An exploration of the nature of English First Additional Language (EFAL) teacher's participation in clusters and how it contributes to their professional development: A case of two clusters in the UMgungundlovu District

Nolwazi Zukiswa Nohiya

Student number: 982207327

Ethical clearance number: HSS/1086/2010 M

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the School of Education and Development, Teacher Education and Professional Development.

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Supervisor: Dr Cynthia Carol Nonhlanhla Mthiyane

DECLARATION

I, Nolwazi Zukiswa Nohiya declare that

i)   The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated is my original work.

ii)   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

iii)   This dissertation does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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

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

b) Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

v)   This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source bring detailed in the dissertation and in the references section.

Signed:

N.Z Nohiya

January 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I give thanks to God Almighty for giving me strength, courage and determination to undertake this study.

It is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the support and help of my supervisor Dr Nonhlanhla Mthiyane. This thesis would have remained a dream had it not been for her remarkable patience, vast knowledge and wisdom.

My gratitude goes to the participants of this study in their anonymous state, for their valuable time and contributions.

I am indebted to my parents for giving me an opportunity to get an education and for always supporting me when I embarked on furthering my studies, (my late father) Themba Nohiya and my mother Fanny Nohiya.

I would like to thank my siblings for their support and encouragement during this journey, Funeka, Zwai and Ntsika.

I would like to thank Bhekisisa Xolani Basi for his continuous support, even though at times I got irritated when he asked me about the progress of my studies.

I would also like to thank the Nohiya, Khanyile and Basi families for tirelessly looking after my children while I spent hours at the university trying to complete this document. You have all helped me achieve my dream.

This dissertation is dedicated to Cwengile, Aphiwe and Inathi and to all my family.

ABSTRACT

The major objective of the study was to explore the nature of participation of English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers in clusters, what they learn and the extent to which they thought their participation contributed to their professional development.

This is a qualitative study located within the interpretive paradigm. The questions in this study were answered by using a case study approach. Two cluster groups were purposively selected as its members were in the same geographical area and were supported by the same subject advisor. The data was collected using focus group interviews, semi-structured individual interviews, observations and document analysis. Data was analysed through coding and emerging themes were identified in order to answer the research questions.

This study used Richmond and Manokore (2010)'s concept of ‗professional learning communities' to understand how teachers participated in clusters, the kinds of activities they involved themselves in, and the extent to which they regarded clusters as contributing to their professional development. This study also draws from Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge to better understand the kinds of knowledge that teachers acquired in the cluster groups and how this helped them to improve their professional practice.

The findings suggest that teachers participated in a variety of activities, and that the interactions, conversations and mentoring that took place during meetings helped them understand the policies, meet the expectations of the department of education and improve their teaching practice in many ways. Teachers reported acquiring general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of the context and the curriculum and some subject content knowledge. The subject cluster meetings also influenced the teacher's interactions outside the scheduled times, encouraged class visit

with other schools, and fostered the culture of sharing of resources and expertise. However, the teachers expressed concern that cluster meetings tended to focus more on ensuring that they complied with the department of education requirements, like the strong focus on moderation of learners' work for the purposes of reporting. Teachers highlighted that they needed to have more interactions with the subject advisor during all their cluster meetings, which was not always the case due to the large number of schools that the subject advisor needed to serve. This suggests that the cluster groups need to be closely supported by subject specialists in order to ensure their relevance to teachers' needs and that they contribute to professional development.

This study concludes that the conversations and activities that EFAL teachers who participated in this study engaged in in their cluster groups did play an imperative role towards their professional development

Keywords: teacher professional development, teacher learning, teacher knowledge, professional learning communities, English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

NPDE -National Professional Diploma in Education

C2005 - Curriculum 2005

OBE – Outcomes Based Education

EFAL – English First Additional Language

NCS – National Curriculum Statement

TPD – Teacher Professional Development

CTPD – Continuing Teacher Professional Development

DoE – Department of Education

PCK – Pedagogical Content Knowledge

GPK – General Pedagogical Knowledge

ACE – Advanced Certificate in Education

PLC – Professional Learning Communities

CoP – Communities of Practice

NCS – National Curriculum Statement

HoD - Head of Department

BA – Bachelor of Arts

B.Ed. – Bachelor of Education

HDE – Higher Diploma in Education

PGCE – Post Graduate Certificate in Education

STD – Senior Teachers Diploma

JSTD - Junior Secondary Teachers Diploma

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to this study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the activities that English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers in UMgungundlovu District participate in during their cluster meetings and how these activities contribute to their professional development. It also highlights the research problem, rationale for the study, research questions and methodology, an overview of literature, conceptual framework and the outline of the study.

According to literature such as Goodlad (1990b, p. 25) (as cited in Fullan, 1993, p. 9), Cohen (1995, p. 13) and Duffee & Aikenhead, (1992) (as cited in Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001, p. 137) teacher professional development has been alluded as the key to education reform in different parts of the world. Education reform is a notion that focuses among other things, on the improvement of learner performance in many aspects of their school work; it could be in the acquisition of a new language, understanding of concepts in different subjects, or any other strand of learner performance. However, the researchers who have studied the notion of education reform also established that it was not easy to achieve the expected results in improving learner performance, without also improving teacher practice (DoE, 2007). It became clear that education reform was not possible without also improving teacher practice through the implementation of teacher professional development initiatives. The improvement of teacher practice is not only accomplished through the implementation of ideas learnt from workshops, seminars or conferences and reading the manual. It is a lengthy process that needs thorough knowledge of how teachers learn, what teachers should learn and what teachers should

know in order to be effective in their practice. This study seeks to establish the activities that teachers participate in in their cluster meetings and the effectiveness of clusters on the professional development of English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers. The study focused on EFAL teachers because the researcher is also an EFAL teacher, in a primary school. The study also focused on EFAL teachers because they were the most accessible for the researcher.

1.2 Presentation of the Problem

The notion of teacher professional development in South Africa dates back from the times of the apartheid regime. During this regime, different homelands were in charge of their own education system. The education system of the country was divided in a way that it should be suitable for different races and different school types. The kind of initial teacher education that teachers received was also separated into different races, school types and homelands. The quality of education for different racial groups and homelands was also different, due to the kind of teacher education that different teachers received (Mays, 2002). The fragmented education system of South Africa was to see a total transformation after the democratically elected government of 1994.

The democratically elected government of South Africa came with a number of changes that were made to many policies and structures in government departments. The educational changes meant that the curriculum needed to be changed in order for it to be representative of the population of the country as well as its needs. As a way of ensuring effective implementation of the transformation process of the curriculum, four policy documents were compiled. These policies were: Norms and standards for educators, code of conduct for educators, manual for developmental appraisal and the duties and responsibilities of educators (Barasa & Mattson, 1998). These policy

documents described the kind of an educator that was envisaged in the new education system, the roles that educators were expected to fulfil and the code of conduct for educators and it provided the frameworks for professional development and appraisal (Barasa & Mattson, 1998).

Owing to the change in the ruling government, the education system was totally overhauled with the old education policies abolished. The aim of a revamp was to introduce an education system that would see all learners as equal citizens of the country who should be awarded equal opportunities and address the inequities of the past. A new education curriculum was introduced and first implemented in 1998 in all grade one classes. The new curriculum came with its challenges for the teachers and the department of education in South Africa. This curriculum presented itself in a totally different manner from what the practicing teachers were familiar with. The curriculum introduced issues and methods of teaching that the teachers were not trained in. This new curriculum was called Curriculum 2005 (C2005) as it was meant to be fully implemented in the different phases by the year 2005.

The new curriculum which was to be known as C2005 came with different principles and missions of education that were not necessarily easy for all teachers to implement. The curriculum came with three essential principles of implementation, which were: the integration of knowledge, outcomes based education (OBE) approach and the learner centred approach. The aim behind the integration of knowledge was that the knowledge that learners are taught at school level would have to be integrated with the kind of knowledge that was needed in the employment sector. The idea was to have an accumulation of knowledge from the initial stage of learner's education up to the employment stage (DoE, 1995, p. 15) (as cited in Pretorius & Lemmer, 1998). The outcomes based education approach envisaged an approach whereby the level of

competency that a particular learner has achieved is not described by the scoring of marks or a percentage achieved by writing a test or an examination. The OBE approach aimed at setting a number of outcomes that a learner in a certain grade was expected to have achieved. The level of achievement for each learner was to be given credits for each learning outcome achieved and if the learners had not achieved to their fullest, they would be given an opportunity to try again in order to achieve the required outcome (DoE, 1995, p. 15) (as cited in Pretorius & Lemmer, 1998). The learner centred approach aimed at changing the atmosphere in the South African classrooms from being teacher centred, where the teacher did most of the talking and demonstrations; to an approach that was more learner-centred where the learners did their own investigations and making sense of the knowledge learnt.

The introduction of the new curriculum was aimed at redressing the inequities of the past and introducing an education system that provided an equal quality of education for all its learners. However, literature has revealed that education reform is not possible without improving the teacher practice through teacher professional development initiatives. The latter is supported by the statement in the (Department of Education, National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2007, p. 16) which says that ―all teachers need to enhance their skills, not necessarily qualification, for the delivery of the new curriculum".

The (DoE, 2007, p. 30) also mention that the department of education in collaboration with South African Council for Educators (SACE) ―carry the statutory responsibility for the teacher education and development system". One of the initiatives carried out by the department of education towards teacher professional development was the introduction of subject based cluster groups. This study was an attempt at establishing how this

initiative has contributed to the teacher professional development of the teachers who participated in these cluster groups.

1.3 Rationale for the study

My interest in this study stemmed from the interest that I had acquired from the masters coursework about the importance of teacher professional development in implementing education reform. My interest also emanated from the observation that new policies in education highlighted the importance of teacher professional development as an effective tool in implementing curriculum reform. According to the Government Gazette on the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2007, p. 3) ‒Teachers are the essential drivers of good quality education". My understanding of this statement was that, the government acknowledged the importance of teachers in implementing the curriculum changes was given to them by the government. I then assumed that the government was also aware of the roles that they had to play to ensure that the curriculum policies and documents were implemented effectively, hence the formulation of the Government Gazette on the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa . The need for teacher professional development as a tool to ensure that the _drivers' of good quality education are well equipped, should then be at the top of the priority list of the education department. The department of education should have effective strategies in place to ensure that policies that need to be implemented are implemented with immediate effect and with great care. The education department's recognition of the importance of teachers in good quality education, led to my interest in conducting a study that looked at cluster groups, as one of the modes of implementing teacher professional development. There are many forms of delivering teacher professional development programmes, but literature suggested that the most effective form of

teacher professional development was when teachers learnt in a community of practice (Lieberman & Mace, 2008).

I have developed an interest in this notion and was interested in investigating the reality of how this actually happened in a South African context. I therefore investigated how the cluster workshops were helping teachers who taught English First Additional Language (EFAL) improve their advanced strategies in order for effective and efficient teaching and learning to take place as well as improve teacher practice. I was interested in EFAL teachers because I also taught English First Additional   and have often felt that there was a need for more teacher development in how some areas needed to be taught and assessed.

I felt that clusters can be categorized as professional learning communities as they had the same features as what Henderson and Leavitt (2002) defined as professional learning communities. Henderson and Leavitt (2002, p. 2) defined professional learning communities as ̶networks of people small and large who come together to share ideas with and learn from one another in physical and virtual space". We have enough policies and strategies in place about how to implement the changes in the education reform, but little research had been done about the different contexts in which teacher professional development takes place in South Africa and which models are more effective. It was for this reason that I decided to study the effectiveness of cluster groups in teacher professional development as I looked at the context in which teacher professional development took place as well as the effectiveness of the model, which is professional learning communities.

1.4 Research Questions and Methodology

The study attempted to answer the following broad question:

What do English First Additional Language teachers do in a cluster and how does their participation contribute to their professional development?

In answering this question, the following critical questions were answered:

- What activities do English First Additional Language teachers participate in in clusters?

- What do English First Additional Language teachers say they learn from participating in clusters?

- How does English First Additional Language teacher's participation and what they learn in clusters contribute to their professional development?

This is a qualitative study that is located within an interpretive paradigm. The data for this study was collected through the use of the following research methods: individual semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, observations and document analysis.

1.5 An Overview of Literature

The literature reviewed in this study was mostly based on international literature, as there was very little research that has been conducted on teacher professional development in South Africa (DoE, 2007). According to Day and Sachs (2004, p. 3) ―Continuing Professional Development is a term used to describe all the activities in which teachers engage in during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work". This means any kind of training or development programme that teachers may engage in after their initial teacher training course, is categorized as continuing professional development (CPD) or teacher professional development, as its aim is to

develop teachers' skills, post their qualifications. Craft (1996, p. 6) defines teacher professional development as ―all types of professional learning, undertaken by teachers beyond the point of initial training". There are many definitions that scholars use to define a term, the differences depend on the context in which the definition was formulated, or the specific interest that the researcher had on the topic. I combined aspects of both definitions in my attempt to define teacher professional development. I defined teacher professional development as in-service learning that teachers engage in after their initial teacher training, with the aim of improving their skills and knowledge.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has an important role to play in the development and renewal of the teaching profession. Teachers nowadays need to be developed constantly, due to the ongoing education reform. If the process of education reform needs to be implemented effectively, teachers need to be in the forefront of that process and one way of doing this is through improving their skills to be in line with the reforms in education, through professional development (Lieberman & Mace, 2008). Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) suggest that there are purposes for staff development programmes, these may vary in context and format, but they generally share a common feature, that is, they are designed to alter the professional practices, beliefs and understanding of the school persons with the aim of bringing about change in the classroom practices of teachers, change in their beliefs and attitudes and change in learning outcomes of students.

Teacher professional development can take place in many forms; it can be in the form of a conference, formal tertiary education courses or one day or once off workshops, these can be attended at an institution of higher learning, at a school, at a particular department of a school or by a group of colleagues (Mohammed, 2006) (as cited in Fareo, 2013). Literature suggests that for teacher professional development to be

effective and worthwhile it must take place in the context of a professional learning community or community of practice (Lieberman & Mace, 2008). The rest of the literature reviewed in this study looks at models of teacher professional development, teacher knowledge, teacher learning and professional learning communities.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This research was informed by Richmond and Manokore's (2010) notion of professional learning communities, which holds that people learn better when they learn in a professional learning community. Richmond and Manokore (2010) enabled me to understand the notion of professional learning communities and look at the qualities of the clusters in relation to what literature says about professional learning communities and their functionality. I looked at the features of professional learning communities, how they function and their limitations, in relation to the cluster groups. The notion of professional learning community has been given many names and has also been used in different sectors such as business, development projects, government, and a number of other institutions. One of the important key features of a professional learning community is that its members share tools, ideas, resources, and ways of addressing problems, knowledge, information and a number of other skills relevant to their profession. The literature that I have read enabled me to further analyse the features of a community of practice and enabled me to understand the data collected. The study also had to identify whether or not the participants actually shared any learning experiences, skills and knowledge.

Using Richmond and Manokore's (2010) notion of professional learning communities, on its own was not adequate in helping me explain and analyse the findings of the study, so I also used Grossman (1990) to understand the nature of teacher knowledge

and what it is that teachers need to know. Grossman (1990) suggests that we need to know what it is that teachers are expected to learn and know in order for teacher learning to take place effectively and efficiently. When Grossman (1990) talked of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), she was referring to the methods, skills and techniques needed to teach a particular subject. An example of this was that a good English teacher does not have the same pedagogical knowledge to teach Mathematics like a Mathematics teacher, he or she would need to have more than just the knowledge of the subject to teach it, but knowledge of pedagogy, context, subject matter and general pedagogical knowledge as well.

1.7 Outline of the Study

The chapters of this study are presented as follows:

Chapter one presented an introduction to the study.

Chapter two presented an overview of the literature review that was studied. It presented literature on teacher professional development, models of teacher professional development, teacher knowledge, teacher learning and the conceptual framework which also looks at professional learning communities.

Chapter three dealt with the research methodology that I used to collect data for this study. It also looked at how data has been analysed to reach the research findings. The limitations that were encountered in the process of data collection are also presented in this chapter.

In chapter four I presented, analysed and discussed the collected data in relation to the reviewed literature in order to put the argument and reveal the themes that were

discovered in the study. It is from these themes that I deducted the main findings of my study.

I have devoted chapter five to the summary of the main findings of the study. The findings were presented in light of the themes that emerged in the analysis in chapter four. The recommendations for practice, research and limitations of this study are also mentioned in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I presented the literature I reviewed in conducting this study. I began the chapter by reviewing literature on the concepts of teacher professional development, teacher learning, teacher knowledge and professional learning communities. This study investigated the extent to which teachers viewed clusters as sites of learning and thus sites of professional development. It starts by presenting a brief overview of the concept of teacher professional development and teacher learning. It also discussed purposes and models of teacher professional development and discussed the state of teacher professional development in South Africa. Some findings of previously conducted studies on teacher professional development were also discussed in this chapter. Finally I concluded the chapter by presenting the conceptual framework according to Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge and Richmond and Manokore's (2010) concept of professional learning communities (PLC) that was employed to analyse data of this study.

2.2 Teacher professional development

The concept of teacher professional development is a discourse that has recently gained attention in teacher education. Teacher professional development is also known in some other settings as in-service teacher education (Ling & Mackenzie, 2001), Ono and Ferreira (2010) and Botha and Reddy (2011). In-service teacher education or teacher professional development can be distinguished from initial teacher education because it applies to teachers who are already practicing and experienced, while initial

teacher education refers to teachers who are studying towards becoming teachers (Ling & Mackenzie, 2001) and Mukeredzi (2013).

There are many definitions that different scholars use to define the term teacher professional development (TPD). Knight (2001, p. 239) claims that ―continuing professional development is needed because initial teacher education cannot contain all of the propositional knowledge that is needed and certainly not that procedural ‗know how‘ knowledge which grows in practice." This suggests that initial teacher education is not enough for teachers because it does not contain all the necessary ‗know how‘ knowledge or tacit knowledge which grows in practice that is necessary for teaching and learning. It also suggests that teachers can never have enough information or skills that are adequate for effective teaching and learning in their initial teacher education. It is also important to note that teacher‘s professional development does not only occur through attending formal courses, but that teachers also gain knowledge, skills, and learn in practice through interacting with their colleagues and learners in their work places.

On the other hand, Craft (1996, p. 6) defines teacher professional development as ―all types of professional learning undertaken by teachers beyond the point of initial training." He does not mention anything about the kind of activities that teacher professional development involves, such as reflection, reviewing, creativity, skills, knowledge, and so on, but he mentions that it is learning that is undertaken beyond the teachers‘ initial training. Craft's definition of teacher professional development links to Knight‘s (2001) explanation for the purpose of teacher professional development, when he suggests that initial teacher education does not contain all the adequate knowledge that is needed by teachers.

Furthermore, Day (1999, p. 4) defines teacher professional development as ‟a process by which, alone and with others, teachers review and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives." This definition highlights the fact that teacher professional development is a practice that is achieved through the teacher's interaction with others; it is not an individual venture. This is in accordance with Lieberman and Mace's (2008) understanding of how teacher professional development occurs. They suggest that learning is social and not individual and that it happens through practice and experience. Day (1999) also emphasises the importance of teachers reviewing their practice and committing themselves as change agents in the education system. These are important elements that are necessary for the improvement of teacher practice, which comes up at a later stage of this chapter, when I discuss models of teacher professional development. Day, (1999) and Wermke, (2011) also argue that change in the education system cannot be implemented if the teachers are not involved in the process; hence they are called change agents. This highlights the importance for teachers to develop and acquire skills and knowledge as they play an important role in implementing changes in the education systems.

Lastly, Bredeson (2002, p. 663) defines teacher professional development as ‟learning opportunities that engage educator's creative and reflective capacities in ways that strengthen their practice." The first important aspect of Bredeson's definition is that teacher professional development involves learning. He does not discuss the kind of learning that is needed, but mentions the necessary end result of this learning, which is to strengthen teacher practice. Both Day (1999) and Bredeson's (2002) definitions suggest that all the activities involved in teacher professional development are

necessary for the implementation of the same end result which is better teacher practice. Like Day (1999), Bredeson (2002) also highlights the importance of the teachers' capability to reflect, as this will help strengthen their practice. Bredeson (2002) also uses the words _creative' and _capacity', which indicates that in order for the teachers' reflections to be productive, the teacher needs to have the capacity to be creative in his or her reflections.

The common thread that runs through all these definitions of teacher professional development is that it involves some form of learning and learning for a purpose. Day (1999) and Bredeson (2002) both cite the words _review' and _reflect' in their definitions of teacher professional development which suggest the importance of looking back and using your previous experiences as a learning curve. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) also argue that ‒teachers and other professionals negotiate their understanding of practice through reflection and learning conversation." However, in order to be effective, teacher professional development needs to be properly planned and implemented. The providers of formal teacher professional development activities need to use the appropriate models or approaches that will enable them to achieve the desired outcomes. They also need to have an understanding of the notion of teacher learning as it is important for the acquisition of appropriate information necessary for successful teacher practice.

Lastly, the providers of teacher professional development activities also need to know the purpose of the teacher professional development initiative or programme in order to produce the desirable outcomes. For the purpose of this study, the literature reviewed focuses on the formal teacher professional development initiatives, although there are other ways in which teachers learn or develop professionally. This was because this

study investigated one formal type of teacher professional development, which is a cluster group.

2.3 Purposes of teacher professional development

There are different purposes for undertaking teacher professional development programmes; these may vary according to different contexts, time or individuals. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) and Fishman, Marx, Best, Tal (2003) claim that while there are different purposes why staff development programmes emerge, the common feature is that they are all designed to alter the professional practices, beliefs and understanding of the school persons towards an articulated end. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) also argue that in most cases the end result of teacher professional development was to bring about change in teachers, their beliefs and attitudes and change in learning outcomes of students.

Greenland (as cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003) identifies four main reasons for undertaking in-service education. The first one is for certification of unqualified teachers. This is when teacher professional development programmes are designed to cater for the teachers who are already teaching, but are not qualified. The second category is to upgrade teachers. This is done when teachers who are already qualified and working need to upgrade their qualification, for example when a standard level of qualification of all educators has been revisited and all teachers are expected to be at a certain level of qualifications. The third category is to prepare teachers for new roles. This can be preparing teachers to be more than just teachers, but to be technologically advanced individuals, such as advancing in computer skills. The last category that Greenland identifies is the curriculum related dissemination or refresher courses. This

type of professional development can be done to boost teachers' knowledge about a certain phenomenon in the curriculum.

Villegas-Reimers, (2003) and The Government Gazette on The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2007) suggest that any change in the education system cannot be implemented successfully if the teachers are not being developed to deal with the changes themselves; therefore the professional development of teachers is at the core of education reform. Teacher professional development is therefore an imperative practice that needs to be carried out in order to make teaching and learning more effective and productive. In the next subtopic I looked at the nature of teacher professional development in South Africa and what programmes are available.

2.4 Teacher professional development in South Africa

Teacher professional development in South Africa is a phenomenon that was in existence even before 1994. The introduction of the Bantu Education act in 1953 and the Homelands Policy in the 1960's necessitated a training of teachers (Sayed, 2004). Racially segregated teacher colleges and universities offered diverse teacher education in the different parts of South Africa (Sayed, 2004). The segregation of the institutions of higher learning and education levels in schools gave rise to a very poor education system for black teachers.

Khosa (2013) states that the levels of qualifications that ensued from racial segregation differed extensively. Furthermore, Van den Berg (as cited in Jackson, 1987) and Welsch (2002) mentioned that the nature of education in South Africa was an autocratic one during the apartheid regime. As a result of this, concerns such as teacher

professional development could not have been a priority, unless the government saw a need for it. The government saw teachers as merely the ‒recipients of policies determined by their masters and as agents of those masters" van den Berg (as cited in Jackson, 1987, p. 20).

Teachers would not have had an opportunity to voice out their need for professional development or even kind of professional development they needed as they were not seen as individuals who were capable of making their own choices. On the other hand, even if these teachers would have had an opportunity to voice out their needs for development, the courses offered would have been ‒core-periphery type" van den Berg, (as cited in Jackson, 1987, p. 20). The professional development on offer would have been from the top down and not consider the teachers' needs.

Owing to this kind of autocratic system in the schooling system in South Africa, other agencies took it upon themselves to make a contribution towards teacher professional development (Welsch, 2002). Their fundamental aim was to ‒upgrade black education", according to Ngcongo (as cited in Jackson, 1987, p. 47). There were some teacher professional development initiatives taking place within the different homelands. Some of the organisations that took part in teacher professional developments included: Teacher Opportunity Programmes (TOPS) which administered courses on the syllabus and various teaching methods such as the methodology of English, Mathematics and Science. One of their main focuses was teaching teachers to be innovative in their classrooms as there seemed to be a lack of innovativeness of black teachers to use the resources that were available to them, Ashley & Mehl (as cited in Jackson, 1987). There were also teacher professional development initiatives provided by Shell Company, which provided courses aimed at upgrading teachers' skills. It also offered management courses for inspectors, principals and heads of

departments. Another teacher professional development initiative was the Embambisweni Project, it offered courses on the English set books and also compiled notes for teachers in high school Ngcongo (as cited in Jackson, 1987). These are only a few examples of the initiatives that were made by independent bodies, there were also other examples that were conducted in the different provinces.

Teacher professional development courses were also offered through courses run by institutions of higher learning, which operated on a distance learning, correspondence basis and later through teacher centres Hofmeyer & Pavlich (as cited in Jackson, 1987) and Welsch (2002). An example of teacher professional development for black teachers was offered by the Further Training Campus of Vista University. The main qualification that teachers were studying for in the early 1980's was a senior certificate, which some teachers were doing through Vista University and other universities throughout the country and some teachers were doing through attending courses at different teacher centres Hofmeyer & Pavlich (as cited in Jackson, 1987).

After the inauguration of the democratically elected government, major changes in the education system took place. A new curriculum, which was initially called Curriculum 2005, was introduced. The introduction of this curriculum presented a huge gap between what teachers had been trained to teach and the skills and knowledge they had acquired and what the new curriculum required of them. The changes in the curriculum were intended to serve ―as an instrument for the new political vision" (Harley & Wedekind, 2004, p. 196). The idea was that this curriculum, which was first implemented in 1998, would be progressively implemented so that by 2005 all the phases of the schools would be implementing it, hence the name C2005. Curriculum 2005 was first implemented in 1998 in all grade one classes and in 1999 was implemented in grade seven classes. This curriculum had three important principles

that were part of its package. It was outcomes-based, had an integrated knowledge system and was learner-centred. These principles will be discussed in the following paragraphs in order to provide a brief overview of what they entailed.

2.4.1 Outcomes based education (OBE)

The principle of OBE presented teachers with an unexpected task of having to design their own content or subject matter to teach their learners. The new curriculum only supplied teachers with lists of outcomes that the learners were expected to have achieved by the end of each school year and phase. However, the teachers were not provided with the relevant content knowledge that should be taught in order to achieve those outcomes. The national curriculum documents only consisted of learning outcomes and assessment standards to be taught. Spreen and Vally (2010) state that ―there was a gap between policy and practise". The policies were there, but the officials assumed that this meant they would be implemented, but did not do a follow up on how they would be implemented and did not properly interpret the policies to the teachers and monitor the implementation process.

2.4.2 The integration of knowledge across subjects

The curriculum presented teachers with the freedom to integrate knowledge across subjects. However, this freedom presented teachers with challenges as they did not know which content knowledge they should utilise in the process of integration. The curriculum did not specify which knowledge should be taught with which skills and expected outcomes (Cross, Mungadi and Rouhani, 2010).

2.4.3 Learner-centred approach

C2005 specifically stipulated the differences between the old approach and the new approach to teaching. The new approach mentioned that learning should be learner – centred and move away from the old approach of being teacher-centred (Welsch, 2002). It also suggests the kinds of activities that teachers should be doing in their classrooms such as being facilitators and using group work to give learners an opportunity to make sense of their own learning. Due to a lack of proper training of teachers to implement this approach, the teachers were left with an option of using personal knowledge or knowledge from the class discussions with the learners as the basis of their lessons. Cross, Mungadi and Rouhani (2010, p. 182) mention that ―Explicit discipline knowledge was ignored". Teachers merely facilitated conversation on different topics and that was regarded as learning, but much teaching activities remained teacher-centred (Chisholm et al., 2000; Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999; Jansen, 1999) (as cited in Brodie, Lelliott and Davis, 2002).

Teachers had to undergo an extensive and intense amount of training in order to be able to deliver the expected outcomes of the new curriculum (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). The Department of Education had to come up with an approach that could be used to disseminate the information of the new curriculum to all South African teachers in a short space of time. The models that were used to do this were the cascading model and the training model (Bantwini, 2009). The National Department of Education trained provincial teams who would be responsible for cascading the information to the subject advisors who then cascaded it to the teachers in their districts (Bantwini, 2009).

Bantwini (2009) criticises this model for placing teachers in a passive role. They were expected to consume the knowledge that was formulated by the officials and

implement it in their classrooms. Both Kennedy (2005) and Bantwini (2009) critique this model for ignoring the importance of the learning context in which teaching and learning occurs and only pay more attention to the actual knowledge being taught. The issue of teacher learning was also not considered, the models used assumed that teachers can change their behaviour, methods and skills and instantly learn to reproduce what has been conveyed to them in the training Little (1993) (as cited in Sparks & Loucks-Horsely, 1989). The teachers were not given time to comprehend the new curriculum, before they could implement it (Bantwini, 2009).

The subject advisors were not helpful to the teachers as they did not seem to have any valuable knowledge that they could add in order to make the understanding of the curriculum easier for the teachers (Bantwini, 2009). They conducted their trainings by reading through the documents during the training sessions. Another downfall of this model is that the teachers were sometimes grouped in their phases per learning areas; this made subject advisors unable to address teachers concerns that they had for their specific grades (Bantwini, 2009). Follow up meetings or workshops were not conducted in order to monitor the teachers' progress on implementing the new curriculum.

After these training sessions were conducted, teachers were not able to reflect on their progress because their subject advisors did not check up on the teachers' progress. Steyn (2011) indicates that teachers need to be constantly monitored in order to know how they are progressing when implementing new teaching initiatives. The following section of the literature review will provide an insight into some of the models of teacher professional development and how effective they are in the professional development of teachers.

2.5 Models of teacher professional development

Teacher professional development programmes can be delivered in many forms or models. Joyce & Weil (as cited in Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989, p. 41) defined teacher professional development models as ―a pattern or plan which can be used to guide the design of staff development program." The model used depends on the kind of outcomes expected. The results should foster positive and expected change in teacher practice, knowledge, skills and pedagogical content knowledge (Onwu and Mogari 2004 & Rogan and Grayson; 2003). Teacher professional development providers need to come up with programmes that will be suitable to different contextual settings, take into account the different identities of teachers, teacher's needs and prior knowledge of teachers who will receive the programme (Bantwini, 2009). The type of professional development model used will determine the kind of results that can be achieved. For example, it is suggested that if the aim of the teacher professional development programme is to introduce a new concept to the teachers, the influence of their classroom may be too strong and it would be advisable to conduct the workshop or teacher professional development activity in a new environment (Putnam & Borko, 2000). However, Putnam and Borko (2000) also caution that it is also important to think of ways that the new learning could be incorporated into the teachers' classroom practice.

Different models of teacher professional development have been identified by different scholars and different names have also been used to refer to the same or similar types of models. Ling and Mackenzie (2001) suggest that teacher professional development can take place in many forms. They suggest that it can take place within an institution that teachers work in, whereby the teachers themselves are the designers of the programme, and it is designed in a way that will be suitable for their context. The

teachers in this type of a model can work as individuals and reflect on their own practice, or they can work collaboratively with colleagues from their schools or other schools and form a professional learning community. I will call these the in-house models. Another model that Ling and Mackenzie (2001) identified is the one where colleagues work towards achieving a professional development goal, but achieve such goals with the help of drawing from outside expertise, such as universities, attending workshops, seminars and many more. In reviewing the literature I realised that models of teacher professional development can be placed on a continuum where on the one end there are models that are more individual based and on the other end there are models that are more collaborative. I will look at the features of the models and locate them into two categories. I have therefore decided to discuss them under these two broad categories.

2.5.1.1 Models that draw from Outside expertise

There are three models of teacher professional development that I discussed below that were grouped as drawing from outside expertise. Each is slightly different from the others.

2.5.1.2 College-based model

According to Mohamed (2009) the college-based model of teacher professional development, takes place at an institution of higher learning. This form of professional development involves teachers attending theory based classes at a university, college or any institution of higher learning. It can be for the purposes of furthering a teacher's

education such as registering for a post graduate degree or upgrading of skills. Professional development is such that those teachers can use their own practice as examples and focus of their study. An advantage of this model is that there are teachers from different backgrounds and contexts and this creates an opportunity for professional and cultural exchange and teachers are able to share insight on teaching in an economical way (Mohamed, 2009). Examples of a college based model of professional development include the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) and Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) qualifications discussed earlier that were designed for teachers who were under qualified teachers as defined by the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education Policy (Mohamed, 2009).

2.5.1.3 The training model

The second type of a model that draws from outside expertise identified by (Ono & Ferreira, 2010) is the one where professional development includes short courses and workshops. This model is also known as the traditional form of professional development (Ono & Ferreira, 2010).This model has been widely used in developing countries, including South Africa. In this model, teachers are invited to attend courses, workshops and seminars. The department of education usually organises these trainings to train teachers on a certain aspect of the curriculum. These trainings have also been used during the implementation of C2005 and the OBE in South Africa.

The training model has been the most popular model of teacher professional development for a very long time. It involves teachers attending training sessions that are provided by the education departments or outside expertise. The agenda and expected outcomes are often predetermined by the expert. This model uses the top-down approach where the

teachers are usually placed in a passive role during the training session. The training can take place within the institution that the teachers work or outside (Kennedy, 2005).

The disadvantage of this model is that programmes are often organised without the teacher's knowledge of what the content and the expected outcomes of the workshop will entail, (Sandholtz, 2002). Training model is usually a once off event that can take place in a day, or a few days. The traditional models of teacher professional development being workshops, seminars, conferences or courses, have been criticized as being brief, fragmented, incoherent encounters, that are decontextualized and isolated from real classroom situations Ball & Cohen (as cited in Ono & Ferreira, 2010, p.60). Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) also critiques it for the amount of time wasted through providing these models for a long time and yet did not produce any significant change in teacher practice. He argues that the training model does not take into consideration the different ways in which teachers learn, the context in which teachers work and it also took teachers knowledge and input in workshops for granted as suggested by (Little, 1993). Bantwini (2009) and Kennedy (2005) also criticised this model for leaving teachers to implement new development in education on their own and doing any monitoring of the teachers progress. Experts who use this model assume that the teachers can manage to implement the changes with no follow ups made after they have attended brief courses. Bantwini (2009) and Kennedy (2005), suggest that continuing professional development should not be the means to an end, but the beginning of teacher support, until teachers can successfully implement the new curriculum or changes in the curriculum.

2.5.1.4 The cascading model

The third type of a model that draws from outside expertise that I discussed was the cascading model. This model needs the training model to precede it before it can be used as a model to cascade information, knowledge or skills to other teachers. The information first needs to be conveyed to a group of teachers at a training session or in a workshop (Kennedy, 2005). The teachers attending the workshop are then expected to cascade the information learnt from these workshops or training to more teachers. This model, like the training model, has also become popular in developing countries (Ono and Ferreira, 2010). The popularity of this model stems from the fact that a large number of personnel can be reached within a short space of time and with less expenses (Wedell, 2005).

This model uses the top-down approach whereby a number of specialists and experts can train the teachers within a short space of time, the teachers are then expected to go back to their colleagues and hold feedback sessions and cascade the information that has been conveyed to them in the workshops. Trainings are usually presented by an individual or a team of experts. This kind of training involves demonstrations or modelling of skills, feedback about performance or coaching in the workplace (Showers & Joyce, 1996). In most cases, objectives of the training session are usually identified by the training providers, facilitators and the expert or presenter of the training and not the teachers. This model of teacher professional development has also been used in South Africa when Curriculum 2005 (C2005) and OBE were introduced (Wedell, 2005).

The disadvantage of this model is that the message does not cascade down to the lower levels effectively (Khulisa 1999; HSRC 2000) (as cited in Dichaba and Mokhele,

2012). By the time the information reaches the next level, it has already been watered down or misinterpreted, because of the lack of the correct mechanism to pass down essential information Fiske & Ladd (as cited in Ono & Ferreira, 2010, p. 61). This model has been critiqued to also expect teachers to be passive participants who just receive information and merely pass it down from one group of teachers to the next (Wedell, 2005). They argue that teachers are not given an opportunity to comprehend the content of the new changes; they are expected to be able to go back to their schools and implement the new policies. These are a few examples of the models that draw from outside expertise. These models helped to further understand the kind of a model the clusters were and be able to identify the relevant features and limitations that that apply to clusters, in relation to other types of models.

2.5.2 In-house, school-based or site-based models

On the other end of the continuum, there are teacher professional development models that involve teachers working as a collective. Teachers work collaboratively with their colleagues to achieve their goals. Examples of such models that I will discuss in this chapter are the in-house model or site-based models, the collaborative action research model and the bottom-across approach or model

2.5.2.1 The in-house model, school -based or site-based model

The in-house model or site-based model of teacher professional development is referred to as such because professional development takes place in the schools where the teachers work (Avalos, 2011). In this model the teachers of a particular school work together to identify and focus on different aspects of teacher professional development within their

school, such as policies, the curriculum, the learners performance, or any other area that needs to be developed. The teachers become experts of their own development. They decide on strategies that they will use to develop each other and improve their teacher practice. Sometimes sub-committees are formed so that teachers can be divided into smaller groups that will be assigned different tasks that they will work on and develop as a group. The sub-committees then give feedback to the rest of the staff and suggest strategies that can be used to develop the areas of interest and the whole staff jointly makes a decision on the issue. The teachers themselves develop the programmes and the learning material that will be used to develop themselves and their colleagues. They may bring in external help or experts to help them with certain aspects of their development. Ono and Ferreira (2010) and Xu (2003) maintain that the advantage of this model is that teachers share skills, knowledge, methods and other developmental resources and implement them in their own context.

The disadvantages of the in-house model is that, it may have gained popularity of being a more cost effective model of teacher professional development, but it may not necessarily produce the best results. The teachers who come up with the content or areas to be developed may have been able to identify the need to develop teacher practice, but they also need to understand exactly the things that teachers need to know and learn and how teachers learn in order to fully develop teachers professionally (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). This model differs from the models that draw from outside expertise in that it is school based. This model consists of teachers taking charge and an initiative towards their own professional development. Teachers also get constructive criticism from their colleagues because they can relate to each other's context and practice.

2.5.2.2 The collaborative action research model

The second type of an in-house model is the collaborative action research model as discussed by (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). Like the previous model, teachers here also work together. The collaborative action research model entails teachers enhancing their knowledge, skills and practice through inquiry and critical reflection on their practice and outcomes. In this model, teachers create environments that foster inquiry and reflection, promote collegiality and dialogue, and support changes in practice with adequate resources and structures. Teachers involved in this model create an opportunity where they write journals or record their lessons and reflect on their lessons and use their findings as a tool to develop themselves professionally. Teachers discuss their reflections, either at an institution of higher learning or at a school based teacher professional development workshop, depending on the site of their development programme (Butler, et al, 2004).

An example of a collaborative action research model is the lesson study model that is commonly practiced in Japan. The most outstanding feature of the lesson study approach is that ‑teachers are collaboratively engaged in action research in order to improve quality of instruction" (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). In this type of a programme, a teacher plans and designs a lesson and teaches the planned lesson. The teacher then writes a report where he or she describes and explains how the lesson proceeded and whether they have learnt anything from the lesson. The colleagues and sometimes teachers from other schools or administrators are invited to take part in the discussion of the lesson study, for the purposes of developing each other (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). Another advantage of this model is that teachers reflect on knowledge that is both relevant and meaningful to their work (Burbank & Kauchak, 2003).

Ono and Ferreira (2010) argued that the disadvantages of the collaborative action research model are that it presumes that all the teachers in a school would have the same vision for goals of schooling and education. Another downfall of this model is argued to be that it assumes that all the teachers within the school would be comfortable to share and reflect on their experiences with their peers of different age groups, experience and gender (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). Teachers in different stages of their profession may not all be comfortable with discussing their practices with their colleagues, this model may not be effective in some areas such as the farm schools that are one-teacher schools.

2.5.2.3 The bottom-across model, communities of practice or professional learning communities

The last model of teacher professional development that falls into this category is the bottom-across model. Roelandt and Den Hertog (1999) argue that in the bottom-across model, teachers from different schools get together to collaborate on professional learning and development activities. This approach has the same features as the model of teacher professional development that has recently emerged as a discourse of teacher professional development. This model has also been recently adopted as a model of teacher professional development in South Africa (Jita and Mokhele, 2014). This model has been called by a number of names such as communities of learning (Lieberman & Mace, 2009), communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), clusters, (Jita and Mokhele, 2014) and collective pedagogical repertoire, (Knight, 2001).

Knight (2001) describes collective pedagogical repertoire as a process whereby teachers share their stories with the aim of familiarizing each other with techniques that

might be new to them or those that they have never used or seen the possibilities of using them. These ―stories might describe presentational devices, homework tasks, assessment methods, analogies, metaphors and anecdotes that explain difficult ideas, good resources and worksheets from elsewhere" (Knight, 2001, p. 238). This model differs from other models in that it involves teachers from different schools getting together on regular basis to develop each other's skills and knowledge. Teachers in this model discuss matters pertaining to the lesson planning, pedagogy, subject matter and assessment methods.

The disadvantages of the bottom- across model is that individual teachers make their decisions based on the conversations that they have with the community, in the context of their schools. Some teachers come from schools that are under-resourced, under-staffed and have a heavy workload. Such teachers may not have time for collegial interactions and the teacher would have to do a lot of sacrificing in order to be an active member of the community.

An understanding of the different models of teacher professional development was necessary for this study. It was necessary so that I could be able to locate clusters in the relevant model as this also helped when looking at the features, advantages and disadvantages of clusters in relation to the literature reviewed.

2.6 Teacher learning

Different scholars define teacher learning differently. Greeno et al. (1996) describes learning as the acquisition of knowledge and skills thought to be useful in a wide variety of settings. On the other hand, Kelly (2006, p. 505), gives a definition of teacher learning that highlights the difference between an expert and novice teacher.

He defines teacher learning as ―the process by which novice teacher's move towards expertise". Teacher learning generally involves the process of teachers acquiring new information or building onto already acquired information, knowledge and skills, at the initial stage of their teacher education and during their practice as teachers. Teacher learning does not start at the stage where teachers are already practicing in their profession. It starts at the stage where teachers are learning or studying to be teachers.

According to Darling-Hammond (2006), the structure, curriculum and focal point of initial teacher education has gone through a number of changes since its inception which dates back to the early twentieth century. There are a number of reasons that have led to such changes such as the control of the education system by the national governments of different countries, the needs of the industry ,the needs of the labour force, power relations and the influences of the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund), (Smyth &Shacklock, 2003). These groups, departments or organisations would communicate their agendas through the changes, restructuring and implementation of different policies in the education systems (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Nevertheless, the number of changes that the education systems of the world have encountered is not a matter of interest in this study, but the nature of teacher learning and what teacher learning entails is important for this study.

2.6.1 The nature of teacher learning

The nature of teaching and learning has changed significantly through the years. Learners have become more mature, open-minded and informed, due to the availability and exposure to technology, such as the internet. Teachers are no longer the only ones bringing information to the classrooms and learners have an opportunity of being just

as knowledgeable as their teachers. Teachers are also faced with the challenge of teaching classes of vast diversity, challenges, cultures, availability or unavailability of resources and backgrounds. Teachers are therefore expected to keep up with all these developments in their learner's lives, in the use of technology and the diversity of their classrooms. According to Lieberman and Mace (2009, p. 226), the solution to this problem is to ‑teach teachers how to improve their practise", hence the importance of teacher learning. Another reason for the need of teacher learning is the continuous curriculum reforms that take place.

Darling-Hammond (2006) suggests that the nature of teacher learning and teacher education depends entirely on what it is that teachers are expected to do in their classrooms. She argues that teachers need to have a thorough understanding of what it means for them to be teachers as well as how learning occurs. She further argues that the nature of teacher learning also depends on the role of teachers that has been identified or prescribed by the education system. If the role of teachers means that they must ensure successful learning of students who learn differently, and with different abilities and barriers to learning, then teachers need to be ‑diagnosticians and planers...and they require a professional knowledge base that informs decisions about teaching in response to learners" (Darling‑ Hammond, 2006, p. 80). This understanding of their learners will enable teachers to plan in response to their learners needs. This is very important in the South African context, as teachers are now faced with learners of diverse abilities and backgrounds in their classrooms. The ability for teachers to diagnose their learner's needs and abilities is therefore imperative.

2.6.2 Views of teacher learning

Kelly (2006) suggests that there are two views of how teachers learn namely: the cognitive view and socio-cultural view. The cognitive view is based on the assumption that learning occurs entirely in an individual's mind and that there needs to be learning in order for knowledge to be acquired. This view places the individual at the centre of learning, and that its proponents argue that it is the individual who needs to make sense of the new concepts and understand them. The cognitive view of learning is also based on the assumption that knowledge that is obtained in one setting can be easily transferred to another setting (Kelly, 2006). They foreground the importance of linking new knowledge to prior knowledge in order to make interpreting new concepts easier for the individual who is learning.

This view suggests that the understanding of concepts should go hand in hand with the understanding of the procedures of how certain things work, so that learners can be able to solve problems using their knowledge of the procedure of things. Well-structured and professionally designed learning opportunities that guide the learning are necessary. Informal learning experiences are viewed important in complementing the carefully structured and learnt knowledge.

This view has been criticised for not recognising the process of learning and the acquiring of knowledge where knowing is distributed across teachers, students and resources such as book and computers Kelly (2006). It also does not recognise that learning is the movement from peripheral (novice) to full (expert) participation in the work of schools Lave & Wenger (1991) (as cited in Kelly 2006, p. 507). The cognitive view is also criticised for ignoring the importance of the wider context in which teachers work as well as the perspectives, experiences, influences and identities which

teachers bring to their work Wenger, Woods &Jeffrey (as cited in Kelly, 2006, p. 507). In the South African context, one cannot ignore the different contexts in which teachers work as there is such a large gap between for example, the previously disadvantaged schools and the ex-model C schools.

On the other hand, the socio-cultural view of teacher learning is predominantly located in Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger's (1998) situated views of learning. This view suggests that learning is a social activity that takes place in a social groups or a professional learning community. ―The socio cultural view of learning holds a conception of the learner as cultural and historical subject, embedded within and constituted by a network of social relationships and interaction within the culture in question" (Kaartinen, 2009, p. 601). This view sees people as social and culturally socialised individuals. Even in the process of learning, the individual is influenced and shaped by the interaction he or she has with the people they socialise with. This view of learning is the foundation of the concept of community of learners (Kaartinen, 2009). In support of this view, Lieberman and Mace (2008) argue that learning is not only an individual endeavour, but is actually more effective when done in a social context. The latter maintain that learning happens through interactions with other people, through experience and practice. It is therefore also important that when teacher professional development programmes are organised, the environment in which the learning will take place is actually taken into consideration in order for the learning to be as effective as possible. This view highlights the importance of the context in which teachers work and learn and the circumstances in which teacher learning takes place as an important factor in teacher learning.

Putnam and Borko (2000) argue that in order for teachers to be successful in constructing new roles they need opportunities to participate in professional learning communities,

and that these play an important role in shaping the way teachers view the world and go about their work. A longitudinal study that was conducted in one high school in America, from 2001 to 2005, demonstrated the effectiveness of professional learning communities in professional development and school reform (Buffum & Hinman, 2006). In this school the whole staff embarked on a school reform project in which they functioned as a professional learning community. The staff discussed changes that they expected to achieve and how they were going to go about achieving them. They started working collaboratively on every aspect of the project. The first step was to identify the purpose and passion for being a professional learning community and four major issues were identified. Among these issues was the high failure rate of the learners, the transition of learners from one phase to another and the lack of attention being given to middle or average students. In a period of five years, the school had seen a high rate of improvement in all their identified challenges. The culture of the school had changed and the morale was higher among parents, teachers, learners and the community. The school had also become a model of professional learning community in the state of California (Buffum & Hinman, 2006). This is one of many examples of how professional learning communities have a great impact on teacher professional development and school reform.

The different views of teacher learning are important because they can serve the purpose of guiding those who are providing teacher professional development programmes. They draw from these views to gain an insight into how learning occurs and therefore plan relevant programmes. The understanding of these views can also help teacher professional development programmes organisers use the appropriate model in relation to the relevant view of learning.

2.7 Conceptual framework

This study aimed to understand what teachers learn in clusters, how they learnt, and the extent to which they viewed clusters as contributing to their professional development. Its focus was on how teachers learnt and the type(s) of knowledge they learnt. In this section I discussed the concepts of teacher knowledge and professional learning communities, which I used as my lenses in making sense of my data. I drew from Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge in trying to understand what teachers said they learnt in clusters. I also used Richmond and Manokore's (2010) concept of professional learning communities to understand the clusters and how teachers participated in them.

2.7.1 Teacher knowledge

The concept of teacher learning has already been discussed in the previous sections. However, in order for teacher learning to take place effectively and efficiently, we need to know what it is that teachers are expected to learn and know. Shulman (1986 b & 1987) was the first person to criticise and question the past and the present accreditation and certification procedures and standards for teaching. He highlighted how teacher education of the past was lacking pedagogy, but had enough of teacher's knowledge of content, and how the present accreditation and certification focused more on pedagogy and had little information on teacher's content knowledge Shulman (as cited by Segal, 2004). He was also the first person to identify the kind of knowledge that is needed for teachers and divided them into seven categories. The seven categories are: knowledge of content, knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of curriculum, knowledge of learners and learning, knowledge of context of schooling, pedagogical content knowledge and

knowledge of educational philosophies, goals and objectives. He claimed that a combination of content knowledge and knowledge of pedagogy was necessary for teaching and termed this combination pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986).

Grossman (1990) re-categorised the types of knowledge that teachers need to have, which were initially identified by Shulman (1986). Grossman (1990) divided these into four general areas of teacher knowledge that can be seen as the cornerstone of professional knowledge for teaching which is important for teachers to know in order to be able to teach learners effectively. These areas of teacher knowledge will also be used as an insight to understanding what it is that teachers say they learn in this study. The four general areas of teacher knowledge identified by Grossman (1990) namely the: general pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of context will be discussed below.

2.7.2 Subject matter knowledge

Grossman (1990) identified subject matter knowledge as key to teacher knowledge. She argues that subject matter knowledge refers to ‒knowledge of the major facts and concepts within a field and the relationships among them" Grossman (1990, p. 6). She identified two further types of knowledge within subject matter knowledge, namely, the substantive structures and syntactic structures of a subject. The substantive structure of a subject refers to the ‒variety of ways in which the basic concepts and principles of the discipline are organised to incorporate its facts" (Grossman, 1990, p. 6). When a teacher has a deep knowledge of the subject he or she is able to teach the subject and relate the themes, factors and concepts in a meaningful manner. The

teacher is able to organize knowledge and lead a discussion towards certain expected concept because they possess the necessary substantive structure knowledge.

The syntactic structure of the discipline refers to the ―understanding of the canons of evidence and proof within the discipline, or how knowledge claims are evaluated by members of the discipline" (Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989). This means that when a teacher has acquired the syntactic structure of a subject, he or she is able to determine what is legitimate to a discipline and what is not. This teacher possesses the set of rules within a discipline. A teacher with subject matter knowledge must not only be able to teach the subject, but they must be able to define concepts, explain why a particular phenomenon is worth knowing and be able to show the learners how different aspects of the subject are related to each other, both within the discipline and outside, in theory and in practice, (Shulman, 1986).Teachers who have a knowledge of the syntactic structures of a subject would know whether a concept is appropriately tackled when teaching it and whether it is taught in a way that will lead to the relevant information for the learners. If a teacher does not have adequate knowledge of the subject matter, its facts and concepts, and relationships within concepts, he or she may misrepresent the subject to the learners. This highlights the importance of subject matter knowledge and all its different structures and the relationships between different structures and knowledge and concepts within that particular subject.

2.7.3 General pedagogical knowledge

Both Shulman (1986) and Grossman (1990) argue that it is important for a teacher to also have an in-depth knowledge of general pedagogy; this does not only refer to the methods that are used when teaching learners, but also refers to ―a body of general

knowledge, beliefs and skills related to teaching; knowledge of general principles of instruction, such as academic learning time, Carol (1963) (as cited in Grossman, 1990), wait-time Rowe (1974) (as cited in Grossman, 1990) or small group instruction Cohen (1986) (as cited in Grossman, 1990), knowledge and skills related to classroom management Doyle (1986) (as cited in Grossman, 1990 and knowledge and beliefs about the aims and purposes of education" (Grossman, 1990, p. 6).This reveals that effective teaching is not only about delivering a concept to the learners, but it involves a lot of skills and knowledge that are necessary for to be effective.

A teacher who has acquired general pedagogical knowledge will have their general knowledge, skills and beliefs about, teaching, learning and learners. This teacher will know the kind of methods and skills that can be used when teaching learners particular concepts. He or she will also have an understanding about how times can be arranged to teach different subject matter, the strategic use of different skills for different purposes, and how to organise and observe learners when doing different tasks. This teacher will have better classroom management skills; they will know how to get learners involved in classroom duties in order to keep them calm and on task (Grossman, 1990, p. 6). A teacher who has general pedagogical knowledge will be able to facilitate a lesson because they possess general pedagogical knowledge. This is the kind of knowledge that is necessary to run and manage a classroom full of learners, without necessarily including the knowledge of the subject.

2.7.4 Pedagogical content knowledge

According to Grossman (1990), when teachers are teaching, they draw their knowledge from general pedagogic knowledge and subject matter knowledge, but they also draw

from knowledge that is specific to teaching particular subject matter. Shulman (1986) claimed that subject matter knowledge on its own does not equip a teacher with the necessary skills needed for effective teaching. He says that ―teaching is the transformation of content into pedagogical forms" Shulman (as cited in Segall, 2004). He called this combination pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge includes ―an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions of preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons" (Shulman, 1986a, pp. 9-10).

Grossman (1990) argues that Pedagogical Content Knowledge is made up of four central components. The first component includes the knowledge and beliefs about teaching of a particular subject to a specific grade. The teacher's knowledge of a subject enables them to have particular reason and understanding of why and how particular subject or theme in a subject needs to be taught. For example, a teacher may teach literature because he or she wants the student to understand and enjoy the language used in the literature like Shakespeare, while another may teach the literature because he or she wants the students to relate the literature to their own lives and make sense of their lives using someone else as their subject (Grossman, 1990).

The second component of pedagogical content knowledge includes ―knowledge of students and understanding, conceptions and misconceptions of particular topics in a subject matter" (Grossman, 1990, p. 8). This component, suggests that a teacher needs to have a thorough understanding of his or her students. You need to be able to see the kind of knowledge that students of a particular grade and context would possess and the kind of systems, techniques and skills they would use to solve particular problems in their subject. When a teacher understands the misconceptions that learners of a particular grade

have, and the factors that contribute to the misconceptions, then he or she would also have the knowledge and skills needed to correct the learner's misconceptions.

The third component is the knowledge of the curriculum. This includes knowledge of material available to teach particular content and subject matter as well as the horizontal and vertical curricular for a subject (Grossman, 1990). Teachers teaching a particular grade and subject would possess particular knowledge about the curriculum that students of a particular subject and grade would have covered in the previous grade as well as how the curricular of a certain grade would need to be organised (Grossman, 1990). In South Africa, the national curriculum statement policy documents (NCS) of the subjects in schools are currently arranged into phases. The knowledge of the curriculum would involve seeing what a teacher is able to see what the curriculum of the previous grade entailed. The teacher can also get an idea of the kind of prior knowledge that the learners of a particular grade should have.

The fourth and last component of pedagogical content knowledge Grossman discusses is the knowledge of instructional strategies and representations for teaching particular topics. This means that teachers should possess rich strategies, metaphors, activities and explanations of how to teach a particular subject as compared to novice teachers (Grossman, 1990). Novice or beginning teachers are still in the process of building such rich instructional strategies, representation and skills to teach certain subject. Experienced teachers know which examples to use in their teaching, which instructional strategies to use and how they can link subject matter knowledge with the previously acquired knowledge and new knowledge as well as leading discussions into a particular concept or knowledge focus (Grossman, 1990). Teachers who have pedagogical content knowledge are aware of strategies that are used when teaching specific subjects. Teachers sometimes tell stories, give practical examples or do

demonstrations when teaching, the acquisition of instructional strategies and skills would make this process even much easier for both the teacher and the learners who are taught.

Grossman identified ways in which pedagogical content knowledge can be developed in teachers. She suggested that it can be developed through variety of factors and influences of a teacher's life and experiences. The first one is the apprenticeship or observation. When teachers are still studying or doing practical experience during their initial teacher education. Teachers are given a master teacher to observe and they can then imitate and adapt the master teachers' instructional skills and knowledge to their own and use it when teaching their own classrooms (Grossman, 1990).

Secondly, Pedagogical Content Knowledge can be developed through a teacher's knowledge and background of the discipline. She argued that a teacher who had studied a certain discipline already has certain knowledge that they already possess and this influences how they teach a particular subject and what they see as important for the learners to know in that particular subject.

The third factor that influences the development of pedagogical content knowledge is the professional coursework that teachers attend while doing initial teacher training or attending subject related coursework. This coursework teaches teachers or students how to teach specific subjects and gives teachers the methods they should use (Grossman, 1990). This also highlights the importance of continuing teacher development in teachers attaining teaching skills.

The fourth factor is the actual experiences of the teachers. Through working with students, the teachers learn how students understand concepts, their misconceptions of

things, and their prior knowledge of particular subjects and how they can build upon the knowledge base of a particular discipline. This kind of knowledge that a teacher possesses can help develop pedagogical content knowledge that a teacher can use when teaching students and this kind of knowledge can make the teaching of a particular subject more effective for the students. The importance of the teachers experience in the development of pedagogical content knowledge shows a relationship between the different kinds of experiences acquired by the expert teachers in comparison to that of the novice teachers as mentioned by Bredeson (2002).

Grossman's components of pedagogical content knowledge are imperative for consideration when planning for teacher professional development initiatives. These components discuss elements that are necessary for a teacher to know in order to teach effectively, such as the knowledge of why particular subject should be taught to a particular grade, the learners misconceptions and instructional strategies to mention a few.

2.7.5 Knowledge of context

Grossman (1990) also suggests that the context in which teachers work is an important part of their work, and that it is necessary for teachers to also have an understanding and knowledge of their context. Knowledge of context includes, knowledge of the school setting, the community, its culture and its socio-economic status, the ward and district in which a teacher works, to mention a few (Grossman, 1990). The knowledge of the context in which a teacher teaches is important because when a teacher is teaching, he or she is able to adapt the teaching methods, content and techniques used and make them suitable to the context in which they teach. This is particularly

important in South Africa due to the vast diversity of contexts that exist in this country. A teacher needs to be able to adapt their teaching to the relevant context.

The categories of teacher knowledge that were discussed in this literature review were important for this study. This study is about professional development of teachers in clusters. In order to understand and make sense of the data collected for this study, I needed to draw on this literature and analyse the data collected in relation to what literature says about teacher knowledge.

2.8 Professional learning communities

In addition to using the categories of teacher knowledge as a lens to analyse my data, I also drew on Richmond and Manokore's (2010) concept of professional learning communities. Even though there are different authors who discuss professional learning communities, I used Richmond and Manokore's definition of professional learning communities as the main definition for this study. However, I also drew from other author's definitions to support my discussion.

Richmond and Manokore (2010, p. 545) define professional learning communities (PLC) as:

‒A group of teachers who meet regularly with a common set of teaching
and learning goals, shared responsibilities for work to be undertaken,
and collaborative development of pedagogical content knowledge
(PCK) as result of the gatherings."

Richmond and Manokore's (2010) definition suggested their understanding of professional learning communities as an act that is undertaken by teachers who have a

common goal of developing their teaching and learning practice. In this community, the teachers share responsibilities of the work that takes place in the community. Lastly, the result of this gathering is the development of pedagogical content knowledge.

On the other hand, Henderson and Leavitt (2002, p. 2) defined professional learning communities as ―networks of people-small and large who come together to share ideas with and learn from one another in physical and virtual space". Henderson and Leavitt (2002) suggest that these communities of interest and of learning are held together by a common purpose or mission. They are sustained by a desire to share experiences, insights and best practices.

Hara (2009, p. 3) defined professional learning communities as: ―collaborative informal networks that support professional practitioners in their effort to develop shared understandings and engage in work relevant knowledge building." Hara suggests that professional learning communities are informal gatherings of professionals. However this is not the case with the cluster groups that I studied. These cluster groups are formally monitored and have to submit reports which are evidence of their work and meetings.

Lieberman and Mace (2008, p. 227) maintain that professional leaning communities are rooted in the ―human need to feel a sense of belonging and of making a contribution to a community where experience and knowledge function as part of a community property." Teachers have indicated that when they belong to a professional learning community they feel more comfortable discussing their work challenges ask for help, unlike amongst their colleagues at their work places.

Lieberman and Mace (2008) explain that learning is not only an individual endeavour, but that it is actually social. They explain that learning happens in practice and through

experience. Learning happens in the company of other people, people learn from others and with others. This is also concurs what Stoll et al. (2006) say about professional learning communities that their main emphasis is on group or collective learning. Lieberman and Mace (2008) maintain that people learn through their interaction with others by observing and being involved in activities. People need to have an intention to learn in order for learning to occur and they must make sense of the activities they are involved in finally from the learning that has taken place, individuals need to demonstrate a change which signifies that some learning has taken place.

The above mentioned definitions of professional learning communities, all have a commonality. They all mention that there needs to be a sharing of ideas, skills and knowledge, a mutual interest or passion for something, and that learning takes place during these interactions. It also mentions that there needs to be regular interaction with the people in the group. This means learning is a social endeavour and people learn better when they are in the company of others.

However, for the purpose of this study, I have used Richmond and Manokore's (2010) concept of professional learning communities as the main definition. I have decided to use their definition because, unlike the other authors, they indicate that there should be a collaborative development of pedagogical content knowledge as a result of the collaboration of the members of a community. I have identified the subject clusters that I studied as professional learning communities, as they consists of teachers who meet and interact with each other, share skills, resources, knowledge and information pertaining to their profession with the aim of developing and growing in their profession and practice.

Lieberman and Mace (2008) give a few examples of professional learning communities that have been functioning for a number of years. They highlight how the involvement of

teachers in such communities has helped them in a number of things in their practice. Teachers were making decisions and setting school policies, they were participating in activities and they were engaging in their professional work, both socially and individually. In another project, the teachers from a particular school had managed to raise achievement for students and they had learnt how to work collaboratively, as Garet et al (2001) suggest that collaborative work is another important aspect of teacher professional development. In this school, teachers were seen to have learnt to trust and learn from one another, as they are regularly interacting with their colleagues, Garet et al (2001) also suggest the importance of ongoing interaction with peers as an important feature of teacher professional development that take place in professional learning communities. Teacher in this research had also learnt to trust their colleague's assistance and input; teachers have also learnt to share material. Teachers had also learnt to talk publicly about their practice, challenges and ideas, goals, etc. However, Lieberman & Mace (2008, p. 228) also make mention of the fact that professional learning communities cannot function entirely on their own, they also ―need external resources to support their internal work, provide different expectations for teaching and learning and opportunities to practice different roles, responsibilities and relationships" The number of empirical studies conducted in examining professional learning communities as a useful mode for teacher professional development gives evidence that professional learning communities are indeed an effective form of professional development.

Richmond and Manokore (2010) identify five features of professional learning communities that I will discuss below: These features are: teacher learning and collaboration; professional community; confidence in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and practices; accountability and sustainability.

2.8.1 Teacher learning and collaboration

The main feature of a professional learning community that Richmond and Manokore (2010) identified was that it involved a group of individuals who have a common goal of improving teaching and learning and a collaborative development of pedagogical content knowledge (Richmond & Manokore, 2010). The collaborative act of sharing resources, skills and information can result in learning. The participants in (Richmond & Manokore, 2010) did not only share resources by sharing in their meetings, but they also shared information by discussing over phone calls, this was also a form of collaboration. Jita and Mokhele (2014) mention they conducted a study of science teachers who participated in the cluster project called Mpumalanga Secondary Science Initiative (MSSI) and they found that, the teachers who participated in this cluster project went beyond just discussing their practices in their meetings, but they gained so much confidence that they were able to later observe each other's lessons and give constructive criticism of their colleagues lessons. This is also in line with Lieberman and Mace's (2008) description of professional learning communities when they maintain that teaching takes place in a social context.

2.8.2 The professional community

Richmond and Manokore (2010) identified the second feature of Professional learning communities as the professional community. They describe a professional community as an element of interdependence among members of a professional learning community, where members are not afraid to voice out their weaknesses and can ask for help when it is needed. In a study conducted by Richmond and Manokore (2010), at an urban school in America, teachers who are members of a Professional learning community indicated that

they shared more about their practice with their PLC colleagues than they did with their colleagues at the schools where they work.

2.8.3 Confidence in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and practices

The third feature of a PLC highlighted by Richmond and Manokore (2010) was how members of a PLC gain confidence in different aspects of their work as a result of the interactions they experience with their colleagues in the PLC. They argued that when these elements are part of professional development, the improvement in a teacher can be seen through the confidence that a teacher develops in their content and instructional knowledge. They therefore identified content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and practices as the key elements supporting productive PLC's. Findings in the study conducted by (Richmond & Manokore, 2010) highlighted that the teachers who participated in the PLC felt that they had gained confidence in their pedagogical and content knowledge and felt that they could ‒help all students learn science" (Richmond & Manokore, 2010; 563).

2.8.4 Accountability

Teachers who are members of a PLC need to understand the importance of accountability, Richmond and Manokore (2010). The members need to be accountable to each other as members of a PLC. The members need to be accountable by giving feedback when it's due. They need to be accountable to themselves and the department of education by delivering the policy that is expected of them to deliver. They need to be

accountable to their students by teaching them and helping them understand the curriculum.

2.8.5 Sustainability

The fifth feature of professional learning communities if sustainability. Some PLC's need external intervention and facilitation in order for them to be sustainable. The teachers interviewed in the study by (Richmond & Manokore, 2010) clearly highlighted the factors that could lead to a lack of sustainability in PLC's. The first one being that teachers who are member of PLC's who come from different schools may be discouraged to continue being members of the PLC's because they did not have an opportunity to continue with their PLC work in the schools where they work. When teachers are the only PLC members in their schools, substantial collaboration around issues of teaching and learning are not practiced and this could lead to a lack of sustainability (Richmond & Manokore, 2010).

I used Richmond and Manokore's (2010) five features of professional learning communities to identify the features of the clusters that I studied. I also looked at the extent at which the clusters corresponded or did not correspond with Richmond and Manokore's (2010) features of professional learning communities.

2.8.6 Limitations of professional learning communities

Like all other models of teacher professional development, professional learning communities have been criticised for a number of reasons. Firstly, Schuck et al. (2008)

argue that professional learning communities may be difficult to sustain, especially when the members of the community do not belong to the same school. They argue that the schools that different teachers work in may not necessarily provide sufficient support and environment for the teachers to practice what they learn in the community. As a result the teachers may be lethargic and lose interest in continuing with membership in professional learning communities. The second criticism against professional learning communities is that it may face challenges with people wanting to be more dominant than others in the community, people not having enough trust in their colleagues or when there are issues of misunderstandings among members of a community (Schuck & Segal, 2002; Schuck & Russell; 2005) . The limitations listed above may lead to the slowing down of the decision making process and reaching unilateral decisions (Bezzina, 2006).

Another criticism of professional learning community is that at the beginning of the community, the teachers who are members of the community may be too dependent on external experts such as facilitators, and this dependence may be detrimental to the sustainability of the community (Schuck, et al, 2008). The members of the community may not have enough skills to run the community on their own and as a result rely on external help to sustain the community. An example of this dependence on outside help is seen in the study conducted by (Richmond & Manokore, 2010), when all the teachers who were participants in the study stated that it would be difficult for them to run the community without outside help as they felt that they were not skilful enough to facilitate and lead the community productively (Schuck, et al, 2008).

Lastly, members of a professional learning community depend on their colleagues to share the information that they have. If members of a community do not share information then the community is not serving its purpose. Pertinent information may be limited to only one person or a minority group of people, if there are issues of conflict,

trust and power or any of the issues mentioned earlier. This may lead to a challenge in the dissemination of information within a community. Dissemination of information may also be a problem if the members do not all belong to the same school. Information may take a long time to reach the relevant people, especially if the community consists of teachers in rural areas, where there might be problems with electricity, telephones and any other mode of communication or technology (Bezzina, 2006). In using this concept in analysing my data I was mindful of these criticisms and was able to identify those that I could see in the functioning of the cluster. However, I still found the concept of professional learning communities useful in making sense of my data and in answering my research questions.

The literature reviewed here gave me an insight into a number of issues of teacher professional development that were helpful in my understanding and analysis of the data collected. The broader definitions of teacher professional development gave me a broader understand of teacher's professional development. Teacher professional development is not only about attending courses, workshops and seminars; it involves a lot of planning and adequate knowledge of the expected outcomes. This understanding enabled me to have a clearer picture of what it that went on in clusters and to what extent it was professional development. The discussion about teacher learning and teacher knowledge both gave me a more focused understanding of what it is that makes teachers to do their work effectively. It also gave me an idea of the kind of knowledge that is necessary for teachers to know in order to be effective in their practice. Lastly, the discussions about the features of professional learning communities gave me an understanding of what clusters should look like and what happens in clusters. The literature reviewed in this chapter, helped me gain a better understanding of the data collected.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the nature of the participation of English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers in clusters in UMgungundlovu District, what they learn and the extent to which they thought their participation contributed to their professional development.

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used in this study. A discussion on the research methods, selection of respondents, stages of data collection and analysis and the ethical issues follow thereafter.

The three key research questions guiding this study are:

- **What activities do English First Additional Language teachers participate in in clusters?**
- **What do English First Additional Language teachers say they learn from participating in clusters?**
- **How does English First Additional Language teacher's participation and what they learn in clusters contribute to their professional development?**

3.2 Research design and methodology

This is a qualitative study that is located within an interpretive paradigm and it uses the case study approach to collect data. According to
Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 3):

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations…"

On the other hand, Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011, p. 9) define qualitative research as ―an approach that allows you to examine peoples experiences in detail, by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods and life histories or biographies. At the same time Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) also state that qualitative research is not only about the methods that are used to collect the data, but is also about the experiences that the researcher experiences when he immerses himself in the lives and experiences of the participants. Qualitative research is about making sense of the issues through the experiences of the participants, and understanding their explanations and metaphors of things by being in their natural settings. Ritchie et al. (2014) and Hatch (2002) maintain that qualitative research is a very broad research method that has been defined differently by different scholars. Some scholars have even attempted defining it rather by what it is not. However, they state that there are some common features that can be used to discuss what it mostly entails.

Borg and Gall (1989) maintain that qualitative research is ‗naturalistic' in nature. They mention that qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting, without manipulating the setting, participants and the environment. It requires the researcher to be physically located in their study in order to be able to make sense of it. The meaning of the phenomenon in qualitative research is socially constructed. It involves the individual being physically involved in the setting in order to make sense of it (Merrian, 2002). Qualitative researchers do not set up artificial experiments in order to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon. Woods (2006) and Merrian (2002) suggest that researchers interpret the phenomenon as well as interpreting and trying to understand the

natural settings in which it takes place, as the natural settings of a study also contribute to certain elements of the study. Researchers in qualitative research aim to try and understand the phenomenon almost as real as its participants live it. They try to understand exactly how the participants feel about a phenomenon, (Sherman & Webb, 2001). This study was conducted in its natural setting, as I observed the teachers during their actual cluster meetings and did not arrange special simulation of the cluster meetings.

Another feature of qualitative research according to Hatch (2002) is that the researcher in qualitative research tries to understand the study from the perspectives of the participants. Bogban and Biklen (1992), Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), Jacob (1988) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) (as cited in Hatch, 2002) mention that the voices of the participants should be projected when reporting the findings of any qualitative study.

To add to this list of features, Hatch (2002) and Lichtman (2013) maintain that the researcher is the main data gathering instrument as well as data analysis. The researcher directly collects data in the form of field notes from observations, notes from other matters that may have been of interest on site of the study, interview transcripts and other material that may be used in data collection. Merriam (2002, p. 5) states that the advantage of the researcher being the data collection instrument is that the researcher can enhance his or her understanding of the phenomenon through observing verbal and non-verbal communication. The researcher can also process information immediately while collecting the data, clarify and summarise the information and check with the respondents for accuracy. The researcher can also explore unanticipated responses on site and through interviews (Merriam, 2002).

Another feature of qualitative research according to Hatch (2002), Ritchie and Lewis (2003) and Rossman and Rallis (2012), is that it uses an inductive reasoning theory which involve looking at patterns and associations which are logically derived through the use of the collected data. The hypothesis is generated from the data. The researcher must first conduct the research and collect the data and thereafter generate a hypothesis. This is one of the important features that distinguish qualitative research from quantitative research.

Moreover, Woods (1999) and Hoepfl (1997) maintain that in a qualitative study, the findings of one study cannot be generalised to other settings, hence I could not generalise the findings of this study. The results are only relevant to this particular study. Each setting is unique and it consists of its own participants with their own experiences. Woods, (2006) and Lincoln and Guba, (1985) (as cited in Hoepfl, 1997) also mention that the different settings that people interact with also have different influences that they have on the participants who belong to it. Therefore generalising the findings would not be appropriate.

Finally, Merriam (2002:5) and Savenye and Robinson (2005) maintain that the product of qualitative research involves very rich and detailed description of human behaviours, opinions and the phenomenon studied. This is owing to the nature of the data that is collected. Savenye and Robinson (2005) maintain that a qualitative researcher collects data in its natural state; it involves a lot of written work that is collected from the different data collection tools that are used in the study. This is evident in this study as I included explanations of observations and wrote people's responses in the discussion of the study.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994), use the metaphor of a quilt maker to give a further description of a qualitative researcher. This is because of the researcher's ability to assemble a set of empirical, incoherent material, artefacts and information into a finished piece of work. Understanding qualitative research cannot entirely depend on looking at its definition only, but also the activities involved in it. Denzin and Lincoln, (1994, p. 5) claim that a qualitative research is ‗multi-method in focus". It needs to use a number of research methods or triangulation in order for the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in question.

The study also falls into an interpretive paradigm. An interpretive paradigm is qualitative in nature. The main characteristic of the interpretive paradigm is its concern for the world in which individuals live. Its main focus is to make sense of the world by understanding the phenomenon from within (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). In the interpretive paradigm, the phenomenon is better understood from the actions of the individuals in their settings. An interpretive researcher interprets the findings of the phenomenon by making sense of the actions of the participants within a study, hence I also observed the teachers in their cluster meetings.

The qualitative approach was suitable for my study because I wanted to research and find out what it is that teachers do in their cluster meetings and how their activities affect their teacher professional development. The relevance of their approach to my study was that I did not only observe the participants, but I also interviewed the teachers, and got their point of view, their own meanings of what they did and why they did it. I did not impose my own interpretations, but rather try to understand the situation from the teacher's point of view. Secondly, this approach was also suitable for my study because in order to be able to understand the teachers' activities and how they affect their development, I needed to be involved in the natural settings of the cluster groups, through observation of

the teachers during their meetings, taking notes, and conduct individual interviews. The relationships that people have with each other and their environment that they exist have an influence in their actions and behaviours, and I needed to experience these environments and how the teachers interacted and related to each other in these settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). This approach was also suitable for my study because the study was conducted with a sample of two cluster groups in UMgungundlovu District. There are certain features and elements that are only unique to each of the clusters studied and the results of these findings cannot be generalised due to the uniqueness of each setting in qualitative research.

3.3 Case study approach

A case study approach was used to collect data in this study. In this section I present an argument in support of why I employed a case study to frame an investigation of my research question. The term case study has been defined by different scholars in an attempt to assist researchers with a better understanding of the term. Yin (2003a, p. 13-14) (as cited in Kohlbacher, 2006, p.5) defines case study as ‖an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context". Yin (2003a, p. 13-14) (as cited in Kohlbacher, 2006, p.5) further describes case study as a research strategy that ‖relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion". To add to this definition, Webster (2009) cited in Denzin and Lincoln (2013, p. 169) defines a case study as ‖an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment" These two definitions basically some up the idea behind a majority of definitions that I encountered during this study.

In the definitions above, one can also highlight the advantages of using the case study approach. Yin (2003) concurs with Darke, P., et al, (1998, 273) when he says that a case study allows the researcher to ‒focus on understanding social phenomena in their natural setting and cultural context". A case study approach was relevant for this study because it allowed the researcher to be immensely involved with the participants of this study in their natural setting. This presented an opportunity to understand the case from the perspective of the participants, observing the activities they were involved in and identifying any other issues that may arise. This also gave the researcher an opportunity to take notes of issues that needed to probe on during the individual interviews. It is through being immensely involved in the participants natural setting that a researcher in able to provide a rich description of the setting and phenomenon studied and have a rich understanding of the phenomenon as stated by Walsham (1995) (as cited in Darke, P, et al, 1998:277)

Darke, P, et al, (1998) and Merrian (2009) (as cited in Denzin and Lincoln (2013) maintain that a case is not necessarily a study of a single unit, but that it can be a study of multiple cases at the same time such as an institution, a community or a programme. This study was a case of two cluster groups in UMgungundlovu District. Using a case study was again relevant for this study, as stated above that a case can be one unit or multiple cases. This allowed me to look at two cases as they both belonged to the same unit which is UMgungundlovu District. This was again another advantage of using a case study; it allows the researcher to study different cases that belong to the same community, programmer, and institution, to mention a few.

I also decided to use a case study approach because case studies allow the researcher to use a variety of data collection tools such as interviews, observation, documents and artefacts as stated by Rowley (2002) and Remenyi (2013). The use of a more than one

data collection tool is referred to as triangulation. This study used interviews, participants' observation, focus group interviews, individual interviews and documentary analysis as data collection tools. Triangulation will be discussed further under the subtopic ‗reliability and validity'.

Literature also state that case study research is often associated with theory development, where it is used to provide evidence for hypothesis generation and for exploration of areas where existing knowledge is limited Cavite (1996) (as cited in Darke, P, et al, 1998:273).). This is relevant in this study as I will be doing a study on the effectiveness of clusters as a tool of professional development. The use of clusters as a professional development tool in South Africa is a new method that has not been extensively researched and the use of a case study is then appropriate in this study. This study could provide a new hypothesis and bring about new questions for further research.

3.3.1 Limitation of a case study

I need to acknowledge some of the limitations of using a case study approach. One of them is that in case study research we cannot generalize the findings to a population, as cases are not sampling units (Darke, P, et al, 1998). This is also because case studies lack dependence as a research approach (George & Bennett, 2004). Stake, (1995, p. 45) states that ‗qualitative inquiry is subjective", this implies that the researcher can sometimes appear to be bias. However, the researcher cannot entirely himself or herself out of the case studies due to the nature of case studies as a research approach. This is prevented by using triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

3.4 Selection of Respondents

The research was conducted in two English First Additional Language cluster groups in UMgungundlovu District. UMgungundlovu District is one of eleven districts municipalities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This district consists of seven local municipalities and is located in the Msunduzi Municipality (Collins, 2013, p. 87). UMgungundlovu district consists of about one hundred and fifty five high schools spread across the different municipalities. Like the majority of schools in the KwaZulu-Natal province, these schools are faced with a number of challenges that included a lack of resources, poverty, the effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and other contextual factors.

For the purpose of anonymity, the names of the schools where these two cluster groups meet, as well as the names of the schools where these teachers work will not be mentioned. These cluster groups were chosen because they consist of teachers who work in schools from diverse backgrounds, experiences and contexts that can be found in a city like Pietermaritzburg and its surroundings and in UMgungundlovu District. These two clusters consisted of teachers from two different contexts. Cluster A consisted of a group of four teachers, one comes from an ex model-C school, two of them are from private schools in the Central Business District (CBD) and one is from a nearby township school (see appendix I). Cluster B consisted of about fifteen teachers, one is from a nearby semi-rural area and the rest are from Siyavuya Township, a few kilometres from Pietermaritzburg CBD (see appendix I). Another reason for choosing this cluster group was that the teachers who belong to this group were more accessible compared to members from other groups that I was given permission to work with (see appendix B, C and D).

These clusters were chosen because they were easily accessible and it was easy to access the teachers for individual interviews and to attend their cluster meetings for observations and focus group interviews. The cluster groups that were studied were purposively selected. Maxwell (1998, p. 235) states that purposeful sampling –is a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices." Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2008) maintain that the advantage of purposively selecting a sample is that the researcher is able to research exactly the kind of sample that is desired and the researcher will be able to acquire in depth information from the participants. I interviewed all the teachers in cluster A as it consisted of only four teachers. The teachers were: one male teacher from a private school in town, and three lady teachers, one from an ex-model C school, one from a township school and the last one from a private school in town as well. Cluster B consisted of about fifteen members, but only ten were interviewed, two of the teachers were not comfortable with being participants of the study (see appendix E) and the other three teachers were always occupied and could not make time for the interviews. Cluster B consisted of all African teachers, six of them were females and four were males. I decided to use these two clusters because I thought they were somehow representative of the different races and backgrounds of the district. I also wanted to be able to compare how clusters of different sizes, demographics and racial standing would do things differently.

3.5 Data collection methods

To achieve methodological triangulation I used four different research instruments in this study, namely: individual interviews, focus groups interviews, observation and document analysis. I used four different research methods with the aim of establishing validity. The process of using a variety of methods to collect data is called triangulation. Lisa et al

(2011) maintain that ―Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analysing a research question from multiple perspectives." There are different types of triangulation which can be used to validate different aspects of a study, namely: Data triangulation, Investigator triangulation, Theory triangulation, Methodological triangulation and Environmental triangulation. The type of triangulation I used is called methodological triangulation. Lisa et al (2011) maintain that ―methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative methods to study the program. For example, results from surveys, focus groups, and interviews could be compared to see if similar results are being found. If the conclusions from each of the methods are the same, then validity is established." The primary sources of data used in this study were the teachers who are members of the cluster groups. Individual interviews were held with cluster members at times that were suitable to them, so as not to disturb their contact time and personal itineraries. A focus group interview was also conducted with both cluster groups.

The clusters were also observed during each of their cluster meetings. I also observed a cluster meeting with teachers from different cluster groups combined in one cluster meeting. This meeting was held at the beginning of the year in one of the schools in Siyavuya Township. A document analysis included carefully reading documents such as the following: The National Framework on Teacher Professional Development, a cluster coordinators handbook and other relevant documents.

Individual interviews were conducted with fourteen teachers from the two cluster groups as well as the subject advisor. The subject advisor plays the role of the department representative who is responsible for overseeing the formation and the functionality of the clusters and is also the person whom the cluster members report to.

The interview with the subject advisor was done because I wanted to have a departmental representative to give her perspective of the whole phenomenon of clusters in comparison to the teachers' account of what they do in clusters and how they develop professionally in clusters.

I firstly drew a list of questions that I intended to address in the interview schedule. I then piloted the questions with a colleague who was not part of the sample in order to establish if there were no ambiguous or unnecessary questions. Thereafter, I revised the questions that needed to be rephrased as well as the structure of the interview schedule. A tape recorder was used to capture the data collected from the interviews, so as to ensure that no information was lost during the interview and to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered. Interviews normally lasted for thirty to fifty minutes depending on the amount of information the participants provided as well as how much further they would discuss issues after being probed.

3.6 Interviews

In this study, I used semi-structured interviews, which I found appropriate for my study because they allow the researcher to divert from the pre-set questions and probe the participants more on emerging matters (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). Maree (2007) maintains that semi-structured interviews are scheduled in advance and are more flexible in that they allow the researcher an opportunity to change questions as they like in accordance to the interviewee's responses. In this type of interview, the researcher is able to probe and allow participants to clarify their answers. Maree (2007) maintains that this also allows the researcher to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that are related to the phenomenon being studied.

I used both individual and focus group interviews in this study. This is because the individual interviews allow the researcher to delve deeply into the social and personal matters relating to the study (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), while focus group interviews allow the interviewer to get wider range of experiences and version of a phenomenon studied.

3.6.1 Focus Group Interviews

In addition to individual interviews, I also used focus group interviews to collect data. These interviews were conducted at the end of the cluster meetings as this was the only time that I could conduct such an interview due to the teachers' busy schedules and individual commitments. Focus group interviews were also conducted before the individual interviews so that the participants could be comfortable with me before their individual interviews.

Kitzinger (1995, p. 299) and Green et al., (2003) (as cited in Rabiee, 2004, p. 656) maintain that ―Focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalise on communication between research participants in order to generate data". The conversations that took place in a focus group interview were important for this study as the researcher would use the individual interviews which followed to probe on the issues that came up in the focus group interviews.

DiCicco-Bloom &Crabtree, (2006) identified the following advantages of focus group interviews: They maintain that it limits the interviewer from probing for in-depth and personal information in the company of other participants. Another advantage of a group interview is that different topics and issues related to the study may come up

from the different individuals in the group and this may give the researcher another insight into the study. In a focus group interview, the participant's different views about issues may also come up. Another advantage of focus group interviews is that they can generate a large amount of data within a short space of time. However, Krueger (1994) (as cited in DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) suggests that the rich data that can stem from a focus group interview can only be generated if the participants in the group are prepared to engage fully in the discussion and are comfortable with each other's presence. While conducting this study, the participants interacted well with each other and discussed issues in a collaborative manner.

On the same note, Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2008) maintain that the advantages of using focus groups is that they do not discriminate against people who cannot read or write and that people are encouraged to talk and participate when they see their peers contributing. The participants have conversations and discussions amongst themselves and the researcher studies and analyses how the participants are influenced by others in a group situation.

I used this instrument to see how the teachers are influenced by the others in a group, especially to see whether there are any power differences within the group. Focus group interviews were also used so that I could get a sense of the kind of issues that came up in the conversations of the participants while they were in the company of others. I would then be able to probe on the certain issues that were of interest to the study. The focus group interviews also acted as an introduction to the whole data collection process for the researcher because some questions could be altered after certain issues arose from the focus group interviews, as I conducted the individual interviews after I had conducted focus group interviews. When this interview was conducted, the teachers did not indicate any disagreements with each other on any of the questions asked. However, this did not

influence the individual interviews negatively, but it gave me more foundation on what kind of questions I may need to probe on.

3.6.2 Individual interviews

I also used individual semi-structured interviews to collect data for this study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2008) maintain that individual interviews give the researcher an opportunity to learn more about an individual's perspective of the phenomenon studied. In individual interviews, the participant can express their personal feelings, opinions and experiences about different aspects of the study. Individual interviews are suitable for addressing sensitive issues that individual cannot talk about in the company of others. They also allow the researcher to gain insight into the participants' interpretation of a phenomenon, without the influence of their peers or other group members. Boyce and Neale (2006) maintain that individual interviews allow the researcher to gain detailed information from participants because the researcher is able to probe for more depth and explanations. Another advantage of individual interviews is that they are flexible in nature, as they allow the researcher to adapt and modify the research question in order to focus attention of certain areas of interest and exclude questions that the researcher has found to be futile (King, 1994). Semi-structured individual interviews were used to collect more detailed data from the participants in this study. They were used after the focus group interviews because I felt that I could collect information from the focus group interviews that I would need individuals to bring more light into during individual interviews.

3.7 Observation

Another instrument used to collect data was observations. ―The distinctive feature of observations as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather ‗live' data from naturally occurring social situations", (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 396). In observations, the researcher can focus on what is happening, rather than getting the data from secondary sources. The observer can look at things such as behaviour, non-verbal communication, physical settings, human settings, interaction settings and programme settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In addition to this, Patton (1990) (as cited in Hoepfl, 1997) maintains that observations ―may enable the researcher to see things that participants themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss."

One of my research questions seeks to understand the kinds of activities teachers engage in and the roles they play during cluster meetings. The observation of teachers in their cluster meeting was therefore necessary for me so that I could be able to observe other influencing issues such as the interactions, roles that different people play, behaviour and power relations within the group of teachers in the cluster.

I observed one cluster meeting for each cluster group. I could only attend one cluster meeting because the cluster meetings were held during contact time and I could not have taken a lot of time away from my work. The teachers indicated that they hold about four cluster meeting in a year. The first cluster meeting is a meeting where all the clusters get together and get addressed by the subject advisor at the beginning of the year. Thereafter, all clusters would meet once every term. However, the number of clusters meetings to be held is dependent on the subject advisors instructions. In the fourth term, oral moderation is held in the cluster meetings, and then an auditing

cluster meeting is held late in the year, this is where all the results for the whole year are moderated.

The clusters were observed during one of their cluster meetings. I observed what it is exactly that they engaged in during their cluster meeting and how this was contributing to their professional development. The advantage of observations is that you can observe the actual activities that people are engaged in. People do not always do what they say they do in interviews. Observing participants gave me an opportunity to observe their actions, interactions, non-verbal communications, and attitudes. I recorded my observations in a note book and used these observations to make an understanding of how the cluster operated. Some of the questions I asked during the focus group and individual interviews had been influenced by what I had observed.

3.8 Document Analysis

I also analysed some documents as part of my data collection. Vockell and Asher, (1995) described documents as either current information such as instructional material, communication within a school, or a system or it can be archival information such as newspapers, school board minutes, teacher's union records, diaries or textbooks. Vockell and Asher (1995) also maintain that this type of data can be analyses through a process called content analysis, whereby the researcher looks for themes or concepts in the natural language. This data collection tool was relevant in my study as I needed to know what the policies in education say about teacher professional development, teacher learning, the policies that support the formulation of cluster groups, the roles and activities of the teachers in the cluster groups and the expected role of clusters in teacher professional development. In the document analysis, I also aimed to analyse the documents that the participants use in the cluster meetings as well

as any other documents that they use that may influence their professional development.

Some of the documents that were used in this study were the following: DoE (2003, 2007, 2008 and 2009).   The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2007) assisted me to get an overall idea of the Department of Education's understanding of teacher's education and professional development. This document also assisted by providing me with an outline of the department of education's plans for teacher's education and teacher professional development in South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement: Grades 10 – 12. (General) Languages Generic First Additional Language (DoE, 2003) gave me an idea of the different learning outcomes that learners needed to learn at the end of each grade in the FET phase. This gave me a better understanding of the different aspects of work that teachers mentioned that their colleagues assisted them in better understanding them. I was able to see whether the aspects discussed by the teachers were indeed part of the curriculum. This also helped me to be able to see that what teachers discussed in their meetings was indeed part of the curriculum.The document titled Moderate assessment: A module of the Advanced Certificate in Education. School Management and Leadership (DoE, 2008), gave me an insight into what the department of education's moderation process entailed and how teachers were expected to implement the moderation process. Lastly, the Cluster co-ordinator's Handbook. Guidelines and documents for grade 12 cluster moderation of oral and CASS: English First Additional Language (2009) gave an insight into what the daily operation of cluster meetings entailed when they have their meetings. This also helped during the analysis of data because was able to see how much the teachers adhered to the guidelines and how they dealt with certain issues in relation to the document.

3.9 Negotiating access and ethical issues

It is necessary to follow the correct procedure when negotiating access to conduct a study. Devers and Frankel (2000, p. 266) suggests that ―researchers have to negotiate access by securing permission from the gatekeepers". The gatekeepers that they are referring to are the officials who hold management positions in government departments or any other institution that the researcher wishes to study.

The first step I took was writing a letter to the department of education asking for permission to conduct a study within the department. This was important because any findings from the research could impact on the department in one way or another. The department of education is therefore the first place that I needed to gain access from, before even approaching the teachers. Obtaining access and permission from the department of education also benefited me because the teachers would be more co-operative and willing to take part if they realised that the department of education had granted me permission to conduct the study.

I then approached the subject advisor for English First Additional Language in uMgungundlovu District and informed her about my study and requested her permission to approach the teachers in some of her clusters. She granted me permission after reading the letter from the Department of Education (see appendix C). The subject advisor then granted me permission to access any of the clusters that were easily accessible to me to conduct the research. She approached the cluster coordinators and informed them about my study and that I have been granted permission by the department to study their cluster groups. The subject advisor asked the cluster coordinators for their permission to give me their phone numbers so that I could make arrangements to visit their cluster groups. The cluster coordinators in turn informed the teachers in their clusters about my study and I was given a platform to introduce myself

in their meetings and tell them what my study was about. In this way, I was able to get teachers that were willing to work with me and be the subjects of my study. Two teachers were not comfortable with being interviewed for this study and they did not give a clear explanation about their discomfort. I did not try to force them or convince them into participating, but asked other participants who were more than willing to be participants. The teachers signed consent forms which were indicating that they were participating in the study willingly (see appendix E).

3.10 Data collection

Data was collected through the use of four data collection tool. The first tool that was used to collect the data was document analysis. I read some documents that were relevant to the research questions that I needed to answer. An example of a document that I read and analysed was the National Policy Framework on Teacher Professional Development and other documents. The documents were read before other tools were used as well as in between the data collection process. I kept going through the documents so that I could remind myself about certain issues in the document.

The next data collection tool that I used was the observation. The two cluster groups that were interviewed were first observed during their meetings. I observed them so that I could use some of the observed information when conducting individual interviews. Owing to a lack of time where all the teachers could get together for my focus group interviews, I was forced to conduct the focus group interviews after I have observed the teachers in their cluster meeting (Appendix G). This was somehow helpful because I wrote down the notes of the things that I needed clarity on and what I had observed, and I could ask the teachers for clarity immediately after their meeting and they could still relate to my observations and give an account of their actions.

The last data collection technique I used was the semi-structured individual interviews (Appendix F). The interviews were conducted in the venues identified by the teachers, so that they could be more convenient for them. The interviews took between thirty minutes to fifty minutes. Some teachers were not very vocal, even when probed; they would give short answers and not provide a long account of their experiences in the clusters. However, all the interviews conducted provided me with some data that was useful for the study.

3.11 Data Analysis

In order to make sense of the vast amount of data collected, I needed to simplify the data before analysing it. Data was analysed by using a method called content analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define content analysis as ―a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.‖ Huberman and Miles (1994, p. 56) maintain that coding is when ―you view a set of field notes, transcribes or synthesised and to dissect them meaningfully while keeping the relations between the parts intact‖ Huberman and Miles (1994, p. 56) state that codes are attached to chunks of varying size, words, phrases, sentences connected or unconnected to a setting. Codes can either be straight forward or they can take the form of a metaphor. The data was analysed by looking at the responses per research question. This technique is useful in that it draws together all the data pertaining to the same research question, making the data to be conveniently available to the researcher and easy to analyse. Huberman and Miles (1994:56) state that ―It is not the words themselves, but the meanings that matter‖. I then identified the themes that emerged from the data collected. I interpreted the themes and these themes were then presented in the chapter of the presentation of findings.

The data analysis was conducted in the stages that will be discussed here. Firstly, the interview tapes were transcribed and hard copies of these were made. Another teacher was very soft spoken and I had a difficult time transcribing her interview, I needed to be in a very quiet place in order to make sense of what she was saying. Another teacher had an accent that I was not familiar with and I sometimes had difficulty in understanding his response, in his case I also had to look at the questions asked in order to understand and recall what we were talking about at the time. I realised that it helped that I conducted the interviews myself and hence I could recall some of the conversations I had with the different teachers and this helped me a lot when I was transcribing. I also realised that it was easier and convenient to do my own transcribing, although it took a long time. I could recall the conversations I had with the different individuals when transcribing. I then identified the different themes in which the data can be categorised in. I attempted listing all the teachers responses for each question in one category, but it took too much time and I did not go through with it. I used the previously identified themes to code the transcripts. I used different coloured pens to code different concepts. For an example I would write ‗activities in cluster' next to the activities indicated by the teachers, or ‗TPD' next to the teacher's response. During the analysis, I realised that some of the teacher's responses fell into more than one theme, another theme would then be written next to the first one in a different colour. It was not always easy to categorise some of the teacher's responses and I had to look at what the questions that led to such responses were or the questions that followed, or how I commented on the teacher's response during the interview. Some of the themes identified could be combined into one bigger theme and this was done when writing up the analysis and presenting the findings of the study.

3.12 Reliability and Validity

Merriam (1995, p. 51) states that ―rigor is needed in all kinds of research to insure that findings are to be trusted and believed." She also mentions that there are three major aspects of rigor, namely: internal validity, reliability and external validity (generalizability).

Internal validity

Merriam (1995, p. 53) states that internal validity asks the question ―How congruent are ones findings with reality?" According to Maxwell (1992, p.284) (as cited in Whittesmore, Chase and Mandle, 2001, p. 526) validity ―is not an inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts, or conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose". Validity in qualitative research has got to do with certainty of the data collected in a representation of that phenomena and not reproduction of it. In answering the latter question, Merriam (1995, p. 53) states that reality from the perspective of qualitative research is not stable and fixed as in quantitative research. Reality is constructed, multi-dimensional, ever-changing and interpreted. The researcher interprets his or her own interpretation of someone else's interpretation of reality. Just as in quantitative research, there are strategies that can be applied to ensure that the research findings are valid, such the use of more than two data gathering tools, this method is called triangulation, Merriam (1995); Denzin (1970); Mathison (1988) (as cited in Merriam, 1995, p. 54) define triangulation as ―the use of multiple investigators, multiple sources of data or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings."

Reliability

Merriam (1995, p. 54) states that reliability ―is concerned with the question of the extent to which one's findings will be found again. That is if the inquiry is replicated, would the findings be the same?" She further mentions that studying human behaviour is not the same as studying inanimate matter such as those studied by the positivist. Merriam (1995, p. 54) maintains that human behaviour is not static, the interactions between people is never the same, even if it happens in the same venue all the time, and it is always influenced by other factors. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 288) in Merriam (1995, p. 55) state that in qualitative research, the question that researchers should be striving for is dependability or consistency. Merriam (1995, p. 55) further elaborates by saying that qualitative researchers should be ensuring whether the ―results of a study are consistent with the data but not reliability". Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) maintain that reliability is a precondition for attaining validity because reliability is not a concept that can be attained on its own. Merriam (1995, p. 55) further states that as with internal validity, triangulation can be used to ensure consistency.

External validity or generalizibility

Merriam (1995, p. 57) defines external validity or generalizability as ―the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other situations." Merriam (1995, p. 57) further explains that ―since qualitative researchers rarely select random sample (which would then allow them to generalise to the population from which the sample was selected), it is thus concluded that one cannot generalise in qualitative research." Merriam (1995, p. 57) further mentions that the aim of qualitative research is not to

generalise what is true to everybody in any case but, the aim is to ―understand the particular in depth."

There are many types of validity that need to be attained in qualitative research, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). The most important part of this discussion is how reliability and validity can be attained. Validity and reliability can be attained through the use of a method called triangulation. In my study I used triangulation as a means of trying to establish reliability and validity of the findings. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 141) defines triangulation as ―the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" The process of triangulation is used to ensure that in-depth and rich information is provided in order to have a clear understanding of the study. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) maintain that triangulation is used as an alternative to ensure validation, but not as a tool or strategy for validation. The aim of using triangulation in qualitative research is to attempt to map out or give a more rich explanation of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. It is a more powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research. The type of triangulation that I used is called methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation uses more than one data collection method or tool to collect data, such as observation, interviews, focus groups and document analysis.

3.13 Limitations of the study

The study might encounter limitations due to the following:

- The research was only based in one district; the results may be different in other districts or provinces. However, this study does not aim to generalize, but the findings are only relevant to the sample used in this study. The in-depth focus on two clusters will provide a rich understanding of what happens in the two clusters, and the findings may inform future large scale studies.
- Skilled researchers will see shortcomings in this research, which I may not have been able to deal with or identify in a professional manner.
- Some participants withdrew some information with the fear of the information reaching the wrong ears, despite the fact that participants were made aware of the confidentiality of their information. I should have spent more time explaining the concept of confidentiality and ethics to the participants so that they do no fear that divulging important information will get them in trouble.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter was to present the data collected from the two cluster groups that I have studied in uMgungundlovu District. The themes that are discussed in this chapter were selected based on their emergence and relevance to the study. The findings presented in this chapter are an attempt to answer the three key research questions of the study which are as follows:

- **What activities do English First Additional Language teachers participate in in clusters?**
- **What do English First Additional Language teachers say they learn from participating in clusters?**
- **How does English First Additional Language teacher's participation and what they learn in clusters contribute to their professional development?**

This chapter presents the findings of data obtained from the individual and focus group interviews conducted with fourteen teachers from the two clusters and the district subject advisor for English First Additional Language. Data was also collected by means of observation of the two cluster groups and document analysis. This study is qualitative in nature and falls within the interpretative paradigm, hence the observation of the teachers in their natural setting, focus group interviews and individual interviews conducted (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008). The participants' voices are heard through the inclusion of direct quotations in order to present their exact words and understanding of certain issues. I used pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the participants and the schools that they belong to.

Literature suggests that teacher professional development is all types of learning that teachers may be involved in beyond their initial teacher training, till the end of their teaching career, Craft (1996). Teacher professional development is a process that teachers undergo either individually or with other teachers. It is also a process which involves the acquisition and critical development of knowledge, skills, planning and practice (Craft (1996, p. 6) and Day (1994). Furthermore Ling and Mackenzie (2001) suggest that teacher professional development can take place in many forms. For the purpose of this study, I have classified the clusters as a form of professional learning community where teachers participate in different activities in order to develop professionally. I use Richmond and Manokore's (2010) concept of professional teaching communities to understand the clusters and how teachers participate in them. I also draw from Shulman's (1986 & 1987) and Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge in trying to understand what teachers said they learnt in clusters.

4.2 Background information about clusters

4.2.1 Profile of clusters

Background information about the two clusters, how they are structured and how they operate was included in order to provide more information about what clusters are (see appendix I). Secada and Adajian (1997, p. 193) (as cited in Jita and Ndlalane, 2009, p. 59) defined clusters as a ─form of professional community that provides a context within which members can come together and understand their practices. A cluster consists of teachers who all teach the same subject. These teachers get together at specific times of the year and they do a number of activities that have been specified to them by the subject advisor. A subject advisor is a subject specialist, who has acquired depth knowledge of the content and pedagogy of the subject. The subject advisor is expected to monitor and

82

support the effective implementation of the curriculum and improve learner performance. Responsibilities of subject advisors include: providing and sourcing relevant teaching and learning material, supporting teachers in effectively implementing the curriculum in the classrooms, strengthening teachers content knowledge, support teachers in organizing relevant co-curricular activities and moderating school based assessment including Annual National Assessment (Department of Basic Education, Guidelines on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts, 2011).

I studied two clusters from uMgungundlovu District, which has four circuits, which are in turn divided into wards. Each ward is led by a Superintendent Education Manager (SEM). The SEM deals directly with school related matters and the school principal's report directly to the SEM. When the subject advisors are allocating schools into cluster groups, the ideal situation is that the schools are grouped according to the wards that they belong to. However, this is not always feasible because a school may belong to a certain ward, but be far apart from other schools within the same ward. To make this more practical, the subject advisor then groups schools according to their geographical location and not necessarily into their wards. A cluster group can therefore consist of schools from ward A and ward B.

According to the subject advisor of EFAL UMgungundlovu district, it is not compulsory for every [1]FET (Further Education and Training) teacher to attend cluster meetings, but it is compulsory for every school to be represented in a cluster group. A school can have only one teacher attending the cluster meetings to represent the school and to ensure that their learners work can be moderate and be in line with the rest of the schools in the district. The schools will remain in their allocated cluster groups, regardless of which teacher is representing the school. One will stay in their cluster group unless the subject

---

[1]**Further Education and Training (FET)** - refers to grades ten to grade twelve in high school.

83

advisor restructures the cluster groups or if a particular school has asked to be allocated to another group due to certain reasons.

The two clusters I studied consists of teachers from ten different schools, the schools belong to different wards but they are grouped together because of their geographical location as well as the number of schools that teach [2]English First Additional Language (EFAL) in the same geographical area. It is not always easy to say how many teachers will belong to the same cluster group because the clusters consists of a different number schools and each school has a different number of teachers who teach English First Additional Language per grade and per phase. I referred to the two clusters as cluster A and cluster B. Cluster A has only four teachers, while cluster B ranges between twelve and fifteen teachers.

4.2.2 Cluster A

This cluster group consisted of four members who came from four different schools (see Appendix I). Three of these schools were situated in the city of Pietermaritzburg and one was situated in [3]Sinentsika Township less than ten kilometres away from the Central Business District (CBD). This township school consisted of learners who mostly come from middle to low income families. Sinentsika High School was an under resourced school, that did not even have a playground where learners can sit during break. Another school in this cluster was an ex Model- C school, [4]Constantia High School. The majority of teachers and learners were still white and Afrikaans speaking. It was a well-resourced

---

[2]**English First Additional Language** is the language learnt in addition to the learner's home language. Also known as EFAL
[3]**Sinentsika Township**: A pseudonym used for the name of a place.
[4]**Constantia High School**: A pseudonym used for the name of a school.

school, with a hall, play grounds, school bus, sports equipment, swimming pool, to mention a few. The third school was Vunimfundo, a privately owned high school. It was situated a few metres from Pietermaritzburg CBD. This school was populated by learners who came from different backgrounds; it also operated as a finishing school whereby learners who have failed grade twelve or those who want to improve their subjects can attend. There were no play grounds in this school, it had no space, and even the staffroom was a small room where teachers have little space to do anything. The last school is also a private school[5]Nozizwe High School. It is situated in the CBD. It is also privately owned. Like Vunimfundo High School, it also consisted of learners who were repeating grade twelve, and learners who were in grade eight up to grade twelve. It also did not have enough space around it. There were no playground for the learners to sit during breaks, no sport equipment, and no swimming pool, to mention a few. The teaching experience of the teachers in this cluster ranges between four to thirty two years. All of the teachers had acquired degrees, and one of them did not have teachers' qualifications. Three of the teachers were post level one teachers, one was a former school principal who had retired but went back to teach at the private school, the fourth teacher was a Head of Department, and was employed by the school governing body (SGB). The teachers in this cluster only had one teacher per school attending the cluster meetings. The cluster meetings were held at one of the schools in town, but this was not a permanent setting, the venue was agreed upon based on its accessibility for all teachers in the group.

---

[5]**Nozizwe High School**: A pseudonym given for the name of a school.

4.2.3 Cluster B

This cluster group consisted of about fifteen members, (see Appendix I). I only managed to interview ten teachers in this cluster. Two of the teachers were not comfortable with being participants of the study, while the other three teachers were occupied with other activities and could not be available for the interviews. These teachers came from ten different schools, one of these schools was in an area called [6]Sunshine and the rest of the schools were situated in [7]Siyavuya Township and its surrounding residential areas. Some of these schools have been around since the seventies and the eighties and have played a significant role in the education of some of the people in high governmental positions in our province today. Teachers in these schools were faced with a lot of challenges such as overcrowded classes, lack of resources, substance abuse, poverty, teenage pregnancy and a very evident impact of HIV/AIDS in their learners' lives. These schools were under resourced as a result of the inequities of the previous government system.

In this cluster group, all the grade ten to twelve teachers were members of the cluster group. The teachers did not all attend the meetings at once, sometimes only teachers in grade ten attended, sometimes only grade eleven and twelve attended the meeting. However it was mostly grade twelve teachers whose attendance in clusters was always imperative as they were working towards submitting learners' marks which will go towards their continuous assessment which are used in conjunction with their final exams at the end of the year.

---

[6]**Sunshine**: A pseudonym used for the name of the place.
[7]**Siyavuya Township**: A pseudonym used for the name of the place.

The cluster meetings were held at any of the chosen schools in [8]Siyavuya Township. This was not a permanent setting, but the venue was agreed upon based on its accessibility for all teachers in the group. The teaching experience of the teachers I interviewed in this cluster ranges between eight to thirty one years. Three of the teachers had a Diploma in Education, one had a certificate and six of them had bachelors' degrees. All of the teachers I interviewed were [9]post level one educators.

Nine of the teachers interviewed in this study came from five different schools situated in Siyavuya Township and one came from a school in Sunshine. The schools in Siyavuya Township were mainly situated in the same neighbourhood. The schools were all situated not more than five kilometres from each other. They were all experiencing the same challenges and were catering for learners from the same neighbourhood. However, the teacher from Sunshine was experiencing a slightly different background. Sunshine is a semi-rural area about 20 kilometres South of Pietermaritzburg. Unlike the schools in Siyavuya Township, Sunshine had been infested with gang rivalry and this had been affecting the learners at school as some of them had been stabbed and killed (News 24, 24/10/2012) and DoE (2013).

In the section below, I presented data collected from interviews, observations of the cluster meetings and document analysis, in answering the three research questions of the study. The information below is presented according to each research question

---

[8]**Siyavuya Township**: A pseudonym for the name of the place.
[9]**Post level one** teachers are entry level teachers, teachers who are not in management.

Key Research Question 1

4.3 What activities do English First Additional Language teachers participate in in clusters?

In answering the first question of the study, I mainly used data from the observations I conducted. However, I also drew from what teachers told me in the interviews. I observed the two cluster groups on separate meetings and I also observed a combined meeting. Teachers participated in a variety of activities during cluster meetings. These included moderation of learners written work, oral moderation and planning.

Richmond and Manokore (2010) state that the existence of professional learning communities is mostly based on the productive interactions that colleagues have with each other. Liebermann and Mace (2008, p. 227) also attest to this when they say that people learn through practice and they further simplify this statement by calling it ―learning as doing". This means that the activities that teachers participate in in clusters will influence what they learn. It was therefore imperative to know what activities teachers participated in in their cluster meetings.

4.3.1 Moderation of written work

One of the main activities teachers participated in during cluster meetings was moderation of learners' written work. According to DoE, Moderate Assessment, (2008) and the Department of Education (DoE), National Examinations and Assessment (2009), the aim of moderation is to maintain common standards in assessment by establishing whether assessment has been conducted in a fair, consistent and reliable manner. It is also to ensure validity of the assessment that has been conducted against the assessment

standards of that particular subject. Moderation is also conducted so that feedback can be provided to the relevant teachers with the aim of improving the quality of school based assessment and teacher practice. The DoE (2008) policy also states that moderation is a process whereby the learners work is reviewed by someone who was not the assessor, who is called the moderator. The moderator reviews the results against the pre-specified criteria, which is the moderation or marking grid (see appendix H).

The learners' school based assessment was marked at school level by individual teachers and then moderated by the head of department (HOD). Moderation at school level meant that the EFAL teacher submitted all of his or her learner's written work to the HOD after she had marked it. The HOD then took about five scripts from the pile, some with low marks, high marks and average marks. The HOD remarks the scripts to see if the teachers had marked the learners' work correctly and fairly. If the HOD discovered some mistakes he or she discusses them with the teachers and they establish where there might have been a mistake and the teacher remarked if there was a need to do so. Thereafter, the teachers met in their cluster meetings to moderate the same school based assessment that had been moderated by the head of department at school level. In the EFAL clusters that I observed, the moderation was done using the marking grid, which showed how marks should be allocated for different sections of the learner's work that was being assessed. During the moderation process, each teacher swooped learners' written work with another teacher. Each teacher brought ten of their learners' written work to be moderated, as mentioned by Mrs Nombewu:

> *We bring ten percent of our learner's scripts and exchange. So we are going to bring about ten scripts of the students. Then you will find one teachers, you exchange the scripts and we remark.*

Teachers mentioned that they all used the same criteria to select learners' work that was to be taken to moderation. They choose learners with the highest mark, learners with

mediocre marks and learners with the lowest marks evenly. Teachers had also brought their personal files and mark sheets to the cluster meeting. Teachers' personal files consisted of mark sheets of all grades that they taught, subject policies, minutes of meetings that they had attended, work schedules and daily plans. The teachers had to come to the clusters with the original marks already erased on the learner's written work. This was done so that the teachers would not be influenced by the marks that were already allocated to the learners. The teachers then used the marking grid to remark the essays, letters and short transactional pieces that the learners had written in their examinations and wrote the new marks on the learner's scripts, which the teachers called the _moderated marks'. After moderation, the teachers discussed the marks, and original marks were revealed and compared against the moderated marks. If there was a difference of less than five marks between the original and the moderated marks, the marks stayed the same. Miss Ngwane explained what they did below:

> *First of all we moderate the work of the pupils. I go there with my marking being Done and when I go we exchange the work of the pupils after that we discuss anything that we found when marking the work of the learners and we also talk about things to be done in future.*

If there was a difference of more than five marks, the teachers had discuss the marks and identify why there was a difference in the marks and they had to agree on a new mark to allocate to the learners. The teachers indicated that the adjustment of marks was not an easy task to do because they sometimes felt as if their competence was being questioned. They felt like this because sometimes they had to give reasons about the big difference between the original marks and the moderated marks. They also did not enjoy adjusting marks because other teachers would assume that the teachers had not marked the learners' work properly. Teachers indicated that sometimes they felt humiliated when they had to adjust learner's marks, as indicated by Ms Mona:

> *There are challenges whereby we don't reach an agreement. Whereby I come with learners marks and they do not want to listen. I say this learner deserves*

this mark and the other teacher says no this learner deserves that mark.
There is a criteria for marking, but sometimes we don't use it the right way.

I also witnessed this tension that transpired during the adjustment of marks as mentioned by the previous teacher's statement in one of the meetings I attended. One teacher had to give reasons for the big difference in marks, and she was very defensive about adjustment done to her marks. Her learner's marks were too high and the moderator felt that she had not given a true reflection of the learner's performance. Her marks were about ten to fifteen marks higher than the moderated marks. The teacher did not want to comply with her colleague and adjust the marks. The colleague asked for the cluster coordinator's intervention in the matter. The cluster coordinator then took the scripts and moderated them himself. Again the cluster coordinator also gave the learners lower marks than the teacher had given them, it was then agreed that the teacher had to agree with her colleagues and bring down her marks, even though she was not happy with the adjustment. However, the teacher was made aware that she did not have to agree to the adjustment, but had a choice of forwarding the matter to the subject advisor and asking her to moderate her marks. However, she opted for an adjustment of her marks, rather than forwarding the matter to the subject advisor. I did not observe any other difficulty with the majority of the other teachers when they were moderating each other's work.

4.3.2 Moderation of orals

Another activity that teachers participated in during cluster meetings was the moderation of oral tasks for grade twelve. This moderation of grade twelve oral tasks is in accordance with the (DoE, Final Oral Document, 2008), which states that all grade twelve oral tasks that are offered for the National Senior Certificate, be it home language, first additional language or second additional language, should be assessed in the schools, but

moderated. The moderation had to happen at three levels, i.e. at school level, cluster or district level and at provincial or national level, hence the moderation of grade twelve orals in cluster meetings.

In one of the cluster meetings I attended, there was a representative from the department of education. He stated that the aim of oral moderation was: ―To moderate the marks *awarded by teachers at school*.‖ DoE (2008) states that during the grade twelve oral moderations at district, provincial and national level, the Examinations and Assessment directorate will select subject advisors and moderators who will visit schools or venues of cluster meetings in order to ensure fairness, accuracy and validity of assessment. Another reason for the presence of the departmental official in the cluster meeting was that the grade twelve results are also used as an instrument to measure the performance of each school. It was therefore imperative that the grade twelve marks be verified by the official in order to ensure validity of the marks.

Before the actual moderation started, ‗Mr Dladla‘ (pseudonym), the department‘s representative discussed the procedure of the day with the teachers. He also discussed ways to create a conducive environment to make learners feel comfortable during the process of oral moderation. It was agreed that teachers would take turns in chairing the meeting. Mr Dladla went to talk to the learners in another classroom and explained the procedure of the day to them. It was decided that he should address the learners as he was a neutral body in this meeting, instead of any of the teachers. Each teacher had brought five learners with them. There was one highest achiever, three average and one lowest achiever. The DoE (2008) states that 10% of the learners per school should be moderated, but the 10% should not be more than ten learners. The teachers mentioned that they agreed as a cluster that the schools should all bring five learners per school for the oral

moderations, in order to maintain uniformity. This is in accordance with Mrs King's words:

> *We also do oral moderation, it's for grade twelve orals only. Teachers must bring their oral marks that the learners have done from the beginning of the year. When we go for moderations, five learners are chosen, one highest, three in the middle and one lowest.*

The teachers then took turns to call the learners into the classroom, but teachers did not call learners from their own school. One teacher then wrote the learner's names on the board, one of the learners was asked to choose a story from the table and read alone. While the other learner was reading the story, the other four learners were asked to tell the panel about themselves. The reader then came back and read aloud to the rest of the group. The learners discussed the story that was read amongst them while the panel watched them and listened to their discussion. Learners were also asked to tell the panel about any of the set literature that they were doing at school, what it was about, the themes talked about, described and discussed the characters. At the end, the learners were thanked for their time and showed out of the room. The procedure that was followed during the moderation process was also in accordance with what the DoE (2008) says should be the procedure of the day during the grade twelve oral moderation.

After the learners left the room, the teachers and the departmental representatives compared scores. The scores were then discussed and moderated against the original scores from the schools. The scores were discussed until a consensus was reached for an adjustment and then they were recorded (see appendix K). In this particular meeting, I did not observe any tension about the adjustment of learner's marks as it had happened in the moderation of written work. This was because none of the teachers had a difference that was very big between the original marks and the moderated marks. Thereafter, the next school would be called in and the same procedure would be followed to assess the learners. This was the order of the day, until all the schools were finished. At the end of

the meeting, teachers were reminded when and where the final cluster meeting for the year was going to be held, they were also reminded to bring all the necessary documents to the meeting.

4.3.3 Discussion of issues relevant to the teaching of EFAL

Beside moderation, teachers in clusters engaged in a lot of discussions about issues pertaining to their work. There was a lot of sharing and discussion of teaching, learning and assessment in some of the cluster meetings I observed, especially in the cluster meeting that was held at the beginning of the year where all the cluster groups were combined. Mr Koneke said the following about the activities done at the cluster meeting held at the beginning of the year:

> *It's basically a subject workshop where we went through the demands,*
> *I mean the curriculum; you know... the basic skills you should have to*
> *help you teach the subject.*

In this meeting, teachers seemed to be concerned about the curriculum demands for the year. They seemed to be anxious for answers and direction about how certain assessment standards needed to be taught during the course of the year. The Department of Education, National Curriculum Statement: General, (2003, p. 7) states that ―Assessment Standards are criteria that collectively describe what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade." The subject advisor facilitated the meeting, but decided to give the teachers an opportunity to answer each other's questions. It was the teachers who mostly mark the grade twelve final examinations which are marked externally and centrally who answered the teachers questions about how certain assessment standards needed to be taught. For example, one teacher asked where the learners needed to add the date when writing an address in a letter, whether they needed to write the whole address

and the date or if they needed to skip a line and then write the date thereafter. This question belonged to Learning Outcome three of the National Curriculum Statement, DoE, (2003, p. 13) which is Writing and Presenting. It states that: ―The learner is able to write and present for a wide range of purposes and audiences using conventions and formats appropriate to diverse contexts".

The teacher's questions were answered by their colleagues. The teachers who mark the grade twelve final examinations also highlighted that teachers needed to start training their learners as early as grade ten to start a new section on a new page, as this helps them to determine the length of the essay and prepares them for grade twelve. Teachers were also encouraged by their colleagues to mostly speak to their learners in English, as this trained learners in speaking the language, increased their vocabulary and familiarized the learners with the language to make things easier for them in the final grade twelve examinations, as stated in the DoE (2003). Teachers indicated that learners cannot express themselves in English because they were not familiar with the language, and had difficulty understanding simple instructions in examinations.

Teachers also indicated that they also discussed issues such as the methods of teaching certain aspects of the curriculum, as indicated by the Mr Mhlongo in the following excerpt:

> Let's say you are doing poetry or short stories, you get empowered by your colleagues. Like you would tell them that I'm not good in poetry, then you mention the poem that you are uncomfortable with and they will brainstorm it for you. Maybe you are approaching it in another way. It helps.

Teachers indicated that sometimes when they are working as teachers, they realized that they cannot apply what they were taught when they were training as teachers, they have to learn new methods of doing things. Theory and practice are not the same and teachers work in different environment that are different from what their lecturers may have been

exposed to. Teachers indicated that clusters helped them in preparing for their practice as teachers and applying the relevant methods; as revealed by Mr Zondo below:

> *Sometimes due to certain reasons, one might deviate from what you were taught at college. When you are in the field you get your methods of doing things, you must come with daily preparations, it's what you are taught at college, but sometimes it's impossible to do with the teacher: pupil ratio that is challenging in school. So you learn new methods of doing your work when attending cluster meetings.*

Teachers indicated that it was not only moderation activities that were done in clusters, but they also planned for the year and for the upcoming work that they still needed to do, as mentioned by Mr Maphanga:

> *Apart from moderation, certain things have to be discussed, like we did in our last meeting, I am happy you were there because you saw it was not only about moderation. We discussed some things in preparation for next year and, challenges that teachers are facing, preparing for exams and orals and so on.*

In another meeting that I attended, it was closer to the meeting for moderating orals. A teacher who was teaching EFAL for the first time asked what was done in oral moderation and what was expected from him. A whole discussion about the oral moderation ensued. Teachers participated and told the teacher what needed to be done, what was expected of him in the oral moderation cluster meeting, how many learners he had to prepare, how the learners were selected, what he needed to bring and how the day of the moderation proceeded. The teacher was well informed about the oral moderation at the end of the meeting and he thanked his peers for their contribution and responding to his question.

The subject advisor advised that schools should have a clear framework for at least three years that indicated exactly what aspects of the curriculum were going to be covered in a certain grade and where the next grade would continue from. She also mentioned that

teachers should always think of innovative ways to improve their work in class and help learners achieve better results as this was their core duty. The teachers did not discuss what needed to be taught and at which time it needed to be taught, but the subject advisor told them how they needed to do their planning in order to make their teaching more effective.

Some teachers seemed to share the same sentiments as the subject advisor about having a clear working framework for the EFAL in schools as they suggested that schools could adopt the method of teaching the same class from grade eight up to grade twelve. This was encouraged because the teacher would understand the learners' strengths and weaknesses and know exactly what they have been taught throughout high school. The teacher would also know all her or his learners level of understanding and capabilities.

4.3.4 Discussion of curriculum issues

In one of the meetings, the subject advisor looked at the English subject policy document. This is a document that is designed by the provincial department of EFAL. It is not the curriculum statement document (NCS). The aim of this document according to (DoE, EFAL, Subject policy Grade twelve, 2013, p. 2) is to ensure that there is uniformity in the work of EFAL teachers throughout the province, to assist teachers to maintain a sense of professionalism in their careers, to provide quality education for all the learners, to streamline requirements across schools and to ensure that all teachers transmit and transfer appropriate subject related aspects appropriate for all learners This document entails among other things: a brief summary of the NCS document and the requirements for each grade, the expected time allocation for EFAL. It also included the management and control guidelines for teachers work, roles for the HOD, and recording guidelines for

School Based Assessment (SBA)'s, guidelines for the amount of tasks to be done and mark allocations. The moderation guidelines for written and oral work, templates for recording learners work, template for teacher's file control sheet, and cluster members contact details were also included in the EFAL, Subject policy. The document also entails a copy of Barrett's Taxonomy (see appendix J), which the teachers were encouraged to use in order to help them know the kinds of questions to set in the test and the different levels of questioning.

The subject advisor made teachers aware of what had changed in this document. This discussion of the changes in the subject policy concurs with what Mrs Zikhali said was done in the cluster meetings during her individual interview:

> *At the beginning of the year we discuss policies where maybe if there*
> *are things that have changed in the policy we will discuss it*
> *and the subject advisor will always be available on that day.*

The change in the subject policy document stated that the learners now needed to have done all four genres in the curriculum from grade ten up to grade twelve. The teachers noted the policy changes they commented and said that it was not something new, because they were already doing the genres, but now it was written down on paper. The rest of the document remained as it was in the previous year. The subject advisor also made teachers aware that a new curriculum called CAPS (curriculum and assessment policy statements) was going to be introduced in the following year in 2012. She mentioned that this would be very beneficial for the teachers as it would come with a prepared work schedule, so the teachers would not spend a lot of time doing work schedules, they will concentrate more get on their teaching. The subject advisor also reiterated to the teachers that when there were changes in the department, it meant that the teachers also had to change their old habits and comply with the department. She mentioned that although policies were made by the department on a national level,

teachers are the ones who implemented them and it was imperative that they comply with the department and implement policies.

4.3.5 Discussion of issues relating to assessment

Teachers also indicated that they set test papers for different grades and moderated the papers to be written at their schools. The teachers mentioned that the subject advisor advised that they set common test papers in their cluster meetings; this was to encourage uniformity in the schools and to ensure that all learners wrote tests that were in the same standard. The teachers indicated that the department of education used to set common test for all schools in March, June and September, but they are no longer doing that. The cluster groups now set common test papers for their own clusters and the department only sets common tests for the schools that have achieved less than fifty percent for their previous year's grade twelve national certificates results. In the cluster meeting that was held at the beginning of the year, the subject advisor asked teachers to sit in their cluster groups and identify teachers that were going to be examiners and moderators of different common test papers in their respective cluster groups. The teachers got into their cluster group and nominated teachers who were going to be examiners and moderators of the different common test papers for the year for each cluster group. To help teachers with the setting of common test papers and setting papers with different levels of reasoning, the subject advisor gave the teachers a copy of Barrett's taxonomy. The copy of Barrett's Taxonomy was not used during the cluster meetings, but teachers indicated that they used them as a guide when setting the tests in their own time at home. Teachers also used the subject advisor as a resource person, and asked several questions about, for example, issues relating to assessment, as alluded to by Mrs Nombewu when she states that:

> *If we have questions the subject advisor will help us, answer and clarify*

things for us, especially about new changes. Like this year I need clarity from her because last year we did not have oral response to literature, now the learners have to read an extra book and we will have to ask the learners questions and that is confusing, so I want her to clarify that for me.

In the meetings, teachers also asked questions that were going to help them guide their grade twelve learners about the final examinations. One teacher asked about how marks were allocated in one of the examination papers. The question was about whether any marks were deducted for summary writing if the learner wrote more words than the specified number of words. The subject advisor was not always the one person who answered all questions raised in the cluster meetings. In this case, other teachers responded to their colleagues questions and made them aware of different mark allocations of the different work in the final examinations, what they needed to focus on and which mistakes learners usually made in the final examination. The experienced teachers also advised the rest of the teachers that they needed to train their learners as early as possible to be aware of where they needed to skip lines and start new paragraphs when writing essays for Paper Three. Paper one of the learners exams consisted of a comprehension, summary writing and a language section. Paper two consisted of questions for a novel, drama, short story and poetry. Paper three consisted of essay writing, a shorter transitional text, for example an advertisement, a postcard or instructions on how to do something or a longer transactional text, which could be a formal or informal letter, dialogue, speech or a newspaper article. Teachers also discussed that learners needed to be trained as early as grade eleven to follow all the requirements of the grade twelve final examinations and to be aware of the mark allocations for certain sections such as letter writing. They also reiterated that learners needed to know exactly where and when to use the punctuation marks as these were minor marks that learners could easily obtain in their final examinations.

In the combined meeting at the beginning of the year, teachers were also given copies of the EFAL provincial report. This report presented the previous year's grade twelve final examination results. The subject advisor mentioned that teachers had to come up with turn-around strategies for improving their schools results. She advised that teachers had to make use of their colleagues from the cluster groups. She indicated that cluster groups had teachers who were experienced as teachers in their school as well as grade twelve final examinations markers and the teachers had very rich knowledge that other teachers needed to utilize to their advantage. She also reiterated that this was what clusters were all about, developing each other with the aim of improving learners' performance. She also emphasized that teachers had to work collaboratively with teachers in their schools, and ask teachers who are more confident with teaching certain aspects of the English curriculum to each teach it to the learners. She also emphasized that the aim was for the learners to pass with good results, so teachers had to work collaboratively at all times.

4.3.6 Discussion of professionalism

All of the cluster meetings that I observed did not start at the scheduled time. They all started later than they had been scheduled. At the end of one of the cluster meetings, one teacher and the cluster coordinator emphasized that teachers needed to conduct themselves in a more professional manner. They voiced out their concern about the lack of punctuality in meetings. The teachers mentioned that other teachers late coming in meetings was a problem because it resulted in teachers wanting to rush through the moderation process and not wanting to discuss other issues after moderation.

The subject advisor also talked about the importance of professionalism of teachers and always conducting themselves in a professional manner. She said that teachers needed to

always act professionally and gave some examples that showed that teachers were professional, such as always keeping their files up to date, and arriving on time for meetings. She mentioned that all the teachers' files needed to be up to date because the external examiners would take anybody's file and use it to evaluate whether the clusters are doing their work effectively during the year. She also encouraged teachers that they should always check if they have all the relevant documents at the cluster meetings and fill in all the necessary forms and documents that needed to be filled in.

4.3.7 Sharing and discussion of challenges encountered in schools

Teachers also had an opportunity to discuss challenges that they were facing in their respective schools in the cluster meetings. Miss Zaca said the following about clusters:

It's a problem solving method to belong to a cluster, it solves problems.

Some teachers indicated that they had a challenge of leaners not being able to spell and punctuate simple sentences even at grade twelve level. Other teachers in the cluster advised by saying that some of the strategies to help improve learners spelling was to have a lot of reading activities and highlighted the spelling of certain words to the learners while reading. Teachers also discussed punctuation marks, and indicated that punctuation marks could be improved by continuously giving learners simple sentences to punctuate as reflected in the statement below by Mrs Xaba:

We grow in the subject, we grow every day. Let's say you have a problem,
a child maybe in the classroom who does things in a unique way.
Then if you share your story with another teacher from another school,
then maybe that solution can help you.

Teachers also indicated that sometimes they encountered challenges with teaching of certain sections of the curriculum, but clusters helped them because they go to cluster

meetings and asked how to teach that section. Teachers also indicated that clusters have really been beneficial to their teaching practice and their learner's performance in some areas. One teacher indicated that he came from a previously disadvantaged school, which did not have all the necessary resources that will make teaching and learning easier. He indicated that he had taken his grade twelve learners to a more resourced school that is in the same cluster as his school to watch a grade twelve film set on the drama Nothing but the truth by John Kani. He indicated that taking his learners to watch the film helped them a lot because it improved their understanding of the book, because although they had done the book in class, some learners understood the book much better after watching the film. In this way being a member of a cluster group helped him teach the learners better and improved the learners understanding of the book. One teacher shared with the group that she needed more books for literature for grades ten and eleven and asked if any school would be able to lend her the books. The teachers suggested that this should be reported to the subject advisor as she needed to know if there were schools that did not have sufficient material.

4.3.8 Compliance with provincial departmental requirements

In the cluster meeting at the beginning of the year, teachers were also given a document that contained copies of all the forms that teachers needed to use during the course of the year such as the file control sheet form and the mark sheets for different learner tasks. This document is what they called the EFAL subject policy document. There were also annexures of the cover pages of the teacher's files as well as the grade twelve's files. There was also a report annexure for head of departments (H.O.D)'s in schools to fill in and verify that they have moderated the teachers oral marks at the school level. The subject advisor mentioned that previously the HOD's in schools only had to moderate

creative writing, but [10]UMalusi now needed all genres to be moderated at school level as well. There was also a checklist annexure to check whether the teacher's files contained all the necessary documents. The subject advisor mentioned that she would also be using the same annexure when monitoring teacher's files during her school visits. The compliance with the departmental requirements was important because it is what the department uses to ensure that the school have followed all the necessary procedure in completing work in schools, assessment and moderation at the different levels.

Key research Question 2

4.4 What do English First Additional Language teachers say they learn from participating in clusters?

In this section I present the views of what teachers in this study said they learnt from participating in clusters. The discussions in this section were generated from data collected in the individual as well as focus group interviews. I present the teachers responses using Grossman's (1990) four general areas of teacher knowledge, namely: General pedagogical knowledge, Pedagogical content knowledge, Subject matter knowledge, and knowledge of context.

Kwakman (2003) suggests that teachers learn through interactions and discussions with their colleagues. The teachers in these cluster groups mentioned that they learn a lot from attending cluster meetings and discussing issues through collaborating with their colleagues.

---

[10] UMalusi – A council for quality assurance in General and Further Education and Training in South Africa. One of its strategies of monitoring quality is through ensuring that assessment is fair, valid and reliable.

4.4.1 General pedagogical knowledge (GPK)

Teacher's responses suggested that they do learn some general pedagogical knowledge from collaborating with their colleagues in the cluster groups. Grossman (1990) mentions that one of the knowledge that can be classified as general pedagogical knowledge is the knowledge of general principles of instruction, such as academic learning time, wait time, or small group instruction. Teachers mentioned that they shared and exchanged ideas and tips on what methods and strategies they can use to teach certain aspects of their subjects, as mentioned by Mrs Pillay below:

> *We exchange ideas and say this is what works for me and this is what*
> *I do in my school and this is what I don't do, that is just how we learn.*

During the observations that I conducted, there were no discussions of methods that happened, however, the teachers did mention that they helped the teachers who were new in the field as well as those who were teaching grade twelve for the first time. They mentioned that some of the things they help each other with are teaching methods that they have found working with their learners. Such as the teacher who mentioned that he had difficulty with poetry and often needed help teaching that section of the curriculum and often went to the cluster and asked his colleagues for help on how to teach poetry. As Gage (1978) (as cited in Grossman, 1990, p. 6) mentions that prospective teachers are trained in certain instructional skills related to student achievement.

Teachers also mentioned that being in clusters also helped them because they shared information, such as which work the learners can be given in groups. One teacher indicated that they have large numbers in their classrooms, and it was not easy to give learners certain work in groups. This was indicated by Mrs Nombewu when she said that:

> *We have large numbers in our classes and it's not always easy to mark*
> *some work, we don't always finish marking. So other teachers showed us*
> *how to mark group work and decrease our marking*

Teachers mentioned that they do a lot of marking, so being in clusters helped them get tips from their colleagues about which work can be done in groups and how it can be done and which work cannot be done in groups. This is what Grossman (1990) says that teachers need knowledge of general principles of instruction such as academic learning time, wait- time, small group instruction and knowledge and skills related to classroom management.

Some of the teachers seemed to be complaining that their cluster meetings were mostly about the moderation of learners work and not about other aspects of their work. However, some teachers actually indicated that the amount of time spent on the discussion about assessment and the correct way of using the rubric was very beneficial to them as teachers. Teachers indicated that the moderation that they did in their clusters had actually equipped them, as suggested by Mrs King in the following statement:

> *We learn to moderate each other's papers and we exchange ideas.*

In the meetings, teachers also discussed issues such as how to mark certain aspects of the learners work, how the marks were allocated when marking different activities and other assessment related issues or concerns that may come up, as suggested by Mrs Xaba:

> *We realised in the cluster that this one which is out of six marks*
> *really helped the learners because you may find that the learner*
> *maybe was poor in English grammar, maybe had language*
> *errors, but when you look at the structure maybe she managed*
> *to structure her essay very well.*

Another teacher suggested that the moderation that they did in clusters helped her to assess learners work better because they discussed the learners and marks in clusters and in that way she learned how to assess work better.

4.4.2 Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

Teachers also indicated that they learnt pedagogical content knowledge from being involved in clusters. Grossman (1990) asserts that teachers must be able to draw from their subject matter knowledge and the knowledge of their learner's prior knowledge, conceptions and misconceptions, to be able to formulate the most thought provoking, the most useful forms of representations, explanations and demonstrations to their learners. Teachers indicated that sometimes they would teach a section in class and realize that their learners still do not understand the section. They indicated that they would go back to their cluster meetings and ask their colleagues if their learners understood the section and ask how they went about teaching them. They mentioned that the discussions would lead to them discovering more appropriate explanations of teaching the section to their learners. As this was mentioned by Mrs Preston when she revealed the following

> *I think you tend to learn different things like you see teachers*
> *might come up with different approaches in terms of teaching a*
> *certain book or teaching a certain section in English.*

Some teachers indicated that they exchanged worksheets with teachers from other schools and they learnt different kinds of questioning techniques from this exchanging of resources. Exchanging of material such as worksheets also helped teachers expose their learners to different questioning techniques and not be familiar with their own teacher's style only. As mentioned by Miss Mbona when she stated the following:

> *The use of different resources, different types of questioning, maybe*
> *the school would use a different technique from the way I would*
> *use it, so we exchange ideas when we do that.*

Grossman (1990) states that PCK also include knowledge of the correct teaching methods and curriculum material to teach a particular subject matter as revealed by the teachers in the deliberations above.

The teachers indicated that discussions they have during cluster meetings are then taken back to class to influence the decision that they take when teaching different genres and marking learners work. They said they learnt how the grade twelve final exam markers mark the learner's scripts, and how the marks are allocated to different sections of the exam papers. Teachers also indicated that they learnt and discussed assessment methods, and discussed how to use the marking grid in a more effective way in marking EFAL. The sharing of information with the teachers who mark grade twelve papers also helped these teachers a lot, as mentioned by Miss Ngwane:

> *We do learn, especially those who don't go for marking. They learn a lot*
> *because we as the people who are marking grade twelve papers as I*
> *have mentioned in the beginning, we come with a lot of information*
> *so there is a lot which is learnt there, there are many changes that are*

Teachers also attested that they got clarity on issues that were unclear to them at cluster meetings and they also learnt better, more effective and easier ways to understand and implement the curriculum from interacting with members of their cluster. They also indicated that they learnt strategies from their colleagues in clusters, such as how to make their children achieve good results in the subject, as mentioned by Mr Okeke when he said: *it's just to share information and also to get some strategies, how do they make it and how do they make their children to do better in the language.*

Teachers indicated that they received and learnt more effective strategies of achieving their goals from interacting with colleagues in clusters. Another teacher indicated that he did not like poetry and had a problem teaching poetry to the learners. When the time came to teach poetry, he indicated that he went to the cluster meeting and asked his colleagues to help him with the poetry. He mentioned that his cluster members would brainstorm the poems he needed to know and discuss all the important information. The more experienced teachers shared their teaching skills and methods and presented these

using their knowledge of student understanding and knowledge of student's conceptions and misconceptions of particular topics in the subject. This was in line with what Grossman (1990, p. 8), says about pedagogical content knowledge (PCK),where she argues that ‑teachers must draw upon both their knowledge of the subject matter to select appropriate topics and their knowledge of students' prior knowledge and conceptions to formulate appropriate and provocative representations of the content to be learned." The teacher indicated that by the time the teacher went back to his school to teach the poetry he was confident enough to teach as he now felt that he had acquired the necessary techniques and knowledge and this enhanced the teachers practice in class.

4.4.3 Subject matter knowledge

Grossman (1990, p. 6) states that subject matter knowledge refers to knowledge of the content of a subject, as well as the knowledge of the major facts and the concepts within a field and the relationships among them. The teachers indicated that being in a cluster group gave novice teachers more subject related knowledge, skills, assistance and guidance. They also indicated that the mentoring in clusters was also in line with specific departmental expectations of the EFAL teachers in the FET phase, as these teachers received up to date and direct instructions and advice from the subject advisor herself, unlike the information they received from colleagues in their schools. The teachers who belong to the same clusters indicated that they were able to tell one exactly what is expected of them as subject teachers and what their files should look like. However, besides assisting new teachers, not much content knowledge was learnt in clusters. Subject advisors only assisted with the new content areas of the curriculum. This was not surprising considering that teachers were expected to have acquired most of their subject content knowledge during their studying and training as teachers.

4.4.4 Knowledge of context

Grossman (1990) states that teachers need to have a sound knowledge of their context, their teaching must be specific and relevant to their students and their district, community, and other contextual factors. Some teachers indicated that being in cluster also helped them to share their challenges that they face in their schools and learn from other teachers in the cluster. Teachers indicated that when they have problems with certain learners in their classes and did not know how to deal with them, they would share this with her colleagues in their cluster meetings and they would get ideas on how to deal with the learner, as mentioned by Mrs Xaba when she said that:

> *Maybe if you have a problem with a certain child in the classroom that does things in a unique way, if you share your story with another teacher from another school, then maybe the solution can come from there.*

Teachers indicated that they would try and find some social factors that could be affecting the child's behaviour in class and how the learners were performing in class. This indicated that teachers needed to have knowledge of context in order to deal with a lot of issues in their teaching, such as choosing material and explanations to use when teaching an aspect.

Teachers also indicated the need to be aware of their contexts and that they learnt to share resources with teachers from better resourced schools. As indicated by a teacher who stated that he came from a school that was situated in a semi-rural area and they did not even have electricity. He indicated that he had made contacts with teachers in the cluster group and had learned to make use of other teachers' resources. An example he mentioned was taking grade twelve learners to a more resourced school to watch a film based on a literature book they were doing. He said that his leaners performance and understanding of the drama improved after they had seen the film, and that he himself

had learnt a lot from the visit to a school in a different context. He indicated that being a member of the cluster had helped him with providing better resources for his learners, and exposed him to teaching and learning contexts that were different from those he was familiar with. This was alluded to by many of the teachers in the two clusters.

Key research question 3

4.5 How does English First Additional Language teacher's participation and what they learn in clusters contribute to their professional development?

Teachers indicated that their participation in clusters contributed to their professional development in many ways. The ways in which clusters have contributed to teachers' professional development will be discussed in the following presentation of data.

4.5.1 Collaboration and networking

Teachers indicated that being in clusters helped them because they learnt to work collaboratively with their peers, which they regarded as part of professional development, as mentioned by Mr Mhlongo:

> *Previously there was this kind of an individual approach to teaching, but now I have developed professionally for instance I can take my learners to another school*

In the meetings that I attended, the subject advisor openly gave teachers an opportunity to help their colleagues and answer the questions that they had about the curriculum and assessment issues. She also indicated that part of professional development was when teachers learn to help each other and ask each other for assistance. As she stated in her own words below:

*I'm sure teachers have already indicated to you in their interviews that
I'm not always present in their meetings. So I make use of the skills
and knowledge of senior markers and senior teachers to develop their
colleagues. That is what professional development is about anyway.*

She indicated that teachers only needed her input in policy related questions that only she could have answers to, otherwise she always encouraged them to help others and be each other's mentors. I experienced this kind of interdependence among teachers when observing a cluster meeting where the subject advisor was not present. One teacher asked the cluster coordinator if he could ask the subject advisor to do a workshop on how they needed to teach certain short transactional texts. Other teachers responded by suggesting they set a date when they were going to do such a workshop amongst themselves. The teachers reminded each other that there were teachers in the cluster who were highly experienced to conduct curriculum workshops within their cluster, and that as a cluster they needed to just tap into that expertise. There was a brief discussion on the issue and teachers then agreed on the date, and some volunteered to facilitate the workshop. This was evidence of the teachers' ability to work collaboratively within a cluster and supported their claim of how they had developed professionally in their networking collaboration endeavours.

In another cluster meeting the subject advisor encouraged teachers to ask each other for help. She also reiterated that collaboration should not only be practiced within teachers of the same grade, but across all the grades. Mr Nzama further added that, he had started the culture of asking other teachers to come to his class and help him on some assessment standards that he was not so confident to teach to the learners. He added that he learnt the importance of collaboration from attending cluster meetings and he argued that he saw this as a cheap and simple way to develop teachers within a school and even with teachers from other schools. He indicated that although there were teachers in his school

who were uncomfortable with sharing with other colleagues, some teachers welcomed his initiative:

I started this year to work as a unit especially from grade ten to twelve. Because I am not a jack of all trades, I requested one lady to come and teach summary writing skills, I know I'm not good in teaching summary writing. She knows I'm good in short stories so she said I must go and assist her in grade eleven.

This was his way of encouraging teachers to work collaboratively, which he indicated he saw as part of professional development. Another teacher mentioned that teaching was not an individual work, but a team effort and felt that clusters contributed to professional development by encouraging teachers to work as teams in their schools. Other teachers also agreed with him and said that it was important for teachers to try and work as teams in their schools because when the grade twelve results came out, it does not only become an issue of the subject teacher, but the whole school becomes criticized and looked at by everyone, hence the importance of teamwork in schools. This was further emphasized by Mr Maphanga when he mentioned that:

You might find that maybe when it comes to poems I'm not good, yet in need to do some poems ….we need to come up with some sort of integration asking certain individuals, certain teachers from grade nine, ten or whatever, as long as I know that the teacher is an expert when it comes to poetry. That's one thing I've changed, that's what other teachers in other schools are doing.

In the documents that were given to teachers in the meeting that was held at the beginning of the year, there was also a list of all the combined cluster members contact details that was generated by the subject advisor. The subject advisor mentioned that she had generated and included this list of teachers contact details in order to encourage relations amongst the teachers.

Teachers also indicated that being in clusters gave them an opportunity to network with teachers from other schools. This networking helped them in a number of things in their work as teachers and contributed to them developing professionally. Evidence of

networking that was discussed in the interviews was that of a particular teacher from previously disadvantaged school who approached teachers from well-resourced schools. In one such instance, a teacher from a poorly resourced school requested to take his learners to an advantaged school to watch the film ―Nothing but the truth‖, which was a prescribed novel for grade twelve. He indicated that his learners' were welcome to go to the school and watch the film and this really helped the learners as it improved their understanding of the drama. Teachers also indicated that networking helped them to also compare the pace they were going with their own leaners to that of teaches from other school, as mentioned by Miss Mbona below:

> *The teacher will contact you and find out what is going on in your school, how far have you gone in this topic, are your children comfortable with this?*
> *And then we shall share all these things.*

Teacher mentioned that before they participated in clusters they did not find it easy to collaborate and network with other teachers, and regarded their participation as having contributed to their professional development in this regard.

4.5.2 Mentoring

Teachers indicated in clusters they also developed professionally because there is coaching and mentoring that takes place. Teachers indicated that the novice teachers and the teachers who were teaching EFAL for the first time had an opportunity to be mentored by the more experienced teachers, as stated Mrs Nombewu below:

> *We also mentor those who are still new, like maybe who have just started teaching.*

They further expanded that they do not only mentor the novice teachers in the subject matter knowledge, but even in organizing their files and how to assess learners work. As indicated by Mrs Xaba:

> *Those teachers still need to be developed even in organizing themselves and making their files and making their preparations, work schedule and other stuff.*

Teachers and the subject advisor both indicated that the subject advisor did not have time to attend to all the clusters during their cluster meetings because she has other commitments. She was the only subject advisor in the district and could not manage to be present in all cluster meetings. The subject advisor indicated that she also attended to provincial matters at times, so she relied on the teachers to assist each other in their needs and challenges in all spheres of their work as teachers.

4.5.3 Improvement in teaching, assessment and planning strategies as part of professional development

When asked about how their participation in clusters contributed to their professional development, teachers referred back to the discussion on what they learnt in clusters. They regarded the improvement in their repertoire of teaching and assessment strategies, as well as the sharpening of their planning skills as apt of professional development that resulted from participating in clusters. In one of the meetings that I observed some teachers were talking amongst themselves, discussing that clusters are very helpful in their work as teachers. They said their clusters have helped them a lot in understanding assessment, improving assessment strategies, understanding the curriculum and implementing the curriculum. They saw this as contributing to their professional development because they had improved on their assessment strategies through the conversations they have with their colleagues. They mentioned that being involved in

clusters really helped because they were assisted in finding easier ways to achieve their assessment standards that are stipulated in the curriculum document. One teacher indicated that members of her cluster had a problem with understanding some of the assessment criteria in grade eleven and twelve and it was in the cluster meetings that they discussed it and found clarity and easier ways to assess the learners work as mentioned by Mrs Pillay below:

> *We did have a meeting, one of the cluster meetings, most of us were*
> *confused about the assessment criteria and assessment standards, especially*
> *when it came to grade eleven and grade twelve. When it came to tasks as well*
> *because we had assessment criteria to follow during classwork and we had*
> *a task…so in that way it became a real issue because we couldn't do all of*
> *these things but there was a lot of encouragement with our cluster group*
> *and that's where we discussed it and were assisted and found easier ways*
> *in which we could actually achieve our assessment standards.*

Teachers indicated that the revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) came with new assessment strategies that they had to implement, which was different from what they were used to doing previously, as revealed by Mr Mhlongo when he said that:

> *It was the first time using the rubric, I used to use my own discretion when*
> *marking learners work, that the child deserves a twenty nine and that child*
> *deserves a twenty five, but now we are using a rubric, therefore I have to*
> *share and even to portray my problem and say this is my problem at school,*
> *how did you solve it?*

Teachers also indicated that clusters also helped them with assessment activities that they can give to learners. Some of the teachers from under-resourced schools mentioned that being in clusters helped them with assessment because they shared material and this meant that they could now give their learners a variety of material, for both classwork and homework, as mentioned by Mrs Zikhali below:

> *Through this information from clusters, we develop professionally, as we are able*
> *to do everything, to give learners practical work to do at home as homework*
> *and even to do as classwork exercises. Therefore this information is very*
> *important because if for instance you are coming from my school which is*

> *under-resourced I can get a lot of things such as books, textbooks and also hand-outs and even previous exam papers, because they have access to information.*

Teachers were also given feedback on how to prepare their learners so that they will know what to do in paper three by the time they were in grade twelve. Teachers were also told how the learners' marks were structured in the grade twelve final exams and where they should give their learners more emphasis in order to achieve their maximum marks.

Teachers also indicated that clusters have helped them in planning their work for the year and understanding the syllabus and knowing exactly what needed to be done and when to do it. This was seen in the following words by Mrs Preston:

> *In the beginning of the year we discuss the syllabus for the whole year...the question papers, the things we should look at concerning the academic stuff.*

This suggested that the teachers did not do their own things in schools; they were guided by the information from the clusters. Clusters helped them with their planning, because the planning for the year was discussed in the cluster meetings, this means clusters also eased the teachers workloads. When they got to their schools, they only fine-tuned their planning and went straight to teaching.

Teachers indicated that being involved in clusters helped them improve their teaching strategies. Teachers indicated that the help that they received from their colleagues in schools was not adequate for the teaching of EFAL, but general to any learning area. They mentioned that attending cluster meetings meant that they could ask questions pertaining to strategies for improving teaching and learning of certain aspects in the EFAL curriculum and the feedback that they received would be specific to EFAL, as mentioned by Mr Okeke in the following excerpt:

To get some strategies, how do they make it, how do they make their children do better in other subjects, more especially in the language.

Clusters seemed to be helping teachers with applying strategies that are up to date and relevant with the curriculum, as teachers suggested that the way things are done has changes with the introduction of the NCS, as suggested by Miss Ngwane that :

We have clusters in order to educate each other on what is being done now, as it is no longer like before.

Teachers also mentioned that when they are at the marking centres for the grade twelve final examinations they also learn new things, so they come back to the clusters and they share the new knowledge with their colleagues in the cluster groups.

Again it came up in the cluster meetings as well as some interviews that teachers are also encouraged to be professional in the cluster meetings, teachers are encouraged to be punctual, keep their files up to date and to always have the relevant material when attending cluster meetings. The teachers were also recognized as professionals and adult learners because the subject advisor encouraged them to help each other, especially the new teachers and she also gave the senior markers of the grade twelve examinations an opportunity to give feedback to their colleagues about assessment and other important things that teachers should note in teaching and assessing EFAL.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the findings of data obtained from the interviews conducted with fourteen teachers from the two clusters and the district subject advisor for English First Additional Language. Data was also collected by means of focus groups interviews, observation of the two cluster groups and document analysis. I have tried to be as

objective as possible when presenting the data collected and reported what I observed and what was obtained from the interviews conducted.

The activities that took place in the clusters were somewhat formal, as they took place within a formal setting of the clusters. The clusters were ongoing and collaborative, literature suggests that in order for teacher professional development to be considered effective it should be ongoing, collaborative and include activities that teachers as, as it is in the activities that teachers learn. The findings of this study indicated that teachers get involved in a number of activities in their cluster groups. The clusters did different activities at different times of the year; these activities were influenced by the programme that the teachers received from their subject advisor. The activities that teachers participated in revealed that teachers did learn from participating in clusters and therefore there was teacher professional development that was taking place. Teachers indicated that they learnt general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, subject matter knowledge and knowledge of context through the activities that they participated in in their cluster meetings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the nature of participation of English FAL teachers in clusters, what they learnt, and how their participation contributed to their professional development. The focus of the study was to answer the following three research questions:

- **What activities do English First Additional Language teachers participate in in clusters?**
- **What do English First Additional Language teachers say they learn from participating in clusters?**
- **How does English First Additional Language teacher's participation and what they learn in clusters contribute to their professional development?**

The study generated data through qualitative interviews with the teachers who belonged to two EFAL cluster groups in UMgungundlovu District, and with the subject advisor for EFAL responsible for the two clusters. Data was also obtained through document analysis of documents such as the National Curriculum Statement (2003), The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2007), National Examinations and Assessment Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination Results Part 2 (2009) and the English First Additional Language subject Policy: Grades 10 and 11. (2013).This chapter presents a discussion of the key findings in answering the questions of the study sought to address. Afterwards, the recommendations emanating from this study are presented, followed by the conclusion.

5.2 Discussions

Teachers in this study reported that participating in clusters benefited them, and that it did lead to their professional development. There were many similarities in what was reported by teachers in both clusters. Findings show that the two EFAL clusters that were explored in this study reflected some characteristics of professional learning communities as described by Richmond and Manokore (2010).

5.2.1 Clusters as sites of learning through collaborative participation in activities and discussion

One of the key findings of this study is that clusters acted as sites for learning for teachers through participation in a number of activities during cluster meetings. This is in line with Richmond and Manokore's (2010, p. 545) view of professional learning communities which they define as ―a group of teachers who meet regularly with a common set of teaching and learning goals, shared responsibilities for work to be undertaken and collaborative development of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as a result of the gatherings.‖ Teachers in the two clusters worked collaboratively on discussing issues pertaining to their professional practice.

Teachers worked collaboratively and learnt during the moderation of learner's written and oral work. Teachers indicated that they also got exposed to having an in-depth understanding of the assessment standards and rubrics used in their phases during the moderation process. This was because they needed to know exactly what they were assessing and how they needed to assess it. Teachers also indicated that they set and moderated learners' quarterly examinations and tests in their respective cluster groups. They indicated that this activity gave them an opportunity to understand the different

121

assessment standards and the use of the rubrics of different assessment standards. Teachers also indicated that setting of these examinations and tests also meant that they had to have an understanding of the different contexts in which their colleagues were working in as well as PCK and sound subject matter knowledge of EFAL.

Teachers indicated that they also discussed and learnt more about the curriculum and issues relevant to the teaching of EFAL. Although it came up that there were no sessions that were only about the curriculum discussions, teachers indicated that the discussions on curriculum issues came up when teachers asked about them and then they were discussed. But they indicated that this was helpful as they learnt from such discussions. These discussions were in accordance with (Grossman et al., 2001, cited in Richmond and Manokore, 2010, p. 558) who argue that the main aim of PLC's is to ―provide opportunities for teacher learning." Teachers also indicated that they also learnt how to use different teaching methods in their cluster meetings. This was especially done in the meetings at the beginning of the year when all the clusters had a joint meeting.

The observations and interviews that were conducted produced findings that indicated that indeed teachers did learn from participating in PLC's, in the case of this study, the cluster groups. Teachers indicated that they were involved in a number of activities in their cluster groups during the course of the year, and that they learnt a lot through participating in collaborative activities and discussions with each other. This concurred with what Liebermann and Mace (2008) say about teacher learning, that it is a social activity and that teachers learn better when they learnt in the company of others and through practice and experience.

5.2.2 Clusters as professional communities

The teachers in this study indicated that they were more comfortable with asking curriculum related questions from other cluster members because they felt that they would not be judged by other members because they all have the same goals, that of improving teacher practice and learner performance. This was in accordance with what Richmond and Manokore (2010) call a professional community, they maintain that when teachers are able to voice out what they did not know in the company of other members of a PLC, it meant that they were comfortable with the other members and they viewed themselves as members of a learning community as well.

Richmond and Manokore (2010, p. 559) also state that PLC's are characterised by participants who ―share a common vision and learn from each other". The teachers in this study indicated that they learnt a variety of things in clusters. Such as using different methods of teaching certain aspects of the curriculum and about knowing the context in which the teachers work. This makes the EFAL clusters a professional learning community because it is also characterised by a group of teachers with the same vision of learning in order to improve their practice.

Teachers demonstrated that they have the same vision for teaching and learning through the activities and discussions that took place in their cluster meetings. This was in accordance with Lieberman and Mace (2008) who maintain that people learn through their interaction with others by observing and being involved in activities. Teachers discussed the importance of teachers planning together within a school and creating a working framework that will involve all EFAL teachers within their schools. They discussed that including everyone in the planning will make teachers work more effective

and efficient. This was in accordance with Garet et al (2001) who maintain that the importance of ongoing interaction with peers is an important feature of teacher professional development. Teachers also discussed how they could make learners learn the language and decrease some grammatical errors that they always make. Teachers were also encouraged to increase the learners' use of the language by speaking to them in English.

5.2.3 Participation in clusters developed teachers' confidence in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and practices

Another important feature of PLC's according to Richmond and Manokore (2010, p. 561) is that teachers gain confidence in Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, and Practices in PLC's. The teachers in this study indicated that they have gained confidence in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and practice through their interactions with their colleagues and exchanging of knowledge and information in their clusters. An example of this is the exchanging of teaching methods of different concepts that teachers indicated take place during their cluster meetings. They also indicated that such discussions helped them gain confidence in delivering different aspects of the curriculum to their learners.

Another finding of this study indicated that teachers learnt different kinds of knowledge in line with Grossman's (1990) categories of teacher knowledge. For example, their Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) was enhanced through their discussions of the English First Additional Language Curriculum. This was in accordance with Richmond and Manokore's (2010) view of professional learning communities that teachers meet regularly with the aim of learning from each other, sharing responsibilities and

collaborative development of pedagogical content knowledge. Newman and Wehlage, (1995) (as cited in Stoll et al., 2006, p. 227) also maintain that teachers develop their curriculum knowledge through their interactions with peers in professional learning communities. It was also observed and brought up by the teachers that most of the discussions on curriculum issues pursued if teachers had questions themselves about certain issues, although the subject advisor did bring the teachers attention to some issues at times

Teachers also indicated that they learnt subject matter knowledge which was relevant to EFAL. They stated that clusters helped them in this regard because if they were not cluster members they would probably ask their HoD's for clarity on things they were not sure of. And they would share knowledge with other teachers who were not EFAL teachers, and the knowledge and information received would most likely not be relevant and up-to-date EFAL information and knowledge.

Teachers also indicated that being members of clusters helped them expand their knowledge of the context. Teachers indicated that such knowledge was enhanced when they were discussing leaners with problems and they needed to know more about the leaner and their background. The teachers indicated that they learnt the importance of the context in which they were working in problem solving and looking at other issues of teacher practice. After discussing the learner's background, the teachers indicated that the colleagues would discuss means of helping the learners or strategies that other teachers had tried in dealing with similar problems. In this way, one teacher's problem would become other teacher's opportunity for learning.

They indicated that they set common examination papers to be written in their schools in order to have uniformity and to ensure that learners were doing the same work and that

they were all on the same level. Teachers also understood the importance of knowing the context in which they work and the context of their colleagues workplaces when setting termly tests for their cluster groups. The other cluster in the study had teachers of mixed race and teachers from diverse schools, so teachers setting tests needed to take cognisance of the different contexts when setting papers.This was beneficial to the teachers as they had to have a sound subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of context in which their colleagues worked in (Grossman, 1990).

Teachers also indicated that they also learnt about how to teach certain sections of the curriculum through discussions in the cluster meetings. Shulman (1986 a) (as cited in Grossman, 1990, p. 7) maintain that PCK also involves the understanding of ―the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations and demonstrations.‖ The teachers learnt to use the latter through collaboratively participating in the cluster. Teachers also mentioned that being members of the EFAL cluster helped improve using different teaching methods on different sections of the curriculum.

Another key finding of the study is that teachers learnt subject matter knowledge (Grossman, 1990) through participating in clusters. Teachers voiced out that sometimes a teacher would feel that his or her learners were not doing well in a certain section of the curriculum and he or she would go to the cluster and discuss this with their colleagues and sometimes the colleagues would suggest that the teacher uses a different method to teach and other teachers would share the methods they have used to teach certain sections. This was in accordance with what Grossman (1990) calls substantive structure knowledge, who argues that subject matter knowledge can be further subdivided into two categories, namely substantive and syntactic structures. Grossman (1990, p. 6) states that ―Substantive structure is when a teacher has a deep knowledge of the subject that he or

she can relate the themes and concepts and be able to teach them in a more meaningful way". The teachers indicated that these discussions with their colleagues helped them and improved their teaching methods and skills. Richmond and Manokore (2010) also maintain that when teachers interacted with their peers, they gained confidence and improved in their subject matter knowledge, as indicated by the teachers in this study.

Another key finding of this study is that teachers learnt General Pedagogical Knowledge (GPK) in their clusters. The teachers indicated that cluster meetings also helped them learn some effective ways of teaching certain sections of their work such as group instruction. What teachers learnt here was an example of what Grossman (1990) called small group instruction skills. It is the additional skills and knowledge that teachers need to learn, besides knowledge of the subject matter and pedagogy. This was evidence that teachers learnt through the interactions and discussions with their colleagues.

5.2.4 Some level of accountability but little sustainability

Richmond and Manokore (2010) also highlight other elements of PLC's which are accountability and sustainability. They maintain that members of a PLC become accountable to each other. Firstly, because they need to go back to their PLC and provide feedback about their practice, they always feel that they are accountable to each other and therefore need to deliver their curriculum. Although this is not teacher professional development, teachers in this study indicated that they were accountable to each other for keeping their teacher files up to date, because when it came to the end of the year, the external moderators took any teachers' file and they used it to evaluate all other teachers' files in the cluster. If the chosen file did not have any work, that meant all the teachers in that cluster had not done the work.

Secondly, all teachers were accountable to deliver the policies and the curriculum that has been given to them by the department of education. Another element of PLC that they talk about is sustainability. Richmond and Manokore (2010) maintain that sustaining PLC's can sometimes have challenges, for example they state that PLC's need involvement of external expert, such as the departmental facilitator as teachers may not feel skilful or responsible enough to keep the PLC's active. Perhaps this is the reason the DoE has the EFAL subject advisor as the main driving force behind the clusters in UMgungundlovu District. A significant challenge in this study was that the clusters did not have the same teachers since their inception. The teachers only became members of clusters if they were teaching EFAL in that particular year. This means clusters did not always have the same members, so it was not always easy to maintain sustainability. However, the clusters were able to maintain accountability for the period of a year because that is the period that each teacher was mostly certain to be a member of the cluster, and therefore be accountable to their colleagues for the year in which they were cluster members.

5.3 Recommendations

The emerged findings discussed in the previous section motivated and influenced this study to present the following recommendations for effective teacher professional development through professional learning communities.

From the literature that I read in this study and the data collected, I have established that cluster meetings have a positive impact in the professional development of EFAL teachers. However, the process of professional learning communities needs to be given more attention as an effective form of teacher professional development in all phases of basic education. This could be achieved by having a controlled programme of

professional learning communities for all phases as literature suggest that professional learning communities need to have leaders and be guided by the departmental policies and guidelines in order to operate more effectively. Teachers mentioned that they needed more involvement of the subject advisor in their meetings because her involvement would bring more insight into the meetings and teacher development. However, due to the fact that she was the only EFAL subject advisor in uMgungundlovu District, she was not able to be more hands-on in all cluster meetings. This study recommends that the department should look into employing more EFAL subject advisors in order to make the cluster meetings more effective and the subject advisors present in more cluster meetings.

Teachers indicated that clusters were also beneficial to their learners because teachers could share resources. This study recommends that clusters should be structured in a way that each cluster group should have a more resourced school within it. There are many schools that lack resources and learners lose out on important information because of a lack of resources. Having a resourced school in each cluster would make teachers share useful resources, benefit learners and improve learners' performance.

Some teachers indicated that clusters were not serving their purpose of developing them as they spent most of their time in the clusters moderating learner's scripts. The department should review the functionality of clusters and the allocation of activities and time in the clusters and perhaps set different dates for more teacher learning activities and other dates for the moderation of learners' work.

5.4 Conclusion

This study tried to understand activities that teachers participated in in clusters, what they learnt, and the extent to which they felt their participation led to their professional development. The findings show that teachers learnt through collaborative participation in activities and discussions with their colleagues who are other EFAL teachers and members of clusters. These activities were activities that were pre-planned by the EFAL subject advisor. The teachers did not plan their activities. The use of the relevant documents such as the marking rubric and the curriculum during the discussions also helped teachers to learn, as they had to assess learners work using the assessment criteria from the DoE. Teachers reported learning general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of context and subject matter knowledge by being involved in cluster groups.

The data collected also indicated that teachers learn better when they learn in a professional learning community. Some of the teachers interviewed mentioned that teaching has always been an individual activity and being members of clusters has helped them in their work as teachers. Being members of clusters has helped them because they are able to share relevant and up-to-date information with their colleagues, they can ask question when they do not understand issues or aspects of their work. Teachers demonstrated that there was a certain level of family- hood that they have established as cluster members. This has made them more comfortable to discuss their challenges and ask questions from each other. Clusters also appeared to have helped increase the teachers' confidence as they are confident enough to ask questions about their work as EFAL teachers and they also indicated confidence in discussing issues and helping their colleagues. The conclusion of this study is that although EFAL clusters were mainly driven by the Department of Education, teachers who participated regarded them as

contributing to their professional development. Although they also expressed some scepticism in that clusters were sometimes used to ensure compliance with the requirements of the department of education, teachers suggested ways in which clusters could be strengthened to act as sites of learning. This highlights the need for teacher professional development initiatives to be driven by what teachers have identified as their needs rather than to have teacher development initiatives that are prescribed by the department of education.

Lastly, both the literature reviewed and the data that emerged in this study support the notion that teacher professional development can best be achieved through teachers learning in a professional learning community. It supports the social-cultural view of learning that believes that learning is a social activity that is best achieved when it happens in the company of others in a social group or professional learning community, with people with whom you share the same values, goals and vision.

REFERENCES

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

Bantwini, B. D. (2009). District professional development models as a way to introduce Primary-school teachers to natural science curriculum reforms in one district in South Africa. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 35(2), 169-182.

Barasa, F, & Mattson, E. (1998). The roles, regulation and professional development of educators in South Africa: a critical analysis of four policy documents. *Journal of Education*, 23(1), 41-72.

Bezzina, C. (2006). ―The road less travelled": Professional Communities in Secondary Schools. *Theory into Practice*. 45 (2), 159 – 167.

Borg, W., R. & Gall, M., D. (1989). Educational Research. White Plains. New York: Longman.

Botha, M., L. & Reddy, C., P., S. (2011). In-service teacher's perspectives of pre-service teachers' knowledge domains in science. *South African Journal of Education*, 31, 257-274.

Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input. Watertown: Pathfinder International.

Bredeson, P. V. (2002). The architecture of professional development: materials, messages and meaning. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 37(8), 661-675.

Brodie, K, Lelliott, T & Davis, H. (2002). Developing learner-centred practices through the FDE programme. In Adler, J & Reed, Y. (Eds.), An investigation of take-up in South Africa: challenges of teacher development. (pp. 94-117). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Buffum, A., & Hinman, C. (2006). Professional learning communities: reigniting passion and purpose. *Leadership-Burlingame.*35 (5), 16. – 19.

Bullough, R. V., & Pinnegar, S. (2001). Guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study research. *Educational researcher*, 30(3), 13-21.

Burbank, M., D. & Kauchak, D. (2003). An alternative model for professional development: Investigations into effective collaboration. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 19, 499–514.

Butler, D., L, Lauscher, H., N, Jarvis-Selinger, S & Beckingham, S. (2004). Collaboration and self-regulation in teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 20, 435–455.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (6th Ed). (2007). Research methods in education. London: Routledge.

Cohen, L., & Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2008). Research Methods in Education. (6th Ed). London: Routledge.

Collins, S., (3rd Ed). (2013). The local government handbook South Africa. A complete guide to municipalities in South Africa. Mowbray: Yes! Media.

Craft, A. (1996). Continuing professional development: A practical guide for teachers and schools. London: Routledge.

Cross, M., Mungadi, R. & Rouhani, S. (2002) From Policy to Practice: Curriculum reform in South African education, *Comparative Education*, 38(2), 171-187, DOI: 10.1080/03050060220140566.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st-century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 300-314.

Darke, P. et al. (1998). Successfully completing case study research: combining rigour, relevance and pragmatism. *Information Systems Journal*. 8, 273-289.

Day, C. (1999). Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning. London: Falmer Press.

Day, C and Sachs, J. (2004). International handbook of the continuing professional development of teachers. England: Open University Press.

Day, C., & Sachs, J. (2004). Professionalism, performativity and empowerment: discourses in the politics, policies and purposes of continuing professional development. Macquarie University Research .Online.

Dichaba, M., M & Matseliso L. Mokhele, M., L. (2013). Does the cascade model work for teacher training? analysis of teachers' experiences. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*. 4(3), 249-254.

Department of Education. (2003). National Curriculum Statement: Grades 10 – 12. (General) Languages Generic First Additional Language. Pretoria: Government Press.

Department of Education. (2007). Government Gazette. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa. Pretoria: Government Press.

Department of Education. (2008). Moderate assessment: A module of the Advanced Certificate in Education. School Management and Leadership. Pretoria: Government Press.

Department of Education. KwaZulu-Natal. (2009). Cluster co-ordinator's Handbook. Guidelines and documents for grade 12 cluster moderation of oral and CASS: English First Additional Language. Pietermaritzburg: Government Printer.

Department of Education. (2009). National Examinations and Assessment Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination Results Part 2.Pretoria: Government Press.

Department of Basic Education. (2011) Guidelines on the Organisation Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts: ―Better districts, better quality". Pretoria: Government Press.

Department of Education. (2013). Communications & Publications. Pretoria: Government Press.

Department of Education. English First   Additional Language subject Policy: Grades 10 &11. 2013. Pretoria: Government Press.

Denzin, N., K, & Lincoln, Y., S. (Eds). (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. London: Sage.

Denzin, N., K., & Lincoln, Y., S. (Eds.). (2002). The qualitative inquiry reader. Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2013). Strategies of qualitative inquiry. California: SAGE Publications.

Devers, J. K., & Frankel, R. (2000). Study Design in Qualitative Research—2: Sampling and Data Collection Strategies. Retrieved from http://educationforhealth. *(Accessed 04 Sept 2012).*

DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, 40(4), 314-321.

Driel, J., H, Beijaard, D & Verloop, N. (2001). Professional development and reform in science education: The role of teachers' practical knowledge. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 38(2), 137-158.

Fareo, D., O. (2013). Professional development of teachers in Africa: a case study of Nigeria. *The African Symposium. An Online Journal of the African Educational Research Network.* 13 (1), 63-68.

Fishman, B., J, Marx, R., W, Best, S & Tal, R., T. (2003). Linking teacher and student learning to improve professional development in systemic reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 19, 643–658.

Fullan, M. & Stiegelbauer, S. (1991). The new meaning of educational change. London: Cassell.

Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (Eds) (1992) Teacher development and educational change. London: Falmer Press

Fullan, M. (1993). Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform. London: Falmer Press.

Garet, M. S., Porter, A. C., Desimone, L., Birman, B. F., & Yoon, K. S. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 915-945.

George, A., L & Bennett, A. (2004). Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Greeno, J. G., Collins, A & Resnick, L., B (1996). Cognition and learning: A Handbook of Educational Psychology. New York: Simon and Shuster.

Grossman, P., L. (1990). The making of a teacher: Teacher knowledge and teacher education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Grossman, P., L, Wilson, S., M., & Shulman, L., S. (1989). Teachers of substance: Subject matter knowledge for teaching. In M. Reynolds. (Ed). The knowledge base for beginning teachers. (pp 23 – 36). New York: Pergamon.

Hara, N. (Ed). (2009). Communities of practice: Fostering peer-to-peer learning and informal knowledge sharing in the work place. Berlin: Springer.

Harley, K., & Wedekind, V. (2004). Political change, curriculum change and social formation, 1990 to 2002. Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa, 195-220.

Hatch J, A. (2002). Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings. New York: State University of New York Press.

Henderson, C & Leavitt, P. (2002). Communities of Practice: A guide for your journey to knowledge management best practices. USA: American productivity & quality centre.

Hennink, M, Hutter, I & Bailey A. (2011) Qualitative research methods. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Hoepfl, M. C. (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers. Journal of Technology Education, 9(1), 47-63.

Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.

Jackson, G. (Ed.). (1987). Inset in South Africa: issues and directions. Teacher Opportunity Programmes.

Jita, L. C & Ndlalane T.C. (2009). Teacher clusters in South Africa: Opportunities and constraints for teacher development and change. *Perspectives in Education*. 27(1), 58 – 68.

Jita, L., C & Mokhele, M., L. (2014). When teacher clusters work: selected experiences of South African teachers with the cluster approach to professional development. *South African Journal of Education; 34(2,)* 1-15.

Kaartinen, S. (2009). Meaningfulness via participation: Sociocultural practices for teacher learning and development. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice.* 15(5), 601-616.

Kelly, P. (2006). What is teacher learning? A socio-cultural perspective. *Oxford Review of Education*. 32 (4), 505 -509.

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

King, N. (1994). The qualitative research interview. In Cassel, C. & Symon, G. (Ed). Qualitative methods in organizational research: A practical guide. (pp. 253). London: Sage Publications.

Kitzinger, J. (1995). Qualitative research: introducing focus groups. *British Medical Journal,* 311, 299-302.

Khosa, G. (Ed). (2013). Systemic school improvement in South Africa: some practical lessons from development practitioners. Johannesburg: African Minds for JET education services.

Knight, P. (2001). A systemic approach to professional development: Learning as practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education.* 18, 229-241.

Kohlbacher, F. (2006). The use of qualitative content analysis in case study research. Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 7(1), 1-30. Retrieved from: http://nbn-resolving.de/urn: ubn: de: 0114fqs0601211.

Kwakman, K. (2003). Factors affecting teachers' participation in professional learning activities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19 (2), 149-170.

Lave, J. (1991). Situating learning in communities of practice. *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition*, *2*, 63-82.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice. Retrieved June, 9, 2008.

Lichtman, M. (2013). Qualitative research in education: a user's guide. Los Angeles: Sage publications.

Lieberman, A., & Pointer Mace, D., H. (2008). Teacher learning: The key to educational reform. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(3), 226-234.

Lieberman, A., & Pointer-Mace, D. (2009). Making practice public: Teacher learning in the 21st century. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 20(10), 1-12.

Ling, L. M., & MacKenzie, N. (2001). The professional development of teachers in Australia. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 24(2), 87-98.

Lisa A. Guion, David C. Diehl, and Debra McDonald. (2011). Triangulation: Establishing the Validity of Qualitative Literature. *Journal of Educational Change*. 7 (4), 221-258.

Little, J., W. (1993). Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 15(2), 129-151.

Mohamed, H. (2009). Challenges and prospects for improving teacher education and development through the National Policy Framework on Teachers Education and Development. *Africa Education Review*. 6(1), 159 – 173.

Maree, K. (2007). First steps in research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Maxwell, J, A (1998). – Designing a qualitative study. Retrieved from:http//:www.corwin.com.

Mays, T. (2002). *The National Professional Diploma in Education*. Pretoria.

Merriam, S, B. (2002). Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis. San Francisco: Jossey –Bass:

Merriam, S, B. (1995). Theory to practice: what can you tell from an N of 1? Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. PAACE *Journal of Lifelong Learning*. 4, 51-60.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded

sourcebook. California: Sage Publications.

Mukeredzi, T. G. (2013). Professional development through teacher roles: Conceptions of professionally unqualified teachers in rural South Africa and Zimbabwe. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 28(11), 1-16. Retrieved from http://jrre.psu.edu/articles/28-11.

Ngcobo, G. (2012, October, 24). Pupil abducted, slain. The Witness.

Ono, Y., & Ferreira, J. (2010). A case study of continuing teacher professional development through lesson study in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 30(1), 59-74.

Onwu, G. O., & Mogari, D. (2004). Professional development for outcomes-based education curriculum implementation: the case of UNIVEMALASHI, South Africa. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 30(2), 161-177.

Pretorius, F. & Lemmer, E.M. (1998) South African education and training: transition in a democratic era. Randburg: Hodder & Stoughton.

Putnam, R., T. & Borko, H. (2000). What do new views of knowledge and thinking have to say about research on teacher learning? *Educational Researcher*, 29(1), 4-15.

Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society.* 63, 655–660.

Remenyi, D. (2013).Case study research: The quick guide series. United Kingdom: Academic Publishing International Limited.

Richmond, G., & Manokore, V. (2010). Identifying elements critical for functional and sustainable professional learning communities. *Science Education*, Vol. *95*(3), 543-570.

Ritchie, J., &Lewis, J. (Ed). (2003). Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers. London: Sage Publications.

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C., M., N., & Ormston, R. (2014). Qualitative research practice. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Roelandt, T. J., & Den Hertog, P. (1999). Cluster analysis and cluster-based policy making in OECD countries: an introduction to the theme. *Boosting innovation: The cluster approach*, 9-23.

Rogan, J. M., & Grayson, D. J. (2003). Towards a theory of curriculum implementation with particular reference to science education in developing countries. *International Journal of Science Education*, 25(10), 1171-1204.

Rossman, G., B, & Rallis, S., F. (2012). Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research. (3rd Ed). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Rowley, J. (2002). Using case studies in research. *Management Research News*, 25(1), 16 - 27.

Sandholtz, J., H. (2002). In-service training or professional development: contrasting opportunities in a school/university partnership. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 18, 815–830.

Savenye, W. C., & Robinson, R. S. (2005). Using qualitative research methods in higher education. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 16(2), 65-95.

Sayed, Y. (2004). The case of teacher education in post-apartheid South Africa: Politics and priorities. In Chisholm, L (Ed). Changing class: education and social change in Post-apartheid South Africa. Cape Town: HSRC, pp 247-266.

Schuck, S., Aubusson, P., & Buchanan, J. (2008). Enhancing teacher education practice through professional learning conversations. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 31(2), 215-227.

Schuck, S., & Russell, T. (2005). Self-study, critical friendship, and the complexities of teacher education. *Studying Teacher Education.* 1(2), 107-121.

Schuck, S & Segal, G. (2002). Learning about our teaching from our graduates, learning about our learning with critical friends. In Loughran, J. & Russell, T, (Eds). Improving teacher education practices through self-study, pp 88-101. London: Routledge.

Segall, A. (2004). Revisiting pedagogical content knowledge: The pedagogy of content/the content of pedagogy. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 489-504.

Sherman, R. R., & Webb, R. B. (Eds.). (2001). Qualitative research in education: Focus and methods. London: Falmer Press.

Showers, B., & Joyce, B. (1996). The evolution of peer coaching. *Educational Leadership*, 54 (3), 12-16.

Shulman, L. S. (1986 a). Paradigms and research programs in the study of teaching: A contemporary perspective. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching (pp. 3-36). New York: Macmillan.

Shulman, L., S. (1986 b). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.

Shulman, L., S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1-23.

Smyth, J & Shacklock, G. (2003). Teachers doing their economic work. London: Routledge.

Sparks, D., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (1989). Five models of staff development for teachers. *Journal of Staff Development*, 10(4), 40-57.

Spreen, C., A. & Vally, S. (2010) Outcomes based education and its (dis)contents: Learner centered pedagogy and the education crisis in South Africa. *Southern African Review of Education,* 16(1): 39 58.

Stake, R., E. (1995). The art of case study. California: Sage Publications.

Steyn, G, M. (2011). Continuing professional development in South African schools: Staff perceptions and the role of principals. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 28(1), 43-53.

Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006). Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change*, 7(4), 221-258.

Umalusi Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training. Retrieved from http://www.umalusi.org.za.

Villegas-Reimers, E. (2003). Teacher professional development: *An international review of the literature.* International Institute for Educational Planning. Paris: UNESCO.

Vockell, E. L., & Asher, J. W. (1995). *Educational research*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill.

Wedell, M. (2005). Cascading training down into the classroom: The need for parallel planning. International Journal of Educational Development. 25, 637–651.

Welsch, T. (2002). Teacher education in South Africa, before, during and after the Apartheid: an overview. In Adler, J & Reed, Y. (Eds.), An investigation of take-up in South Africa: challenges of teacher development. (pp. 17-35). Pretoria: van Schaik Publishers.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of Practice: learning, meaning and identity, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wermke, W. (2011) Continuing professional development in context: teachers' continuing professional development culture in Germany and Sweden. *Professional Development in Education*, 37(5), 665-683, DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2010.533573

Whittesmore, R, Chase, S., K & Mandle, C., L. (2001) Pearls, pith and provocation: validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*. 11(4), 522-537.

Woods, P. (1999). Successful writing for qualitative researchers. London: Routledge

Woods, P. (2006). Successful writing for qualitative researchers. London: Routledge.

Xu, J. (2003). Promoting school-centered professional development through teaching portfolios: a case study. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54 (4), 347-361.

Yin, R., K, (3rd Ed). (2003). Case study research: Design and methods. California: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A-K: **APPENDIX A**

19 September 2010

Miss N Z Nohiya
P O Box 2228
PIETERMARITZBURG
3200

Dear Miss Nohiya

PROTOCOL: An investigation into the effectiveness of clusters in contributing to the professional development of English First Additional Language teachers in the UMgungundlovu District
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/1086 /2010 M: Faculty of Education

In response to your application dated 10 September 2010, Student Number: **982207327** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL.**

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

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

Yours faithfully

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: N Mthiyane (Supervisor)
cc: Mr. N Memela

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood   ■ Howard College   ■ Medical School   ■ Pietermaritzburg   ■ Westville

kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

NOLWAZI Z. NOHIYA
PO BOX 2228
PIETERMARITZBURG
3200

Enquiries:	Sibusiso Alwar
Date:	27/09/2010
Reference:	0093/2010

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CLUSTERS IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN UMGUNGUNDLOVU.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research at the departmental institutions has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. The Departmental officials are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.

2. Departmental officials should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.

3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.

4. Work programmes are not to be interrupted.

5. The investigation is to be conducted from 27 September 2010 to 27 September 2011.

6. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey please contact Mr Sibusiso Alwar at the contact numbers above.

7. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal of the school where the intended research is to be conducted.

8. Your research will be limited to the province of KwaZulu Natal

9. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Resource Planning.

10. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL : Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: Office G25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Metropolitan Building, PIETERMARITZBURG 3201

TEL : Tel: +27 33 341 8610/8611 | Fax: +27 33 341 8612 | E-mail: sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za / smiso.sikhakhane@kzndoe.gov.za

The Director: Resource Planning
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3200

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards

R. Cassius Lubisi (PhD)
Superintendent-General

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL :   Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: Office G25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Metropolitan Building, PIETERMARITZBURG 3201

TEL: Tel: +27 33 341 8610/8611 | Fax: +27 33 341 8612 | E-mail: sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za / smiso.sikhakhane@kzndoe.gov.za

APPENDIX C

kzn education
Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

NOLWAZI Z. NOHIYA
PO BOX 2228
PIETERMARITZBURG
3200

Enquiries:	Sibusiso Alwar
Date:	27/09/2010
Reference:	0092/2010

PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW LEARNERS, EDUCATORS AND DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS

The above matter refers.

Permission is hereby granted to interview Departmental Officials in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal subject to the following conditions:

1. You make all the arrangements concerning your interviews.
2. Work programmes are not interrupted.
3. Departmental officials are not to be identifiable in any way from the results of the interviews.
4. Your interviews are limited only to the province of KwaZulu Natal
5. A brief summary of the interview content, findings and recommendations is provided to my office.
6. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers and principals of schools where the intended interviews are to be conducted.

The KZN Department of education fully supports your commitment to research: **An investigation into the effectiveness of clusters in contributing to the professional development of English first additional language teachers in uMgungundlovu.**

It is hoped that you will find the above in order.

Best Wishes

R Cassius Lubisi, (PhD)
Superintendent-General

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

12 July 2010

Dear Mrs N. Mzila

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Nolwazi Nohiya, I am currently doing a Masters Degree in Education at the above mentioned university. I need to do a research project, in partial fulfilment of my degree.

The aim of this project is to understand the activities that teachers engage in, in cluster meetings and how these activities contribute to their Professional development. The project is supervised by Dr Nonhlanhla Mthiyane (Tel: 033- 260 6131), a lecturer at the School of Education and Development, UKZN. You can contact her if you need further clarification on this.

I hereby request your permission to conduct my study with one of the cluster groups that you supervise. I will use the following methods to collect data: individual interviews, group interviews and sitting in on their meetings, just to get a sense of how they run the cluster. The data will be used in my research report.

Please note that the teacher's participation in this project is voluntary. They will be free to withdraw from the project at any stage, should they wish to do so. I would also like to assure you of the strict confidentiality of the data, I will use pseudonyms in writing up the project.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

Nolwazi Nohiya
Researcher

APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

12 July 2010

Dear _____

My name is Nolwazi Nohiya, I am currently doing a Masters Degree in Education at the above mentioned university. I need to do a research project, in partial fulfilment of my degree.

The aim of this project is to understand the activities that teachers engage in, in cluster meetings and how these activities contribute to their Professional development. The project is supervised by Dr Nonhlanhla Mthiyane (Tel: 033- 260 6131), a lecturer at the School of Education and Development, UKZN.

I would like to request that you participate in my project as a member of the English First Additional Language Cluster. I request your permission to record the interview in writing, tape recorder and video. I would like to use the following methods of data collection: individual interviews, group interviews and observations. The data will be used in my research report.

Please note that your participation in this project is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the project at any stage, should you wish to do so. I would also like to assure you of the strict confidentiality of the data, I will use pseudonyms in writing up the project.

If you agree to participate, kindly sign the consent form below. I will contact you for the exact date of the interview.

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

I understand that I am free to leave /withdraw from the project at any stage, if I want to.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

Yours Faithfully

Nolwazi Nohiya
Researcher

School of Education and Development
Faculty of Education

Postal Address: Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)33 260 5368   Facsimile: +27 (0)33 260 5080   Email: public@ukzn.ac.za   Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood   ■ Howard College   ■ Medical School   ■ Pietermaritzburg   ■ Westville

APPENDIX F

Individual Interview Schedule for English First Additional Language Teachers

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What are your qualifications?
3. What grade do you teach?
4. What is your position at school?
5. What do you understand by the term professional development?
6. How is it important in your career as a teacher?
7. How long have you been a member of a cluster group?
8. How did you become a cluster member?
9. How does one become a member of a cluster group?
10. How often do you meet as a cluster group?
11. Is this time enough?
12. Where do you meet as a cluster group?
13. How long do your meetings usually take?
14. Can you tell me the aim of having cluster groups?
15. What do you do in clusters?
16. What do you normally talk about in clusters?
17. Do you learn anything from being a cluster member?
18. What exactly do you learn in clusters?
19. How do you use the information that you have learnt in cluster meetings in your practice as a teacher?
20. What documents do you bring to the cluster meetings?
21. What other resources do you use in clusters?
22. Who decides what will be discussed in the cluster meeting?
23. Do you have a programme that you follow for the whole year?

24. When and where do you get the year programme?

25. Does the cluster have a leader?

26. How was the leader chosen?

27. How long has he/she been a leader?

28. What duties does the leader perform?

29. What roles do other cluster members play in the cluster group?

30. Who chairs the meetings?

31. What challenges do you encounter in clusters?

32. Does the subject advisor attend your meetings?

33. How often does she attend the meetings?

34. How does her presence benefit you?

35. What do you think will make clusters more effective?

Thank you!

Focus Group Interview Schedule for English First Additional Language Teachers

1. How did you become cluster members?
2. How many teachers can become cluster members from one school?
3. How do you choose which cluster you want to belong to?
4. What is the aim of clusters?
5. How often do you meet as a cluster group?
6. Is this enough time for the things that you do in clusters?
7. Do you always meet at the same venue?
8. What do you do in your meetings?
9. How do you decide what will be on the agenda for your cluster meetings?
10. What documents do you bring to your cluster meetings?
11. What other resources do you bring to cluster meetings?
12. What do you do during your cluster meetings?
13. What do you talk about?
14. How do you implement the things that you talk about or do in clusters in your work at school?
15. What role does the subject advisor play in your cluster meetings?
16. Do you have leaders in clusters?
17. How is the leader chosen, what criteria do you use to?
18. What roles does the leader play?
19. What roles do other teachers play in the cluster meetings?
20. What do you understand by professional development?
21. Are clusters part of professional development, how?
22. Do you share any other problems that you encounter in your schools during your cluster meetings?
23. What challenges do you encounter in your cluster meetings?

Thank You!

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE OF MARKING RUBRIC FOR AN ESSAY

RUBRICS FOR WRITING

ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE RUBRIC
NSC
SECTION A: ESSAY
50 MARKS

LANGUAGE

	Outstanding — Code 7: 80 – 100%	Meritorious — Code 6: 70 – 79%	Substantial — Code 5: 60 – 69%	Adequate — Code 4: 50 – 59%	Moderate — Code 3: 40 – 49%	Elementary — Code 2: 30 – 39%	Not achieved — Code 1: 00 – 29%
LANGUAGE	• Language, punctuation effectively used. Uses figurative language appropriately. • Choice of words highly appropriate. • Sentences, paragraphs coherently constructed. • Style, tone, register highly suited to topic. • Text virtually error-free following proof-reading, editing. • Length in accordance with requirements of topic.	• Language, punctuation correct, and able to include figurative language correctly. • Choice of words varied and correctly used. • Sentences, paragraphs logical, varied. • Style, tone, register appropriately suited to topic. • Text largely error-free following proof-reading, editing. • Length correct.	• Language and punctuation mostly correct. • Choice of words suited to text. • Sentences, paragraphs well constructed. • Style, tone, register suited to topic in most of the essay. • Text by and large error-free following proof-reading, editing. • Length correct.	• Language simplistic, punctuation adequate. • Choice of words adequate. • Sentences, paragraphing might be faulty in places but essay still makes sense. • Style, tone, register generally consistent with topic requirements. • Text still contains errors following proof-reading, editing. • Length correct.	• Language ordinary and punctuation often inaccurately used. • Choice of words basic. • Sentences, paragraphs, faulty but ideas can be understood. • Style, tone, register lacking in coherence. • Text contains several errors following proof-reading, editing. • Length – too long / short.	• Language and punctuation flawed. • Choice of words limited. • Sentences, paragraphs constructed at an elementary level. • Style, tone, register inappropriate. • Text error-ridden despite proof-reading, editing. • Length – too long / short.	• Language and punctuation seriously flawed. • Choice of words inappropriate. • Sentences, paragraphs muddled, inconsistent. • Style, tone, register flawed in all aspects. • Text error-ridden and confused following proof-reading, editing. • Length – far too long / short

CONTENT

		Outstanding	Meritorious	Substantial	Adequate	Moderate
Outstanding • Content shows impressive insight into topic. • Ideas: thought-provoking, mature. • Coherent development of topic. Vivid detail. • Critical awareness of impact of language. • Evidence of planning and/or drafting has produced virtually flawless, presentable essay.	Code 7 80-100%	40 – 50	38 – 42	35 – 39		
Meritorious • Content shows thorough interpretation of topic. • Ideas: imaginative, interesting. • Logical development of details. Coherent. • Critical awareness of impact of language. • Evidence of planning and/or drafting has produced a well crafted, presentable essay.	Code 6 70-79%	38 – 42	35 – 39	33 – 37	30 – 34	
Substantial • Content shows a sound interpretation of topic. • Ideas: interesting, convincing. • Several relevant details developed. • Critical awareness of language evident. • Evidence of planning and/or drafting has produced a presentable and very good essay.	Code 5 60-69%	35 – 39	33 – 37	30 – 34	28 – 32	25 – 29

xxiv

Assessment rubric grid (rotated on page). Criteria descriptors with code bands and mark ranges:

Descriptor	Code						
Adequate • Content: an adequate interpretation of topic. • Ideas: ordinary, lacking depth. • Some points, necessary details developed. • Some awareness of impact of language. • Evidence of planning and/or drafting has produced a satisfactorily presented essay.	Code 4 50-59%	30 – 34	28 – 32	25 – 29	23 – 27	20 – 24	15 – 19
Moderate • Content ordinary. Gaps in coherence. • Ideas: mostly relevant. Repetitive. • Some necessary points evident. • Limited critical language awareness. • Evidence of planning and/or drafting that has produced a moderately presentable and coherent essay.	Code 3 40-49%		25 – 29	23 – 27	20 – 24	18 – 22	03 – 17
Elementary • Content not always clear, lacks coherence. • Ideas: few ideas, often repetitive, • Sometimes off topic. General line of thought difficult to follow. • Inadequate evidence of planning/drafting. Essay not well presented.	Code 2 30-39%			20 – 24	18 – 22	15 – 19	00 – 14
Not Achieved • Content irrelevant. No coherence. • Ideas: repetitive, off topic. • Non-existent planning/drafting. Poorly presented essay.	Code 1 00-29%				15 – 19	03 – 17	

APPENDIX I

Teacher's profile

Cluster A

Name of educator	Grades taught	Highest Qualifications	Position at school	Teaching experience
Mrs Michele King	8 -12	BA Degree	Head of English	15 years
Mrs Carol Pillay	9, 11 & 12	BA Degree (English & History)	Post level one educator	20 years
Mrs Aliyah Preston	8, 9, 10, 11 & 12	BEd	Post level one educator, retired &former: HOD, Deputy Principal & Principal	32 years
Mr Emmanuel Okeke	10,11 & 12	Honours (Policy & Development)	Post Level one	4 years

Cluster B

Name of educator	Grades taught	Highest Qualifications	Position at school	Teaching experience
Mrs Nomali Zikhali	Grade 11	BEd (Bachelor of Education)	Post Level one	30 years
Mr Sboniso Nzama	Grade 12	BA and HDE	Post level one	13 years
Miss Nomzamo Mbona	Grade 9 & 10	Diploma in Education	Post level one	12 years
Miss Thandi Zaca	Grade 9 & 11	BA & PGCE	Post level one	9 years
Mr Bheki Mhlongo	Grade 11	B.Ed.	Post level one	17 years
Mrs Lindiwe Xaba	Grade 10	STD	Post level one	29 years
Mrs Dudu Nombewu	Grade 8 & 12	BEd	Post level one	20 years
Mr Sizwile Zondo	Grade 9 & 10	B.Ed.	Post level one	21 years
Mr Bongani Maphanga	Grade 12	B.Ed.	Post level one	8 years
Miss Nomvelo Ngwane	Grade 10	JSTD (Junior Secondary Teachers Diploma)	Post level one	31 years

APPENDIX J

BARRETT'S TAXONOMY

Note: This is a summary of the main aspects of Barrett's Taxonomy.

1. (LOWEST) LITERAL

   Learners identify information stated directly in the passage e.g. names of characters, places, times, etc.

2. REORGANIZATION

   Learners organize or order the information in a different way than it was presented e.g. organizing persons, things, places into groups, etc.

3. INFERENCE

   Learners use information from the passage and their own experience to interpret possible outcomes, e.g. interpreting cause and effect, interpreting literal meanings from figurative language, conjecturing about what might or will happen when no explicit statements are included in the text etc.

4. EVALUATION

   Learners make judgment in light of the evidence in the passage e.g. judgments of facts and opinion, judgments of worth, desirability, acceptability (decisions of good, bad, right, wrong) etc.

5. (HIGHEST) APPRECIATION

   Leaners give an emotional response to the text e.g. the author's use of language, identity or empathize with characters or incidents etc.

APPENDIX K

ORAL MODERATION: SCORE SHEET

CLUSTER CO-ORDINATOR: _____ CLUSTER: _____

SCHOOL MODERATED: _____

LEARNERS' NAME	MAXIMUM MARK: 50								
	Cluster Co-ord.	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D	Teacher E	Cluster moderator's Average	School's Marks	Moderated Mark
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
Average:									

School's average of the 5 learners present: _____

Cluster moderator's average of the 5 learners present: _____

Difference: _____

Action required:	**No adjustments**	**All marks to be raised by:**	**All marks to be reduced by:**

Signature of Cluster Co-ordinator: _____

Date: _____

Note: All marks remain confidential.