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Exploring the role of Ngotsha District Teacher Development Centre in supporting teachers' professional learning

BY

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Declaration

I, Sifiso Praisegod Hlabisa, declare that the research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university. This thesis does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced. Where their exact words have been used, then their writing has been placed in italics and inside quotation marks and referenced. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source detailed in the thesis and in the reference sections.

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29 November 2018

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Supervisor's signature   Date

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my late parents Makhosazana (mother) and Mandlakayise (father) Hlabisa. I will always remember your teachings, support, guidance and unconditional love. My loving and understanding wife, Nokuthula, thank you. I would not have made it without your support and sacrifices during my studies. My children, Kholeka and Khulani, thank you, you are my inspiration. I will not forget the rest of my Hlabisa family.

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Above all I thank my God the Almighty for empowering me to complete this study.

Abstract

In KwaZulu-Natal DTDCs have been established to support teacher professional development. The study explored Ngotsha DTDC as a space to support teacher professional development. The aim was to explore in what ways the activities and resources provided by this centre support teacher professional development.

This study was located within the interpretive paradigm and a case study research design was adopted. Semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis were used. I interviewed seven teachers instead of the eight initially recruited and four centre employees (one could not be reached due to some commitments). All teachers interviewed were black African History teachers. In addition to these I interviewed a retired circuit manager who was sought out for very critical information regarding the history of the centre. This study was based in one district and the findings cannot be generalized.

The findings of the study indicated that teachers were enthusiastic in attending the workshops organized by the DoE and hosted at the centre. Teachers engaged in different learning activities like discussions, collaboration, working in small groups and in so doing gaining a lot of information, content knowledge and procedural content knowledge. This improved their classroom practice. Another finding was that teachers could not access certain resources like the computer centre which, according to them, was due to poor marketing of the centre. Centre employees also expressed their frustrations over unrepaired equipment which hampered the proper functioning of the centre. This resulted from the centre not being given power to manage their finances.

Key words: professional development, teacher learning, teacher learning activities, resources.

List of acronyms

ACE: Advance Certificate in Education

ATP: Annual Teaching Plan

CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

DBE: Department of Basic Education

DoE: Department of Education

DTDC: District Teacher Development Centre

FET: Further Education and Training

INSET: In-Service Education and Training

IQMS: Integrated Quality Management Systems

IT: Information Technology

ISPFTEDSA: Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and

                  Development in South Africa

LLB: Bachelor of Law

LLM: Master of Law

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

PCK: Procedural Content Knowledge

PD: Professional Development

PET: Physical Education and Training

PGCE: Postgraduate Certificate in Education

PLC: Professional Learning Communities

SACE: South African Council for Educators

SASA: South African School's Act

SGB: School Governing Body

STD: Secondary Teachers' Diploma

TPD: Teacher Professional Development

UED: University Education Diploma

UKZN: University of Kwazulu-Natal

UNISA: University of South Africa

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Chapter one

Orientation of the study

1.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore the District Teacher Development Centre (DTDC) as a space to support teacher professional development and teacher learning. This study hoped to provide an in-depth understanding of the resources and activities that are provided by this centre. I attempted to find out if Ngotsha (pseudonym) DTDC fulfils the prescriptions set out in the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTEDSA). The focus was on finding out what resources are provided by the centre and what learning activities history teachers engage as they visited the centre, with the purpose of understanding how the Centre supported teacher learning.

This chapter presents the rationale for and the background, focus and purpose of the study. It highlighted the research questions and conducted a brief literature review of key terms. It also presents the design, methodology and theoretical framework and concludes by outlining the focus of the chapters that followed in the dissertation.

1.2 Background to DTDCs and rationale for the study

In my experience of twenty five years as a teacher, I understood teacher professional learning meant registering for a particular course at higher institutions of learning, like a university, and graduating thereafter as a teacher. After entering the profession, I became aware of the workshops that a teacher needed to attend for continuing professional development. These workshops were organised by the Department of Education according to the stipulation contained in the department's policy. A Teacher Summit held in 2009 produced a policy called the 'Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa'' in 2011 which made provision for the establishment of DTDCs to support teacher professional

development. The policy mandate is that district teacher development officials stationed at these had to assist teachers to access appropriate development opportunities (DBE and DHET, 2011). According to the policy, these centres are to operate as local support sites for teachers from which curriculum support staff can operate, as sites where teachers would access shared resources, as sites of delivery for continuing professional development courses and as meeting points for teacher professional learning communities (DBE and DHET, 2011). Further policy recommends the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) which is similar to subject committees as previously referred to, hence the focus on history teachers (DBE, 2015). However, there does not appear to be much evidence of teachers' awareness of what these centres offer to support their professional development. Currently there is no evidence of studies conducted to ascertain whether the policy mandates are being fulfilled by these centres.

The findings of this study to a certain extent helped establish whether these centres operate as per policy recommendations and resolutions decided at the 2009 Teacher Summit.

1.3 Focus and purpose

The aim of this study was to explore what resources the Ngotsha District Teacher Development Centre (DTDC) provides to support teacher professional development and how history teachers used these resources towards their professional development. The study also aimed to establish what activities history teachers engaged in to enhance their professional development.

The study also considered to what extent the resources that were provided by the centre were helpful to history teachers engaged in professional development activities. The study was a qualitative exploratory case study of naturally occurring events in the centre.

1.4 Research questions

In what ways do the resources and activities offered by Ngotsha DTDC support history teacher professional learning?

1. What resources are provided by the centre to support history teacher professional learning?
2. What activities do history teachers engage in to support their professional learning?
3. How does the use of these resources and engaging in activities support history teacher professional learning?

1.5 Literature review

There is no evidence of studies conducted which focus on these centres as spaces for teacher professional learning in South Africa. Thus, there are no empirical studies to review, however there are studies conducted on history teacher development in general. The literature review will be structured according to the following concepts which inform my study: teacher professional development, teacher learning drawn from different theories of teacher learning, activities that support teacher learning and, finally, teacher knowledge. The study aims to explore how the resources and activities influence history teachers' professional learning. In the process some kind of knowledge should be gained by teachers.

1.5.1 Teacher professional development

Teacher professional development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Glatthorn, 1995 as cited by Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Similarly, Maskit (2011) defines it as a life-long dynamic process that occurs throughout a teacher's professional career. There is some consensus amongst researchers that professional development includes both formal and informal learning experiences (Board & Evans, 2006; Villegas-Reimers 2003). Collaboration has been identified as central to teacher development in teacher learning, shared inquiry and learning from and with peers (Board & Evans, 2006). There is also agreement that the context/setting for effective teacher professional development needs to be considered (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Broad & Evans, 2006). Researchers also share similar views in that teacher professional development moves through the professional career cycle (Glatthorn, 1995 as cited by Villegas-Reimers, 2003) and teachers' stages of professional development (Maskit, 2011; Board & Evans, 2006). The

concept of teacher development is largely contested and there is no one universally accepted way of understanding it (Bertram, 2011). Day and Sachs (2015) use the term "Professional Development" to describe all the activities teachers engage in during the course of their careers.

1.5.2 Teacher learning

The study required an examination of the role that the Centre played in what history teachers learn, how learning took place and made sense of experiences for teachers who visited the centre. The researcher attempted to achieve this by exploring different theories or perspectives on teacher learning. Teacher learning is introduced as the process by which novice teachers move towards expertise, that is, teacher knowing and teacher identity (Kelly, 2006). There are two main ways of understanding teacher learning. Cognitivists see teacher learning as the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding in one setting that is, subsequently, able to be used elsewhere (Kelly, 2006). This perspective assumes a process of transfer by separating the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understandings from their use (Kelly, 2006). Similarly Sfard (1998) describes learning as the gaining of knowledge that, once acquired, may be transferred to a different context and shared with others.

The socio-cultural perspective views teacher learning as the movement of teachers from peripheral/novice to full/expert participation in the specific working practices (Kelly, 2006). Lave and Wenger (1991) equate expertise with full participation in social settings. Situated theorists challenge this assumption of a cognitive core, independent of context and interaction, and view teacher learning as situated, social and distributed (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Similarly, Sfard (1998) views teacher learning as legitimate peripheral participation or as an apprenticeship in thinking. The situated perspective has increasingly been adopted as a preferable means for professional development of teachers (Borko, 2004).

Opfer and Pedder (2011) argue that teacher professional learning has been too focused on professional learning activities without considering professional lives and working conditions. They bring a different dimension by suggesting instead that teacher professional learning be viewed in the light of complexity theory, with intersecting and

interacting systems of teacher, school and learning activity (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).
They are also against the notion of looking at teacher learning as an event: rather, they
prefer to view it as a complex system (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Wenger (1991) argues
against the view of teacher learning as an individual process which can be separated
from other activities. His social learning theory suggests that learning be placed in the
context of people's lived experiences of participation in the world (Wenger, 1991).
Furthermore Wenger (1991) stresses that focus should be on collaboration and
cooperation, active and social participation. Wenger's theory, however, does not replace
other theories of teacher learning but adds another set of understandings. In the same
way as Putnam & Borko (2000) view learning as cognitive and social, Wenger (1991)
states that learning should be an integral part of people's participation in communities of
practice and in organisations.

1.5.3 Teacher learning activities

Vermunt and Endedjik (2011) relate teacher learning activities to the overt and covert
activities used to learn something. In the study, I attempted to ascertain what kind of
learning activities history teachers engaged in when they visited the centre. Desimone
(2011) views these as a vast range of activities and interactions that can increase
teacher knowledge and skills to improve their teaching practice and contribute to their
personal, social and emotional growth. She further asserts that these experiences range
from formal, structured seminars, to informal hallway discussions with other teachers
(Desimone, 2011). Four categories of learning activities are identified: reading,
experimenting, reflecting and co-operating (Kwakman, 2003 as cited by Vermunt &
Endedjik, 2011). Similarly, Bakkeness et al. (2010) suggest six categories of teacher
learning activities: experimenting, considering own practice (the most frequent), getting
ideas from others, experiencing friction, struggling not to revert to old ways and avoiding
learning (Vermunt & Endedjik, 2011).

According to Desimone (2011), learning activities that are used by teachers include co-
teaching, mentoring, reflecting on lessons, group discussion of students' work, teacher
networking, study groups and curriculum materials. Learning activities that teachers use
less frequently include observing each other in class, preparing lessons together with

colleagues, asking for feedback from learners and reading professional journals (Vermont & Endedijk, 2011).

1.6 Theoretical/conceptual framework

In my study I adopted Harland and Kinder's (1997) hierarchy of Professional Development (PD) outcomes to explore the role of DTDCs in teacher professional development. This hierarchy of PD outcomes focuses on nine PD outcomes. It enabled the researcher to know in what ways history teachers used the resources of and engaged in activities offered by the centre. This model was seen as an effective tool to help identify continuing professional development needs (Harland and Kinder, 1997). Harland and Kinder (1997) differentiate between three orders of impact of teacher development programmes which teachers go through during their development (Meyer & Abel, 2015).

1.7 Design and methodology

My study adopted an interpretive and qualitative paradigm as the intention was to understand the world of human experiences and how they socially construct reality (McKenzie and Knipe, 2006). As a researcher I paid particular attention to what the selected participants said about their lived experiences at the centre (Creswell, 2003 & McKenzie and Knipe, 2006). This was a suitable paradigm for my study as the role of district teacher development centres as spaces of teacher professional learning would be understood from the experiences of history teachers using the centre and those of the centre personnel managing the centre.

1.7.1 Research method/design

A case study design was adopted. A case study is an in-depth analysis of a single entity (Stake, 2008 as cited by McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Creswell (2008) defines it as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, for example, an activity, event, process of individuals based on extensive data collection. My study will adopt an exploratory case study to explore the role of DTDCs as places to support teacher professional development (Yin, 1984). A single case study will be adopted as there are no other cases available for replication (Zaidah, 2007). This case study proved to be a suitable

method to elicit implicit and explicit data from the participants (Zaidah, 2007). The chain of events were systematically recorded and archived, particularly as interviews and direct observations by the researcher were the main sources of data (Ibid). Suitability is also that my case study is linked to the conceptual framework the researcher has chosen (Tellis, 1997 as cited by Zaidah, 2007).

1.7.2 Sampling

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define a sample to be a group of participants that are selected to collect data. My study employed both purposive sampling and convenient sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select centre personnel: centre manager, librarian and computer room personnel, and convenient sampling to select eight teachers who are using the centre.

1.7.3 Data collection methods

I have chosen semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis as the data collection methods that I used to conduct my study.

1.7.4 Interviews

An interview schedule was developed for this purpose. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to ascertain from participants the usefulness of the centre for teacher professional development. The semi-structured interviews were suitable for my study as they gave history teachers an opportunity to clarify their responses. Due to some information gaps that were encountered, follow-up interviews were arranged. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) identify six types of interviews. For the purpose of my study I used in-depth interviews.

1.7.5 Observations

McLeod (2015) describes observation as the act of watching what people do. He further states that observations can either be overt (participants know they being studied) or covert (the researcher keeps his/her real identity a secret from research subjects). For the purpose of my study, overt and controlled observation were conducted (McLeod, 2015).The researcher assumed a non-participant role (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). The researcher could not decide where the observation would take place

because this depended on the allocation by the staff, at what time, with which participants, in what circumstances and will use a standardised procedure (McLeod 2015). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) affirm that controlled observations include selecting a site for observations by the researcher.

1.7.6 Document analysis

For my study document analysis was a suitable method as it is mainly used in qualitative research. Documents to be analysed included, amongst others, teacher attendance registers, policy on training and development, inventory registers, infrastructure maintenance plans, ATP's, prepared history notes, CAPS documents etc.

1.8 Overview of the dissertation

Chapter One has introduced the background and rationale for the study, presented the focus and purpose of the study, highlighted the aims and research questions, provided a brief literature review of key terms and the theoretical framework underpinning the study and presented the design and methodology that will be used to collect and analyse data.

This was followed by Chapter Two which will review the literature and the theoretical background for this study. The following key concepts were discussed: teacher professional development, teacher learning and teacher learning activities. This chapter was concluded by discussing in-depth the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

Thereafter, Chapter Three focused on the research design and methodology that was adopted for the study. The procedures and strategies were outlined in this chapter.

Then, Chapter Four captured the findings of the study and formulated a discussion based on participants' views, literature reviewed and the theoretical framework adopted by the study.

Lastly, the fifth and final chapter presented the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

1.9 Conclusion

Chapter One has provided an orientation to this study. The following focus areas were discussed, namely, introduction, background and rationale, focus and purpose, research questions, literature review, theoretical framework, design and methodology and an overview of the dissertation. The next chapter focuses on the literature review of the study.

Chapter two

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explored various literature related to the concepts of teacher learning, teacher professional development, models of teacher professional development, teacher learning activities and, finally, the conceptual framework that guided the study. The aim of this was to review what literature exists that is relevant to the focus of the study. Teachers visited the centre with the hope of learning or of gaining some knowledge and skills by engaging in different learning activities and the use of various resources afforded to them at the centre.

2.2 Teacher learning

'Teacher learning' is defined as the process by which novice teachers move towards expertise in understanding the expectations and character of a teaching profession (Kelly, 2006). There are different theories or perspectives on teacher learning. Cognitivists see teacher learning as teachers acquiring skills, knowledge and understandings in one setting and subsequently being able to use these skills and understandings and this knowledge elsewhere (Kelly, 2006). This perspective assumes a process of transfer by separating the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understandings from their use (Kelly, 2006). Similarly, Sfard (1998) notes that one way of seeing learning is as an acquisition of something, an act of gaining knowledge that, once acquired, may be applied, transferred to a different context and shared with others. This active and constructive learning is heavily influenced by an individual's existing knowledge and is situated in particular contexts (Kwakman, 2002). Putnam and Borko (2000) stress that for this type of learning to happen positive learning environments have to be created. For teachers visiting the centre, favourable learning environments should be created to facilitate their professional development

engagements. There is also a strong belief from research that powerful learning experiences are gained outside the classroom or school as well (Kwakman, 2002).

In contrast to the cognitivist approach, the socio-cultural perspective views teacher learning as the movement of teachers from peripheral/novice to full/expert participation in the specific working practices. This perspective views teacher learning as an expert teacher's active and productive relationships with their knowledge-in and knowledge-of-practice (Bertram, 2011). Lave and Wenger (1991) match teacher learning with full participation in social settings, which involves knowing-in-practice, a distributed and dynamic process resulting from the collaborative actions of teachers and students together in the context of their own work. In the same way, situated theorists challenge the assumptions of a cognitive approach, independent of context and interaction and instead view teacher learning as situated, social and distributed (Putnam and Borko, 2000).

Situative theorists stress that the physical and social contexts in which an activity takes place are an integral part of the activity and that activity is an integral part of the learning that takes place within it (Putnam and Borko, 2000). Similarly, Sfard (1998) says that teacher learning can be understood as a legitimate peripheral participation or as an apprenticeship in thinking. Participation in learning activities is regarded as the first learning principle (Kwakman, 2003). The situated perspective has increasingly been adopted as a preferable means for the professional development of teachers (Borko, 2004). Walton et al., (2014) share a similar view, highlighting that teacher learning does not focus on an individual but on professional learning within the context of a cohesive group that focuses on a collective knowledge. According to Kwakman (2002), teacher learning is collaborative in nature.

Opfer and Pedder (2011) argue that teacher professional learning has been too focused on professional learning activities without considering professional lives and working conditions. They bring a different dimension by suggesting instead that teacher professional learning be viewed in the light of complexity theory, with intersecting and interacting systems of a teacher, the school and the learning activity. They are also against the notion of looking at teacher learning as an event: rather, they prefer to view

it as a complex system. Similarly, Wenger (1991) argues against the view of teacher learning as an individual process which can be separated from other activities. His social learning theory suggests that learning be placed in the context of people's lived experiences of participation in the world.

Furthermore, Wenger (1991) stresses that focus should be on collaboration and cooperation, active and social participation. Wenger's theory, however, does not replace other theories of teacher learning but adds another set of understandings. In the same way as Putnam and Borko (2000) view learning as an intellectual involvement amongst people, Wenger (1991) states that learning should be an integral part of people's participation in communities of practice and in organisations. This perspective favours the view that teachers should take charge of their own learning which Lohman and Woolf (2001) call self-initiated learning. Kwakman (2002) argues that teacher learning should be seen as workplace learning. She introduces three principles in her attempt to define teacher learning. As the first principle, she sees learning as participation in activities. For the second principle she views learning as social in nature and respects the importance of a context in which learning takes place. She also asserts that learning does not only take place from individual action but also from dialogue and interaction with other people (Kwakman, 2002). As the third principle, she maintains that learning is necessary for teachers to develop professionally and prefers to call teacher learning 'professional learning'. Teachers learn by becoming aware of the opportunities available to them and, in the process, they acquire skills, knowledge and/or information. I agree with Bertram (2011) that learning occurs in a variety of settings and that the context in which teachers learn has a great influence on teacher learning (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005). These learning theories underpin different types of professional development models. The cognitivist approach favours learning through workshops and seminars, while the socio-cultural approach favours learning in the workplace.

The literature review shows that teachers use a variety of physical and conceptual resources and engage in different learning activities in their learning (Hobbs, 2012). According to policy (DBE and DHET, 2011), the DTDC under exploration is expected to provide a large range of learning opportunities for teachers and offer both physical and

conceptual resources to assist them as they engage in different learning activities. Next, I turn to the concept of teacher professional development.

2.3 Teacher professional development

Teacher professional development is viewed by many researchers as a complex process not easy to describe, as researchers stand on the shoulders of each other in trying to understand it. Continuing professional development (CPD) is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Glatthorn, 1995 as cited by Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Gaining increased experience arises from a wide variety of on-going opportunities that are provided for teachers to improve their knowledge and skills (Edmond and Burns, 2005). Some researchers view CPD as a tool by which policy makers' visions for change are disseminated and carried over to teachers. However, Maskit (2011) defines it as a life-long dynamic process that occurs throughout a teacher's professional career. There is some consensus amongst researchers that professional development includes formal and informal learning experiences (Board and Evans, 2006; Villegas-Reimers 2003; Avalos, 2011)).

Collaboration (teachers working together as a collective) has been identified as central to teacher development in teacher learning, sharing inquiry and learning from and with peers (Board and Evans, 2006). There is also agreement that the context/setting for effective teacher professional development needs to be considered (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Broad and Evans, 2006). Researchers also share similar views that teacher professional development moves through the professional's career cycle (Glutthorn, 1995 as cited by Villegas-Reimers, 2003) and teachers' stages of professional development (Maskit, 2011; Board and Evans, 2006). The concept of teacher development is largely contested and there is no one universally accepted way of understanding it (Bertram, 2011), however, the Department of Education leans towards an emphasis on giving instruction to teachers to promote their development in a certain area. Next the characteristics of high quality teacher professional development are discussed.

2.3.1 Characteristics of high quality teacher professional development

A number of characteristics are identified to support high quality teacher professional development. A first assertion is that the environment where learning is supposed to take place, in this case the District Teacher Development Centre, uniquely affects teacher professional development (Guskey, 2003). Secondly, teacher professional development should be content-based. Several studies reveal that teachers' talents and understandings are directly related to professional development experiences that focus on subject matter content (Birman, Desimone, Garet and Porter, 2000). This also means considering teachers prior knowledge related to the content (Cohen, Hill & Kennedy, 2002). A further claim is that professional development should be an extended experiences rather than one-time sessions and should permit for more substantive engagement with the subject matter. Researchers believe that this can create more opportunities for active learning and development (Birman, Desimone, Garet & Porter, 2000).

Collaboration is another effective trait identified as it is viewed as promoting teachers to work together both within and outside their schools (King & Newmann, 2000). Research reveal that professional development activities based on collective participation are more likely to avail opportunities for active learning and more likely to connect with what teachers have already acquired (Birman, Desimone, Garet & Porter, 2000). However, Opfer and Pedder (2011) caution that too much or too little collaboration can be a problem. Similarly, Birman, Desimone, Garet and Porter (2000) emphasise that professional development should be on-going and provide follow-up sessions that will ensure support is provided for further learning. Another characteristic is that professional development should form part of teachers' daily work and should be incorporated into the day-to-day work of teachers (Ibid). Coherent and integrated professional development is another characteristic identified. The emphasis is that professional development should involve experiences that are consistent with teachers' goals, aligned with standards and other reform initiatives (Birman, Desimone, Garet & Porter, 2000; Guskey, 2003).

Ensuring that teachers actively learn, inquiry-based professional development is identified as another characteristic (Birman, Desimone, Garet & Porter, 2000). Researchers claim that teachers learn best when professional development promotes continuous inquiry and reflection, as teachers will be engaged in discussions, planning and practice (Ibid). Professional development should also be teacher-driven, responding to teachers' self-identification of needs and interests. Research reveals that professional development becomes more meaningful to teachers when they exercise ownership of its content and process (King & Newmann, 2000). Guskey (2003) points out that professional development should be informed by student performance. Finally self-evaluation is identified as another characteristic of professional development (Guskey, 2003). He asserts that self-evaluation can assist in providing guidance to teachers in their on-going improvements efforts.

Archbald (2011) identifies some characteristics a professional development programme should possess: it should be aligned with school goals, assessments and other learning activities, should focus on core content and modelling of teacher strategies for the content, conclusion of opportunities for collaboration among teachers, inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback. These are consistent with those identified by Desimone (2011), which I have described above.

2.3.2 Models of high quality teacher professional development

There are many models that incorporate the above discussed characteristics. According to Wenger (1999), traditional approaches to teacher professional development include workshops, seminars, and conferences. Similarly, Kennedy (2005) confirms these traditional approaches to teacher professional development, however, adds more models towards teacher professional development: training, award-bearing, deficit (which is not a model but may be used to correct an occurring shortfall in performance management), cascade, standard-based, coaching and mentoring, action research, communities of practice, and transformative (which is also not a model in itself but a blending of a number of processes and situations). Research has shown that a fair amount of transformation has been effected through the use of different models of

professional development in terms of teacher content knowledge or pedagogical skills (Wenger, 1999).

Socio-cultural theorists believe that teachers develop better professionally when they engage in informal activities and opportunities (Wenger, 1999). Informal activities are not controlled by the Department and may include improving personal technological skills, academic programmes, participating in subject associations and curriculum development, applied research, federation seminars and workshops, collaborating with other teachers, collaborating with outside organisations and extracurricular activities (Board & Evans, 2006). For the purpose of this study the focus will be on the following models: workshops, mentoring, and guided instruction. Teachers visit the Centre to attend workshops that are organised by the Department of Education, where they are orientated as per the subject requirements contained in the CAPS documents. These workshops are facilitated by the subject advisors who are expected to provide teachers with guided mentoring and instruction. Next I discuss categories of teacher professional development.

2.4 Categories of teacher professional development

According to Edmund and Burns (2005) teacher professional development can be divided into three broad categories: standardised TPD; site-based TPD, which will not be present in my study since this category is school-based; and self-initiated TPD.

2.4.1 Standardised TPD

These are the most centralised programmes and are mainly used when the requirement is to disseminate information and skills among large teacher populations. The DoE organises workshops to afford teachers an opportunity to come together so that they may be informed about the requirements of each subject, to discuss curriculum matters and assessment requirements.

2.4.2 Site-based TPD

These TPD models tend to bring people together to address local issues and needs. Intensive learning by groups of teachers take place in a school or region. This model

promotes individual initiative and collaborative approaches to problems. The provision of on-going opportunities for teacher professional learning is made possible.

2.4.3 Self-directed TPD

This model involves independent learning that is initiated by teachers as learners. It addresses locally based needs and reflects local conditions. These are recommended to form a foundation of teacher professional development. Cluster coordinators facilitate content discussions which give each individual teacher the confidence to effectively practise in the classroom.

2.5 Barriers to implementation of effective teacher professional development

Teachers' work is intensive and demanding which leaves little time for teachers to attend to their professional development needs. Teachers may have doubts about fulfilment of this need due to the unavailability of time. As a result, teachers often prefer to attend one-day workshops during the school year rather than an extended commitment (Birman, Desimone, Garet, Porter, & Yoon, 2001). The next challenge might be the unwillingness for some teachers to share their subject matter understandings and beliefs with colleagues and supervisors (Ibid). Teachers might also perceive district introduced reforms as being disjointed and uncoordinated which may eliminate enthusiastic participation in professional development (Suporitz & Zief, 2000). Little time provided by rigid school structures might also have a negative influence on teacher participation in professional development activities (Birman, Desimone, Garet, Porter & Yoon, 2001). Lastly voluntary participation in professional development activities might be expensive which may lead to reluctance for a teacher to get involved (Ibid.). As I will be exploring Ngotsha DTDC as a space to support teacher professional development, I will be observing the presence of any obstacles preventing teacher professional development. Now I turn to what learning activities teachers engage in when visiting the centre.

2.6 Teacher learning activities

Teacher learning activities pertains to the overt and covert activities used to learn something (Vermunt & Endedjik, 2011). Desimone (2011) views teacher learning activities (which are undertakings intended to bring about the condition of learning) as a vast range of activities and interactions that can increase teacher knowledge and skills to improve their teaching practice and contribute to their personal, social and emotional development. She further asserts that these experiences range from formal, structured seminars, to informal hallway discussions with other teachers. Four categories of learning activities are identified as reading, experimenting, reflecting and co-operating (Kwakman, 2002). Similarly, Bakkeness et al., (2010) suggest six categories of teacher learning activities, namely, experimenting and considering own practice as the most frequent, getting ideas from others, experiencing friction, struggling not to revert to old ways and avoiding learning (Vermunt & Endedijk, 2011).

According to Desimone (2011), learning activities that are used by teachers include co-teaching, mentoring, reflecting on lessons, and discussions of students' work, teacher networks, study groups and curriculum materials. Learning activities that teachers use less frequently include observing each other in class, preparing lessons together with colleagues, asking for feedback from learners and reading professional journals (Vermont & Endedijk, 2011). Similarly Lohman and Woolf (2001) refer to these categories as self-initiated teacher learning activities, which they define as experiences that teachers initiate and participate in on their journey to professionally develop themselves. According DBE (2015) teachers would engage in activities like identifying their area of improvement, prepare lesson plans together, observe each other, and analyse learner results. For the purpose of my study, I will describe Kwakman's (2002) four categories of learning activities in detail. The aim is to explore to what extent teachers visiting the centre engage in these learning activities in supporting their professional development.

2.6.1 Reading

Teachers engage in this activity with the intention of gaining new information and knowledge. With many reforms in the education fraternity teachers are compelled to

keep up to date with new developments and insights influencing their professional field (Kwakman, 2002). Lohman and Woolf (2001) refer to this activity as environment scanning whereby teachers engage with available resources in search of knowledge and information. The expectation is that the centre will support teachers by providing the relevant reading resources pertaining to subject matter, new teaching methods, manuals, and new societal developments which have an influence on education and teaching in general (Kwakman, 2002). The study will explore to what extent teachers read these resources.

2.6.2 Experimenting

The question is whether the new knowledge and skills gained through engagement in these learning activities can be practically applied by teachers in performing their tasks (Kwakman, 2002). Teachers should reflect on their actions and make necessary adjustments to change their practice (Lohman & Woolf, 2001). Lohman and Woolf (2001) suggest that the best form of experimenting is the reflection-on-action, for example, "What have I done to evaluate what I'm doing and how can I improve?" (Lohman & Woolf, 2001, p. 67).

2.6.3 Reflection

Kwakman (2002) asserts that reflection is viewed as a cornerstone of teacher professional development as it is a prerequisite to recognising and changing routine behaviour. In support of this activity, Lohman and Woolf (2001) talk of knowledge sharing among teachers as the best form of reflection. Teachers will have an opportunity to talk, collaborate and share resources with others, which may take place formally or informally at a place like the DTDC. Through deliberations teachers can obtain a better understanding of issues where there might be gaps of knowledge and information (Lohman & Woolf, 2001). This study will explore to what extent the activities offered at the Centre encourage teachers to reflect on their practice.

2.6.4 Collaboration

Collaboration among teachers is a requirement as it ensures ready support for learning and the provision of feedback and creates a platform for sharing new ideas and

challenges (Kwakman, 2002). Lohman and Woolf (2001) identify the following forms of collaboration: special education groups, building vertical teams, study groups and curriculum development work groups. The significant observation is that the decision to work together is made by teachers themselves. The study explores what learning activities are created for teachers at the centre and to what extent these encourage teacher collaboration.

2.7 Organisational characteristics influencing participation in learning activities

Lohman and Woolf (2001) suggest that the availability of resources can encourage teachers to want to visit the centre (in their case district experienced public school teachers) so they can engage with those resources. They, however, caution that the unavailability of the most influential resource, "time", may hinder teachers from visiting the centre. The second characteristic is about physical layout. Location of the centre in relation to schools may influence the ability of teachers to visit the centre and share resources. Thirdly, there is the level of centralisation in the centre. Decision-making concerning the operation of the centre may also affect the maximum use of the centre by teachers. Now I turn to the conceptual framework that guides the study.

2.8 Conceptual framework

The purpose of this section is to introduce the reader to the theoretical framing that will guide the study. The selected theoretical framing will guide the research and provide the conceptual tools with which I will begin to explore, describe and explain the role of Ngotsha DTDC, as a space to support teacher professional development/ learning. This theoretical framework will be used during data analysis. The Hierarchy of Professional Development (PD) Outcomes proposed by Harland and Kinder (1997) will be adopted in analysing data that will be collected from participants: eight high school teachers who are all teaching history and, from the Centre, the manager and the Centre personnel (centre librarian, media centre facilitator and the administration clerk).

The figure below represents Harland and Kinder's (1997) hierarchy of PD outcomes:

PD INPUT

3rd Order   Provisionary/Resources   Information   New Awareness

2nd Order   Motivation   Affective   Institutional change

1st Order   Knowledge & skills   Value congruence

Impact on teacher's practice
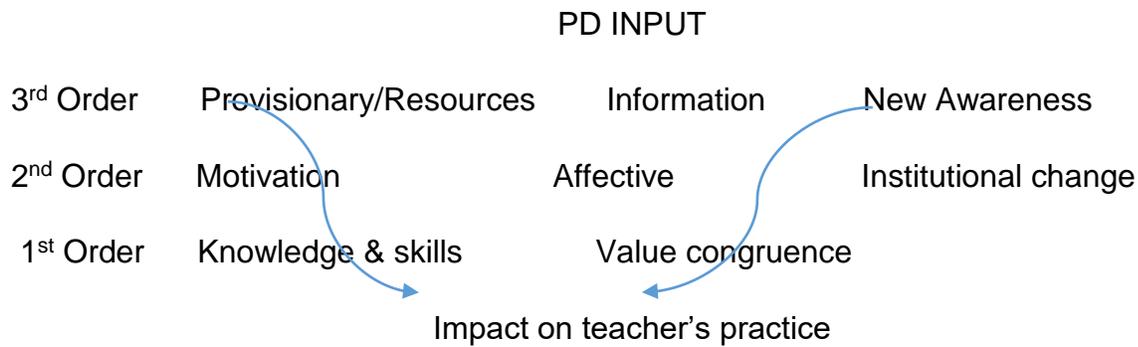
Figure 1: Harland and Kinder's (1997) hierarchy of PD outcomes

Meyer and Abel (2015) note that Harland and Kinder's (1997) framework proved useful in previous research projects and provided unambiguous criteria for assessing professional development in teachers' work (Meyer & Abel, 2015). It became evident that the more outcomes teachers attain, the greater the likelihood of impact on teaching and learning quality. They argue that its key strength is in its hierarchical nature that allows for the impact of teacher development to be assessed incrementally (Meyer & Abel, 2015). It makes specific reference to the institutional context of the teacher instead of focusing on an individual teacher (Meyer & Abel, 2015).

Evidence of the evaluation suggests that CPD experiences which focus only on third order outcomes are least likely to impact on practice (Harland & Kinder, 1997), unless other higher order outcomes are also achieved or already exist (Harland & Kinder, 2015). It is worth noting that for PD to result in changing practice, all nine outcomes need to be present as pre-existing conditions or be achieved by the PD activities (Harland & Kinder, 1997).

They differentiate between three orders of impact of teacher development programmes: see Fig 1 for a graphical representation of these outcomes. The outcomes are identified as: material and provisionary, informational, new awareness, value congruence, affective, motivational and attitudinal, knowledge and skills, institutional and impact on practice. Meyer and Abel (2015) employed this framework in their study and noted that

the more outcomes teachers attain, the greater the possibility of impact on teaching and learning quality. To enable the reader to better understand these outcomes I have individually described them.

Harland and Kinder (1997) give a brief description of each of the outcomes as follows:

2.8.1 Material and provisionary outcomes

These are physical resources which result from participation in PD activities, which may include: worksheets, equipment and handbooks (Harland & Kinder, 1997). They further point out that new or revised materials which are relevant to teachers in performing their tasks are procured. The belief is that the availability of resources will enhance teachers' performance.

2.8.2 Informational outcomes

These outcomes are understood as the gaining of new information by teachers after they participate in a PD activity (Harland & Kinder, 1997).

2.8.3 New awareness outcomes

This can be understood as a conceptual content and delivery of a particular curriculum area (Harland & Kinder, 1997). The emphasis is that the curriculum should be broadly understood and not only be limited to what is to be taught in the classroom.

2.8.4 Value congruence

According to Harland and Kinder (1997) this outcome refers to the personalised forms of curriculum and classroom management which inform a practitioner's teaching. This outcome suggests that change of practice will happen more easily when there is similarity between the teacher's own beliefs and what the PD is encouraging.

2.8.5 Affective outcomes

This is about the presence of an emotional experience in any learning situation (Harland & Kinder, 1997). They point out that a learning situation may have either negative affective outcomes or positive affective outcomes. They assert that teachers feel demoralised or excited by the new approaches acquired during their involvement in PD

experiences and, also, that be it either negative or positive the experience will be useful and even necessary as it may have a significant impact on practice.

In addition Harland and Kinder (1997) present another group of outcomes, which are related to the above, and call them motivational and attitudinal outcomes. They describe these as an enhanced enthusiasm and motivation to implement the ideas received during PD experiences. They point out that teachers may feel geared up to implement what they have gained from PD experiences. Enthusiasm can also lead to the change in attitudes towards self-concept, professional identity, professional development and the continued professional development process itself (Harland & Kinder, 1997). They also reveal that teachers may gain confidence from participation in PD experiences.

2.8.6 Knowledge and skills outcomes

This is about the development of deeper levels of understanding, critical reflexivity and theoretical rationales with regard to both curriculum content and pedagogy (Harland & Kinder, 1997). They further point out that this outcome is about improvements in teachers' self-knowledge and awareness of the adult learning process. Through involvement in PD activities teachers are exposed to opportunities of gaining various forms of knowledge: procedural knowledge, situational knowledge, propositional knowledge, practical knowledge, knowledge creation, skills and know how (Harland & Kinder, 1997).

2.8.7 Institutional outcomes

PD activities can have significant impact on groups of teachers and their practice, which may reward schools with positive functionality elements like consensus, shared meanings, collaboration and mutual support when implementing new practices in the classrooms (Harland & Kinder, 1997).

2.8.8 Impact on practice

This is about the change expected to be effected in the classroom after teachers' involvement in PD activities (Harland & Kinder, 1997).

This theoretical framework has been successfully used by Meyer and Abel (2015) in their study. They pointed out that this theoretical framework proved useful because of its

unambiguous criteria for assessing the impact of training and other professional development on teachers' work. They also highlight the key strength of this theoretical framework to be in its hierarchical nature that allows for impact of teacher training to be assessed incrementally. I will use it in this study to establish in what ways the professional development activities offered at the District Centre influence teachers' learning.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed important concepts which are related to teacher professional development, namely, teacher learning, teacher learning activities, models of teacher professional development, and stages of teacher professional development to be gained by teachers in engaging themselves in professional development programmes. The next chapter focuses on the methodology employed in the study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the qualitative methodological approach selected to research in what ways the Ngotsha District Teacher Development Centre is a space that supports teacher professional learning. First, this chapter will highlight the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the qualitative methodological approach. Then the interpretive paradigm will be discussed as appropriate to the study. This will be followed by discussing the case study research design to be used and its suitability to the study, including the strengths and weaknesses of the case study research design. Data collection methods (interviews, observations and document analysis) will also be discussed. Finally, data analysis, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study will be outlined.

3.2 Ontological and epistemological underpinnings

Ontology is described as the philosophical study of the nature and form of reality, i.e., that which is or can be known (Maree, 2010). Maree (2010) argues that ontology can be defined from both the scientific method and the qualitative approach. The scientific approach suggests that reality is external to human beings, is objective, based on natural laws and can only be discovered by using scientific methods. However, my study will look at reality from the qualitative approach, which defines reality as being constructed by human beings: it acknowledges peoples' interactions and meanings that people ascribe to their experiences and that their relationships are important in their creation of reality. The qualitative approach views reality as socially constructed. Interpretivists do not believe in an objective, external reality that is experienced in the same way by everyone. Interpretivists argue that people may or may not experience reality in the same way as experiences are influenced by different circumstances, cultures, experiences and so on (Franzel du Plooy, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The

qualitative researcher's perspective will be suitable in explaining reality regarding my study as data will be generated from the experiences of the teachers who are using the centre for their professional development and the centre personnel namely the centre manager, librarian and computer centre person.

Maree (2010) asserts that epistemology refers to how people find out or learn about things, or how truths or facts or physical laws are made known to people. Qualitative researchers accept as true that knowledge can be known by examining the experiences of people about a particular phenomenon (Maree, 2010). They challenge the view that scientific knowledge is the only valid form of knowledge and do not disregard common sense as a form of knowledge (Franzel du Plooy, Davids & Bezuidenhout, 2014, p. 30). They argue that common sense guides people in daily living to understand human behaviour: "common sense is an essential source of information for understanding people" (p. 30). Qualitative researchers argue that knowledge should come from people who have experienced a particular phenomenon and that the researcher should understand the phenomenon that is examined through the peoples' meaning of the phenomenon, that is, the researcher should allow the peoples' experiences to define knowledge (Franzel du Plooy, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). They further argue that knowledge and meaning should be sensitive to the specific context and never be generalised beyond the context in which the study was conducted (Ibid). In my study I will understand knowledge from the perspective of the teachers who are using the teacher development centre and of the centre personnel, namely the centre manager, librarian and computer person.

3.3 Qualitative methodological approach

The qualitative research approach is interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed, how people make their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merrian, 2009, p.13). Similarly, Carr (1994) affirms that the qualitative approach studies the empirical world from the perspective of the subject, not the researcher. This approach permits the creation of a close relationship between the participants and the researcher and the social settings in which they live (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). This approach also values the natural settings or surroundings in understanding

human beings and their experiences (Danzig & Lincoln, 2005; Carr, 1994; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). In addition the researcher was afforded an opportunity to employ multiple data collection methods to better understand the phenomenon under exploration (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006).

3.3.1 Strengths of qualitative research approach

Choy (2014) highlight the following strengths of using the qualitative approach: the researcher can reach an understanding of the same kind and also of different groups of people to assist with complete exploration of the phenomenon being studied and the researcher can raise more issues through broad and open-ended inquiry, which may benefit the researcher in understanding values, beliefs and assumptions. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) agree that the qualitative research approach can lead to many interpretations of the qualitative data and, also that an element of flexibility and teamwork is encouraged.

3.3.2 Weaknesses of qualitative research approach

Choy (2104) highlights the following weaknesses of using the qualitative approach: the immersed positionality of the researcher in the study can create an element of bias and subjectivity; objectivity with regard to results is compromised; conducting interviews requires a well-mastered skill which may hinder an effective interviewing exercise; and researcher's interpretation is limited. Similarly Ramos (1989) asserts that the close relationship present may thwart the research process, putting a researcher under strain in separating own experiences from those of the subjects.

3.4 Interpretive paradigm

My study has adopted an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist approaches to research have the intention of understanding the world of human experiences and they suggest that reality is socially constructed (Mckenzie & Knipe, 2006). Creswell (2003) re-iterates the fact that participants' views of the situation being studied should be carefully noted. McKenzie and Knipe (2006) further argue that peoples' lived experiences are important and the researcher should pay attention to what they say about their experiences. The interpretivist researcher is most likely to rely on qualitative data collection methods and

analysis or a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The interpretivist paradigm was suitable for my study as the role of the district teacher development centre as a space for history teacher professional learning will be understood from the experiences of history teachers using the centre and those of the centre personnel that are managing the centre.

3.5 Case study research design

A case study is an in-depth analysis of a single entity (Stake, 2008 as cited by McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Creswell (2008) defines a case study as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, for example, an activity, event or process based on extensive data collection. In this study, Ngotsha DTDC was studied as a single entity. Yin (1984) defines a case study as an empirical investigation that inspects a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) assert that a case study is unique according to place, time and participant characteristics. The emphasis is on a single instance of something or a single entity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Case study research design examines a bounded system or single unit (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006), a case, over time and in-depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting (Zaidah, 2007). The case may be a programme, an event, an activity, or a set of individuals bounded in time and context. The case is characterised by an in-depth explanation of social behaviour and understanding of complex issues. It is a robust research design particularly when a holistic, in-depth investigation is required (Zaidah, 2007). The case study research design is appropriate to provide a completely exhaustive description of the situation, to capture the complexity and uniqueness of the case information (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). Case study research design affords the researcher an opportunity to get close to a particular individual, group, school, classroom, programme or event (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). It selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of the study (Zaidah, 2007). Case studies observe data at a micro-level.

Yin (1984) notes three categories of case studies namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. My study was based on Yin's (1984) exploratory case study, which

embraces a detailed research of the given subject matter aimed at disclosing a comprehensive understanding of how history teachers benefit from using the centre. The researcher used this type of case study to provide a detailed exploration of Ngotsha District Teacher Development Centre as a space to support history teachers professional development. The case study research design has proved to be a suitable method to obtain unknown and known data from the participants (Zaidah, 2007). The chain of events were recorded systematically and archived, particularly as interviews and direct observations by the researcher were the main sources of data (Zaidah, 2007). My case study is linked to the conceptual framework (Tellis, 1997 as cited by Zaidah, 2007) which, in this case, is Harland and Kinder's (1997) hierarchy of outcomes on professional development.

3.5.1 Strengths of a case study research design

Zaidah (2007) claims that case study research design counteracts the limitations of quantitative methods, by providing holistic and in-depth explanations of the social and behavioural problems in question. Through this method a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand behavioural conditions from the participants' perspective (Zaidah, 2007). Case study helps to explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Tellis, 1997). Case studies are also conducted to ascertain whether particular government programmes were efficient or whether the goals of a particular programme were achieved (Zaidah, 2007). Case study method can uncover important data which might be obscured by only applying quantitative methods (Zaidah, 2007). Yin (1984) points out that case study method allows for examination of data to be conducted within the context of its use (within the situation in which the activity takes place). Case study helps to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research (Zaidah, 2007).

3.5.2 Limitations of a case study research design

According to Yin (1984) case studies are criticized for a scarcity of rigour, which is about thoroughness and great care in ensuring that something is correct. They also suffer

from a tendency for a researcher to have a biased interpretation of the data (Ibid). Zaidah (2007) asserts that case studies provide very little basis for scientific generalisation since they use a small number of participants. As in my case only seven history teachers were observed and interviewed and four centre employees and one ex-circuit manager. In addition, Yin (1984) contends that case studies are often labelled as being too long, difficult to conduct and producing a massive amount of documentation. In dealing with the above mentioned challenges the researcher opted to narrow the number of participants by only focusing on history teachers. In addition the researcher only focused on documents that were mostly used during history teacher workshops namely ATP's, prepared "notes", attendance registers, program register, centre inventory, diary entries made by centre personnel and CAPS document which provide guidelines on curriculum and assessment.

3.6 Data collection methods

I have chosen to employ semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis as data collection methods in conducting my study.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Walford (2001) defines an interview as a social encounter and points out that interviewers and interviewees co-construct the interview. Braun and Clarke (2013) assert that a person who takes part in this social encounter is asked a number of questions by the researcher in a qualitative interview and the interviewee gives responses in his/her own words. The aim of the interview is to acquire valid and reliable data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The researcher prepared a set of questions in advance in order to conduct semi-structured interviews (Curtis, Murphy & Shields, 2014), and appendix one (1) is attached to this effect. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to ascertain from participants the usefulness of the teacher development centre towards teacher professional development. The semi-structured interviews were suitable for my study as they gave teachers and centre employees the opportunity to clarify their responses should there be a need. Due to some gaps in information given by the participants, single follow-up interviews were arranged for all the participants and done telephonically. For the purpose of my study, I have used semi-structured, in-depth

interviews as identified by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), see appendix one for questions that the participants had to respond to.

Responses by history teachers enabled the research to elicit the desired data and the researcher was able to probe further to attain rich data to better understand history teachers lived experiences. All the interviews were conducted at the centre except for two history teacher participants, whom I went to their schools as they cited transport problems.

According to the researcher's plan the interviews were managed in a two phase sequence: first I interviewed seven history teacher participants and then followed with four centre personnel or employees, and strategically positioned the centre manager as my last interviewee. One additional interview was later added for his rich information on the establishment of the centre, whom was interviewed at his home.

3.6.2 Strengths of interviews

Marshall and Rossman (1989) present the following strengths of interviews: they can be used to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions, more detailed questions can be asked, respondents own words are recorded, ambiguities can be clarified and incomplete answers followed up, precise meanings of questions can be clarified, and interviewees are not influenced by others in the group. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) contend that the exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. They also point out that when using a semi-structured interview schedule, interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order.

3.6.3 Weaknesses of interviews

People that are being interviewed may be reluctant to supply all the information that was anticipated by the interviewer (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). They further highlight that interviews can be very time-consuming, can be costly, different interviewers may understand and transcribe interviews in different ways, there is a possibility of respondent bias. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) contend that interviews may have little flexibility, standardised wording of questions may constrain and limit naturalness

and relevance of questions and answers. Brynard, Hanekom and Brynard (2014) agree that honesty of the respondents may not be guaranteed.

3.7 Observations

McLeod (2015) describes observation as the act of watching what people do. He further states that observations can either be overt (participants know they are being studied) or covert (the researcher keeps his/her real identity a secret from research subjects). My positionality as an observer was announced by the subject advisor in terms of teacher observation(s) and the centre personnel were also made aware that I would visit the centre to conduct observations and this would be purely for research purposes.

Different types of observation are identified controlled, natural and participant observations (McLeod, 2015). For the purpose of my study, controlled observations were conducted. As the researcher, I decided where the observations would take place, at what time, with which participants, under what circumstances and used a standardised procedure (McLeod, 2015). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) affirm that controlled observations include selecting a site for observations by the researcher. I conducted three observations. In my first observation I went to the centre to introduce myself to the centre personnel and inform them about the proposed study. I asked them for permission to participate in the study and also asked for permission to conduct a tour around the centre, which took about two hours. This enabled the researcher to see what is there in the centre. I prepared an observation schedule for this study, whereby the researcher collected data on the following: the number of rooms and the purpose for each room; what resources were available to be used by history teachers; the condition of buildings; the number of people employed to work at the centre; documents that are most used; and whether there were people using the centre at that time.

Second and third observations were planned to coincide with the Department of Education's proposed dates for history teacher workshops. An observation schedule was prepared to facilitate this process. These observations were focused on the following key areas: what activities history teachers engaged in during these workshops; what resources history teachers used; and whether history teachers seemed interested to be part of these workshops. The researcher spent about ten hours conducting these

observations. The researcher used these observations to select history teacher participants by talking individually to teachers and those who showed enthusiasm to be part of the study were then given letters of invitation and consent forms to complete.

3.7.1 Strengths and weaknesses of observations

McLeod (2015) outlines the following strengths of observations: they are cheap to carry out; few resources are needed by the researcher; they can be easily replicated by other researchers using the same observational schedules; data obtained from these is easier and quicker to analyse; and they are fairly quick to conduct. McLeod (2015) outlines the following weaknesses of observations: they can be very time consuming and longitudinal and can lack validity, especially when participants know they are being observed as they may act differently.

3.8 Document analysis

Babbie (2010) defines document analysis as the study of recorded human communications such as books, websites, paintings and laws. Bowen (2009) affirms that document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic material. Document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to extract meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). Documents contain words and images that have been recorded without the researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). According to Bowen (2009) documents are "social facts" which are produced, shared and used in a socially organised way. Documents may take different forms, which may include agendas, attendance registers, minutes of meetings, books, maps, charts and so on (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis was a suitable method for my study as it is mainly used in qualitative research. For my study documents that were analysed included, amongst others, statistical registers, attendance registers, appointments registers and programmes designed to assist visitors to the centre, with particular attention paid to history teachers' programmes. In addition to these, documents that were issued to history teachers during workshops were also analysed which included: Annual Teaching Plans (ATP's) for history, History prepared "notes" on new and challenging topics like

China, Cuban missile crisis and international response to apartheid, CAPS history extracts on the curriculum and history program of assessment.

3.8.1 Strengths and weaknesses of document analysis

Babbie (2010) outlines the following strengths: it can save a lot of time and facilitates the collection of a large amount of reliable information without necessarily questioning many people. Babbie (2010) outlines the following weaknesses of document analysis: it is based on secondary data and is likely to have some errors. Analysis is also strenuous and requires a certain level of expertise.

3.9 Sampling

This study employed purposive sampling, sometimes called judgemental sampling (Johnson & Christensen, 2016) to recruit participants. Purposive sampling, according to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006), is a procedure where the researcher identifies key informants, i.e., people who have specific knowledge about the topic being studied. They further assert that the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for study in-depth. Similarly Creswell (2012) insists that in qualitative research we identify our participants and sites for purposeful sampling based on people and places that can best help us understand our central phenomenon. The study drew from the experiences of seven educators from seven different schools who use the Ngotsha DTDC as a space to support their professional development/learning. The selected educators teach history in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in their schools. Selected educators are of different gender and age (three females and four males) and their experience in the field varies. Three of these educators have taught for over twenty years and the other four have taught for over ten years. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggested guidelines for selecting participants were followed: they must be "knowledgeable about the cultural arena or situation or experience being studied", "willing to talk" and "representative of the range of points of view" (p.66).

The following criteria was used to select history teacher participants: teachers had to be teaching history in either GET and/ or FET phase, gender and age were taken into consideration for a balanced collection of data, teachers who attended workshops and/

or meetings at the centre and the number was decided upon recommendation from my supervisor. All selected teacher participants were given letters of invitation to participate and consent forms to complete and sign. Apart from educators, my study also required that I identify centre personnel/employees as participants. The criterion of strategic positionality was used to select the staff. These included the centre manager, centre secretary, the computer centre facilitator (IT), who could not continue as a participant due to his busy schedule, the UNISA administrator representative and the centre's assistant librarian. All the centre employees were given letters of invitation to participate in the study and consent forms to complete and sign.

3.10 Profile of participants

Following below is the table that displays the research participants' characteristics and pseudonyms used to conceal their actual identity. For teacher participants the table is organized according to age group, gender, qualifications, grades taught and teaching experience. All teachers are black Africans and are all history and/or social sciences teachers. I have to bring caution though that other teachers who offer different subjects also use the centre. The seven teachers who took part in the study were working in different schools in (Mdinwa) Circuit under (Sobakhethile) District. Common to all teacher participants is that they all possess a required minimum professional qualification to practice in any South African public school and are all registered with the teacher professional body SACE (South African Council of Educators), however, their level of individual professional development in terms of qualifications differs and also their experience in the profession vary. For centre employees the table is arranged according to age group, gender, qualifications, position and experience at the centre. Finally the history and setting of the case is presented.

Table 3.10.1 Research participants (Teachers)

Participant Name	Age Group	Gender	Qualifications	Grades Teaching	Subjects Teaching	Teaching Experience

Mr. Lo	55+	M	B.A.(History & English), BEd Hons, STD & Masters coursework	10 to 12	History	25 years
Mrs. La	55+	F	STD (History & Afrikaans), B.A. (History & Education) & BEd Hons (Management)	11 & 12	History	34 years
Mr. Tha	35 - 54	M	B.Ed & Masters in History	10 to 12	History	11 years
Mr. Ni	35 - 54	M	B.A.(History), B.Tech (Education & Law) & PGCE	10 to 12	History	21 years
Mrs. Wa	35 - 54	F	STD (History & English) & ACE-Inclusive education (Not completed)	10 & 11 8 & 9	History & Social Sciences	12 years
Mrs. Be	55+	F	B.A. (Geography & Psychology), UED, Diploma in Environmental law, Diploma in community development	10 from 2017 8 & 9	History Social Sciences	10 years
Mr. Thi	35-54	M	STD (History & Zulu), HDE(History & Zulu), BEd Hons (Education Management)& ACE (Leadership & Management)	11 & 12 8 & 9	History Social Sciences	28 years

Table 3.10.2 Research participants (Centre employees)

Participant Name	Age Group	Gender	Qualifications	Position	Experience
Mr. Zi	35-54	M	Matric, ACE (Education Management)	Centre Manager	11 years as CM (21 years in the department)
Ms. Ya	35-54	F		Secretary	1 ½ years (since 2017)
Ms. De	35-54	F	Matric & Computer Certificate	Assistant Librarian	Since 2013 (6 years at the centre)

Mr. Di	35-54	M	LLB now doing LLM	Unisa Online Administrator	Since 2017

3.11 Data analysis

Data was organised and analysed after collection. Audio recording equipment was used to collect data during interviews which were later listened to and transcribed. According to O'Connor and Gibson (2003) data refers to valid information that can help a researcher to answer his/her question(s). Data is organised into systems: coding technique, grouping similar kinds of data into categories and formulating themes (O'Connor & Gibson, 2003). The following step-by-step guide to qualitative data analysis was used: organising of data, finding and organising of ideas and concepts, building overarching themes, ensuring trustworthiness, finding possible and plausible explanations for findings and, finally, an overview of the final steps (O'Connor & Gibson, 2003). The hierarchy of INSET outcomes as proposed by Harland and Kinder (1997) was also used to analyse data collected from eleven participants (seven high school teachers and four centre employees).

3.12 Ethical considerations

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) assert that when researchers conduct a research study, they have to establish what is morally correct or incorrect. Curtis, Murphy and Shields (2014) suggest the following principles be adhered to by any researcher: informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation and withdrawal. Similarly, Check and Schutt (2012) suggest five ethical issues that should be given particular attention: voluntary participation (this means that the participants were allowed to decide whether to participate or not, and also made aware that should they decide not to continue to be part of the study they could withdraw); subject well-being (this is about ensuring that the participants are exposed to no harm); identity non-disclosure (this involves not exposing participants' names, work details and even the information each participant shared with the researcher); confidentiality (this involves assuring all the participants individually that the information they give during interviews

will not be revealed); and appropriate boundaries (this is about explaining the purpose of the study vividly to the participants).

Creswell (2012) re-iterates that the anonymity of participants must be protected by masking or assigning pseudonyms to individuals and organisations, which I ensured to satisfy the element of confidentiality. When interacting with the participants, Creswell (2012) warns that the researcher should respect both the participants and the property and avoid introducing issues that may cause the participants to have doubts about their group or organisation. Qualitative research requires the researcher to acquire permission/s to begin or conduct a study (Creswell, 2012). To meet this requirement applications to both the UKZN university ethics committee and Department of Education had been made and permission to conduct research had been granted by both institutions. The purpose of the study was unpacked to the envisaged participants and they were all given letters of invitation to participate. Out of thirteen identified participants only eleven (seven teachers and four centre employees) signed the consent forms to participate. The researcher also made all the participants aware that their participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and should they decide not to continue, they may do so freely at any time (Verma & Mallick, 1999).

3.13 Trustworthiness/credibility

This is a qualitative study which requires that the researcher provides evidence that the descriptions and analysis portray the reality of the situation and the persons studied (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). Botes (2003) explains this as trustworthiness, which is the extent to which the reader can trust that the data is believable and does reflect the participant's experiences. He describes it as aligned to standards of truth and value coupled with the neutrality of the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide the criteria to be followed in qualitative research: credibility, dependability and transferability instead of validity, reliability and rigour as in quantitative study. According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006), credibility refers to whether the participants' perceptions of the setting or events collaborate with the researcher's representation of them in the research report. Credibility parallels the criterion of validity in quantitative research which is, however, not possible to do in a qualitative study (Lodico, Spaulding &

Voegtle, 2006). Dependability as a criterion in qualitative research parallels reliability in quantitative research and is described as whether one can track the procedures and processes used to collect and interpret the data (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). Transferability, according to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006), refers to the degree of similarity between the research site and other sites as judged by the reader, as well as whether lessons learnt in one setting might be useful to others.

In strengthening the trustworthiness of the study, I used three data collection methods: semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis. The use of these multiple sources of data collection enabled the researcher to accurately represent what the participants think, feel and do when using the centre. A deep and accurate picture and understanding of the research setting was explored. To better understand the operations taking place at the centre, the researcher spent approximately ten hours at the centre, and took part in meaningful interactions with the participants. The study used member checking whereby the transcribed interviews or summaries of the researcher's conclusions were sent to participants for review (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). I engaged with my thesis supervisor and members of my study cohort to ensure that the views and experiences of participants were accurately represented. A detailed explanation of how data was collected has been provided. I will also attempt to provide an in-depth explanation of the operations at the centre and what participants feel, think and do, which may facilitate decision making on the part of the reader as to whether similar processes may occur in their own settings.

3.14 Limitations of the study

The question of making me available to conduct my interviews and observations was of a concern, since as a teacher I am expected to be at school for seven hours performing my duties of teaching and learning, and a teacher should by no means leave learners unattended. My participants are teachers, who are also expected to be in their schools and teaching uninterrupted and so are the centre personnel. However, effort was made. First I sat down with my principal and informed her about my study and its requirements. My principal requested that I draw up a schedule of my planned interviews and observations, as well as a schedule of how I would make up for the time I would lose.

She agreed to give me some time off to conduct my interviews and observations. Concerning my teacher participants, all the interviews were arranged so that they did not compromise their teaching time, i.e., after school hours and during weekends, whichever was convenient for them. In terms of observations, I made them coincide with departmentally organised meetings, which I used to recruit my participants and also to observe them as they engage in their professional development. Centre personnel participants all agreed that I see them during working hours at the centre. I planned to interview eight teacher participants; however, one teacher participant kept on postponing and ultimately withdrew from participating in the study.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the qualitative methodological approach selected to research a teacher development issue: exploring the role of Ngotsha DTDC as a space to support teacher professional learning. This was followed by a discussion of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the interpretive paradigm. Case study as a research design for the study was described. The suitability of the qualitative methodological approach, interpretive paradigm and case study research design for the study was discussed. Qualitative data collection methods, namely, semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis, were also discussed. Strengths and weaknesses of the above mentioned data collection methods were discussed. This was followed by looking at how data would be analysed. Finally, ethical principles to be adhered to when conducting the research were outlined. The next chapter presents the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation and analysis of data

4.1 Introduction

The study was undertaken to explore what role the DTDC plays in creating a space to support teacher professional learning. The study also aimed to explore what resources are provided by the centre to assist teachers in their professional learning and what activities teachers engage in as they visit the centre and interact with these resources. The findings from data collected through interviews, observations and document analysis are presented in this chapter. The interviews were conducted with eleven (11) teacher participants and four (4) centre employees. Next I discussed the history and setting of the case.

4.2 History and setting of the case

The current employees seem to have little information as to when the centre started its operations. I found that most of the employees assumed their duties as from 2013 and some in 2014. I was not deterred and made strides in securing some information about the initial stages in the building of this centre. I managed to get hold of a retired circuit manager who shed some light on the history of the centre.

According to him negotiations about the building of an education centre started back in 2006 and he was tasked by the district director at the time to negotiate with traditional chiefs to secure a site where the centre could be built. Apparently there was some funding from overseas countries like Netherlands for the building of such centres around KwaZulu Natal and this district was amongst those identified. The retired circuit manager held meetings with traditional chiefs and they ultimately donated a site that could be used for this purpose. The site inspection visit included the chiefs and people from the agriculture department and the Department of Education. Tendering processes were carried out to select a company to do the work. A project manager from the Department of Education was appointed to oversee the building of these education

centres in KwaZulu Natal. The company that got the work could not start the work as the area was seen as inaccessible, too far from schools the centre was envisaged to assist.

The site where the centre was finally built initially belonged to the municipality. Requests and proposals were made to the municipality to make the site available for the building of the centre, to which it finally agreed. Then the centre was built but not according to initial plans. According to the original plan the centre was meant to be a triple story building boasting two laboratories, one for physical sciences and the other for life sciences and a computer centre so that the surrounding schools may access these resources. (see Fig 1 for the outside view of the centre).

Figure 1 Outside view

In an attempt to further articulate the history and setting of the case, I was guided by the declaration of the Teacher Development Summit of 2009 which recommended the establishment of teacher education centres for the purposes of teacher development to improve the quality of teaching and learning in South Africa. The policy proposed that these education centres should have dedicated funding and staff for teacher development and provide improved access for teachers. Finally, they were to provide both physical and soft resources which would enable teachers to engage in activities associated with teacher development. I have, therefore, organized my discussion into the following sub-headings: accessibility, staffing, physical resources and safety and security.

4.2.1 Accessibility

Ngotsha DTDC is located in the semi-rural vicinity of Mdinwa circuit under Sobakhethile district in KwaZulu Natal. This area is fast developing in terms of its socio-economic status. Modern built houses surround this DTDC and the community members are mixed with regard to education levels: most living nearby work as professionals like teachers, nurses, policemen and other high profile professions. However, some are illiterate and still observe the traditional lifestyle. Adjacent to the centre is the public road that is very busy, (see Fig 2), which makes it easier for people to come and visit the centre. The road the leads to the centre is tarred.

Figure 2 Outside view-surroundings

Mdinwa education circuit offices are situated opposite the centre and on the same premises, there are municipal offices. Other government departments that are in close proximity to the centre are social development offices, a police station and two high schools.

Teachers come to the centre when there are workshops organized by the Department of Education or self-initiated activities. Reaching the centre for some teachers is a challenge, as most of the schools are far from the centre. Transport problems exist especially after peak hours as a result of the rules under which the local taxi association operates. Mr. Ni confirmed this and said:

The distance between my school and the centre is too big and this sometimes results in me missing some workshops or important meetings.

Similarly Mr. Thi said:

You see because of the distance, I cannot go there as I so wish.

The centre employees say that they do not encounter any transport challenges as the centre is right there next to the main road. The other challenge that was presented by both the teachers and the centre employees was the issue of the parking space shortage. The centre becomes too busy at times which may compel teachers and other patrons to leave their cars outside the centre boundary. In support of both teachers and employees the centre manager said

If I had the power, I would make more parking available since there is ample space to do that.

4.2.2 Physical resources

There are different rooms, each with a particular purpose. The buildings generally are in a good state, however, with some minor repairs required. During my first observation visit, after permission was granted, I took a tour around the place in the company of the centre secretary. We moved from room to room and this is what I observed. The first room is assigned as a "Broadcasting" facility for Unisa (see Fig. 3).

Figure 3 Broadcasting facility room

In this room there is one smart board, one white board, a printer and photocopier and one laptop used by the administrator. The second room was the computer laboratory (see Fig. 4) with twenty six computers.

Figure 4 Computer centre

The next room was the science laboratory (see Fig. 5) in which a torso, an eye and a human skull are on display and there is a cupboard which I was told contained science chemicals.

Figure 5 Science Laboratory

Then followed the library, which looked small and had few books on its shelves (see Fig.6).

Figure 6 Library

Next to the library was this large meeting room (see Fig. 7) with chairs, tables and a chalkboard.

Figure 7 Large meeting room

Next to reception area (see Fig. 8) there was one study room (see Fig. 9) with a few chairs and tables. Adjacent to the reception area also was this meeting room (see Fig. 10) with a few tables and chairs.

Figure 8 Reception area

Figure 9 Study room

Figure 10 Meeting room

Both the teachers and centre employees vented their dissatisfaction over the lack of sufficient resources or improper management of the few resources available.

4.2.3 Staffing

The district office was responsible for the hiring of staff to work and manager the centre. The first person to be appointed was the administrative clerk who was followed by the centre manager and other supporting staff, like cleaners, security and library personnel. According to the current centre manager, staff is sufficient for the smooth running of the centre.

4.2.4 Safety and security

The presence of security personnel greets visitors as they enter and the centre is fully burglar guarded. The place is fully fenced and has a locking outside gate.

4.3 Themes from inductive data analysis

This section now presents insights into what ways the resources and activities offered by Ngotsha DTDC support teachers in their professional learning.

Data collected through interviews is organized according to themes in order to answer the three research questions of the study. The three questions explore what resources are provided by the centre to support teacher professional learning, how the use of these resources supports teacher professional learning and what activities teachers engage in to support their professional learning. Interview questions were prepared to which the teachers had to respond and were themed so that they could illuminate the ways in which the resources and activities offered by Ngotsha DTDC support teachers' professional learning. Data is presented according to themes as this is an interpretive study. During the course of data presentation participants' voices are heard in the form of direct quotations. The purpose of this is to show similarities and differences in their understanding of the role the centre plays in their professional learning.

There are five themes that will be discussed below.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Different understandings about the purpose of the centre

The participants have views that differ regarding the purpose of the centre. Some teachers see the centre as a place that is there to develop them in a number of ways whilst others show no understanding of what the centre is there for and only see it as place where they meet as teachers. Mr. Ni's (history teacher) perspective is that the centre is there to uplift the standard of educators by developing them both academically and professionally. He further states that the centre also provides resources that are needed and helpful to teachers. In contrast Mr. Tha said:

> *I don't have an understanding of why the centre was established and in whose interests and who was responsible for its building but I speculate that it can be of help to us.*

Another teacher raised a very interesting aspect that this centre is about bringing services to the people: by this he meant anyone who can access the centre.

Centre employees seemed to have a clearer understanding of why the centre is there. The centre manager, Mr. Zi, opened his response with the following statement:

You see education is dynamic, things are changing all the time and, therefore, the centre is important in that with the new policies being introduced by the department like CAPS, the centre provides a suitable platform for us to meet and be made aware of these new mandates.

According to him, the centre capacitates teachers through the resources they provide for teachers and alerts them to the latest developments in the department by making available the prescripts of new legislation and policies. Teachers visit the centre to get information and in the process acquire information and improve their knowledge and teaching practice. Similarly, Mr. Zi agrees with Mr. Thi (a teacher) that the centre is there to help teachers improve both personally and professionally. Ms. Ya (the centre secretary) and Ms. De (assistant librarian) both agree that the centre is there to provide teachers with resources which are used to get information and, also, that the centre is open for other stakeholders like members of the community. Mr. Di (Online Unisa administrator) could not say he has an understanding regarding the purpose of the centre. He put it this way:

I cannot say I know but through my observation I see teachers coming in and also members of the community and people from other departments as well.

Mr. Di could only provide details about the Unisa project he is in charge of: that it is there to help teachers and students with different school subjects. This facility offers sessions in different subjects and all subjects are treated equally. Seemingly there is a record of understanding between Unisa and the Department of Basic Education that permits Unisa to organise online sessions where teachers attend and listen to a central host/facilitator situated in Chatsworth. Teachers here get an opportunity to ask questions for clarity and or further information.

The centre according to teachers' understanding is just a place for them to meet when they are called for meetings, workshops or to attend self-initiated activities as teachers. According to their responses, they hardly come to the centre voluntarily unless they are

invited or instructed by district officials to perform a particular activit. Then the centre presents itself as a central venue. Mr. Thi (teacher) put it this way in his own words:

> *The centre as venue makes available enough space for all the teachers in our circuit to meet and it is accessible.*

The centre employees agree with teachers on this point. They pointed out that the centre is used as a venue by teachers and other groups of people to meet. Ms. De (assistant librarian) said:

> *Teachers sometimes use the library as a venue for their workshops and meetings.*

During my observation visits I witnessed different groups of teachers coming into the centre. Most of the rooms were occupied and were not being used for their specific purposes but as a meeting place for teachers. The centre manager, Mr. Zi, confirmed what the teachers said about the centre as a venue:

> *The centre hosts a variety of activities for different groups of people like teachers, principals, subject advisors, community members, learners and other government department officials.*

Centre employees also feel that the centre is beneficial to teachers. According to them, the centre provides a platform for teachers to meet and share their experiences, which helps them to learn on the job. The resources that they provide, though insufficient, are helpful to teachers. Teachers visit the centre to attend workshops on moderation, orientation, content discussion and setting of question papers. The centre also provides teachers with photocopying equipment. Ms. De (assistant librarian) confirmed the usefulness of the centre to teachers and said:

> *Teachers' continued use of the resources we offer, to me is an indication that teachers are happy with our service.*

Documents analyzed were the attendance and bookings registers and they both confirmed that different groups of people used the centre. Some teachers used the centre at least twice in a term. According to documents studied, it was evident that

teachers mainly came to attend orientation workshops at the beginning of the year then came for moderation workshops, content and setting of question papers at the beginning of the second and third terms. People from the Department of Social Development, municipality employees, traditional leaders, circuit managers and members of the community also came to hold their meetings.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Resources that are provided by the centre but not used

All teachers interviewed agreed on the resources that are provided by the centre. They pointed out that there is a library which does not have many books or useful resources like encyclopedias, reference books, and set works for the high school curriculum. They also seem to agree that they only use the library facility to meet as teachers and not to use any reading materials that are provided there. Secondly, they all mentioned the computer centre facility that is there. However, they hardly use it for its purpose but only when they meet as teachers. The availability of a photocopying machine is of great help, according to teachers, but the challenge is that sometimes it is out of order. Teachers are aware of the resources available at the centre, however, they were not told if they could access them.

In contrast to the teachers, the centre employees mention a lot of resources that they provide for teachers and other stakeholders who visit the centre. Mr. Zi (centre manager) mentioned the following resources that they provide for teachers:

> *We provide a computer centre with thirty one computers with internet, a library with books, a science laboratory, two study rooms, one large meeting room, a boardroom for staff meetings, reception area, rest rooms, parking and a kitchen, and apart from these we also host a Broadcasting or video conferencing facility which is administered by the University of South Africa (Unisa).*

Mr. Di (Unisa online administrator) confirmed this and pointed out that teachers do visit the centre to attend online sessions which are run by Unisa. There is a "memorandum of understanding (MOU)" between Unisa and the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education (KznDoE). According to this MOU, the KznDoE sets dates for teachers to attend these sessions. According to Mr. Di this "Broadcasting" facility, which is a

different room from the computer centre, also makes available laptops with internet to be used on-site. These do not leave the centre. This facility only provides in-service training and does not offer any qualifications.

Both Ms. Ya and Ms. De agree with the centre manager regarding the resources they provide for teachers and other people visiting the centre, like school administration clerks, principals of schools, circuit managers, municipal employees, employees of other government departments and members of the community. Ms. Ya (secretary) in her own words:

> *We provide teachers with internet services which they do not know much about and I am also not 100% sure if teachers are aware about the internet, computer centre and Unisa project.*

Apart from these rooms there is an open space where two Jojo tanks are placed to save water (see Fig 12), two toilets separated according to gender, and the parking area (see Fig. 11), an open space outside which might be used for further development, (see Fig 2).

Figure 11 Parking space

Figure 12 Open space inside the centre

I requested to study the inventory register which had all the records of what resources are there.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Teacher learning activities at the centre

All the teachers that I interviewed unanimously agreed on the activities they engage in when they visit the centre. The activities mentioned included attending workshops (orientation, moderation and content), meetings (for IQMS and with Schools' Food suppliers about the nutritional programme offered to most previously disadvantaged schools), for physical education and training (PET), an assessment component for life orientation which they brought up as most history teachers also teach life orientation at their schools, for cluster coordinators, and for the setting of question papers, curriculum development and exchange of views by discussion. The regularity of their visits, however, varied from three to ten times a year, but what was common is that at least once a quarter all history teachers in this circuit converge at the centre as a cluster for a particular activity.

In the first term all teachers meet at the centre for orientation and the previous year's matric results analysis workshop. When teachers come for the orientation workshop at the beginning of the year, they start by discussing the previous year's learner performance at province, district and circuit levels. This year the history subject advisor who facilitated the whole process made a positive comment on learner performance, however, cautioned teachers that still more needs to be done. Challenges that are faced by learners when answering questions were brought to the attention of teachers. According to Mrs. Wa (teacher):

> *The examiner's report revealed that the biggest challenge is our learners' failure to appropriately answer level three questions which require a lot of interpretation and analysis, namely, level two essay writing, which is an argumentative essay and paragraph questions. As a result a decision was made for us to meet so that we are workshopped on this.*

In the second term, teachers are all expected to meet to do moderation of the first term's work. Teachers seem to understand what is expected of them concerning moderation of their work and learners' tasks. According to Mr. Lo:

Each teacher is supposed to bring about ten percent of learners' scripts which should be representative in terms of learner performance in your school, i.e., top, middle and low, and that a teacher should bring a mark list as evidence marks have been recorded.

Mrs. La (teacher) added that:

Teachers are then paired according to grades and learner scripts are exchanged and remarked by a different teacher. Each teacher has his or her question paper, memorandum and a green pen is used during moderation.

According to teachers the purpose of this exercise is to ensure that standards are maintained throughout the assessment of learners. Mr. Lo (teacher) revealed a shortfall that they experience as teachers when it comes to marking learners' work. He put it this way:

Sometimes when a teacher marks a learner's work, he or she might under-score or be too generous and so to address that moderation becomes significant.

Centre employees also have an understanding about what teachers come to do when they visit the centre. Teachers have to make a booking when they wish to use the centre and provide reasons for their own records. Mr. Di (Unisa online administrator) explained that high school teachers offering different school subjects attending the broadcasting facility come there to watch an online presentation, which is facilitated by a central host based in Chatsworth, Durban. According to Mr. Di each of these sessions normally caters for fifteen teachers per session and teachers are afforded an opportunity to ask questions whilst the session is in progress. He explained that:

The interactions are a two way communication.

According to centre employees, teachers come for orientation, moderation, content workshops, to attend Unisa online presentations (Broadcasting) and also for the setting of question papers. Through their observations they witness teachers engaged in intensive discussions. Mr. Zi (centre manager) added that they do not only cater for teachers but also for the following groups of people: principals, subject advisors, the

community, other government departments and learners, who usually come to use the library and the computer centre. He went on*:*

> *The centre also hosts different trainings for government departments like SASSA (South Africa Social Security Agency), Municipality to name a few and as the centre manager, I oversee the whole process.*

My observation visits coincided with the programme set by the Department for teachers to meet. I observed a group of history teachers and noted the following in my field notes:

> *The subject advisor was facilitating the proceedings of the day and he came before teachers arrived. He had brought his own projector and some documents to give to teachers. Teachers arrived on time and there were twenty eight teachers in attendance (13 males and 15 females) and the room space was suitable for this number of teachers. The programme of the day was issued and had the following items for discussion, namely, content to be covered in 2018, assessment criteria, challenges faced by learners in answering questions, performance of learners in different questions and papers, since history is written in two papers. All the items in the programme were attended to, however, not in the order they were listed in the programme. First different levels of questioning were discussed but the focus was on level two and level three questions, for example, questions of reliability and usefulness, writing of a paragraph and essay writing. A sample of a well-written essay was issued to teachers and discussions ensued based on that essay.*

> *Whilst the subject advisor was leading the proceedings, teachers were paying their undivided attention to what was said, some taking notes and some intercepted to get more clarity on certain issues. Then a dummy essay was given to all the teachers to mark. Then there were discussions over the marks allocated by individual teachers. Concerning content matters Annual Teaching Plans were issued to all teachers present and where there were concerns clarity was given. Other documents like moderation tools, the 2017 matric examiner's report,*

prepared notes for new sections and recording documents were issued to teachers.

Documents studied were programmes by the Department of Education and attendance registers, which are safely kept in both files and electronically. The studied documents confirmed what I was told by both the teachers and centre employees that most of the activities teachers attend are organized by the Department of Education. The activities that take place most often include orientation, moderation and content workshops.

4.3.4 Theme 4 Teachers and centre employees' frustrations regarding the functionality of the centre.

The majority of teachers complained about the distance between the centre and their schools which sometimes prevents them from getting to the centre. Teachers also complained that the centre was not well marketed to them, as most of them only know the centre as a meeting place for them during workshops and meetings. The feeling was the same in terms of the library not having enough resources. Mr. Tha (teacher) put it like this:

I don't use the library as it is too shallow and lacks resources.

Similarly, Mrs. Be (teacher) noted that she had no idea if the library was available for use by teachers and through her observation the library is small and does not have enough books. Ms. De (assistant librarian) agrees with the teachers saying that the library is there but small and that the books are not enough. The library does not have reference books, enough textbooks that cover all the school subjects, maps and charts. Learners use the library quite often for study purposes and they bring their own textbook materials. The textbooks available only cater for intermediate and junior phases. She describes her position like this:

I have done requisitions to the Department for more books and I am still waiting for books and other resources to be delivered, and this waiting game hampers my service delivery and it pains me to see people, in particular teachers, not getting help and this unavailability of resources discourages learners and teachers to come to our library.

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Concerning the computer centre, the majority of teachers interviewed pointed out that they have no access to use the computer laboratory and that it was not explained to them if they were permitted to use computers at the centre. Through their observation the facilities at the centre are mainly used by learners and local people. Only two teachers interviewed said that they have used the computer centre mainly for printing and emailing, however, they highlighted that the computer centre is mainly used by learners when doing their research tasks. Teachers also get frustrated when visiting the computer centre and finding that the internet is not available.

Centre employees agree with the majority of teachers about the use of the computer centre and Ms. De (assistant librarian) said*:*

> *I have never seen teachers using computers maybe because they bring their own laptops but learners use them a lot.*

Ms. Ya (secretary) put it this way:

> *We provide teachers with internet services which they do not know much about and I am also not 100% sure if teachers are aware about the internet, computer centre and Unisa project.*

Centre employees are faced with many challenges that cripple the proper running of the centre. The issue of repairing broken equipment seems to be their biggest problem, as they do not manage the centre's finances themselves. Therefore, they cannot do repairs as quickly as they wish. There is a whole lot of unrepaired equipment: the printer, regular tripping of electricity, some broken computers, broken screen of the broadcasting facility, leaking toilets to name a few. They are expected to report what is broken and submit that to the Department of Education so that people are sent to do the repairs, however, this takes "forever" according to the centre employees. One example of this was presented by Ms. Ya (secretary) who said*:*

> *In one instance a teacher came to borrow chemicals so he can conduct experiments for his learners. We could not help the teacher because the lock for the cupboard was broken and could not be opened. This was reported and*

nothing was done immediately. You see we work under difficult conditions and our hands are tied.

During one of my visits I also tasted this frustration when I requested the secretary to print some documents for my use. She could not because there was no ink or paper. She apologized and requested that I organize photocopying paper next time I come.

On top of the above highlighted challenges by the centre employees, there was also another disturbing revelation about their negative reception and treatment by some members of the community. Since most of the employees are not from the local community, they said they are not welcomed well:' they are accused of taking the jobs that are established for the running of the centre.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Teachers' perceptions about their professional teacher learning

In spite of many challenges that teachers encounter when visiting the centre they, however, find it beneficial to a certain extent. They agree that after attending cluster meetings organized by the Department of Education and meeting other teachers and engaging in different learning activities, they emerge refreshed and more eager to take on the next lesson with their learners. Mrs. Wa confirmed this and said:

After sharing our experiences, like content challenges, methods of tackling certain topics, I just feel ready to respond to any questions my learners might have.

Teachers further agree that they find workshops hosted at the centre are empowering as they gain a lot of information and knowledge and equip each other with a number of skills.

Most of the teachers indicated that they did learn new content knowledge from the workshops. Challenging topics and new topics are discussed and teachers learn tips on how to manage or approach the syllabus which impacts positively in the delivery of content in the classroom. Two teachers also pointed out that teaching history requires that connections (establish relationships) with what happened in the past need to be

made with what is currently happening and attending these workshops is so helpful. One scenario shared by teachers to make this point clear was that of comparing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to the present Zondo Commission. In both commissions people had to come before the commission and testify. Mr.Thi put it this way:

> *After attending these content workshops, one comes out bold and confident about teaching the subject and, you see, one feels bad to miss any of these workshops.*

Mr. Lo shared the same sentiment with Mr. Thi and said*:*

> *Coming back from the content workshop enables me to give confident feedback to my learners, you see, I am in the position of presenting a new and fresh perspective.*

Apart from gaining new content knowledge teachers also point out that they acquire pedagogic content knowledge (PCK) related to the subject, which amongst others includes how to set a history question paper that is up to standard, helping learners in how to answer questions in different levels, like writing paragraphs, writing an argumentative essay, tackling comparative questions where a learner is supposed to compare two sources in terms of similarity or difference and usefulness of questions. Mr. Ni described the format a learner should abide by when answering a level two history essay which is argumentative and said:

> *Writing a history essay a learner is expected to take a stand, then present a line of argument which is then followed by the focus or purpose of the essay and all this should appear in the introduction. Then there is the body with different paragraphs where a learner is expected to sustain the presented line of argument in each of the paragraphs and throughout the essay. Then tying up of the argument forms the conclusion of the essay.*

Teachers pointed out that acquiring the correct and required skills to answer essay questions is even a challenge to teachers and needs a lot of practice. In addition teachers also learnt how to differentiate between questions at different levels. Setting a

history paper that is balanced requires that there should be questions at all three cognitive levels as they are set out in the history CAPS document: Level one questions are definitions of terms and extraction questions; Level two questions are about the usefulness of the source; and Level three questions are comparative questions and writing of a paragraph.

Teachers receive a lot of useful resources when attending workshops at the centre. They receive prepared notes, particularly for newly introduced topics like "notes on Cuba, China and the international response to apartheid". They also receive Annual teaching plans (ATPs), CAPS documents which provide guidelines on how to manage the history curriculum and assessment and moderation tools. The usefulness of these workshops as a platform for teachers to meet was applauded by Mr. Tha in the following way:

> *What stood out for me is that when we meet as teachers, one gains important lessons like working in a team, collaboration, to accommodate different personalities and be tolerant.*

Besides receiving resource materials, like prepared notes, when attending the workshops at the centre teachers are encouraged to bring their own materials so that they can share them for the benefit of all. Seemingly teachers benefit from these cluster workshops as they come out motivated which enhances their classroom practice. In addition they gain a lot of information and skills. They also learn content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge which eliminate doubts in terms of curriculum delivery in the classroom

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of data collected through observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The findings were discussed in terms of five themes emanating from data collected through semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis. The following five themes emerged from the collected data, namely, different understandings about the purpose of the centre, what resources are provided at the centre, what teacher learning activities take place at the

centre, teachers' and centre employees' frustrations about the functionality of the centre and teachers' perceptions about their teacher professional learning. The next and final chapter will focus on the interpretation of the findings, together with the conclusion and recommendations of how the centre can improve in supporting teacher professional development.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed at exploring the role of Ngotsha DTDC as a space to support teacher professional learning. This DTCD is situated at (Mdinwa) circuit under (Sobakhethile) district in KwaZulu Natal. The study focused on acquiring insights into how the use of resources and engaging in activities support history teacher professional learning when they visit the centre. For convenience I only interviewed high school history teachers and centre employees. In the preceding chapter I presented findings that emanated from the data collected by means of semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis. In this study I present a discussion of the key findings, offer recommendations and conclude the study. Prior to this, it is vital to restate that the study sought to answer the following research questions.

5.1.1 Research questions

Main question

In what ways do the resources and activities offered by Ngotsha DTDC support teacher professional learning?

Sub-questions

1. What resources are provided by the centre to support history teachers' professional learning?
2. What activities do history teachers engage in to support their professional learning?
3. How does the use of these resources and engaging in activities support history teacher professional learning?

5.2 Research question 1: What resources are provided by the centre to support history teachers' professional learning?

I conducted three observations of the centre. The first one was to find out what resources are available for use by history teachers and teachers in general. During my first observation the administration clerk showed me around. The establishment of DTDCs as mandated by DBE and DHET (2011) stipulates that these centre should provide shared resources for use by teachers. The structure in terms of buildings is well built and there are many rooms each with a particular purpose. The reception area is very inviting and well furnished with an administration clerk's desk and computer and an additional table with six chairs which are used for staff meetings and waiting area. There are also separate toilets for both males and females. One room was allocated as a science laboratory with a few chairs and tables, a cupboard which keeps science chemicals and some life sciences equipment on display: a torso, a human eye and a heart. Teachers come and borrow chemicals and life sciences equipment for use at their schools for experiments and demonstrations. According to centre employees, teachers do not bring learners but only conduct a pre-testing/practical to check their hypothesis before they do it with their learners.

The next room was a computer laboratory fitted with twenty six computers. Wi-Fi is provided to access the internet. This enables teachers to conduct online searches. According to centre employees not too many teachers use the computer centre; however, a few use it to search for online resources they can use in their teaching. Teachers registered with different institutions of higher learning are the ones who use the computer centre quite often to do their assignments and to search for information. Next was one large room with twelve tables and thirty chairs which is mostly used for teacher workshops and meetings. Another room is used by Unisa as an online broadcasting facility which provides sessions for teachers on different subjects. During one of my observation visits I found ten teachers who came to attend a mathematics online session. This room has laptops provided by Unisa which are given to each

teacher during sessions. During my visit I witnessed that each teacher was given a laptop to use.

The next room was the library which is also available for use by teachers. There is one computer and photocopying machine and some books which covered mostly the junior and intermediate curricula. Reference books and FET textbooks were not in sight. Teachers use the library as a space to hold workshops and meetings. When I visited the centre I found no teacher using the library. Centre employees and teachers interviewed told me that teachers hardly use the library except to organise materials to help their learners with their assignments and school projects.

I also found additional equipment available for use by teachers, like a photocopying machine which teachers use when attending workshops to make more copies, a kitchen and one small study room with a few chairs and tables. Only teachers registered with institutions of higher learning use this room.

5.3 Research question 2: What activities do history teachers engage in to support their professional learning?

The establishment of DTDCs as mandated by DBE and DHET (2011) stipulates that these centres should serve as local sites to support teachers in their continuing professional development and to access appropriate development opportunities. SACE (South African Council of Educators) was mandated to manage and implement the CPTD system, which recognizes all useful teacher development opportunities that support teacher professional learning.

I deliberately made my second observation at the Centre coincide with the DBE programme for teachers. According to this programme teachers were expected to attend orientation workshops at the beginning of the first term, which were to be followed by moderation workshops at the beginning of terms two and three. What I found about these workshops is that they were managerial in nature in that teachers had less control but had to comply and attend (Day & Sachs, 2004). An alternative according to Day and Sachs (2004) to this of professionalism is a democratic one,

which underlines teamwork and shared tasks of teachers themselves as learning communities. The orientation workshop I observed started at 9am and continued up to 2pm. The programme of the day was divided into three sessions: reflection on last years' matric results in history and overall learner performance by circuit, district and province; secondly, discussion of teachers' expectations for the 2018 curriculum; then the programme of assessment discussions.

The meeting of teachers at the centre met learning principles and different learning categories as suggested by Kwakman (2003), namely, participation, experimentation, reflection and collaboration. According to Kwakman, when teachers engage in these activities for their professional development, there is a great possibility to acquire new knowledge, skills and values which will improve their teaching practice.

The subject advisor facilitated the proceedings of the day. Teachers attentively focused when information was delivered to them. There were constructive interruptions as teachers sought for clarity and asked questions. At times discussions ensued amongst teachers which the subject advisor effectively guided. Examiner's report, Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs), prepared notes, moderation tools and a document with a list of schools' performance in history in the district were handed to teachers. Teachers were coached in how to use these.

Then the last session followed which focused on the programme of assessment for all high school grades (8-12). The CAPS document was consulted as the subject advisor explained the number and type of tasks per grade per year. Teachers actively participated. Reference was also made to different levels of questioning, addressing information and awareness acquisition on the part of the teachers. Discussions about these levels revealed that some teachers still face a challenge in teaching their learners how to tackle these questions. Experienced teachers used this platform to share their knowledge with regard to answering these questions to the benefit of still doubtful teachers.

The moderation workshop I attended and observed was also as per the DoE programme which was at the beginning of term two. The workshop lasted from 9am to 1pm. Teachers brought with them learners' files with term one tasks and teachers' files

with records of tasks assessed, mark sheets and green pens to be used. First teachers grouped themselves according to grades (grade 10, 11 or 12). Cluster coordinators briefly explained the whole process of moderation. Teachers then exchanged their learners' scripts and individual teachers had to re-mark scripts from another school. In the process of this exercise I could see teachers engaging in deep discussions over mark allocations. The moderated learner scripts were signed and recorded in a moderation tool, a copy of which had to remain with the cluster coordinator.

Additional activities were mentioned by teachers during interviews. These included content discussion workshops where certain topics were selected and discussed. This fulfilled the learning principle of collaboration (Kwakman, 2003), where teachers gave each other support, feedback and help regarding challenges in terms of content misinterpretations and understandings. Another activity was the joint sharing of materials where teachers were engaged in the setting of question papers. Teachers would bring previous exam question papers, textbooks and memory sticks with downloaded support materials which they asked the centre employees to print for them. Teachers would set question papers together with the memorandum. By experimenting and constructing question papers together, teachers learn from each other as they share resources and ideas. By being hands on in the setting of question papers teachers gained new experience and applied new ideas as well (Kwakman, 2003).

The engagement of teachers in these activities fulfilled the principle of reflection as suggested by Kwakman (2003). Teachers experienced a transition from a routine of waiting for question papers from the department to setting question papers themselves.

Teachers also participated in different meetings like with schools food suppliers, for IQMS and union meetings. This helped teachers to gain new knowledge and information and helped them to keep up to date with new insights and developments in the education sector. The administration clerk kept all the records of these activities.

What I found about these workshops is that they were managerial in nature in that teachers had less control but had to comply and attend (Day & Sachs, 2004). An alternative according to Day and Sachs (2004) to this to this form of professionalism is a democratic one, which means that teachers take the initiative for their own professional

development, which underlines teamwork and shared tasks of teachers themselves as learning communities.

5.4 Research question 3: How does the use of these resources and engaging in activities support history teachers' professional learning?

To answer this question, I draw from Harland and Kinder's (1997) hierarchy of PD outcomes which proposes three group orders of outcomes of professional development activities. These entail provisionary, information and new awareness as the third order, motivation, affective outcomes and institutional change as the second order and knowledge and skills and value congruence as the first order of PD outcomes. They assert that the greater the attainment of outcomes, the greater the possibility of impact on a teacher's practice.

According to Harland and Kinder (1997), third level outcomes are material resources that teachers receive at a workshop, as well as information outcomes and new awareness. In my study, teachers gained new information and awareness after they attended workshops organised by the DBE. Regarding new information and awareness teachers learnt about critical areas where learners perform poorly and also about the new curriculum topics introduced for Grade 12. It was also evident that their classroom performance was enhanced which impacted positively on learner performance. Teachers were also introduced to new topics to be covered in each grade. The new and challenging topics to be taught were discussed individually at content discussion workshops where each topic was discussed in detail. These content discussion workshops were initiated by teachers with cluster coordinators taking the lead. In addition different strategies were discussed on how to attend to each topic and the styles of questioning as explained in the CAPS document.

Second level outcomes are motivation, affective or emotional outcomes and institutional change. It was evident from the data collected during interviews that teachers came out refreshed and motivated from these workshops and eager to take on the next lesson

with their learners. They found themselves in a better position to guide learners through the whole syllabus. In addition, the confidence of teachers was boosted in that these workshops played a huge role to eliminate any doubts in terms of subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990). Acquiring this knowledge ensured enhancement of their classroom practice which was evident in improved learner performance.

First level outcomes are knowledge, skills and value congruence. Teachers highlighted that they gained a certain set of skills after participating in these activities. Teachers could now prepare lesson plans individually, experiment with new teaching methods and coach other colleagues in curriculum management.

The centre provided them with a suitable venue to engage in different learning activities and use the resources which benefited teachers a lot. All the teachers interviewed attained the third order of outcomes; however, they suggested the need to improve on the provisionary outcome. With the second order of outcomes, attainment was satisfactory by all the teachers as they demonstrated renewed motivation and their confidence improved although they were motivated by the high enrolment numbers they face at their schools. Regarding the first order of outcomes teachers gained subject content and pedagogical content knowledge which ensured a balanced content coverage and presentation, thus, a change in their practice.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The initially identified teacher participants were eight but I only managed to interview seven in the end: the last participant pulled out due to personal reasons. With regard to centre employees four out of five were interviewed. This was due to the over-commitment of the fifth employee.

Another limitation was that I only interviewed history teachers whereas the centre is used by all teachers irrespective of subject.

5.6 Recommendations

In light of the above discussion, I present recommendations that can assist the effective and efficient functionality of the centre to support teacher professional learning.

Firstly, proper marketing of the centre is recommended. Teachers raised concerns about not being aware that the centre was available for use by them and, in addition, do not know what it offers teachers in terms of resources. One concern that stood out was the availability of computers. Teachers were not aware that they could access them. Teachers even suggested that being allowed to access the computers could assist in sharpening their computer skills.

Secondly, proper stocking of the library with relevant books and related resources like reference books, departmental manuals, copies of relevant legislations and previous examination papers is recommended. In spite of the small size of the library to have these would be of great importance.

Thirdly, the functionality of the centre is disrupted when repairs of equipment are not timeously done. According to centre employees requisitions and reporting are done and sent to the department however a long time elapses before the department sends contractors to attend to reported repairs. To explain this they made reference to the printer and one photocopying machine that have been broken since last year but still have not been repaired.

Lastly, the running of these centres should be transformed to adopt a model used by most of South African schools (SASA, 1996). According to this Act, most South African schools enjoy section 21 status, which means that they are responsible for the management of allocated finances from the department, which gives them additional powers to order stationary, textbooks, pay their lights and water accounts and undertake their own maintenance. Schools that manage finances allocated by the department require the presence of a SGB and I suggest that a similar structure is established for centres.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings that emerged from semi-structured interviews conducted, observations carried out and document analysis. The findings of the study showed that history teachers use the space provided by the centre to use resources and engage in different learning activities. History teachers highlighted the following

challenges namely: insufficient provision of resources in terms of books which they identified as their main concern, history manuals and audio-visual materials. The centre employees shared the same sentiments in terms of the shortage of reading materials like books and audio-visual resources to assist history teachers. Inability of the staff to fully service history teachers and teachers in general due the lack of funds seemed to be a major concern. History teachers were found to be very cooperative in attending the workshops organised by the department at the centre and showed enthusiasm by their active participation. In addition their confidence was enhanced and these workshops refreshed them since they gained a lot of information and some helpful resources to use in their teaching practice. Another finding was that teachers learnt content knowledge and procedural content knowledge in terms of history teaching.

Finally, the engagement in different learning activities and the use of resources provided by the centre played a significant role in ensuring teacher professional learning which contributed to an improved classroom practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview schedule for teachers and centre employees

Date of interview: _____

Name of Centre: _____

Section A: Biographical details

Name of teacher:

School name:

Years of teaching:

Grade taught:

Subjects:

How far is your school from the Teacher Development Centre? _____

How do you travel from your school to the Centre? _____

Section B

1. What do you think is the purpose of the teacher development centre?
2. In the last year (since Feb 2017), how often have you visited the centre?
3. What do you come to do at the Centre? [probe: what activities such as content workshops or moderation or finding resources]
4. Tell me about a recent workshop / moderation process that you attended at the Centre. (Probe: who facilitated the workshop, what was the purpose of the workshop, what was the focus of the workshop, how long did the workshop last, who attended the workshop)
5. What did you gain from the workshop / moderation process – (new materials/resources; if so, how did you make use of the materials/resource to better your learning development?

6. What new knowledge did you gain from attending that workshop /moderation? [Probe: Can you provide a clear example of this knowledge? E.g. new content knowledge?

7. Did you gain any new skills from attending the workshop /moderation? If so, what new skills?

8. Are you able to use the new knowledge and skills in your classroom? If yes, can you give some examples?
   If not, can you explain why?

9. Have you become more motivated or inspired to teach as a result of attending a workshop / moderation session?
   If yes, can you provide details?

10. Do you use the library or the computer centre?
    a) If yes, for what purpose? [probe: to download curriculum documents, to find teaching resources; to study]
    b) How often did you use the library in 2017?
    c) If not, why not?

11. What is your main reason for coming to the Centre? Does it play an important role in your professional development?

12. What prevents you from using the Centre more?

13. Does your subject advisor/ principal/ colleagues encourage you to use the Centre?

14. What do you think that the Centre could do to support teacher development better?

Appendix 2: Interview guide for librarian/ centre manager/ computer lab manager

Section A: Personal Information

Gender

Age Range

Highest Professional Qualification

Highest Academic Qualification

Position at the Centre

Length of Service at Centre.

Section B

1. How long has this Centre been operational?
2. What is the purpose of the teacher development centre?
3. What do teachers come to the Centre to do?

   [Probe: can you tell me a bit about these activities e.g. Who facilitates the various activities?]
4. In what ways do you think that these activities benefit teachers and their professional development?
5. What are the resources that are available at the centre for teachers? [Probe: do you think teachers are aware that these resources are available?]
6. How do these materials/resources support teachers' professional learning?
7. Can you provide me with any reports/stats of how many teachers

   a) use the library every day?

   b) use the computer centre every day?

   c) visit the centre to attend workshops every day?
8. Do you think that the centre is functioning well? Why do you say this?
9. What hinders the centre from functioning well?
10. How would you like the Centre to improve over the next two years?
11. Who else uses the Centre besides teachers? For what activities?

Appendix 3: Observation schedule of the centre

[**Note about taking photographs**: ask permission to take photographs. Do not include faces of people in the photographs, as this has ethical implications for using the photos in your thesis.]

No. of meeting rooms in the Centre
No. of offices for staff

Other rooms/ offices

What resources are available for teachers? Photocopier?

Is there are computer lab? How many computers? Printers? Internet connection?

Is there a library? Approx. how many books?
What kind of books (e.g. textbooks? Reference books? For which subjects/ grade level? (Take photos of the shelves)

Look inside a selection of books. Are there date stamps to indicate that these have been borrowed by teachers?

Is there a well- tended garden?

Appendix 4: Gatekeeper permission letter from KZN DoE

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma   Tel: 033 392 1063   Ref.:2/4/8/1420

Mr SP Hlabisa
763 N33 Road
Imbali
Pietermaritzburg
3219

Dear Mr Hlabisa

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPLORING THE ROLE OF DISTRICT TEACHER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (DTDC) AS A SPACE TO SUPPORT TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING. A CASE STUDY OF NGOTSHA DTDC"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 11 January 2018 to 30 June 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Vulindlela Education Centre
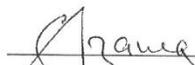
Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 15 January 2018

Appendix 5: Gatekeeper permission letter UKZN Ethics committee

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL ™

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

17 January 2018

Mr Sifiso Praisegod Hlabisa 210556287
School of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Hlabisa

Protocol reference number: HSS/2281/017M
Project Title: An exploration of the role of District Teacher Development Centre (DTDC) to support teacher professional learning. A case study of Ngotsha DTDC

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 5 December 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Prof C Bertram
cc. Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc. School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
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