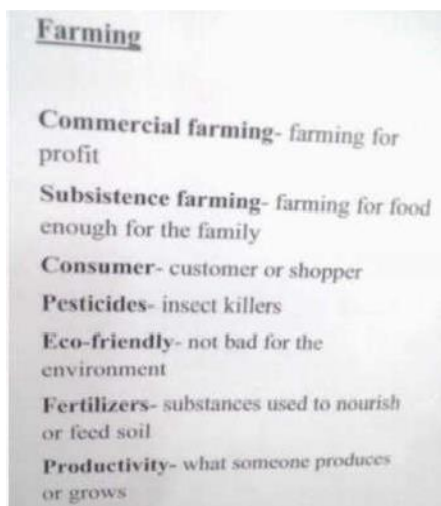


Figure 4.10: Vocabulary list that assisted my learners to construct their own sentences

I had prepared a poster for subsistence farming, a poster for commercial farming, a smart phone and a Bluetooth speaker to play a recorded teaching. I did this to capture my learners' interest in the lesson and to enhance my teaching. I figured that my learners would be interested in hearing a voice that they were not familiar with (it was a male voice). I played the recorded teaching, to which my learners listened attentively. They also looked at the posters, as instructed by the teacher in the recording, to capture the difference between the two types of farming. I had to pause the recording at some points to check whether the learners were still following and to make some emphasis where I felt it necessary. I could see that the posters that made no meaning to them at the beginning of the lesson were then making some sense from their comments:

"Haw, azifani lezizithombe. Kukhona okufanayo nokungafani." That means "These pictures are different. There are similarities and differences."

The learners were trying to look for differences and similarities between the two posters. I was very much surprised to notice that they were all listening as they were all able to answer the questions I asked, like:

"Which of the two posters would you say shows us commercial farming?"

They all shouted, "*Poster number 2.*" Learners could then see the difference, which is why they could answer correctly. I then asked them to answer in full English sentences to acquire basic vocabulary.

Even though their English was not as accurate as it was supposed to be, they got the idea of what the teaching entailed. I had to rephrase the learners' sentences, because I had noticed that my learners were familiar with the present continuous tense only, which made them forget about other tenses. I saw the need of doing this since one of the aims of Geography curriculum is to develop learners who can communicate ideas and information through speaking in a clear and informed way (DBE, 2011).

4.4.1.4. Consolidation and assessment

To consolidate, I asked the learners to play the sound game. I explained how the game was to be played; one learner would make an animal sound and ask, "*Who am I?*", while others would listen to the sound and tell which animal it was. They had to answer in full English sentences, for example, "*You are a duck*". I could tell that they enjoyed the game; I saw disappointment in their faces when they had to stop. The emphasis was on answering using full sentences, not just segments. To wrap the lesson up, I asked the learners to give four sentences about what they were learning about. The focus was on their understanding of the teaching and learning content that was presented to them in English.

4.4.1.5 Learners' reflection on the lesson

In the beginning of the lesson, the learners showed no interest on what they were going to learn, as usual. They were curious though, they wanted to know if they were going to be dancing or listening to their favourite songs when they saw the Bluetooth speaker. As soon as they heard the question that I asked, "*Look at these two posters and tell me what is the same and what is different in these posters*", they just looked away showing no interest. I used that opportunity to bring the music in my teaching. We sang together the song Old MacDonald had a farm, and they showed pictures of animals in the song. That is when they regained interest in the lesson. -I could see them laughing when one of them showed the pictures upside down or the wrong picture. As the lesson proceeded, they listened attentively and wanted to learn more. This was evident even in their journal entries when they had to reflect on the lesson.

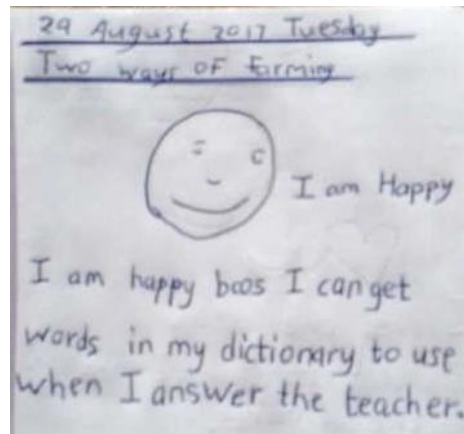


Figure 4.11: Example of learners' journal entries reflecting on the first lesson

4.4.1.6. My reflection on the lesson

I had to reflect on my teaching practice, recall and organise teaching strategies that would help me in enhancing my teaching practice, such as choice of materials and resources, organisation of teaching and learning, content and getting my learners' feedback to establish significance. The learners listened attentively to what we were doing together, and were willing to try to answer questions in English, however, construction of sentences took longer than expected as the learners spent more time searching for words (in their dictionaries) to use. In my next lessons, I would have to engage learners more in discussions and giving oral responses than having more writing.

I nearly gave up collecting data from today 's lesson when I felt that my learners were uninterested. All I needed was just to be cool and collected and remember that my learners lose interest very soon when they do not understand the teaching and learning content presented to them in English. Attempting a variety of teaching strategies, together with pertinent teaching and learning aids turned the situation around. I think I nailed this lesson. I was happy to see how my learners responded to questions I asked in English, and how they constructed their own sentences. I never knew that they enjoyed using dictionaries (My personal journal entry, 29 August 2017).

What the learners wrote in their journals was very motivational to me. I learnt that I had to restructure my lessons in a way that would capture their interest from the beginning to the end of the lesson to facilitate effective learning. I could not believe my eyes when I saw the very same learners who had shown absolutely no interest in the beginning, reflecting that the lesson was interesting and expressing how they loved the way I taught them (See figure 4.11).

4.4.2. Second lesson: Stock farming in South Africa

4.4.2.1. Reflection on the lesson plan

Doing this lesson plan was not an easy task, even though it was not my first one. The most challenging part was that it followed the one that took almost all my time preparing. I was working against time and had thought it was going to be much easier as I had already started doing detailed lesson plans (my first lesson plan). Initially, I thought I was going to use the lesson plan for my first lesson and make some minor changes, but that was not going to be possible if I wanted to improve on my teaching practice. I could not follow the same steps and procedures because I was going to lose that element of enhancement.

How on earth am I going to maintain the momentum of my first lesson, which was exciting and allowed learner participation throughout the lesson? Do I still need to use the same resources and strategies I used in my first lesson? What will I do if my learners feel they needed something new this time? How do I embrace variety and still maintain the standard?
(My personal journal entry, 30 August 2018).

Thoughts like these flooded my mind the whole afternoon while I planned for my second lesson. I later realised the need to create the lesson plan before I collected and prepared my material and resources, which were going to enhance my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English. Eventually, I came up with the lesson plan with which I was satisfied and convinced was going to yield the intended results

4.4.2.2. Introduction of the lesson

English First Additional Language policy requires that grade four learners collect and synthesise information, construct knowledge, solve problems, and express ideas and opinions (DBE, 2011). This can be achieved if they are engaged in activities which facilitate vocabulary acquisition. One way of acquiring necessary vocabulary for learning is allowing learners to perform a simple rhyme, poem or song (DBE, 2011). To introduce my second lesson, I asked the learners to sing the song "*Old MacDonald had a farm*". They had sung the song before, and they knew how to show pictures of animals that are in the song. I did this to bring some game-related elements into the learning activity so that the process of learning could be filled with fun and therefore, arouse learners' interest in the lesson (Magubane, 2014). I gave each of the six groups pictures of farm animals that were in the song (i.e. cow, dog, pig, duck, cat, horse and a goat). All the learners sang the song and one of the group members showed the picture of the animal that went with the song. They repeated the activity of showing pictures of farm animals that went with the song before I could tell them to do so.

My learners wanted to dwell on the song and showing of pictures, and complained when they were instructed to stop singing. That showed they understood the song and could give the names of the farm animals in English. It looked like they thought the lesson was only about the song and the pictures. After the song, I played the recorded sounds made by farm animals and they had to say which animals made those sounds. The first sound was that of a dog; I asked them which animal it was and they all responded simultaneously "Dog". They were told that it was expected of them to answer in full sentences (e.g. *that is a dog or the dog is barking*). Other recorded sounds were of a horse, cat, pig, cow, duck and a goat. To refresh their memories, they had to look at labelled pictures of farm animals on the wall. They even asked me to play a "gqom" (dance song) so they could dance for me.

"Miss, we want to show you how we can dance. Play a song for us." Lwazi.

"Not Old MacDonald!" Nani.

"What song do you want me to play? Are we not going to learn today?" I tried to control the situation because I could hear most learners suggesting "gqom" songs they liked dancing to. I learnt that learners enjoy playful learning and they learn easier if they sing and act out the teaching and learning content.

"If you promise to behave, listen carefully and do your work correctly, then we can choose a song together and dance before break time ends". That is how I got their attention. There was some silence at that point in anticipation of that promise.

4.4.2.3. Content delivery and learner activities

After the song and the sound activities, I gave each of the six groups two English-IsiZulu dictionaries, one English dictionary with illustrations, A4 paper and labelled pictures of farm animals. I then explained to the groups to draw up a table in the paper and make a list of farm animals they know and the products gained from each of the animals. I went to the groups explaining how the activity was to be done and encouraged them that the group that finished first was going to be allowed to play the sound game. The groups discussed the activity quietly such that I was convinced they were not going to do it. I was not sure whether they were bored, or found the activity too difficult for them. I stood at the back of the classroom not knowing what to do. I noticed that my grade four learners had a habit of talking to one another when they were not aware of what was expected of them or they did not know how to respond in

English. Sometimes they would shout in IsiZulu, saying they did not know what to do or show no interest by doing their own things, like drawing. That is why I was confused by their soft discussions and silence.

After a few minutes I saw some hands showing me that they were done. I thought they wanted to ask me to clarify the activity to them after the silence they had given me, but I could not believe my eyes when I looked at what they had written. They understood what they had to do, and they spoke softly because they did not want others to steal their ideas. I asked one of my vocal learners, Zani, (pseudonym) why I did not hear her group discussion like in other days, she said:

"Mam, some people want to copy our work. We don't want them to hear the things we say because they copy." (Zani, audio-recorded discussion, 30 August 2017).

I did not expect this kind of response from my grade 4 class which always enjoys loud talks in their groups. I had to try and figure out what was different this time. I thought of the hard work that went into planning the lesson, the teaching and learning resources that I had brought to class, the vocabulary list, dictionaries and music, and the whole teaching strategy; I had done an excellent job enhancing my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content. I noticed that I had started to connect to my learners, considering the vocabulary they had acquired, instead of concluding that they found it difficult to understand what they were learning in English. The way I explained to them also had an impact in their understanding. I only praised all the groups for producing good work without any disruptions. I also noticed a high level of commitment to their work, which was something new in my grade four class.



Animals	Products
Cattle	meat milk skin
Goats	meat milk skin
Pigs	meat
sheep	meat milk wool skin
Poultry	meat eggs feathers

Figure 4.12: An activity that showed my learners' dedication

4.4.2.4. Consolidation and conclusion

To conclude the lesson, learners listened to the recording of a small-scale farmer telling her success story of stock and crop farming, and the challenges she had to overcome. I could hear some of my grade 4 learners having home language discussions in their groups and I discouraged it as the focus was on their understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English. My learners' talking alerted that something was not right. They were complaining that the farmer talked too fast, and they could not hear everything she was saying. I had written the story on a chart, but my plan was to let them refer to it at the end of the lesson to answer questions. I stopped the recording and explained to the class that I had planned to put the chart with the story on the wall so that they could listen to the recording and read at the same time.

Miss Duma, the prosperous farmer

I am a stock and crop farmer in my area. I grow olives and sugar cane, and I also keep pigs in my farm. Olives are used to make olive oil for cooking, and they are also eaten with green salad. They are a good source of iron. They protect you against different types of cancer. It takes three to five years for my olives to be ripe and ready for harvesting. Once they are harvested, I sell them to another farmer who processes them and makes them ready to be sold in shops. It takes twelve to sixteen months for my sugar cane to be harvested. After harvesting, I take my sugar cane to the local sugar mill, which makes sugar and other products. My pigs increase very fast because a female pig produces ten to twelve piglets two times a year. At six months, a pig is ready to be eaten as bacon, ham, sausages or spare ribs. Meat from pigs is called pork.

I have fifty-six people who work in the olive fields, sugar cane fields and in the pig pens. I pay those workers every month. I love farming, it is how I make money. Sometimes I lose a lot of money because thieves steal my pigs at night. Two years ago, my olive and sugar cane fields were struck by droughts. I had to pay a lot of money for irrigation. I also had to employ extra people to watch my pigs at night. My plan is to have big farms in future.

Figure 4.13: The written version of the audio-recorded story

Putting the story on the wall was of great help. I was amazed to see that most of my learners were able to understand the story better after they had read it. After listening to the story, I asked questions and they responded correctly, which showed that they understood what they had been taught. I then asked them to write a paragraph of at least six sentences about stock farming. I explained they could use dictionaries to search for words they could have forgotten, that could also assist them in acquiring necessary vocabulary for themselves. By so doing, I thought I was giving them an opportunity to write what they had heard and read. Most learners

showed very little understanding of how to write a paragraph even though I had explained how a paragraph should look like. They only wrote lists of sentences, which had some sense, but not in the form of a paragraph which were broken without any order. For example, they had sentences like:

Cows, goats and pigs are examples of livestock.

Poultry gives us eggs and meat.

That was more of a poem's stanza than a paragraph. Since my focus was on their understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English, I was pleased to see meaning in what they wrote.

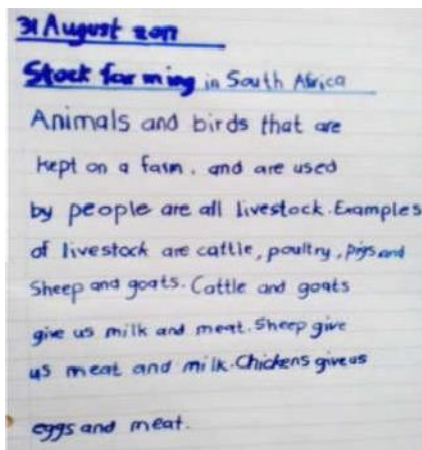


Figure 4.14: An example of a paragraph written by my learners

4.4.2.5. Learners' reflection on the lesson

I was surprised to notice that my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content had improved. At first, I thought they were only interested in singing the songs we sang together, but as time went on, I could tell they were getting a picture of what they were learning. They did not like the activity of writing paragraphs, as they preferred oral questions and short sentences, which was evident in their journal entries during their reflection on the lesson (see Figure 4.15). Their reflections on the lesson also taught me that writing of paragraphs was not necessary when assessing my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content.

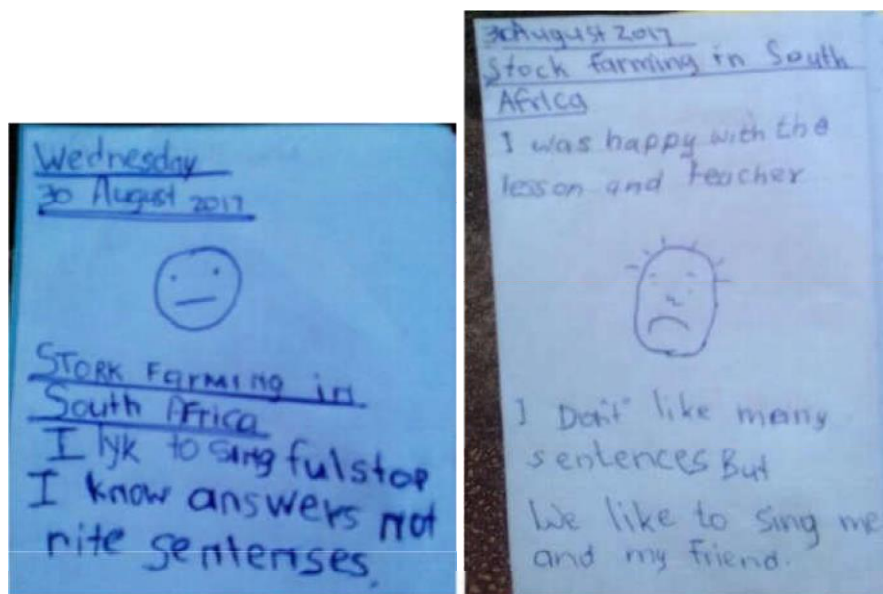


Figure 4.15: Examples of learners' reflections of the second lesson

4.4.2.6. Self-reflection

My second lesson was not as good as the first one. I introduced the lesson well and the learners were actively involved through music, which helped stimulate their interests, brought some game-related element to the lesson and a recap of the work done previously as an introduction to the new one. I could not help noticing that one way of enhancing my teaching was to bring some music in the lesson, since my learners enjoy learning while thinking they are playing. At first, content delivery did not go as anticipated. At one point, I got the impression that my learners did not understand the instructions given to them because they were unbelievably quiet. After looking at the work the groups presented, I realised that I had misjudged my learners. That taught me to have faith in them, and not to assume the worst. Sometimes I would find myself over-explaining some things, which I saw as undermining my learners' intelligence, thinking and their hard work. I realised the need to change that mentality so that my teaching could be enhanced.

Concluding the lesson with a recorded story was also not such a good idea as I had anticipated. I had listened to the recording severally and concluded that it was great until I overheard my learners complaining that it was too fast for them to grasp what it was about. After putting the chart with the written story on the wall, I could see that the learners were beginning to understand the recorded story. I believed that it would have been better if I had given the

recording to one grade four learner to listen; I would have known that it was too fast for my learners. Letting my learners read the story for themselves was even a better option. The activity of writing a paragraph was not only time consuming, but it was also unnecessary for assessing my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content. Answering oral questions and writing at least one sentence was enough. The lesson took longer than I had expected because of unnecessary activities. However, it taught me a lot that I was going to use to improve the way I taught.

4.4.3. Third lesson: Crop farming in South Africa

4.4.3.1. Reflection on the lesson plan

This was my last Geography section lesson since the other three were going to be on the History section of Social Sciences. I wanted my learners to enjoy and understand what they were going to learn. I had learnt from the two preceding lessons that I had to think of various strategies to capture my learners' attention towards the lesson. Doing this lesson plan was therefore like doing corrections for the two former lessons so that I would not make the same mistakes that I had made before, and I also had to improve on what I had done before. I examined the reflection on both lessons and saw what I needed to do better. At first, I thought it was going to be easy, then I realised that I had to work harder than before.

While I was busy with the lesson plan, I remembered that my learners' level of understanding the teaching and learning content presented to them in English had improved, and they could also use dictionaries without being instructed to do so as soon as they came across a word they did not understand. I had also learnt that their silence after an instruction did not necessarily mean that they did not understand.

I need to come up with activities which will allow my learners to communicate ideas and information, as required by the Geography curriculum. The questions I ask should give the learners an opportunity to talk to one another in their groups and share ideas. I must also have the teaching and learning resources that will facilitate their discussions and vocabulary acquisition (My personal journal entry, 30 August 2018).

It took me more time than I had anticipated to finish this lesson plan, however, I was confident that it was going to help me learn from the lesson and improve the way I teach IsiZulu speaking learners in English.

4.4.3.2. Introduction of the lesson

To maintain the momentum of the previous lesson, I had to ensure that this lesson was introduced in an interesting and understandable way. I started the lesson by asking only three questions from the previous lesson, which was "Stock farming in South Africa". I did this in order to capture my learners' attention towards the lesson and to recap on what had been done. The questions were:

"What is a stock farm?"

" What three products do we get from sheep?"

"Briefly explain how a stock farmer benefits from keeping pigs in his/her farm. " The questions I asked accommodated the three cognitive levels (low, middle and high order) because I wanted them to be familiar with this kind of questioning as it is required by their curriculum. They could still remember what had been done previously. They answered the first two questions easily, but the question which required them to explain was a bit tougher for them. They knew the answer, but the problem was the lack of vocabulary. I could hear some trying to answer in their home language and others translating to English. Eventually, they gave me the answer, with some grammatical errors, which I corrected quickly and moved on, since the emphasis was on their understanding and recalling of what we had done previously.

While they were still excited that they could respond correctly to the questions asked, I went straight to the introduction of the day's topic by asking:

"Name the vegetables, fruits and grains that are in our school garden. "

"We have local farms that grow sugar cane, maize, fruit and vegetables. Can you name the farm and say what is grown in that farm? "

While the learners answered these questions, I introduced the term "crops" to them and suggested to take them to the school garden to learn more about the crops, as Vygotsky's (1987)/ sociocultural theory notes that language development begins in one's social context. I emphasised the importance of following all the instructions accurately so that they would have enjoyable and quality learning time in the garden. It was important for me to explain to them because we had never gone to the garden for learning purposes before. Learners were not allowed to go into the garden, and so, to them it would be a chance to pick up some carrots and

fruits that they were not allowed to do than learning if I had forgotten to give clear instructions. They asked questions like:

"Miss, can we take some lemons and carrots?"

"Can we have some tomatoes?"

I told them they were not allowed to do so, and they promised to behave. We went out to the school garden and learners were quiet and attentive as they had promised. I pointed at the crops and asked them to give their names. I also gave them names and asked the learners to point at those crops, for example:

"Where is cauliflower?"

"Can someone show us radish?"

"What is the name of this purple vegetable?"

What I discovered from my learners was that they knew all the crops in the garden, they could name them in English and in IsiZulu. My task was then to give them English names for those that did not know. I then told the learners that they had to draw and write names of other crops they knew which were not in the school garden when they went back to class. They gave me names of fruits and vegetables they were going to draw. I reminded the learners that sugar cane and sunflowers were also crops. Some of them complained that they did not know the English names for what they were going to draw, others reminded them to use dictionaries with "pictures" (illustrations). I was very proud of my learners as I realised that they had achieved something from their learning. They were gradually learning to use a variety of strategies to solve their own problems, as one of the Geography aims is to develop learners who can work with a range of sources to cross-reference information. I could hear some comments they made when returning to class, for example:

"Green vegetables are nice to see, but ukuwadla, No!"

I asked one learner to try and correct that sentence, and the one who had said it would not allow him, she had thought of another way of correcting it by substituting that IsiZulu word with an English word. I was very happy to discover that my learners were learning to use self-correcting strategies in their learning.



Figure 4.16: Learners identifying and naming crops in the school garden

4.4.3.3. Content delivery and learner activity

The focus of the lesson was on classifying or grouping of crops into fruit, vegetables, grains and other crops (like sugar cane, which was available in the local farms and flowers). I wanted my learners to work in groups to encourage full participation by all learners and peer teaching.

I gave each of the six groups a chart which was divided into three sections and wrote *Fruits, Vegetables, Grains and other Crops* as topics. I gave the whole class the instruction:

Take out the pictures of fruits, vegetables, grains and other crops that you collected as your homework. You are going to paste those pictures in correct columns in the chart that I have given to you, fruits in the column of fruits, vegetables in the right column and grains and other crops in the right column. You have to put your chart on the wall before you start pasting pictures, so that we all see whether you are correct or wrong. One member will paste one picture at a time so that everyone will get a chance to paste their pictures. Your group will help you paste the pictures correctly. All others will be quiet.

I gave the instruction steadily in English, using gestures, ensuring that everyone understood what was expected of them. I was ready to code-switch, but I could see that it was unnecessary because all the learners rushed to take out pictures from their bags, which showed me that they had understood the instruction. They were ready to start the activity. They put their pictures on the desks and talked about them softly. I thought they were telling one another where each picture fitted. The groups begun pasting their pictures (see figure 4.17).



Figure 4.17: Learners showing one another how they were going to paste pictures in the correct columns



Figure 4.18: Example of completed work by learners classifying crops

It was very funny when group members shouted in both English and IsiZulu at one member who pasted the picture under the wrong heading, saying:

"No, hhay lapho! No, hhay lapho futhi! Yes, lapho ke!" that means "No, not there! No, Not there again! Yes, there!"

I was very excited when I realised how the learners enjoyed the activity. They even clapped hands for those who pasted correctly without any assistance. This went on until all the groups had pasted all their pictures. I then asked the learners to leave their charts with pictures on the wall. I could tell that they were proud of their work. That taught me my learners needed to be given an opportunity to do things on their own so that they take pride in their achievement. They needed their teacher to explain everything using simple language, gestures, relevant

teaching and learning aids, and then create opportunities for them to learn from one another, what I saw as interaction-based learning.

I had prepared a recorded teaching on crop farming in South Africa, explaining about different crops, what they need to grow well and what happens when they are ripe. Examples of different vegetables, fruits and other crops were given, and clear explanations were also given. The learners were informed of what the teaching was about and how it was going to help them make corrections in their charts. I asked the learners to listen to the recorded teaching attentively. They were all excited to hear that they had done well and made corrections themselves where they had done wrong (where they had mixed pictures). I discovered that learners liked listening to another voice other than mine; to them, it was like they had two different teachers helping them understand the teaching and learning content presented to them in English.

4.4.3.4. Consolidation and conclusion

To conclude the lesson, learners were given an opportunity to imagine and decide if they would like to be stock or crop farmers one day, and what they would like to have in their farms. I gave them incomplete sentences in strips of paper, which they had to complete using the flash cards with vocabulary words. Each learner had his/ her own paper with two sentences and each of the six groups were given vocabulary words from which they had to choose words to complete their sentences.



Figure 4.19: Learners reading incomplete sentences and looking at vocabulary to complete the sentences

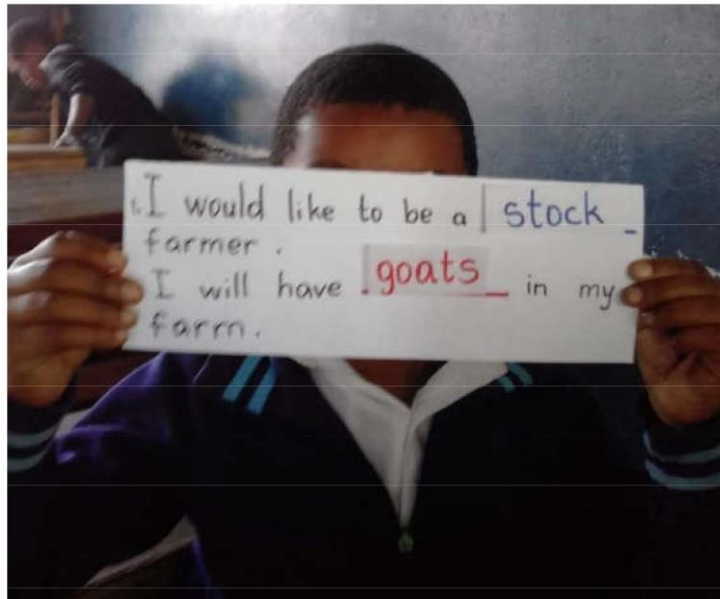


Figure 4.20: Example of sentences that learners were proud to complete

The learners looked at their completed sentences, read them and shouted that they had finished. I asked them to show what they had done and was happy that all their sentences were correct (see figure 4.19). I asked one learner from each of the six groups to read aloud what they had done. After reading aloud, I told the learners to write the same sentences in their exercise books. I wanted them to write something they discovered, or achieved on their own so that they would not forget it easily.

4.4.3.5. Learners' reflection on the lesson

My learners' level of commitment to their work was becoming noticeable, each time I gave them an activity to do, they would all focus and try their best to do what was expected of them. If they were not sure of what to do, they would not just sit and talk to one another (as they used to do before), instead they would ask for clarity. Sometimes they would ask in IsiZulu, but most of the time in English. This suggested that they wanted to own their learning. I asked my learners not to be afraid to share if I had done something they did not like or if they had some ideas of how I could do better when they reflected on the lessons we had done. I made sure that instructions I gave to them were clear enough, as I spoke steadily and allowed them to ask for clarity where it was needed. Sometimes, they would share that they knew what was expected of them before I could finish re-explaining. I thought they did that because they had understood both the learning content and the instructions given to them. Learners acknowledged that the resources used were very helpful in acquiring vocabulary and understanding the teaching and

learning content presented to them in English (See figure 4.21). That meant I had to prepare relevant and interesting resources for my learners in order to improve my teaching to IsiZulu speaking learners in English.



Figure 4.21: A learner's reflection on the third lesson

4.4.3.6. Self-reflection

The lesson went very well; learners were able to answer oral questions and were motivated to learn more about the topic. Taking the learners to the school garden was very helpful as they were excited to learn about what they could see. However, I was a little worried by the way they demanded my attention. I asked myself what I did differently, and remembered that the children wanted me to notice that they could see how much I wanted them to understand what they were learning. They also wanted me to notice that they were happy with the way I had been teaching them. I learnt that I needed to do more than just reading the textbook with my learners. I needed to prepare thoroughly and think of my learners while planning for the lesson. I was surprised to note that my learners did not write anything about the activities they did in the school garden in their journals, but I could tell that they enjoyed them, and they were very informative. That gave the idea of thorough explanation before engaging in any kind of learning outside the classroom so that they do not see it as just an outing. I discovered that my learners learnt more effectively when they were doing group activities, where they shared ideas and acquired vocabulary from one another.

4.4.4. Fifth lesson: The motor car

4.4.4.1. Reflection on the lesson plan

Doing this lesson plan was not as tough as doing the previous ones. I had started to understand how my learners need to be taught for them to understand the teaching and learning content presented to them in English, which is their second language. I had realised the importance of preparing thoroughly before teaching them. My preparation included preparing necessary teaching and learning resources, learning and assessment activities, questions which would stimulate my learners thinking and facilitate language acquisition, as well as listening to them to learn from them. I also had to think of group activities which would allow my learners to learn from one another. I realized that beginning the lesson with a song that my learners were able to sing gave them an opportunity to think about the lesson and it also helped them with vocabulary. I thought to myself:

How am I going to structure my lesson so that it allows for interaction among my learners? I think I must study the teaching and learning content thoroughly so as to get direction towards planning the lesson. I do not want to lose focus, which is finding out how I can improve my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English. Now I know the song that I am going to let my learners sing (My personal journal entry, 04 September 2017).

Thinking of one of these objectives of the study, which was finding a variety of strategies to enhance my teaching practice, encouraged me to do the lesson plan. I had figured out how I had done in the previous lesson and I had to make improvements. I also had to continue doing what assisted my learners' understanding and make some necessary changes. At the end, I came up with the lesson plan which I was satisfied was going to improve my teaching practice.

4.4.4.2. Introduction of the lesson

The focus of the lesson was on how the car has evolved through time, from the early steam car to the modern cars. To introduce the lesson, I asked the learners to take out the pictures of cars that they had collected as their homework. The instruction I gave was:

"I want you to take out the pictures of cars that I asked you to collect at home. Once you have all done that, I want you to compare your cars in terms of size and beauty, that is how they look. Look at what is the same and what is different. You must discuss this in your groups and then give me the answers. Remember we did degrees of comparison, which means you are able to compare things. You may use the words in the chart, same words we used when we were learning degrees of comparison. "

This activity was meant to enable the learners "to select relevant information by deciding about what is important to use" (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p.11). That would allow them to think, reason and talk using English vocabulary they had acquired. They would also use their ability to switch from their home language to English and from English to home language, as required of all the Intermediate Phase English First Additional Language learners (DBE, 2011). The learners followed the instruction; first they took out the pictures they had, and then they put them on their desks and started talking about them. One learner asked: *"Miss, can I say, My BMW is faster than a Peugeot?"* This showed that the learners had understood the instruction and they could relate what they were doing in class to what they had done before. I had noticed that learners found it easier to remember the sentences that they had constructed on their own, and so I wanted them to answer questions in full sentences. I then responded by saying: *"Good, I want sentences like that one."*



Figure 4.22: Learners talking about the pictures of cars and comparing them

The learners looked at their pictures of cars and talked loudly about them. I could tell that the activity excited them from the way they were talking, some of them even stood up and made illustrations with their hands. I could hear them arguing, mixing IsiZulu and English, *"Hey*

sonny, awyazi iPeugeot wena. Iyabaleka leyanto wena ngiyakutshela ". Meaning, *"Hey sonny, you don 't know the Peugeot. That one is a fast runner, I'm telling you."*

"Kodwa mfan wami ayitholi lutho egalofini. Kuyafiwa laphaya ", which means *"But my brother, a Golf outruns it. That one is a killer car. "*

"I hear that you are having very good sentences, but can you please say them in English. I want us to be able to express ourselves in English". I tried to channel the group discussions towards the use of English since my learners were expected to do their presentations (how they compared their cars) in English. One girl asked to try and say the sentence in English, *"My boy, the Golf is faster than the Peugeot"*. I asked the class if that sentence was correct, and they all agreed it was correct. That taught me something new, that it was not always necessary to translate for my learners, since they could do that on their own if they were given an opportunity to do so. I needed to allow them to make their attempts and ask for assistance where it was necessary.

I gave each of the six groups a strip of paper and a marking pen and explained that they had to write the sentences that they had been constructing in their groups, in which they were comparing cars. They had to paste the picture or two pictures and then write a sentence. All the groups wrote their sentences. Those who finished first asked for another strip of paper to write other sentences that they had agreed on. Most of the sentences were correct, and others had minor mistakes which were corrected instantly. Each group chose one member to show the class what the group had written and read it aloud. I noticed that the learners could understand the instructions given to them in English and they could also ask questions for clarity, and the questions asked in IsiZulu were relevant.

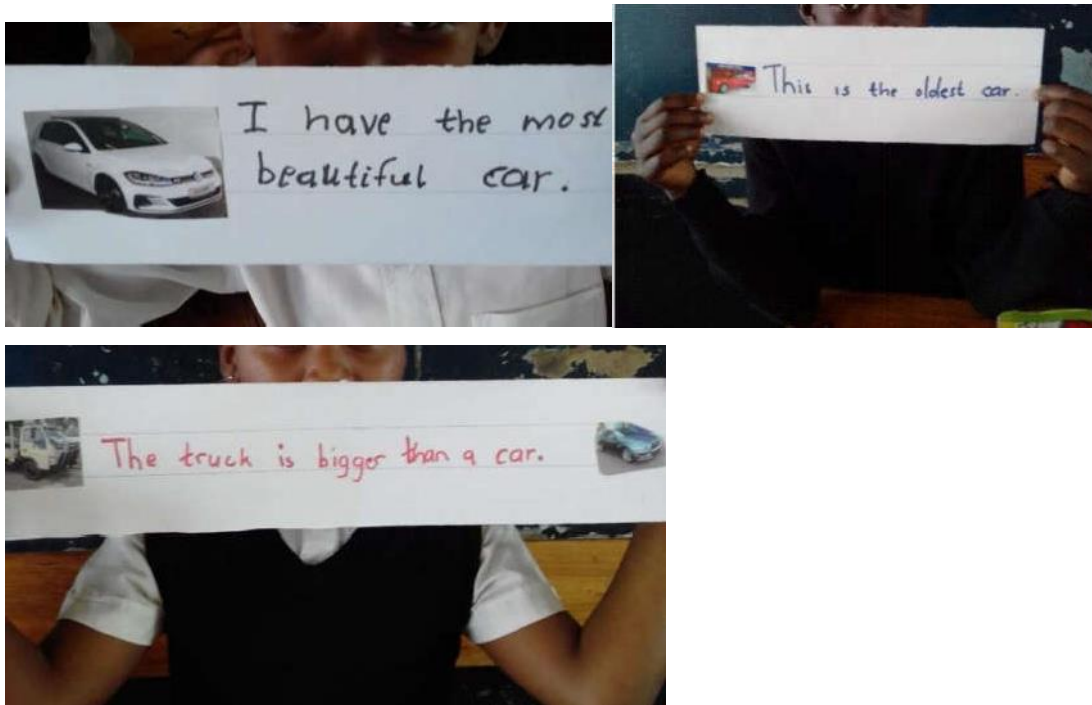


Figure 4.23: Examples of sentences that learners wrote to compare their cars

Degrees of comparison		
Positive	Comparative	Superlative
1. big	bigger	biggest
2. small	smaller	smallest
3. fast	faster	fastest
4. slow	slower	slowest
5. old	older	oldest
6. cheap	cheaper	cheapest
7. expensive	more expensive	most expensive
8. beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
9. good	better	best

Figure 4.24: Chart written by learners with comparison words

4.4.4.3. Content delivery and learner activities

I brought a laptop to class to show my learners images of cars from ancient steam cars (from as early as 1759) to the modern models. I told them:

"I want you to come in your groups and watch the images that I am going to show you. I want you to see how the car has become better over time. You are going to see very old cars and the new ones, and then see what has changed. "

The first group came to the table to view the images of cars. Some learners could not believe the first image they saw (figure 4.29), others asked these questions while they were still viewing: *"Is this a car? Where is the driver? Where are the people?"* They were surprised to notice the difference in the appearances of the steam cars as they improved with time. I asked them to view all the images and go back to their groups where they would talk about what they had seen.

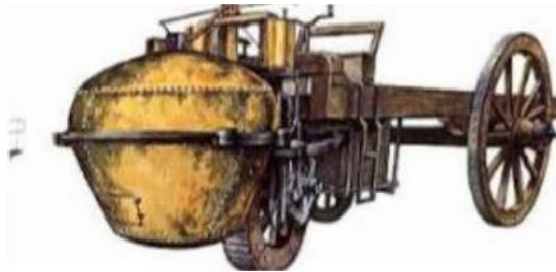


Figure 4.25: Image of an ancient steam car that learners could not identify

I showed the learners images of something they had never seen for them to relate it to what they had seen. That was in line with one of the specific aims of History which is "Seeing something that happened in the past from more than one point of view" (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p.11).

All the groups shouted with disbelief and interest when they saw the early steam cars. This showed that my learners were very curious about what they were going to learn, and they had an understanding and interest. This was evident when they asked relevant questions about what they were learning (DBE, 2011). To maintain the momentum, I played a recorded teaching of early steam cars evolving to the modern cars and their engines. The teaching was in English, but the speaker would code-switch at some points for clarity and to ensure that the learners were still following. The title of the teaching was: *"The motor car"*. The lesson was about how the steam powered car worked, when it was invented, the speed it managed to travel, how the modern cars work and how they are different from the early steam cars. The learners listened with interest. I could tell that they were grasping what was being taught because they were

relating what they were hearing to what they had seen. I could understand that showing images and talking about them prepared the learners for learning the new content, especially, because they had never heard of steam cars before they saw their images.

4.4.4.4. Consolidation and conclusion

This is the part where the learners had to respond orally to questions about what they had learned. I had planned to ask a single question that was going to require learners to think, make comparisons, use relevant vocabulary and draw conclusions. The question was: *"How were early steam cars similar and different from the modern ones?"* I could see that most of them did not know where to start answering that question. They looked worried. I decided to rephrase the question: *"There are features that are common for all cars, try to identify them. There are also features that make modern cars different from ancient steam cars, find them"*. One boy answered: *"All cars have wheels"*. The whole class said, *"Yes, all cars have wheels"*. That showed that they were getting a picture of what they were supposed to do. I added: *"What else is common?"* The learners mentioned windows, steering wheel and a hooter. I then asked them to answer in full sentences, which they did with ease. Then, I asked: *"Can you now tell us what is different?"* I got various responses like: *"Modern cars use petrol and diesel, old cars used steam. Old cars moved short distances, modern cars travel long distances"*. They had to answer in full sentences in order to encourage the use of English. This was also going to assist them with vocabulary and prepare them for written activities.

4.4.4.5. Learners' reflection on the lesson

I noticed that my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content was gradually increasing. Their English vocabulary was also improving. They needed me to allow them some minutes to try and figure out how they could respond to questions and instructions, not to rush them. This lesson did not start with the song, like other lessons. They were puzzled at first, but enjoyed the way the lesson was introduced. That was evident in their journal entries when they reflected on the lesson (see figure 4.30). They also wanted to read and write sentences after the lesson. Their reflections on the lesson also taught me that they could use dictionaries to search for words they did not know.

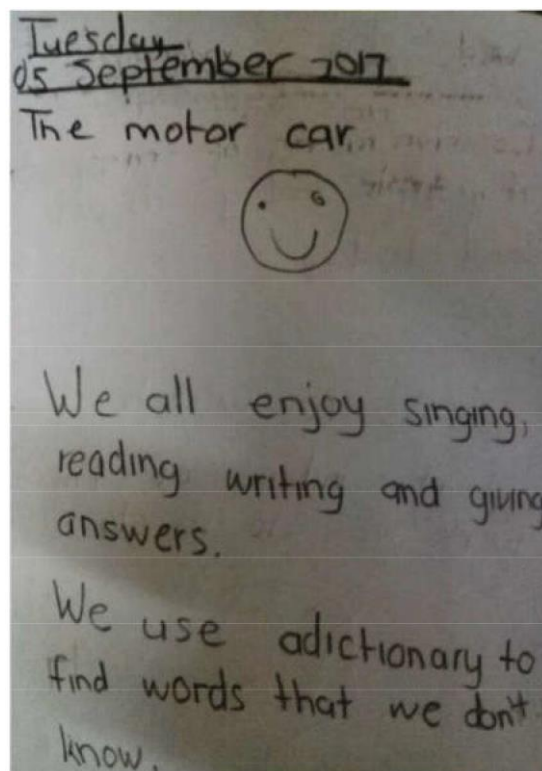


Figure 4.26: Example of learners' reflection on the fifth lesson

4.4.4.6. Self-reflection

The lesson went as planned and it was interesting right from the introduction to the end. Learners enjoyed talking about the pictures they had collected. The introductory activity was meant to integrate what the learners had learnt in the English language lesson and the new History learning content. Using English to compare their pictures (cars) was very fulfilling to them, more especially because they were using the same comparative words that they had used before. Most of the sentences they gave were grammatically correct and to the point, even though there were still those who could not wait for their turn to speak and used home language instead of English. Their group mates corrected them, telling them to use English and to use dictionaries if they were not sure what to say. They were also reminded of using the chart with degrees of comparison, since the words they wanted to use were in the chart (See figure 4.28, example of learners' reflection on the fifth lesson). I was surprised to see that all my learners had tried to respond to instructions given to them, including those that were known for passivity. I could see them talking and laughing as part of the groups. Introducing the lesson with what the learners knew made the lesson interesting to them.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter addressed the second research question: *How do grade 4 learners experience and respond to my teaching in English?* I discussed how I designed my lessons to incorporate a variety of teaching strategies to enhance my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English. Highlights on how I enacted the intended curriculum in teaching in a language that is not my learners' home language were also provided. Finally, I gave a brief discussion of issues that emerged from my memory stories and my engagement with my class (what I learnt from the lessons that I did with my learners).

Chapter Five, which is the final chapter of this self-study dissertation concludes the self-study by presenting a reflective view of the whole dissertation. I reflect on what I have learnt from my self-study research in response to the third research question: *How can I further improve my teaching to IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English?* Furthermore, I reflect on my self-study methodology and the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

MY ENACTMENT OF THE INTENDED CURRICULUM: WAY FORWARD

5.1. Introduction

The focus of this research was to explore the ways of teaching IsiZulu speaking grade four learners in English. The purpose of conducting the study was to improve my teaching practice to enhance my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in English, their additional language. To achieve this purpose, a self-study methodology was employed which involved an exploration of my personal history (Samaras, 2011) starting from my family life, primary and secondary school learning, teacher training college to my early teaching practice experiences. Pithouse, Mitchell, and Weber (2009) confirm that a self-study facilitates professional development for both the individual engaged in it and others in similar contexts, provided it is done appropriately. Thus, conducting this study enabled me, as a grade four teacher to learn from my lived experiences, and interactive discussions with critical friends which uncovered innovative strategies of improving my teaching practice.

In the previous chapter, data generated in my grade 4 class was presented and re-examined in response to the second research question: *How do grade 4 learners experience and respond to my teaching in English?* explanations of how lessons were designed and taught with the intention of enhancing my teaching through exploring a variety of teaching strategies were provided. Furthermore, four issues that emerged from the memory stories and engagement with my class were identified and discussed. The emergent issues were as follows: a) Learning from parental involvement, b) Learning from the impact of teachers' expectations on learners, c) Learning through exploring the environment, and d) Learning from enacting the intended curriculum.

In this chapter, I conclude this self-study by presenting a reflective view of what was learnt from engaging in this work and respond to my third and final research question: *How can I improve my teaching to IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English?* I outline how through exploring my enactment of the intended curriculum, as I taught Zulu speaking learners in isiZulu, assisted in facilitating my learning. I also reflect on my self-study methodology journey

by examining how the studying of my own practice assisted me in reviewing my enactment with the intentions of development.

5.2. Review of the dissertation

In Chapter One, I outlined the focus and purpose of this self-study research, which was to explore a variety of teaching methods to develop an understanding of what could be done to improve my teaching practice as I taught IsiZulu speaking learners in English. Reasons for embarking on this study were introduced and the research questions that guided this study explained in depth. Furthermore, the theoretical perspective assisted in understanding the key concepts that were identified. A synopsis of the self-study as a methodology was also provided, followed by an overview of the dissertation.

In Chapter Two, the methodology chapter, I gave an account of my choice of a self-study research methodology. The use of a personal history self-study was described through narrating my educational journey to better understand how my teaching practice could be enhanced in future. A description of the location of the study, the challenges encountered during the research process and how they were addressed were given. Moreover, I outlined my role as the main participant in this self-study research. My learners' and critical friends' roles were also clarified and a table was used to present the research questions, methods and data sources. Furthermore, different self-study research methods were discussed, which assisted in retracing the story of my educational journey. The issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also addressed. The main lesson learnt from this chapter is that there is need to exercise caution when dealing with my learners so that they would not count me as part of their unpleasant experiences. This was realised when I recalled memories of my past learning experiences which are difficult to relive.

Chapter Three presented my educational journey, in response to my first research question: *How have my lived experiences contributed to the way I teach IsiZulu speaking grade 4 learners in English?* Here, I examined myself in terms of my lived experiences. The highlight of telling my personal history stories was the various ways in which I learnt in English, my second language. In doing this chapter, I realised that teaching a second language requires a variety of innovative ways so that learners can understand and make use of the language.

Chapter Four responded to the second research question: *How do grade 4 learners experience and respond to my teaching in English?* The data presented showed the activities conducted with the learners. Through use of my learners' journal entries and their work, I was able to engage in teacher learning as described by Kelly (2006), as one of the key concepts of the sociocultural theory. The key elements identified were a) Learning from parental involvement, b) Learning from teacher expectations, c) Learning from exploring the environment, and d) Learning through enacting the intended curriculum. I have learnt that employing various teaching methods is of utmost importance if my learners are to understand what I teach them, particularly, if the language of teaching and learning is not their mother tongue.

5.3. My personal- professional learning

The reason for embarking on this self-study was to improve my teaching practice when teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English, as explained in Chapter One. The aim was to explore how my past learning experiences could assist me in becoming a better teacher. I understood that self-study would allow me to engage with a variety of approaches to help me understand how I could enhance my teaching in English to IsiZulu speaking grade four learners.

5.3.1. Why I designed and taught the lessons

The main purpose of designing and teaching the lessons was to explore a variety of teaching strategies I could use to improve teaching and learning in English to IsiZulu speaking Grade 4 learners. I wanted to enhance my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content presented to them in a language that is not their mother tongue. Designing the lesson plans provided me with the opportunity to look for various teaching strategies that were going to enable my learners to process the teaching and learning content in their minds in order to understand it. The process allowed for a deep engagement with the intended curriculum policy, while I attempted to maintain the set content to be taught in English with the prescribed expected outcomes reached. This gave me an opportunity to identify resources that were to assist in the facilitation of learning in a second language. I had to go beyond the limits previously set for myself, since my learners needed to be provided with multiple chances to interact with one another, and with me as their teacher. Through the accurate design of lesson plans and their implementation, the intention was to create an environment in which every learner in class would develop oral literacy as well as meaningful interaction where they were going to acquire basic vocabulary from one another.

Through the process of designing the lesson plans, both the content objectives and the language objectives were examined in order to structure instruction in a manner that would increase my learners' language proficiency which would aid the understanding of teaching and learning content. Tapping into my learners' experiences and linking them to the lessons to enhance learning was imperative. The planned lessons were also taught with the intention of learning from my learners whether my teaching was understandable or not. Learners needed to answer questions in English to demonstrate they had understood the teaching and learning content. I also intended to engage in teacher learning, i.e., to do things differently from the usual way to learn from lessons I taught and my learners' reflections on these lessons, as well as to explore various teaching methods to facilitate my professional growth.

5.3.2. How I think my learners would describe the lessons

Based on the reflections of the learners as shared in chapter four, they found the lessons different from those taught before and had begun to understand the content that was presented to them in English. The lessons allowed them an opportunity to learn from one another in their groups, because they provided interaction-based learning which the learners enjoyed. This provided them with time to develop academic language proficiency. Through introducing music, the learners were able to enjoy singing the songs introduced in the lessons. Since they were familiar with the songs, it was easy for them to guess what the lessons were going to be about, and they could also identify vocabulary to answer the questions from the lessons.

Posters and pictures that were used in the lessons helped the learners engage in conversations which facilitated language learning. Lessons allowed participation by all learners in their groups, that helped boost their self-confidence. The learners loved the way the lessons were presented, and appreciated the opportunity of using dictionaries to look for meaning of words and select those they could use to construct their own sentences.

5.3.3. The difference in the previous English lessons taught before the self-study research

Before the self-study research, I had a very concise lesson plan template in which needed to be modified. I was unable to explain how the lesson was going to be conducted because of the limited space provided in the lesson plan template, which deprived me of an opportunity to have a step by step frame of the lesson that I had planned to teach. Designing my self-study research lesson plans provided me with a full picture of the content, objectives, teacher and learner activities, resources and how the lessons were going to be assessed. I was able to link

the lesson to be taught with the following lesson, and had flexibility to structure the lesson content in a way that considered my learners' level of understanding the language of instruction. This helped to avoid burdening my learners with too much information, trying to finish the prescribed work.

Before the self-study research, the time factor was a point of concern each time I planned the lesson. I always thought I would not be able to finish the lesson on a set time. Although with the self-study research lessons, I discovered that time was not an issue, but instead the way I had been teaching trying to rush time was. I had been focusing mainly on finishing at the prescribed time, instead of focusing on whether true learning had taken place. I realized that I limited time by saying something to learners and expecting them to say it in exactly the same way, expecting accurate responses in their first attempts. I wasted time waiting for those accurate responses, forgetting that my learners were learning in a language that was not their home language. I would go back and forth over content with the intention of simplifying it.

It became evident that I needed to work on the use of time in my class. Time is one of the limitations that come with the curriculum. One is given a topic to cover over a certain period and assess it in a prescribed form of assessment such as a project, only to find that finishing becomes a problem to learners who are still struggling with the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). I have learnt that the struggle is not just the teaching and learning content, but also the language that the learners are expected to be learning. I find my classroom literally turning into a language classroom and my identity also as a subject teacher changing to a language teacher irrespective of whether I am teaching Social Sciences or any content subject. I must approach every teaching and learning content in a language perspective, allowing learners to understand the language before anything else.

5.3.4. My most useful discoveries from lessons

I discovered from my lessons the importance of giving learners more interaction opportunities in order to enable them to learn the language (English) from one another and boost self-confidence for all learners. Providing them with the lesson topic and allowing them to brainstorm and deliberate on it is paramount, even though they need extra time since they are still learning the language. In their mixed ability groups, they learnt to discover things on their own, which is not easy to forget. They also learnt to use dictionaries (either English-IsiZulu,

the illustrated ones or any dictionary that they found easy to use) as much as they need to, because it facilitates their vocabulary acquisition.

I discovered that it is not always necessary to expect learners to say things correctly at all times. Expecting perfection and accuracy is an obsession that I needed to work on as a teacher, because it limits my learners' language development and scares my learners of making attempts, fearing that they may make mistakes, which is mostly not tolerated. I noticed that taking all their responses as valid contributions showed that they were listening and willing to learn, as well as encouraged to participate in their learning. Even if their responses still need correction, I must learn to appreciate them. In that way, they will own their learning and their confidence will improve. They will be motivated to make numerous attempts and end up being accurate. I have learnt that I must not expect my learners to pronounce English words correctly the first time they are using them, as they will learn correct pronunciation as they continue learning; what matters is that they understand what they want to say.

5.3.5. What I want to continue doing when teaching second language speakers in English

With the knowledge gained from this self-study, I want to continue making English language visual to my learners through use of visual aids such as pictures, posters, charts, video clips and real objects to facilitate language learning. I have realized how visual aids encourage my learners' learning process, making it easier and interesting. Through visual aids, my learners can retain more concepts for a remarkably long time in their minds and they also increase their vocabulary. I would also like to continue creating opportunities for interaction-based learning to enable learners to learn from one another. Seeing that proper lesson planning is the key to meaningful teaching and learning, I would like to continue planning my lessons in a step by step manner that will allow the inclusion of everything that I need to facilitate my learners' understanding of the teaching and learning content. I also want to continue giving my learners activities that promote language learning, like taking them out on an excursion for learning.

5.3.6. What I would do differently in future when teaching second language speakers in English

Reflecting on how I delivered instruction before the self-study research lessons and after, there are things that I would do differently. I would not expect my learners to pronounce English words correctly the first time they use them; I would appreciate their efforts to use the language in their conversations and when they answer questions; allow them to make their mistakes and learn from them, because that gives them a chance to learn self-correcting strategies; not

demand that they always give correct responses, because that stops them from trying to use the language, fearing that they will be disappointed; enable them to write sentences as captions for pictures and posters instead of paragraphs; and allow those who are still struggling with sentences to write words as captions, as long as they are able to tell what the picture or poster is about. I have realised that paragraph writing could be an activity that can be done later in the year as it takes more time to complete, and thus deprives learners of their precious time of interaction where they acquire vocabulary.

5.3.7. New understanding gained about teaching second language speakers in English

Since the self-study research lessons, I have learnt that learners need patience and understanding in order to perform activities given to them. They need the teacher to understand that they are in the process of learning the language, and their oral literacy is still developing. I have learnt that I need not be strict when marking their written work and when giving feedback, provided I understand what they want to say. The feedback must be positive and constructive to motivate learners, refraining from the influence of my school teachers and how they conducted things, which was characterised by high expectations that were sometimes unachievable and discouraging to learners.

When my learners were silent after being asked a question, I assumed that they had not understood the teaching and learning content, or they did not know what was expected of them. I would rephrase the question and try to simplify it, but they would just be quiet. I have learnt that their silence means that they are still processing the questions in their own understanding. As they try to find English words to respond to the questions, my job is to allow them time to think and gather relevant vocabulary necessary for their learning. I understand that learners process things differently; therefore, I should not expect them to respond correctly on their first attempts. Thus, they should not be limited in terms of time to finish the activity.

5.3.8. New understandings gained about my enactment of teaching

Enacting my teaching helped me come to the realisation that I am a product of my teachers' instruction; hence, I expect my learners to see things as I do. I had not been giving them room to develop their own learning strategies, as my teachers did. My relationship with CAPS, as the prescribed curriculum, was that it should be implemented as it is regardless of my school context. I thought CAPS did not require I insert myself in it. There is a possibility that this emanated from the way I was taught. My teachers forced more imaginary things, without

allowing us to find our own ways of learning and understanding the teaching and learning content, which promoted rote learning and delayed language proficiency. When reflecting on the lessons, I realized my frustrations when my expectations on learners were not met, and when they were not responding instantly.

As I continued with lessons, modifying lesson plans, structuring teaching and learning content and assessment activities, I had an opportunity to correct the mistakes that I had been making. I learnt to create opportunities for my learners to enable them to learn from one another and the environment, as well as allow them to learn things at their pace. I realised that I was the one frustrating my learners by not allowing them enough time to have a relationship with the language they used as a medium of instruction.

5.3.9. New understandings gained about my learners

When I observe my learners now, I see them differently. When I see them not participating or not responding to instructions and questions instantly, I am more aware that it does not mean they did not understand what they are learning, or they have no idea of how to respond. Neither does it mean they are not learning at all, but that they are still organising and processing the information in their minds, in their own way as they are still learning the language. They must learn the language before anything else. I now understand that I need to respect that my learners learn things differently from how I learn them.

I also understand that learners learn better when they manipulate things in their environment, and when they learn about what they are familiar with, which is also part of their daily lives. They also acquire vocabulary from songs they sing when these are included in their lessons. When they are chosen appropriately, the lyrics of the songs assist the learners in vocabulary acquisition. Incorporating music in their learning makes learners learn in a relaxed atmosphere, thinking that they are playing. Therefore, I have learnt to not flood learners with information which is too abstract for them, but to be creative when planning lessons to enhance my learners' understanding. It is also important to improve from the way I was taught and come up with innovative teaching strategies which accommodate the learners' context.

5.3.10. New understandings gained about teaching English to second language speakers

Teaching learners that do not speak the language of instruction is not easy. I have learnt that as a teacher, it is important to comprehend as much as the learners learn the content, they are still learning the language through which teaching is taking place. I, therefore, need to understand

and accept that they will take longer than the language speakers to learn. Avoiding burdening learners with too much information is crucial; the fact that the information has already formed in my mind as the teacher and I am able to pronounce it, does not mean I should expect the same from my learners. They still need to translate it, which requires more time and patience. I am conscious about time, while they may only be concerned about forming concepts and processing the information I have given to them. It is vital that I make the language visual to my learners and give them enough time for interaction.

Figure 5.1: A metaphor drawing representing the balance between me, my learners and their parents

One of the learnings that came out of my self-study process is the significance of parental involvement (see Chapter Four). I learnt that I needed to redefine parental involvement for myself, because to me it is not about what I want parents to do, but what they can do. This does not necessarily mean doing homework with their children, but their efforts in assisting their children gain items required to aid learning. This can be considered as a way of supporting learning which should be appreciated. Hence, the three-legged pot metaphor: first leg represents the teacher, second represents the parents and the third, the learner. This pot cannot balance if it loses one of its legs. I learnt that if there is no connection between the teacher, learner and their parents, effective learning becomes a challenge and as the teacher, I must maintain that balance.

This can be possible through using the bridge metaphor to bring together the perspective of learning through exploring the environment and avoiding too much expectations on learners

Learning a second language is not an easy task. Transitioning from learning in one's home language to learning in a second language is even tougher. As a metaphor, the bridge opens opportunities for learners to be assisted by adults, teachers, other community members, other children and resources in their environment in their quest to learn a language.

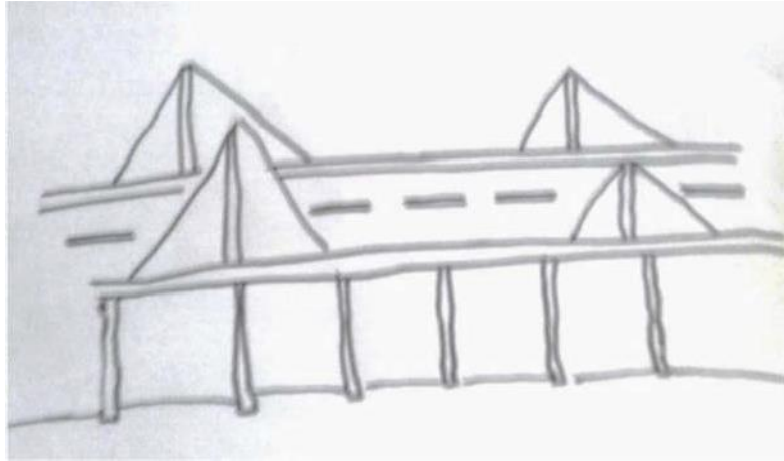


Figure 5.2: A metaphor drawing of a bridge that allows movement from one point to another through exploring the environment

Planning and designing of a bridge are not anyone's jobs. These are indicators of the creative ability of designers, which demonstrates their imagination, innovation and exploration (Reszke, 2011). The process requires that designers imagine, visualise and apply safety and economy shape. Likewise, as a grade 4 teacher, I learnt that I need to visualize and imagine my learners' level of understanding, content, resources in and outside the classroom and assessment forms. The design process of a bridge includes significant factors like; materials, dimensions and foundations, local landscape of environment, carrying capacity and beauty (Reszke, 2011). This suggests that my learners' understanding of the learning content presented to them in an additional language depends on my understanding and interpretation of their learning environment, available resources, existing knowledge of their home language as the foundation and the way I assist them in their learning.

5.3.11 Using the chameleon metaphor drawing to address learning from curriculum enactment

The chameleon metaphor drawing was used to expose meaning of what I learnt from curriculum enactment as outlined in Chapter four.



Figure 5.3: Metaphor drawing of a chameleon speaking to my curriculum enactment

I have learnt that in as much as the curriculum is prescriptive, teachers can always find ways to make it work for the different contexts they find themselves in. This is only possible through the application of innovative ways of teaching (see Chapter Four). Even though the curriculum is prescribed, and teachers are expected to implement it as it is, it also allows for many ways of interpreting content and still maintain the same outcome. A chameleon does not change what it is, but it changes its colour according to the context of where it is, and picks up the colours of the environment it finds itself in. Therefore, as a teacher I should make the curriculum adjust to the context in which I work. Since the curriculum is for all grade 4 learners, irrespective of their environment, I must understand my context to make it work for my learners.

In Chapter Four, taking my learners to the school garden meant exposing them to another way of learning, which is learning through exploring the environment. From that experience, I learnt that conducting things differently from the norm would enable them to understand English. This shows that my enactment of the intended curriculum lies on my innovativeness. I discovered that enacting the curriculum requires a certain level of innovation on my part as the teacher so that I can create an educative environment, where there is effective teaching and learning.

5.4. My methodological learning

This study was informed by self-study of educational practice methodology (Samaras, 2010). Self-study methodology requires that researchers learn about their teaching practice with the aim of changing and improving it. Thus, using this methodology helped me to learn to examine my own practice as a grade 4 teacher, teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English. Through reflecting on my practice, I discovered that most of the challenges encountered by the learners

in their learning emanate from the way I teach them, which in turn is a result of the way I was taught. Working with my critical friends during the self-study taught me to respect other people's ideas and opinions in order to gain new perspectives on my teaching practice. At first, I thought they were cross-examining my teaching methods, but eventually, I learnt to appreciate our discussions because they helped identify things I was not able to see before.

Initially, I did not have metaphor drawings, but when I looked at my Chapter Five, I realized that I needed to them to get a deeper understanding of my practice. Self-study allowed me an opportunity to play around with different sources that I thought would work best. At the beginning, it was not easy to reflect on myself when I knew I was confronted with things which were not easy to rid myself of, like my position in my classroom. I really had to work hard seeing myself as part of the classroom, not just teaching in the form of giving instruction, but also learning new things. Self-study forced me to look at my practice and my understanding of the roles of people in ensuring things happen.

Going back and forth in reflecting on every activity of my learning was a challenging task. Since, this was a self-study, I had to keep bringing the study back to myself as my practice was under scrutiny. When I think about these experiences I feel that if I had studied self-study as a research methodology and gained reasonable background, I would have done things differently and much better in practice.

Self-study allows a person to grow professionally; however, it requires one to be flexible and be willing to learn from others and from one's own introspection. For someone who also wishes to conduct a self-study research, I recommend they be observant, pay attention to even minute objects or people around them and have a critical mind that interrogates everything about their teaching practice. I would also advise them to have a listening ear that is able to identify and embrace constructive criticism for the sake of learning and professional development.

5.5. My conceptual and theoretical learning

This personal history self-study used the sociocultural theory and its two components; *teacher learning and learners' learning*; to examine and organise my personal and professional learning. The theory assisted me in reinforcing my understanding of learners' learning (Vygotsky, 1997) and teacher learning (Kelly, 2006). The sociocultural theory was most pertinent for this study as I wanted to learn how I could improve teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English. My intention was to get an understanding of how learners learn a second

language and how I could learn from my lived experiences to enhance my teaching practice through teacher learning. From the study, I have learnt the importance of engaging with other people since teacher learning is a participatory process through which I could move from being a novice teacher to an expert teacher (Kelly, 2006). It is through the sociocultural perspective that I have learnt that my lived experiences of learning and teaching have been constructed through my social and cultural environment. This allowed me to view my learners' social and cultural contexts as valuable tools through which they can learn effectively.

Through the sociocultural perspective, I was able to identify significant themes, which I refer to as learnings (as discussed in Chapter Four). These themes allowed me to discover how my enactment of the intended curriculum facilitated my learning of how I could better understand and improve my professional practice.

5.6 My original contribution

The experiences encountered in this self-study research clarified that teaching learners in a language that is not their home language requires planning and thoughtfulness. Teachers need to be able to understand their learners, but most importantly themselves and their capabilities when it comes to learning an additional language. It is important that they work on themselves first before they attempt teaching the learners. This calls for teachers to lessen their expectations on the learners, not necessarily disregarding them, but allowing them time to digest and conceptualize what they are learning. Curriculum planners and designers should be cautious of learners' level of understanding of a new language as against the amount of content that needs to be covered. They should not burden learners with too much knowledge while they still need to learn the language of learning and teaching. Additionally, it is crucial that parental involvement in their children's learning be redefined, understood and appreciated.

5.7 Moving forward

One significant lesson learnt from this self-study research is that curriculum enactment is the foundation for all interaction that takes place in the classroom. Reflecting on the future self to understand the current self, I realise the importance of identifying and utilising a variety of teaching strategies that allow for effective learning regardless of the context learners find themselves in. I have learnt that the prescriptive nature of the curriculum does not stop one from adjusting teaching to suit the needs and the environment of learners to understand what is being taught in second language. In fact, I plan to avoid complaining about my learners'

environment as a reason for their failure to understand what I teach them. I would rather examine the way I teach and continue to improve my teaching.

5.8 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to give a review of this dissertation. Although this study is a self-study and deals with an individual, it highlights how learners experience and respond to learning in second language. The study also draws attention to how teachers can engage in teacher learning with the purpose of developing their practice, which could be facilitated through learners' reflections on their teaching. It also emphasises the importance of parental involvement in children's learning. Improving one's professional practice requires reflection and self-motivation for involvement in children's education to learn from the past and present in order to improve future practice. In conclusion, I would like to articulate that the context in which our learners find themselves in does not have to be the barrier to their learning. From this self-study research, I have learnt that it is very important to learn who you are as a teacher (teacher learning) before observing the learners' inability to learn.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Learner participant Consent form



Hello grade 4. I am doing research:



Enriching my teaching of grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners in English.



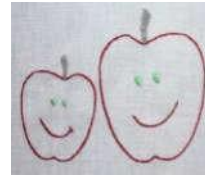
I want you to be part of my study.



In my study I want you to write in your journals and tell me how our lessons went, how I taught you and how you felt about my teaching. I would like you to present to me your work.



I will also want you to work in groups to make a collage where you will say what you want us to change.



You will cut and paste pictures from magazines and newspapers to make a collage.



I will audio record your collage presentation.

I will also ask you to present your collage presentation.



I will also audio record my six- teaching lesson with you.



Are you happy or unhappy to be part of my study?

Appendix B: Gatekeeper's Letter of Permission to Conduct Research

P. O. Box 10855

EMPANGENI

3880

24 July 2017

The Principal

..... Primary School

P. O. Box

EMPANGENI RAIL

3910

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Title of the study: Enriching my teaching in English First Additional Language to Grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners. A teacher's self-study.

The purpose of this study is to explore how I can develop my teaching of all subjects in English First Additional Language to Grade four IsiZulu speaking learners. My aim is to enhance my teaching practice.

I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and this research forms part of my Masters of Education (M.Ed.) study. The findings of the study will be used in my M.Ed. thesis and any related publications and presentations.

This study is supervised by Dr. Lungile Masinga who is a lecturer at the school of Education, UKZN. She can be contacted telephonically at 031- 260 3439 or Masingal@ukzn.ac.za for further information.

In this study, I will be the principal participant. I will use my daily teaching activities to gather information from Grade 4 A learners. I will use memory work self-study, collective self-study and art-based self-study methods. I will use learners' collage presentations which will be audio recorded. Parents' or guardians' permission will be requested for their children's or wards' participation in the study.

If I gain informed consent from participant's parents or guardians, I will use this data in a way that respects their dignity and privacy. Copies of their contributions will be securely stored and discarded if no longer required for research purposes. Their names or any information that might identify them or the school will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study. They will be informed that they have no binding commitment to the study and may withdraw their consent; they will not be prejudiced in any way.

There are no direct benefits to the participants in the study. However, I hope that this study will make valuable contribution to the teaching of Grade four IsiZulu speaking learners in English First Additional Language.

I hereby request a written letter of permission from you to conduct the research at school.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithfully

Miss R. Khanyile

Cell: 072 856 3204

Appendix C: Parent/Guardian Consent Letter

P.O. Box 10855

Empangeni

3880

24 July 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian

CONSENT LETTER TO PARENTS

Title of the study: Enriching my teaching in English First Additional Language to Grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners. A teacher's self-study.

The purpose of conducting this study is to explore what I can learn from my personal history self-study about teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English and how I can improve my teaching practice.

This study is supervised by Dr Lungile Masinga who is a lecturer at the School of Education, UKZN. She can be contacted telephonically at 031- 2603439 or Masingal@ukzn.ac.za for further information.

The information will be generated through learner journal and learners' written work. I will use hardcopies of learners' written work and journal entries they will keep during the research period. I therefore request your permission to refer to your child's contribution when I generate data for this research.

I will only use your child's work if you give me your consent. It will be used in a way that respects your child's dignity and privacy. Hard copies and journal entries of learners' work will be safely stored and discarded if no longer required for research purposes. You child's name

or any information that might identify him or her will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study.

There are no direct benefits to your child from participating in this research. I hope this study will make valuable contribution to the teaching of IsiZulu speaking learners in English. I also wish to inform you that you do not have a legal obligation to your child participating in the study. You may withdraw your child at any point and that will not affect or put your child at a disadvantage.

I hope my request will be considered positively.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

R. Khanyile

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT TO USE CHILD'S CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH

Title of the study: Enriching my teaching in English First Additional Language to Grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners. A teacher's self-study.

I, hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and do give my consent for my child to participate in the research that will be conducted in grade 4 class.

I also understand that my child can withdraw from the study with or without my permission and there won't be any negative or undesirable consequences to him/her.

Choose one by writing **YES** in the space provided:

I consent to the data collection activities of my child's (work) hard copies and journal entries
.....

Or **NO**

I do not consent to the data collection activities of my child's (work) hard copies and journal entries
.....
.....

Signature of parent/Guardian

Date

Appendix D: Consent Letter to Critical Friends

P. O. Box 10855

Empangeni

3880

24 July 2017

Dear Critical friend

CONSENT LETTER TO CRITICAL FRIENDS

Title of the study: Enriching my teaching in English First Additional Language to Grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners. A teacher's self-study.

The purpose of conducting this study is to explore what I can learn from my personal history self-study about teaching IsiZulu speaking learners in English and how I can improve my teaching practice.

This study is supervised by Dr Lungile Masinga who is a lecturer at the School of Education, UKZN. She can be contacted telephonically at 031- 2603439 or Masingal@ukzn.ac.za for further information.

In this study it will be useful to record our group class discussions as a method for data collection. I will request your additional time for us to meet to discuss our development memories. Other contributions will be from our meetings during our group supervision meetings. I hereby request your permission to use your valuable contributions during our critical friends' meetings and to avail yourself for further meeting discussions. You will be notified in advance with the date and time for our meetings.

If I receive your consent, I will use your contribution in a manner that respects your dignity and privacy. Your voice recordings and my notes of our discussions will be securely stored and discarded if no longer in use for my research purposes. You will not be identified even the name of your school will not be used in any presentation or publications that might result out of this study.

There are no direct benefits to you from taking part in this study and there are no legal obligations to the study, meaning you may withdraw at any time. There won't be any negative consequences or be prejudiced as a result of a consent withdrawal.

For further information on research participants' rights you can contact Ms Phume Ximba at UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587.

Yours sincerely

R. Khanyile

Contact No. 072 856 3204

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title of the study: Enriching my teaching in English First Additional Language to Grade 4 IsiZulu speaking learners. A teacher’s self-study.

I, hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and the nature of the study.

I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time from the study without any negative consequences to myself.

Choose one of the following: **YES**

I consent to the data collection activities by attending meeting discussions and the use of my viewpoints and ideas in the study.....

Or **NO**

I do not consent to the data collection activities by attending meeting discussions and the use of my view points and ideas in the study.....

.....

.....

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Appendix E: Request For Permission to Conduct Research Letter (IsiZulu)

P.O. Box 10855

Empangeni

3880

24 Julayi 2017

Mzali/ Mbheki womntwana

ISICELO SEMVUME YOKUSEBENZISA IMIPHUMELA YOCWANINGO OLWENZIWE KUMNTWANA WAKHO.

Isihlokosocwaningo: Ngingayithuthukisa kanjani indlela yokufundisa abafundi bebanga lesine abakhuluma isiZulu izifundo zabo ngolimi lwesiNgisi?

Inhloso yokwenza ucwaningo ukuthola izindlela zokwenza abafundi bebanga lesine bakwazi ukuqonda okufundwa ngesiNgisi kube kungelona ulimi abalukhuluma emakhaya.

Injongo yami ukuthola izindlela ezizokwenza abatwana bebanga lesine bakuthokozele futhi kubasebenzele ukufunda izifundo zabo ngesiNgisi.

Lolucwaningo lwengamelwe nguDr. Lungile Masinga ongumfundisi ophikweni lwezeMfundo eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu- Natali. Angatholakala ocwengweni kulenombolo: 031- 2603439 noma kuMasingal@ukzn.ac.za uma udinga ulwazi oluthe xaxa.

Ulwazi luzoqoqwa ngomsebenzi owenziwa wuthisha nabantwana ekilasini. Ngizosebenzisa lokhu abantwana abakubhale ezincwadini zabo zomsebenzi wasekilasini nakumabhukwana (amajenali) abo ngesikhathi socwaningo. Yingakho ngicela imvume yakho ukuthi ngikusebenzise lokhu engikuthole kumntwana wakho. Ngizowusebenzisa umsebenzi wengane yakho kuphela uma ungivumela. Lokhu kuzokwenziwa ngendlela ehlonipha isithunzi nemfihlo yengane yakho. Okubhaliwe emaphepheni nasebhukwini eliyijenali yomntwana kuzogcinwa ngendlela ephiphile kuze kulahlwe uma kungasadingeki ocwaningweni. Igama lengane yakho neminingwane engayenza ibonakale ngeke kusetshenziswe emibhalweni ezovela ocwaningweni.

Akukho okuyinzuzo ngqo okuyo lethwa yilolucwaningo enganeni yakho. Ngithemba ukuthi lolucwaningo luyoba nomthelela omuhle ekufundeni izifundo ngolimi lwesiNgisi ebangeni lesine. Ngifisa nokukwazisa ukuthi akukho mgomo obophezela ingane yakho ukuthi ibambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo. Ungakwazi ukuyiyekisa ingane yakho noma yingasiphi isikhathi, lokho ngeke kwaba nawo umphumela ongemuhle enganeni yakho.

Ngithemba ukuthi isicelo sami sizokwamukeleka.

Ngiyabonga.

Ozithobayo

Miss R. Khanyile

ISICELO SEMVUME YOKUSEBENZISA OKUTHOLAKALE ENGANENI YAKHO

Isihloko socwaningo: Ngingayithuthukisa kanjani indlela yokufundisa abafundi bebanga lesine abakhuluma IsiZulu izifundo zabo ngolimi lwesiNgisi?

Mina ngiyafakazisa ukuthi ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe yilenwadi nokuthi ngiyavuma ukuthi ingane yami ibambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo oluzokwenziwa ngesikhathi sokufunda izifundo ezahlukene ekilasini.

Ngiyaqonda futhi ukuthi ingane yami ingayeka noma yinini kulolucwaningo ngiyivumelile noma ngingayivumelanga ukuyeka, nokuthi lokho ngeke kwaba nomphumela ongemuhle kuyona ingane.

Khetha okukodwa ngokubhala ukuthi **YEBO** esikhaleni osinikiwe.

Ngiyavumelana nokuqoqwa kolwazi okuzokwenziwa emsebenzini wengane yami nasebhukwini eliyijenali yayo.

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Noma **QHA**

Angivumelani nokuqoqwa kolwazi okuzokwenziwa emsebenzini wengane yami nasebhukwini eliyijenali yayo.

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Ukusayina

Usuku