

**TEACHERS' REFLEXIVITY IN THE ENHANCEMENT OF LEARNERS' ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE IN SOME SELECTED PRIMARYSCHOOLS OF THE THABA-  
TSEKA DISTRICT**

**By**  
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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the study titled: *Teachers' reflexivity on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic performance in some selected schools in Thaba-Tseka district* is completely my own work.

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Student's name

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Signature

.....

Date

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank the Holy Spirit for His guidance from the beginning to the end of this study.

Sending my sincere gratitude to the following special people:

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to my husband, Seqobela Eric Thamae for his support and patience during my research conduct, sleepless nights. To him I say: Thank you Mokoena. You have fathered me through thick and thin.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study focused on the teachers' reflexivity on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic performance in some selected schools in Thaba-Tseka districts. The qualitative based study sought to explore voices of principals and teachers regarding teachers' reflexive practices in the classroom in order to enhance learners' academic performance. A purposive participants' selection was used to select three principals and twenty eight teachers. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The research was guided by Constructivism Theory. Data was analysed thematically.

The findings indicated that both principals and teachers did not have an idea about the term reflexivity because they had been introduced to reflection. However, it was revealed that principals through the use of an effective communication with teachers can improve teachers' reflexive skill by discussing all the matters that affect teachers and learners in the classroom. It was further mentioned that for principals to keep teachers reflexive, they have to assess their official documents such as lesson preparation and scheme and record of work. It was indicated that reflexive teachers were always prepared and flexible enough to address learners' needs. The study as well revealed that reflexive strategies teachers could use were peer observation and collaborative teaching and learning.

The study recommends that as a measure to prepare both the principals and teachers to develop reflexivity skill, a teacher training program that supports teachers' reflexive practices should be held more often. Ministry of Education and Training has to examine national professional standards to identify the extent to which to which reflexivity is embedded in national documents which are to guide the work of primary teachers in the country. Lesotho teacher training institutions must employ reflexive strategies in pre-service and in-service teacher education to enhance their capacity of self-observation, self-analysis and self- evaluation. This could have a positive impact on learners' academic performance.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

SDG:	Sustainable Development Goal
ESSA:	Every Student Succeed Act
CL:	Collaborative Learning
EBL:	Experienced Based Learning
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
TCA:	Teacher Centred Approach
CBA:	Competency Based Approach
LCA:	Leaner Centred Approach
IBL:	Inquiry Based Learning
DI:	Differentiated Instructions
NCF:	New Curriculum Framework
MOET:	Ministry of Education and Training
LIEP:	Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy
DRT:	District Resource Teacher
DEP:	Diploma in Education Primary
B.Ed:	Bachelor of Education in Primary
COSC:	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
DTEP:	Distance Teacher Education Programme
PTC:	Primary Teacher Certificate

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

High quality education has been the main issue across the globe. Therefore, to raise the calibre of their educational system, various nations have paid attention on different aspects of teacher practice to advance the quality of their education (Ramberg, 2014). Olufemi, Adediranand, Oyediran (2018) indicate education as the most crucial part of human resource development. Olufemi et al (2018) further specify that in as much as education is concerned; the major focus is on learners' academic performance, which is the outcome of teaching and learning activities. In order to assure the increase and development of learners' knowledge and skillsteachers have to offer a considerable substantial contribution (Kaper, 2018).To effectively facilitate and carry out their teaching and learning activities, teachers need to be reflexive at all the times in the classroom. Hence, the study sought to explore the role and the place of teachers' reflexivity in enhancing learners' academic performance.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The primary education aim of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) was to represent a worldwide commitment for all the nations to provide the right to high quality education for all throughout life (UNESCO, 2015). In this regard, one foremost principle is that education is a core human right and an enabling right (UNESCO, 2015). Thus, in order to achieve that right, countries have to make certain that everyone accesses fair, equitable and high-quality education, leaving no one behind. In striving to improve quality education, some countries have emphasised on teacher training and improving infrastructures, while others concentrated on curriculum reform in their effort to increase the quality of education (Ralebese, 2018). In relation to those various ways on how governments handle the issue of quality education, the overall concern at school level is mainly related to providing effective teaching and learning. This can be attained by ensuring appropriate curriculum content, and materials, use of learner-centered approaches and the physically, socially, and emotionally learner friendly environment (Ramberg, 2014).

Despite an increase in school attendance in recent years, data from across the world hasrevealed that hundreds of millions of children are still enrolled in classes and attending school without achieving even basic learning outcomes (UNESCO Institute of Statistics,

2019, World Bank 2018). As the scales of these learning crises become clear and noticeable, a great deal and focus of policy attention has largely shifted to instructional methods. In response to the Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (2008), school systems in Australia were required to make a provision, in all their teaching related official documents, for the education of child in each classroom, irrespective of the variants that constituted the students' differences (National Report on Schooling in Australia, 2010). The aims were to ensure that teachers differentiated and were cognizant of their teaching practices.

According to Haamoonga (2017), one of the most important educational outcomes in every system of education is the performance of the learners. It is enabled by teachers' skills in maintaining effective classroom environments as well as using the right educational strategies. In this light, Lamas (2015) aver that in many nations, worries about school performance are shared by learners, parents, teachers, and the government. In the same breath, Ampofo (2015) posits that a learner's skills, attitudes, and behaviours in the classroom contribute to their academic achievement, which is a multidimensional construct. As a result, teachers, parents, researchers, and the general public are now very concerned about learners' achievement in any academic activity.

That said, it appears that low academic performance remains a significant issue in schools. According to Asikhia (2010), a poor performance is one that is judged to be below expectations by the examinee as well as some other important bodies like teachers. Asikhia (2010) notes that insufficient positive reinforcement, teachers' attitudes towards their work, lateness to school, critical comments regarding students' performance and ineffective teaching strategies are other variables that contribute to low performance. Poor teaching techniques involve presenting instructional tasks without involving learners directly. According to Alzahram (2018), passive learning was a bad teaching strategy because it views learners' minds as a "sponge" that may be flooded with information with the hope that they will take it all.

According to UNESCO's (2015) Education for All Global Monitoring Report, the learning crisis, particularly the one hard on the underprivileged learners, was discovered. Owing to this problem, the United States of America is very worried about how well learners from destitute backgrounds progress in their studies. The UNESCO (2015) findings also point out

a time when many American schools were unable to monitor their development. They (disadvantaged learners) were frequently excluded from state exams and were not eligible for special education. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was enacted in an effort to address the issue. A federal law passed in the United States sought to improve public primary and secondary schools, but most significantly, student performance, which required greater work from teachers. In light of this, the law was in force from 2000 to 2015. In 2015 No Child left Behind Act was replaced by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was signed by President Obama on December, 10, 2015 in order to provide all children with the significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable and high quality education, as well as close educational achievement gaps (UNESCO, 2015).

Likewise, African countries seek to increase learners' access to high quality education. However, the quality of education in Africa is still being improved (Evans & Costa, 2020). In the third grade, less than two out of three learners across countries in Sub-Saharan African children cannot read a letter, and only about half of children can read a word or arrange numbers in order (Evans & Costa, 2020). Moreover, Evans and Costa (2020) adumbrated that the solution to Africa's education is the use of pedagogical interventions like workshops to assist teachers to adapt their lessons and instructions to learners' learning levels, and individualized, and again to improve teachers' ability and teaching levels, and individualized practice. This suggests that teachers had to adopt practices that would make them better facilitators and improve in whatever they exercise in the classroom. Cillers, Fleisch, Prinsloand Taylor (2018) describe teaching practices as instructional approaches or techniques that teachers apply to accomplish their classroom learning objectives. It specifies the ways of presenting instructional materials or conducting instructional activities. Similarly, based on how teachers can assist learners effectively, Hoge (2016) enunciates that instructional practices of the teachers refer to teachers' practices whereby they demonstrated confidence on the elements such as classroom organisation, management and lesson preparation and presentation.

There are different factors contributing or influencing academic performance of learners. According to Mason (2017) those include metareflective thinking and learning motivation, learning, and teaching process, quality of instructions, learning environment and socio-economic status. To this end, teachers' practices and their reflexivity must enhance academic learners' performance. According to Archer (2021), reflexivity is a process that supports

reflection for action. According to Archer (2021), reflexivity is a process that resulted in transformative teaching methods. Furthermore, according to Door (2014), reflexivity is an enlarged form of reflection because it took into account the embodied self and its deliberate actions at a given time. It is a comprehensive viewpoint that allow for contemplation of how one may adopt wise practices. According to Probst (2015), the advantages of reflexivity included accountability, dependability, richness, clarity, assistance, and personal development.

Nonetheless, Feucht, Brownlee and Schraw (2017) assert that teachers' competence has a significant role and direct impact on learners' achievement. Contemporary education requires teachers who organise practice, support, inspire and motivate their learners' accomplishment. Feucht, Brownlee et al (2017) further contend that teachers who are thoughtful and rational make an effort to influence their learners positively. Previously, in the field of education, reflective thinking and action taking had been marked significant in the area of education since Dewey's (1909) work in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is it (Feucht et al, 2017).

The development of reflexive practice in teacher education is advanced in initial and in-service teachers to improve the teacher capacity of self- observation, self-analysis and self-evaluation (Bim-Bad&Egorova, 2016). This is why Paul Freire's work is influential in drawing attention to the need for critical reflexive practice in education; compared with the traditional rigid approach which was referred to as banking education (Tagata, 2018). Reflexive practice has long been a major issue in professional practice; therefore, this study focused on the practices employed in teacher education and looked at the ways in which they have been utilized to build teachers' capacity for self-reflection (Stingu, 2012).

Lesotho, like any other country that values its education, has great expectation to have teachers who provide quality teaching practices based on high standards of instructions. Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) states that teacher education institutions in Lesotho were urged to assess their training programs so as to ensure that they were associated with the policy. The existing teacher training programs should be examined so that teachers could be better equipped with the necessary skills that make it possible for them to be aware of the assessment of the individual learning needs, manage more individualized learning programme and be outfitted with multiple choices of teaching techniques and methods (Lekhetho, 2017). With regard to Lesotho curriculum and assessment policy document,

Raselimo and Mahao (2015) articulated that teachers were faced with the problem of shifting from teacher-dominated teaching methods to learner centred methods. Hence teachers were urged to be reflexive in all classroom activities to address any problem that may rise during learning and teaching. Next to be discussed is the problem statement

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Teachers play an essential role in the lives of learners they teach in the classroom as well as in the society and the world at large. In addition to teaching, Kazi (2018) contends that a teacher must serve and act as an external parent, counselor, mentor, role model and so on. In the same vein, Makovec (2018) declares that a teacher is an expert in the profession field and as well as an expert in pedagogy. Therefore, there has been an increasing scrutiny on the teachers' quality and effectiveness worldwide. Education systems globally were more concentrating on learning performances and how and what contributes to effective teaching and learning. Noticeably, there were studies conducted in the United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia focused on teacher reflexivity on their practices which sought to promote teacher professionalism through reflexivity (Ryan & Bourke, 2013).

As pointed out by Popoveniuc (2014), researchers, teachers and parents have long argued which teaching practices were best and most effective for learners. Despite the fact that the literature certainly acknowledged that teacher reflexivity unquestionably enhanced academic learners' performance, reflexivity was insufficiently used by teachers in academic practice. According to Park (2014), most teachers were likely to be more familiar with reflective practices than they were with actually putting them into practice. That confirmed the low use of reflexivity. Since no research has been conducted on teachers' reflexivity in Lesotho, this study contributes in filling a literature gap which prompted the researcher to investigate whether teachers in Thaba-Tseka primary schools were conscious and reflexive on their practices.

#### **1.3.1 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

The study was guided by the following overarching question: to what extent are the role and the place of teachers' reflexivity in enhancing learners' academic performance?

##### **1.3.1.1 SUB-QUESTIONS**

Based on the above main question, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. What are the primary school teachers' perceptions regarding the role and the place of reflexivity in their teaching practices?
2. What are the drawbacks of lack of reflexivity among primary school teachers?
3. How can teachers' reflexive practices enhance learners' academic performance?
4. Which reflexive strategies can teachers use to improve learners' academic performance?

### **1.3.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to examine the role and the place of teachers' reflexivity in enhancing learners' academic performance.

#### **1.3.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

In line with the purpose, the following objectives provided scaffolding:

1. To examine the primary school teachers' perceptions regarding the role and the place of reflexivity in their teaching practices
2. To analyse the drawbacks associated with lack of reflexivity among primary school teachers.
3. To establish how teachers' reflexivity may enhance learners' academic performance.
4. To identify reflexivity strategies which teachers can use to improve learners' academic performance.

### **1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

In order to address the overarching questions for the study, a fitting framework of research methods and techniques, as well as strategies used to conduct the research were identified.

#### **1.4.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

It was decided that Interpretivism would be the best paradigm for the investigation. According to Chowdhury (2014), truth and knowledge are built on lived experiences and their understandings are culturally and historically constructed. Additionally, Rehman and Alharthin (2016) claim that interpretivism engages in many realities those are socially produced and can be viewed from various perspectives. According to McKenna, Richard, Manroop (2011). Interpretivism deepens the understanding of the social phenomena which is being studied and acknowledges the value of participants' subjectivity in the research process.



### **1.4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

According to the presumptions of learning from participants, this study approved of a qualitative research approach in which literature was used (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative approach involved conducting an in-depth investigation using data collection from a variety of realistic materials (such as personal experience, introspection, interviews, artefacts, observational, interactive, and visual texts) to serve as the foundation for analysis and understanding. Words, descriptions, or narratives made up the qualitative data (Dawadi et al., 2021).

### **1.4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design guided the research direction and progressed the planning of the methods and procedures needed for collecting the applicable data and the methods to be used in data analysis (Kabir, 2016). The research used a case study design. According to Rashid, Rashid, Warraich, Sabir and Waseem (2019) a case study allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the phenomena within the practitioner context. The value of a qualitative study case study was that it allowed the researcher to capture people's actual lived experiences, which led to an in depth understanding of the phenomena (Fairhurst, 2014). Moreover, it captured and uncovered truth at specific, local levels with an emphasis on the nature account and rich description.

### **1.4.4 DATA COLLECTION**

According to Yin (2014), the case study's data is acquired using written sources, antiquated records, first-hand investigation, participant observation, and physical artefacts. For the aim of this study, focus groups and semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data. According to Rowley (2012), an interview is a conversation between two or more people during which the interviewer probes for information. According to Rowley (2012), interviews were a good method for acquiring information about the participants' practices, beliefs and ideas. Semi-structured interviews permitted the researcher to prompt or persuade the interviewee to open up and say whatever they wanted to say. The method also gave the researcher the opportunity to probe the participant to expand their views in their own terms. Focus groups were used as a data collection technique with a group of people working in the same profession- teachers. The goal was to learn in-depth information on people's attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and opinions regarding a certain topic (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). The perspectives and experiences of participants helped researchers generally comprehend what

individuals felt about an issue (Dilshad et al., 2013). The researcher led conversation on a particular subject with the aim of collecting extensive qualitative data from a group. The focus group was made up of a small group of individuals typically six to nine who were brought together to discuss their views, opinions, and feelings regarding the subject.

#### **1.4.4.1 POPULATION**

Principals and teachers constituted the population for this study. Walliman (2011 b) defines a research population as a set of objects or people who are the major focus of the research study and on whom the researcher intends to focus.

#### **1.4.4.2 PARTICIPANTS SELECTION**

The researcher was able to gain a deeper insight of the phenomenon being examined through the use of participant selection strategies, which are customary in qualitative studies. As stated by Omona (2013), when the aim is to include participants who represented a wide range of opinions, purposive participants' selection is used. As a result, participants were chosen in order to share understanding of the subject at hand in as much depth as possible. In that situation, the researchers' goal was to recruit participants who had specific knowledge and experience. Purposively nine participants: three principals and three teachers from each of the three schools were carefully chosen for semi-structured interviews. In the same manner, focus groups were also held within the same three schools and only teachers were involved.

#### **1.4.5. DATA ANALYSIS**

Finding themes and categories while analyzing qualitative data required comparing and contrasting replies. In order to make wise decisions about how to present data, the primary goal of data analysis was to draw out relevant information from the data (Dawkins, 2017). Data analysis was done both during and after data collection. Since the study adopted a qualitative methodology, word interpretation was the subject of data analysis. Data analysis was done both during and after data collection. Since the study adopted a qualitative methodology, word interpretation was the subject of data analysis. Moore and Llompart (2017) claim that selecting the data to transcribe was another crucial step in the analytical process, the researcher decided to do transcription by writing out the vocal content. Transcribing was also done in connection to the topic posed. Data management was done by verbatim transcription. The interviews were analyzed using codes that were created by applying the most prevalent themes from the data.

## **1.5 VALUE OF RESEARCH**

Teachers received training on how to confidently and actively facilitate learning. Governments should, in the opinion of Keck (2015), permit teachers to take part in a cutting-edge training programme designed to help them change the way they view their personal and professional experiences. It is further noted by Keck (2015) that the training needs to be situated within the language of self-reflection and self-study and progress towards an intra- and inter-subjective awareness of their reflexive roles as teachers. Since the primary goal of the study was to determine whether teachers' reflexivity could have a positive influence on learners' academic performance, teachers may benefit as they possibly will have improved teaching experience which made them better teachers and learners' performance would improve too. Teacher training institutions and professional development program would benefit from the study.

## **1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was geographically framed within four primary schools in around town in Thaba-Tseka. Attention was given to teachers' actions in relation to teaching and learning in the classroom. The study was demarcated within educational philosophy. Philosophy was a tool that examined education as it related theory and practice. Zirhlioglu, Yayla (2016) indicates that philosophy of education assisted teachers to develop ability and desire to think deeply and continuously about the purpose and consequences of teaching methods they apply in the classroom.

## **1.7 INTEGRITY OF THE STUDY**

In the words of Huberts (2018), acting in harmony or conformity with the applicable moral standards, norms, and laws is a sign of integrity. Integrity is defined by Engelbrecht, Heine, and Mahembe (2017) as adherence to moral principles that embody the essence of ethical ideals and can therefore be considered as a key factor influencing ethics. While integrity emphasizes that ethical standards should be applied in daily activities to control human actions. This suggests that achieving integrity requires taking into account both moral and trustworthy concerns. Therefore, ethical considerations are essential in all research areas but are more important in qualitative research in particular (Arifin, 2018). In conducting this research, the researcher first had to gain access to the targeted schools by the approval from the respective principal for permission to conduct research in their schools.

### **1.7.1 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In every research project, it is crucial to safeguard participants through the use of suitable ethical guidelines. Due to the extensive duration of the study procedure, ethical considerations are especially important in qualitative research (Arifin, 2018). Informed permission and voluntary involvement were two ethical factors. This means that the researcher asked for permission from the schools in order to conduct the study. Furthermore, the researcher minimized the possibility of participant injury, secured their identity and confidentiality, refrained from employing dishonest methods, and gave them the option to leave the study at any time. In addition, other values including integrity, regard for the participants, and justice were taken into account.

### **1.7.2 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness involves making sure that the researcher bias did not coil the interpretation of the research participants said to fit the certain narrative. The collected data was verified to ensure the credibility of the results. With regard to trustworthiness, Lemon and Hayes (2020) posit that the elements that support trustworthiness in research are the following measures: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirm ability. Hence the applicability of these trustworthiness elements was considered in this study.

## **1.8 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction to the study**

This chapter included the background, statement of the problem, the main question and sub-questions, purpose and objectives of the study, research methodology (research design, data collection and data analysis), value of the study, and demarcation of the research, ethical consideration and trustworthiness.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

Relevant sources were chosen and viewed in this chapter and those included books, articles. The definition of reflexivity was looked into, and which teacher practices were increasing learners' performances. The theory that was suggested most suitable for the study was constructivism theory.

### **Chapter 3: Research design and methodology**

In this chapter the researcher discussed data collection methods that were taken into consideration in this study, preferable qualitative case study and research methodology. The instruments to be used for data collection were semi-structured interview and focusgroup interviews.

### **Chapter 4: Research findings and research analysis**

The results of the study were analyzed in this chapter. The meanings from collected qualitative data were produced. With regard to understanding and interpreting all the information emerging from data, the researcher first transcribed the interviews verbatim and eventually summarized the data into common words, phrases, themes and patterns.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations**

The main findings were summarized and recommendations be made to improve teachers reflexivity on their practices for better performance of learners.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided an overview of the study; it provided background of the study and the problem statement. The background of the study has highlighted that SDG4 is the education target that strives for right to quality education for all. The teachers are expected to actively provide quality education through a process called reflexivity which was the area of concern for this study. Preliminary literature review clarified that reflection for action alone was not enough to enhance academic performance of learners but needs to be extended by a process called reflexivity. The main research question which led to sub-questions is stated. Purpose of the study, objectives and research design and methodology, the value of the study of the research, demarcation of the study, ethical considerations and trustworthiness were included.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The focal point of this chapter is to review the related literature concerning the study. This also includes the studies conducted on issues regarding teacher reflexivity, practices and learners' academic performance. Reflexivity and practice are considered as intertwined concepts in the sense that reflexivity influences practices. Through reflexivity teachers acknowledge the effects of their teaching practices. The chapter commences with a theoretical framework which anchors the issues of teacher reflexivity, role and the importance of reflexivity in education and its place in philosophy. Methods of teacher self-reflexivity are discussed as well as teaching styles and learning styles.

#### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study is guided by the constructivism theory. Constructivism is the theory of knowledge and understanding of the environment so that people find the meaning of what surrounds them (Fall, 2010). A theory also offers an in depth exploration of how teachers through use reflexive skill and construct teaching and learning. Bolton (2010) emphasises the relationship between constructivism and teachers' reflexivity when stating that reflexivity is the basic of constructive evaluation of actions and experiences. Hibbert (2013) affirms that reflexivity aids individuals not only in making sense of events in their daily lives but it also informs future behaviour. Through reflexive practice teachers are able to construct meaning from whatever they do in the classroom.

This is supported by Belbase (2016) who asserts that Constructivism theory views learning as a procedure in which learners are involved to construct and create their knowledge and understanding through the experiences (Jia, 2010). The theory maintains that teachers' roles and responsibilities are to comprehend the approaches that they have to apply to effectively help learners learn how to learn (Keiler, 2018). Constructivism approach to teaching and learning is different from traditional method of teaching whereby learners are passive because teachers control the classroom and give the direction towards content knowledge acquisition (Keiler, 2018).

As viewed by constructivism theory, learning is a process where learners actively built their knowledge and understanding via experiences (Jia, 2010). According to the idea, knowing teachers' roles and duties in the modernised classroom is necessary for successful application of new pedagogies (Keiler, 2018). In constructivist classrooms, Keiler (2018) claimed that "the teachers' role is to encourage and accept learners' autonomy and create a comfortable atmosphere for learners' expression" (p. 3). Constructivist learners operate in stark contrast to traditional teachers, who rule the classroom and direct learners' acquisition of subject-matter knowledge (Keiler, 2018). Schreiber and Valle (2013) defined constructivism in terms of four individuality: how to create knowledge, social interactive learning where learners learn from others, thinking about thinking and provision of learning tasks that require learners to apply knowledge to solve problems. For this reason, the theory supports reflexive practices teachers undertake to improve teaching. John Dewey's constructivism theory places considerable emphasis on the act of doing or hands-on learning as the most efficient way of learning (Suhendi&Purwarno, 2018).

Discovery learning is carried out alone, in accordance with the constructivist theory. This is because it is founded on cognitive constructivism and knowledge is acquired for oneself through discovery (Schreiber & Valle, 2013). Similarly, reflexive teachers need to expand knowledge about their experiences in the course of self-observation in order to enhance instructional strategies. To improve their instruction and the general performance of learners, teachers require employing in collaborative learning and peering observation.

In addition, Constructivist Theory supports experiential based learning or reflexive learning. Learning is constructed, new perceptions, thoughts and information are internalized through current and previous occurrences (Amineh&Asi, 2015). This means that Constructivist Theory requires one to be reflexive about one's own and others' construction of reality and understanding. Therefore, the constructivism philosophy is that education should be centered on learners and their experiences. Constructivist philosophers place a strong focus on original thought, individual uniqueness, and the guiding function of teachers. Rajshree (2012) provides evidence that a constructivist teacher does not view learning as a fixed curriculum but rather as an opportunity for discussion and idea sharing. The teacher's position transforms from one of transmitter to one of participant in the process of change. Class is viewed as a space for creation rather than replication.

The researcher opts for the above-mentioned theory because learners have to explore and discover the new information on their own. For this reason, constructivism theory was found vital for the study because it seeks and examines the role of reflexive teachers on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic outcome. The next section is an overview of the reflexivity in the discipline of philosophy.

### **2.3 REFLEXIVITY AND ITS PLACE IN PHILOSOPHY**

Reflexivity is defined by Maclean, Harvey, and Chia (2012) as the ability of an actor to develop a practical understanding of them inside a community, to respond strategically, and think more critically, and to sharpen understanding in reaction to events and the outcome of their actions. Reflexivity, according to Cunliffe (2020), is the practice of critical awareness of one's context, course of action, and power dynamics during the teaching process. The word "reflexivity" has been used in a variety of academic fields, including philosophy. Philosophy discourse, as stated by Jeremiah (2013), contains reflexive thoughts and creates this crucial component since the thinking mind is governed by logic. Reflexivity and logic become interwoven as one of philosophy's subfields. Logic is a means of thinking logically and inferring conclusions based on verifiable facts, according to Maddy (2012).

According to Novaes (2012), logic is a methodical process of thinking that establishes the causes of conclusions or the justification of the truth. Reason, rationality, and justification are all implied by the term "logic," and it is in this sequence that reasoning works. According to Maddy (2012), if thinking is orderly, it is logical and rational. Nevertheless, if thinking seems disordered, logic becomes irrational. Thus, logic is demonstrated through engaging in tasks that require reasoning, establishing drawing conclusions from the evidence at hand, and other similar acts. In this regard, Logic provides teachers with the concept and skills necessary to identify and evaluate practices effectively (Maddy, 2012).

### **2.4 REFLEXIVE LEARNING**

Several philosophers, such as John Locke and Immanuel Kant, developed the idea of reflexive learning (Afolayan, 2016). Reflexive learning refers to the sort of learning where people examine their own experiences in order to become familiar, receptive, and critical of them. In Afolayan (2016) opinion, reflexive learning primarily focuses on experiences related to one's own identity, beliefs, values, and attitudes. As a result, the teaching strategy is considered successful if it helps teachers construct their critical analysis abilities and identify



how learners are doing academically. Based on the discussion above, reflexivity is conceptualized as the instrument used to develop teacher practices. The next section is going to discuss the concept of reflexivity.

#### **2.4.1 CONCEPTUALISING REFLEXIVITY**

Reflexivity is both a notion and a process (Palagamas, Sanchez, Molintas, Caricativo, 2017). Reflexivity as a notion describes a specific state of consciousness. In the view of Lambert, Jomeen, and McSherry (2010), reflexivity requires self-awareness, which implies participating fully in the educational process. It is about acknowledging that teachers contribute to the social milieu in which they reside. According to Palagamas et al. (2017), reflexivity is a process that involves assessment of the importance of subjectivity in the lessons and learning process.

Teachers continually consider their ideals as well as their social background, location, and presumptions, which have an impact on their teaching practices. Reflexivity is thus considered essential- potentially facilitating understanding of every activity the teacher is doing in the classroom. It is the belief of the researcher that reflexivity assists teachers to be focused at all the times.

#### **2.4.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLEXIVITY**

Reflexivity, as explained by Aristotle, is essential for human flourishing. It (reflexivity) serves as the foundation for a positive assessment of events and behaviours (Lamb & Aldous, 2016). Self-reflexivity helps to create who we are through assisting one gain self-awareness and a sense of their professional identity through reflecting on their lived experiences (Hibbert, 2013). In the same breath, Morin (2011) added that having a comprehensive understanding of one's personality, including strengths and flaws, thoughts, beliefs, motivation, and emotions, constitute self-awareness. Reflexivity permits appreciation for other people, how they consider others, their attitudes and responses in a particular time. Topuz and Arasan (2014) supported by stating that self-awareness is having a clear and realistic insight of who one is.

Individuals, institutions, and cultures are all shaped significantly by reflexivity in how they approached professional ethics (Hibbert, 2013). Additionally, it shapes a person's character by encouraging them to uphold moral principles and civic duties (Hibbert, 2013). This indicates that ethics and reflexivity are closely related. This is so because the expression ethics

is drawn from the ancient Greek word 'ethika,' which denotes the study of habits and a person's choice of behaviour (Prinsloo, 2012). In agreement, regarding the value of human behavior, including what is the right and wrong of the actions and both the good and bad of motive behind, Fox (2010) affirms that ethics is a branch of philosophy. Furthermore, Atjonen (2015) perceived ethics as referring to the normative (2015) thought that the term "ethics" referred to the normative evaluation of an individual's or social group's behaviour and character.

According to the above argument, the researcher is of opinion that there is a relationship between reflexivity and ethics. Reflexivity offers a way of foregrounding the moral and ethical and ethical responsibilities for people. Ethics as set of rules are pre-scribed to govern individual actions, monitor and regulate an individual's action in support of efficient functioning of instruction and learning. On the other hand, ethics control people in different fields, discipline them to be responsible, understand and think deeply about what they are doing and what is expected of them. Teachers are aware of their job description and theycomprehend boundaries as to where teachers should act. Below is the description of reflexivity and reflection.

### **2.4.3 REFLEXIVITY VERSUS REFLECTION**

Reflective practice and taking action have long been the cornerstones of teacher preparation programmes and ongoing professional development in the field of education (Feutch et al., 2017). For someone to be considered as a professional in the classroom environment means being able to assess personalpractices. Such meditation is meant to be used thoughtfully to engage introspective conversations about important issues with peers (Archer, 2012). But reflection alone does not always imply practise that is influenced by reflection. According to Feutch et al. (2017), concentrating on the reflexive process may help facilitate reflection for action. Reflexivity is a reflective process that inspires action for a transformative learning environment. Accordingly, reflection develops into reflexivity when it is influenced by deliberate internal dialogues that result in modifications to educational practises, expectations, and beliefs. It goes without saying that reflexivity promotes in-depth professional learning and results in long-lasting transformation in education practices.

Ryan (2015) professes that reflexivity on a regular basis is frequently employed synonymously with other words such as transformational reflection. Likewise, Ryan and

Bourke (2013) see reflection as an essential part of reflexivity, which is defined by internal debate and purposeful action after reflective thought. They further mention that some certain types of reflective learning used metacognition, which is a strategy that is related to “thinking about thinking” (Brownlee, Ferguson, Ryan, 2017). That alone, however, cannot successfully manage to address all the anticipated that may arise during teaching and learning. Reflexivity, as opposed to reflection, is characterized by internal dialogue to understand and evaluate various perspectives (those held by individuals and those situated in a larger social context, such as those based on school policies, curriculum expectations, and social justice agendas), and to maintain or modify courses of action as a result of its dialogue (Archer, 2010).

In support of Archer (2012), Ryan and Bourke (2013) dispute that in order to encourage and promote changes in teaching practices; teachers must be involved in a reflexivity process which may take in to account their own personal inspirations and standards as teachers. The distinctive quality of reflexivity is that it displays 'bending back', or self-referential, features (Archer, 2012, p.2). Timsina (2014) also shows the critical role teachers have in their learners' academic success. The primary determinants of learners' academic development are their teachers. Therefore, it is assumed that teachers can successfully educate learners and improve the learners' performance if they possess strong critical reflexivity and optimal teaching.

#### **2.4.4 THE ROLE OF REFLEXIVE PRACTICE IN EDUCATION**

Stingu (2011) maintains that reflexive practice has been used to develop teachers' competence to assess their own practices. Dewey (1933) and Schon (1983) are the theorists that have immense influence in the area of reflexive practices (Stingu, 2011). Reflexivity practice was first identified by Dewey (1933) as an action that involves thoughtful, ongoing reflection on any belief. The study conducted by Stingu (2011) explored the reflexive approaches applied during teacher trainings and means used to develop teachers' aptitude to consider their practices. The findings suggest that reflexive practice was an effective practice which brought a series of advantages to teachers that practiced it.

The most crucial competency for professional work is reflexivity, which has caused the educational process for professional development to be re-examined (Fagnant & Gray, 2010). Furthermore, reflexive practice extends teachers' professional identity and considers teachers' conducts interactions amongst themselves and different opinions about teaching

practices (Stingu, 2011). Williams and Morgan (2013) also add that reflexivity promotes deep comprehension of professional learning for teachers and brings about sustainable change in education, and it enhances teachers' competence of self-inspection, individual scrutiny and self-assessment.

Reflexivity, according to Cunliffe (2020), is the practice of critical awareness of one's context, course of action, and power dynamics during the teaching process. This proves that teachers who do not engage in reflective practice lack insightful information that may further enliven and guide teaching and learning. Reflexive practice also allows teachers to evaluate and modify their methods, ensuring that learners receive valuable and relevant instruction. Additionally, it helps them react to people and situations with tremendous awareness and conscience as they develop. Reflexivity, according to Norton and Sliep (2018), is a tool for inquiry, adjustment, and transformation. It directs one in the direction of performativity and accountability.

A reflexive teacher has the ability to move towards the goal of teaching and become cognizant to multiple perspectives. In as far as teaching is concerned; Norton and Sliep (2018) consolidate that teachers who are not reflexive cannot develop skills of critical thinking and critical consciousness which are emancipatory and transformative. Consequently, the role of reflexive practice in education is great because teachers with comprehension critically look at what they have learned and consider how the products of what is learned can impact the environment they work in.

## **2.5 CONCEPTUALISING TEACHING**

Everywhere in the world, schools have existed as institutions designed to support teaching as a practice or education for the purpose of fulfilling any society's educational goals (Rajagopalan, 2019). In other words, effective teaching supports the learners' effective and constructive understanding of the material, desired knowledge, and abilities. In this teaching methodology, there is contact between teachers and learners in which the teachers serve as facilitators while the learners take an active role in their education.

In support of the above description, Kuppuswamy (2012) declared that teaching is closely linked to education, whose prime objective is to convey about the preferred modifications of the learner's conduct and provide a process of speeding up the attainment of those

adjustments by the learner. As a result, education is usually referred to be a process that allows individuals to obtain and develop new information, skills and attitudes (Rajagopalan, 2019). Teaching as a course of action is regarded as the opportunity for achieving the aim of education.

According to Anthony (2010), any teaching succession pay most attention on three prime factors which include learners, teachers and the subject, with teaching being the most important factor because it serves as the medium of communication between learners and the subject. In support of this, Kuppuswamy (2012) posits that policy makers have reconsidered several reforms to raise schools' standards such as new standards and tests, changes to school operations, revised curricula and model of governance. Even so, studies have repeatedly revealed that the innermost agents in determining the success or malfunction of the school initiatives are the teachers.

On the other hand, teaching is described as an art and a discourse concerning two parties for the purpose of converting knowledge (Kuchhar, 2014). As indicated by the University of Queensland (2012), teaching has to assist learners to become independent. It ought to be responsive to learners' prior knowledge and experience. According to the constructivist theory; learning is an active process in which students create and assimilate new concepts, ideas, and knowledge using their own prior and current learning and experiences (Ramoutar, 2019). As a result, learners should not be taken for granted that they come to class with a blank mind. Their experiences must be taken into consideration as potentials source of learning.

Teachers participate in reflexive practice, a crucial component of professional growth, in that style of constructive teaching (Ryan & Bourke, 2013). Professional development, according to Nishimura (2014), is an organized form of learning that influences the teacher's practices and enhances learners' learning outcomes. One of the characteristics of professional development is the inclusion of content-focused discussions that directly address teachers' patterns of decision-making when mediating the learning styles of their students (Hartie, 2016).

The inclusion of content –focused discussions indicate that the practice is more transformational since it is influenced by teachers' high levels of self-awareness as they evaluate the current circumstance and make adjustments. Teachers can also evaluate their

own contributions to the situation and the reasons why things are the way they are (Ryan & Bourke, 2013). Thus, it becomes necessary for teachers as reflexive professionals to provide quality type of teaching to learners. Teachers have to be accessible to learners and their parents at all times, as well as to be kind, considerate, enthusiastic, devoted, patient, energetic, communicative, and always learning new things.

### **2.5.1 QUALITY TEACHING**

In education, the word quality is widely used. Quality is subjective, although there are good teachers, good classrooms, and good curricula (Collins, 2017). According to Collins (2017) teachers value various things in their classes depending on who they are, where they are from, and what experiences they have. They require a set of criteria to direct their concept of quality teaching, similar to the explicit quality standards teachers give learners (Jeyaraj, 2019). Responsive and reflexive teachings are components of quality teaching. Teaching should be considerate about the learning processes and learning preferences of the learners. According to Jeyaraj (2019), reflexive practices and effective teaching should offer support for the goals and requirements of instruction. The following is the review of the teacher reflexive practices.

### **2.6 TEACHERS REFLEXIVE PRACTICES**

As they are used to increase learners' knowledge and skills, teacher practices are seen as being crucial to a teacher's work routine (Frelin, 2010). According to Uibu and Kikas (2014), teachers' preferences for instructional strategies in the classroom are linked to the objectives they specify. According to Vaughn (2014), teachers must use techniques that are appropriate for the learners' age, stage of perceptiveness and social development, and surroundings. Uibuet al. (2021) further elucidates that teachers must select unique instructional strategies that take learners' needs into consideration.

As defined by Khader (2012), reflexive teaching practices are the collection of instructional tactics and procedures used in teacher-learner interactions in the classroom. Those procedures ought to improve learners' social and cognitive abilities (James & Pollard, 2011). Based on the findings, teachers choose to adopt instructional methods that put the improvement of learners' collective skills in the background while emphasizing memorisation and application of previously taught material (Huitt & Dawson, 2011). In the opinion of Gillies and Boyle (2010), social ability is the key to resolving conflicts and coping in society. Teachers need to

use strategies that promote collaboration and improve communication skills in order to enhance their students' social development (Gillies & Boyle, 2010).

According to Cillers, et al (2018), all the classroom activities teachers carry out are relevant to teaching methods or procedures that teachers implement to ease learning and achieve objectives. Cillers et al (2018) add that teacher practices identify lesson presentation together with the organisation of the activities and use of teaching materials. In addition, Honge (2016) illustrates that teacher practices include demonstration of confidence on elements such as classroom organization, management and lesson preparation and presentation. This part captures teacher practices organized in wide areas such as: classroom culture, instruction and socio-emotional skills.

However, because it is frequently done in the present and requires greater comprehension, reflexive practice is far more transforming. Reflexive teachers, as seen by Stingu (2012), have a high level of self-awareness because they can appraise the situation as it develops and make adjustments as they proceed. They also have the capacity to assess their own contributions to the existing results and to examine why things transpire as they do. This is where self-reflexivity issue comes up.

## **2.6.1 SELF-REFLEXIVITY**

Self-reflexivity, according to Popoveniuc (2014), is the capacity for a person to continuously converse with their entire selves about their experiences. Its core idea is to turn into a fully-fledged professional by taking the long view. Self-reflexivity, according to Popoveniuc (2014), also relates to reflexive practice in a way that generates fresh insights and finally acts as a catalyst for change. The teachers now serve as the subject of their own observation.

### **2.6.1.1 METHODS OF SELF-REFLEXIVITY**

Reflexive-self is defined as the capacity to reflect on one's past and assess one's identity in relation to others. Self-reflexivity broadens interpersonal contact by introducing a person's sense of confidence, personality, self-perception, and self-worth (Popoveniuc, 2014). Self-reflexivity is therefore an influential practice that builds up teachers to be better teachers. That is, self-reflexivity takes one into anything they become more aware of. The awareness then fits itself back into latest ideas; new methods of doing things and insights which eventually serve as the source of change as one observes themselves (Popoveniuc, 2014). The

methods of self-reflexivity are discussed hereunder and their relevance to the study is established.

#### 2.6.1.2 SELF-OBSERVATION

Self-observation is used as an overarching word for any progression in which the self is taken as object of interest or mirror image at the present moment (Todd, 2017). Self-examination is the method that leads towards reflexive teaching; it allows teachers an extrachance to think about instruction approaches and tasks performed in class (Lestari, 2015). According to Sassi (2016) self-introspection or self-screening which are used conversely in the literature is a “systematic approach to the observation, evaluation and management of one’s behaviour in order to have a better understanding and control over the behaviour” (p. 34). Therefore, self-inspection and evaluation of the practice helps a teacher to automatically self-assess and act in response to the circumstances as they were unfolding. Reflexive practice ensures a level of responsibility in teachers by demonstrating responsive actions whenever possible.

Lestari (2015) separates observation in a wide sense as a method of learning about teaching as opposed to a means of assessing teaching in and of itself. It is one of the most popular methods used by teachers to engage in critical thinking. In this regard, a teacher can reflect on what they did in class, consider why they did it, and consider critically if it was successful or not. Sassi (2016) investigated teachers' attitudes toward using self-observation during practice as a method of approach. It was found that teachers have the chance to evaluate their own lessons, assess their personalities, and pinpoint their areas of expertise. According to Sassi's (2016) results, some teachers refuse to engage in self-observation because they feel responsible for the learners' work.

Todd (2017) investigates how instructors perceived peer assessment as a tool for their own growth as professionals. It also looked into whether new and seasoned teachers have distinct perspectives on the classroom observation procedure. Peer observation helped them develop professionally and establish collegial connections, according to the results. Some of the participants, however, also felt that there were many barriers to peer monitoring, such as fear of being observed.



### **2.6.1.3 PEER-OBSERVATION**

Peer observation gives practitioners in any profession the ability to learn about what's important in the field and how experts react to and behave in a variety of settings (Todd, 2017). In other words, peer observation involves teachers viewing one another's lessons, learning from one another, and emphasizing their own needs as well as the opportunity to learn from and critique their peers' teaching strategies (Department of Education and Training, 2018). Against this background, teachers collaborate in a systematic and agreed-upon manner through peer observation to identify and improve each other's practices. Tosriadi et al (2018) also assert that, one advantage of observing other teachers is that it allows them to become familiar with methodologies that would significantly advance their progress.

The teacher, who has been observed, stands a high chance to collect information, review it and find ways to make it more useful to improve classroom teachings. (Tosriadi et al, 2018). With regard to the advantages of both the viewer and the attended, Todd (2017) claims that the “skillfully handled, classroom observation can benefit both the observer and the observed, serving to form and enhance the professional skill of both people” (p.13). Similarly, Kennedy (2016) claims that part of the important professional reflection one could engage in to improve performance can be based on observation of and by the others.

### **2.6.1.4 STRUCTURE OF PEER-OBSERVATION**

Depending on the requirements and objectives of each teacher, assessment by coworkers can be accomplished in many various ways. The most popular model for colleagues to observe each other for improvement is through clinical supervision, which is the practice that places an emphasis on enhancing pedagogical practice through the direction of observation (Eri, 2014). Three stages make up the process: the pre-observation consultation which is the meeting held before observation, the actual or real observation, and the follow-up observation which rely only on issues discovered during observation.

#### ***a) Pre-observation consultation***

Classically, two teachers, the observer and the observed, meet prior to the class to discuss about the lesson's focus and objectives and to agree on the observation route or instrument to be used depending on the agreed point of focus (Eri, 2014).

### ***b) Classroom observation***

At this juncture, the teachers visit the classes and accomplish the observation using the procedure agreed upon in the preliminary meeting. Eri (2014) recommends that informing learners that someone is coming to observe the class can moderate the tension and allow the lesson to unfold as naturally as possible.

### ***c) Post-observation discussion***

Teachers meet to present the feedback constructively. It is a chance for teachers to discuss and assess on the features of instructional practices which are agreed on as the observation focus (Department of Education and Training, 2018). The discussion supports the sharing of practice and built awareness about the impact of teaching strategies on learners' learning outcomes and they learn from each other and one another.

## **2.6.1.5 COLLABORATIVE PEER-LEARNING**

According to Laal & Laal (2012), collaborative learning (CL) is a method of teaching and learning that involves teams of individuals cooperating to solve problems, carry out tasks, or produce a product. In collaborative teaching approach, sometimes refer to as cooperative teaching or team teaching, teachers work with the same group of learners to provide instruction, guidance, and mentoring (Laal and Laal, 2012). Laal et al (2012) carried out the research to examine the advantages of group instruction and learning. According to the research findings, shared learning encouraged working with others in manner that respected and highlighted each person's unique gifts, skills, and ability to contribute to groups. Additionally, it was claimed that group members accepted accountability and had joint power. Ghedin and Aquario (2020) argue that collaborative teaching facilitated teacher growth. In the study, the focus is on employing teaching collaboration as a model of teaching. According to Ghedin and Aquario (2020), collaborative teaching is the persistent sharing of knowledge and support amongst colleagues that enables them to come up with novel solutions to common difficulties.

Collaborative teaching is seen as the primary aspect of teacher professional development and a medium to increase teacher knowledge (Stanley, 2011). It is believed that the main component of teacher professional development and a means of enhancing teacher expertise is collaborative teaching. According to Stanley (2011), when teachers work together to teach, they share resources, expertise, and teaching strategies. As a result, a set of shared beliefs is

developed. According to Badiali and Tinus (2010), collaborative teaching aims to give teachers the chance to learn from one another through networking and helping one another to enhance their classroom practices. Furthermore, Badiali and Tinus (2010) state that collaborative teaching improves teachers' methods of instruction because they are able to share experiences, achievements, and difficulties.

There are challenges coupled with collaborative teaching. Rytivaara and Kershner (2012) state that school 'micro politics' is an issue that hinders teachers' collaboration in schools. Some teachers frequently resist participating in discussion and assessment of practices that result in improved teaching and personal growth and development. There is proof in some schools of some negative attitudes of some teachers to collaborate in teaching activities (Rytivaara&Kershner, 2012). They further elaborate that teachers manifest lack of commitment towards this activity.

There seems to be differences of beliefs on the appliance of reflexive practices by some teachers. It is of the researchers' view that reflexive practice influences the level of responsibilities in teachers. Therefore, it is of great importance for teachers to grow professionally and personally.

## **2.6.2 REFLEXIVE TEACHING APPROACHES AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT**

Teachers have to apply some reflexive techniques that permit them to improve in their teaching. One of the approaches is Experience Base Learning (EBL). According to Conneely and Tangney (2016) experiential learning is a concept that pays attention on teachers' experiences to develop their practices whilst in the classroom, experimenting, reflecting and adapting new theories, practices and content. Pital, et al (2020), claim that experiential learning is a device for self-direction and professional development activities that teachers connect to. As thus, experiential learning is utilized as an approach in the development of practice value in learners (Efstratia, 2014). Efstratia (2014) further corroborates that experiential learning focuses on the learning process of the individual and concerns the improvement of learners' abilities, such as memory, creativity and sensitivity to achieve knowledge.

Conneely and Tangney (2016) investigated on the execution of experiential based learning approach with teachers in the Irish secondary level schools who were asked to make

important pedagogical change as part of major curriculum reform. The findings demonstrated that the process influenced teachers' beliefs, resulting in meaningful alteration in the classroom practices. Owing to that, experiential learning signifies the function experience plays in the learning process. In this way, teachers through EBL benefit from the discoveries and experiences by learning through observation and interactions as they evaluate their practices. Patil, et al (2020) also maintains that experiential learning means learning from experiences or learning by acting. Thus, the approach introduces teachers in the experiences and then encourages positive suggestions about their teaching experiences and how they can develop new skills, fresh attitudes and new ways of thinking deeply about teaching practices.

## **2.7 REFLEXIVE PEDAGOGY**

In this context, reflexive as the method of practice and teaching offer an overarching structure to engage with diversity and to clarify the arising issues concerning learning plan and teaching practices (Rothman, 2014). Teachers become reflexive practitioners who take into consideration different teaching styles and develop a new combination of learning or teaching repertoires (Rothman, 2014). As constructivism advocates that learners build their knowledge, in reflexive pedagogy, a learner becomes a knowledge creator and undertakes activities that are meaningful and reasonable. Joseph (2014) adds that reflexive pedagogy enables teachers to become learners of their learners' diverse life worlds. These learners' diverse worlds comprise learners' culture, metaphors, and language and learning styles. Joseph (2014) examines the merits of adopting retrospective teaching as a reliable and active means of reflexivity. It was discovered that reflective learning is an active, complicated, and questioning process. The ability to create, deconstruct, and rebuild their personal reality is essential for developing awareness of oneself. Learning styles are discussed as the dialogue of reflexivity moves teachers to be carefully considered when it comes to teaching styles, and those should allow learners to fully participate in learning.

### **2.7.1 TEACHING STYLES**

The impression of teaching styles refers to the way teachers teach, their unique mannerism complemented by their choice of teaching behaviour and strategies (Inayat&Zehra, 2020). Every teacher develops a personal style of teaching which feels most comfortable.

### **2.7.1.1 TEACHER-CENTRED TEACHING STYLE**

The teacher-centered approach has been described in many different ways by scholars. According to Otukile-Mongwaketse (2018), to suggest that education is teacher-centered implies that the teacher maintains complete control over all of the activities in the classroom and every aspect of the learners' experience. It is described as a technique centered on memorisation or rote learning by Muganga and Ssenkusu (2019). The teacher-centered approach, in particular, the traditional teaching style, has long been practiced (Ahmed, 2013). In a typical classroom, learners become passive or, more accurately, are only the recipients of the teachers' expertise (Shah, 2020). Learners' degree of educational advancement is hampered by the lack of learner control (Kaymakamoglu, 2018).

Ahmed (2013) later stated that the teaching method also prevents learners' personal development. However, Baghoussi's (2021) study examines the reasons for and perceptions that Mostaganem secondary school teachers have about the Teacher-centered Approach (TCA), the methodology that was largely used in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). The study's findings supported the notion that teachers were knowledgeable about the range of teaching strategies and techniques that were available. The results demonstrated that teachers continued to use a teacher-centered strategy that constructivism does not support. Multiple limitations, including the crowded nature of the classroom, the traditional physical classroom setting, and the time limits brought on by extensive English programmes all contributed to this attitude.

### **2.7.1.2 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHERS IN TEACHER-CENTRED TEACHING**

According to Ahmed (2013), the teacher and their professional competencies play a significant role in the amount of instructional knowledge learned. The single decision-maker in the classroom is the teacher; they choose the curriculum, instructional strategies, learning profiles, and various modes of assessment (Ahmed, 2013). With regard to behaviour, education, and employment, teachers have always been expected to serve as role models for their learners and society at large. In addition, Xhemajli (2016) said that under the traditional method of instruction, the teacher serves as the primary facilitator of all educational and vocational activities in the classroom.

Teachers who favour the teacher-centered approach took control of the classroom environments they had decided are important to influence learners' behaviour in the way they

believe (Ahmed, 2013). Ahmed (2013) looks into the university level's use of a teacher-focused approach to student learning. It was determined that the teacher-centered strategy had a beneficial effect. However, Mackatiani et al. (2018) investigated the factors that underlie the use of a teacher-focused strategy and their impacts on the performance of learners. The method was cited as not being suitable for young children. Apart from that, information is given by the teacher. The system appears to be unsuccessful and inadequate for the performance of the learners based on the role of the teacher in relation to the traditional method of teaching. Surprisingly, Ganyaupfu (2013) asserts a link between poor academic achievement on the part of learners and the use of inadequate teaching strategies. Ahmed (2013) reveals, effective teachers have the power and obligation to emphasize the value of learners' independence and to encourage them to use their imaginations.

### **2.7.1.3 LEARNER-CENTRED TEACHING STYLE**

In contrast to traditional classroom, Dewey advocates that schools and classrooms should be representative of real-life situations, permitting children to participate in learning activities interchangeably and flexibly in a variety of social setting (Dewey, 1938, Gudek, 2014). He is of the opinion that abruptly introducing too much academic content, out of the context with children's social lives, bordered on unprincipled teaching behaviour (Flinders & Thornton, 2013).

Dewey's approach is viewed well by educators who prioritize the needs of their learners (Schiro, 2013). Many of Dewey's educational principles and social learning theory could be observed in action in learner-centered classrooms. He sees the classroom as a place where learners can come together to learn and solve issues as a group. In those classrooms, learners may be seen hard at work building their own knowledge through personal meaning, rather than teacher-imposed information and teacher-directed activities, in line with constructivism's claims (Schiro, 2013).

In those classrooms, it is evident that the learners are learning by doing and using hands-on activities to solve difficulties. When teachers organise lessons, they take into account the interests of their learners and combined the curriculum with a focus on project-based learning. The educational experience includes the full child's development, not just academic development, including intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth (Schiro, 2013).

The learner-centered teaching method has taken the place of the teacher-centered approach. The more independent and self-directed learners who actively participated and created their own learning experiences benefited the most from learner-centered education (Ahmed, 2013). This implies that learners take ownership of their education and actively participate in it (Darsih, 2017). Instead of focusing on how teachers teach, the learner-centered approach does involve learners to take charge of their learning. The method presents a variety of types of methods that changed the teacher's function from one of information provider to one of facilitator in the instruction of learners (Ahmed 2013). For instance, Algeria has implemented educational reforms since 2022 with the goal of helping learners develop the skills and competencies required to meet 21st-century challenges (Baghoussi&Ouchdi, 2019). The decision on educational reforms was unique to Algeria; Lesotho also adopted an integrated curriculum which catered for learner centered pedagogy. The new reforms were intended for teachers to provide teaching and learning approaches proposed to equip learners with knowledge, skills and competences sufficient to deal with life challenges (Raselimo&Mahao, 2015).

The system is built on the Competency-Based Approach (CBA), which is shown to be efficient since it incorporates the principles of the Learner-Centred Approach (LCA) and is based on constructivism. In order to increase learners' sense of autonomy, responsibility, and creativity, CBA placed learners at the centre of the learning process and involved them in the knowledge-self appreciation (Baghoussi&Ouchdi, 2019). Teachers resist change and continued to use the old teacher-centered approach teaching styles even though the English curriculum and CBA featured learner-centered approach and learner autonomy concepts. Their top priority is to cover the curriculum and force learners to memorise as much material as they could so they could recite it verbatim in exams (Baghoussi&Ouchdi, 2019).

#### **2.7.1.4 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN LEARNER-CENTRED TEACHING**

The teachers' roles have to shift in order to implement learner-centered teaching in the classroom. According to Xhemajli (2016), such shift necessitates that teachers have knowledge, be educators, advisers, friends, organizers, coordinators, associates, assessors; in other words, be versatile individuals. That suggests that teachers should participate in extracurricular activities, in-school events, and the development of cultural programmes. One of the factors teachers should take into account is cooperating with learners. This does not

mean that teachers must just hear the learners' ideas; rather, effective and democratic work in the classroom shows that teachers acknowledge the influence of the students.

According to Yuldashevna (2019), learners are positioned in learner-centered instruction as a subject and an equal partner of the teacher. Teachers who value their learners' thoughts and inputs structure the learning process in a way that makes it easier for learners to learn while also inspiring interest and enjoyment in them as they applied the program's contents.

Some of the difficulties the teachers encounter when applying learner-centered pedagogy are discussed in the section. Time constraints for completing the programme are among the challenges for implementing a learner-centered approach. (Keiler, 2018) made observations about how well learners perform in external exams, their resistance to changing traditional teaching methods, peer pressure from other teachers, the lack of flexibility from teachers in the classroom, the propensity of teachers to teach as they had been taught, and concerns about classroom management. The results indicated that even though teachers have difficulty in shifting from traditional way of teaching to the learner centered one, learner centered is the best one for learners. The section next highlights one of the strategies teachers can use to actively involve learners in the learning process.

### **2.7.1.5 INQUIRY BASED LEARNING**

According to Fagnant and Grahay (2010), an inquiry-based teaching strategy demonstrates itself as a strategic way to encourage learners to employ their reflexive thinking in more expressive and varied ways. Teachers need to consider their learners' needs and upcoming difficulties. In the contention of Gholam (2019), there is a demand for teaching methods that encourage analytical thinking, assessment, questioning, cooperation, communication, and investigation in order to ensure that learners have the skills necessary to meet future demands and expectations. According to Avsec and Kocijancic (2014), inquiry-based learning (IBL) is a learner-centered instructional strategy that positions learning through the use of relevant tasks like cases, projects, and research. Learners are supposed to cooperate in order to determine how to approach the issue and gather information.

With IBL, learners are enthusiastically engaged on how they learn and how they are making sense of their surroundings. By stating that "allowing learners to interact with materials, models, manipulate variables, explore phenomena, and attempt to apply principles afford



learners with opportunities to notice patterns, discover their underlying causalities, and learn in ways that are robust (p.113)," Gholam (2019) refersto the advantage of IBL in the classroom. IBL adoption maximizes learning as a result. Conforming to Caswell and LaBrie (2017), IBL is an instructional strategy in which learners take charge of their education by posing, analysing, and responding to questions.

Additionally, it is seen as a type of independent learning where learners assume ownership of how they arelearning (Spronken, Smith, Walker, 2010). IBL has gained recognition as a learning organisation that encourages the improvement of learners' problem-solving abilities. According to Gholam (2019), there are many different types of IBL, such as scrutiny, resolving challenges, and innovativeopinion. Investigation is looked at by Guido (2017) from both the learner's and point of view. IBL centers on examining open-ended problems from the perspective of the learners, whereas inquiry-based instruction centers on guiding learners past their natural curiosity and into the realization of critical thinking and knowledge. As a result, knowledge is being created rather than being bestowed by the teacher in this situation. Learners should take charge of how they learn according to constructivist as well as proponent of IBL, John Dewey (Gholam, 2019). As they learn through contact with their environment in IBL, learners are more likely to comprehend and recall concepts. According to Santrock (2012), John Dewey is adamant that learners should be reflective problem solvers.

The preceding section highlighted the teaching strategy that could improve learners' academic performance. The next focus is on the differentiated instructions, as well as key elements of differentiated instructions.

#### **2.7.1.6 DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONS**

How to enhance learners' learning outcomes is a major issue for researchers and educational institutions. The issue has prompted extensive investigations into how well schools are run and how successful teachersareat raising learners' achievement (Pham, 2012). The employment of effective teaching strategies is found to be more valued than ever before, given the expansion of learner variety in today's inclusive classrooms (Shareefa, Zin, Abdullah, Jawawi, 2019). When teachers try to put helpful strategies into practice, they should take into account factors including learners' different interests, readiness levels, learning skills, attitudes, and language development (Shareefa et al., 2019).

In the context of inclusive learning, it is teacher's capacity to effectively differentiate teaching essential for catering for individuality and diversity (Marks, Woolcott & Markopoulos, 2021). The selection procedure known as "streaming" or "tracking" based on the outcomes for all learners is the most popular method used to serve varied learning needs, both regionally and internationally (Marks et al., 2021). Papers from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Asia-Pacific area, and Western Europe are among the research papers that question the value of attainment grouping (Marks et al., 2021).

The Australian study by Marks et al. (2021, p. 19) concluded that "the literature generally demonstrated that streaming impacts negatively learners' learning outcomes." For instance, in Mathematics, learners placed in lower ability groups may become disengaged; conversely, learners placed in the highest ability groups may experience disadvantages as a result of the high anticipation placed on them, the rapid pace of the lessons, and the high demands to perform well (Murata, 2013). It has been determined that differentiated instruction is the best approach for embracing the benefits of different groupings. According to the talents, interests, and readiness levels of the students, such instruction suggests components that promote good learning environments while recognizing diversity (Marks et al., 2021).

Although it has been demonstrated that using diversified instruction is a successful technique for learners from diverse backgrounds, there were some barriers that prevented effective implementation of differentiation (Shareefa et al., 2019). The report by Shareefa et al (2019) concerning differentiated revealed that teachers frequently oppose differentiated instruction. The report's main challenges were: (1) insufficient managerial help; (2) minimal parental input; (3) scarcity of time for extra preparation, organizing, and making arrangements of individuals and groups in a large class setting; (4) a lack of learning resources; and (5) the difficulty of meeting individual requirements as well as learners' preferences to learn on their own instead of working in groups or with the whole class.

The research conducted by Shareefa et al (2019) about challenges teacher encountered when when applying DI strategies also indicated that the lack of proper understanding and knowledge about Differentiated Instructions (DI) strategies is impeding the implementation of DI, which ultimately has an impact on students' education (Shareefa, 2019). Teachers' daily workloads also include paperwork, documentation, and administrative responsibilities.

On the contrary, Shareefa et al. (2019) maintains that after obtaining extensive professional development and mentoring, teachers still fail to conduct differentiated instruction. Aldossari (2018) also discovered that some teachers think that traditional teaching methods can maintain order and discipline in the classroom since the DI approach gives students too much flexibility.

The researcher also concurs that effective method of educating and receiving knowledge needs the application of DI practice. The needs of each individual learner are met; learners are not marginalized. Teachers are able to appropriately differentiate lessons by understanding how learners learn best. Teachers try to increase the possibility that each learner in the class would actively engage and personally benefit from any given session by using DI according to their interests. For the teachers to gain knowledge, skills, and create favourable attitudes towards the application of DI, they need professional and personal development courses.

According to Dixon et al (2014) teachers frequently make an effort to give every learner is admitted to the learning tasks that are most effective for all of them, and what is effective for one learner may not be effective for another. Therefore, DI makes sense since it provides a variety of avenues for comprehending material, process, and result while taking into account the child's profile, skills, interests, and learning preferences.

Differentiated education includes a useful reaction to the knowledge of the learners. That requires combining the learners' learning style with the most effective teaching strategies, curriculum objectives, and opportunities to demonstrate the learned material (Ismajli & Imami-Morina, 2018). According to Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012), constructive teacher considers differentiated instructions as is an educational approach that encourages teachers to take into account their learners' prior knowledge before letting them put it into practice. Teachers are therefore charged with assisting learners in realising their full potential in light of their knowledge and environment.

Differentiated instruction is defined by Ismajli and Imami-Morina (2018) as a pedagogical strategy in which teachers adjust what has to be taught, be dedicated to generate a different teaching approach, and repeatedly reviewed the intended learning outcome. In light of this, the teacher's objective in a differentiated classroom is to enable learners to swiftly and

effectively build upon their existing knowledge and form connections with it to address life issues (Mark et al., 2021).

Pham (2012) pointed out that, differentiated instruction is a useful strategy that should be used by teachers. It is instruction that recognised and takes into account the distinctions among learners. According to Dixon et al. (2014), separation of learners is the classroom activity that places significance on the needs of each individual learner and the subject matter. In an attempt to give learners, the chance to study as much and as deeply as possible, teachers have to differentiate their instructions in order to account for variances in their learners' preparation, preferred methods of learning, and learning abilities (Dixon et al., 2014). The uniqueness of the learners makes the necessity for a balanced emphasis clear. According to Ismajli and Imami-Morina (2018), learners differ in terms of prior learning, culture, language, gender, interests, and readiness to learn as well as in their levels of self-awareness, confidence, and independence as learners.

An investigation was taken in the setting of Maldives, a country that emphasised the value of enhancing and advancing inclusive education. According to Shareefa et al. (2019), the New Curriculum Framework (NCF) of Maldives emphasised the need of accommodating individual differences as part of the inclusiveness principle. On the other hand, Lesotho also had taken the responsibility of ensuring that all learners, including those with a variety of learning needs, receive a high-quality education at all levels by The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) (2018). Access to schooling has historically been limited for learners with exceptional needs. The Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (LIEP), which is developed as a result, addresses all unpleasant aspects of exclusion and eliminated the effects of unhelpful feelings and deficiency of interest in diversified ways of knowledge acquisition (MoET, 2018).

### **2.7.1.7 KEY ELEMENTS OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

#### ***a) Learner readiness***

Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) states that readiness does not refer to the learner's common ability but to the acceptable knowledge, understanding and skill level the learner has in relation to a specific progression of learning. Differentiating instruction based on the learner's readiness involves knowing where learners are in the learning continuum, then creating programme features instructional strategies, resources and support the meet them

where they were (Shareefa et al, 2019). Some learners can require remediation or modified expectations; others might need extra time or chance to work independent.

### ***b) Learner interest***

Addressing the learner's interest is crucial to their academic growth, just as it was in the case of readiness. According to Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010, 16) learner's interest is defined as "that which attracts the interest, inquisitiveness, and participation of a learner." Because of this, when teachers vary instruction based on their learners' interests, these learners are driven to make connections between what they are learning and the things they already value. Additionally, interest-based differentiation helps learners find new interests (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). For instance, in a classroom context, teachers may select important concepts and learning tools by matching them to a particular learner's interests across all subject areas. According to Joseph et al. (2013), interest-based differentiated instruction is directly related to student motivation, learner enhancement, creativity, and productivity.

### ***c) Learning profile***

Learners frequently have varied tastes. Others prefer working alone, whereas other learners have a preference to connect with cluster or the entire group of learners (Shareefa et al., 2019). Others are verbal or auditory learners, while many learners are those that learn by seeing while some prefer touching concrete objects during learning. Learners can be given the opportunity to learn in ways that suit individuals considering their learning styles, interests and pace. The possibility for learners to perform some tasks on their own, with a neighbor in the classroom, or with set of learners could be given to learners (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). In accordance with Joseph et al. (2013), learning atmosphere preferences, group course, cognitive styles, and aptitude preferences are the main components for learning profiles. According to research, learners in elementary school perform better when their learning preferences are taken into account during instruction (Joseph et al., 2013).

### ***d) Content differentiation***

In order for students to be more focused and likely to participate in useful and suitable information, teachers should demonstrate a high level of grasp of students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles (Joseph et al., 2013). In this case, content alludes to the knowledge, understanding and the skills learners need to learn. While learning objectives

should constantly remain stable for all learners in the distinguished classroom, teacher differentiated approaches learners use to access content, the ways they present the content and the scaffolding they provide to learners (Shareefa et al, 2019).

***e) Process differentiation***

Process is used to describe how learners learn. Each learner has a preferred method of learning, and effective differentiation includes providing materials for each of these methods, including verbal, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (Shareefa et al., 2019). This process-related approach also takes into account the fact that not all learners need the same level of teacher assistance and that they could choose to work in pairs, groups, or alone (Shareefa et al., 2019). As an illustration of how to differentiate the learning process, teachers should supply textbooks to visual and word learners, permit auditory learners to listen to rather than read, and, finally, give kinesthetic learners the chance to finish an interactive assignment on time.

***f) Product differentiation***

At the conclusion of the class, the students generate a product to show that they have a thorough understanding of the subject matter (Valiande&Tarman, 2011). Tests, projects, reports, and other tasks could be used to demonstrate that.

***g) Learning environment differentiation***

Shareefa et al. (2019) argue that the learning atmosphere has a considerable effect on how comfortable and motivated students are in the classroom. To improve learning, teachers should think about changing the classroom's physical design. In order to lessen distractions and increase comfort level, teachers should create a respectful, secure, and safe environment.

According to Hossieni and Khalili (2011), constructivism theory is a method for engaging conventional concepts and behaviours in unconventional ways that strayed from the established super structural pattern. As a result, differentiated instructions call for reflexive teachers to identify learners' learning styles. The researcher agrees with the above arguments that learners are different even though they are in the same class and age. Teachers through the skill of reflexivity are in position to differentiate learners according to ability, interest and ability.

## **2.8 LEARNING STYLES AND LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE**

Academic performance is defined by Ampofo (2015) as the degree of knowledge, skills, and competencies that learners have acquired in the educational field. This level of knowledge, skills, and competences is frequently assessed using the grades received in the topics that made up the study plan. Academic performance, according to Mvula (2020), is the condition of a learner's attainment on a specific course at a specific moment. Learners vary in a variety of ways. Knowing how learners learn best could be incredibly beneficial for both teachers and learners. According to Awla (2014), the best way to actively involve learners in the learning process, teachers must recognise and comprehend the different learning styles of their learners. The following paragraphs cover several learning styles and the significance of recognising and comprehending them.

### **2.8.1 CLASSIFICATION OF LEARNING STYLES**

Everybody has their own unique processes for absorbing new information. The three primary cognitive learning styles, auditory learning which is learning through listening, visual learning that is learning by seeing and observing, and kinesthetic learning whereby learners manipulate things, must therefore be taken into consideration by a constructivist instructor to emphasize the active role of learners in building their own knowledge in order to promote deeper learning and comprehension (Fernando & Marikar, 2017).

#### **2.8.1.1 AUDITORY (LISTENING)**

The auditory learning style allows auditory learners to learn most effectively by listening or communicating verbally. According to this learning method, listening is the primary method used to assimilate information or knowledge via discussions, lectures, debates, or other verbal presentations (Nilson, 2010). In other words, those with this learning style must immediately listen to the information's source in order to retain and comprehend it. Typically, these learners have trouble understanding direct information when it is written down (Ginting, 2017).

#### **2.8.1.2 VISUAL (SEEING)**

The findings according to Ginting (2017) revealed that visual learners preferred to learn through reading text and studying illustrations, photographs, diagrams, flashcards, graphs, concept and mind maps, graphic models, and other visual materials. Regardless of the degree

of affinity for visual images, it was found in a significant meta research that visual display through the use of pictures was beneficial for learners (Moussa, 2014).

### **2.8.1.3 KINESTHETIC (TOUCHING**

Learning in the kinesthetic domain is best achieved through engaging in hands-on activities. These learners learn best by using their sense of touch; hence they gain greatly from tasks that require them to use their hands (Moussa, 2014). The greatest way for kinesthetic learners to learn is through movement. They like moving their hands and reacted to sounds and music by moving their bodies by juggling or playing with things (Moussa, 2014).

It is critical for teachers and learners alike to understand learning styles. Learners could easily understand and become aware of their learning preferences if they are allowed to construct their learning. They feel more at ease and become aware of their strengths and shortcomings as a result of increased awareness of their learning style. Xu (2011) declares that the importance of knowing a learner's learning style helps teachers to accommodate different learning preferences and makes learning more enjoyable for learners.

### **2.8.1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTIFYING AND UNDERSTANDING LEARNING STYLES**

The constructivist teachers have to support learners' preferred learning modalities (Trif, 2014). The lives of learners are greatly influenced by their learning preferences. Learning styles could be identified for three reasons: academic, personal, and professional, (Awla, 2014). Academic advantages include improving learners' capacity for learning and teaching them how to learn. Learning styles can be incorporated into the learning process after they are recognised by the student (Awla, 2014). Because they (the learners) know how they learn, the learning process is thus simpler, quicker, and more effective. Personal worth entailed raising learners' self-esteem and confidence, learning how to effectively use their brains, and understanding their strengths and weaknesses. They develop their independence and sense of responsibility for learning as a result. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) assert that another purpose of realising learning style is that it helps teachers draw lesson plan to match learners' learning styles. That again calls for teachers to be reflexive as Door (2014) reminded teachers that they should be attentive of their learners' behaviour in the classroom with regard to learning.



## **2.9 CONCLUSION**

The current chapter has provided the sources of information on teacher reflexivity on their practices and how such could enhance academic performance of learners and teachers themselves. The theoretical lens for understanding the study is stated as constructivism theory. Reflexivity is a fundamental component of teacher professionalism that assists in mediating different situations within the environment in which they work. Therefore teachers have to evaluate and communicate their internal thinking and consideration; teachers' skills and actions can stay rigid, even in situations where changes or alteration is required to improve their teaching practices and learners' outcomes. The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology adopted in this study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter covered and provided a detailed description of the research design and methodology, as highlighted in chapter one. The chapter began with a brief general introduction on the research design and methodology, followed by research paradigm and design, data collection, population, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations in the collection of data.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

According to Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri (2002), a research design is a planned framework for how the researcher would carry out the research process to address the research questions. A research design, according to Jongbo (2014) is a strategy that can be employed as to how the researcher would conduct the research. The research methodology helped in investigating the research problem. It identified and described the design and methods employed in carrying out the study. The plan assisted the researcher to select the research site; data collection procedure to respond to the question, population, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations. Research design worked out as strategic framework for action as it served as bridge between research questions and completion of the study (Walliman, 2011). The following are research paradigm and research approaches which were used in the study.

##### **3.2.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

This study's guiding philosophical presupposition was interpretivism. The goal of the interpretivism paradigm, according to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), is to comprehend the subjective realm of human experience. This method attempts to explain the various ways in which people interact with their social environments (Kivunja&Kuyini, 2017). Understanding people and their interpretations of the world around them was emphasised (Martens, 2015). As a result, the basic tenet of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially created while the researcher interacted with the participants by requesting their view or experience on a certain problem (Abubakar, Douglas & Sani, 2018). In that regard, the researcher's job was to gather qualitative data and reveal the perspectives of the participants.

In this paradigm, the researcher was open to learning new things that participants helped to develop (Abubakar et al., 2018). Instead of attempting to generalize the basis of understanding for the entire population, researchers have a tendency to get a deeper grasp of the phenomena and its complexity in its specific context when adopting an interpretivism approach (Kivunja&Kuyini, 2017). The benefit of this paradigm is that it offered a variety of perspectives on phenomena and allowed for the in-depth understanding of objects, people, and other phenomena and events in social context. That type of research can also be conducted in natural setting by utilising key methodologies (Hamersley, 2013).

According to Kuvinja et al. (2017) a paradigm is comprised of elements namely epistemology, ontology and axiology. The elements constitute the basic assumptions, beliefs, norms and values that each paradigm holds. Therefore, it is crucial to relate the elements with the research.

#### **3.2.1.1 Epistemology**

The Greek term episteme, which signifies knowledge, is where the word epistemology originates. Epistemology is a term used in research to define the basic foundations of knowledge, its nature, forms, and methods of acquisition and dissemination (Kuvinja et al., 2017). Focus is placed on the type of human knowledge and comprehension that the researcher could be able to pick up in order to be able to broaden, deepen, and expand understanding in the research topic. As a result, since the participants' subjective experiences were the ones being studied, the subjective evidence was put together based on personal opinions. It was thought that the explanation of knowledge could have an impact on the choice of methodology and interpretation of data.

#### **3.2.1.2 Ontology**

According to Gibson (2017), ontology is a set of presumptions used when talking about the nature of being and the substance of the universe. According to Kuvinja et al. (2017), ontology is concerned with the presumptions that are made in order to believe that something is true or real, as well as the nature or core of the social phenomenon being studied. This helped to comprehend and interpret the information gathered. The presumption compels the researcher to think analytically about the relevance of the research problem and how to address it in order to contribute to its resolution. According to Kuvinja et al. (2017), ontology establishes the true nature, or the fundamental ideas that make up the themes that are

examined to make sense of the meaning contained in data. The target group was interviewed to gather meanings, experiences, and perceptions in order to understand reality.

### **3.2.1.3 Axiology**

The ethical concerns that must be taken into account while preparing to undertake research are referred to as axiology. This entails identifying, assessing, and comprehending the notions of appropriate and inappropriate behavior in relation to the research (Kuvinja, 2017). A consideration is made regarding ethics or ethical conduct the researcher should exhibit toward each participant in the study. Axiology considered the principles that guided the researcher during the conduction of the research, such as how to respect the participants' rights, what are the moral concerns to consider and how to ensure the goodwill of the participants.

## **3.2.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

This study validated a qualitative research approach whereby literature was used in line with presumptions of learning from participants (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative approach associated an in-depth inquiry by means of data gathering from a variety of realistic materials (such as personal experience, introspection, interviews, artifacts, observational, interactional and visual texts) to form the basis for analysis and understanding (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative data was in the form of words, descriptions or narratives (Dawadi et al, 2021).

The qualitative approach employed data instruments such as open-ended questions, in depth interviews (audio or video), and field notes to collect data from participants in their natural setting (Daniel, 2016). Moreover, qualitative approach views human thought and behaviour in a social context and covers a wide variety of phenomenon in order to understand and realize them thoroughly. Human behaviours such as interaction, thoughts, reasoning, composition; norms were studied holistically because of in-depth examination of phenomena (Daniel, 2016).

## **3.2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design is method for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data (Yin, 2018). The researcher used a case study for this study. A case study is a type of research design that was used to produce a thorough, comprehensive understanding of difficult topics in the context of real-world situations (Scribner & Crow, 2012). A case study's focus is an in-depth

analysis of a current occurrence which understands the participants' interpretations of their experiences in the setting of real life (Yin, 2018).

The advantages of using a case study were that it helped the researcher to focus the research on a specific case within the limited parameters of time and space which are population and researcher's time (Baxter & Jack, 2010). Additionally, the case study offered the chance to gather many forms of information, including interviews, papers, observations, surveys, and more (Yin, 2018). It also took into account the opportunity to get a better understanding of a person, as well as their motivations, relationships, and interactions with others (Scribner & Crow, 2012).

### **3.2.4 DATA COLLECTION**

Data for this case study were gathered using a variety of sources and data collection methodologies (Yin, 2014). In order to acquire data for this study, interviews were used. Rowley (2012) define an interview as a discourse between two or more persons during which the interviewer posed questions in an effort to obtain information from the interviewee. Interviews, according to Rowley (2012), were a useful tool for gathering data based on participant practices, beliefs, and ideas.

Participants had the chance to broaden their perspectives and opinions. Because they promoted two-way dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used. In a semi-structured interview, the participants were free to express themselves as much as possible while the researcher has more control over the direction of the conversation and the subject matter to be covered (Dakto, 2015). In a focus group, the researcher similarly guided the conversation (Dilshad et al., 2013).

#### **3.2.4.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Information about people's experiences with a phenomenon or process was elicited through semi-structured interviews. In a given situation, that may be how people explain, comprehend, evaluate, and communicate with one another (Ruslin, et al., 2022). A semi-structured interview gave the researcher the opportunity to get more in-depth details about a phenomenon. Interviewees were given the opportunity to elaborate on a topic in order to detail their experiences, and a researcher organized a guide that was used to direct the interview (Hugh-Jones, 2010). Because the interviewee can provide more information than

was expected, semi-structured interviews were adaptable by becoming flexible and adjust whenever possible. According to Ruslin et al. (2022) the order of the questions may alter, some interview questions may not be asked, or new questions may be added. Therefore, the researcher had to be alert and attend to such situations.

#### **3.2.4.2 FOCUS GROUP**

Focus groups are one of the useful methods for gathering qualitative information. According to Dilshadet al. (2013), a focus group is made up of group of people who share particular traits and who concentrate on discussion of a particular topic. Focus groups offered "a more natural environment than that of individual interview because participants wereand influenced by others, just as they are in real life," according to Dilshad et al. (2013, p. 192).

Focus groups were designed to gather high-quality information from participants in a social setting in order to better understand a particular issue from their perspective. The rationale and goal of focus groups, according to (Cyr, 2016), was to provide a rich and detailed set of facts regarding people's perceptions, ideas, feelings, and impressions of their own environments. Similarly, focus groups were mostly helpful when the goal was to learn about people's perceptions of the problem, their experiences with it, and the causes of their particular way of thinking (Sagoe, 2012). Therefore, the goal was to investigate the teachers' intents towards their practices, justifications for their choices, and styles of instruction.

### **3.3 POPULATION**

Walliman (2011) defines population as a collective term used to explain the total quality of things or subject of the study. For the purpose of this study, the population comprises of primary schools of the Thaba-Tseka district.

#### **3.3.1 PARTICIPANTS' SELECTION**

Through careful selection, the location and study subjects were determined. The study used purposive sampling, which Ngozwana (2018) refers to as a non-probability sample. In order to compare perceptions and understandings of teacher reflexivity, the sample consisted of a manageable number of individual teachers and principals who could be reasonably engaged at various locations or sites in the Thaba-Tseka district. According to Omona (2013), when the aim was to include participants who reflect a wide range of opinions, purposive participants' selection was adopted. The researchers' objective in this instance was to identify

volunteers with particular expertise and experience; as a result, participants were chosen based on their ability to impart understanding of the subject at hand in as much detail as possible.

Nine participants for semi-structured interviews were purposively selected from three primary schools: three principals and three teachers per school. With regard to focus group interviews, the rest of the teachers within the same three schools, who did not take part in semi-structured interviews contributed to focus group interviews. Teachers were key participants for the study because they have a better experience of what they do in the classrooms. Principals were selected because by virtue of their administrative positions. They have a lot of experience with learners' performance and teaching in their schools, therefore, they were capable of providing rich information on the study. Delice (2010) also maintained that teachers were directly involved in the teaching and learning process. Consequently, they were in a good position to provide reliable information for the study.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis, according to Johnson and Christensen (2014), is the process of looking for trends, themes, and overall characteristics while taking into account various variations. Additionally, according to Belotto (2022), categorising qualitative data requires finding themes, constructing categories, and identifying responses' similarities and variances. In order to make wise decisions about how to present data, the primary goal of data analysis in this study was to draw out relevant information from the data (Belotto, 2012). Data analysis was done before, during, and following data collection.

Since the study adopted a qualitative methodology, word interpretation was the subject of data analysis. Moore and Llompert (2017) claim that choosing what data to transcribe is therefore another crucial step in the analytical process. The researcher in this study performed transcription by writing out the vocal material. The transcription process was related to the questions asked. The data management method was verbatim transcription. The interviews were analyzed using codes that were created by applying the most prevalent themes from the data.

### **3.4.1 ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS INTERVIEWS**

Thematic analysis was used by the researcher in the analysis of data from the interviews. According to Kumar (2014), thematic analysis is seen as organized approach to qualitative data analysis that recognises and summarizes message content. Using thematic approach permitted the researcher to realize and think of collective or shared meanings and experiences emerged from the responses given by participants (Kumar, 2014). The researcher listened to the audio and transcribed, codes the similar transcriptions based on the notes merge similar content into various themes.

### **3.5 INTEGRITY OF THE STUDY**

According to Huberts (2018), operating in agreement or harmony with pertinent moral ideals, standards, and rules is a sign of integrity. Integrity, according to Engelbrecht, Heine, and Mahembe (2017), is the observance of moral principles that encapsulate the essence of ethical ideals and may therefore be considered a key factor influencing ethics. While integrity says that ethical standards should be applied in daily activities, ethics are the concepts that governed our actions. This suggests that integrity was attained by taking both moral and trustworthy factors into account. As a result, ethical considerations were crucial in all study fields, but they were more crucial in qualitative research (Arifin, 2018). The researcher had to first obtain permission from the selected primary schools to perform this study.

#### **3.5.1 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In every research project, it is crucial to safeguard participants through the use of suitable ethical guidelines. Due to the extensive duration of the study procedure, ethical considerations were especially important in qualitative research (Arifin, 2018). Informed permission and voluntary involvement were two ethical factors. That eventually meant that the researcher asked the schools conducting the study for their consent. Once more, the researcher avoided the possibility of participant harm, ensured anonymity and confidentiality by restricting the information about participants to the researcher, refrained from using dishonest methods, and gave them the option to leave the study at any time. Moreover, additional values like integrity and respect were observed by the researcher.



### **3.5.1.1 INFORMED CONSENT AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Ethics regulations applied to researchers. In accordance with ethical guidelines for human subject research, informed consent was a necessary step in the research approach (Tulyakul&Meeping, 2020). Before individuals in the research population decided to participate in the study as volunteers, they needed to receive essential information and authorisation (Bryman, 2012). It was crucial that permission had clear and sufficient information, such as descriptions of the research procedure, subject rights, potential risks and benefits, and confidentiality (Bryman, 2012). Every research subject must consent to participate in the study and receive the necessary information to enable them to offer "informed" consent. A verbal agreement or a mix of a written and verbal agreement could also constitute informed consent (King, 2010). The head teachers and the teachers who took part in the study were asked and consented for their permission by the researcher to conduct the study.

### **3.5.1.2 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**

It was essential to keep study participants' identities private. Any information about a person's private life that they prefer not to disclose with others was regarded as confidential, according to Surmiak (2018). Such information was distinguished from publicly available information, which was accessible to everybody. The right of the study participant to maintain control over their privacy and to withhold some information has recently gained more recognition both inside and outside of academia and has been made the subject of substantial legislation. Confidentiality was preserved to preserve the research's anonymity. During the interviews, all the information was recorded using a cell phone which had a password known only by the researcher. The results were described and reported in a way that prevented the participants from being identified.

## **3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

In order to follow the research plan and design, reflexivity in research helped one avoid creating oppressive structures within the research study and the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Trustworthiness was another justification for putting reflexivity into practice. Being trustworthy means preventing researcher bias from distorting what research participants said to fit a predetermined narrative. To confirm the validity of the findings, the data that had been collected was checked. According to Lemon and Hayes (2020), credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability are the four pillars of trustworthiness in

research. Consequently, the applicability of these trustworthiness factors were taken into account in this investigation.

### **3.6.1. CREDIBILITY**

According to Stahl and King (2020), credibility is defined as the accuracy of the data, the participants' perspectives, and the researcher's judgment of how the data were represented. The researcher's ability to share their results with the participants improved credibility. So, in order to ensure that the findings were consistent with reality, principals and teachers were inquired to provide concrete examples to assist the researcher validate their information.

### **3.6.2 DEPENDABILITY**

Dependability is defined by Stahl and King (2020) as the consistency of the data in circumstances that are similar. The consistency of the results over time was the cause dependability. It involved the evaluation of the study's findings, interpretation, and suggestions by the participants in order to ensure that all of these were supported by the data collected from the study's participants. A set of notes was produced during the study to allow the study to be repeated next time.

### **3.6.3 TRANSFERABILITY**

According to Kennedy-Clark (2012), transferability refers to how well research findings from one study may be used to another. Nowellet al (2017) suggest that it was the researcher's duty to make sure that enough background knowledge regarding fieldwork locations was provided to allow the reader to make this transfer. To ensure transferability, the researcher provided a rich description of where the research was carried out, the setting, s ample size and every interview procedure. They were done to aid any reader to make the transferability judgments on their own as they might be reading the study report.

### **3.6.4 CONFIRMABILITY**

According to Nowellet al. (2017), confirmability is all about the researcher's capacity to show that the data accurately reflect the participants' responses and not their prejudices or worldviews. By explaining how conclusions and interpretations were arrived at and illustrating how the results were generated directly from the data, the researcher illustrated confirmability. This was demonstrated in the presentation of qualitative research by including insightful statements from the interviewees that illustrate each new theme.

### **3.7 RESEARCHER'S POSITION**

One of the most crucial factors for the researcher, according to Berger (2013), is the position held in respect to the research setting, participants, data analysis, and presentation. Pitard (2017) argues that the researcher's viewpoint could significantly affect the research design and the ethics of the research process itself, whether deliberately or unknowingly. Because of this, self-reflection is seen as essential to the research process, which prompted the researcher to accept accountability for their own positioning (Pitard, 2017).

As a primary teacher in one of the primary schools in Thaba-Tseka district, I tried to avoid bias by maintaining the objectivity during study conduction. According to Borowska's (2017) definition, bias is any pattern of departure from the truth in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination that may lead to erroneous findings. In that sense, by conducting the study objectively, all of the aforementioned types of biasness were taken into account. I did not impose my opinions and values on the participants during semi-structured interviews. I just paid attention to information provided by the participants.

#### **3.7.1 REALITIES OF THE FIELD WORK**

A field task did not involve only asking questions, recording or writing down the responses. The process needed a careful plan and implementation of a series of strategies to get the desired information. Part of the plan of the field work required identification of site and the research tools to be used in the research process. Meeting with the first interviewee felt stressful and awkward. I was afraid and had no confidence since it was my first time to conduct interviews of such kind. The second interview was better than the first one and as I continued, I began to enjoy my work and had great desire to go on collecting data. I mostly got fascinated by listening to people's different views as they answered the questions.

Flexibility and improvisation are the key characteristics that a researcher must possess. For example, on the set interview date, one participant apologized that she could not manage to go on with the interview due to some reasons. The meeting was cancelled and suggested another date. Later on that day she called, telling me that we can continue with the interview. From that I learned that the researcher has to be flexible and use the opportunity given effectively.

The data for semi-structured interviews was collected during school holidays in winter. Some participants lived in rural areas, and they kept on postponing interviews because they were collecting some grains from the fields. I became patient with them; I told them that they were doing a great job, and I would wait until they finished. Geographical location of some teachers made me feel unsafe because I had never been there before. I had to travel long distance on foot and my great fear was herd boys might attack me or set dogs on me. My husband had to accompany me to their places.

Shifting work hours was one of the most challenging, especially to agree upon an interview time that is suitable for both the participants and the researcher. Another problem was that I had to use public transport, which was slow. For me to grab a given chance, I hired a private transport in order to arrive at the interview destination on time.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The focus in this chapter was to clarify the research design and the methodology. The methodological elements discussed in the chapter include the research paradigm, research approach and design, as well as and data collection and data analysis. Ethical considerations and trustworthiness issues were also outlined. The next chapter focuses on the presentation of the findings

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The main aim of this study was to find the impact of teachers' reflexivity on their practices and how that can enhance learners' academic performance. Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were conducted and recorded using a digital recorder. Data was transcribed verbatim thereafter. The transcript was edited and checked against voice recordings for accuracy. The findings were analysed in accordance with the research questions and objectives.

#### **4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE**

The study was conducted in three primary schools in Thaba-Tseka district. Two schools were situated in town while the other one was situated far away from the town in rural areas. The intention was to compare context-specific perceptions and experiences of both principals and teachers in town and rural. Schools or teachers in rural communities were mostly disadvantaged when it came to working conditions, teacher related matters such as qualifications. Therefore, their experiences differed from those urban teachers.

##### **4.2.1 PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES**

Table 1 outlined the participants' profiles. The participants qualified to take part in the study as some had more than a decade teaching experience and are mostly trained teachers. The profile observed participants' gender, teaching experience and professional development. To protect the identity of both the principals and the teachers, codes were employed. The principals from the three schools were labeled Principal A, Principal B and Principal C depending on which school was visited first. The teachers were assigned letters and numbers depending on the type of interview they participated in and school they belonged to. For instance, with Teacher SA1, 'S' designated semi-structure interviews that teachers participated in and A1 meant the first teacher under the management of Principal A. In the same manner, participants in focus groups A, B and C were allocated letters and numbers too. For example, with the participant FGC2, 'FG' was for focus group while C2 meant the second participant in the group C.

**Table 1: The participants' profiles**

Participants	Gender	Teaching experience	Professional development (educational level)	Number of participants
Principals (semi-structured interviews)				3
Principal A	Female	38	Diploma in Education Primary (D.E.P)	
Principal B	Female	30	Bachelor of Education primary (B.Ed)	
Principal C	Female	18	Diploma in Education primary (D.E.P)	
Teachers (semi-structured interviews)				6
Teacher SA1	Female	5	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (C.O.S.C)	
Teacher SA2	Female	19	Bachelor of Education in Primary (B.ed)	
Teacher SB1	Female	19	Diploma in Education primary (D.E.P)	
Teacher SB2	Female	20	Inclusive Education	
Teacher SC1	Female	10	(B.edHonours) Supporting	
Teacher SC2	Female	13	Teaching Diploma in Education primary (D.E.P) Bachelor of Education in Primary (B.ed)	
Focus group A				19
Teacher FGA1	Female	22	Bachelor of Education in Primary (B.ed)	
Teacher FGA2	Female	17	Distance Teacher Education Programme (D.T.E.P)	
Teacher FGA3	Female	44	Primary Teacher Certificate (P.T.C)	

Teacher FGA4	Female	9	Bachelor of Education in Primary (B.ed)
Teacher FGA5	Male	20	Distance Teacher Education Programme (D.T.E.P)
Teacher FGA6	Female	21	Bachelor of Education in Primary (D.T.E.P)
Teacher FGA7	Female	9	Diploma in Education Primary (D.E.P)
Teacher FGB1	Female	25	Diploma in Education Primary (D.E.P)
Teacher FGB2			
Teacher FGB3	Female	19	Diploma in Education Primary (D.E.P)
Teacher FGB4	Female	13	Bachelor of Education in Primary (B.ed)
Teacher FGB5	Female	13	Distance Teacher Education Programme (D.T.E.P)
Teacher FGB6	Female	17	Distance Teacher Education Programme (D.T.E.P)
Teacher FGB7	Female	20	Bachelor of Education in Primary (B.ed)
Teacher FGC1	Female	15	Distance Teacher Education Programme (B.ed)
Teacher FGC2	Male	13	Distance Teacher Education Programme (D.T.E.P)
Teacher FGC3	Female	17	Distance Teacher Education Programme (D.T.E.P)
Teacher FGC4	Female	19	Distance Teacher Education Programme (D.T.E.P)
Teacher FGC5	Female	14	Diploma in Education Primary (D.E.P)
	Female	23	Primary Teacher Certificate (P.T.C)

### 4.3 FINDINGS

Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were used to collect data. Verbatim transcription was used to manage data. Thematic analysis was used whereby raw data was coded and themes were identified. The emerging themes were carefully examined and analyzed. There was the combination of the findings from both data collection methods due to the overlapping themes. The summary of the themes and sub-themes is outlined in Table 2 and the presentation follows.

**Table 2: Themes and Sub-themes**

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Participants understanding of the concept reflexivity	
Poor performance and blame shifting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict between parents, principal and teachers</li> </ul>
Teacher support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of resources.</li> <li>• Effective communication.</li> <li>• Training by resource persons</li> </ul>
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconsidering the teaching and learning approaches</li> </ul>
Teacher preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson planning</li> <li>• Lesson presentation</li> <li>• Use of teaching and learning materials</li> </ul>
Peer observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers deciding to reach out for help and problem solving.</li> <li>• Incorporating video and recording during observation.</li> <li>• The benefit of being observed.</li> <li>• The benefit of being the observer.</li> <li>• Challenges of peer observation.</li> </ul>
Collaborative teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team work</li> <li>• Teachers' attitudes towards collaborative practice</li> </ul>



The participants answered the same questions in both the semi-structured and focus group interviews. As a result, overlapping themes emerged from the data. Therefore, the findings from both sets of interviews were combined.

#### **4.3.1 PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT REFLEXIVITY**

The participants were requested to share their own understanding of the term reflexivity. Most participants could not respond because they had no idea about the concept. Even so, their answers were captured. The participants who tried to define reflexivity confused it with reflection. The response was that it was done after the lesson to check what went well and did go as planned. Principal B said:

*Reflexivity is something I do when I'm through with my lesson, and I do it because I want to see if my lesson was carried out as planned, again I want to see if learners have understood what they have been learning*

Principal C gave a response which indicated that she had no idea about the term reflexivity. The following were her words:

*I cannot lie; it is my first time to hear about the term 'reflexivity'. What is the meaning of this word?*

The participants who took part in the focus group discussions also had no idea what the concept reflexivity meant. Teacher FGC5 pointed out that:

*...it is my first time to hear about the word.*

The rest of the participants agreed with the response that they too did not know the term reflexivity. In focus groups A and B participants responded by giving the definition of reflection.

The participant's responses indicated that they did not understand the notion 'reflexivity'. Teacher SC1 also answered by explaining reflection:

*I find the word difficult to understand; I am only familiar with reflection because it is what I commonly use to make judgment on my practices.*

Teacher SA1 stated:

*It is the reflection whereby after teaching your learners, you have to sit down and see if you have achieved the objectives.*

On the other hand, the word was associated with reflex and reflection while teaching and making changes where there is a need. Teacher SB2 mentioned:

*I can guess that the word is comes from reflex. This means that as I teach, I reflect at what I am doing at the moment, so that I can make certain changes wherever possible.*

The participants who took part in the focus groups complained that the questions could be given to them some days before the interviews, or the questions should be left with them so that they would search for the meaning of the reflexivity. Teacher FGC4 declared:

*You could have given me questions some days before interview and by then I could have found the meaning of this difficult word.*

The responses indicated that for both the principals and teachers, it was their first time to come across the term reflexivity and could not comprehend it at all. The term they were used to was reflection since they were introduced to it at the training college of teachers. I had to help the participants with the definition of the term reflexivity.

### **4.3.2 POOR PERFORMANCE AND BLAME SHIFTING**

The findings revealed that the poor performance and blame shifting were problems encountered with regard to lack of reflexivity among primary school teachers. Lack of reflexivity was a contributing factor that impacted negatively on the professional learning and learners' academic performance and did not bring acceptable change in education. The dispute between parents, principals and teachers became a sub-theme.

#### **4.3.2.1 CONFLICT BETWEEN PARENTS, PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS**

Parents have a role to play to in children's education. Parents and teachers are expected to be a team, united for children's success. Every child's best performance is what all parents anticipate. Nonetheless, it seemed some children's academic performances were declining. At this juncture, parents are not in a position to assist their children with homework. They complain that the new curriculum is difficult, and teachers are not doing the job they have trained and are paid for.

*...if learners have obtained poor grades, parents complain that teachers are ignorant, and they expect them (parents) to do their work (said Principal C).*

Principal A responded by saying:

*A teacher who does not have the reflexive skill blames others all the time, especially learners when the objective is not achieved. Such teacher does not practice self-evaluation.*

This was supported by Principal C who added:

*In a case where learners are transiting (progressing to the next class) without the teacher who was teaching them in the previous year, the new teacher is likely to blame the teachers if learners are underperforming, yet the problem is with that particular teacher at the moment.*

The principals are the supervisors of the schools. They guarantee that teachers do their work effectively and learners too. However, there were some complaints principals received from the parents about the teachers with regard to their children's performance.

The above statement was supported by Principal B who said:

*One of the drawbacks resulting from lack of reflexivity is poor performance of learners. And this brings about the conflicts between three parties which are parents, principals and teachers. Parents will complain that a principal does not manage the school properly, and principals blame teachers for not teaching properly.*

It also became apparent from the focus group discussion that there was an escalating concern that learners were not performing well. The results obtained revealed that teachers were the decision makers in their classroom, and if they lacked reflexivity skill they were not aware of the experiences they had because they did not think about what they did, and why they acted the way they did. Teacher SB6 stated that:

*...teachers need to change most specifically in ways of doing and seeing things in the classroom teaching.*

It was also found that a constructive classroom concentrated mostly on constructing learners' knowledge by considering their unique experiences on which to build knowledge base to learn new things. In focus group A, TeacherFGA2conceded that:

*...teachers ignore that learners have their experiences and knowledge.*

The finding indicated that the process of transition, moving from one class to another had significant impact on learners. In a case where learners had to move to a new teacher, it could mean learners struggle interacting with the new teacher socially and as a result performs poorly academically. It is important for the teacher to think about the impact of that change upon individual learners and critically think of the approaches to ensure the learners feel motivated and supported in their learning. However, it was mentioned that instead of thinking reflexively, teachers shifted all the blame to teacher who taught the learners in the previous year.

In this regard, Teacher SB7 indicated that:

*...teacher blaming is easier to do.*

The above suggested that the learners' poor performance causes conflicts among three parties; the parents, principals and teachers. Instead of uniting for learners' sake, they blame shift. The blameshift results from lack of reflexivity amongst teachers. Parents blame school principals for poor management and lack of adequate supervision. Principals also blame teachers for failing to meet learners' needs and interests to improve their performance.

There were some cases where learners had to transit to another teacher and that could negatively affect their performance. As it was indicated earlier that teachers were the decision makers of whatever that occurs in the classroom. If teachers lack reflexive practice, they are not in situation to act according to a constructivist teacher who gives the learners the ownership of what they learn, since learning is based on learners' experiences. Such teachers point fingers at others.

### **4.3.3 TEACHER SUPPORT**

The principals are held responsible for assisting teachers in every part of teaching so that learners perform well. The support is given in various ways. The sub-themes that emerged

under teacher support included provision of resources, effective communication and the training of some challenging concepts by the resource persons.

#### **4.3.3.1 PROVISION OF RESOURCES**

The findings indicated that constructive and supportive principals were always accountable in providing teachers with teaching and learning resources. Principal C explained:

*Teachers cannot actively teach if there are no resources. This compels me make sure that all teachers have enough resources like exercise books for making lesson plans, pens and many others.*

Principal B explained that some teachers have a bad attitude towards the use of resources or teaching aids, more especially if they have to find the resources themselves. They can even skip some topics. Here is what they said:

*The problem with some teachers is that they are lazy to go out and look for some resources to ease their teaching. What I do is to buy some supplementary books to boost textbooks given by the government. We also have a library at school; I encourage teachers to use it effectively.*

However, Principal A insisted that because of lack of funds in the schools; it is not easy for her to supply teachers with almost everything they require:

*You see, now that stationery is no longer delivered in schools, I do not afford to buy some things like coloured chalk, bostik, charts or markers. We have no funds and parents are poor to support us with money.*

The principals stated that they have to stay connected to the teachers' experiences and their professional growth and promotion of better performance. A frequent classroom visit by constructive principals can help teachers to spot strengths and weaknesses in instructional methods and classroom management and provide the teacher early opportunities to make adjustments. Principal B added:

*Checking on how the teachers do in their classroom is what I do by visiting their different classes for some few minutes. And the visits encourage teachers to maintain their professional growth and promote better understanding.*

Checking of teachers' official books was cited as another way of supporting teachers to teach effectively and to be reflexive practitioners. It is the responsibilities of the principals to see to it that teachers write scheme of work, prepare a daily lesson plan and keep the record of learners' registration books updated. The collection and checking of lesson plans is to ensure that there is preparation ahead and that suitable content is distributed. Principals gather these documents to verify that teachers are teaching appropriate content and sufficiently planning ahead. Being prepared is essential for success of the learners. This is what Principal C said:

*Teachers have to turn in their lesson plans as a basic expectation of every teacher to be prepared before teaching by making a lesson plan. That makes them more reflexive because they think about learners' activities and teachers' activities. However, writing and submitting lesson plan on a regular basis seems to be a problem to some teachers.*

Being prepared was discovered essential for the success of the learners. Lesson planning organizes one for the work ahead. Teachers have to be made to comprehend the need for preparing ahead before teaching. Another way to get a sense of what happens in the classroom is for principals and teachers to work jointly to help learners with some given tasks.

Principal B announced that at some point she supports teachers, especially in higher grades by marking learners' work.

*...As I give the feedback about learners' performance, that gives a hint to the teachers as to where to improve.*

#### **4.3.3.2 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

It was found that communication between teachers and principals increases reflexivity in teachers because the principals would reevaluate a very varied variety of activities to support teachers. This is because constructivism theory ultimately leads to effective communication. Teachers should be supported by principals in acquiring critical skills that advance their instructional strategies, help them become more reflexive practitioners, and enhance the academic achievement of students. In the context of a school, communication is crucial. All school communications must be facilitated, by the principals.

The principals who participated in the study affirmed that principals and teachers create a positive atmosphere, to ensure coordination, to adapt to change, to make effective decisions, to execute plans and programs efficiently and many others. Principal B explained:

*...if I do not talk to teachers the school will not progress.*

Effective communication with everyone taking part ensured proper guidance. Principals' responsibility is to manage communications effectively. Fruitful communication supports all the skills, values, knowledge as it positively influenced teachers. Principals initiate conversation and facilitate them as others add their ideas, suggestions and questions. They (principals) take lead in maintaining and developing relationship at every level. Principal A indicated that:

*The best way for me to support teachers is to hear from them about their plans, where they need help. This will happen only if we communicate face-face. This also enables me to know about challenges they encounter, and together we discuss the way to solution.*

#### **4.3.3.2.1 COLLECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF MEMBERS**

It was indicated that mainly communication concerns everyday activities, information and efficiency. The principals felt that teachers needed to be well informed and satisfied with their daily practices through communication. It was revealed that principals and teachers sometimes seem not to have enough time for the conversation related towards their work inside the classroom, in depth conservation on issues related to learners' outcomes and school improvement. Hence it was an advantage to have regular staff meetings with teachers to discuss and attend to some of the issues about what they do in the classrooms. Principal B stated:

*..Sometimes principals imagine teachers perform well in their classroom and bother less to know about what is going on in there. But the truth is teachers need to principals' support in order for them to be reflexive.*

During staff meetings teachers reveal all their successes and challenges which are then resolved at the time depending on the type of the problem. In support of Principal A, Principal B pointed out the following:

*I normally have meetings with teachers whereby they describe their vision each focusing on the needs of learners. For them to achieve planned*

*objectives, I provide all necessary materials like chalk, charts and markers. I have opened a platform for teachers to visit other classes to see what other teachers do to help learners learn. And they should go there only for the benefit of learners, not to gossip.*

#### **4.3.3.2.2 COMMUNICATION WITH THE INDIVIDUALS**

One of the actions taken to influence teachers' instruction is through implementing the practice of face-to-face conversation with the individual teacher. The steps taken aim at engaging with an individual teacher about their own growth and instructional actions. Therefore, in this line, it was found worthy for principals to have direct conversation with each teacher in their classroom or in the staff meeting. Principal C mentioned that:

*Since not all people feel free to talk about their problems in the presence of others, it is sufficient to talk to teachers privately in order to find where they might need support.*

Principal A indicated that offering of advice, direction or assistance is one of the duties of the principals. Here is what they said:

*...Teachers have to be given advice as to how they can teach better.*

Teachers feel supported and valued when they are listened to by the principals. They mentioned that principals should listen to them when they come to discuss some issues concerning the classroom, problems with learners or anything that affected their work. Teachers SA2 mentioned that:

*...principals have to cherish teachers by developing a listening skill to make sure that teachers feel heard.*

It was indicated that it is important for principals to be as approachable and friendly as possible. Teacher SC2 remarked:

*...taking time to be available for teachers and listen to their queries and concerns help them feel comfortable and appreciated.*

Teachers brought up the concept of appreciation. They revealed that for them to improve reflexive skill, principals have to show some recognition to teachers with regard to their job.



Praising teachers' work and involvement made them know they were seen and appreciated and thus making teachers feel confident and happier. Teacher FGB7 added:

*Getting compliments for valuable work makes teachers put more effort to do their job.*

Teacher FGC7 highlighted that principals have to support and facilitate teachers' professional development by evaluating teachers' work:

*...evaluation aids teachers focus on the work and learners' performance.*

According to this participant, the objective of the appraisal is to improve learners' academic performance, help teachers to be the best teachers, not to trap and mock teachers about their weaknesses but to upgrade their effectiveness.

#### **4.3.3.3 TRAINING BY THE RESOURCE PERSON**

In furthering the support to teachers, principals mentioned that where they could not offer assistance, they invited an expert to facilitate training of some challenging concepts. Training is the act of increasing knowledge, skills and performance on the current job. Therefore, it is the school principals' responsibilities to exercise significant influence on teacher professional development.

*The District Resource Teacher (DRT) is the person entrusted to assist teachers in any area if there is a problem concerning teaching and learning, (responded Principal B).*

The findings demonstrated that training of teachers on new concepts is of benefit to both teachers and learners, which includes inviting resource persons. If teachers had problems in some learning areas, and they could not help each other, the resource person was needed to ensure relevant training whereby teachers would gain a well-presented knowledge. Principal C supported this by saying:

*There are people called the DRTs in the district and their job is to come for teachers' rescue where they struggle. They have to train teachers and equip them with skills and knowledge that will make them better teachers.*

The findings revealed that the principals' responsibilities were to support teachers in various ways in order to enhance learners' academic performance. Teachers were provided with

teaching and learning materials. The principals and teachers mentioned communication as an effective tool to use to discuss all matters related to teaching and learning. For instance, teachers believed that evaluation feedback had to be communicated in a manner that helps teachers to develop. Again, a constructivist communicator either the principal or the teacher, has to communicate the concept or content that is attractive enough to be accepted and meaning be constructed from the information. Lastly, people with special knowledge and skills like the District Resource Teachers (DRTs) were invited to assist teachers wherever they were challenged.

#### **4.3.4 FLEXIBILITY**

Teachers that are flexible were more productive in the classroom. It is stated that teachers are motivated to maintain a critical sense of self-awareness throughout the teaching process via reflexivity. Teachers adapt, shift and modify practices while being receptive to fresh concepts that are beneficial for learners. The sub-theme that appeared under the above theme was teachers reconsidering the teaching and learning approaches.

Teachers feel more responsible to meet each learner's needs. Flexibility in the classroom is one of the imperative qualities that every teacher must possess. Teacher SA1 mentioned that receiving the feedback from learners during a lesson forces a teacher to immediately change the plan.

*...when learners seem not to respond to intended objectives as expected, I quickly make some changes here and there in my teaching.*

The findings also revealed that planning the lesson showed teacher keenness and preparedness, but not every planned class would go as required as learners were found unpredictable. Sometimes immediate alterations could be made based on a certain situation in the classroom, without being aware in the first place. Teacher SA4 observed that:

*.....teachers need to be aware they will always need to be changing up their teaching styles, lesson plans cannot go as smoothly as it is planned. There will always be interruption due to learners' misunderstanding when learning. When an obstacle arises, you must be able to overcome it steadily and this could require the entire plan to alternate for the day.*

#### 4.3.4.1 RECONSIDERING THE TEACHING APPROACH

It was also indicated that in order to demonstrate reflexive skill, it is up to teachers to reconsider the teaching approach they employ so as to solve the problem at hand and to meet the objectives of the day. Teachers had to advocate learning that was initiated from learners' point of view than that of the teacher. Teacher FGA3 said:

*...Learners' performance is upon teachers' approaches or skills they may have as individuals..*

From the same focus group named above, Teacher SA2 mentioned that they opted for an interactive approach which implicated interaction in dialogue mode, in other words, an interactive teaching approach as a form of learning and unrestrained activity in which learners are part of learning process. This is what Teacher SA2 said:

*During teaching I involve learners by allowing them to ask questions. If there is a need for me to change my plans for learners to understand, I change suddenly so that at the end I achieve my objectives.*

Unlike a traditional teaching approach oriented on the teacher, interactive learning focused on learners' needs and abilities, interests. The teacher was considerate to provide learners with content that was at their level. In support of this view, Teacher SB1 stated:

*I will be able to check if learners understand by asking questions. I will also move around the class to see if all learners are on task. I will as well break content into smaller chunks for all learners to accommodate as they differ in abilities.*

Similarly, Teacher SC2 added:

*During teaching, I involve learners by allowing them to ask questions. If there is a need for me to change my plans for learners to understand, I change suddenly so that at the end I achieve my objectives.*

To solicit information on how interactive teaching is beneficial, teachers have to be observant and responsive, always bearing in mind about how to best engage learners in the learning activities. Teacher SB2 expressed that:

*Yes, I can find teaching approaches that suit different learners so that they learn at their paces. And learners will be actively involved by answering questions I ask, working in groups and presenting.*

Teacher SA1 added that:

*...asking questions can help a lot because it encourages learners to participate actively and once there is discussion, they find learning stimulating.*

The findings revealed that teachers have to opt for flexible teachings that foster constructivist practices to meet different learners' needs and interests as learners could provide feedback which was not part of the initial planning. Teachers have to have plan B in case option one fails.

#### **4.3.5 TEACHER PREPAREDNESS**

According to constructivist beliefs, it is beneficial for teachers to be organized before starting any teaching so that the lesson becomes effective and productive. Teachers must have a good piece of content knowledge. They have to create a plan and try to understand 'what to teach, how and when to teach it.' The information has to be presented in a way that captures learners' attention; the sub-themes under this theme are lesson planning and lesson presentation, and effective use of teaching and learning materials.

##### **4.3.5.1 LESSON PLANNING**

The teachers believed that in preparation for teaching, it is normal for teachers to draw a lesson plan to direct learning process. That served as a guide that a teacher used to determine what learners were learning, how the lesson would be taught, as well as how learning would be evaluated. Teacher SA2 explained:

*...without the right preparation beforehand, class can end up being unproductive, frustrating and confusing for learners as the teachers would be this and that.*

It was mentioned that teachers function more effectively in the classroom by giving a detailed outline that they adhere to during each classroom activity. It helps to make sure that every moment spent in class is used profitably. Lesson planning gives teachers greater assurance and self-determination in teaching. The teacher, who has their lesson wisely planned, entered

the classroom without anxiety, ready to get on with confidence upon the job they do. Principal B disclosed:

*...a lesson plan provides you with a way of thinking of smart objectives and all the means to achieve them.*

Effective time management was raised to demonstrate that prepared teachers made use of every moment of the lesson. Teachers FGA5 put forward that:

*...if the lesson plan is not prepared on time, it will not be easier to know how long certain activities could take.*

#### **4.3.5.2 LESSON PRESENTATION**

Lesson presentation was mentioned by teachers as an imperative aspect in teaching. They specified that lesson presentation requires teachers who are well organized, confident enough to deliver the content. During the lesson presentation teachers have to pay attention to learner diversity. Teacher SC1 expressed that learners learn differently with various levels of abilities.

*...a very skillful presentation is keeping learners interested by introducing variety in the content and caters for each an individual learner.*

Teacher SC2 added that:

*...I always think if all learners could hear me well*

Thus, the participants conceded that an audible tone can ensure that every learner could hear what has been said clearly, with simple words to understand.

The participants also maintained that during lesson presentation a reflexive teacher bears in mind that learners' optimal pace is one of the good element to consider that gives time for the learners to comprehend the content delivered and ask questions when need arises. At the same time the pace should not be too slow that the teacher runs out of time to complete the lesson. Teacher FGA3 divulged:

*...teachers should not speak fast when they teach so that learners grasp one same thing at the same time. Their voices have to be loud and clear for all to hear.*

Teachers have to encourage active learning through participation. It was frustrating when some learners participate, and others stayed passive. Teachers should understand learning pace of each learner, Teacher SA2 explained:

*.... activities done should engage learners and have to include several senses as an individual might be pleased.*

Creating eagerness and interest keep learners active and prohibits them from getting bored. That motivates them to be all ears throughout the lesson. Teacher FGB7 declared:

*If learners enjoy lessons and want to learn more about the topic, they are less likely to divert their attention to other activities like talking to friends during class.*

Gestures were found to complement what teacher would be communicating. If the teacher was stationed in one place and speak with monotone voice, learners quickly lose interest. Teacher FGB4 mentioned:

*.... moving around the classroom helps to identify learners who are doing well and who may need assistance.*

#### **4.3.5.3 EFFECTIVE USE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS**

The findings showed that the use of teaching materials stimulate learning as constructivist classroom advocated for manipulative materials. It was stated that the use of teaching aids in the classroom has the potential to help teachers to give details on the new concepts clearly, resulting in better understanding of what is being taught and learned. Teaching materials are crucial because every individual learner tends to forget but proper use of the aids assists learners to remember lessons and that becomes permanent. Teacher SC1 commended:

*...use of teaching materials develops an exact image in mind and learners hardly forget what they have learned. Teaching aids attract the attention of the learners and capture with ease what they are learning at the particular moment.*

The materials should meet the needs of the learners as they have different levels of understanding. Learning becomes easy and interesting as they enable the learners to actively participate. Teacher SB2 stated that:

*.... learners can relate the topic to the real life situation.*

Some content might be complex for learners to understand and challenging for teachers to teach. Therefore, teaching aids draw the learners' attention and help in explaining and illustrating the concept more easily and they make use of five senses. Teachers SA2 disclosed:

*...teaching aids attract the attention of the learners and capture with ease what they are learning at that particular moment.*

In conclusion, it was divulged that preparedness for teaching was an integral part of teachers' professionalization. The study highlighted meaningful insight on how a reflexive teachers' commitment pertains to teachers' devotion to enhance learners' academic performance. The study found that teachers' preparedness was positively associated with lesson planning, lesson presentation and effective use of teaching and learning materials. The preparedness of teaching materials demonstrated teachers' readiness, competencies and the abilities to instruct, manage classroom and facilitate learners' engagement.

#### **4.3.6 PEER OBSERVATION**

Peer observation is regarded as a crucial component of teaching and learning by the participants. For the goal of professional development, teachers might cooperate and observe one another. Both the observer and the observed teachers gain from it. Peer observation is one of the reflexivity techniques teachers could use to examine their ingrained behaviours, attitudes, presumptions, and values, according to the principals and teachers. They continued by saying that when teachers see one another, they improve their own skills and receive constructive feedback from a colleague. The sub-themes that appeared were teachers deciding to reach out for help and problem solving, incorporating video and recording, the benefits for the teacher for being observed, benefit for being the observer and the challenges of peer observation.

##### **4.3.6.1 TEACHERS DECIDING TO REACH OUT FOR HELP**

The findings demonstrated that there are teaching related issues that teachers could not handle alone. There are some challenging situations that put much pressure on teachers to go and ask for help.

In essence, practicing reflexivity through peer observation is seeing other teachers as equal partners as it (reflexivity) invites openness as one explores their strengths and weakness in teaching practice. Principal A said:

*I understand that no teacher is the jack of all traits. Therefore, I have emphasised classroom visits between teachers so that they may acquire the skills from one another.*

Principal C explained that invited or not, it has to be the habit of the principals to regularly visit classrooms to observe the situation. Here is what she said:

*.... In most cases I visit classrooms for instructional purposes so that I have an idea of what is happening in the classes. This assists me realize where teachers do well and need help, because thereafter I will have discussion concerning all that was discovered.*

It was mentioned that shouting for help was seen as the technique teachers could use when they admitted they needed it. Principal A voiced that:

*I always encourage teachers to help each other in as much as they can as in Sesotho we say kopanokematla (unity is power). There is always a teacher with super creative ideas as to what one is struggling with.*

Teachers also believe that asking for help is one of the practices that are best to develop teachers professionally. They further added that the strategy gives the teachers the chance to realize their strengths and areas for growth.

Reflexivity is the practice that entailed or required the teachers to continually reassess how they (teachers) influence the teaching process and learners' responses. As a process it made easy for teachers to assess and change thereby ensuring that learning was meaningful and fruitful. However, teachers experienced different challenges in the daily teaching and Teacher SC2 explained:

*.... I had a tough time to handle manage my classroom; I first hesitated to ask for help because I was afraid that other teachers would regard me as incompetent. But the situation compelled me to go and ask for help and now I enjoy my class.*



Teachers SA2 felt they had increased the number of times they required other teachers' ideas and thoughts on how to teach a certain topic.

*...whenever I teach, I bear in mind the motive of teaching a topic and how to motivate learners and involve them in learning activities.*

Teachers agreed that observing colleagues could help them to become aware of tendencies or bad habits that dominated their classes. They further indicated that looking at how others do things assisted them to adjust their practices. For teacher FGA1 in particular, learning by watching was more crucial and asking for permission to visit and observe other teachers teach was what she did. Therefore, Teacher FGA1 divulged:

*Previously, my teaching was a traditional one, more lecturing and not involving learners. But by observing other teachers I realized that I need to let learners participate in the class and that really helped me a lot.*

Teacher SC1's statement also hinted at how peer observation has become an opportunity for her to learn about learner-centered method of teaching. The teacher conversed that seeing what teachers do in their class was the tool for learning.

*I hated teaching scientific and technological because I found it difficult. I would ask for help from other teachers. One colleague requested me to come and observe her teach that learning area. I realized that I have to ensure that there should be teaching aids, and that science is all about activities we do daily.*

#### **4.3.6.2. INCORPORATING VIDEO AND RECORDING DURING OBSERVATION**

It was mentioned that teachers could take the videos and record each other during the observation. It was found that video taking and recording by the observer while the teacher was teaching could construct feedback and be used as a resource for future improvement. Teachers could use the video for discussion later on. Teacher FGA5 spelt out:

*.... the beauty of video and recording is that you can pause, rewind and repeat it.*

It was also mentioned that classroom observation video facilitated the sharing of best practices in the lesson. It promotes openness and sharing of lessons learned. Teacher SB2 explained:

*...with joy it becomes easy to share successful lessons with fellow teachers.*

#### **4.3.6.3 BENEFITS OF BEING OBSERVED**

This section gives the benefits befitting the teachers who are being observed after receiving a constructive feedback. Peer observation was described by Principal C as a perfect tool to be practiced in order to support teachers' best practice. Integrating peer observation within existing school structures makes a great impact on teaching and learning.

*...teachers have to feel free to visit other classes to observe what other teachers are doing and how they do it.*

Principals are teachers by profession. Therefore, they are in position to observe teachers teach. That was the reason Principal A explained that one way of supporting teachers in schools was by observing them teach,

*...observing a teacher during lesson presentations is vital and plays a major role in improving teachers' practices and learners' academic performance.*

The participants highlighted that in observing other teachers teach empowered their practice as they would be learning from each other. It also supported the sharing of best practice and built the awareness about the impact of one's own teaching. Teacher FGA4 explained:

*...there are some areas that require improvement, which simply means ask a colleague to observe you teach and the feedback you get will boost you.*

It was found that there were some teaching related issues teachers could not handle. Teacher SB3 remarked that there was a time when she encountered some problems in managing her classroom. To conquer the problem, she allocated a slot to be observed while teaching.

*.... inadequate classroom management skill prevented me from controlling learners and hindered teaching and learning progress.*

Similarly, Teacher SB1 remarked:

*I visit other classes to observe how some teachers deal with learners, how they manage classroom, introduce the lesson and praise learners.*

From the above findings, teachers perceived that the practice of peer observation encourages honest conversation between the teacher being observed and the observer. The practice offers the teachers an opportunity to learn from each other in a non-threatening environment, where there is no judgment outcome and atmosphere of trust between the participants. It is hoped that the teachers would share ideas and suggestions openly and constructively to their mutual professional growth and benefit. Teacher SC2 said:

*... discussing work related issues become a conversation whenever teachers meet.*

One thing that came up from the teacher FGC3 about peer observation was the discovery that peer observation was a good way for teachers to learn about their strengths, weaknesses, experiences, and ideas:

*As teachers we always learn from each other, sharing experiences works a lot for us. From my point of view, peer observation creates strong relationship between teachers, and it improves teaching practices as teachers exchange ideas.*

#### **4.3.6.4 THE BENEFITS OF BEING OBSERVED**

It was revealed that observation is the best way to learn, it does not only allow the observer to exactly see how things are done but provides the opportunity to learn what a person being observed is doing and how the new skills are put into practice. Teacher SC1 mentioned that the observed teacher's level of praise stimulated a positive and pleasant atmosphere within the classroom. The action itself contributed to an affirmative learning environment. Teacher SC1 said:

*...after observing my colleague, I became cognizant that I should increase the level of praise afford to my learners in the classroom in order to enhance learning.*

In addition, being the observer provides additional information by allowing chance to see different ways of doing things as teachers had different experiences. Teacher SA1 added:

*...observing other teachers is the good chance to learn from the observed teacher.*

#### **4.3.6.5 CHALLENGES OF PEER OBSERVATION**

The challenges of peer observation were mentioned by some teachers and principals. It was stated that one of the challenges was teachers' resistance to be observed. That making the practice ineffective to be implemented as shown in the following quotes by Principal B:

*...some teachers do not want to be observed while they teach. Fear of being criticized forbids them from engaging in the practice.*

TeacherFGC3 indicated that in some cases teachers are all by themselves in the classroom, teaching many learners, with too much paperwork to do within a very limited time.

*...it is time consuming with limited time and load of work teachers have,  
Principals' views*

Even though the principals encouraged the teachers to use peer observation, the findings revealed that some teachers have a bad attitude towards the approach. Principal A explained that:

*... Although I encourage peer observation, other teachers felt it was lack of importance to be observed for they think that it limits their freedom and competence.*

The findings revealed that peer observation developed the skills of both observed teacher and the observing one. Peer observation provided teachers with different set of experiences as the constructive feedback was shared after the session. However, it was also articulated that some teachers under some certain reasons could not practice peer observation.

#### **4.3.7 COLLABORATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The participants stated that the engagement of teacher collaboration in real-life problems through cooperation and constructing solutions enables them to become more focused and goal oriented because professional development is social and interactive in nature. The success of collaboration depends on how well the interaction is among teachers. This brings about collaborative skills, support in exchange of ideas, collectively designed teaching methods and knowledge construction with the help of shared reflexivity in which teachers think and work together to sustain professional growth. The sub-themes that emerged were teamwork and teachers' attitudes towards collaborative practices.

#### 4.3.7.1 TEAMWORK

Reflexivity is considered crucial by the participants more specifically when people work as a team where members approach knowledge differently. Teamwork influences the day-to-day work life of the teacher. The improvement of the practice of teaching results from the daily sharing and working with other teachers. The participantstalked about how teamwork provides new ideas and how it has expanded their teaching practices. Teacher SA2 remarked:

*.....I come up with the idea but in as much as it is shared with other teachers, the idea would be 'how about doing this.....'*

Collaborative reflexivity between team members was perceived by Principal Aas articulating the differing assumptions and issue that were contributing too many distinctive aspects and understanding.

*....one of the few opportunities for teachers to engage in collaboration is to work on the limits of their personal knowledge.*

Strong teacher teamwork was said to create respect and trust amongst the teachers. Participants provided the reasons driving them to handover their lesson plans to other teachers for proof reading. Teacher SA4 explained that:

*...the action itself supported teacher to teacher professional learning and practice in the classroom.*

In addition, Teachers SA6 mentioned:

*...it is now becoming a habit to ask other colleagues to check my lesson plan for continuous improvement of teaching and learning.*

It was also mentioned by Teacher SB2 that discovering weakness and managing weakness was what teachers should be good at. Sometimes teachers with ease can realise or detect the weakness they have in a certain learning area. It was illustrated that the best thing to do was to let someone do it.

*...when it comes to numeracy, I feel burned out teaching that learning area because I am not good at it. Teachers with strength in the learning area complement me*

#### 4.3.7.2 TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

The participants revealed the in their experiences, collaboration is a significant tool in their teaching practices. It was best for them to move away from the isolation or working independently and work with other colleagues. Interestingly enough, some teachers were perceived not to believe in collaboration. Furthermore, teachers reported a desire to gain the social benefit of collaboration. Teacher SC2 commented:

*... sometimes asking for others for comments opens up more than one could anticipate. Being open to unexpected feedback or critical feedback is sometimes quite painful.*

Teachers perceived that the new curriculum is important as it encourages the group work. There has been a massive change in the content where some learning areas have to be intergraded which was not the case in the old curriculum of subject teaching. The results about teachers supporting each other revealed that the new curriculum lacked teaching and learning materials, contained a lot of workload by the time it was introduced. Principal A said:

*...this new curriculum demands teachers to work together as there are some concepts that challenge a lot or are difficult for a teacher to comprehend.*

There was a minority perspective that insisted that collaboration was not the best idea. The reason behind that was that there were some teachers who undermined them, who might seek help from them. Teacher SB1 pointed out that:

*...I think I am fine until now. I know what I am doing in my classroom. I seldom discuss my classroom issues with teachers because some think that they know better than the others.*

Similarly, TeacherFGC6 reported on her experience where she had worked in isolation for some time because she acknowledged that she was doing fine,

*...in as much as I work alone, I struggled a lot and found my work as a burden. But later as I began sharing my problems as encouraged by the principal, things are getting much better, as I put into practice the ideas given to me.*

An attempt to solve the problem is another aspect of collaboration action whereby teachers try to solve the problem at hand. By sharing and understanding the problem, an individual is required to establish how their own knowledge and skills could contribute to solving the problem as well as identifying and appreciating knowledge and skills contributed. Teacher FGA5 explained:

*.... even though there are potential differences in point of view, when knowledge is shared amongst the teachers, that leads to effort to reach the solution.*

Capitalizing on each other strengths and working on each other's weakness was another issue raised. The best way to capitalize on strength was to use them when a problem arose, by putting the skills, knowledge, and experiences to work. In understanding the strengths, one has, that enabled them to nurture their role to ensure that they got most of their talents. Teachers have to focus on their bigger strengths and be confident in what they know best as teacher FGB 1 stated that:

*.....it also helps you to grow more. Knowing what you can excel at warrants you to aim higher for learners to achieve more.*

The findings revealed that in collaborative learning, teachers as professionals discuss study and construct conceptual principles and ideas, generate and enact new strategies for their own work environment and above all, share insights about what they have learned. Collaborative practices result in positive construction of knowledge. It was noticed that through collaboration, teachers could build links between their conceptualizations of practices and about the actual performance of learners. The findings demonstrated that teacher collaboration fostered teamwork which expanded teaching practices amongst teachers. Nevertheless, teachers had different opinions regarding collaborative practices. Some teachers found the practice useful as some concepts in the new integrated curriculum were challenging, but other teachers felt that they did fine on their own, without collaborating with other teachers.

Below is the table that gives the summary of the findings of the study. The findings included teachers' comprehension of the concept reflexivity and how it impacted their teaching practices. There are also suggested ways that teachers could put into practice to enable reflexivity in their practice in order to enhance learners' academic performance.

**Table 3: Summary of the findings**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
Participants' understanding of the concept reflexivity		The participants had no idea about the concept reflexivity. They defined reflection.	4.3.1
Poor performance and blame shifting	Conflict between parents, principals and teachers	Poor performance of learners caused a conflict between three parties which are parents, principals and teachers.	4.3.2
Teachers' support by principals	Provision of resources  Effective communication  Communication with staff.  Communication with an individual teacher  Training of new concepts by a	Principals provided teachers with any sort of help they might need.  Communication between principals and teachers promoted reflexivity in teachers.  Staff meetings help in addressing issues related to teacher development and, teaching and learning.  Face to face communication conversation between principals and teachers fosters in depth discussion about classroom issues.  Expert have to be invited to facilitate the training of some	4.3.3



	resource person.	challenging concepts	
Flexibility	Reconsidering the teaching and learning approaches	There are issues that force the teachers to act on the spot	4.3.4
Teacher preparedness	Lesson planning  Lesson presentation  Effective use of teaching and learning materials.	Teachers have to prepare daily before teaching and learning.  Presentation should capture learners' attention; expose teachers' confidence and knowledge in any learning area.  Constructivist classroom functions with manipulation of teaching and learning materials.	4.3.5
Peer observation	Teachers deciding to reach out for help and problem solving  Incorporating video and recording during observation  The benefits of being	Peer observation is helpful to both the observed and the observer. Teachers have to ask for help to be observed in order to solve problem and improve after receiving constructive feedback.  Videos and records during observation might be taken as they could be used for reference.  Constructive feedback	4.3.6

	observed	provides empowers teachers' practices and work on the weaknesses for improvement.	
	The benefit of being the observer	There is an attainment of some skills and knowledge from the observed teacher.	
	Challenges of peer observation	Some teachers are resistant to be observed.	
Collaborative teaching	Teamwork	Provision of daily sharing ideas and experiences and working jointly is importance for the teachers and learners. Teaching.	4.3.7
	Teachers attitudes towards collaborative practice	Some teachers found collaborative practice useful while other felt happy to work on their own.	

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings of the study were presented. The qualitative data was collected from the primary school principals using semi structured interviews. In addition, data was collected from the primary school teachers using semi structured interviews and focus groups. The research site consisted of three schools in Thaba-Tseka. Data was collected and analysed specifically through a thematic analysis where emerging themes were identified and analysed.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study explored teachers' reflexivity on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic performance in the selected primary schools of the Thaba-Tseka district. This chapter focuses on the discussion, findings, conclusion, and recommendations based on the reviewed literature and empirical findings. The discussion of the findings is led by themes and sub themes that emerged from the findings. The recommendations of the study are for teacher training institutions, for practices and further research areas were also proposed. Additionally, the limitations of the study are stated. The study was guided by constructivism theory, a theory that maintained that learning was an active process in which learners construct and internalise new concepts, ideas and knowledge based on their present and past knowledge and experiences. The theory further supports that learners are the main body of learning activity as they construct knowledge rather than receive it.

#### **5.2 THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' reflexivity on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic performance in the selected primary schools of the Thaba-Tseka district. The objectives of the study indicated key issues to be focused on in the research, which were to examine the primary school teachers' perception regarding the role and the place of reflexivity in their teaching practices, to analyse the drawbacks associated with lack of reflexivity among primary school teachers, to establish how teachers' reflexivity may enhance learners' academic performance and lastly, to identify strategies which teachers can use to improve learners' academic performance. The study was aimed to answer the following main question and sub questions.

##### **5.2.1 Main research question**

To what extent are teachers aware of the importance of reflexivity in enhancing learners' academic performance?

##### **5.2.1.1 Sub questions**

The main question was supported by the following questions:

1. What are the primary school teachers' perceptions regarding the role and the place of reflexivity in the teaching practices?
2. What are the drawbacks of lack of reflexivity among primary school teachers?
3. How can teachers' reflexive practice enhance learners' academic performance?
4. Which reflexive strategies can teachers use to improve their practices?

### **5.3 Overview of the study**

**Chapter one** provided orientation to the study. It began with the introduction, background of the study, followed with the statement of the problem. The details were provided of the main research question and sub questions, purpose, and the objectives of the study. The brief explanation of the research design and methodology, data collection techniques, selection of the participants, data analysis methods were provided. Furthermore, value of the research, demarcation of the study as well as issues of ethics and trustworthiness was provided.

**Chapter two** included the review of the related literature and studies which the researchers have pursued to give the light on the topic 'reflexivity'. The relevant sources were selected to define this term and related practices were found to enhance learners' performances. Theoretical framework that guided the study was stipulated as constructivism theory.

**Chapter three** gave a detailed explanation of the research methods that were followed in the study. It provided the information about the participants and how they were selected. The research designs and the reasons for the choice were also clarified. The instruments used for data collection (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) were described and procedures followed to carry the study were included as well as the methods utilized to analyse data. Finally, the ethical issues were discussed.

**Chapter four** consisted of the findings obtained from semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The findings were classified into themes and sub themes for the purpose of answering the research questions.

**Chapter five** summarized the study and drew the conclusion. The recommendations were made to improve teachers' reflexivity and their practices for better performance of learners.

## **5.4 DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN FINDINGS**

The major findings were highlighted; concerning the main question and it was exposed that reflexivity as a notion can advance teachers practices and learners' academic performance but lack of it (reflexivity) has negative impact on learners' performance. The findings were aligned with views of constructivism.

### **5.4.1 PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT REFLEXIVITY**

Concerning the question: **What do you understand of the reflexivity or reflexive practice?**

The participants in both the semi structured and focus groups interviews found the concepts new. They had no idea what they meant. Instead, they gave the definition of reflection. The findings also revealed that in the field of education, reflective practices and action-taking have long been the foundation of teacher preparation and professional development, replacing reflexive practices (Feutch et al., 2017). It was also noted that reflective practice was more often employed in teacher training programmes and that it was less common in academic settings.

### **5.4.2 POOR PERFORMANCE AND BLAME SHIFTING**

Poor performance and blame shifting were mentioned in response to the following question: **What are the drawbacks of lack of reflexivity among primary school teachers?** The low performance of students was mentioned as a consequence of teachers' lack of reflexivity in relation to the aforementioned subject. According to Zoubi and Bani-Younes (2015), the term "performance" refers to observable outcomes in the classroom that emerge from a learner's actions, attitudes, and behaviours in the teaching and learning environment. Teachers themselves without the knowledge or the skill of reflexivity were considered poor performers. The reason being, during teaching and learning, they were less cognizant about what was taking place in the classroom. Alami (2016) adds that teachers who have no passion for teaching are unable to assist learners to obtain comprehensive idea of the subject matter, and that leads to poor performance.

It was further indicated that teachers could not think deeply about their actions and experiences or even those of learners during the teaching and learning process. In support of the findings, Patnaik (2013) stated that reflexivity provides strategies to question the attitudes, thoughts, processes, values, assumptions, and the actions in order to comprehend complex roles in relation to others. Reflexivity in its own right was noticeable as the basis of

the constructive evaluation of the actions and experiences as it involved transformative practices in the classroom.

It was mentioned that learners' poor performance caused some conflicts amongst three parties namely parents, principals, and teachers. When learners' performance did not satisfy parents, they blamed the principals for not managing the school properly. The finding is confirmed by Mazmishvili, Tavdgiridze, Doborjginidze (2019) as they stated that parents come with complaints on the ways the teachers teach their children expressing their concern on the quality the teaching and learning process is carried out. The fact that complaints could be unhelpful and destructive if not handled well ruined the relationship between the parents and principals. On the other hand, principals would not bear it to be held responsible for learners' poor performance; they began to blame teachers for being irresponsible. Yariv (2011) argues that principals with poor management skill and lack of adequate supervision project their inability to teachers. They lack general leadership skills or simply fail to deal effectively with the teachers' difficulties.

### **5.4.3 TEACHER SUPPORT**

To solicit information on how teachers' reflexivity may enhance learners' academic performance, the following question was responded to: **Do you think reflexive practice can enhance learners' academic performance?** The findings were discussed under teacher support, flexibility and teacher preparedness.

The finding specified that reflexivity has impact on principals' introspection of their managerial actions. Based on the findings; the principals have to create a supportive school environment in which teachers enhance their knowledge and practice in order to ensure effective and active learning. It was also discovered that principals have to organise the professional learning activities based on the needs of both teachers and learners. The level of support provided by principals in teachers' professional development was the one counted for most (Karacabey, 2020).

The findings suggested that the principals supported teachers by providing them with resources for effective practice in the classroom. The findings implied that when principals ensure that the teachers have sufficient educational resources, they (principals) have fully facilitated a successful teaching and learning process. Learners learn differently, some can learn better through visual aids, while others are auditory learners. Teachers might take time

to understand the learning pattern of learners. In such cases, they (teachers) must have the support of their principals. Principals could support teachers by providing the best-in-class facilities for smooth and interactive content delivery (Maingi, Maithya&Ronoh, 2021). However, the findings contradict what Yariv (2011) found. The findings indicated that principals do not take corrective measures at early stages and were reluctant to confront or give teachers assistance.

It was mentioned that good performance amongst learners should be activated by sufficient provision of teaching and learning resources. But the findings entailed that the schools were running short of funding; therefore, principals do not afford teaching and learning resources. The above discoveries were in line with Maingi et al (2021) who argued that the most common challenge facing principals was lack of financial ability to ensure that resources supply was enough for meaningful learning in the class.

Another finding demonstrated that principals are expected to be on top of all school communications. Sapian, Bin Abdullah, Abdullah (2019) maintained that effective communication between the principals and teachers, either collectively done with all the staff members or with an individual teacher, supports all the skills, values and knowledge as they positively influence teachers to perform better in their classrooms. Sapian et al (2019) further state that principals regularly commence conversations with teachers and others added their questions, ideas and suggestions. School principals who often make the first move and direct communication with teachers encourage them to be successful in their profession by listening to them consciously (Tyler, 2016). The effectiveness of communication results in organization of training of new concepts by a resource person, more especially where teachers encountered some problems with some topics.

#### **5.4.4 FLEXIBILITY**

It was discovered that flexibility made teachers operate constructively in the classroom. Reflexivity forces teachers to stay focused in critical self-awareness throughout the teaching practice (Hibbert, 2013). Teachers alternate practices and open up new ideas for learners. It was discussed that if every teacher would demonstrate preparedness by planning on the spot, there would be a change with regard to controlling the situation in the classroom (Cunliffe, 2015).

Teachers illustrated reflexive skill by reconsidering the teaching approach to address problem identified. Teachers have to be observant and responsive to ensure that each and every learner effectively achieve the objective of the day. Joan (2013) stated that today's children are challenging; to make genuine connections with learners; teachers ought to modify strategies to fit learners' abilities, needs and wants.

#### **5.4.5 TEACHER PREPAREDNESS**

According to constructivist beliefs as Makwana and Barad (2022) signify, it is important for teachers to prepare before starting any teaching so that the lesson turns out to be effective and productive. Teachers' preparedness was perceived by participants as having a great positive influence on learners' academic performance. Teachers were well prepared for various tasks that have more currently become an essential part of expectation for classroom teaching. Lawrence (2021) in support articulate that increased classroom diversity demands of the teachers to put more effort in preparation for teaching.

Teachers articulated that lesson plan preparation before beginning any lesson served as a guide, directing and giving a detailed outline that they adhere to during classroom activity. Lesson planning prevents waste of time and energy because it helps the teachers to be logical and orderly. It saves teachers from haphazard teaching (Abdulsafi, Bin-Hady, 2018). It was further mentioned that reflexive teachers prepare on how to constructively reach each and individual learner's pace and style of learning during lesson presentation. A well-organized lesson plan is easily presented (Lawrence, 2021). Learners are given an opportunity to put their knowledge and experience into practice.

According to the study conducted by Tuimue and Chemwei (2015), on the use of instructional materials, the finding revealed that during lesson presentation, effective application of variety of use of multisensory materials stimulates learning as a constructive classroom advocates for manipulative materials. Tuimur et al (2015) further mentioned that the purpose and role of learning resources do not only consist of making educational process more attractive and interesting, but also of encouraging active learning, development of different skills and the adoption of desirable values and attitudes of learners (Busljeta, 2013). Teaching materials were considered as useful equipment to assist teachers to explain some concepts simply, resulting in better understanding of the concept taught and learned. Teaching materials made



learning interesting and attractive, and encourage active learning, development of different skills and attitudes in learners (Busljeta, 2013)

#### **5.4.6 PEER OBSERVATION**

In responding to the question: **Which reflexive strategies can teachers use to improve their practices?** It was strongly believed by all the participants that peer observation is aimed to support teachers and focus on an individual's needs and opportunity to learn. Todd (2017) maintains that peer observation is a core element of creating a professional community and building community efficiency. It also improved teachers in ways that better promoted learners' learning. Peer observation of teaching provided constructive feedback that would enable teaching professional development through the mirror of critical reflexivity by the observer and the observed (Eri, 2014).

Peer observation was further noticed by Tosriadiet et al (2018) as a many-sided process that involved technical knowledge classroom dynamics, personal growth, and change. Some of the benefits associated with peer observation are enhancement of quality teaching and some skills, gaining confidence in teaching methods, acquiring new ideas for more efficient teaching, sharing of teaching methods and practices (Tosriadiet et al, 2018). The findings demonstrated that there were teaching related issues that compelled teachers to seek help from other teachers as reflexivity called for openness amongst teachers.

Principals mentioned that they visited classrooms to observe teachers. At some point, teachers visited other teachers to observe how they carried out classroom instructions. The findings were that teachers might take videos or record each other during observations for future use, even for sharing of best practices. Conversely, Alghamdi and Alsolami (2020) investigated teachers' perceptions about the benefits of peer observation among female teachers. Some challenges of peer observation were identified as other teachers found it as a waste of time as they were loaded with too much paperwork. It was also mentioned that at some point lack of sensitivity in providing feedback made teachers to be reluctant to practice peer observation.

#### **5.4.7 Collaborative teaching**

The ability to work collaboratively with others is a central component of contemporary teacher development and learner performance (Stanley, 2011). Teachers shared that principals

must motivate teachers and give them time to figure out and discuss what works best for them. They further added that principals should let them share tips, mentor each other to effectively connect with learners and make learning process joyful. The findings showed that teacher collaboration was perceived constructive and productive as potential teacher practices and learners' performance were recovered. Badiali et al. (2010) affirm that collaborative teaching aims to provide teachers the opportunity to learn from one another through networking and helping one another to improve their classroom practices. Collaboration is a systematic process where teachers work together to analyse and impact professional practices for the betterment of individual learner results.

In Ghenu and Aquario (2020)'s opinion, collaborative teaching promoted teacher growth. It was mentioned by principals that effective teacher collaboration promoted teamwork, engaging in regular routines where teachers communicate and have critical conversation about classroom experiences, strengthen each other and push other colleagues to try out new things. Once more, Stanley (2011) condents that working teams tend to focus the discussion on pedagogical techniques to address specific skills or content which learners may be struggling. Teamwork creates daily plans and goals about learners. The participants disclosed their attitudes towards collaborative practice. They mentioned that since the new curriculum was challenging, when working collaboratively, they worked towards the solution.

## **5.5 Conclusions**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the primary school teachers' perceptions on teachers' reflexivity on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic performance. The study explored: teachers' understanding of the concept reflexivity, poor performance and blame shifting, teacher support, teacher preparedness, flexibility, peer observation and collaborative teaching and learning.

### **5.5.1 Participants' understanding of the concept reflexivity**

The principals and teachers did not have a clear understanding of the concept. They could not give the definition of reflexivity. They gave the definition of reflection while others did not bother to try and pronounced that they did not know the term.

### **5.5.2 Poor Performance and blame shifting**

Learners' poor performance was mentioned as one of the drawbacks which indicated that teachers lacked the skill of reflexivity in their daily practices in the classroom. The results showed that teachers did not pay attention to themselves as constructed objects, considering their effects on teaching practices and learners' performance. This indicated that teachers did not move beyond their philosophical positioning to become open to multiple stand points. The principals mentioned that the dropping of learners' performance caused conflict amongst parents, principals, and teachers. Parents started to raise a concern about their children's performance that was bad due to poor management principals have in schools. In defense principals shifted the blame to teachers that they were not doing their job effectively.

### **5.5.3 Teacher support**

The support in schools to be given to teachers was found to be the responsibility of the principals. Reflexivity helped principals to critically think of their actions as school supervisors and ensure that they enhance learners' academic performance. Therefore, school principals felt that on their side the reflexive practice that develops learners' performance was supporting teachers with everything they might need in teaching practice and learning. The principals declared that the constructive support they offered teachers was providing teaching materials such as buying chalk, charts, and many more for all classes. They even said they provided some supplementary books wherever possible.

Effective communication was mentioned as a tool for principals to meet all teachers to discuss all matters related to teachers' practices and learners' performance. It was further mentioned that sometimes, teachers were met one on one so that they freely had conversation with principals. Assessing teachers' official documents such as a lesson plan preparation or scheme and record of work was the strategy principals used to keep teacher's reflexive. The challenging concepts for teachers were addressed by the resource persons invited by the principals, and they named the District Resource Teacher (DRT).

### **5.5.4 Flexibility**

The participants outlined that reflexivity forced teachers to be alert and address any rising need when necessary. They declared that it is always a good practice to focus on things to be controlled. Teachers were expected to be flexible to change whenever teaching practice and learning did not go as planned. They further added that reflexivity allowed teachers to be

open to new ideas, adapt to changes and meet the needs of the learners. It was pointed out reflexive teachers were flexible enough, always willing to be responsive to individual needs and interests of learners by trying new teaching methods that motivated learners.

#### **5.5.5 Teacher preparedness**

Teacher preparedness was perceived by participants to be having a great positive influence on teachers and learners' performance. A well-prepared teacher considered diversity of learners and puts effort to meet their needs. The participants also said that lesson plan preparation before the beginning of the new lesson serve as a guide and giving a detailed outline that teachers must adhere to during classroom activity. Again, lesson plan preparation-maintained teachers to be systematic, orderly, prevented waste of time, energy, and haphazard teaching.

The findings revealed that during lesson presentation, an enthusiastic teacher created interest in learners, motivated them to pay attention, ask questions, collaborate, and communicate. Teachers and principals suggested that lesson presentation should be associated with multisensory materials to suit different learners' learning styles. Teachers have to maintain an audible tone and pace to make sure that every learner can hear what had been said. The participants also brought to surface that effective use of gestures, ability to demonstrate whenever possible and efficiency of classroom management where the skills reflexive teachers should have.

#### **5.5.6 Peer observation**

The participants sustained that peer observation amongst teachers contributed to improving the overall teaching experiences and practices. The results also indicated that there was a significant progress in learners' performance. The participants categorised the benefits of involving peer observation as a reflexive strategy in teaching practice. They stated that peer observation supports teachers and acted as a core component of creating a professional community among teachers. The constructive feedback made available assisted teachers to realize their strengths, comprehend their weaknesses and work on them.

The principals and teachers affirmed that both the observer and observed benefited from peer observation as it focused on individual requirements and learning by collecting and providing a valuable feedback. The observed and observer discuss and exchange ideas about teaching, check out the new ideas that could possibly improve the way of teaching. The observer can

witness and experience another teacher's behaviour and then replicate it. Finally, observing other peers does not only help in increasing knowledge but also aids in building confidence and thus enhancing self-efficacy for teaching. It inspired the peers to try new pedagogies in classroom.

### **5.5.7 Collaborative teaching**

Collaborative teaching was a practice that included groups of teachers to solve problems, complete tasks, or some projects. Teachers, who work together achieve higher level of thoughts, preserve and keep knowledge more than teachers who work individually. In teacher collaboration, working team of teachers communicates different experiences they encounter, and they could be dealt with. Therefore, teachers have good attitudes towards collaborative teaching and learning.

### **5.6 Limitations of the study**

Some limitations need to be considered in order to adequately comprehend the findings. The study was qualitative in nature and the number or the percentage of participants who shared their opinions was not provided because this is not quantitative study. The study was not based on representative sample, which may not allow the findings to be generalized to the entire population of teachers in Thaba-Tseka district. Lastly, the study was conducted only in one centre (cluster of schools) out of nine centres or school clusters.

### **5.7 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

#### **5.7.1 Recommendations for policy**

In review of this study, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education and Training should:

- Examine national professional standards to identify the extent to which reflexivity is embedded in educational documents which are to guide the work of primary teachers in the country.
- The blueprints for teachers' work must include reflexivity as an essential and overarching discourse of teacher professionalism.

- Lesotho Teacher Training Institutions must employ reflexive strategies in pre-service and in-service teachers' education to enhance teachers' capacity of self-observation, self-analysis and self-evaluation.

### **5.7.2 Recommendations for practice**

As a measure to prepare both the principals and teachers to develop reflexivity skill, a teacher training program that supports teachers' reflexive practices should be held more often.

### **5.7.3 Recommendations for further research**

- A quantitative study can be carried out in the same research site to quantitatively analyse the participants' views about teachers' reflexivity in the enhancement of learners' academic performance.
- Further research needs to be carried out in order to find ways to assist teachers to be reflexive and improve reflexive practices in teacher education to address needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This study explored teachers' reflexivity on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic performance in some selected primary schools in Thaba-Tseka district. This chapter discussed the findings, and the conclusions were as well drawn from the findings. The limitations of the study were identified and the recommendations for policy and practice were made. The study has revealed that the implementation or application of reflexivity has the positive impact on teaching practices and on learners' academic performance. Reflexive strategies that have huge impact when applied effectively were also outlined.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

Interview questions for teachers in semi-structured interviews and focus groups interviews

1. What do you understand of reflexive practice or reflexivity?
2. In which way does reflexive practice enhance learners' academic performance?
3. How is reflexive practice helpful in improving your teaching practice?
4. How do you involve other teachers to improve your teaching practice?
5. Which reflexive strategies can teachers use to improve their practices?

Interview questions for principals

1. What do you understand by the concept reflexivity or reflexive practice?
- 2, what are the drawbacks of lack of reflexivity among primary school teachers/
3. How to do you support teachers in their teaching practices?
4. What do you think can be done to encourage teachers to be reflexive in order to enhance learners' academic performance in the schools?

## Appendix 2: Permission Letters and Consent Letters

# The National University of Lesotho

Telephone: +266 22340601  
Fax: +266 22340000  
http://www.nul.ls



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

P.O. Roma 180  
Lesotho  
Africa

14<sup>th</sup> July, 2022

The Principal  
Thaba-Tseka L.E.C. Primary school  
Thaba-Tseka 550

Dear Sir/Madam

### APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION FOR MS 'MALEFU ALICE MOREKI (200705343) TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I wish to confirm that Ms 'Malefu Alice Moreki is a registered part-time student at the National of University of Lesotho in the Faculty of Education. She is currently pursuing Master of Education (M.Ed.) Degree in Socio-Philosophical Studies. As a requirement for this degree, she is conducting a study entitled: *Teachers reflexivity on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic performance in some selected primary schools in thaba-tseka district.*

In order to achieve the objectives of her study, she will conduct semi-structured interviews with the principals and teachers, as well as conduct documents analysis at some selected primary schools in the Thaba-Tseka district. Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher will issue letters of informed consent to each participant to reassure them that the information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality as per the requirements of the Faculty of Education, at the National University of Lesotho. I therefore request you to grant Ms Moreki the permission to collect data at your school.

Yours sincerely

T. Tlali (Ph.D.) - Supervisor



# The National University of Lesotho

Telephone: +266 22340601  
Fax: +266 22340000  
<http://www.nul.ls>

P.O. Roma 180  
Lesotho  
Africa



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

14<sup>th</sup> July, 2022

The Principal  
Majara Primary school  
Thaba-Tseka 550

Dear Sir/Madam

## APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION FOR MS 'MALEFU ALICE MOREKI (200705343) TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I wish to confirm that Ms 'Malefu Alice Moreki is a registered part-time student at the National of University of Lesotho in the Faculty of Education. She is currently pursuing Master of Education (M.Ed.) Degree in Socio-Philosophical Studies. As a requirement for this degree, she is conducting a study entitled: *Teachers reflexivity on their practices and enhancement of learners' academic performance in some selected primary schools in thaba-tseka district.*

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Yours sincerely

T. Tlali (Ph.D.) - Supervisor



1

# The National University of Lesotho

Telephone: +266 22340601  
Fax: +266 22340000  
http://www.nul.ls

P.O. Roma 180  
Lesotho  
Africa



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

14<sup>th</sup> July, 2022

The Principal  
Patisi Primary school  
Thaba-tseka 550

Dear Sir/Madam

## APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION FOR MS 'MALEFU ALICE MOREKI (200705343) TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

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Yours sincerely

T. Tlali (Ph.D.) - Supervisor





Kolberg Primary School  
P.O. Box 349  
THABA-TSEKA 550

14 July 2022

The National University of Lesotho  
P.O. Box 180  
Lesotho  
Africa

Dear sir/madam

This is to make the correction concerning the name of the school on the application for permission for Ms Molete Alice Moreki who is to conduct her research at my school.

The right name of the school is Kolberg Primary, not Patsi Primary. Patsi is the name of the village in which the school is located.

Yours faithfully  
Maneo Phela *Phela*  
Principal  
59059567/68375067



Dear Participant,

I Malefu Alice Moreki, I am currently enrolled in Master of Education (M. Ed.) programme, in the Department of Educational Foundations, of the Faculty of Education, at the National University of Lesotho. My student number is 200705343.

As part of the requirements to complete the M. Ed. programme, I must carry out a research and I have already started the process. My topic of interest is: TEACHERS REFLEXIVITY ON THEIR PRACTICES AND ENHANCEMENT OF LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SOME SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THABA-TSEKA DISTRICT. The study is aimed at exploring views on the teachers' reflexivity and practices in the classroom and on how they enhance learners' performance.

You are requested to participate in this study to answer the questions as honestly as you can. All answers are correct. Your name will not be disclosed and your participation will not put you in any danger. The information collected from this study will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

My supervisor is Dr T. Tlali of the Faculty of Education at The National University of Lesotho.

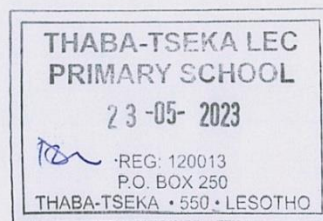
Yours sincerely

Malefu Alice Moreki

*Moreki*

+26658057502

+26663046615



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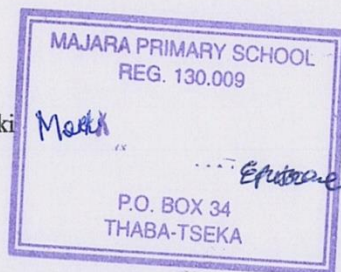
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Yours sincerely

Malefu Alice Moreki

+26658057502

+26663046615



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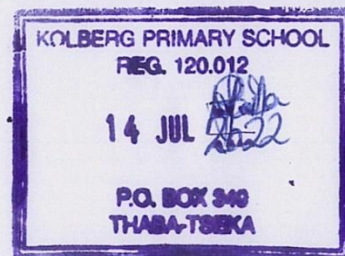
Yours sincerely

Malefu Alice Moreki

*Moreki*

+26658057502

+26663046615



## Appendix 3: Proof of Editing



### PROOF OF EDITING

To whom it may concern:

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TITLE OF THE PAPER

**TEACHERS' REFLEXIVITY ON THEIR PRACTICES AND ENHANCEMENT OF  
LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SOME SELECTED PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS OF THE THABA-TSEKA DISTRICT**

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## Appendix 4: Turnitin Report

TEACHERS REFLEXIVITY ON THIER PRACTICES AND ENHANCEMENT OF LEARNERS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SOME SELECTED PRIMARYSCHOOLS OF THE THABA-TSEKA DISTRICT

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