



**EXPLORING LEARNING FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: STORIES
OF LIVED EXPERIENCES OF AN ECONOMICS TEACHER IN A
RURAL SETTING**

SIBONGILE BEAUTY SIDLENI MHLONGO

209539625

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DECLARATION

I, Sibongile Beauty Sidleni Mhlongo declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain any other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed:



Date: 20 February 2024

Mhlongo Sibongile B.S

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation is submitted with/without my approval

.....
Professor Daisy Pillay

.....
Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother Dudu Ntombikayise Ntuli who instilled in me the values of respect, love, humanity and success in everything I do in life

I also dedicate this work to all my children S'nakho, Ngcweti, Zi, King & Bunny. When you see this work, know that I did it for you to do better than me in your future endeavours

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Lastly, I want to thank myself for the effort I have shown to become a better person.

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an understanding of my personal and professional development as an Economics teacher in a rural setting. I adopted a self-study methodology with narrative inquiry in this study to examine my lived experiences therefore I am the main participant in this study. I made use of storytelling to tell about my lived personal and professional experiences that contributed to shaping and moulding me into the teacher that I have become. This study was framed by the theories of Evans (2014) and Reid (2007) who concentrate on teacher formal and informal learning. The purpose of this study was to understand how my learning happened as a teacher in a rural setting. In addition, this study focused on the movement of unqualified teachers to qualified teachers. As the researcher and the researched in this study, my curiosity was to explore how my personal and professional learning contributed to my professional growth as an underqualified teacher in an under-resourced school. By using personal narrative inquiry, I was able to reflect on the personal and professional events that happened in my childhood and professional life. Through this study, I have discovered the meaningful experiences that I had never shared with anyone previously and I was able to reveal the factors that contributed to my professional development and more importantly, I identified my weaknesses and strengths. I have gained the strength to continue with my professional growth and to further my studies in Economics. I have discovered that there is a link between planned and unplanned learning which enhance teacher professional growth. The findings reveal that I acquired a deeper understanding of the self through memorising, retelling and reflecting on my lived personal and professional experiences. Through sharing my lived experiences, I was able to reinvent myself. Through this study I have learned that sharing of stories of lived experiences, contribute positively to personal and professional growth.

Key words

Narrative inquiry, teacher learning, rurality, personal experiences, professional experiences

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ITE	Initial Teacher Education
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
HEI	Higher Education Institution
B COMM	Bachelor of Commerce
FET	Further Education and Training
NCS	National Curriculum Statements
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
DSG	Development Support Group
SDT	Staff Development Team
HOD	Head of Department
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
REQV	Required National Qualification Value
SDA	Skills Development Act
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
SADTU	South African Democratic Teacher's Union
COP	Community of Practice
PLN	Personal Learning Network
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
TDS	Teacher Development Studies

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Learning for professional growth of teachers involves the continuous process of acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitudes that will result in effective classroom teaching. It is critically important for teachers to keep abreast of current pedagogical practices, teaching strategies and subject content knowledge so that they can grow professionally. Learning for the professional growth of teachers is a multifaceted process that involves a commitment to lifelong learning, self-reflection, collaboration, and staying abreast of advancements in education. It ultimately contributes to improved teaching practices and enhances the overall quality of education for classroom teaching. Given the dynamic nature of education, teachers must be adaptable and open to change. Professional growth involves developing the ability to embrace new teaching methodologies, curricular changes, and educational policies. Whilst, there are a number of ways of exploring teacher learning for professional growth, in this research study, stories will be used as a tool to explore teacher learning for professional growth because it is a powerful and engaging approach.

1.2 Background of the study

On 19 January 2023, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga provided the breakdown of the number of educators who are not academically and professionally qualified during the Release of the 2022 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination Results (Department of Basic Education(DBE), 2023). The minister explained that, in South Africa, to be regarded as a qualified teacher, a teacher must possess a matriculation certificate along with a three-year professional qualification and be confident about subject matter and methodology. According to the report, Minister Motshekga differentiated between underqualified teachers and unqualified teachers who serve as teachers in South African schools. Under-qualified teachers are those who are professionally qualified both in terms of subject matter and methodology but do not possess the required matriculation certificate plus the three-year professional training requirement while unqualified teachers are those individuals who have neither academic nor professional qualifications but have a matriculation certificate. While the minister highlighted in her report, that the number of underqualified teachers employed by the Department of Basic Education is decreasing, the table below provides a summary of the

number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers that are employed in each province in South Africa as of December 2021 (DBE, 2023).

Table 1.1 Unqualified and under-qualified teachers per province in South Africa

PROVINCE	UNQUALIFIED	UNDER-QUALIFIED	TOTAL
Eastern Cape	29	132	161
Free State	44	40	84
Gauteng	8	62	70
Kwazulu-Natal	123	15	138
Limpopo	1	17	18
Mpumalanga	56	32	88
North West	3	84	87
Northern Cape	308	10	318
Western Cape	456	155	611
TOTAL	1028	547	1575

The numbers indicated in the table above, are alarming, and researchers are compelled to consider the question: *What do underqualified and unqualified teachers do to further their professional learning and develop a better understanding of their subject knowledge and qualifications?*

In this regard, research undertaken by a leading South African think tank, the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), highlighted, that the quality of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes and teachers, is central to the educational project for schools (Bernstein, 2015). They also stressed the importance and need for South African teachers to develop their subject content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge for negotiating the everyday complexities of schooling and the diversity of learners inhabiting school classrooms. While the report attributes teachers' lack of essential knowledge and skills, to inadequate preservice teacher training and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes at higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa, this study is about becoming a professional teacher as an ongoing, life-long learning process (Fraser et al., 2007). Starting from the premise that the path of learning to teach and becoming a professional teacher, are varied for individuals who choose to move into teaching in schools, this chapter problematises the linear trajectory from university preservice programs to becoming a professional teacher with expertise for teaching in particular school phases and subject specialisations.

This study centres on the educational journey of an Economics teacher, referred to as Sidleni for anonymity. Despite having an underqualified status as a teacher, she holds a Bachelor of Commerce (B Com) Accounting degree from a South African university. Notwithstanding her academic background, she chose to transition into teaching in a school. Currently, she teaches Economics as an underqualified teacher, at a rural school within the Mkhambathi Circuit in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In this particular personal narrative inquiry study, Sidleni serves a dual role as both the researcher and the researched. To navigate these dual responsibilities, she employs the use of first and third-person genres to delineate her role as a researcher and a participant.

Sidleni will be using stories to undertake a deep exploration of her past and present experiences, which intricately intertwine to shape her personal and professional learning journey to become a qualified teacher. The overarching goal of this study was to explore Sidleni's professional practice with the ultimate purpose of improving her proficiency as a subject teacher of Economics for which she does not have any formal teaching qualification. Economics as a subject in the FET¹ Phase, is a stand-alone subject under the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Umalusi. The Umalusi Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, sets and monitors standards for general and further education and training in South Africa in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008, as amended, and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act 58 of 2001, as amended (National Government of South Africa, 2012-2024). The subject is introduced in the FET phase but the introduction to Economics and the basic knowledge in Economics is introduced in the senior phase (grades 7-9), in a subject called Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). The word Economics is derived from the Greek word 'Oikonomia' which means management of household affairs (Cartledge, 2015). The subject Economics, studies human behaviour and individual's daily choices to satisfy their unlimited needs and wants with limited resources (Alhadeff, 2022).

¹ The Department of Basic Education (DBE) officially groups grades into two "bands" called General Education and Training (GET), which includes Grade R (South Africa's equivalent of Kindergarten) plus Grades 1 to 9, and Further Education and Training (FET), which includes Grades 10 to 12 as well as non-higher education vocational training facilities (<https://www.gov.za/about-sa/south-africa-glance>).

1.3 Focus of the study

This study will therefore focus on an exploration into Sidleni's personal and professional development through the lens of stories about her lived experiences. This study will delve into her individual learning journey as an underqualified teacher, teaching Economics in a rural school while considering the challenges, triumphs, and transformative moments that have shaped her professional development

1.4 Rationale for the study

To observe, imagine and stir her innermost thoughts, she provided a visual representation in Figure 1.1, in the form of a memory drawing of her moving into the school as an unqualified teacher of Economics.



Figure 1.1 Memory drawing of Sidleni, moving into the school as an unqualified teacher of Economics.

The reflection below was evoked by this memory drawing.

After residing in a township for four years, I found myself entering an environment that stirred up mixed emotions and anxiety due to unfamiliar surroundings. I vividly recall the first day I stepped into a school surrounded by scattered settlements. Lacking the necessary professional

qualifications and knowledge to teach high school learners, I was filled with anxiety and apprehension as well as being uncertain about the decision to transition into teaching. As an unqualified teacher in 2007, I entered the teaching profession during the time when there was a shortage of educators so my appointment to the school was hurried. I had no time to plan or familiarise myself with teaching methodologies. The reality of teaching hit me on the very first day in a classroom. Despite my lack of formal qualifications, I achieved commendable results, with my learners consistently scoring above 75% in the grade 12 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. After four years of teaching without a formal teacher qualification, I decided to pursue a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Based on my academic record, I was advised to specialise in Accounting, Business Economics and Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) but not Economics, for the PGCE, which I did and subsequently qualified as a teacher, securing a permanent position. Despite my lack of a qualification in Economics, I continued teaching Economics, although being technically underqualified for the subject. I consistently produced strong grade 12 results, leading to recognition in the district and opportunities to participate in Economics-related activities at the cluster, district, and provincial levels. As an active lead teacher in Economics, I moved to another school for the same subject and gained the reputation as an expert in the field. Despite my achievements, I faced challenges when applying to mark grade 12 NCS examinations in Economics because of being considered underqualified for the role. Nevertheless, I received certificates of recognition in various activities and ceremonies within the cluster and district programs.

Figure 1.2 are photographs of Sidleni receiving her certificates for teaching excellence in Economics



Figure 1.2 Photographs of Sidleni receiving her award for teaching excellence in Economics

This personal experience narrative, highlighted a pervasive issue in rural schools which is the challenge of securing highly qualified teachers for learners in these remote areas (Carver et al., 2022). The difficulties in recruiting and retaining well-qualified educators becomes apparent when considering the unique circumstances of rural schools (Carver et al., 2022). These institutions often grapple with limited resources, isolation, and a dearth of amenities, making them less appealing to highly qualified teachers who may opt for urban or more well-equipped educational environments. As a result, teachers are sometimes assigned to teach subjects that they are not trained for (Ingersori, 2005). This statement highlights Sidleni's situation and provides the rationale for her embarking on this study, to make her situation known, about how she ended up teaching in a rural school as an underqualified Economics teacher, teaching Economics in the crucial FET phase.

Examining the narrative of Sidleni's educational journey, particularly the transition from an unqualified Economics teacher to an underqualified one, employed in an economically

disadvantaged rural school, serves as the central focus of this research endeavour. The primary objective was to gain insights into her personal transformation and professional development as an Economics teacher. The study aims to scrutinise the interplay of past and present critical experiences that may have shaped Sidleni's personal and professional learning journey. This exploration ultimately seeks to enhance the understanding of the challenges and opportunities she negotiated as a practicing Economics teacher, dedicated to her professional learning and the development of new ideas for learning to teach Economics and evolve as a subject specialist in a secondary school situated in rural KZN, despite being categorised as underqualified.

1.5 Why self-study?

Since this study is positioned within a self-study genre using personal narrative inquiry, Sidleni specifically chose to study her life as an Economics teacher, teaching in a rural setting. Economics, as her teaching subject, which is interwoven with her personal and professional development as a subject teacher because ever since she began teaching, she has been teaching Economics. She taught Economics initially as an unqualified teacher until she qualified as a teacher but she is currently teaching Economics as an under-qualified subject teacher because Economics was not one of her teaching specialisations in her teacher education qualification. Nevertheless, both as an unqualified and underqualified teacher, she has maintained the standard of producing good quality results and she is known as one of the expert teachers of Economics within her cluster², circuit and the district. She has received awards for teaching excellence and became a lead teacher in her school, her cluster, and in programmes organised by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) which take the form of camps for learners from all districts. Henceforth, in this study, Sidleni wanted to find out how learning happened for her as an Economics teacher, teaching in a rural setting.

1.6 Teacher learning for professional growth

Learning for professional growth is a crucial aspect of teachers' career development. It allows teachers to stay relevant in their subject fields, adapt to changes, and acquire new skills that can enhance their performance and open up new opportunities. Teachers come out of teacher education programmes with a qualification but knowing little about the craft of teaching (Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998). Learning to teach is a complex process and takes place

² A cluster would define a group of teachers from a set of schools in a geographical area called a circuit (DBE, 2011).

over a teacher's professional lifetime (Beynon, Geddis, & Onslow, 2001). This research states that teachers begin their teaching careers with a certain degree of knowledge, competence and skills for the classroom and they extend their competencies and teaching skills during their years of classroom practice. Over time, teachers acquire both experience and expertise (Berliner, 1987). They continually learn new strategies which they add to their collection of classroom behaviours. Sometimes, they make substantial pedagogical adaptations over time and sometimes they do not. Hargreaves (1992) said that a teacher's classroom learning is closely related to their professional growth and the way they develop as professionals and as a person.

Research suggests that professional learning of teachers will be successful if it takes place as close to the teacher's work environment because this allows for reflection and feedback on their teaching (Geiger et al., 2015; Fullan, 2020; Lovitt & Clarke, 1988). Education scholars for example Boyle et al. (2004) and Fullan (2020), are of the view that once-off professional learning experiences do not have the capacity to bring about effective changes in teachers' learning that have long-lasting effects on their practice.

The process of becoming more knowledgeable about teaching and participating more in classroom instruction is known as teacher learning (Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020). Over the years, forums and conversations in education have increasingly focused on teacher learning (Keay, Carse & Jess, 2019). Teacher learning happens when teachers are curious and willing to learn in order to increase their level of content acquisition. Teacher learning is the construction of knowledge through involvement in educational activities and is the process by which teachers advance from beginner to experienced teachers (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2022).

1.7 Teacher professional learning in South Africa

Although more resources are being provided for teachers' professional development, the results are not as positive as anticipated (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011); Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2011). The reasons for this are very complex, "encompassing the social and material conditions in which teachers work, the ongoing legacy of apartheid in the form of disorganized and dysfunctional schools and the radical nature of the recent curriculum reforms" (Bertram, 2011, p. 3). Additionally, the teacher's lack of commitment is another issue regarding their professional development. Teachers do not take ownership of their own professional growth because they think the DBE should handle it

(Bergmark, 2023). Unfortunately, the teachers never consider that if their development goals and the department's goals are mutually beneficial, both sides may benefit. Also, the teachers' scant subject content expertise has been cited as one of the mitigating factors (DoE, 2007) that Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) has not been able to completely address. This has the consequences of poor learner performance at the end of assessment (Charles & Mkulu, 2020).

In fact, many teacher development initiatives, do not lead to teacher learning and improved practice, because they do not have, as their explicit purpose, the development of the professional practice of organising systematic learning. Also, they are not informed by an understanding of what knowledge teachers require and how they might best acquire this knowledge (Bertram, 2011, p. 5-6). The fact that some teachers do not appear troubled by the disconnect between the majority of professional development interventions and initiatives and what they wish to learn to help them do, to enhance their current skills, further exacerbates the issue. In addition, there are differences in the initial professional development needs of practicing teachers, particularly in terms of confidence and competence in dealing with curricular changes (Ketelhut et al., 2020). This is taking place as updated and new policies are released. Teachers would even go so far as to delegate the DBE with the task of overseeing their professional development rather than taking on the role that they are also expected to play.

While studies on teacher professional learning focus on the life-long learning of teachers and what they do to learn and engage in their continuing professional development, in this study, Sidleni was guided by Korthagen (2017) who reminded her, that “professional learning takes place at various levels” (2017, p. 387). Korthagen (2017) argues that the assumption that teacher behaviour is guided by thinking alone, is incorrect. He writes that teacher behaviour is also influenced by the teacher's emotions and motivation as the personality of the teacher is central to meaningful teacher learning.

By focusing on teachers' lived educational experiences of learning, this study is not only concerned with the conscious behaviour and the cognitive, rather it is also brings to the surface, the teachers' feelings and emotions which is connected to teacher learning and their new ideas. This alternate perspective highlights that teacher learning is not a simple, linear process of learning new concepts and putting these into practice in the classroom as we know professional

development to be, but rather, the focus on teachers' stories of learning and recalling of past and present experiences, serve to highlight that effective teacher learning links teachers' personal strengths and core qualities to their teaching practice. Teacher learning is multi-dimensional, as the sources of behaviour (what teacher's do and why) can be traced to deeper levels of their values, beliefs, and their behaviour. Teacher learning happens when teachers engage in self-reflection, inquiry-based learning and also through collaboration in communities of practice which are grounded in everyday practices.

1.8 Using stories to explore teacher learning

Pinnegar, Pinnegar & Lay (2018) posit that the knowledge that teachers bring to the classroom context is practical knowledge that is grounded in their stories about their lives. Therefore, considering their experiences which is represented by their stories, leads to more creative ways of learning to teach because the story has the potential to bring together the different characters in the instructional process such as other teachers, learners, principals, parents and the community (Polkinghorne, 1988). This makes the narrative more attractive as it represents knowing and meaning in the interactions between people and practice. Because of these characteristics, story not only builds on but also disrupts the teachers' knowledge and causes them to reimagine and rethink their ways of teaching.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that when we tell our stories, we relive the experience and from this experience we reshape our story and retell them. Retelling stories opens space for considering and reconsidering and viewing elements from different perspectives and this brings about shifts in our knowing and meaning, that we hold of our teaching and our learning. We explore what we know about teaching from stories we have told and the narrative understandings that emerged as we examined these stories. Through stories, we tell about teaching, teachers and their development and how these explorations provide narrative insights and guide us in developing as stronger teachers.

Stories build on teachers' knowledge as well as interrupt preconceptions and beliefs about teaching (Pinnegar, Pinnegar & Lay (2018). Using stories to explore teacher learning is not only a method for self-reflection but also a means of fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the educational community. It allows for a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in teaching and professional development. Using stories as a tool

to explore teacher learning can be a powerful and effective approach. Stories have the ability to convey experiences, emotions, and complexities that may not be easily captured through traditional methods. Hence, in this study Sidleni chose to use stories to explore her teaching as an underqualified teacher of the subject Economics, teaching in a rural school.

1.9 Introduction to the conceptual framework

Concepts that offer a deeper understanding of the topic under study, form the conceptual framework (Varpio et al., 2020). Apart from helping to clarify the research problem and the purpose of the research study, the conceptual framework helps to refine the research questions and guides the data gathering, analyses and interpretation (Singh, 2023). A theoretical framework is a set of ideas and assumptions that can help to guide and structure research and analysis. Consequently, this research study utilises two conceptual frameworks (Evans 2014; Reid 2007). Both these theorists speak about professional development. Evans (2014) highlights the *what* of teacher learning: highlighting three dimensions of teacher learning, namely attitudinal, behavioural and intellectual. Reid (2007) explains the four quadrants of teacher learning and highlights the spheres of *where* teacher learning happens in continuing professional development (formal/informal; planned and unplanned). In bringing these two perspectives to frame this study, I can study what experiences shape the incentives for the kinds of changes in individuals' personal and professional growth and; where the individual acquires and accesses new ideas for ongoing professional learning in negotiating their everyday lives as teachers.

Teacher learning is a collective activity that happens intentionally or unintentionally and is a central part of our daily lives (Evans 2014). Drawing from teaching experiences, one meets different groups of people in the professional journeys of teaching. This study also highlighted how a community of practice of teachers enhances professional growth. Moreover, Sidleni used the theories of Evans (2014) for this study as her frame. Evans (2014, p. 186) focuses on how professional learning happens and defines professional development as “the enhancement of individuals' professionalism, resulting from their acquisitions, through a consciously or unconsciously applied mental internalization process, of professional work-related knowledge.” Evans (2014), further adds that professional development increases understanding, attitudes, and skills. In addition, professional growth competencies that, on the grounds of what are consciously or unconsciously considered to be their superiority, displace(s)

and replace(s) previously-held professional work-related knowledge and/or understanding, attitudes, skills and/or competences.

By acknowledging the features that may collectively function in diverse ways under various conditions in various contexts, we must raise our fundamental expectations for the characteristics of professional growth (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). As a result, it is important to understand the kind of professional development activities that are most likely to enhance teacher learning because these activities vary, depending on the particular teacher and the school system in which they work (Osman & Warner, 2020). The teachers' learning orientations is the second mechanism that affects teacher learning. The teachers' prior behaviours and beliefs, as well as their level of knowledge and competency, have an impact on their learners' learning (Opfer and Pedder (2011). Additionally, what is important is the knowledge that teachers acquire during their teacher training (Wolff, Jarodzka, & Boshuizen, 2021). Sidleni is going to use both theorists to guide and analyse the study. She will be using Evans (2014) and Reid (2007) her research questions.

1.10 Methodology

In this study, Sidleni adopted a narrative inquiry approach to re-examine her everyday lived experiences. Stories are used to describe human action in narrative inquiry, a subtype of a qualitative research design (Mertova & Webster, 2019). Self-narrative is a technique for understanding one's own work. The technique of using storytelling to acquire data for research purposes is known as narrative inquiry. The researcher documents their experiences in writing. Self-narrative is used to understand oneself because every educator has a tale to tell. This study her professional development. The self-professional journey includes narrative inquiry, a type of reflective research. Moreover, critical memories that come from the experiential journey, provide significant insight for narrative inquiry (Mertova & Webster, 2019).

Sidleni was inspired to share her unique experiences and struggles with the process of teaching and learning after reflecting on her own teaching journey. Personal narrative inquiry is a suitable methodology for this study of the self in order to share teaching journey experiences and obstacles. By pursuing their unique vision, people make sense of the world. Exploring and conceptualising human experiences as they are expressed in language, is the goal of narrative

inquiry. Another goal of narrative inquiry, is to uncover the complex meanings that individuals give to their experiences.

1.11 Research questions

The following research questions were created:

1. What are the stories of an unqualified teacher's lived learning experiences as an Economics teacher in a rural school?
2. What personal and professional experiences shaped what it means to be an unqualified Economics teacher in a rural school?
3. Where did learning happen to enable professional growth and change a teacher's everyday practices as an Economic teacher in a rural school

1.12 Overview of the thesis

The structure of this thesis, encompasses seven chapters, as outlined below.

Chapter One

Chapter one introduces the argument and provides a background for the study. Then the focus of the study is provided followed by the rationale for undertaking the research study. I then explain why I chose a self-study methodology with narrative inquiry. This is followed by the discussion of the concepts of teacher learning for professional growth and teacher professional learning in South Africa. Next, I provide a narrative on using stories to explore teacher learning. I introduce to conceptual framework and the methodology adopted in this study as well as the research questions that guided this study. I then provide an overview of the entire thesis and conclude this chapter with a summary of the chapter.

Chapter Two

I commence chapter two with an introduction to the chapter and explain that this chapter is divided into Section A and Section B. In the Section A, the literature review is presented under the headings: teacher learning and forms of teacher learning which is explained under examples of formal learning for teachers. Then informal learning for teachers discussed and examples of informal learning for teachers is described. This is followed by the context of formal teacher learning in South Africa as well as professional development of teachers in South Africa. Then, strategies for professional development for teachers and this is followed by teacher learning for professional growth and teacher learning and the rurality context.

Section B discusses the two theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study and the chapter concluded with a summary of the entire chapter.

Chapter Three

This chapter provides a description of the study context and the participants. Then the research design is outlined by describing the study approach, the research paradigm, the methodology, the research aims and objectives as well as the research questions. Then the data collection and analysis process are presented followed by the ethical issues of how trustworthiness was established in the study. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the positionality of the researcher and the limitations of the study. A summary of the entire chapter brings this chapter to a close.

Chapter Four

Chapter four presents how the data as collected through the personal narrative enquiry method. The single story presented in this chapter is based on the lived experiences of Sidleni. The data collected in this chapter seeks to respond to question one of this study.

Chapter Five

Chapter five responds to the second question of this study. The researcher describes what factors may have shaped her personal and profession growth.

Chapter Six

Chapter six responds to the last question of this study. This chapter seeks to understand the methods of learning that hampered professional growth of Sidleni as an Economics teacher in rural setting.

Chapter Seven

This chapter provide the summary of the key finds in chapter four, chapter five and chapter six.

1.13 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, Sidleni introduced the study and outlined the background of the study. She also presented the rationale for the study and situated the study in context, while providing the research questions. A brief outline of the methodological approach and conceptual framework was discussed. Sidleni concluded this chapter with an overview of thesis. The next chapter focuses on the literature review and theoretical framework relevant to this study

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a review of the relevant literature will be presented. The literature review provides the groundwork for the research by contributing to the scholarly conversations related to the research topic. It also identifies and reviews relevant studies, theories, and methodologies. by placing the study within the broader context of existing knowledge in the field of teacher learning and professional development. It also provides the conceptual tools for the analysis of data. For this study, the literature review has been delimited to an overview of studies conducted from an international and national perspective on teacher learning that contributes to their professional growth. This chapter consist of two sections namely Section A that will discuss the literature review and Section B that will explain the theoretical framework adopted in this study

Section B: Literature review

2.2 Teacher learning

Over the years, forums and conversations in education have increasingly focused on teacher learning (Keay, Carse & Jess, 2019). The process of getting more knowledgeable about teaching and participating more in classroom instruction is known as teacher learning (Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020). Teacher learning happens when teachers are curious and willing to learn in order to increase their level of content transformation. Teacher learning is the process by which teachers advance from beginner to experienced teachers (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2022). This study focuses on how teacher learning contributes to professional growth.

It is believed that teacher learning is a process of increased participation in the teaching profession and, through this participation, a process of learning about teaching takes place (Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020). Teachers learn in a variety of settings, including their classrooms, school communities, workshops for professional development, and formal communities of practice (Brinton et al., 2021). Teacher learning can happen in a short dialogue with a colleague, or after school when counselling learners (Evans, 2014). To comprehend teacher learning, we must study it within these numerous environments, considering both individual teachers and learners and the social systems in which they are participants.

Without experience or understanding of how to interpret practice, teacher learning cannot occur in classrooms (Milner, 2021). The settings for teacher learning in both universities, colleges and schools, offer many opportunities. When teachers debate subject content issues and their individual classroom experiences, knowledge-in-practice is created (Ndlalane, 2006). Teachers feel secure when they meet together with the aim of providing emotional support, fostering team spirit and working together to sustain their knowledge. Teacher learning happens when teachers share information and turn it to knowledge. Teacher learning promotes quality teachers from the knowledge gained through social communication. Teacher learning is transforming information into knowledge and teacher knowing (Evans 2014) and depends on the behaviour and curiosity of a teacher for professional development.

Teacher learning enhances teacher performance and may yield positive results. The process of teachers becoming experts is known as teacher learning (Bruggeman et al., 2021). Programmes for teacher learning and professional development start the learning processes that result in learning outcomes for teachers (Sancar, Atal & Deryakulu, 2021). Teacher learning promotes independence and informative teachers and the outcomes may be theorised as increased or changed knowledge and understandings for teachers. The government's initiative to improve teacher learning and provide ongoing professional development includes the establishment of teacher learning centres (Binmohsen & Abrahams, 2022).

In the context of South African education, changing the curriculum can be accomplished through teacher learning (Feldman, 2020). Learning is an ongoing process. Changes within the Department of Basic Education (DBE) can create problems or challenges for teachers. It is evident that implementing the curriculum is just one of many components of teachers' practices (Gale et al., 2020). Policies do not give teachers all the information they need. Teachers sometimes learn on their own, how to work through challenging curricula and how to develop assessments. Teachers are being asked to teach in ways that are unfamiliar to them, ways that they did not learn about in their practice and training. Teachers want to enjoy teaching, to have confidence and develop interests in their subject areas.

2.2.1 Forms of teacher learning

Teachers learn in different ways and through different processes and systems, by participating in formal and informal learning opportunities (Evans, 2014). There is a distinction between formal and informal learning but both forms of learning are relevant to teachers' learning.

2.2.1.1. Formal learning for teachers in South Africa

Formal learning for teachers takes place in an organised, controlled manner and is designed to enhance teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and competencies. One benefit of structured, direct instruction-based formal learning is that it requires learners to grasp predetermined results (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Formal learning comprises learning in courses, workshops, university and in other learning institutions. These events are planned and conducted by expert professionals over a stated period of time. One of the problems with teacher formal education includes the possibility of a mismatch between teacher supply and demand, leading to inadequate or inappropriate training. This is especially true of event delivery in formal education (Biggs, Tang & Kennedy, 2022). Formal learning in the form of workshops and courses do not always facilitate learning sufficiently for roles such as teaching Economics as an applied subject.

Formal learning is defined as learning that occurs in a structured setting with a predetermined curriculum and predetermined results (Muzam et al., 2023). The curriculum is delivered by experts, and there are deadlines by which the objectives must be accomplished. Vehicles for formal learning include schools, colleges, workshops, courses, and any other organisation that disseminates theoretical (knowledge-based) and practical skills (Wang et al., 2020).

The reality of the classroom experience cannot be replicated by formal learning platforms, and they show limitations in providing teachers with a comprehensive program for professional development (Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020). Teaching is a pragmatic profession; the workplace should be the place where teachers learn. Despite the importance and necessity of formal education prior to entering the field, teachers cannot be sustained or developed by this knowledge (Billett, 2020). Although formal learning has advantages, theory and practice may not always be linked by it. Consequently, one of the ways that teachers learn is through formal learning.

It is important to not undervalue formal learning because it serves an important purpose in the early stages of teacher learning. It is crucial for teachers to engage in a variety of learning activities, and they should complement one another (Bryson & Andres, 2020). Stanca, Dabija, and Păcurar (2022) suggest that theoretical orientation and knowledge values are used to convey formal knowledge, which is then supposed to be converted into classroom practice. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) also offers accreditation through formal education in the form of awards or certifications. This offers inexperienced teachers self-assurance that they can handle the challenges of the classroom.

However, through informal learning, teachers continue to learn in the setting of the classroom. It is not appropriate to prioritise formal teacher learning over informal teacher development. For learning to be sustained and effective, it must involve a variety of activities across several platforms since it is a complicated, lifelong process that is both accidental and intentional (Poquet & De Laat, 2021). In my opinion, formal learning imparts knowledge that will eventually serve as the basis for all informal learning and gives teachers the confidence they need to initially meet obstacles in the classroom.

The benefits of formal learning for teachers are:

- it requires teachers to grasp predetermined knowledge (Fisher & Frey, 2021)
- it provides teachers with opportunities for continuous professional development by allowing them to keep abreast on the current educational theories, teaching strategies and technology-mediated instruction.
- it provides teachers with specialist knowledge of specific subject areas thus broadening their expertise and teaching skills and making them more effective in the classroom
- it provides opportunities for teachers to collaborate, interact and form partnerships with other teachers in similar subject areas as well as education officials and specialists in their subject fields
- it provides for the sharing of education and teaching resources which otherwise may not be available to them
- it allows for self-reflection on assessments provided during the formal learning programs that help teachers gauge their own understanding of the materials

- it can include components that educate teachers on legal and ethical considerations in education. This knowledge is crucial for maintaining a professional and compliant teaching practice
- it helps teachers adapt to changes in the dynamic education landscape by providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to integrate new approaches into their teaching.
- it enhances their motivation and confidence levels which can have a positive impact on their classroom context and interactions with their learners, parents, and colleagues.
- It may offer certificates or degrees that can be important for career advancement, job opportunities, and increased recognition in the education arena

(Johnson & Majewska,2022).

While formal learning is critical for professional development, it can have some disadvantages for teachers. It's important to note that these disadvantages may differ because of different contexts and teacher preferences. Some of the disadvantages are:

- the curriculum is normally standardised with a one-size-fits-all approach thus leaving little room for flexibility and individual needs
- often, the learning is very theoretical and less practical thereby presenting problems for teachers to translate abstract knowledge into real-world classroom strategies
- teachers have very stringent and tight schedules and formal learning requires a significant amount of time away from the classroom. Teachers may feel overwhelmed and this can lead to teacher stress and burn-out
- not all formal professional development opportunities are free or subsidised by the department or school and teachers may not be able to afford these workshops or training
- while formal learning may provide teachers with valuable information, it does not always foster collaboration between teachers and the teacher may feel isolated
- formal learning programs may struggle to keep pace with rapid changes in pedagogy, technology, and other aspects of education, potentially providing outdated information.
- some formal learning programs place too much emphasis on assessment rather than the provision of practical skills or knowledge which can create pressure and may not always align with the needs of the teachers

(Johnson & Majewska, 2022)

2.2.1.2 Examples of formal learning for teachers

- Professional Development workshops
- Reflective practices
- Collaborative learning
- Conferences and seminars
- Online learning and resources
- Certification programs
- CPTD courses and workshops

(Jones & Dexter, 2014)

2.2.2 Informal learning for teachers

Informal learning for teachers refers to the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and insights through experiences and activities that are not explicitly structured or planned as part of a formal educational program. Unlike formal learning, which occurs in a structured and organised environment such as a classroom or workshop, informal learning often takes place in day-to-day interactions, discussions, self-directed exploration, and real-life experiences.

South Africa is characterised by language and cultural diversity. Teacher informal learning may be influenced by these diverse contexts, with teachers sharing insights and strategies that are relevant to their specific communities. Despite this diversity, in South Africa, much is being done to promote teacher professional development (Geldenhuys & Oosthuisen, 2015). Informal learning often complements formal training programs and workshops, allowing teachers to continually update their skills and knowledge. The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education in South Africa, is influencing informal learning among teachers. Online platforms, webinars, and social media could be avenues for teachers to informally exchange ideas, resources, and best practice. Teachers often engage in informal learning through communities of practice where they share experiences, strategies, and challenges. This collaborative approach can be invaluable in addressing specific local educational contexts and needs.

Informal learning can occur through the media. The interaction online with others on social media promotes communication and information sharing. Media such as newspapers, periodicals, television, radio, and social media such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Zoom App, and Edmodo are examples of informal learning methods (Kaur & Singh, 2021). Media and social media is receiving increasing attention. The use of media and social media involves experts (Yang, Holden & Carter, 2018). Also, teachers of nowadays are using social media as a method of sharing information. Using social media, different learning styles are encountered to assist teachers in disseminating information, policies, teaching materials, and circulars among distinct groups of teachers (Sinha, 2021). Social networks are now a common source of communication; even officials from the DBE utilise them to disseminate crucial information, including subject guides. Additionally, it has become customary for all educational events and groups to form online chat groups and talk about pertinent issues. Social media is an extremely effective tool for academic advancement and teacher learning as was evident during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. Social media and the media themselves are elements of informal education.

Informal learning among teachers, which refers to learning that occurs outside of formal school settings and traditional professional development programs, can offer several advantages such as:

- teachers learn at their pace and in their own time which benefits overburdened teachers with tight schedules and limited time.
- teachers are not away from their classrooms for lengthy periods of time
- the learning meets the individual needs of the teachers
- teachers can take control of their own learning by choosing how to learn and what resources they need
- it is more cost effective
- allows teachers more adaptability
- promotes collaboration between teachers because they are free to interact with each other on any platform they find most convenient at a time suitable for them
- promotes life-long learning as teachers can continually update their knowledge and competencies
- increases teacher motivation as teachers can decide what and how they learn
- promotes the learning of practical real-world classroom activities and skills

(Jones & Dexter, 2014)

Informal teacher learning is valuable in many ways, however it has certain limitations such as:

- without a structured curriculum with well-defined goals, teachers may miss out on essential knowledge and skills for effective classroom teaching
- teachers may not always have access to updated and relevant information which can lead to gaps in their knowledge base
- due to the lack of formal assessments, teachers may not be able to determine what they know or do not know
- teachers may become demotivated because of the lack of accountability
- informal teacher learning often happens individually and teachers may feel isolated
- time limitations and lack of accountability may lead to teachers not engaging in informal professional development learning activities
- can lead to stress and burn-out because the pressure to keep abreast with informal learning activities may become overwhelming

(Jones & Dexter, 2014)

2.2.2.1 Examples of informal for teachers

- Observations
- Peer interactions
- Reflective practice
- Professional development opportunities
- Online materials and resources
- Media and social media
- Experiential learning
- Study groups
- Mentorship programs

(Geldenhuys & Oosthuisen, 2015).

2.3 The context of teacher formal learning in South Africa

In South Africa, the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) created the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) (Budeli, 2021). According to IQMS Collective Agreement 8 of 2003, this system aimed to advance education and the development of teachers.

The idea was that The DSG (Developmental Support Group) and SDT (Staff Development Team) would carry out this development within the framework of the school. The school heads of department (HODs), SDT, DSG, or DBE will conduct this informal professional development. The IQMS was devised with the intention of enabling teachers to review their work and receive professional development from their DSG in a relaxed setting (Ndaba, Maphalala & Ngubane, 2023). Despite the system's best efforts, IQMS was fraught with difficulties (Yusuf, Masruhim & Sjamsir, 2019). Although IQMS purported to support teachers' informal learning on how to enhance their teaching, it did not live up to expectations (Rio & Newman, 2022). There are numerous explanations for why IQMS in schools failed (Kadenge, 2021).

The main cause of IQMS failure was a general lack of ability in the educational system (Shongwe, 2023). Moreover, Tachie and Mancotywa (2021) commented that IQMS was only an evaluation system and not a programme for development. This comment was supported by Perumalsamy et al. (2023) who also added that IQMS was only an evaluation system and not to develop teachers professionally. Furthermore, although IQMS purported to support teachers' informal learning on how to enhance their teaching, it does not seem to have lived up to this promise (Rio & Newman, 2022). This negative situation was further intensified by the cascading of information by teachers who were trained for a brief time and asked to promote the system to other teachers. Also, the reluctance to change on the part of teachers at the schools, further heightened the problems which seriously hampered teacher professional growth (Onyema, 2019). This was compounded by the lack of monitoring and development of the system, a sure sign of foreboding failure.

2.4 Professional development for teachers in South Africa

Even though more resources are being provided for teachers' professional development, the results are not as positive as one may have expected (Department of Basic Education & Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2011). "The reasons for this are very complex, encompassing the social and material conditions in which teachers work, the ongoing legacy of apartheid in the form of disorganised and dysfunctional schools and the radical nature of the recent curriculum reforms" (Bertram, 2011, p. 3).

Additionally, the teacher's lack of commitment to professional development adds to the problem. Research indicates that even in schools with few teaching and learning resources, learners can still succeed (Tamah, Triwidayati & Utami, 2020) but teachers do not take ownership of their own professional growth because they think the department should handle it (Bergmark, 2023). The teachers never consider that if their development goals and the department's goals are mutually beneficial, both sides may benefit. The teachers' scant content expertise has been cited as one of the contributing factors (DoE, 2007) that CPTD has not been able to completely address. This leads to learners' poor performance at the end of assessment (Charles & Mkulu, 2020).

Many teacher development initiatives, in fact, do not lead to teacher learning and improved practices, because they do not have, as their explicit purpose the development of professional practice of organising systematic learning, and because they are not informed by an understanding of what knowledge teachers require and how they might best acquire this (Bertram, 2011, p. 5-6).

The fact that some teachers do not appear troubled by the fact that the majority of interventions do not take into account what they need to help them to better their current skills, further exacerbates the issue. There are differences in the initial professional development needs of practicing teachers as a result of the distinct and unique methods, particularly in terms of confidence and competence in dealing with curricular changes (Ketelhut et al., 2020). This is taking place as updated and new policies are released. Teachers would even go so far as to delegate the DBE with the task of overseeing their professional development rather than taking on the role that they are also expected to play.

Two professional development strategies have been initiated by the DoE, according to data gathered through the Department of Basic Education quarterly reports, namely the qualifications upgrade, particularly for unqualified and underqualified teachers, and on-the-job training, which is provided through workshops, short courses, train-the-trainer programmes, the escalating framework, and lately, the teacher cluster systems, operating at the circuit level (DBE, 2011; Gumbo, 2020).

With the negative legacy of the apartheid era still being felt, the DBE is under pressure to create a performance management system to track the performance of teachers (Levy et al., 2019). The department undertook various projects, including the creation of a policy for teacher development, the creation of programmes for teacher development, and the implementation of the teacher development system (Department of Education, 2000). The Educator's Employment Act of 1998, which mandates the Minister to establish standards of conduct for educators in terms of which performance is to be evaluated, has, as a result, led to the design of a system that is guided by Schedule 1 (Mantshiu & Odeku, 2020; Shaukat & Chowdhury, 2020). This calls for the system to be focused on the professional growth of the individual by using strengths and seeking to do away with weaknesses. Due to competing priorities and the fact that teachers take a backseat and wait for the department to take the lead, none of these activities ever had the chance to accomplish what they were intended for therefore, the improvement of pedagogical content knowledge and the proper execution of curriculum policies will always be at the centre of the department's goals (Vinnervik, 2022).

It was determined that there was a pressing need to abandon summative authoritarian methods and create a system that encourages:

Teacher involvement and ownership through teacher organisations; A focus on the formative professional development of teachers (Department of Education, 1994, p. 106).

The goal was to include teachers in the decision-making process when determining what their developmental needs are. However, the difficulty with this strategy is that there are isolated areas of uncoordinated initiatives with little or no influence. Instead, unions continue to train (on short courses) their members without giving teachers a say in their development (Joshi, Vinay & Bhaskar, 2021).

Following this, there was a time in the year 2000, when the emphasis was on improving the credentials of teachers who already held Primary Teachers' Diplomas so that they could enrol for the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) and move up to the Required National Qualification Value (REQV 13) (Tiwari & Ilesanmi, 2020). A certain number of teachers were specifically targeted. This did not last long, though. The National Qualifications

Framework levels (NQF) and short courses became the main focus when the Skills Development Act of 1998 (SDA) was passed (Shibiti, 2022). However, with all these actions, workshops, the cascade model remained popular with the Department of Education as a professional development strategy. People with degrees but no professional certifications were the target audience for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (Olaniran, 2020). With the goal of enabling teachers to improve their competences and take on new tasks, the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) program was designed to reskill teachers in their areas of specialisation (DoE, 2007).

In-service training, which primarily concentrates on curriculum orientation, introduction to new content areas, and content updates, is an alternative to formal training. This group also utilises the cascade model. It comprises the training of a limited group of teachers who will then impart their expertise to their peers (Reich, 2020). Despite a structure being in place, implementation has been a challenge for South African teachers' professional development (Sayed & Bulgrin, 2020). This in turn, has impacted how teachers are trained (Singh, 2011). Currently, there is no provision for monitoring how professional development initiatives, affects teachers' classroom practices or how schools progress (Cooc, 2019).

The primary purpose of workshops, which are a popular training model with the DBE, is to make sure that teachers have been guided through a new policy and that they are able to report on a specific number of teachers who have received training when the audit of who has received training is completed, using the attendance register as evidence of who attended. Instead of mandating the learning that must occur and making it the goal, the goal is typically to reach all teachers through phasing-in-training. The increasing attempts at educational reform include learning how to do something new in the classroom that frequently has ramifications for classroom practice because efforts for change need to be supported by a framework for long-term teacher development (Kauppinen et al., 2020).

Even after 1994, the centralised model remained common. In my observation, teachers would be invited to training sessions where specialists would teach new teaching strategies. These workshops took the shape of meetings, conferences, seminars, or short educational programs.

Teachers who attended these workshops received attendance certificates (Hollebrands & Lee, 2020). The issue with these certificates is that they were given out to people who showed up on the first day and then vanished or who arrived on the last day. Teachers are left on their own, with no support in the classroom. The purpose of the after-care is to ensure that the teachers are successfully applying the skills they learned during the training intervention and are not having any problems. It is one method of supplying teachers with ongoing support. One workshop rarely results in change because it ignores the complexity of the current classroom environment (Skivington et al., 2021). It is believed that these teachers will take the knowledge they gained from the seminars and use it in their classrooms (Yen, 2020). Sadly, this frequently results in teachers adopting specific innovations and adding to existing knowledge.

The centralised approach was criticised for having issues with quality, coordination, the length of the workshops which were one-time events, and the lack of assistance or follow-up thereafter (Mxenge, 2019). In light of this, these seminars were not successful in increasing teachers' subject-matter knowledge or even pedagogical understanding (Bariham, Ondigi & Kiio, 2021). The cascade model has many flaws for example, not all of the workshop leaders, who also happened to be implementers of the curriculum, are familiar with the subject matter. The GET & FET Directorates' cascading workshops drew criticism from teachers for their poor quality (Mxenge, 2019). As a result, fundamental knowledge was misrepresented in workshops for teachers (Lo, 2019).

In my opinion, getting thorough and well-written didactic materials has a positive impact on educational development and is a precise procedure for teacher learning. However, promoting a modern initiative through a workshop comes to the conclusion that it ignores the complex teaching configurations that already exists in school classrooms. Without a framework to facilitate long-term teacher development, introducing new ideas in a one-time workshop has a tendency to reinforce current practice and sustain the status quo (Meiklejohn et al., 2021).

A professional development strategy was introduced in 2011 through a collaborative process, and it later went by the name of Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa for 2011–2025 (Symeonidis & Eloff, 2023). The

plan's objective was to concentrate on the teacher's career through a number of stages, including the hiring of prospective teachers, initiation into the workforce, and lifelong professional learning and development. The following is a summary of the plan's professional development-related activities.

Establish the National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development (NICPD) that will develop the system for teachers to identify and address their development needs through the following: Developing content frameworks to describe the content (theory and practice) related to the school curriculum; Developing diagnostic self-assessments to determine core functions of the teachers; Developing continuing professional development courses that are pedagogically sound, content-rich and of high quality; Maintaining and developing an ICT platform to support the system; The new system must be aligned with the South African Council for Education (SACE), Continuing Professional Development (CPTD) and Management System (DBE, 2011, p. 5).

The Department of Education launched the CPTD initiative. The objective was to provide teachers with relevant knowledge and abilities that will enable them to be experts in their disciplines. The CPTD works to fill skill gaps for teachers' professional and personal growth as well as to help them improve their performance and material understanding (Nsibande & Mbokazi, 2023). The CPTD programme was created to guarantee that all teachers remain dedicated to their work and that their performance is assessed and monitored so that they are eager and proud to serve the country (Manyike, 2020).

Programmes for continuing professional development should take into account teachers' pedagogical and professional demands as well as the evolving educational needs of learners rather than becoming political pawns (Kozleski & Proffitt, 2020). The South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU) undertook research on teachers' requirements and suggested that, there is occasionally political pressure, especially from the teacher unions. They "realised that department-driven teacher development has been shown often, not to be as effective as teacher-driven, it is therefore necessary for SADTU to focus its research on

professional development programmes that are relevant to the needs of teachers in poor communities and underperforming schools” (Pilot Research Project, 2011, p. 4).

Although significant time and money is spent on teacher development, in my experience, there is rarely anything to show for the work. A professional development strategy that includes educators and is supported by a top-notch professional development team should be found and implemented by the Department of Education (Edwards et al., 2019).

2.4.1 Professional development strategies for teachers in South Africa

2.4.1.1 Communities of practice

A community of practice is defined as a group of individuals who are skilled in a particular profession, have knowledge, experience, and a desire to advance their expertise in order to accelerate their growth (Xue et al., 2021). People who participate in a process of collective learning in a common field of human effort establish communities of practice (Olszewski et al., 2022). Communities of practice occur when individuals collaborate to learn. Communities of practice are places where teachers regularly discuss issues related to teaching and learning with one another and share knowledge that would improve both their everyday practices and the learning of their learners. Furthermore, through the democratic sharing of teaching information, communities of practices have improved the quality of teacher learning (Ferguson-Patrick, 2022). Additionally, teachers gain skills for measuring their teaching and learning, considering past and present achievements, setting realistic goals, sharing, and coming up with strategies to increase these levels (Hwang, Wang & Lai, 2021). Communities of practice provide a method for teachers to learn continuously.

Teachers collaborate to increase their own learning and foster learner accomplishment in a community of practice (Al-Habsi, Al-Busaidi & Al-Issa, 2022). Communities of practice are made up of educators who are willing to discuss their ongoing learning by asking questions and addressing them in order to promote excellence in their field (Goodnough & Azam, 2022). For many years, teachers have relied heavily on ongoing professional development to advance their work (Mamlok-Naaman et al., 2022). In communities of practice, teachers discuss learners’ performance and other challenges to pinpoint ways to accommodate other teachers in meeting learners’ needs. As a result, teachers continuously learn through meaningful collaboration, which leads to insights and new perspectives on the content and purposes of

inquiry and dialogue. Communities of practice help professionals continue their professional development while connecting them with one another and ensuring that their instructions are relevant. Communities of practice are favoured because of their capacity to boost teacher confidence while also providing support and fostering trust among community members. Communities of practice guarantee active involvement in learning engagement that promotes professional development. For instance, with my teaching subject, Economics, I have found that the nature of Economics as a subject requires an educator to be well-equipped and updated in Economic issues. Most Economics textbooks contain data that is outdated and irrelevant to every year's current situation such as load shedding. Economics is an applied subject and teachers should be skilled to teach it as such so communities of practice assist the teachers by sharing ideas on how to teach this complex subject.

2.4.1.2 Learning from teaching Economics

To teach current knowledge and possess relevant Economics subject content, teachers must continue to learn. When teachers explore theories and develop them for the purpose of teaching Economics facts, Economics teachers learn (Lekashvili, 2019). Studies have found that lack of Economics literacy is associated with learning challenges (Japell, 2010). Teachers are likely to learn when they are dealing with problems related to the subject Economics as a subject of teaching and learning which promotes teacher learning and professional growth (Macaro & Han, 2020). When teaching and learning Economics, one has to be open-minded about common issues and the behaviour of people. Economics teachers who are not well-equipped are automatically forced to organise themselves into groups and learn Economics content. Economics as a subject covers exciting new growth areas in experimental Economics (Semerikov et al., 2019). Experimental Economics requires reasoning and learning so teachers themselves have to possess critical thinking skills and an analytical mindset to be able to teach experimental Economics to learners.

2.4.1.3 Personal Learning Networks (PLN)

The teaching career can be a lonely journey (Beimers, 2021). The majority of a teacher's day is spent with learners, leaving little opportunity for significant adult interaction. This isolation eventually results in low effectiveness, reduced risk-taking, poor performance, burnout, and high turnover. For teachers to learn, grow, and develop, peer-to-peer engagement and reciprocal engagement are essential. This is where Personal Learning Networks (PLN) comes in. Online networks known as PLNs encourage social and cooperative learning (Ekoç, 2022).

In addition, to eliminate isolation, PLNs offer a setting for teachers to share knowledge, skills, and experiences in a nurturing environments that foster collaborative understanding of subject content and insight (Prestridge et al., 2021).

2.4.1.5 Twitter Chats

Twitter is becoming recognised as a social network for professional growth (Heitkamp et al., 2021). On their twitter accounts, teachers can express their opinions and experiences with other teachers or professionals. Twitter reveals that teachers' attempts to use social media technologies such as Twitter for pedagogical usage and professional development, is a viable solution to improve teachers' professional development (Greenhow, Staudt Willet & Galvin, 2021).

2.4.1.6 Teacher Study Groups

Teacher study groups offer a special chance to exchange ideas on concepts and increase knowledge on a subject of your choosing (Caron & McLaughlin, 2019). Study groups can be a crucial tool for teachers to learn about teaching methods, learner problems, and a plethora of other topics and areas that have an impact on the school and its learners. Study groups for teachers are wonderful since they may be flexible (Zayapragassarazan, 2020). They can be formal or informal, in person or online, theoretical or practical, whatever suits the needs of its members and the culture of your school. However, study groups can only be successful, if they meet regularly and have clearly established goals to work towards.

2.4.1.7 Book Study

Book studies fall somewhere between teacher study groups and book clubs. Typically, a small group of teachers get together to discuss a book of their choosing on a topic of shared professional interest. It may be a book that is related to a school-wide goal, an issue of practice at a particular grade level, or teaching strategies for a specific subject.

Book studies are different from school-wide common readings, which are typically mandatory with discussion built into department meetings. Book studies are voluntary and inclusive as anyone interested in the topic, is welcome to join, but is not mandated to join and this is what

makes it so attractive. They foster conversation and communication as teachers discuss the theory of what they learn as well as the implementation of that knowledge.

2.4.1.8 Education camps

Education camps are personalised, learner-driven events lead by teachers, for teachers. The participants set the schedule on the morning of the event, so the day is reflective of attendees' needs. Education camps are built around the belief that all educators should be entitled to share their expertise in a collaborative setting, so anyone who attends is eligible to make a presentation. Education camps are another great place to further develop your PLN as you meet your Twitter connections face-to-face and meet new people to connect with. If this isn't enough to entice you, the camps are free.

2.5 Teacher learning for professional growth

Professional growth is defined as “the enhancement of individuals’ professionalism, resulting from their acquisitions, through a consciously or unconsciously applied internalization process, of professional work-related knowledge” (Evans, 2014, p. 186). Furthermore, the development of professionals in their professional positions through both formal and informal encounters is known as professional growth (Kohli, 2019). Aspects of learning formally, involve activities such as attending workshops, conferences, and seminars (Andresen, Boud & Cohen, 2020).

In its broadest sense, professional growth refers to a person’s advancement in their capacity as an expert. Professional expansion specifically refers to a teacher's development as a teacher because of better experience and analysing their teaching. Moreover, professional growth involves both planned and unplanned experiences, such as reading professional journals and watching media related to academic subjects on television and in movies (Yurieva, Musiichuk & Baisan, 2021). This will demand that teachers evolve in order for them to be completely effective in teaching learners at all levels. It is necessary for teachers to advance their knowledge, abilities, and classroom-related activities (Juhkam, Soodla & Aro, 2022). Programmes that foster professional growth must include acquiring survival skills in the classroom, mastering the fundamentals of teaching, expanding one’s instructional flexibility, assisting colleagues in advancing their careers, exercising leadership, and participating in decision-making (Coelen & Gribble, 2019).

Professional growth includes both all-natural learning opportunities and deliberate, intentional activities that are aimed to directly or indirectly benefit the individual, the group, and the perfection of learning (Becker & Otto, 2019). These skills are acquired and can be used over the course of a lifetime. The improvement of organisations and schools depends on professional development of its staff. The development of learners' skills, confidence, and classroom behaviour is primarily influenced by the personal and professional growth of teachers within a school (Hobbs & Quinn, 2021).

To promote teacher growth, teachers must have more opportunities to learn about the components of professional development (Sancar, Atal & Deryakulu, 2021). Knowing what kind of professional development activities are more likely to enhance teacher growth is vital and crucial because their usefulness will vary based on the teacher and the educational system in which they work. While attending seminars that meet the standards for efficient professional growth, teachers should also be encouraged to participate in informal classroom learning opportunities. Professional growth and teacher learning are related in that both are crucial to a teacher's overall development (Jin et al., 2021). As a result, the study's main focus is Economics teachers' learning for career advancement and subsequent growth.

Academic learning is a component of professional growth and any new professional development plan should always start with small-scale, meticulously controlled pilot studies to determine its efficacy (Van Gaalen et al., 2021). Any endeavour by teachers to further their education is known as teacher professional growth. Effective educators are passionate about both learning and teaching. Professional growth is fuelled by teacher learning (Croft, 2021). Both formal and informal environments can promote learning. Conferences, classes, seminars, retreats, and workshops are examples of formal settings (Evans, 2014). Independent research or investigation, peer learning projects, or even just chit-chatting with a colleague in the staff room are examples of informal chances for teacher professional growth. There are numerous degrees of professional growth for teachers. A professional growth plan outlines specific learning objectives for educators, both short and long-term, along with strategies for accomplishing each objective. Everyone who works in education has heard at least one story about a teacher professional development session that went awry. Many teachers are still constrained by a lack of options for their own professional growth (Goode et al., 2021)

2.6 Teacher learning and the rurality context

Many rural communities, including schools, are characterised by complex lived experiences and beliefs (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). The term rurality refers to a state of place-based familiarity shared by those with ancestors or heritage who live in historically or culturally designated rural areas or locales (Ranjan & Chowdhary, 2022). Rurality is a transformational indicator that has the power to alter teacher motivation and alter behaviour. The highly transformative and reproductive nature of rurality helps to both guide and limit the efficacy of intervention programmes created, frequently with the greatest of intentions, for schooling (Arslan et al., 2021). The potential for identification and interaction in terms of the quality of teacher preparation and the grade of teaching in rural educational settings is related to the application of a social theory in the countryside (Cheng, Wang & Liu, 2019).

Fostering partnerships is the teaching method for improving learners' acceptance of rurality (Mutambara & Bayaga, 2020). Knowing the values and culture of certain communities, makes one feel accepted. Discussion and involvements between teachers and the community promote professional development. Rurality fosters resilience, including needs that must be supported and resources that must be used through connections. Through the democratic sharing of teaching expertise, [rural] communities of practices have improved the quality of teacher learning (Zeichner, 2020).

A common habit/practice in rural areas is social learning. When teachers talk informally about the problems, successes, and difficulties in a given subject, social learning occurs (Ashraf, 2020). Ubuntu is a top priority in rural areas. In a rural school context, social learning takes place when teachers talk about tasks linked to their jobs. Formal and informal teacher education takes place. Rurality has the power to transform, and it can influence teachers' attitudes and motivation (Mahdum, Hadriana & Safriyanti, 2019). Informal education takes through social media, at cottages and hallways. Rural areas experience little change. The very nature of rurality alters conduct. Communities in rural settings have certain expected behaviour, culture, and values. Rurality opens opportunities for its workers to learn from their diversity of lived experiences. Isolation is a worry in rural areas (Wenger, 2021). Due to the problems and difficulties of living in a rural region for an extended period, teachers who are stationed there sometimes experiences many problems (Humphreys et al., 2021).

It is arguable that there is a strong connection between poverty and the experiences of women and girls, especially those who reside in rural areas (Dekel & Abrahams, 2021). Gender inequality and the social standing of women in these societies, which dictate how people and organisations navigate their daily encounters, make this situation worse. Developing teachers requires both professional and personal growth, which can be achieved in a variety of ways (Posamentier & Smith, 2020). Rurality is a platform for teacher growth in many different methods.

Section B: Theoretical framework

2.7 Theories that frame this study

Concepts that offer a deeper comprehension of a topic under study, form a conceptual framework (Varpio et al., 2020). Obtaining, analysing, and interpreting data are also done with through a conceptual framework. This research study utilises two conceptual frameworks, that of Reid (2007) and Evans (2014). According to Reid (2007), there are various professional learning experiences that provide different chances for developing attitudes as teachers. According to Reid (2007) there four quadrants comprising of “Formal-informal and planned-accidental” (p. 11). Formal opportunities are established by individuals or organisations other than the teacher for example, courses offered or taught by the DoE and universities. Informal opportunities are established by the teacher such as connecting with other teachers and self-reading to gain more knowledge. As highlighted by Reid (2007) planned opportunities can take place formally and informally for example cluster meetings or teachers meeting for tea at a mid-year function, sharing experiences related to their subject challenges. The four quadrants of CPD as highlighted by Reid (2007) are spheres of action where professional learning takes place.

The diagram in Figure 2.1 is of Reid’s four dimensions of learning for teacher Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

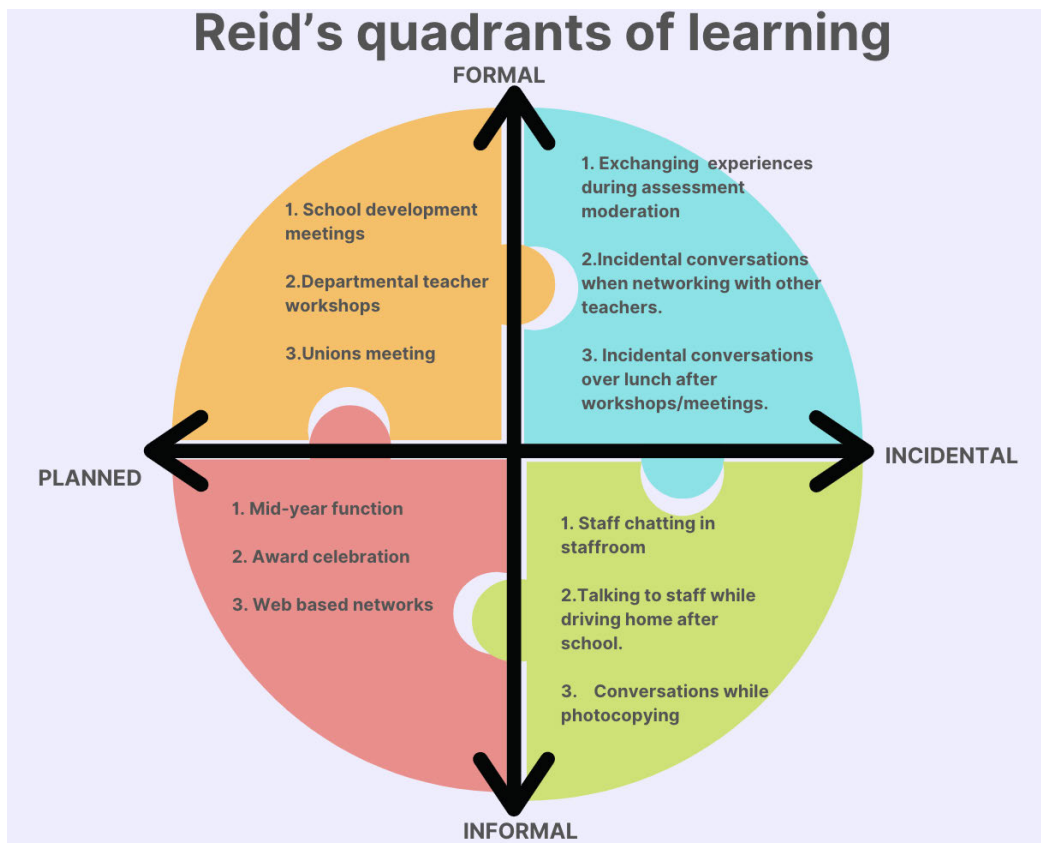


Figure 2.1 Reid's four quadrants of teacher learning (Adapted from Reid, 2007)

Formal planned

Formal learning is learning that is organised by institutions or the Department of Education. Formal learning has a clear direction and time frame. In some cases, teachers who attend the formally planned learning sessions, usually get certificates or may be score points. Formal planned learning can happen in school development workshops, departmental workshops and or teacher union workshops.

Formal incidental

Informal accidental learning happens when professional learning communities meet to perform certain activities related to a certain subject and then teach each other about new knowledge based on their experiences. This can take place in the following form such as, exchanging professional experiences during assessment moderation, incidental conversations when networking with other teachers, incidental conversations over lunch after workshops and meetings.

Informal planned

Informal planned is learning that happens when people are gathered together. This type of learning is not formally organised and it has no time frame. In a formal learning session, there are no rewards but people gain knowledge through communication for example year-end functions, awards celebrations and online networks.

Informal Incidental

When more than one teacher sits in one room, a sharing of experience will always take place. Sharing of experiences is informal incidental learning because it communicates information to other teachers for example, staff chatting in the staffroom, talking to staff while driving home together after school, conversations that take place at the photocopying machine.

The second theorist that will frame this study is Evan (2014) as she discusses the components of professionalism. Evans (2014) identifies three components of professionalism namely behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual. Behavioural focuses on what teachers physically do at work. Behavioural component relates to what teacher's physically do at work. Behavioural have its own sub-components which are processual, procedural, productive and componential dimensions of professionalism. Furthermore, behavioural sub-component includes productivity, achievement, skills and competences applied at work. The attitudinal component is concerned with the attitudes held by teachers. Attitudinal sub-components are perceptual, evaluative and motivational dimensions of professionalism. Moreover, the behavioural component involves perceptions, beliefs, job satisfaction and morale. The intellectual component of professionalism relates to teacher's knowledge and understanding their of knowledge structures and further divided into sub-components of epistemological, rationalistic, comprehensive and analytical dimensions. Figure 2.2 is a drawing showing the Reid's (2007) four quadrants of teacher learning intertwining with Evans (2014) components of professionalism.

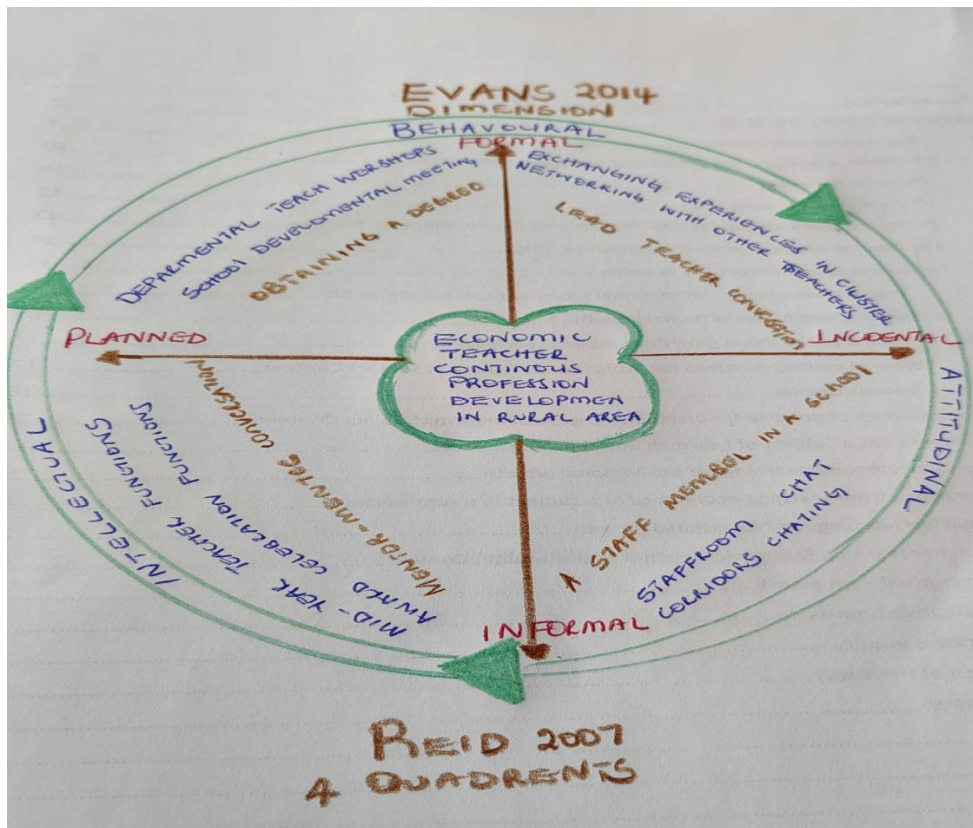


Figure 2.2 Drawing showing the Reid's (2007) four quadrants of teacher learning intersecting with Evans (2014) components of professionalism

Both theories are going to help me to explore the learning for professional growth of one individual teacher who started teaching as unqualified teacher in a rural setting.

2.8 Summary of the chapter

This chapter consisted of two sections namely Section A that discussed the literature review and Section B that explained the theoretical framework adopted in this study. Under the literature review section, the concept of teacher learning was explained followed by the different forms of teacher learning namely formal and informal learning. Formal learning for teachers was then placed in the context in the South African education landscape followed by the professional development of teachers in South Africa. Then the strategies for professional development of teachers in South Africa was described. In Section B of the chapter, the theoretical frameworks to be used in this study was explained. This chapter consisted of two sections namely Section A that discussed the literature review and Section B that explained the theoretical framework adopted in this study. The chapter ended with a summary of the entire chapter. The next chapter focuses on the research design and methodology employed in this

study. The chapter further addresses the paradigm in which this study was situated as well as the data collection methods that will be used to generate data. The ethical issues, trustworthiness and limitations will be explained.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology employed in this study. This chapter further addresses the paradigm in which this study was situated as well as the data collection methods that will be used to generate data. The ethical issues, trustworthiness and limitations are explained.

3.2 Study context

This study was located in one secondary school which is situated in the rural Nkanyezini area in the uMgungundlovu district in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The majority of learners at this school, walk to school and some of them have to cross a river. This secondary school is under-resourced and has close to 700 learners. The school is a no-fee-paying school which means that learners do not pay school fees and the school depends on support from the government for its effective functioning. The school has 19 teachers, with three teachers, including myself, who have a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The school has a functioning School Management Team (SMT) and the school is divided into four departments. This has led to the school achieving a high pass rate of between 80 and 95 % for the past five years. The school has a good monitoring system to meet the requirements of the DBE and the relevant policies.

3.3 Participants

In this study, I was both the researcher and the researched. This means that in this study, I am the main participant. I found it difficult to do both and I needed someone I could talk too. I saw a need for a person who will give me support and encourage me but at the same time provide constructive criticism about my work (Samaras, 2011). This person is known as a critical friend. My critical is a qualified teacher who is a few years older than me. She is a teacher by profession. She was the only one who accepted me from the first day at the school and offered me to share a table with her. She also organised transport for me to get to the school because at that time, I did not have a car and I was not familiar with the place where the school was situated. Even after I moved to another school, we kept in touch and she would always give me a call just to check up on me.

My critical friend voluntarily offered her time to listen to me, help me to recall my memories and give me support. In addition, my critical friend allowed me to send her messages on WhatsApp and call her so I could clarify some problem areas with her. She was always available to listen to me and when she explained the situation, it made sense to me. She also helped me to remember certain incidents that happened which I had forgotten but were very significant to my study. She was the voice of reason and was not afraid of taking me to task when the situation called for it. She was strength and literally carried me on this research journey.

3.4 Research design

3.4.1 Study approach

For this study, I adopted a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach investigates events in their natural environments with the goal of interpreting, comprehending, and giving them significance (Aguilar Solano, 2020). The qualitative approach recognises that context plays a significant role in influencing human behaviour. I selected to adopt a qualitative research approach in this study because the focus of qualitative research is on people's lived experiences (Butow et al., 2020). Also, the necessity of comprehending the phenomenon being studied, the natural environment, taking each context into account, and using flexibility in data gathering methods are characteristic of the qualitative approach (Kyngäs, 2020; Hendren et al., 2023). Moreover, viewing the world from the perspective of actors or participants is a requirement for the qualitative approach.

In order to better understand the social and cultural circumstances in which I lived, I used a qualitative approach (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). It enabled exploration and representation of the complexity and diversity of my worlds. Contrasting expert opinions, an investigative strategy, and techniques for compiling and analysing data were all used in my qualitative research study (Hendren et al., 2023). Other methods are also characteristic of qualitative research such as observation and participant observation, questionnaires and interviews, texts and documentation, as well as the researcher's ideas and comments, some of which I adopted in this study (Muzari, Shava & Shonhiwa, 2022) because the qualitative research method seeks to comprehend or explain the phenomena in terms of the meaning's individuals assign to them, rather than studying the phenomena in their original form.

What was also significant for my choice of a qualitative research study was that, it took into account, the interpretations that participants in a study make of the occasions, circumstances, and activities that they are a part of, as well as the accounts they provide of their lives and experiences (Roberts, 2020). Additionally, qualitative inquiries comprehend the specific setting in which participants act and how this context affects their behaviour (Tonon, 2021). Developing causal explanations and understanding the processes behind occurrences and actions, is a goal of qualitative research.

When doing this qualitative study, Sidleni interacted with the context and the many interpretations of her lived experiences with which she creates her own worlds. She interacted with the scenario the majority of the time without setting up an observation plan, and this contributed actively to building her understanding of the research environment by interpreting what took place (Kessio, 2019). As a result, qualitative research yielded the conclusions that were her interpretation of other people's viewpoints, through the lens of her own understandings and she found that the greatest way to study human learning is through qualitative data (Lester, Cho & Lochmiller, 2020).

Sidleni's research focused on teacher professional development therefore she was more concentrated and more engaged in the process, rather than concentrating on the results. To comprehend her perceptions and experiences, qualitative approaches were preferable since it allowed for the exploration of the phenomenon of her development as an Economics teacher in a rural setting by collecting data that comprised a comprehensive description of her experiences.

3.4.2 Research Paradigm

Paradigm is a perspective of reality or phenomena (Hughes, 2020) which in this study was Sidleni's way of thinking about what the research study was about and how she should be conducted the study (Held, 2019). In this regard, she settled on the interpretivist paradigm as it aims to understand phenomena from her perspective, exploring her interpersonal interactions as well as the historical and cultural context that she lived in (Mubita et al., 2022). Also, the interpretive paradigm involved looking at the situation from the perspective of others as well, rather than only my perspective (Kankam, 2019; Muzari, Shava & Shonhiwa, 2022). The

interpretive paradigm provided Sidleni with pertinent information regarding the arbitrary causes and intents that underlie her professional development in her teaching context (Gunbayi, 2020).

Sidleni found that by situating this study within the interpretive paradigm, her interpretations and experiences were unique, and they shaped how she saw the world (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). In contrast to generalising and predicting causes and consequences, the interpretivist paradigm aimed to comprehend and interpret the meanings of her human behaviour (van Nes & Yamu, 2020, as a result of the events and circumstances she found myself in. She realised that it is possible to generalise her findings by accessing and analysing this multiplicity, mostly through discourse and consensus focused on explaining related phenomena (Mertova & Webster, 2019). Sidleni's worldviews were concerned with the shape, nature, and extent of what was known about her reality which is her ontology. However, she realised that the interpretive research approach has various drawbacks, including subjective components of her experience that caused her to cram as many truths into her findings (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022), a situation in which she exercised caution.

Sidleni began this study with the goal of better understanding and interpreting how her learning occurs as a rural Economics teacher. The interpretivist paradigm helped her to understand herself from within by going inside of herself because as the interpretivist experts acknowledge, that she, as the researched, could distinguish between the truth that is perceived and the truth that was created by her (Scauso, 2020). Moreover, in order to understand her emotions, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they actually occurred in the real world, she sought to study them in their natural environment (Dangal & Joshi, 2020). Interpretivism assisted her in recognising that her different interpretations were all equally legitimate as she also perceived the world around her (Burdine, Thorne & Sandhu, 2021).

3.4.3. Methodology

Sidleni adopted a self-study methodological approach through narrative inquiry as a way of critically examining her pedagogical practice as an Economics teacher. Self-study is a research methodology where the researcher investigates their own practice, experiences, beliefs, and reflections. It's a form of qualitative inquiry that allows for deep introspection and self-reflection (Loughran et al., 2004). The nature of self-study has been summarised by LaBoskey (2004, pp. 859-860) as "improvement-aimed; interactive; employing multiple, primarily

qualitative methods; and a formalisation of our work as [teachers] that makes it available to our professional community for deliberation, further testing and judgement”. Self-study describes the focus of a study, not a specific method for carrying it out (Loughran, et al. 2004). Methods such as action research or teacher research, ethnography and personal narrative inquiry are typically used in self-studies. Thus, undertaking a self-study through narrative inquiry provided a focus for this inquiry and a methodology to carry it out. While the self-study component of this inquiry implies a personal sense-making quest, undertaking a narrative inquiry allowed Sidleni to broaden and strengthen that quest. The movement away from the self is a paradox of self-study because one of its most vital components is to pursue alternative perspectives on experience which she did by transforming her experiences into stories that included not only her but others for example her learners and her colleagues and the broader school community at which she teaches (Loughran, et al. 2004).

In this study, Sidleni used narrative inquiry techniques including storytelling and conversational interviews to convey her own experiences. The purpose of this study was to gain a thorough insight of Sidleni through actual experiences and spoken stories. She also found out that she can learn about the unreported stories by using narrative inquiry. She decided to utilise this methodology because she wanted to understand how her professional development as a teacher has changed from the time she began teaching as an unqualified teacher to the present. In order to create meaningful knowledge of identity and the self, narrative inquiry is a method that is ideal for challenging the social and human sciences (Clandinin, 2022). A spoken or written account of frequent occurrences, episodes, and teaching experiences is known as a narrative inquiry.

The Deweyan viewpoint served as the foundation for the ancient practice of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006). Narrative inquiry is a component of qualitative research methodology. This methodology’s main goal is to analyse and comprehend the stories of lived experiences that have been spoken about (Nigar, 2020). Teachers’ continual experiences that keep in mind the past, we project while planning for the future by determining the shape of instruction (Iivari, Sharma & Ventä-Olkkonen, 2020). The goal of the narrative inquiry is to acquire information through stories (Ford, 2020). Sidleni’s personal account of the struggles and learning opportunities that influenced her professional development and advancement, served as the basis for her data collection.

According to Ruini and Mortara (2022), storytelling is essential to overcoming many of life's problems. Sidleni selected to employ this methodology because she wanted to comprehend how her professional development as a teacher has changed from the time she started out as an unqualified teacher to the present. Family stories, research interviews, letters, dialogue, field notes, and autobiographical writing are some of the strategies used to collect data when employing the narrative inquiry methodology (Islam, Khan & Bakady, 2022).

Personal narrative research focuses on significant life experiences. A story about a person's life or experiences is referred to as personal. Personal narrative research focuses on information based on emotions, aspirations, motivations, and moral principles (Sali, Osiesi, & Blignaut, 2023). Personal story investigation can produce significant backward and external experiences. Sidleni's personal narrative serves the objective of telling the story of her life, complete with conversation, events, descriptions of her personal experiences, and insights. Self-knowledge is aided by self-narrative and self-reflection.

Personal narrative inquiry was used in this study as a methodology. An oral history of family tales served as the foundation for this narrative inquiry (White & Cooper, 2022). Writing letters, having talks, and conducting interviews are all ways of acquiring data. Individuals get the chance to share accounts about their past or present using this practice. In research investigations, narrative inquiry is a well-established methodology (Bresler, 2020). In order to create meaningful knowledge of identity and the self, narrative inquiry is a method that is ideal for challenging the social and human sciences (Clandinin, 2022). A spoken or written account of frequent occurrences, episodes, and teaching experiences is known as a narrative inquiry.

3.4.4. Research aim

Overall, the study aims to offer valuable insights into the dynamics of learning for professional growth among Economics teachers, with a focus on real-life experiences and stories.

3.4.5 Objectives of the study

- Explore and understand the stories of an unqualified teacher's lived learning experiences as an Economics teacher in a rural school
- Examine the personal and professional experiences that could shape what it means to be an unqualified Economics teacher in a rural school

- Identify the sources and mechanisms of learning that contribute to professional growth and change among Economic teachers' everyday practices in rural schools

3.4.6 Research questions

The following critical research questions were created to accomplish the aforesaid objectives:

1. What are the stories of an unqualified teacher's lived learning experiences as an Economics teacher in a rural school?
2. What personal and professional experiences shaped what it means to an unqualified Economics teacher in a rural school?
3. Where learning did happen to enable professional growth and change in the everyday practices as an Economic teacher in a rural school

3.4.7 Data collection

To outline the data collection sources and the methods to address each research question, a data generation table was constructed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Data generation table

Research Question	Data generation method	Method of data Analysis
What are the stories of an unqualified teacher's lived learning experiences as an economics teacher in a rural school?	Collage Found photos	Narrative analysis
What personal and professional experiences shaped what it means to an unqualified economics teacher in a rural school?	Collage Memory Drawing	Narrative analysis
Where did learning happen to enable professional growth and change in the everyday practices as an economic teacher in a rural school	Collage Artefacts	Narrative analysis

3.4.7.1 Collage inquiry

In this study, Sidleni is the researcher and the researched. Therefore, she wanted to get a deeper understanding of the self to find out what shaped her professional and personal growth as an Economics teacher. To understand and connect to the methodology of this study, she constructed a collage. Collage from "found" visual imagery is a widely used mechanism for expression and illustration of reflections in education (Davis, 2008). Collage has been known to portray "linguistic and non-linguistic representations to articulate authentic lived experiences"(Gerstenblatt, 2013, p. 296). Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) used a technique of clustering collages to investigate visual tools for experiential research approaches: "Collaging can also be helpful in conceptualising a phenomenon by fleshing out different facets in order to get a nuanced understanding of it" (p. 4)

Collage inquiry serves as a flexible and dynamic approach to research that fosters exploration, creativity, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary collaboration. It encourages researchers to embrace complexity, embrace multiple perspectives, and generate new knowledge in innovative ways. Collage inquiry allows researchers to explore a wide range of sources, perspectives, and ideas related to a particular topic or question. By compiling diverse materials, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and uncover new insights. Collage inquiry encourages creative thinking and the synthesis of disparate elements. By bringing together different types of information and perspectives, researchers can generate innovative ideas and approaches to their research questions (Butler-Kisber, 2018). Sidleni's collage stirred mixed feelings that linked her to the methodology of this study. Figure 3.1 is a collage representing her experiences as an underqualified teacher of Economics.

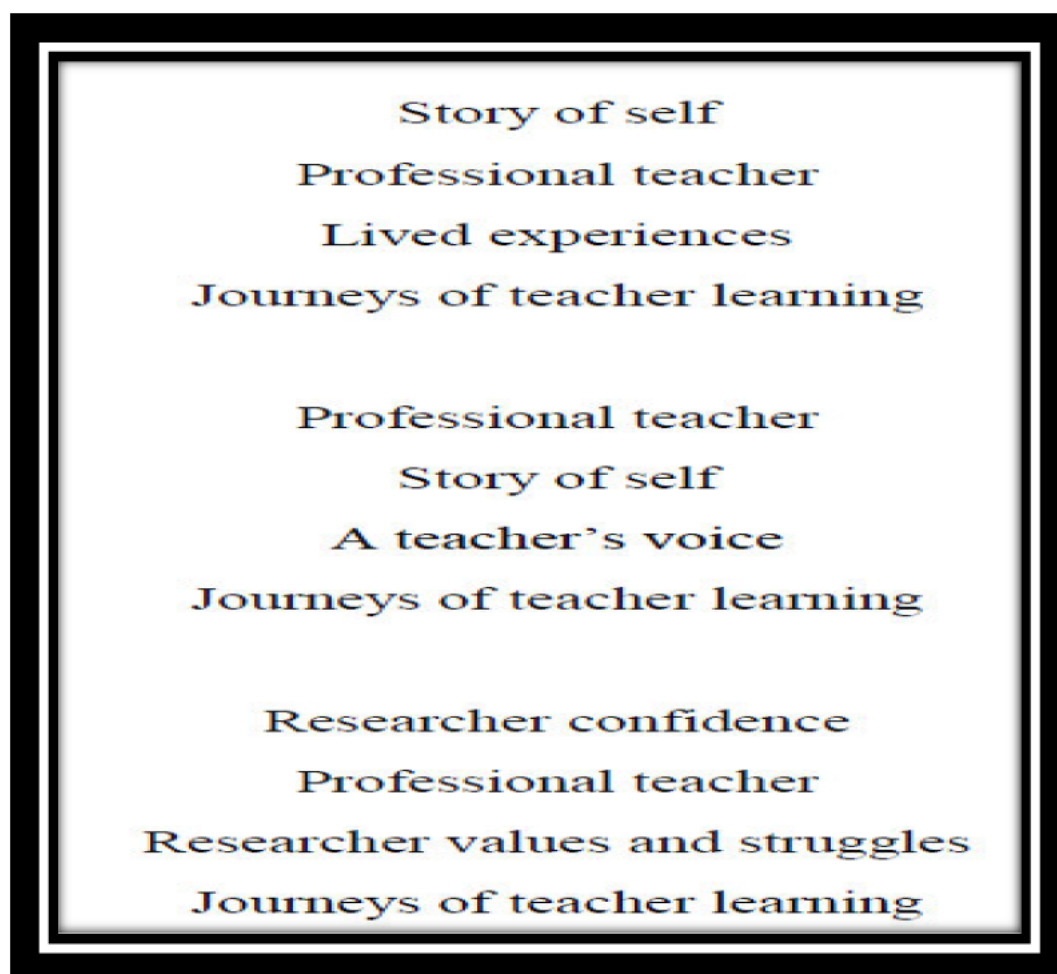


Figure 3.2 Pantoum poem of Sidleni's lived experiences

3.4.7.2. Object Inquiry

Object inquiry is a method that helps to express meaningful memories. Objects that are attached to memories, challenges, and experiences on the journey of teaching are selected and presented in various forms. Mitchell (2011) suggested that the potential benefit of object inquiry is frequently neglected in social research, even in visual research. She proposed that studying objects “as texts of visual research in and of themselves” can be a very cathartic experience (Mitchell 2011, p. 37). Moreover, she expanded the idea of object inquiry as “possibilities of what counts as evidence in research” (Mitchell 2011, p. 35). Building on the ideas of Riggins (1994), Mitchell offers examples of how everyday objects such as a toy or an item of clothing, can be studied as visual research data in terms of their connotative and denotative meaning. Examples of valuable objects include photographs, trinkets, memory boxes, and videotapes (Li, Hu, Hengeveld & Hummels, 2020).

So, Sidleni chose those objects that brought back memories to explain her teaching journey. It is fortunate that at this point in time photo-taking is a common practice and she took a lot of photographs of her objects to represent her learning. Finally, Sidleni is convinced that doing research using the object method in this study, allowed her to expand and reflect on her experiences of teaching Economics that led to her professional development.

3.4.7.3 Timeline method

A personal narrative timeline is a list of events or experiences from one's life organised in chronological order (Li et al., 2020). A timeline may be narrowed to annual, seasonal, weekly, or daily routines, that include perspectives on how a person connects to society. In this study, her experiences were arranged from her university experiences to her teaching practices to date. She used photographs and awards received during the teaching journey as data.

3.4.7.4 Letter writing

Letter writing is a method of narrative inquiry that spans a decade of use (Stamper 2020). For this study, letter writing was used because this method enabled Sidleni to share personal stories that involved feelings and emotions. She wrote letters to critical friends about the time they shared together, reminding them about the incidents that took place when they were together. Letter writing is a method that is able to generate data that incorporates an emotional dimension (Pithouse- Morgan, 2013).

3.4.7.5 Lived experiences

Lived experiences is a qualitative research method used to explore and gain a deeper understanding of complex and nuanced aspects of human life. As the researched, Sidleni wanted to find out how she developed personal and professional growth as an Economics teacher. Lived experience is essential to the narrative inquiry methodology (Clendenin 2006). In this study, Sidleni gathered data through using stories of her lived experiences of certain incidents, challenges and achievements that she had experienced in her life. and represented them as stories.

3.4.7.6 Story of the self

Knowledge is constructed through story-telling and sharing of teacher's lived experiences (Bery 2018). In this study, Sidleni built knowledge from her own achievements and struggles

during her journey of teaching, to understand her-self. Story of the self is linked to individual narratives (Bery 2018). Sharing professional knowledge of practice through self-study is located within the interpretivist and narrative inquiry methodology. Self-study enables teachers like Sidleni, to give meaning to their experiences. Drawing from experiences and story-telling, is critical for finding knowledge about the self (Rice 2018). Story of the self is re-defining the work of a teacher in the simplest form to understand what values and personal growth was informed by incidents that happened in the journey of teaching.

3.4.7.7 Journey of a teacher

Teachers' incidents, challenges and events inform a teacher's journey (Casey, 2013). To understand a teacher's journey, teacher's experiences need to be turned into a story. Teachers' journeys are tracked in a self-study (Snyder 2012). Narrative inquiry methodology allows a researcher to gather data from stories of their lived experiences.

3.4.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to discover useful information, draw conclusions, and support decision making. It involves the use of various techniques and tools to analyse and interpret raw data, uncover patterns, trends, and relationships, and extract meaningful insights. Data analysis remains a significant part of the research since it allows for the creation of thick description, the identification of themes and the generation of thoughts and actions (John, 2011). For this research study, Sidleni used qualitative content analysis. She took the data collected and re-created into a story. To analyse the data, she used deductive and inductive approaches and drew on Reid (2007) and Evans (2014) models of data analysis of personal and professional learning.

3.4.8.1 Working with the data

Sidleni used photographs, collage and memory drawing to represent her data. When constructing the collage, she reflected on nodal incidents that occurred during her personal professional journey. After the lockdown was over, she went home and told her mother that she am enrolling for a master's degree and she had no clue what it was about but prayed for her and gave her blessings. Sidleni's mother's prayer kept her going as she searched in the old family albums for photographs. When construction the collage, she cut and pasted pictures and words out of old magazines. Her family asked her to explain to them the meaning and the purpose of what she was doing. Their questions were helping her to remember stories from the

past. Some photographs reminded her of the stories that she had never spoken about previously as well as past memories and the emotions she experienced during her journey of life and professionalism. Memory drawing brought laughter and moments she had with her mother and her village with its activities.

3.4.8.2 Data coding

Coding is a qualitative data analysis technique which allows the researcher to identify the related content across the data. In preparation for the next chapter, Sidleni is going to do storyboarding. Storyboarding is a sequence of pictures that tells a story, provides the instruction and shows the flow of action. Storyboarding is a tool that helps to plan and organise the sequence of the events in a story (Pani, 2021). Storyboarding includes conducting research and creating a story using images (Karlimah at el 2021) In this study, Sidleni employed the power of the researcher and used story boarding as a method of planning, organising; selecting data that should be included in her narrated story, using the images. Storyboarding helped her to bring her work to life. Storyboarding guided her as the sole participant when sharing her story. She used a highlighter to categorise the themes which are presented below. She used different colours to highlight the words or sentences then converted them into themes. To develop meaningful groupings, she used plotting as a tool to reconstruct the story narrative. Sidleni had six photographs which related the events that took place in her life. She pasted each picture under the appropriate theme. She then constructed the storyboard which is provided below in Figure 3.3

Struggling young girl in rural setting 	In a relationship with a mother 
Unqualified teacher and hardship 	Learning formal and informal 
Qualified teacher with power and voice 	Hardship reward as motivation 

Figure 3.3 Storybook image of Sidleni's experiences

3.5 Ethical Issues

3.5.1 Trustworthiness

When choosing a method for gathering data, a researcher should always evaluate it critically to see how likely it is to be genuine and accurate (Rose & Johnson, 2020). In qualitative research, the system for maintaining rigour and transparency is called trustworthiness (Singh

et al., 2021). As a self-study researcher, it was crucial to provide concise and comprehensive explanations of how I gathered data and to make it apparent to the reader what constituted data for this study (Pithouse-Morgan, 2022).

Trustworthiness is a critical aspect of qualitative research. and according to Stahl and King (2020, in Lincoln & Guba, 1985). it refers to the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the research findings. Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research is essential for establishing the validity and reliability of the study.

3.5.1.1 Credibility

To determine credibility, I had to establish whether or not the research findings represent a trustworthy conceptual interpretation of the data derived from the original data (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). Additionally, Sidleni learnt from Ahmed & Ishtiaq (2021) that credibility is the extent to which her study's conclusions reflects the meaning of the research participants. Furthermore, she ensured that she accurately portrayed the phenomenon under study (Groenland & Dana, 2020). This was to make sure that she used the data to draw conclusions. She also provided detailed descriptions of herself as the main participant in this study. Sidleni also included the viewpoints of her participants accurately as cautioned by Kyngäs, Kääriäinen & Elo (2020). This fact was addressed using a preventative strategy. Sidleni used multiple data sources and methods to cross-verify the findings. This also helped in validating the results through different perspectives. A further strategy for building credibility is triangulation. The basis for triangulation is the idea that any bias present in one data source, researcher, or procedure would be eliminated when combined with multiple data sources, researchers, or methods (Hamilton, 2020).

3.5.1.2 Transferability

Sidleni provided detailed and rich descriptions of the study context and procedure in order to assess the transferability of the findings to other settings and populations (Slevin & David, 2013).

3.5.1.3 Dependability

Dependability is concerned with producing findings and case narratives that the research community can accept with trust (Mertova & Webster, 2019). It emphasises methodological rigour and coherence. Dependability means that findings are consistent with other studies and

could be repeated (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen & Elo, 2020). The fact that this study was based on individual personal and professional experiences, however, makes it unique to its context and it is unlikely that its conclusions would be replicated. The results agree with those of related research. Reliability is addressed by dependability (Singh et al., 2021). The results of this qualitative study, which was based on Sidleni's personal and professional experiences, are not certain to be consistent if the study is replicated (Slišković, 2020).

3.5.1.4 Reliability

There were no altered study settings because this was not an experiment carried out in a controlled environment, rather, the conclusions of the study under the dependability concept rely on what was shared by the participants. Since the data relied on Sidleni's distinct experiences and narratives, consistency cannot be guaranteed (Jayawickreme et al., 2021). Also, as Sidleni had narrated her lived stories, some elements may have been forgotten, which may interfere with the consistency of the findings should the study be repeated. Sidleni relied on a critical audit of the study methodology conducted independently by colleagues to resolve the issue of dependability (Johnson, Adkins & Chauvin, 2020). By combining the results from the original data sources (myself) in the form of collage, photos, storytelling, and memory drawing, reliability was further ensured. Sidleni also referenced empirical studies to guarantee dependability (Ruess et al., 2023) related to teacher's learning,

Sidleni also made sure that the findings were reliable by maintaining an audit of all the actions that were carried out. She made sure to describe every detail when talking about reliability, including how she introduced this study. In order to check for any potential contradictions, Sidleni provided her personal experiences and ideas about what emerged (Brownstone et al., 2022). She even enlisted the help of a critical reader to make sure that only factual material was revealed and that the conclusions had been subjected to many sets of eyes. The issue of dependability is strengthened by the methodological rigour and logic that were upheld in this investigation (Torlig et al., 2022). To triangulate the data, Sidleni also used the collage, photos, storytelling, and memory drawing, to allow herself to tell her story by using pictures or artistic expressions. In the written report, I utilised a pseudonym (Sidleni) and not my real name, (Byron, 2019).

3.6 Positionality of the Researcher

It is essential to pay attention to positionality, reflexivity, the production of knowledge, and the power relations that are present throughout the research process in order to perform ethical research (Cuevas-Parra, 2021). A person's worldview and the position they have taken in relation to a certain research endeavour are referred to as their positionality (Savolainen et al., 2023). The researcher's worldview, or the perspective from which they are approaching a subject, affects their ontological assumptions (concerning the nature of social reality), epistemological assumptions (concerning the nature of knowledge), and presumptions regarding human nature and action (Gannon, Taheri & Azer, 2022). Because of this, the perspective Sidleni brought to her work and the personal experiences that shape what researchers bring to the research context could have an impact on the processes they choose to use and how they interpret the results (Thompson Burdine, Thorne & Sandhu, 2021).

By declaring his or her positionality and combining reflexive efforts, the researcher can accomplish two important tasks: foremostly by recognising the inherent subjectivity of every research standpoint while guarding against letting my own subjectivity unduly impact the study's findings (Schneider, 2022). Additionally, to emphasise to readers that political overtones exist in language and that they must be continuously and reflexively acknowledged for research to have an influence (Holmes, 2020). Because of the interpretivist paradigm in which this study is grounded, my view of reality is that it is socially constructed.

I walked 16 to 21 kilometres each day to school from primary through secondary school. Because shoes were only bought once a year at my house, I used to occasionally walk barefoot in the early grades (primary level). Because school policies and procedures forbade learners from arriving late, I was compelled to maintain an early arrival schedule throughout my primary and secondary education. When learners were sent home to call our parents, I sometimes found the gate locked and we were locked out of the school. Also, we were disciplined by teachers physically when we did not follow the regulations of the school. As a result, I do not believe that my position has had a significant impact on how honest I am. I maintain that my subjective role is not a major issue as an interpretive researcher working to comprehend the phenomena of instructors learning about themselves.

3.7 Limitations of the study

I began this study during the time of Covid -19 and it was not a good time because I was house-bound and I could only rely on my cellphone and the laptop to communicate. While the data provided in the research study is legitimate, I feel that I did not do justice to my methodology on personal; narrative inquiry because I could not get the perspective of others on my data. which would have made my study that much richer. Also, the data is very limited as it comes from one participant. I could not hold face-to-face meetings with my critical friend and we could only communicate online and sometimes with load shedding, this was not viable. Making myself the object of the study has been a very challenging situation as I struggled to differentiate between myself as the researcher and researched. Sometimes, I unintentionally introduced bias into my study through my own beliefs, expectations, and interpretations. This could have affected everything from the study design to data analysis and interpretation of the results. Although, this study produced valid results, it is challenging to generalise my findings to other settings. Different settings may have unique characteristics, such as cultural, economic, or social factors, that can influence the outcomes. What works in one context might not work in another due to these variations.

3.8 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the study context was described followed by a description of the participants. The research design was explained which comprised an overview of the type of the study and the research paradigm in which the study was situated. This was followed by a detailed description of the methodology adopted in this study, the research aim and objectives and the research questions. The data collection was provided next which was outlined in a data generation table and then the research methods that were used to elicit the required data was explained. The data analysis was described next and ethical considerations were highlighted with a narrative about the positionality of the researcher. The limitations of the study were then reported. This chapter concluded with a summary of the entire chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIFE OF A STRUGGLING GIRL IN A RURAL SETTING

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the reconstructed stories of my lived educational experiences as an Economics teacher working in a rural school setting. These stories draw on the memories and experiences of my early childhood, schooling and my teaching journey. The stories in this chapter are generated through a variety of methods. I learned that we interpret our past in light of the tales that define who we are, and these stories impact how we conduct our daily lives (Abbott, 2021). Drawing on the idea that teachers' daily lives are constructed by their stories about their teaching, the stories presented in this chapter responds to the first research question: *What are the stories of an unqualified teacher's lived learning experiences as an Economics teacher in a rural school?*

This chapter hones in on my learning experiences that shaped me into becoming an Economics teacher and is crafted from critical experiences, incidents and relationships. On looking at my story narrative, I was able to select how I wanted to work with the smaller stories of self. The storyboard in chapter 3 assisted me in developing the small stories for my story narratives in this chapter. The story narrated in this chapter, includes my personal and my professional growth from an unqualified teacher, to becoming a qualified teacher in a rural setting.

4.2 Life as a young girl in a rural setting

I grew up in a rural area and this had a great influence on my life. I call my village an institution for life orientation because I learned that experiences gained in the village inform behaviour and attitude of future personal and professional development. However, Evans (2014, p. 181) emphasises that "coaching and mentoring" is a tool of professional growth as my village offered free coaching and mentoring in everyday rural life. I was born in a rural area at Kwa-Maphumulo and I am the only child of Mr and Mrs Mhlongo. Figure 4.1 is a photograph of me as a baby with my parents.



Figure 4.1 Photograph of me as a baby with my parents

I was born in a village in Kwa Maphumulo, Kwa Ngoni where cow dung was a valuable asset and mud and grass were used to build houses while ceramic tiles were a dream. High unemployment was the order of the day and farming was the common economic activity for every household. Most women including my mother, depended on money from their husbands. Women spent most of their time farming as it was the only way of surviving. I personally abhor farming because we had to spend almost the whole day planting or cultivating the soil. Growing up in a rural area was a critical moment in my life as a young black girl.

As a young girl, I grew up in a place which is underdeveloped, with no resources, no infrastructure and no industries. The life in my village taught me, my family and the people in the village that nothing comes easy if you needed something, you had to work very hard to get it. From 1980, my father worked as a gardener in a private home in Johannesburg but he died when I was in standard 7 (grade 9). My father was not educated and was a victim of the apartheid inequities and discriminations. As my father lived in a backroom of his employers residence, we were not allowed to visit him. He would visit us once or twice in a year. I spent all my life with my mother who remained a housewife.

My mother was not educated and never worked in formal employment ever, yet she was my mentor, provider and role model. I learnt most of the things I know from my mother. I always wanted to be educated and have a different life than that of a rural girl. The greatest sorrow in my life was that I have no siblings which has taught me to be independent. I have fought all my battles and life's challenges alone in my early childhood. I am a living testimony of a girl who comes from a rural area where education was seen as a waste of time but rose to heights unimaginable. Patriarchy was the norm in my community where women were treated as mere objects to do the cooking and care for the men and the children. They had no voice in the community and men took all the decisions on behalf of women. Figure 4.2 is a photograph of my mother and me.



Figure 4.2 Photograph of my mother and me

Because I wanted something different from the others in my community, it inspired me to be strong, set goals and be successful with an academic career. I was the first graduate in the family with a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting degree. Being celebrated as a graduate, instilled in me, my love for education and even when things got tough, I knew that I had my family support.

Seeing the women in my village cooking, fetching water from the river and cleaning the yard, acted as my motivator to be better than that. Girls in my village, dropped out of school and married very young and became housewives. But I was different because in my spare time, I would watch a small television set and I fell in love with the imaginary life. I did not want to be like the other girls nor did I want to live the same way my mother had lived, but I was forced to participate in my community activities. Nevertheless, I motivated myself and believed that this life was temporary for me and no matter what, my life will change one day. I accepted that I am Maphumulo girl and I was forced to act like all other girls in the area. It was quite challenging because some community principles were hard to follow. Women were not allowed to participate in the community meetings, yet women were fully responsible for all activities in their homes and in the village. Our mothers used to pay Khandapondwe (rates) in the absence of our fathers. I could not understand why this money was paid by woman who were not employed. Poverty was a big issue in our community. Women in my area survived all their obstacles without fail, no matter how poor they were.

To perform certain duties like participating on ‘memulo’ (21st birthday celebrations) and girls virginity checking in rural communities, makes a girl feel accepted. I wanted my mother to be proud so I had to do those activities. Community activities in my rural area taught me love and respect for elders, peers and children. I learned to take instructions from the community elders. When my father died, my mother became an unemployed widow. We were very poor but my mother gave all what she had, to make ‘memulo’ happen for me because of my good behaviour and the love she has for me. Even today, I still cannot believe that she made the memulo function possible. Such functions are done by families who are financially stable and commonly done by fathers for their daughters. For the memulo, I was celebrated by my community, I got gifts and money. Even today, I am still an example to the young girls in my village as I am that girl who every woman wants to see, when I go home. The gift of life I have received from being a rural girl, is that I have more than one parent as all the elders in my community are respected as my parents, I receive love and blessings every step of my life. I sometimes wonder what I have done for the Lord, to get this special love from the old and the young community members. The lesson I learned from my rural background is that everything is possible when you believe, have faith and change your goals into actions. Figure 4.3 is a photograph of my rural community.



Figure 4.3 Photograph of my rural community

4.3 My life as a feminist

Women in my area were far different from the women I used to see on television. Deep inside, I hated the idea of being a housewife but I did like the way elders in my community raised a girl. In addition, violence against woman and children was normal and accepted in the village. The authorities respected men and took no action against them for their violent behaviour. I became a feminist because of the atrocities levelled against women in my community. My dream was to complete schooling and look after my mother and not be a victim like the women in my village. I had different desires, of which I became a joke to my family and the girls in my village when I spoke about it. When engaging with other girls from my area, they thought that I was crazy. I used to dream about things which were seen as impossible at that time. Some were very sure that I will never live my dream. The negativity from people around me made me become a very reserved girl. My mannerisms were acquired by my everyday experiences. However, being raised in a place where no one fought your battles made me strong. I used to detest that I was born and raised in a rural setting until one day, an elder from my community told me that a “man lives within me”. His statement brought a lot of confusion within me. Later on, I asked the old man about his statement. He replied by saying “kwakhona kuthi uyangibuza ingobam awusabi, inganeyentombazane ephikelelayo phambili ayijwayelekile (The fact that

you have the guts to ask me is unusual, a girl with a strong pushy character is rare in our community)". In comparison with the other girls from my area, I agreed with the old man's statement. I was strong-minded and independent and I knew what I wanted and I was determined to achieve my goals regardless of challenges. Figure 4.4 is a photograph of me in my rural setting.



Figure 4.4 Photograph of me in my rural setting

Today, my perspective has changed and I see things in a different light. I feel blessed to have been born in a rural setting. Being raised in a place with no resources, teaches a person to improvise. A skill of facing all obstacles on your way made me strong and resilient. I am pleased about the fact, that values have been instilled in me to treat all adults with respect because I grew up in a place where elder people in the village take on parental roles with all children and treat all children as their own. Taking instruction from different people and making it your normal way of life has taught me not to be arrogant but to treat people with the respect they deserve.

Indigenous knowledge and its skills are delivered during community or family gatherings. I learned how to respect and listen to other people. I only realised now that what I thought was abuse against women was an indirect way of making women more independent and self-reliant.

As much as I have learned valuable lessons from my rural upbringing, an important question that always bothers me is who actually decided that certain duties are for men and certain duties are for women. That is my feminist persona rearing its cheeky head here.

As a young girl in a rural setting, you have to choose whether you follow the existing life or you choose 'the path less travelled'. I chose to learn from the lessons of others and use the hardships as the impetus for success. I lived and embraced the values of my rural community, but I dreamed of another life inspired by what I saw on my small television set. Television had a great influence on me and made me not want to live the life of the women in my village because television teaches you to have choices. I celebrate that I am a girl from a rural setting because its contributions are part of my learning as the values instilled in me by my rural upbringing has shaped who I have become today. My only desire is that I pray that women from rural settings use their skills, talents and capabilities to build their own wealth and economic stability and not rely on their husbands who in turn make them doormats.

4.4 My primary school experience

My school experiences, both in primary and secondary school, will forever be remembered throughout my life. The gravel road, long distances, walking in pathways, scared of snakes and ghosts, the cold stream water and fights after school were my daily hardships. Walking early in the morning a long distance, sometimes with no shoes, scared of punishment from teachers, makes failure not an option. However, good performance in the classroom keeps a person going and it fosters motivation to succeed. The little activities done at school are capable of shaping learners positively. For example, being one of the top 10 achievers per grade and being called out in assembly in front of the whole school, had a great influence on my quest. Back then, that was my only hope to get out of my legacy of poverty. Proving a point that a bright future is possible even for a young girl who grew up in a rural village, was my mission. The only way I could do this was to do my best at school and go to university.

Time management was a huge stumbling block to my success as well as corporal punishment being my daily fear. I was scared of any form of punishment and at that time, the easiest and most commonly used method was corporal punishment. Our classes in primary school were huge with a very large number of learners in one class. I am very proud that my performance

made me popular at school despite the fact that I was not good at sport, academics was my forte'. Figure 4.5 is a photograph of one of my primary school report cards.

REPORT ON MHLONGO BEAUTY
Term ending 04.12.1997 Number of days absent _____
Standard 5
Number in standard 40
General remarks
WELL DONE. SHE IS COMPETENT.
SHE CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS
NEXT YEAR.

RECORD OF EXAMINATION WORK

SUBJECTS	Marks		
	Maximum	pupil's	EFFORT
1. VERNACULAR	100	97	B
2. ENGLISH	100	59	C
3. MATHEMATICS	100	86	B
4. GENERAL SCIENCE	100	85	B
5. GEOGRAPHY	100	99	B
6. HISTORY	100	80	B
7. AFRIKAANS	100	48	C

COMMENTS ON OTHER CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Art _____
Music GOOD
Gardening _____
Health Education _____
Physical Education _____
Sport GOOD
Handwriting GOOD
Homework GOOD
Book Education _____
Guidance GOOD
Scripture GOOD

Conduct Good

W. Ntshato
Class Teacher
REMARKS BY PRINCIPAL
S. Ntshato
Principal
DATE 04.12.1997
School will reopen on 20.01.1998
Kindly notify the Principal if the pupil was in contact with an infectious disease during the holidays.

RESULT: PASSED
OTIMATI C.P. SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 203
MAMULUQ
4470

Figure 4.5 My primary school report card

The sad and the tough issue in my primary school is that I got sick often, I would spend hours sitting under a tree when feeling sick because I couldn't go home as the teachers would not allow me to walk alone since home was far from the school. I will never forget the care I got from my teachers and classmates. Also, my sickness gave me an opportunity to eat my teachers' lunch and I am grateful for that because I was always hungry. My teachers were like my parents, my nurses, and my counsellors. Despite all these obstacles, I enjoyed singing at school which brought me much joy and peace and made me forget my illness.

4.5 My secondary school experiences

I was one of struggling and poor girls in high school. Normally when grade eight learners go to high school, they usually have a new school uniform. I started high school with an old uniform donated by a neighbour who completed grade 12 at that time. I used to wear a smile like any other girl and pretend to be happy while deep inside me, I was hurting and embarrassed. The donated uniform was an oversize and it was faded but I wore it because I had no choice. I believed God had a plan for me as he has been my provider all the way. My class

teacher was like a mother to me. She spent 5 years with us as a class teacher and the class gave her a name “My miss”. My miss played many roles apart from being our teacher and she changed our lives. During the break, I would not go outside with other learners because I had no money. I did not want to be ridiculed or a burden to any of the girls at school. Poverty and circumstances forced me to focus more on my studies and the rewards paid off as I maintained first position in the class from grade 8 to 12. During the break, I used to remain in class and keep myself busy with my studies and homework. I started writing speeches and submitted them to my class teacher. She then created a platform for me to present my speeches in the assembly on Thursdays. One of my speeches caught the teachers’ and learners’ attention and they could not stop talking about it. The speech was called “Who am I”. I became popular and earned recognition and respect from other learners. My miss was my class teacher and subject teacher in the FET phase. I was struggling with Economics, and I admitted that I did not know much about Economics as a subject. My miss gave me no choice, she instilled in me a love for Economics as a subject. I never thought that one day I will be a teacher, let alone, an Economics teacher. Figure 4.6 is a photograph of my secondary school.



Figure 4.6 Photograph of my secondary school

4.6 Relationship with my mother: My role model

As a young girl, I used to follow my mother around and try to emulate everything she did, such as cooking, cleaning the yard, and making mud blocks. It all started as a game but surprisingly even today, I own these skills of domestic activities, making my house a home. From my mother's teaching, I learned to complete any given task on time and I also learned to multitask. Figure 4.7 is a photograph of my mother and me where my mother's love for me is evident.



Figure 4.7 Photograph of mother's love

My mother was my first love and my pillar of strength. My mother is my life coach and I try to mirror her actions. She is a tough lady and she always leads the way. Her prayers open rusted gates for me. My mother once said that if a person wants a long-lasting fire, there must be strong wood. This turned out to be a life lesson for me. My mother built a solid and strong foundation for me that will last forever. When I am in class teaching, I teach as if there is no tomorrow. When walking out of class, I want to leave with a clear conscious. I teach, based on the lessons from my mother in my vision, laying a solid foundation. My mother taught me to be humble. She taught me to love and to be independent. My mother's definition of a strong woman is the woman who completes her given task successfully and overcomes all obstacle in life. Figures 4.8 are photographs of my mother and me depicting our strong bond.



Figure 4.8 Photographs of my mother and me depicting our strong bond

When I think of my mother, I imagine her in the kitchen. My mother's hut is my parliament. At home, we had five separate rondavels but we spent most of our time in her rondavel. The cooking, the teachings, the prayer, the singing, all happen in my mother's home. My mother taught me how to make a fire in the house. She used to say "when I enter into the house, as a woman I need to warm the house". When I was younger, we did not have electricity in our home. In order to get warm water, cook food or make tea, we had to make a fire. I would sometimes be left alone in the house, when my mother was doing other activities such as farming or going somewhere with other women in the valley. When left alone, I would perform all duties that are usually performed by my mother. When she is going somewhere, she would give me instructions. I had no other option except to perform those duties without fail. My mother is known as a very strict woman in the area. Respect was my everyday lesson. I am the person I am today because of the lessons I learnt in my mother's hut kitchen. I define my home as an umbrella for all life lessons. Figure 4.9 is a memory drawing I did of my mother's rondavel.

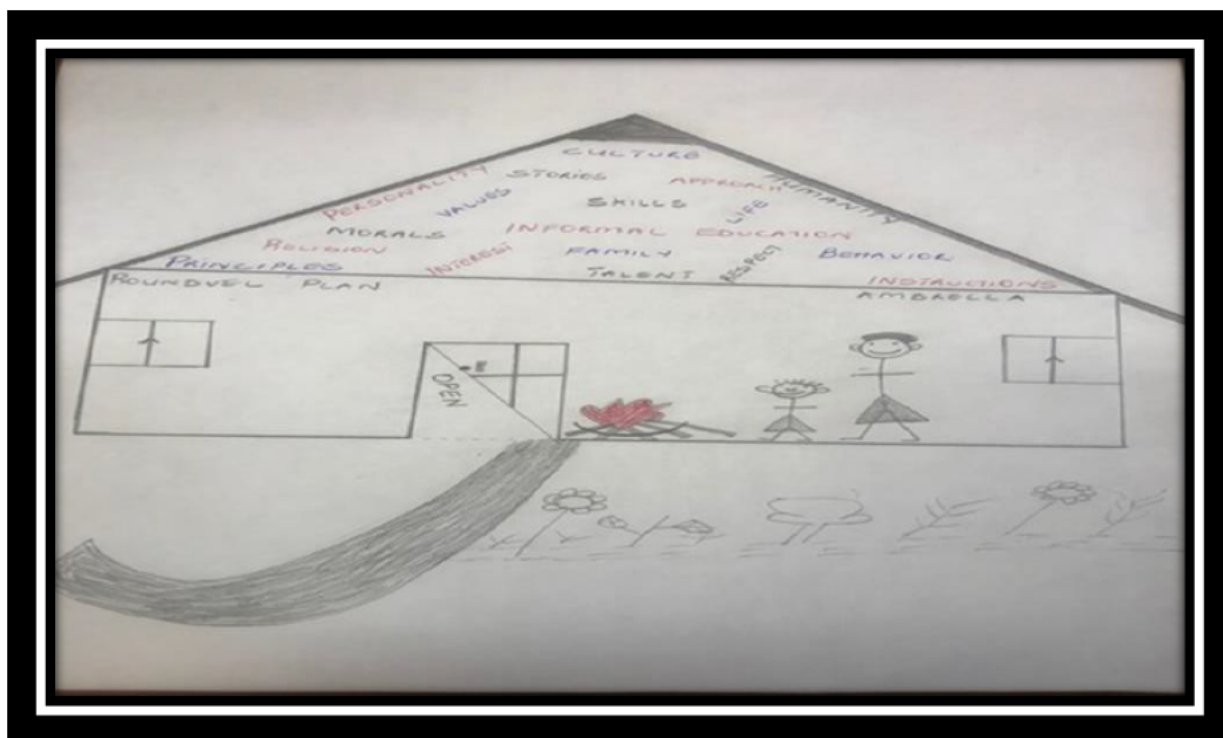


Figure 4.9 Memory drawing of my mother's rondavel

4.7 My teaching experiences

Teaching is not only about the work done inside the class. In the staffroom, we are more like siblings. We are like a family. we sing, play and pray together. We see each other five days a week even sometimes on a Saturday. My principal once said, "as teachers, we spend more time at work and less time in our home'. The staff at my school have made my workplace a second home. I enjoy being with the them. One of the lessons I have learnt is that work conflicts must end at work. But I learnt that discussion and sharing of ideas that take place in the staffroom create learning platforms. Figure 4.10 is a photograph of the staffroom at my school.



Figure 4.10 Photograph of the staffroom at my school

At my school, we do not like Fridays at all. We created many jokes and named Friday as “Gomora, Isihogo (The hell day)”. All these names are used to ease the tension on Friday. We remind each other about all the required submissions. We help one another and we work as a team. Another area that we dread is the grade 12 pass rate analyses meeting. My principal analyses the pass rate in all subjects especially grade 12 and then says: “Economics, 50 learners wrote, 47 made it but we are not going to rest if we still have 3 learners who did not make it. Moreover, in Economics you have 9 learners with level two passes, that’s not good”. When the meeting is finished and the management have left us, noise will be loud in the venue. We praised, teased and congratulated teachers if their learners did well. Words such as “Professor, Skhokho, Nkunzi” are said to each other and hands are shaken all over the staffroom, praising the colleagues whose learners performed well. I remember an incident when I was deeply touched because a lady who supplies our school uniforms sent 40 ties for matriculants as memorabilia. We also bought school ties for well-performers in our subject and one for a needy learner.

Teachers at my school are not just teachers but act in loco parentis. Each year, teachers provide learners with many different things to support their learning. This includes free modelling

lessons for learners to teach them poise and decorum. We ensure that we bring together learning and sport, educational trips and organise people from the outside to come and speak to and motivate our learners. Figure 4.11 is a photograph of my work table at school which is always in disarray which is indicative of how busy I am at school.

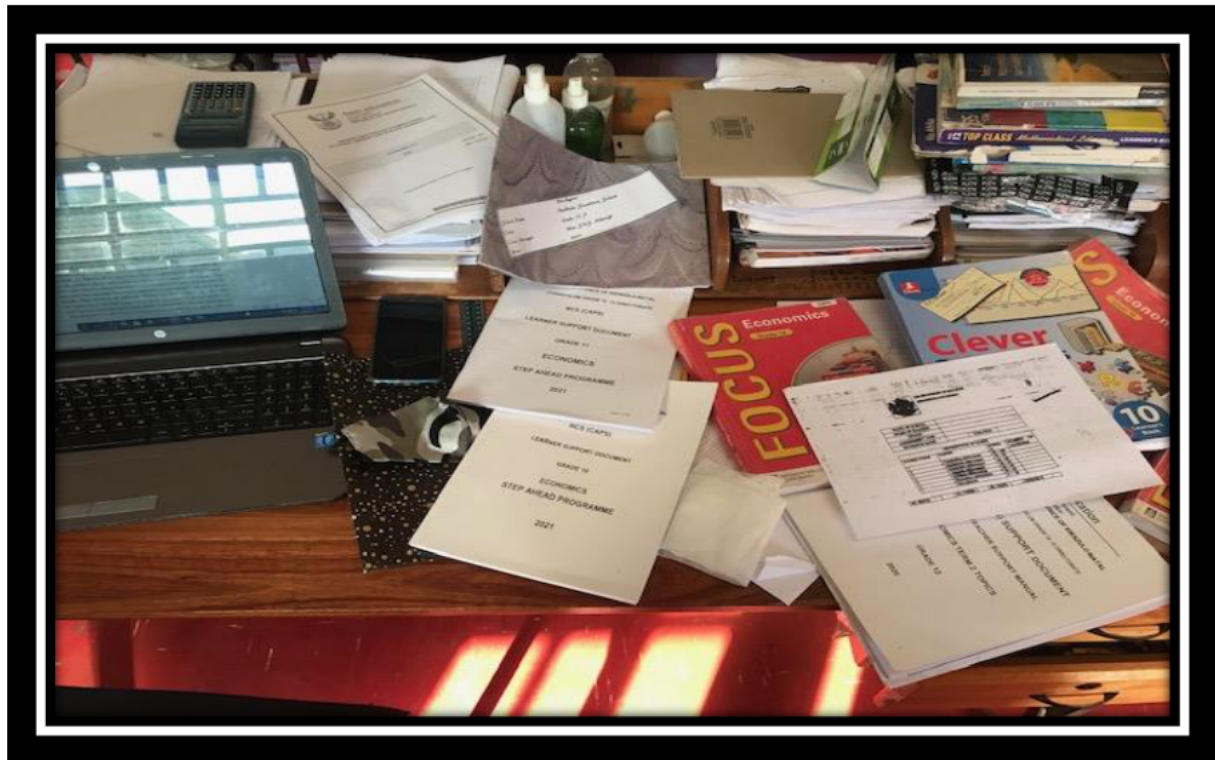


Figure 4.11 My work table at school

4.8 My Economics cluster experiences

A cluster is formed by a group of teachers teaching the same subject in schools in a particular geographical area. I met these teachers in my Economics cluster and they readily accepted me despite me being underqualified to teach the subject Economics. The relationship I have with my cluster teachers goes far beyond talking about teaching. I remember that we even formed a stokvel. When attending cluster meetings, we formally re-marked learner's scripts and discussed the problems encountered when conducting examinations or during teaching. I became the cluster coordinator and was tasked with delegating teachers to set formal assessments for learners. When setting an assessment, I insisted that the module for which the assessment was being developed, must have a teacher guide, meet the required standard for assessment and comprise a cognitive level grid. I started by setting these tasks in grade 10. My cluster members pushed me to set assessments for all levels. Participating in the cluster as

coordinator, gave me strength and confidence when I was elected by the teachers within the district to be an examiner for grade 10 Economics. In the year 2018, three teachers including myself, were selected as subject examiners for the district. I was very happy and honoured to set a provincial Economics paper for grade 10. I got more excited when I visited my family home and found children revising and doing remedial work on a paper that was set by me. If I had not signed the confidentiality clause, I would have screamed and told them. Figure 4.12 is a photograph of me as a happy teacher



Figure 4.12 Moving into teaching from an unqualified to a qualified status

The time I entered teaching in 2007, I had a commerce qualification but I had no teaching qualification, as I never dreamt that I would be a teacher one day. However, my B Comm degree opened opportunities for me in teaching. My teaching journey was not easy and I felt that I was walking barefoot on that gravel road again as I knew nothing about education policies or the DBE. At that time, there was a grave shortage of teachers and I heard of a vacant post at a school for an Economics teacher. When I got to the school, I was told that the learners did not have an Economics teacher for two months and the school was desperate so they employed me. I had to stand in front of desperate learners and teach them a subject for which I was not qualified. Although, I was panicked, I remembered “my miss” and she automatically became

my moral support. My teaching styles and strategies especially role-play was learnt from “my miss”. Although she was far away from me, she became my guardian and role model. “My miss” made an indelible mark on me when she taught me at school and her influence in my life carried me through my early teaching days as an unqualified teacher. Figure 4.13 is a photograph of me teaching Economics.



Figure 4.13 Photograph of me teaching Economics

4.9 Learning from my mistakes

Holding my head high became my new motto. I would pretend that all was well even when I was unsure of myself. I have made mistakes and learned from them. I once marked the register incorrectly and produced a hand-written mark schedule to be submitted to the DBE. After being highly embarrassed, I learnt to mark the register correctly and complete the schedules on the computer. I would come prepared to class but once learners began asking questions, I would feel so unprepared. While I drafted good lessons, when I got to the class, I found myself teaching something else. Also, I failed to give learners feedback on time. I had problems with each and every class and I could not control my learners and had to seek management intervention. All these mistakes were lessons for me as I have learnt from them to be a competent teacher.

4.10 My formal learning

Learning in a tertiary institution wasn't as easy as I thought, as a result I failed one module. I thought studying for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) would not be challenging as I had completed a B Comm degree. I registered for the PGCE and I was very excited. I was so keen to learn how teachers should teach. When entering the university lecture room, I was hoping to be called by my first name by the other PGCE students but it was a very formal setting in the classroom. Figure 4.14 is a photograph of my PGCE lecture room at university.



Figure 4.14 Photograph of my PGCE lecture room at university

When I got there, I was overwhelmed by the quantity of work we had to do which was more interactive and hands-on than studying for the B Comm degree because we did a lot of practical activities. Another challenge was the fact I still had to go to school and teach Economics as I registered to study for the PGCE part-time. Despite actually teaching at a school, I did not get any special attention as the number of students doing PGCE was very high during the years 2009-2012 because the DBE was adamant that there should be no unqualified teachers teaching at schools and teachers were in a hurry to become qualified or they would have been dismissed from teaching. We would attend lectures in different venues as the lecture rooms were equipped with furniture and equipment for specific subject teaching. The PGCE taught me to adapt and accept changes, to be independent because I had to study on my own as I could not rely on

anyone as there were so many changes. Most of my peers graduated in 2011 while I was still doing the module I failed which was a very sore point for me. It was very hard to talk about my failure to my family and colleagues. Completing a failed module with completely new people required me to be positive and focus more on my studies. I completed my PGCE and graduated and I was very excited. Figure 4.15 is a photograph of me at my graduation.



Figure 4.15 Photograph of me at my graduation

As a fully qualified teacher, I became more positive and confident because I acquired the power and knowledge that I was looking for. I wanted more and I wanted to further my studies. The purpose was to look for greener pastures. I decided to register for an education honours degree in Teacher Development Studies (TDS). I met the other students in my group and this time we were a group of 30. My professor requested us to introduce ourselves and explain to each other, the purpose of our studying. I answered with a very loud voice and said I want to be a lecturer. During my course of study for the honours degree, my mindset changed as we were focusing on teacher identity. We were asked to recall memories of the self and the values that shaped our personal and professional identity. I started to question myself but I did not get all the answers. But this activity changed my thinking and caused me to become more self-reflective and question why I teach in the way I do. I found that during my honours study, I became more

positive about my teaching as I engaged with the other students in the group and my honours supervisors and that is what motivated to embark on this master's qualification doing a self-study with narrative inquiry.

4.11 My informal learning

4.11.1 Learning from my teaching experiences at school

Teaching connected me with many people on different levels. When I came into teaching, I knew nobody. I moved from the place where I was born and spent my childhood to a new place where I had to learn the culture. I met with the community who had different values and norms to mine. Due to the distance of the school from my family home, I had to rent a room from one of the community members. Teachers from my school as well as teachers from neighbouring schools were also renting at the same place. So, I met teachers from different backgrounds. At the rented property, there were teachers from primary school and secondary schools. Some teachers were older than me and I would call them sister. But they gave me very good advice. They told me that once we become colleagues, age should not matter but it was very awkward for me to call them by their first names but they gave me the confidence and I began using their initials when calling them, even to this day. After school, we would discuss personal and professional issues with each other.

4.11.2 Learning from workshops organised by the DBE

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) organised workshops where we discussed the content of subjects specifically. At the workshops, I found myself seated at the same table with teachers from the district schools who I did not know prior to the workshop. Some of these teachers were respected subject experts in the district. These expert teachers shared their knowledge and experiences at the workshops which for me was a very advantageous learning experience. Figure 4.16 is a photograph of some of these workshops.



Figure 4.16 Photographs of some of the workshops

I have been involved in department workshops where teachers' sit down together and discuss Economics matters. My formal learning happened at these workshops. The organised formal workshop created an opportunity to physically meet subject advisors and trained expert teachers. In these formal meetings, I discovered that we all have some form of expertise. After I attended these workshops, I found that I was very confident and self-assured because I gained many skills and my subject knowledge improved in great leaps and bounds.

After these workshops, my performance in class changed. I had full control in class and of my teaching subject. I came to know that learning is an ongoing process. Situations may change, but I learned that it is these changes that shape our personal and professional growth. The best decision I ever made for myself was to further my studies because I wanted a voice, I wanted to be accepted and I wanted to be confident. Going back to university after a long period of time wasn't easy. I was used to doing calculations in Accounting since I studied a B Comm Accounting degree but I was able to change and adapt to education modules. When I think back on my childhood in the rural area, the morals and values that were instilled in me is what propelled me into the future of teaching. I think about my mother who adjusted to life as a widow and all the other women in my village who were strong, determined and self-reliant, I

feel proud for having the same attitudes and beliefs. Becoming a qualified teacher gave me confidence. To represent the new me, I constructed a collage in Figure 4.17



Figure 4.17 Collage of the new me

4.12 A woman in a male dominated school

In my high school, there were more male teachers than female teachers. At the school where I teach, there are 9 female teachers and 12 male teachers. My feminist tendencies came to the fore when I realised that I found myself in a male dominated environment. I found that the females were very quiet during meetings. But I did not want to be quiet because when you are quiet, others take binding decisions on your behalf, I wanted to be heard. I had to voice out when I see gender inequalities. I started to question, ask for clarity or openly raise issues, share my ideas and opinions during the meetings. Being vocal led me to be nominated to serve on many committees. My conscience told me that if I fail to represent myself in these committees, then I will have failed myself and other teachers as failure is not in my vocabulary. Dedication and perfection became my moto. I participated in the meetings actively and soon other female teachers joined me. Currently, regarding our school activities, there are no activities that are set aside for male teachers only. The battle that I am still fighting at my school, is the unequal distribution of teaching subjects. Some subjects are recognised as special subjects for male teachers only and were allocated more lessons than the subjects taught by female teachers. I fought to get more lessons for my subject Economics but it was and remains a contentious issue

because my pass rates are scrutinised more than the pass rates of male teachers since I dared to question the inequalities that were so blatantly visible

4.13 My learning from my involvement in other activities

Teaching is not only about going to class. Teaching involves doing other activities for example, sport, cultural activities, debates, entrepreneurship day, youth day celebration and many more. I make myself available for other activities. I always try to do my best. One of the things I do when given a task, is consultation. By working together on projects or initiatives, I have come to believe that we can learn from each other's strengths and expertise. Consulting those teachers who have experience and knowledge and observing other teachers during extracurricular activities, such as sports events, drama performances, or science fairs, I learn by observing these teachers engage with learners, manage classroom dynamics, and facilitate learning outside of traditional classroom settings. Attending workshops, conferences, or seminars focused on extracurricular activities helped me gain new ideas, techniques, and strategies for enhancing learner engagement and learning. These events often feature presentations by experienced educators and experts in specific fields. Also, inviting guest speakers or organising presentations related to extracurricular topics, exposed me to new ideas, perspectives, and methodologies. These events sparked my creativity and inspired me to explore innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

4.14 Networking with other schools

Building relationships with teachers from other schools enabled me to exchange ideas and learn from diverse perspectives. Platforms such as social media provided me with opportunities for connecting with peers. Also, teaching in other schools which was organised for me specially as lead teacher, to teach Economics during Saturdays and weekends, I learnt a lot about the dynamics of other schools and learners. Teachers may have similar qualification but their teaching methods, experiences and style are not the same. When I am invited to team teach with other teachers, I have learned that team teaching often fosters interactive and dynamic classroom environments. With more than one teacher, there are more opportunities for discussions, debates, and collaborative activities, which can increase learner engagement and participation. Also, each teacher brings their own expertise and specialisation to the class and not only does that allow for more in-depth coverage of topics, I learned in the process and acquired a deeper understanding of the subject matter and I was exposed to a wider range of knowledge and skills.

4.15 Lifelong learner

I have been to different tertiary institutions. I made new friends that shared a great connection with me. I have studied through many different approaches. I have met different supervisors who have added value to my education. Even today, I am still willing to meet people with new and positive learning ideas. I learn new things each and every day, inside and outside the classroom. I am still willing to learn more to develop personally and professionally. My learning also benefits my learners. Knowledge gives power and confidence. I have seen myself doing wonders when I have knowledge and confidence.

4.16 Rewards of my learning

From all the learning I have done in my life, I have gained more knowledge than I had before I started my journey in teaching. I can say that the knowledge I gained in my life, has broadened my horizons. I am a teacher who is still learning and gaining more knowledge. My pains and hardship paid off. When I look back at the challenges I had, I believe that it was all worth it. Today I am one of the well-known teachers within the district. I have worked with different teachers and taught at different levels. I have been selected to participate at a provincial level preparing tasks and notes for Economics. I fall in love with my teaching every day. My dedication is not based on monetary gain but to see learners excelling in the subject.

Sharing a platform with high profile teachers in Economics has added growth and competence to my teaching. The skill and information gained when conducting workshops or at a provincial memorandum discussion, has added to my subject content knowledge. I have learned a lot from formal workshops organised by the department. The person that I am today is shaped by their contributions. I consider myself as a lucky person to be surrounded by highly experienced people. I have been receiving certificates since 2015. Each and every reward that I have received is linked to many memories and experiences. This certificate in Figure 4. 18 and a trophy in Figure 4.19, serves as motivation to me.



Figure 4.18 Certificate for Excellence



Figure 4.19 Trophy for recognition

4.17 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I provided a narrative account of my childhood experiences growing up in a rural community and I then related my primary school and secondary school experiences. Next, I spoke about my relationship with my mother who was my role model and followed this with my teaching experiences. Next, I highlighted my Economic cluster experiences and then I gave an overview of moving into teaching from an unqualified to a qualified teacher. I then explained how I learnt from my mistakes. Thereafter, I outlined my formal and informal learning in various contexts and then I described my role as a woman in a male dominated environment. I described my learning from involvement in other activities and my networking with other schools. I then explained how I remain a lifelong learner and the rewards I received for my learning. This chapter concluded with a summary of the entire chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOGNISING AND REMEMBERING MYSELF AS AN ECONOMICS TEACHER

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse and interpret my reconstructed storied narratives of lived experiences. The previous chapter presented the stories of my lived experiences. Since this study focuses on how teachers learn, I am going to approach my learning from the viewpoint of Reids' (2007) four quadrants of teacher learning namely the formal/informal and the planned/incidental as well as Evan's (2014) three dimensions teacher learning which are behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse my personal and professional growth stories by answering research question two; *What personal and professional experiences shaped what it means to an unqualified Economics teacher in a rural school?* According to

I commenced this chapter by doing a self-portrait collage. The self-portrait collage was constructed with pictures from magazines, newspapers, different coloured pens, blank paper, and a chat (McKay et al., 2006). The self-portrait collage is used in this chapter, as a tool for extracting themes to discuss my findings in a coherent manner. I cut pictures and words which had a meaning to me from magazines and pasted it on the self-portrait collage. I arranged the pictures and words into my personal and professional experiences. My last step was to group words which had the same meaning. The simplicity of a collage made it easy for me to understand and find themes for this chapter. This chapter is divided into two sections. I gave the first section, the title 'Victim to Victor', and the second, section is titled 'Journey of professionalism'. Figure 5.1 is a photograph of the self-portrait collage.

5.2 Self-portrait collage

A self-portrait collage is an artistic creation in which an individual, constructs a representation of themselves using various materials and images. Instead of a traditional self-portrait created through drawing, painting, or photography, a collage allows the researcher to incorporate multiple elements to convey aspects of their identity, personality, experiences, or emotions (Lahman et al., 2021). Figure 5.1 below is a photograph of my self-portrait collage.

5.2.1 Poverty and race in a rural setting

Poverty and race intersect in complex ways in rural settings, often highlighting systemic inequalities and historical disparities. Rural areas, especially in certain regions, tend to have higher poverty rates compared to urban areas. Factors such as limited job opportunities, lower wages, and lack of access to quality education and healthcare contribute to economic hardship in these communities.

Black African people particularly, are disproportionately affected by poverty in rural areas. Historical factors like discrimination, segregation, and unequal access to resources have contributed to these disparities. Rural communities often face challenges accessing basic necessities such as affordable housing, transportation, nutritious food, and healthcare services. This lack of access exacerbates poverty and can perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage.

In the above excerpt, I highlight the effect of poverty (Risky & Suryahandi, 2019). Being raised in a family where there is poverty, comes with many challenges. Families living in rural areas are more likely to bear the burden of environmental pollution and degradation. Rural schools face resource constraints, including limited funding, outdated facilities, and shortages of qualified teachers. Figure 5.2 is depictive of the situation of poverty and race in a rural community.

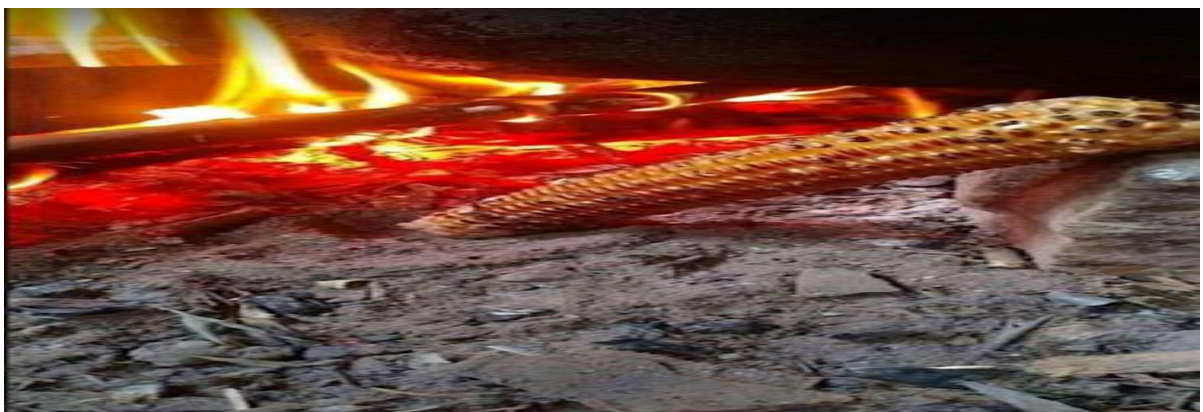


Figure 5.2 Image depicting the situation of poverty and race in a rural community

(https://www.google.com/search?q=picture++depicting+the+situation+of+poverty+and+race+in+a+rural+community&sca_esv=a74a00dabe12077a&rlz=1C1GCEU_enZA1088ZA1088&ei=sizPZc7gOf2ahbIPnbOr6AE&ved=0ahUKEwjOgbbex6-EAxV9TUEAHZ3ZCh0Q4dUDCBA&uact=5&oq=picture++depicting+the+situation+of+poverty+and+race+in+a+rural+community&gs_lp=Egxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcniAisXBpY3R1cmUgIGRlcGljdGluZyB0aGUgc2l0dWF0aW9uIG9mIHBvdmVydHkgYW5kIHJhY2UgaW4gYSBydXJhbCBjb21tdW5pdHII-0lQAFiDNnABeAGQAQCYAYoCoAG4C6oBAzItNrgBA8gBAPgBAQ&sclient=gws-wiz-serp)

This can hinder educational attainment and perpetuate intergenerational poverty. Addressing poverty and racial inequality in rural areas requires comprehensive policies that focus on economic development, access to quality education and healthcare, infrastructure improvements, and environmental justice. Efforts should be made to include the voices and perspectives of affected communities in policy-making processes. Grassroots organisations and community-led initiatives play a crucial role in addressing poverty and racial disparities in rural areas. Empowering local residents to advocate for their needs and participate in decision-making processes can help drive positive change.

5.2.2 Surrounded by females

The family's gender dynamics limit the importance of schooling (Brown, 2019). In rural settings, mothers pass their knowledge to their daughters. In some contexts, traditional gender roles within families may prioritise different educational opportunities for boys and girls. This could be due to cultural norms or economic considerations. For example, if a family perceives that by investing in a son's education will lead to better economic prospects, they may prioritise his schooling over that of their daughters.

My father was working as a gardener in Johannesburg, uneducated and burdened by the atrocities of apartheid. Men and/or boys would leave their families to look for job opportunities mostly in Johannesburg. I grew up in a village where I was surrounded by females. In the absence of men, women in my community were performing all the duties at home, even the work that was traditionally for men.

In the above excerpt, it is emphasised that women were the sole providers in the absence of fathers. In my childhood, the absence of my father highlights the breakdown of growing up in a close-knit family structure. This highlights that women played the role of being caregivers and economic providers in my community (Bueno & Vidal-Coso, 2019). Sole household providers are faced with a challenge in accessing care for themselves and their children (Kabia et al., 2018). What is more interesting is that, it recognises the women as individuals with the capacity to negotiate the challenges of village life. Based on my story, being surrounded by woman does mean that me, as a person felt incomplete. Activities that were normally done by

men, were done by my mother, in the absence of my father. The excerpt highlights my determination to disrupt the taken-for-granted understandings that some activities are for men only. The role of mothers in passing down knowledge to their daughters, highlights the importance of informal education within families, especially in rural areas where formal schooling may be limited. This transmission of knowledge can encompass various skills and the practical know-how relevant to rural life and livelihoods. Despite the importance of maternal knowledge transmission, girls in rural areas may still face challenges in accessing formal education. This could be due to various factors such as financial constraints, lack of infrastructure, cultural biases against girls' education, or the need for girls to contribute to household labour or income generation, as was my situation. Fortunately, in my case, I was able to transcend the belief, that growing up in a home with only my mother, did not direct me towards low-skilled vocational opportunities rather than pursuing further education. This could have stemmed from economic necessity or perceptions about traditional gender roles and suitable occupations for girls.

5.2.3 Life lived by rural women

The experiences of rural women are diverse and multifaceted, shaped by a complex interplay of factors including culture, geography, and socio-economic status. In my village, the women often engage in a variety of work, including farming labour, household chores, fetching water from the river, collected wood for fires as well as caring for the children and seeing to their husband's every need. Figure 5.3 is an image of some of the rural women's chores.



Figure 5.3 Image of some of the rural women's chores

(https://www.google.com/search?q=Image+of+++some+of+the+rural+women%E2%80%99s+chores&sca_esv=a74a00dabe12077a&rlz=1C1GCEU_enZA1088ZA1088&ei=nyvPZeSIHaHIhbIPqpiNgA)

I highlight in this section, some of the experiences of the women in my village that made me look at life differently than others. But I learned that to deviate from the normal routine in the community, means choosing a new path.

Rural women typically bear a significant burden of household and caregiving responsibilities, including childcare, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of elderly family members. These responsibilities can be particularly demanding in contexts where resources and infrastructure are limited. Rural women often have limited access to resources such as education, healthcare, and financial services. This can hinder their ability to improve their economic situation and make decisions that affect their lives. Rural women frequently face discrimination and gender-based barriers that restrict their opportunities and autonomy. This can manifest in various forms, including limited access to land ownership, unequal pay for work, and cultural norms that prioritize men's roles and decisions. Access to education for rural women can be limited due to factors such as distance to schools, cultural norms that prioritize boys' education, and economic constraints. However, education is crucial for empowering women and improving their opportunities for economic and social advancement.

I emphatically believed that I did not want to live the life of a rural woman because I learned that despite the challenges they face, many rural women are actively engaged in efforts to improve their own lives and communities. This can include participating in self-help groups, advocating for their rights, and engaging in community development initiatives. But access to education for rural women can be limiting, due to factors such as distance to schools, cultural norms that prioritise boys' education, and economic constraints. However, I also discovered that education is crucial for empowering women and improving their opportunities for economic and social advancement and that is why I was adamant about not becoming a slave to some man but a strong determined woman. I decided how I want to live my life and not let my mother or the community force me into a life of drudgery and submission. I was strong enough to stand firm and take control of my life and today, I am the better for that decision.

5.3 Resisting patriarchy

Resisting patriarchy involves challenging and dismantling systems, norms, and attitudes that privilege men and marginalise women and other genders (Jonnalagadda & Madhavi, 2019). Patriarchy and gender roles in communities and stereotypes, have a powerful influence on the division of roles (Wood, 2019). Society in general believes that women are not supposed to have a voice and be independent.

Patriarchy intersects with other forms of oppression such as racism, classism, and ableism. For centuries, men have been raised in societies that have taught them that to be in control is successful and expected of them. Men have been given privileges in the world over women with regard to work – there are more male bosses, men overall are paid more than women, men are more likely to be hired (a woman may need maternity leave etc). As the feminist movement has continued throughout history, it seems, we are desperately pushing to balance the scales between the masculine and feminine divide (Warren, 2019).

This section highlights my positive mind and fighting spirit in spite of the male chauvinistic practices that took place in my rural setting. I set my own standards and stood firm about my decision to have a better life. I overcame patriarchy and men's oppression which raised concerns about me been accepted in my community. Nevertheless, bell hook's quote was my constant reminder that patriarchy does not only define male actions of oppression of women, but also some communities and cultural narratives perpetuate patriarchy (Serres, 2019). That is why I pushed back against the system of patriarchy both in my rural community and at my school because I came to know from Serres (2019), that patriarch is not exactly an overt attempt by men to dominate women but an age-old system we were born into and participate in, mostly unintentionally. While women who do hold this position are expected to pander to these male norms, I definitely was not one of them. Figure 5.4 is an image representing the domination of men over women.



Figure 5.4 Image representing the domination of men over women

(https://www.google.com/search?q=Image+representing+the+domination+of+men+over+women&sca_esv=a74a00da be12077a&rlz=1C1GCEU_enZA1088ZA1088&ei=2CrPZYTYH)

5.4 Lesson learned as a young black girl going to school barefoot

Walking to school early in the morning for long distances, with no shoes, acted as my impetus to want to improve my life. I respected myself deeply and respecting yourself means taking care of your physical well-being and presenting yourself in a way that reflects your self-worth and dignity.

Walking barefoot is a common occurrence in rural areas, particularly in regions where resources are scarce or cultural practices dictate such behaviour. In many rural communities, especially in developing countries, it's not uncommon for both girls and boys to walk barefoot due to various reasons. No doubt, I embraced my cultural heritage and identity, but me walking barefoot was not because of a cultural belief but because of poverty. While walking barefoot was the norm, I also recognised the importance of adapting to modern norms and practices. While cultural practices are important, personal beliefs are equally important and it's essential to balance them with practical considerations. Hence, walking on the gravel road without shoes, I

always kept uppermost in my mind that if I wanted to better myself, the only way was education because education is a powerful tool that can empower you to create a better future for yourself.

My fear and pain led to my determination to pursue my desire to be an educated girl and complete my schooling successfully. Figure 5.5 is an image of me as a barefoot young girl.

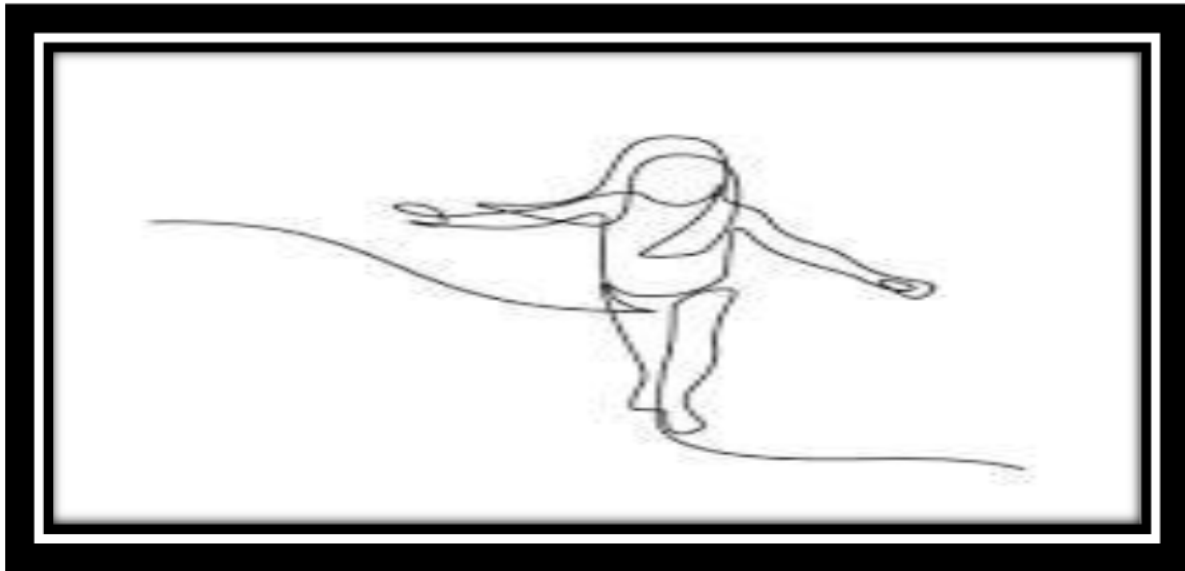


Figure 5.5 Image depicting me as a barefoot young girl

(https://www.google.com/search?q=skecth+of+barefoot+young+girl&rlz=1C1GCEU_enZA1088ZA1088&oq=skecth+of+barefoot+young+girl&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIB)

In spite of pain and fear, my academic achievements far outweighed my pain and suffering which was enhanced by being recognised as a top achiever. This serves as motivation for me to invest in education. Education is a way out of poverty (Cuearesma, Fengler & Kharas, 2018), and my poor background was not going to determine my future. In addition, the above extract highlights that the small acts such as being called out in front of the whole school for something good, leaves an indelible mark that can shape children positively.

5.5 The influence of television

Television's influence on society is vast and multifaceted, impacting everything from culture and politics to education and entertainment. Television plays a significant role in shaping cultural norms, values, and trends. Through various programmes, including dramas, sitcoms, and reality shows, television reflects and reinforces societal beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes.

Television has the power to shape societal norms and perceptions by portraying diverse characters and storylines. Representation on television can influence how different groups are perceived and treated in society. Figure 5.6 is an image depicting my small television set.

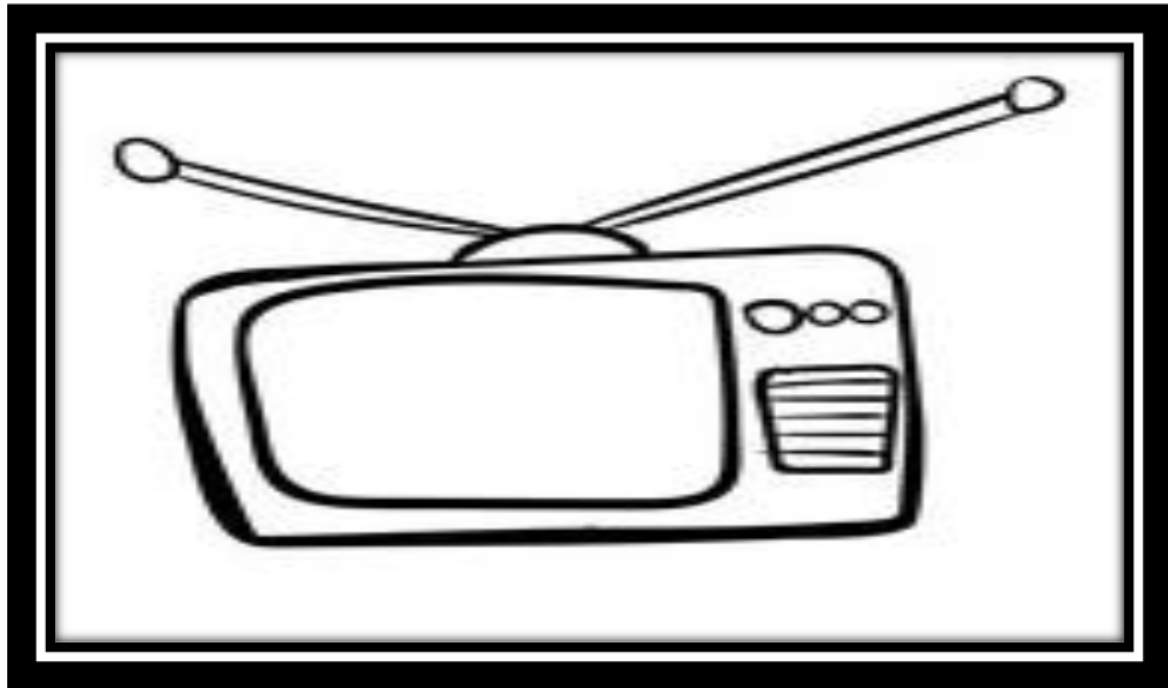


Figure 5.6 Image depicting my small television set

(https://www.google.com/search?q=skecth+of+small+television+set&sca_esv=a74a00dabe12077a&rlz=1C1GCEU_enZA1088ZA1088&ei=KirPZZ6CE8-khbIP7qaZ6AM&ved=0ahUK)

Television has facilitated the globalisation of storytelling by allowing audiences around the world to access and consume content from different cultures and countries. This exposure to diverse storytelling traditions has enriched the creative landscape and inspired my storytelling curiosity. Because television's influence on storytelling is vast and multifaceted, the many hours I spent watching me small television set, shaped the way, stories of my lived experienced were conceived, structured, and presented in this research study.

As a young poor girl, the magic of television was like a window into worlds I only imagined. And this allowed me view new cultures, ideas, and perspectives. Television sparked my imagination and made me aware of the infinite wonders that awaited me in the future. I was removed from my context and transported to a magical world where the woman were treated with kindness and respect and where there was no poverty, hardships and suffering. Television motivated me to want to be a better version of myself.

5.6 Rurality and poverty: The beauty of education for disrupting economic deprivation

Rurality and poverty often intertwine, creating complex challenges for individuals and communities. Poverty rates are highest in urban and more in rural settings (Sokolowski & Lewandowski, 2020). Rural areas are still underdeveloped and lacking resources which contribute to poverty. The effect of poverty and rurality on young girls most often leads to social disruption. Many rural communities lack stable employment opportunities. Lack of community investment and instability in the economy, contribute to social inequities (Atteridge & Strambo, 2020). Rurality and poverty may be the barriers to success. Escaping from rurality and poverty requires a strong person who does not give up easily.

It is not easy to predict the future at an early age. Everyone is born gifted in his/her own way. I regard myself as a person who does not give up, a queen. When I look back, I don't believe I have made it this far. I survived the family's dark cloud of suffering. I am the first one to become a graduate with an academic qualification. I became the first working woman in my family. I valued education even when no one saw the beauty of it. I have seen that education stands as a powerful force capable of disrupting the cycle of economic deprivation in rural areas. Education provided a pathway for me from a rural area to access opportunities that might otherwise have been out of my reach. By acquiring knowledge and skills, education helped me level the playing field, enabling me get a good job. Education empowered me by instilling confidence, critical thinking skills, and the ability to make informed decisions. In rural areas where resources may be limited, education serves as a tool for self-advancement and community development.

Education disrupted my cycle of poverty by offering me the chance for upward mobility. When individuals from rural communities receive an education, they are better equipped to secure stable employment, earn higher incomes, and provide for themselves and their families, breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. I found that education fosters innovation and entrepreneurship, which are essential for economic growth in rural areas. By equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills to identify opportunities and solve problems, education fuels economic development and creates new avenues for prosperity (Grant, 2017).

Educated individuals like myself, often contribute to the development of their communities by serving as leaders, educators, and catalysts for positive change. Through education, rural communities can build stronger economies, improve infrastructure, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents. Education enhanced my access to information and resources, enabling me, from a rural area, make better-informed decisions about my livelihood, health, and well-being (Robertson & McHardy, 2020). I can safely claim that education served as a beacon of hope for disrupting my economic deprivation by empowering me and preparing me for a brighter and more prosperous future. Figure 5.7 is a photograph of me as a poverty fighter.



Figure 5.7 Photograph of me as a poverty fighter

5.7 Professional portrait collage

In Figure 5.8 are photographs of the developing professional portrait collage and the completed collage.



Complete collage portrait

Developing collage portrait

Figure 5.8 Photographs of the developing professional collage portrait and completed collage

The purpose of the collage above, is to find out how professional learning happened for me as an Economics teacher in a rural setting. When constructing this collage, I had a mental picture in mind, of a happy woman. The reason behind that happiness was that I saw myself as a better teacher than the teacher I was before. I pictured a lady who faced many challenges in her teaching journey. I began making the collage by cutting pictures and words which have a meaning for me from different magazines, I began by looking for words and pictures which fit into these three themes. I grouped the pictures using three different colour pens.

5.7.1 Born to run: journey of professionalism

A teacher is a person who delivers knowledge, especially in a school. Teachers are expected to be professionals who have studied for at least a minimum of four years in a tertiary institution. Teachers have a central role to play in the long-term resolutions in our society, (Hayes 2010). Teachers play a significant role in the upliftment and transformation of society. Becoming a successful teacher is challenging and it requires professionalism and commitment because classrooms are complex environments, with different challenging problems (Thuy 2020). Therefore, teachers have a duty to be ongoing researchers. In addition, teachers are faced with

situations where they teach learners who are sometimes more knowledgeable than them since the advent of the internet and social media.

When I first began teaching, I was very intimidated because learners in a classroom typically have diverse learning styles and preferences. Some may learn best through visual aids, while others may prefer auditory or kinesthetic learning. Catering to these diverse needs was challenging for me. Even more challenging was that each learner comes with their own background, abilities, and prior knowledge. This led to differences in understanding, pace of learning, and engagement levels, making it difficult for me to ensure that all learners are adequately challenged and supported. I found that some students exhibited disruptive behaviour, which created such a challenging environment for me because I lacked skills in managing classroom discipline while maintaining a positive learning atmosphere and I had to seek management intervention. Also, class sizes were large, making it difficult for me to provide individualised attention to each learner resulting in some learners feeling neglected or falling behind academically. I found that some learners face pressure to perform well academically, whether from parents, peers, or themselves. This pressure can create anxiety and stress, making it challenging for learners to focus and learn effectively.

Despite these challenges, I am a believer who faces the challenges head on. I was able to solve my teaching challenges by adopting a positive attitude and exposing myself to every workshop, training session and seminar to improve my teaching abilities. Being unqualified makes one feel inadequate but I accepted the challenge to teach without a relevant qualification. Doubting yourself is natural but I had to find the cause. I strongly believe that there is a reason for every problem. Defining the cause of a problem is a solution. Defining the problem is also a skill.

5.7.2 A dream chaser: Leaving a mark

A dream is a series of thoughts and imaginations about the future. Every child has dream of a so-called soft life. Dreams attract a wide range of academic and general mindsets within a person. When a dream comes true, the next step is to leave a mark. It is a daily duty of a teacher

to guide and lead learners to better thinking and better futures. Teachers are role models to learners.

As a fully qualified teacher, now I am a positive thinker. I got the power and knowledge that I was looking for. I wanted more and I wanted to further my studies. The purpose was to look for green pastures. I have achieved that now.

I liked studying and I am confident of myself. I believe in myself and feel that now I have a ability to think and be in control of my actions. Furthermore, I argue that education gave me more than one valuable thing, which is power and knowledge. I know that education filled the gaps where I was lacking. Education has the power to complete the challenging puzzle in one's life and I am passionate about learning, I always wants to get more. I make positive decisions about my life. Figure 5.9 is a photograph of me depicted as a dream chaser.



Figure 5.9 A photograph of me as a dream chaser

5.7.3 Education beyond teaching

Many people think that teaching is an easy job because we get so many holidays but each profession has its challenges. Teachers spend more time nurturing and caring for their learners, listening to their problems and sometimes provide pastoral care. Figure 5.10 is an image of a teacher offering pastoral care to a learner.



Figure 5.10 Image of a teacher offering pastoral care to a learner

(https://www.google.com/search?q=Figure+5.10+Image+of+a+teacher+offering+pastoral+care+to+a+learner&sca_esv=a74a00dabe12077a&rlz=1C1GCEU_enZA1088ZA1088&ei=)

Education beyond the classroom encompasses a broad range of experiences and opportunities for learning that occur outside of traditional academic settings. This type of education is often informal, experiential, and focused on practical skills or personal development. Participation in sports or other activities can provide valuable learning experiences. Engaging in community service or volunteer work exposes teachers to different perspectives, cultivates empathy, and fosters a sense of social responsibility. Participation in outdoor education programmes such as excursions promotes teamwork, problem-solving but takes up a lot of teachers' time. Attending workshops or seminars on topics such as financial literacy, communication skills, stress management, and decision-making equips individuals with practical life skills essential for personal and professional success. Attending workshops or seminars on topics such as financial literacy, communication skills, stress management, and decision-making equips individuals with practical life skills essential for personal and professional success

A teacher is a person who instils values in learners. Teaching is not only about transferring the content to learners. Teaching involves many other duties. Teachers, apart from delivering content have a lot of preparation to do coupled with a huge amount of paper work. Teaching is

a calling. Teachers recognize and encourage learners to maintain their performance standard. Teachers also care for those who are needy. The needy learners get love, at the end of the day all learners look the same on their school uniform. I am convinced that teaching is about providing, caring and supporting learners. Figure 5.9 is a drawing of a teacher offering pastoral care to a learner.

5.7.3.1 Participation in school activities, communities and sporting activities

Taking part is an action that denotes many types of involvement (Lara & Saracostti, 2019). Teacher's participation happens inside and outside the classroom. Participation is empowered by a physical or symbolic action. An active mind is achieved through physical participation. In school, sport is very serious. Sport in schools is supported by government and independent sponsors.

Participation in school activities fosters a sense of community among teachers, students, and parents. It can strengthen relationships and create a supportive environment within the school. That is why, I make myself available when there is a need for other activities except delivering content knowledge in a class. I found that Involvement in committees allows me to develop leadership skills, collaborate with colleagues, and contribute to decision-making processes that affect the school's direction and policies. Being involved in various activities also improves communication between myself, other teachers, learners and parents. When I participate in sports or other extracurricular activities, i serve as a positive role model for learners. Participation in school activities is enjoyable and fulfilling for me. It allows me to connect with my learners in a different context and enjoy shared experiences.

From the above extract, it is evident that I am not forced to take part in other activities but it is my choice. Furthermore, I have learned that participation in school activities, committees, and sporting events enrich my professional and personal life while contributing to a vibrant and supportive school community. Also, have felt that by doing this, I promote school spirit and pride, which can have a positive impact on the overall culture and atmosphere of the school.

Figure 5.11 is a photograph of me participating in a cultural event at school.



Figure 5.11 A photograph of me participating in a cultural event at school

5.8 Professional growth: Learning from expert teachers

5.8.1 Communities of practice

Reid's (2007) model accentuates that teacher learning take place individually and collaboratively both formally and informally (Govender, 2019) I leveraged this by participating in a community of practice (COP). Communities of practice are described as relationships between individuals and activities (Lemke 2021). These COP's can provide opportunities for teachers to share experiences, analyse teaching practices, and collectively develop innovative solutions to common teaching challenges. At a school level, a teacher gets an opportunity to meet with other teachers whom they share the common ideas with. Through involvement, communities of practice develop dialogue, and share experiences (Carroll & Mallon, 2021).

Joining a community of practice (CoP), I was provided with the opportunity to engage in continuous learning and professional development. Through sharing experiences, insights, and best practices, I enhanced my teaching skills and stayed updated on educational trends in Economics teaching. I benefitted from the guidance and mentorship of more experienced colleagues as COPs provided me with a platform for sharing advice, seeking assistance, and building relationships within the school community. CoPs allowed me to expand my professional networks and connect with colleagues both within and outside of my school. These

connections resulted in collaborations, partnerships, and opportunities for further professional growth. Most importantly, being a member of a CoPs, fostered a sense of belonging and community within the school. By coming together around shared interests and goals, I developed stronger bonds with the other teachers, which positively impacted morale and overall school culture. These learning experiences are according to Reid (2007), examples of my informal learning. In my COP, I also learned to reflect individually on my teaching experiences with the aim of making sense of my experiences. However, I found when relating my learning to Reid's four quadrant model, that the quadrants cannot be seen in isolation of each other because as a collective, the COP participated in formal hands-on sessions where we discussed innovative strategies for teaching Economics. Some of these discussions occurred unplanned while at certain times, the COP actually planned in advance that on a particular date, we will get together and discuss the NSC examination paper. So, the quadrants actually overlap and navigating through all four quadrants is when my most profound learning took place as we reflected on our teaching, discussed new ways of teaching Economics, identified common flaws in teaching certain topics in Economics and we analysed our teaching practice. Figure 5.12 is a photograph of teachers working together as a COP.



Figure 5.12 Photograph of staff working together as a COP

5.8.2 Cluster teachers

A cluster is a collection of people who have collected together, for a common activity (Qian et al., 2020). In a circuit, teachers meet twice or quarterly according to their teaching specialisation. The cluster is formed by a number of teachers teaching the same subject in different schools (Yu, 2022). I found that Reid's four quadrant model applicable to the cluster meetings as well.

Cluster meetings play a crucial role in fostering collaboration, professional development, and support among educators, ultimately contributing to improved learner outcomes. My Economics cluster provide opportunities for teachers of Economics to engage in professional development activities. They hold workshops, training sessions, and discussions on teaching methodologies, curriculum updates, assessment strategies, or new educational policies. The cluster provided a platform for me and other teachers from different schools in the cluster to collaborate, share ideas, and exchange resources. This collaboration fostered a sense of community among educators and we solved problems together. We also analyse learners' result especially Grade 12 NSC examination results and assessment results or attendance records, to identify trends and areas for improvement. Based on this analysis, we plan interventions and strategies to support learning and achievement of learners.

Mahon (2009) highlighted that subject clusters offer a space for teachers to reflect on their practice, share successes and challenges, and seek support from each other. This reflective practice helps to improve teaching effectiveness in the classroom. Jita and Mokhela Year believe that planning their lessons together in the cluster, learning how to do proper lesson plans, how to teach certain sections and the content that must be taught really benefitted them as teachers in the cluster.

5.8.3 Academic relations in my postgraduate study group

Academic relations is about social networking with a purpose of growth (Rambe 2011). Academic relations promote the involvement of academic activities. Students help each other

in and outside the lecture room. Peer groups have even learned to use technology as the method of sharing knowledge.

I met my student mates and this time we were a group of 30. My professor requested us to introduce ourselves and share the purpose of our studying. I answered with a very loud voice and said I want to be a lecturer. As we were engaging with our supervisors, my purpose of studying and focus changed.

Meeting and interacting with new and different people, results in the development of new social bonds (Candrasari, 2020). Each person is different in his or her own way. Groups are capable of changing the focus. I pick up the potential and power of groups. Groups are influential. Secondly, as a researcher I discovered that engaging with people who are more informative and highly experienced, participate to form an academic a group and bring change in a person's life.

5.8.4 District workshops

A face-to-face meeting called a workshop is used to address the conceptual and cognitive challenges (Candrasari, (2020). Workshop is a formal gathering of the invited teachers where they share the same platform of knowledge. Workshop is used to identify the challenges faced in their subjects.

The department workshops have taught me that there is life in everything you do. I have found myself seating on the same table with teachers from district whom I have no connection with them, discussing general life matters. Some of these teachers are respected expect teacher in the subject within the district. In those gatherings' expert teachers discuss and share their experiences in teaching.

Many workshops were planned to support professional development by providing training and educational opportunities for individuals to enhance their careers and advance their skills. I attended most of these workshops and met people with similar interests or backgrounds, providing valuable networking opportunities. I connected can connect with peers, mentors and experts leading to new collaborations or opportunities. I found the workshops to be a forum receiving feedback on my work and ideas and for reflecting on my personal or professional goals and progress. The workshops facilitated the sharing of knowledge and expertise among

participants. They often had presentations, discussions, and interactive activities where we exchanged ideas and learnt from each other.

Workshop is a formal learning meeting. I found that workshop taught me that there in life everywhere. I pick that Sidleni is positive about formal workshop. These gatherings they bring hope. Sharing is kindness. When teachers meet, they share information. They are connection among teachers within the departmental workshops. I found that in formal meetings, teachers also discuss general matters. Openness and interaction between people create the relationship. Departmental workshop combines teachers with different experiences. Workshops are informative formal gatherings.

5.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter commenced with a self-portrait collage which portrayed poverty and race in a rural setting. The dilemma of being surrounded by females was discussed next followed by a discussion on the life lived by rural women. Next, the challenges in resisting patriarchy was discussed and then the lesson learned as a young black girl going to school barefoot was presented. Next, the influence of television was described. Rurality and poverty: The beauty of education for disrupting economic deprivation was presented next then I described as myself as being born to run on the journey of professionalism. My description as a dream chaser was outlined next. A narrative followed next on teachers' roles of offering education beyond teaching as well as participation in school activities; committees and sporting activities. Next, the issue **of** professional growth: Learning from expert teachers was presented in the form of learning from communities of practice, learning from cluster teachers, learning from academic relations in my postgraduate study group and district workshops. The chapter concluded with a summary of the entire chapter. My learning was shaped by behavioural and attitudinal dimensions (Evans 2014). My determination to change my life as a rural girl and my commitment to educate myself through furthering my studies, highlights both behavioural and attitudinal change in her personal growth and change.

CHAPTER SIX

MY LEARNING

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the analysis and interpretation of my storied narrative to respond to research question three: *Where did learning happen to enable professional growth and change in the everyday practices as an Economic teacher in a rural school?* The aim of this chapter is to identify the different areas of my learning, that contributed to my professional growth in a rural setting. Therefore, in this chapter, I am going to look at my learning, through the lens of the two theories, namely Reid's (2007) four quadrants of learning model and Evans' (2014) three dimensions of learning, starting from childhood experiences to professional experiences. Evans' (2014) dimensions of learning provide a framework for understanding the complexity of teacher learning and professional development. Frequently, teacher learning incorporates all three dimensions, aiding teachers attain new skills, foster positive attitudes, and extend their understanding of teaching and learning processes (Sancar, Atal & Deryakulu, 2021).

Throughout this study, the collage has been a popular tool and a helpful method of representing my data. In this chapter, I also use a collage to plot events and activities that took place during my personal and professional journey. The collaging process enabled me to connect with my stories as narrated in chapter four, and provide the analysis of my data. After I presented my story, I looked for pictures that I felt would represent what I wanted to include on my collage, to depict the areas of learning that contributed to my professional growth. Figure 6.1 is the collage of the areas of my professional learning.



Figure 6.1 Collage of the areas of my professional learning

6.2 Areas of learning

6.2.1 Self-empowerment to overcome poverty

Poverty is a mind-set of the poor where they see poverty as an immovable barrier because overcoming poverty is a journey that may involve challenges and setbacks along the way, therefore it often requires a combination of mindset shifts, practical actions, and access to resources (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). People like myself who have grown up in poverty develop this mindset, as we think that our circumstances are out of our control. Evan's (2014) attitudinal dimension comes into play here as it pertains to changes in attitudes, beliefs, and values. In the context of my learning, it involved developing a growth mindset, reflecting on my teaching practices, and embracing new pedagogical approaches. I had to shift my attitudes towards perpetual improvement and lifelong learning. I also needed to foster empathy, be willing to accept feedback from others and adapt to new teaching methods which was not an issue with me, since my childhood experiences taught me to take instructions from others and to improvise and adapt to change. Hence, I cultivated a growth mindset and believed in my ability to improve my circumstances. On attaining self-empowerment, my attitude towards my poverty-stricken background altered as I began to focus more on the benefits of growing up in a rural setting rather than lamenting the lack of basic necessities. In tandem with my change in attitude, there came about a change in my behaviour as Evans' theoretical framework suggests. I focused on

solutions rather than dwelling on obstacles and developed resilience to overcome setbacks and persevere in pursuit of my goals. I set clear and achievable goals and broke down my long-term goals into smaller short-term achievable goals and created a plan to achieve them because setting goals for yourself, guides a person in accomplishing their dreams. In order to do this, I had to tap into my intellectual capabilities, in line with Evans' three dimensions of learning namely behaviouristic, attitudinal and intellectual dimensions. On the other hand, Reid's four quadrants of learning impacted on my self-empowerment by awakening my consciousness and my motivation. By understanding and navigating these stages, I took control of my professional growth and development, ultimately leading to my improved effectiveness as an Economics teacher and consequently improving my learners' results. That is how I learned, that the accomplishment of choice goals improves self-satisfaction while past experiences shapes the choice of goals. people set for themselves to achieve self-satisfaction, self-growth and successful outcomes (Sanders, 2023) personally and professionally.

Poverty and circumstances forced me to focus more on my studies. I used to remain in class and keep myself busy with my studies and homework. I started writing speeches and submitted them to my class teacher. She then created a platform for me to present my speeches in the assembly. I maintained first position in my class from Grade 1 to Grade 12.

The above excerpt highlights my dedication to my studies to overcome poverty and challenge the disadvantages of my rurality. The relationship between a persons' background and poverty is complex and multifaceted. While poverty can be influenced by a variety of factors, an individual's background can play a significant role in shaping their likelihood of experiencing poverty. Single-parent households, for example, may face greater financial strain due to a lack of dual income or support systems, increasing the risk of poverty for both parents and children. Also, reflective practice is essential for teacher self-empowerment. By regularly reflecting on my teaching practice and progress through Reid's four quadrant model of learning, I gained insights into my strengths and areas for improvement. This self-awareness led to my continuous growth and empowerment as an educator. However, I did not let my impoverished background deter me from overcoming my circumstances because I learned that when people are empowered, they are equipped with skills and knowledge with which they will be able to earn a living (Rappaport, 1981). In this way, they will both be able to get paid employment or start a business to earn an income. Earning income is the first step towards poverty eradication.

Therefore, I was adamant about attending every workshop and training that was offered so that I could improve my knowledge and skills in order to enhance my professional growth and become empowered.

6.2.2 Planning for the present and the unexpected

Failing to plan is planning to fail. I learned from Reid (2007) that when someone is unaware of their lack of skill or knowledge, they may not expect any glitches in effectively planning for unexpected events. This lack of awareness can place a person in difficulties when planning for the present and the unexpected. Planning is an exercise of forward thinking, including recommendations for alternative action (Schwarz, Ram & Rohrbeck, 2019). Planning is a method of achieving a specific goal. One of the bigger problems that people face is failing to plan. Failing to plan is a barrier that limits people's participation (Severcan, 2015). Planning for the current and unexpected, includes knowing how to call for assistance when needed. Also, planning is a tool and a skill and an effective intervention in improving a perceived goal. Planning for the current and unexpected simultaneously, should include the pinpointing of an alternate plan (Willhaus et al., 2014). which improves planning.

I felt that what I was doing in class when teaching was never enough. That is when I became consciously aware of my limitations. Developing skills and knowledge when I became aware of the gaps in my teaching was necessary for planning for the present so I decided to further my education because I wanted to produce a good performance in my teaching and thereby gain confidence.

Reid's (2007) four quadrants of learning provided me with a useful framework for understanding how my different levels of consciousness and intentionality in learning related to planning for both the present and the unexpected. Also, Evans's (2014), three dimensions of learning provided me with a background for effective planning by emphasising the importance of understanding the present situation (intellectual component)), developing practical strategies (procedural learning), and being adaptable and responsive to change (reflective learning), whether expected or unexpected. Planning starts with a feeling so I considered my feelings and came up with a solution for the current situation and future. My life changed after facing the challenges of teaching without a qualification. Planning and facing a challenging situation opened on opportunity for me to learn. With time and my enhanced knowledge and skills

acquired from my different areas of learning, I discovered that I was able to control my classes and my teaching. That discovery acted as a stimulus that pushed me to get more knowledge. I honoured and respected my work and I always wanted to perform to the best of my ability. According to the Department of Education (2016), the best strategy to perform well is to have knowledge because knowledge is power. In addition, improving my confidence, led to my professional growth therefore it can be concluded that planning is an act of professionalism.

6.2.3 Soul-searching

Life sometimes requires that we ask ourselves who we are and where we are going. Soul-searching is very important to everyone. Soul searching typically refers to a process of introspection, self-reflection, and exploration of one's beliefs, values, and purpose in life. It often involves asking questions about the meaning of life. Soul searching occurs when you connect with your inner self. It is an inner journey that a person undertakes to find answers to their place in the world, and what truly matters to them. Soul searching is aimed at gaining insight into oneself and finding fulfilment and authenticity (Brittz, 2018). I learned from Reid (2007), that quadrant one of his framework focuses on reflective learning which is a kind of soul searching where individuals critically examine their experiences, thoughts, and actions to gain insights and improve their practice.

When engaging with other girls from my area, they thought that I was crazy. I used to dream about things which seemed impossible at that time. Some were very sure that I will never live my dream.

Soul searching and Evans' (2014) three dimensions of learning are interrelated processes that involve intellectual pursuits, self-analysis, and behavioural change (Sahoo & Mishra, 2018). Through soul searching, I gained a deeper understanding of myself and I learned who I was and who I wanted to be and with this knowledge, I was able to bring about positive changes in my life. I am a dreamer but also a goals-driven person. A dreamer is a person who lives in the world of imaginations. Being a goals-driven person means searching for what is right for you. I used to dream about a future which was seen as impossible but I was determined to achieve my goals, no matter how impossible they seemed. Furthermore, I spent most of my time proving to the girls from the village or any other woman that nothing was impossible. My life experiences taught me to fear failure. While trying to fight for better personal and professional

growth, learning took place. The process of fulfilling my dreams created a learning space for me.

6.2.4 Turning stress into superpower

Turning stress into a superpower involves reframing my perspective on stress and leveraging it as a catalyst for growth and productivity rather than allowing it to overwhelm me (LePine, Zhang & Crawford, 2016). This correlates with Reid's (2007) four quadrants of learning in the sense that a person can influence the way they learn and in so doing, manage their stress and convert that stress into a powerful mechanism for learning. What this means is that if you know how you learn, then you can design your learning activities such that you can adapt your learning style and take advantage of your strengths and turn stress into a motivator for learning rather than seeing stress as an obstacle to your learning. There is positive and negative stress. Stress is defined as a rapidly escalating thought created by disagreements in an individual's life (Dunham 2002). In schools, teachers are faced with the problems of ill-discipline, lack of resources, poor working conditions and changing curricula. Stress over these issues, leads to anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties and physical illness (Dunham, 2002). Instead of viewing stress as a purely negative experience, I reframed it as a sign that I am pushing boundaries and challenging the status quo. I see stress as an opportunity for growth and development rather than an obstacle.

Being unqualified amongst qualified teacher gave me a problem. The challenge was to be like them and excel so that I won't be regarded as a teacher who doesn't know her stuff. I would go the extra mile in everything that I was doing. I learnt from the highly experience teachers. I would seek advice and directions from teachers. I would search for subject knowledge in the many different textbooks. I used all the suggested resources in trying to close the gap.

Turning stress into a superpower aligns with Evans' dimensions of learning. By improving your intellectual functioning, controlling your emotions and prompting your interpersonal relationships with individuals and communities, you can achieve professional growth. By converting stress into a superpower, I was able to improve my learning and enhance the opportunity for growth and adaptation. I also enhanced my learning across multiple dimensions (Sutton, 2012).

My journey of teaching has never been easy. I experienced one problem after the other when I began teaching. I learnt how to deal with poverty and schooling in an under-resourced school. When I thought that my problems were over, I found myself in the jungle again, when I was employed as an unqualified teacher. I read many textbooks to close my subject content gap because I do not take failure as an option, instead I try by all means to find solutions to challenging situations. I always know how to pull myself out of any problem. My solution was to get information from different resources. Besides dealing with learners while not having a proper qualification, I was renting a room with qualified colleagues. Acting as a professional to meet the required standards was a learning curve for me. The fear of embarrassment pushed me to work harder in everything that I did. I always learn by being involved with well-educated and highly experienced people. I discovered that consultation with more experienced people opened opportunities for learning. I rewarded myself with knowledge when dealing with my stress.

6.2.5 Cracking the codes for change

The necessity for growth in education is very central nowadays (Husty & Newell 2013). In order to work for a certain institution, experience and knowledge is required. Also, education and training helps to unlock many closed doors. Many people fall on the wayside, and do not make it to higher education. Completing a degree is key to change therefore education should be an ongoing process (Husty & Newell, 2013). Holding postgraduate degrees rarely happens once teachers are employed in the field. A change in training and education has the power to close the content gap. An additional growth transformant is the behaviour of a teacher which further influence the hidden curriculum. Education and training, allows the teacher to take control of their classes and teaching subject (Powell & Solity, 2018). To pursue further studies, opens an opportunity for new ideas and knowledge. Each of Reid's (2007) four quadrant offers a specific viewpoint on tackling complex problems like "Cracking the Codes for Change," whether learning through hands-on experiences or analysis of phenomena, having deep insight into how you learn will enhance your ability to solve complex problems.

The best decision I ever made for myself, is to pursue further studies. I wanted a voice and I wanted to be accepted, I wanted to be confident and I wanted to own my teaching lessons. But there was a gap, I felt that what I was doing in class when teaching was never enough. I felt that I was left alone in a desert. I wanted to get over with doubts

and guilty conscience. I decided to further my education because I was looking for better prospects.

In terms of Evans' (2014) three dimensions of learning, the cognitive dimension will involve how information is processed in the brain when you are learning and bringing about change, the behavioural dimension will involve examining the way the person acts in a certain situation which will influence what motivates them to learn and the attitudinal dimension relates to the ideas and beliefs that a teacher has about change, since learning takes place when there is a change in behaviour (Hindle & Withington, 2007)

My starting point is based on my early childhood experiences. I always fought for excellence. I studied at a tertiary institution, becoming the first graduate in my family. My struggles pushed me to change the family status. I pursued my studies when I was employed as an unqualified teacher. Besides saving my job, I also learned in the process of getting a relevant qualification, that I am a perfectionist, I always want to do everything right. When I see a gap, my first solution to the problem, is always education. I think that education is everything. To pursue education as a postgraduate student and get an honour's degree, proves that I am passionate about learning and I value studying. Each awarded certificate, shapes my personal and professional development.

6.2.6 Solving life puzzles

Life puzzles consist of specific events in a person's life (Niyazova 2019). Every person has a story with pain and laughter. Human life is categorised by disappointments, dilemmas and failure (Maxsudovna, 2022). In the journey of life, a person comes across with many challenges that need to be overcome. Flexibility is a strength that is needed to remain grounded (Sanusi, Johl-Heliyon, 2022). The power to solve problems is solving life puzzles. Life puzzles are something beyond human limitations that can give some larger meaning to human life (Niyazova, 2019). Dramatic change in human life is a normal situation that many people go through, before they live a normal life. Figure 6.2 is an example of a puzzle picture

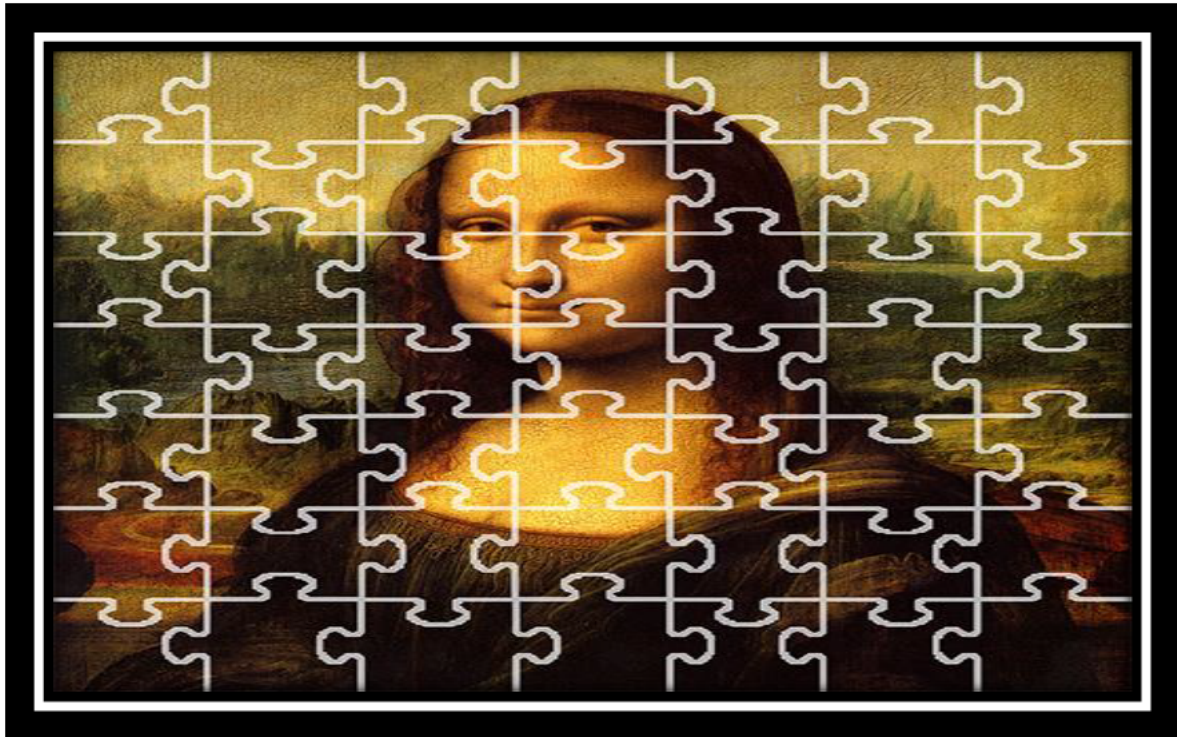


Figure 6.2 An example of a puzzle picture
(<https://www.butlerandhill.co.uk/products/mona-lisa-by-leonardo-da-vinci-300-piece-wooden-jigsaw-puzzle>)

I grew up in a place which is underdeveloped, with no resources, no infrastructure and no industries. Since 1980, my father worked as a gardener in Johannesburg. He died when I was doing std 7 (grade 9). My father was not educated and suffered from atrocities of apartheid. He would visit us once or twice in a year. I spent all my life with my mother who remained a housewife. My mother was not educated, neither did she work in any registered industry however, she has been my mentor, provider and role model.

I grew up in a poorly-developed rural area. In addition, I grew up in a family who had no income but I learned and performed well in my studies. I was raised by parents who never went to school but I worked myself out of that circle. Work-life flexibility is based on a person's background across occupations (Kossek & Lautsoh 2018). The flexibility to overcome life challenges meant that I wanted a change in my life. I studied to change the family status. When I registered for my PGCE qualification, I was undertaking formal planned learning according to Reid's theoretical framework of learning because I was receiving instruction in a systematic planned manner. Engaging in formal planned learning reignited my passion for teaching by exposing me to innovative ideas and approaches. Learning from experts in the field, inspired

me to try new methods and overcome challenges in my own classrooms. However, incidental informal learning also took place because I exchanged ideas with my PGCE classmates. While discussing these ideas, I was learning but that learning took place informally. When I collaborated on projects and shared resources with colleagues from different schools and districts, informal incidental learning occurred. Collaborating with my peers and reflecting on our practice, I gained confidence in my abilities and felt empowered to bring about positive change in my classroom. So, I can safely say that informal incidental learning had a profound impact on my attitudes and behaviours which informs the attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of Evans (2014), thereby leading to my professional growth and my empowerment within the teaching profession. However, my journey of professionalism was fraught with struggles. Having to work as an unqualified teacher, teaching learners without proper teacher training was a struggle. In addition, I studied to gain power, a voice and certificates to become a qualified teacher. It took courage to solve all of my life challenges.

6.2.7 Bringing the vibe to work

Bringing the vibe means to have fun and bring creativity to the school. Bringing happiness to others helps to promote one's own feelings of enjoyment in that particular activity (Kumar & Raghavendra 2006). Happiness and success complement each other. Success makes better workers (Krishna 2020). Bringing fun can be used as a tool to promote learning (Woolley & Fishbach, 2016) because by incorporating fun into the school environment, I found that I could create a more dynamic and engaging professional learning culture that fosters continuous growth and development. Although my learning by bringing fun into the school environment, was not formally planned, but was unplanned and incidental, it boosted my morale and my motivation to teach because I felt that my communication skills were enhanced. This had a positive effect on my behaviour and my attitude to engage in professional learning as so rightly posited by Evans' (2014) dimensions of learning. Learning that promotes happiness can be learning using games, video and art. Immediate rewards during activities allows increasing persistence in the long-term goal. Excitement creates long-lasting memories. Besides learning, fun also promotes involvement.

6.2.8 Professional communities

My principal will say: "Economics, 50 learners wrote, 47 made it but we are not going to rest if we still have 3 learners who did not make it. Moreover,

Economics you have 9 level two learners, that not good". When the meeting is finished and the management has left us, the noise will be loud in the venue. We praise, tease and congratulate teachers when their learners did well. Words such as "Professor, Skhokho, Nkunzi" together with and shaking of hands takes place all over the staff room, praising the colleague whose learners performed well.

In the extract above, I felt happy that I belonged to a group of teachers who have different behaviours. The different behaviour has taught me to take everything easy and bring in enjoyment. As a staff member, we have learned to normalise everything that happens while working. To normalise the situational challenges, we use creativity (Raghavendra 2006). Together with my team of teachers, we call each other silly names to lighten the mood and no one takes offence. We promote team spirit which enables us to meet deadlines. We engage in fun to destress and to also celebrate our achievements. Enthusiasm motivates my learning progress while being a team player is one of my strengths. I have discovered in this study, that I like shining every step of the way, that includes my personal learning and professional learning.

In my professional learning community of teachers, we organised professional development workshops where we shared knowledge, experiences and resources. My learning from these workshops was formally planned learning when the more experienced teachers talked and debated about effective teaching methods and we developed mentoring relationships. Informal incidental learning occurred when we had casual chats about teaching and our learners. My learning from both formally planned sessions and informal incidental sessions impacted on my intellectual, behavioural and attitudinal dimensions of my learning. This was so because I developed a deeper understanding of teaching methods and strategies to teaching Economics and I felt safe, protected and accepted within the community of practice which offered opportunities for professional development and growth.

6.3 Other kinds of learning related to my narrative

6.3.1 Independence and responsibility

Independence simple means to be able to do things on your own as a person. Independency is gained when is person is taught to do things in their own way. Independency leads to the

acquisition of knowledge and skills. By being independent and responsible for my own learning, I was able to actively engage with the material, seek clarification when needed, and explore topics of interest beyond what is covered in the classroom. When I sought clarification, formal planned learning was provided to me by my head of department (HOD) and more senior teachers who were experts in their fields. However, the casual conversations I had in the staffroom and corridors with colleagues and the management, was informal and incidental learning because I did not plan it but it just happened casually and incidentally, for instance, while walking to the tuckshop during the break, I may have incidentally met a colleague and we got talking. My learning from these unexpected situations encouraged me to think creatively and innovatively about a particular problem or situation and I discovered new solutions that I hadn't considered before. Forced to think on my feet during these unplanned encounters, led to intellectual growth because I had to make decisions on the spur of the moment. Being independent and responsible, I had to effectively respond to an unplanned situation, I had to change my behaviour to accommodate the unexpected event. Also, sometimes I was forced to disrupt my beliefs and my attitude towards the situation and learn to be empathetic and tolerant.

My character was built through everyday experiences. Being raised in a place where no one fought your battles but you, made me strong. I used to hate that I was born and raised in a rural setting but my mother taught me to be humble and accept my way of life. She taught me to love and to be independent. My mother's definition of a strong woman is the woman who completes her given task quietly and successfully without drawing attention to herself.

A lot of the skills and knowledge I learnt to be independent and responsible, was self-taught while taking instructions from elders. The environment itself contributed to my learning. I used my background as a foundation for my decisions as my past experiences, upbringing and personal history equipped me with the skills and resilience I needed to face challenges or conflicts effectively and think on my feet. I developed inner strength and coping mechanisms through my life experiences, which enabled me to confront situations head on.

6.3.2 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognise, understand, and manage both your own emotions and those of others. It involves a set of skills that allows individuals to navigate social interactions, communicate effectively, empathise with others, and regulate your own emotions in various situations. Self-awareness is the ability to recognise your own emotions and understand their impact on thoughts, behaviours and interactions. Children are likely to pick up certain traits during their childhood experiences. Social skills and knowledge shapes children. The things that children learn in their early experiences grow with them. Learning to share is something that we all learn in childhood, either taught by family members, neighbours and or community members. While there may be innate components to intelligence, it is also heavily influenced by environmental factors and life experiences. The interplay between nature and nurture is complex, and both contribute to the development of an individual's intelligence.

While rural living may not be for everyone, those who are fortunate enough to grow up in such environments often cherish the unique benefits and experiences it offers. Overcoming challenges such as limited resources, distance from amenities, and harsh weather conditions can build resilience, resourcefulness, and a strong work ethic in individuals raised in rural areas. Rural areas often have rich cultural traditions and heritage that are passed down through generations, providing a sense of continuity and connection to the past. Living in a rural area may encourage self-sufficiency and resourcefulness, as residents often need to rely on themselves and their neighbours for various needs, such as growing food or fixing equipment.

I take what I am able to use and what is in front of me to achieve my goals. I am very resourceful and adaptable. Being able to make use of what's available to me to accomplish my objectives is a valuable skill. It often involves creativity, problem-solving, and making the most out of any situation or resources at hand. This ability is crucial in various aspects of life, from personal endeavours to professional projects. It's about being flexible and finding innovative solutions, even when faced with challenges or limitations. developing emotional intelligence is an ongoing process that requires dedication, patience, and self-reflection. By incorporating formal planned learning into your journey, you can accelerate your growth and enhance your ability to navigate relationships, make sound decisions, and achieve personal and professional success.

6.4 Structured and unstructured learning

6.4.1 Structured learning

Formal learning is delivered in a systematic manner and takes place in lessons that are planned and monitored by a teacher or a mentor. Formal learning takes place in the classroom, training, workshops and other institutions of learning.

A challenge for me was to balance my formal learning with my teaching responsibilities but with my perseverance and dedication, I succeeded in both areas. I was flexible and willing to make changes as needed. I did not get a special attention because the number of students doing a PGCE was very high during 2009-2012. We would attend class in different venues. The PGCE taught me to adapt and accept changes.

To undertake my formal learning experience, I had to attend lectures at a university. Balancing teaching and learning was very stressful, but being the adaptable person I am, I made use of my free lessons and during the breaks, I was able to complete my assignments. I identified the most important tasks and allocated time accordingly. My formal learning played a critical role in my professional growth.

6.4.2 Unstructured learning

Informal learning means learning that is constructed out of formal learning. Informal learning creates situations which are conducive to formal learning. Informal learning is popular in childhood. In most work places, learning is informal (Moore & Klein 2020). Informal discussion and passing of information in general discussions creates a learning space.

My staff has made my workplace a second home. I enjoy each and every time I spent with my staff. One of the lessons I have learnt is that work conflict ends within that hour. Discussion and sharing of ideas that take place in the staff room create learning opportunities.

In the process of sharing ideas, learning takes place informally at the workplace. Sharing knowledge and resources develop as the most common method (Moore & Klein, 2020). I

learned most of the things when discussing with the general staff and with other colleagues. Informal discussion leads to the passing of information amongst colleagues. I have discovered that informal learning also contributes to the accepted behaviour and attitude in the workplace. A staffroom is a workplace where more than one teacher can sit. In a staffroom, there are different people with different background and experiences I take that when people with different levels of experiences sit together, a staff room becomes a learning area. Informal learning is valuable because it allows individuals to learn at their own pace, focus on topics of personal interest, and adapt learning methods to suit their preferences and needs. It plays a crucial role in lifelong learning and skill development beyond formal education. .Any place where ideas are exchanged, dialogue and discussion occurs or people just chat with each other, learning takes place.

6.4.3 Practical and experimental learning

Practical and experimental leaning means being physically involved. When doing practical work and experiments, more knowledge and skills is gained. It is not easy to forget what a person has done physically. Experimental learning is a process of constructing knowledge and applying it to the practice (Rolfe & Freshwater 2020). Involvement encourages a person to explore and construct knowledge on his own. Involvement is a method of learning.

I wanted my mother to be proud so I had to do those activities. Community activity taught me to respect elders, peers and children. I have learned to take instructions from community elders.

Being involved in activities has created a platform for learning which enhances my professional growth and development. I learned most of the skills and knowledge when I was involved practically. During my childhood in my rural community activities, I learned a great deal by practically carrying out the task. Furthermore, adaptation took place. I took my experimental teaching experiences to the workplace. I am not scared of working. I involved myself practically in many activities. I believe in myself and don't give up easily as I see it as a sign of failure.

6.5 Summary of the chapter

I commenced this chapter with a professional learning collage which I used to answer my third research question: *Where did learning happen to enable professional growth and change in the everyday practices as an Economic teacher in a rural school?* I identified the different areas where my learning happened by starting with self-empowerment to overcome poverty. I followed this up with planning for the present and the unexpected. Soul searching was discussed thereafter and then turning stress into superpower was explained. Cracking the codes for change came next and then solving life puzzles. Bringing the vibe to work followed this and then professional communities were explained. Other kinds of learning related to my narrative was subdivided into independence and responsibility and the issue of emotional intelligence followed and then structured and unstructured learning was discussed and then practical experimental learning followed. The chapter concludes highlighting Sidleni's learning that was dominated by four quadrants of learning as explained by Reid (2007). Formal planned learning happened when Sidleni took a decision to register at a formal institution to become a qualified teacher. Sidleni's accidental and unplanned learning happened when in conversations with other teachers in the staffroom and in cluster meetings.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In the previous three chapters, I presented the analysis and interpretation of my everyday storied experience in response to the three research questions that drove the focus and purpose of this personal narrative inquiry. This chapter provides a reflective review of this thesis from chapter one to chapter seven. I provide an overview of the pathways of personal and professional learning that enabled my development from being an unqualified teacher to becoming a subject specialist through personal narratives in response to the three research questions. An overview of chapter three provides my theoretical and methodological learning of this thesis. I provide some suggestions for further research that can expand the understanding of teacher identity. To conclude, I provide some final reflections guided by the two theorists Evans (2014) and Reid (2007) on my research journey with reference to the practical implications of this study.

The phenomenon of unqualified teachers taking up teaching positions in schools is central to this study. This study focused on my lived educational experiences of a female teacher who changed through formal and informal learning (Evans 2014). I teach in a rural setting in an under-resourced school. I started teaching as an unqualified teacher and pursued my studies to become a qualified teacher and I now hold an honours degree in education. I initially studied and graduated for a B Com Accounting degree and then registered for a PGCE to become a qualified teacher. The challenge is that I am well-known and an expert teacher in Economics yet I hold an underqualified status in Economics as a subject. The study presents my challenges of working in rural school and being highly experienced yet underqualified for teaching the subject Economics. This study aimed to reveal the contributing factors to my learning (Opfer & Pader 2011).

Through the research process, I was able to develop a meaningful understanding of the professional initiatives that practicing teachers can participate in, order to open themselves to learning new ideas and different perspectives to become subject specialists. In addition, through this research, I have managed to discover the connection between childhood experiences and the diverse pathways to teacher's professional learning journey. In this

research process, I as the narrative researcher, was able to reflect on my critical experiences and identify significant people who shaped my desire for learning new ideas and perspectives for negotiating the complexities of rural schooling and teaching Economics in the FET phase.

7.2 Summary of the thesis

Chapter One

Chapter One maps out the focus and purpose of the study as a whole. It presents the three research questions that drive the study's focus and purpose and the personal, professional and contextual rationale that underpin the conceptual and theoretical threads that weave across the seven chapters.

Chapter 2

This chapter offers a scholarly narrative of the findings of different scholars. This chapter discusses previous related studies that local and international scholars have done. While there is a dearth of literature on Economic teachers and their professional learning experiences, I was able to draw on scholarly articles about their current research for other subjects like Science and Mathematics. This chapter reveals that there is a gap regarding the research on Economics teaching and learning. In addition, there is still room for improvement and opportunities to learn more about Economics teacher development. Lastly, with research that will trace the well-being of Economics teachers who were recruited when there was a shortage of teachers is very scant. This study was framed within the theories of Evans (2014) and Reid (2007), emphasising that professional development for teachers happens formally and informally.

Chapter 3

In this methodology chapter, I drew on past and present lived educational experiences to reveal the silenced voices and stories that shaped my pathways of learning from an unqualified teacher to becoming a subject specialist in a rural secondary school. Through this personal narrative inquiry, I developed an insightful understanding of the complexity of teacher learning and the diverse formal, informal and non-formal collaborative spaces available for cultivating new ideas, understandings and approaches as subject specialists. This chapter gives clear information on how the research was conducted. It tells about the methodology used in the study. In addition, this chapter talks about the methods used to collect, and produce stories as data through a range of creative methods such as memory drawing, photographs, objects and

collage. This chapter also establishes the trustworthiness of the study. Personal narrative methodology helped me to understand my journey as I unpacked the issues that I attended to through my journey of professionalism. For this study, the methodology used was accurate for a personal narrative inquiry.

Chapter 4

This chapter offers the first-level analysis of this personal narrative inquiry. As the researcher, I drew on Polkinghorne (1994) to reconstruct my past and present stories of lived educational experiences, which I outlined as a storied narrative of my professional learning experiences as an unqualified teacher in a rural secondary school. I divided this process into two sections; Section A touched on my personal stories of early childhood experiences of rural life and being a learner. Sections B explored my professional development from the time I started teaching as an unqualified teacher and my pathways of professional learning and transformation to a qualified teacher.

Chapter 5

As the researcher, I drew on the generated and storied data presented in chapter four, to address my first research. In chapter four, I told my story about the self and my lived experiences. In this chapter, I responded to question two of the study by presenting a true reflection of my educational journey by showing the link between personal and professional lived experiences. I presented the personal and professional motivations and learnings that shaped my professional growth and change as an Economics subject teacher. Furthermore, this chapter helped me to identify the learning experiences facilitated through formal and informal learning spaces.

Chapter 6

In Chapter 6, I responded to the last question of this study. In this chapter, I as the researcher presents the kinds of learning that's contributes to teacher learning. The researcher critically zoomed in on the specific methods of learning that shaped my changes personally and professionally as teacher participant in this study. This is achieved by examining the stories of learning, narrated in chapter four. Furthermore, this chapter highlighted my desire to be a life-long learner. Lastly, this chapter explains how structured and unstructured collaborative learning contributed to teacher learning and methods of teacher learning.

Chapter 7

In this concluding chapter, I provide an overview of the entire thesis, chapter by chapter. I provide a summary of my key findings. I also relate my various learnings such as my methodological, learning and theoretical learning from undertaking this research study. In addition, I make recommendations for further research. I conclude this thesis with my final reflections and a conclusion.

7.3 Summary of key findings

I used the metaphor of a butterfly to represent my key findings in this study.

A colourful butterfly

The life of a person is made up of different stages. Likewise, a person goes through different stages in their lifetime, learning and growing and evolving at each phase. People use their learnings at each phase to build on as a foundation for the next phase. Butterflies undergo a remarkable transformation known as metamorphosis, starting as eggs, then becoming caterpillars, pupating, and finally emerging as butterflies. Humans also undergo stages of development, from infancy to childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. While the process is not as visually dramatic as that of a butterfly, there are clear parallels in terms of growth and change. In addition, lives involve many changes but what is most important, is that the end results should look beautiful. As a researcher, relating and analysing my journey, makes me see the beauty of life and how personal and professional lived experiences intertwine to enhance professional development. Humans have a wide range of experiences, emotions, and motivations that shape their lives, including relationships, aspirations, achievements, and challenges. The complexity of human consciousness sets their existence apart from that of butterflies. Nevertheless, a butterfly is a beautiful and attractive creature, camouflaging itself with beautiful colours as it grows and evolves from one phase to the next. The survival of a butterfly depends on the environment just as people. Figure 7.1 is a drawing of a butterfly.



Figure 7.1 Drawing of a butterfly

This study reveals that I started my life in a rural area where there was no development. I crawled slowly to bring about change in my life. My journey involved many stages which include a rural life, township life and a teacher in a school situated in a rural setting. Furthermore, my professional journey started as an unqualified teacher, then I became professionally qualified and I hold an honours degree in education. I am recognised as the lead teacher for Economics in my district due to my learners producing good results. Nevertheless, I am still categorised as an underqualified teacher in Economics because while I am highly experienced as a teacher, I lack a qualification as a specialist Economics teacher. Despite this flaw, I am like a butterfly which is always in search of new ideas and understandings to improve how I think, plan and enact my classroom practices. A butterfly does not sit in one place for a long period of time, it is always on the move, flying from one flower to another, using its beautiful colours to blend in with the flowers to protect itself from danger. So too, I blend in with the other Economics teachers because of my expertise in teaching Economics. The community of practices of which I am a member, accept me and protect me like how the flower accepts and welcomes the butterfly. I feel safe in that environment with other Economics teachers because not only do they protect me, they provide me with sustenance for my survival in the form of new ideas and strategies for teaching Economics. In my teaching, I inspire my learners to engage with the subject. My personal and professional growth is supported by my eagerness to learn and participate in professional practices.

7.3.1 My research questions and the findings

This study consists of three research questions

7.3.1.1 Findings from research question one

This research question revealed my love of doing something for the self. Doing and completing this study is the most precious gift I ever gave myself. Life challenges captures us and we forget to ourselves first. I responded to this research question in chapter four. When writing this chapter, I felt that I was doing something for myself, which was going to add value for myself. While writing this chapter, I had mixed emotions because I had to recall memories from my early childhood, some of which were painful. However, I also felt like it was a healing process because I remembered and wrote about the things that I never mentioned before. This time I did it for myself. The process healed all my past hurts because confronting them head-on, I was able to deal with them and in the process, now as an adult I perceived certain happenings maturely and differently. What I had thought about those painful experiences previously now took on a new meaning for me and I tried to see the good in them for example, I hated that I was born into a rural area but now I see the values and morals that were taught to me by my rural upbringing and I stated that I feel lucky having been a rural child. Doing this study is a legacy I will leave for my children and my future generations as if I engraved my name on a rock.

7.3.1.2 Findings from research question two

Personal and professional experiences that shaped my meanings of ‘being teacher’.

When doing this chapter, I had to separate it into sections. This chapter serves as a transformational learning curve. This chapter helped me differentiate between personal and professional growth. Through this chapter, I have discovered that integration of personal and professional learning shaped my teacher learning as a subject teacher.

This study reveals three phases of my life. Each phase played a certain role in my journey of personal and professional development. The first phase, which is the childhood phase, is a critical phase where, as a child, I developed knowledge, skills, and a meaning for life. My childhood took place in rural areas where I was dependent on people in the village, especially

my mother, who played a crucial role in my life. My mother is my role model as I learned from her, that a woman can be a leader. I learned to be disciplined, respect elders, take instructions and complete tasks on time.

At this stage, I had many challenges, which included poverty, patriarchy, and poor economic development within the village. Patriarchy forced me to stand by my decisions and work my successes silently, to avoid criticism. My strong character has taught me to resist male domination and hold the view that patriarchy, will not determine or shape my future. Both my primary and secondary schools were under-resourced. My childhood experiences changed my mindset. The analysis revealed that I gained a strong character in my critical childhood phase. Fulfilling a dream of becoming a qualified teacher and proving that education can change someone's life at an early age, was a sure sign, that I will be a fighter. She started from an early age to take decisions that would change her life.

Childhood experiences are shown to powerfully shape a person's vocation. My experiences of growing up with only my mother in a patriarchal system, shaped my belief that she wants to be different from the women and young girls growing up in a rural settings. I got the strength to be an independent woman from my mother. I saw my mother leading in the absence of my father. Leading is her motto. One of the key findings in this study, revealed my attitude and motivation as a woman who remains focused and determined to change, care about who she is and what she can become through meaningful learning opportunities and collaborating with significant other professional learning communities in enhancing her professional development. In the process she opens up possibilities to help her learners to remain focused.

Learning from informal mentors which is my mother contributed to my professional development. I learned certain values from my mother which is time management, independence, taking instructions, multitasking and to always complete any given task. In addition, I resisted patriarchy which made it easier for me to adapt and work with colleague in a school dominated by male teachers. These values shaped my determination to enhance my professional develop

7.3.1.3 Findings from research question three

This chapter encouraged me to reflect on the journey of the self and look with a lens of the researcher to find out the methods and approaches to my participation in my journey as a professional teacher. My learning as a teacher happened while I was trying to meet the standards of a fully qualified teacher. Secondly, my progressive mind of seeking to gain content knowledge on the subject also pushed me to enhance my professional learning.

My status as a B Com graduate was a critical moment in my life as a woman who left behind her life in the rural community and found herself employed in another field of work that she was not trained for. Taking up the responsibility to serve as an unqualified teacher highlighted my capacity as a provider and an improviser. I learned to be a responsible person in the position of a teacher by caring about myself and creating opportunities for transforming my thinking and everyday teaching practices. The hope of becoming a recognised qualified teacher opened opportunities for myself in different ways. I found myself exceling in my teaching and I also monitoring other teachers. Lastly, I found herself involved in other formal subject related activities such as setting provincial papers, developing subject support material, selection as a delegate to subject provincial meetings and district lead teacher. Secondly, the burden of performing the duties of a qualified teacher with professional status while I remained unqualified, was challenging. My determination and motivation to mentor my learners played a big role in ensuring learners did not fail. My findings reveal that I have the character of a good life-long learner teacher as outlined below:

- As an unqualified teacher, I have a positive attitude toward teaching and learning.
- In spite of the personal constraints I face, I prioritise the success of the learners first.
- My determination to learn and grow as a subject specialist guided me to acquire knowledge through a solid education.
- Parenting my own children and parenting learners. Parenting instils natural love. A butterfly takes and also gives
- Determination to change and capacity for adaptability. My eagerness to teach and learn nurtured healthy curiosity, which directed me to professional growth.

7.4 Theoretical Learning

This study is framed by Evans 2014 and Reid 2007, and her theory of enhancing professional development through formal and informal learning teachers learn formal and informal. This study has reveals three facets of Sidleni learning pathways. Each phase played a certain role in Sidleni's journey of personal and professional development. How do these three align with Evans 2014 and Reid 2007 and the theory of formal and informal learning for teachers and continuous professional development.

Sidleni emotions are integral to her identity as a professional. Being regarded as an under qualified subject specialist and economics teacher continues to motivate her to, learn through collaboration with other teachers. The study's findings highlight that her incentives to attending subject related workshops and participating in subject-related activities enhanced professional development and change to Sidleni's journey as an economics teacher in a secondary rural school.

7.5 Findings and overall conclusion

Through this study I conclude the findings by making an emphasis that professionalism is a walkable journey which is channelled by different factors. In addition, professionalism foundation is lay on both good and bad lived experiences. One of the key contributing factors on a journey of professionalism is a participation. Involvement in any educational activity ensures the experience and knowledge. Secondly, I have discovered that learning happens in both formal and informal through communication. Discussing and sharing of information with different groups form part of learning. Communities of practice create learning space. Informal discussions delivered knowledge that is easy to remember because it is attached with memories. Through this study I have learned that going through a certain situation makes a person to change focus. Challenges and situations that teachers are dealing with instils learning. I grew up knowing that teaching is a calling and discovered that professionalism is a commitment.

7.6 Suggestions for further research

Understanding of a self is crucial for personal and professional development. A self-understanding motivates plan for future decision and professional growth. It is important for

teachers to understand their professional journey so that they can fill up the gaps and shape their professional growth.

Based on the study of Sidleni, I see a need of studying lived experiences of teachers who were raised in rural setting and became teachers in rural and under resourced schools. Furthermore, I suggest that teacher learning should be emphasized to all teachers. I highly recommend that teachers should do research about their professional journey. That can enable them to understand their journey and close the discovered gaps by enhancing their teacher learning.

In conclusion, this master's thesis underscores the imperative for a shift in professional development paradigms, urging a more personalized approach that aligns with the individual motivations of educators. While many programs initiated by the Department of Education adopt a learner-cantered framework, there is a pressing need for targeted teacher learning initiatives within specific subjects, especially within school and university programmes.

To facilitate this, I propose the creation of subject-specific teacher development programs designed by the Department of Education. These programs could be strategically scheduled during winter school holidays to minimize disruptions to regular classes. Incentives, such as formal recognition and certificates, accompanied by a modest salary increment, could be integrated to motivate teachers to participate actively in these programs. This approach not only acknowledges and celebrates their commitment to continuous learning but also serves as a tangible encouragement.

Recognising exceptional cases, such as the achievements of teachers like Sidleni who excel in subjects outside their major, is crucial. Establishing a formal recognition system for such educators underscores the importance of their contributions and sets a precedent for acknowledging excellence beyond the confines of a teacher's designated major subject.

Additionally, I recommend the implementation of a financially supported, non-degree, one- or two-year certificate program specifically tailored for teacher learning. This initiative aims to provide educators with a structured pathway to enhance their skills and knowledge in a subject-specific context.

Lastly, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive study focusing on teachers who were initially employed as unqualified educators during periods of teacher shortages, akin to the experience of Sidleni. This study should delve into the challenges and achievements of these individuals, shedding light on how they navigated their teaching responsibilities over time. Such insights can inform future policies and strategies to support teachers who began their careers under unique circumstances.

In conclusion, the proposed revisions aim to establish a more personalized and subject-specific approach to professional development, recognizing and incentivizing teachers for their commitment to continuous learning and outstanding contributions within their chosen subjects. This study is framed by Evans (2014) and Reid (2007). These authors emphasize on the teacher learning that happens planned or unplanned. As a researcher I have discovered new ideas from what I knew from the start of this study. This study adds that teacher learning happens when:

- Engaging with an informal role model like a mother
- Engaging with formal role model like departmental head (DH)
- Reading and collection of different textbooks from different authors to get knowledge
- Participating on the educational tasks assigned by subject expert or advisor
- Persuading studies in a tertiary institution and engaging with supervisors

7. 7 Conclusion and final reflections

This chapter serves as a comprehensive summary of the entire study, aiming to guide the reader through the journey undertaken in the preceding chapters. Each chapter's review encourages the researcher to reflect deeply on the study's progression and purpose. The overarching goal is to provide clarity on the objectives set forth in each chapter, bringing coherence to the study's narrative.

Central to this study is the narrated story of a teacher working in a rural setting, which addresses the curiosity that often accompanies such contexts. The responses to this curiosity are synthesized in this concluding chapter, ultimately seeking to unravel the purpose behind each chapter. The aim is to address lingering questions and assemble a complete picture of Sidleni's personal and professional journey.

The significance of narrating previously unshared events and memories lies in its motivational impact. This thesis, marked by a spectrum of emotions, reinforces the idea that nothing is insurmountable. The study reveals that one's background and challenges need not dictate their future. The culmination of this research, coupled with the uncovered facts, underscores the profound importance of maintaining a positive attitude towards learning. Such an approach, as evidenced in this study, not only leads to success but also fosters self-control, empowerment, and, significantly, professionalism. The study's completion reinforces the notion that a positive mindset towards learning can yield fruitful outcomes with enduring impacts on an individual's personal and professional life.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



06 January 2021

Mrs Sibongile Beauty Sidleni Mcetywa (209539625)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Mcetywa,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002139/2020

Project title: Exploring learning for professional growth: Stories of lived educational experiences of an economics teacher in a rural school setting Degree: Masters

Approval Notification — Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 27 October 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

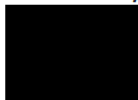
This approval is valid until 07 January 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000 South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzmac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO GATEKEEPER

14 summit road, ext 3

Camperdown

3720

08 June 2020

The Principal

Unobhala high School

P.O.Box 7832

Camperwood

3235

Request for a permission to conduct research

Dear Principal

My name is Sibongile B.S. Mcetywa and I am currently studying towards Master of education degree at the university of Kwa-Zulu natal (UKZN), Edgewood campus. It is required of me to complete a research dissertation by June 2021 as full thesis.

The title of my study is: Exploring learning for professional growth stories of a lived educational experiences of an economics teacher: personal narrative of an economics teacher. The purpose of this study is to find out how do teacher(s) learn for professional development, specifically on economics as a subject. This study is using personal narrative inquiry; however, I will have casual conversational interviews with colleagues to help me remember the incidents that happened while I was a novice teacher till date. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the skills, resources and methods applied by an economics teacher for professional development. Furthermore, the study seeks to find out how do a teacher learn from being an unqualified teacher to an expert teacher. This study only involves me as I am the research and the researcher. The role of other participants who are my colleagues is help me recall my memories as novice teacher till date. This study will be conducted outside the school premises and it will not disturb the normal school time, however it will involve teachers from the school. All the data that I will collect will be using it for my research project report.

Methods of data collection

Activity	ESTIMATED TIME	PREPOSED TIME FRAME	FORMAT OF DATA COLLECTION
Object inquiry	2 x 30 minutes	October/November 2020 15: 00 to 15: 30	Transcription and audio recordings
collage	1 x 30 minutes	October/November 2020 15:00 - 15:30	Pasting of pictures and drawing
Letter writing	2 x 2 hours min	October/November 2020	Write a letter
Timeline	1 hour	October/November 2020	Draw a timeline

My supervisor for this study is Prof. Daisy Pillay. Please feel free to contact her on the number below if you have any queries regarding this research study. You may also contact me as the researcher or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details are as follows

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Daisy Pillay UKZN School of Education Office CSI 38 Main Tutorial Building Edgewood Campus Contact details: 031 260 7598 pillaygv@ukzn.ac.za	HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building PrivateBagX54001 Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA <u>Tel:27312604557-Fax:27312604609</u> Email:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za4
---	--

Yours Sincerely

Sibongile B.S. Mcetywa (Ms)

Signature_____

APPENDIX C: GATEKEEPER CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT: PRINCIPAL

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I Simon Thulisani Ndlovu been informed about *the study entitled: Exploring learning for professional growth: personal narrative of an economics teacher by Sibongile Mcetywa. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study. I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and I have answers to my satisfaction. I am aware that the study involves Sibongile Mcetywa as study prime participant, other staff members will only help her to remember incidents happened in her teaching journey. If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher or the supervisor and or the University of KwaZulu-Natal using details provided below.

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Westville Campus Govan Mbeki

Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA Tel:

27312604557 -Fax: 27312604609

Email: HSSREC@wukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide/ do not provide consent to: Sibongile B.S Mcetywa

Signature of Principal

School stamp:

Date: __/__/



2020

APPENDIX D: TURNITIN REPORT

Masters Thesis

by Sidleni Mhlongo-Manyonyo

Submission date: 16-Feb-2024 02:34PM (UTC+0200)

Submission ID: 2296324495

File name: Sibongile_Edited_thesis_16_Feb.docx (17.07M)

Word count: 42882

Character count: 233437

Masters Thesis

ORIGINALITY REPORT

4%

SIMILARITY INDEX

%

INTERNET SOURCES

4%

PUBLICATIONS

%

STUDENT PAPERS

APPENDIX E: CONSENT LETTER TO CRITICAL FRIEND

14 Summit Rd, Ext3

Camperdown.

3720

Dear participant(_____)

My name is Sibongile B.S. Mcetywa and I am currently studying towards Master of education degree at the university of Kwa-Zulu natal (UKZN), Edgewood campus. It is required of me to complete a research dissertation by June 2021 as full thesis.

The title of my study is: Exploring learning for professional growth stories of a lived educational experiences of an economics teacher: personal narrative of an economics teacher. The purpose of this study is to find out how do teacher(s) learn for professional development, specifically on economics as a subject. This study is using personal narrative inquiry; however, I need support in the form casual conversational interviews with a colleague(s) to help me remember the incidents that happened while I was a novice teacher till date. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the skills, resources and methods applied by an economics teacher for professional development. Furthermore, the study seeks to find out how do a teacher learn from being an unqualified teacher to an expert teacher. This study only involves me as I am the research and the researcher. Your role as the participant in this study is to help me recall my memories on the incidents happened to me as notice teacher till date. This study will be conducted outside the school premises and it will not disturb your normal teaching time, however I will make an appointment to meet with you after school or during the weekends. All the data that I will collect will be used for my research project report.

Methods of data collection

Activity	ESTIMATED TIME	PREPOSED TIME FRAME	FORMAT OF DATA COLLECTION
Object inquiry	2 x 30 minutes	October/November 2020 15: 00 to 15: 30	Transcription and audio recordings
Collage	1 x 30 minutes	October/November 2020 15:00 - 15:30	Pasting of pictures and drawing
Letter writing	2 x 2 hours min	October/November 2020	Write a letter

Timeline	1 hour	October/November 2020	Draw a timeline
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My supervisor for this study is Prof. Daisy Pillay. Please feel free to contact her on the number below if you have any queries regarding this research study. You may also contact me as the researcher or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details are as follows .

Should you have no objection with the conditions mentioned above, please fill in the following form.

PARTICIPANT DECLARATION

1, _____

(Full names and surname of participants) participate in this research study. I confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the study. I have been briefed about the nature of the research study by the researcher in advance. I understand that my role as a participant is to help Sibongile Mcetywa to remember critically moments and incidents in her teaching journey. I also understand that the results of this research study will be used for the purpose of the study only, and that my identity will be kept confidential.

I hereby provide/ do not provide permission to help Sibongile for the use of the following ° records devices during the study session and data production process:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio recording		
Object and transcribed data		
Collage and transcribed data		
Participate in a timeline drawing		
I may respond to her letter		

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

APPENDIX F: EDITING CERTIFICATE

Dr Anita Hiralal

BA, HDE, B ED HONS, B COMM HONS, M
ED, PH D, CERTIFICATE IN COPY-EDITING
AND PROOFREADING (UCT), SA WRITERS
COLLEGE **CERTIFICATION (UCT)**
COPYWRITERS AND PROOFREADING
CERTIFICATE: SOUTH AFRICAN
WRITER'S COLLEGE

17 Fairfield Avenue

Scottsville

Pietermaritzburg

Telephone: 0333864913

0825352777

anitah0106@gmail.com



Guild of Copy Editors

EDITING CERTIFICATE

Ms Sibongile Beauty Sidleni Mhlongo-Manyonyo

16 February 2024

EDITING OF:

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

EXPLORING LEARNING FOR PROFESSIONAL

**GROWTH: STORIES OF LIVED EDUCATIONAL
EXPERIENCES OF AN ECONOMICS TEACHER IN
RURAL SCHOOL SETTING**

This thesis has been editing to ensure technically accurate
and contextually appropriate use of language, grammar as
well as logical coherency & presentation

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Dr Anita Hiralal.

DR ANITA HIRALAAL