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Enhancing Economics Curriculum implementation in selected schools in the Northern Cape

By

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Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy with Specialization in Curriculum Studies, Department of Curriculum and Higher Education Studies, Faculty of Education University of the Free State, Bloemfontein South Africa

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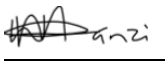
DECLARATION

I, Wellington Itai Manzi (Student Number: 2017148541), hereby declare that this thesis entitled "Enhancing Economics Curriculum implementation in selected schools in the Northern Cape" (five interrelated publishable articles) is my own work and all sources that have been used in this thesis are indicated and are acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that this work has not been submitted previously in part or entirely for examination for a degree at any institution.

I hereby cede the copyright of this thesis to the University of the Free State.



Signature 30/7/2023

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty, the giver of life, and my immediate and extended family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In fulfilment of this thesis, a particular word of appreciation goes to

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- Dr. Jabulani Sibanda and Mrs Carmen Nel for their language and technical editing assistance.
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ABSTRACT

Economics, as a high school elective subject, helps learners to understand the operations of the economy and equips learners with critical thinking, analytical, problem solving and decision-making skills. It empowers learners with the skills required to confront 21st-century challenges. This qualitative study aimed to explore how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in selected schools in the Northern Cape Province through article publications. This study is vital because Economics academic achievement has been reported to be poor in the province and country at large. There has also been literature which documents that Economics teachers face challenges in implementing the Economics curriculum. This qualitative study explores how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in the selected schools in the Northern Cape Province. Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theory was chosen to theorise the study while adopting case study research for the design and interpretive paradigm as the lens for the study. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis and analysed using thematic analysis. The study findings revealed that although there are pockets of good practices in Economics curriculum implementation, more still needs to be done in terms of the provision of teaching and learning resources, equipping teachers with proper Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and improving the support provided to Economics teachers by various stakeholders including departmental heads. The study recommends more meaningful use of current and relevant educational resources and that teachers should undergo continuous teacher-initiated empowerment workshops to enhance their Economics curriculum implementation practices.

Keywords: Mediated Learning Experience, Curriculum implementation, Information and Communication Technology, Teacher practices, Meaningful Assessment, Curriculum leadership and Support.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ETPCK	Economics Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
MLE	Mediated Learning Experience
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
SARB	South African Reserve Bank
SMT	School Management Team
TSPCKM	Topic Specific Pedagogical Content Knowledge Model
TUESA	Test of Understanding Economics in South Africa

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

To whom it may concern

Kindly take note of the following before reading further:

- Article three has been published in the *Universal Journal of Educational Research*:

Wellington Manzi, Boitumelo Moreeng. 2023. Challenges Facing Implementation of Economics Curriculum: The Experiences of Frances Baard District Teachers. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 11(1), pp.1-13. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2023.110101

- Article two has been published in the Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS) and Values for Education:

Manzi, W. and Moreeng, B. 2023. Mediating Economics Curriculum Implementation through Meaningful Assessment- a Case Study of the South African Educational system. *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences,* 4(6), pp.726-743. https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2023463

- Article four has been submitted to the Journal of Curriculum Studies Research (see Appendices 9)
- Article one has been submitted to the Journal of Economics Education and Entrepreneurship (see Appendices 10)
- Article five is to be submitted to the Journal of African Perspectives of Research in Teaching and Learning.

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The study aimed to enhance Economics curriculum implementation in selected schools in the Northern Cape. Economics is viewed as "a science which studies the human relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses" (Gotip, Ede & Oleabhiele, 2020). Moreover, it is viewed as a social science, which seeks to explain how people choose to use scarce resources in a manner that is efficient and equitable (Ononye & Obiakor, 2020). The subject's significance can never be overemphasised as it plays a crucial role in all societies and economies of the world. For this reason, scholars such as Idika (2020) argue that Economics is the lifeblood of the future health of an economy. Since resources are limited, and people's needs and wants are unlimited, people must make informed decisions and use the resources more efficiently while being considerate of others. Economic literacy plays a crucial role in how citizens make such decisions. The Economics curriculum should produce responsible citizens who use critical thinking to make informed decisions in solving economic problems (Asarta et al., 2021). Economics should also develop the learners' ability to apply the analytical tools, knowledge and skills acquired in the subject to solve society's economic problems (Gotip et al., 2020).

For the aims of the Economics curriculum to be achieved as envisaged in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) document, there is a need for proper curriculum implementation. Nevenglosky, Cale and Augustine (2018:1) view curriculum implementation as "how teachers deliver instruction and assessment through the use of specified resources provided in a curriculum." These scholars suggest that curriculum implementation is a process where learners acquire the

planned or intended knowledge, skills and attitudes. Ng et al. (2015) believe that proper curriculum implementation requires good teaching by good teachers and demands monitoring of curriculum coverage by SMT, specifically departmental heads. Moreover, Metcalfe (2018) further posits that departmental heads are there to identify pedagogical problems with coverage and support educators to solve these identified problems.

Notwithstanding the above, available literature postulates that the lack of training, insufficient resources, increased workload and overcrowded classes presented a challenge to the efficacy of implementing the Economics curriculum (Ismael et al., 2020; Ojo & Adeyami, 2020). Scholars such as Idika (2020) and Kruger (2018),mention that the lack of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) has resulted in some teachers choosing what to teach and what not to teach based on their knowledge of the content. In addition, Asarta et al. (2021) posit that the lack of PCK has resulted in teachers heavily relying on teacher-centred strategies, which reduces learners to mere spectators; this probably expose people with low incomes to mediocre Economics academic achievement (Idika, 2020; Kruger, 2018; Zhang, 2016). In South Africa, in the Northern Cape Province in particular, the Diagnostic report for the matric examination analysis shows that academic achievement in the subject has been below average. The Diagnostic Report revealed that only 27.6% of the 1,928 learners who sat for the Economics National Senior Certificate Examinations 2022 in the Northern Cape, achieved at 40% level and above and that such has been the trend for the past five years (DBE, 2022).

Some studies in Economics teaching and learning have pointed to numerous factors ranging from the effect of the learning environment, such as the competency level of teachers (Cabautana & Dacles, 2021), classroom conditions, teaching methods (DBE, 2020) to learner-related beliefs and misconceptions amongst others as reasons for the poor academic achievement (Asarta, 2021). In addition, some scholars such as

Ogbonnaya, Awoniyi and Matabane (2020) identify sections of the Economics curriculum which are deemed to be challenging and even went further to develop Topic Specific Pedagogical Content Knowledge Model (TSPCKM) for the teaching of Market Dynamics, one of the topics deemed to be challenging. However, despite all these efforts, there is still a gap in the literature on how Northern Cape Economics teachers are implementing the Economics curriculum and what curriculum leadership and support are available for these teachers to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. Thus, this study explores how Economics curriculum implementation can be improved in the selected schools in the Northern Cape.

1.2 The Non-Traditional Format and Organisation of the Article-Style Study

The presentation of this doctoral thesis differs from the traditional format as this thesis adopted the article option instead of the conventional approach. Five interrelated articles are presented as Chapters 2-6 [see /cf. Chapter 2-6]. It is important to note that although the five articles were free-standing for publication purposes, all of them contribute to the thesis and are interrelated and jointly seek to achieve the aim of the study, which is to enhance Economics curriculum implementation in selected schools in the Northern Cape. A single theoretical Framework couched all five articles; Mediated Learning Experience (MLE).

1.3 Problem Statement of the Study

Literature reveals that learners seem to be performing poorly in Economics despite global efforts to improve the quality of education (Asarta et al., 2021; Idika, 2020). This poor academic achievement can be attributed to how teachers implement the Economics curriculum (Asarta et al., 2021). Teachers are blamed for declining Economics academic achievement because of their ineffective curriculum

implementation practices (Ismael et al., 2020; Ojo & Adeyami, 2020). Available literature documents that teachers do not possess the pedagogical content knowledge to teach the prescribed material (Asarta et al., 2021; Nepal & Rogerson, 2023). My experience and observations as a senior marker for the past seven years concur with literature findings that there are inadequacies in teachers' curriculum implementation practices. I observed that learners grapple with basic economic concepts primarily found in microeconomics. This assertion is supported by the Test of Understanding Economics in South Africa (TUESA), which suggests that learners perceive microeconomics concepts as dry and overly congested with mathematical concepts. Hence, this study aims to explore how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in the selected schools in the Northern Cape.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) as the theoretical framework. This theory has its roots in the social constructivism theory as espoused by Piaget and Vygotsky (Tzuriel, 2011). Social constructivism refers to an act where knowledge is constructed through the help of others (Jha & Devi, 2014). It subscribes to the notion that knowledge is constructed through human activity and that individuals create meaning through interactions. Social constructivism believes that knowledge is developed through social interactions.

Reuven Feuerstein developed the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theory from 1950-1963. After having spent many years working with children who were coming from North Africa and the Holocaust, he was touched by observing how new immigrant learners were having difficulties coping with the unfamiliar learning environment in Israel. He discovered that most of these children were regarded as "retarded" or "unteachable" based on the standardised tests and Piaget's methods (Feuerstein & Lewin-Benham, 2012). Determined to make a difference in these marginalised groups,

Feuerstein started questioning the Piagetian framework, which emphasised the limited role of the educator in learning, and the Vygotskian framework, which was more concerned with self-mediation (Deutsch, 2003). Although Feuerstein agreed with Piaget and Vygotsky that learners learn through interaction with the environment, Feuerstein believed that the mediator played a critical role in organising and facilitating learning. To him, there should be intentional mediation from various stakeholders, including parents, peers, educators and other relevant stakeholders who pose as mediators (Isman & Tzuriel, 2008).

Feuerstein's (MLE) theory focuses on how stimuli are structured, transformed, and organised by a mediator, who can be a parent, teacher, or agent (Tzuriel, 2011; Tzuriel & Shamir, 2002; Feuerstein et al., 1980). It concerns how mediators interpose between the learner and the content and skills to be acquired (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995). Feuerstein believed that a deliberate attempt (intentional engagement) should transpire to help learners organise and understand concepts effectively (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995). In his view, the absence of MLE could result in learners failing to connect the past and the present (Feuerstein et al., 2010). His theory linked ineffective learning mainly to the failure of adults, parents, educators, and other mediational agents to mediate between the learner and the stimuli correctly.

In education, mediation refers to educators striving to teach learners to think critically and find solutions to problems instead of being information transferors. Feuerstein emphasises teaching learners how to learn instead of teaching them content, as he argues that content can change or become obsolete (Feuerstein et al., 2010). Effective teaching, to Feuerstein, can only take place when teachers act as human mediators between the environment and the learners. So, it is plausible to suggest that the quality of interactions between the teacher, individual, and the environment enables or denies learners an opportunity to build knowledge and skills.

Mediation is a deliberate teaching approach where the teacher does not pose as a think tank but rather a facilitator of learning. The learner should be purposefully assisted in gaining new knowledge. Bouwer (2008:3) postulates that mediation can be in the form of different actions, as depicted by Figure 1.1

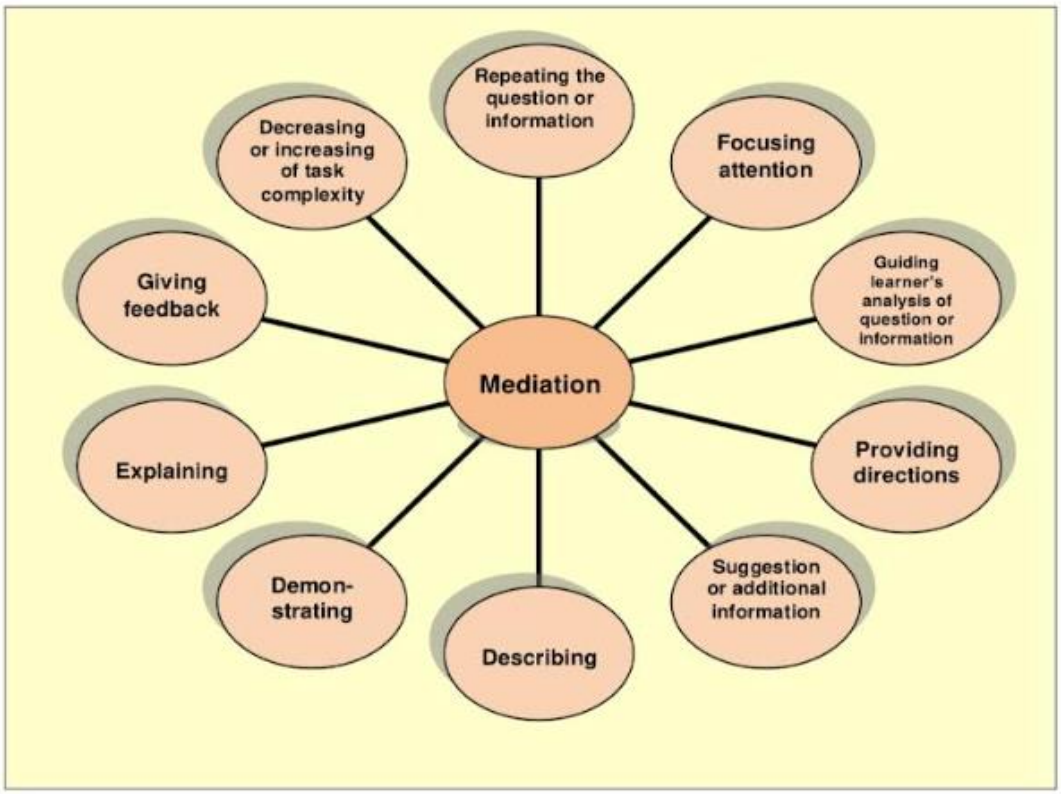

Figure 1.1: Figure 1.1: Forms of mediation

It becomes apparent from Figure 1.1 that mediation occurs when the mediator channels the learner's attention to the work and provides guidance on how learners analyse the information. The mediator must carefully and strategically introduce new information by employing strategies such as explanations, demonstrations, repeating information, adding or reducing tasks, and providing meaningful and timely feedback to the learner. Since MLE was the theory for this study, I must discuss the four main parameters that formed this study. These parameters guided how I explored how Economics curriculum implementation could be enhanced in the selected schools in the Northern Cape.

In the following section, I discuss the parameters of MLE, how they were applied in this study, implications of mediation for learning, my reflections, and the relevance of MLE to the study.

1.4.1 Parameters of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE)

Feuerstein et al. (2010) posit that MLE is based on 12 parameters during teaching. However, only the four parameters are considered necessary and adequate for MLE. These parameters include intentionality, reciprocity, mediation of meaning, and transcendence. *Intentionality.* To Tzuriel (1999), the mediator's role is to intentionally design content and help learners analyse and correct their cognitive difficulties. Tzuriel (1999) further argues that intentionality has to be coupled with reciprocity. *Reciprocity* is achieved when a learner responds verbally, non-verbally or vocally to the mediator's efforts. Intentionality and reciprocity concern the mediator's deliberate efforts to change the learners' perception, processing and response. *Mediation of meaning*- the mediators should facilitate learners' reflection on how they found the solution to the problem and the generalisations that can be made. *Transcendence*- the lessons learned and experience should be transferred to new situations. In other words, learners should be able to use the knowledge gained in different situations. Combining intentionality and reciprocity, mediation of meaning and transcendence provides a powerful tool for the "development of cognitive modifiability" (Isman & Tzuriel, 2008:548).

1.4.2 Application of the four parameters of MLE in my study

1.4.2.1 Intentionality and reciprocity

As the researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis, a search for a purposeful selection of resources

and teaching strategies from the teachers (intentionality) to solicit reciprocity from the learners was imperative. The study sought to observe issues like eye contact and elaboration on the part of the teachers to captivate learners to respond to stimuli. Regarding the departmental heads, the researcher sought to identify how they intentionally supported the teachers. The concern with intentionality was not only based on how teaching and learning were unfolding or how curriculum leadership and support was provided, but also sought to understand why it was done the way it was done.

1.4.2.2 Mediation of meaning

With this parameter, the study sought to discover how teachers were helping learners to comprehend the value of what they were learning. Through the data-gathering instruments, it sought to understand how teachers assisted the learners in linking what they were learning to their everyday experiences. The curiosity to ascertain what teachers and departmental heads were doing to make learning relevant to the daily live experiences of the learners was an interesting exposition.

1.4.2.3 Transcendence

Transcendence deals with transferring learned knowledge and skills to new situations. As I gathered data, I sought to identify whether teachers assisted learners in using the learned knowledge and skills in new situations. I was concerned with what teachers and departmental heads were doing to help learners decide how and where the learned knowledge and skills could be applied.

In the following section, the study dealt with the implications of mediation of learning. The impact of this is shown diagrammatically in Figure 1.2 and then explain the importance of mediation.

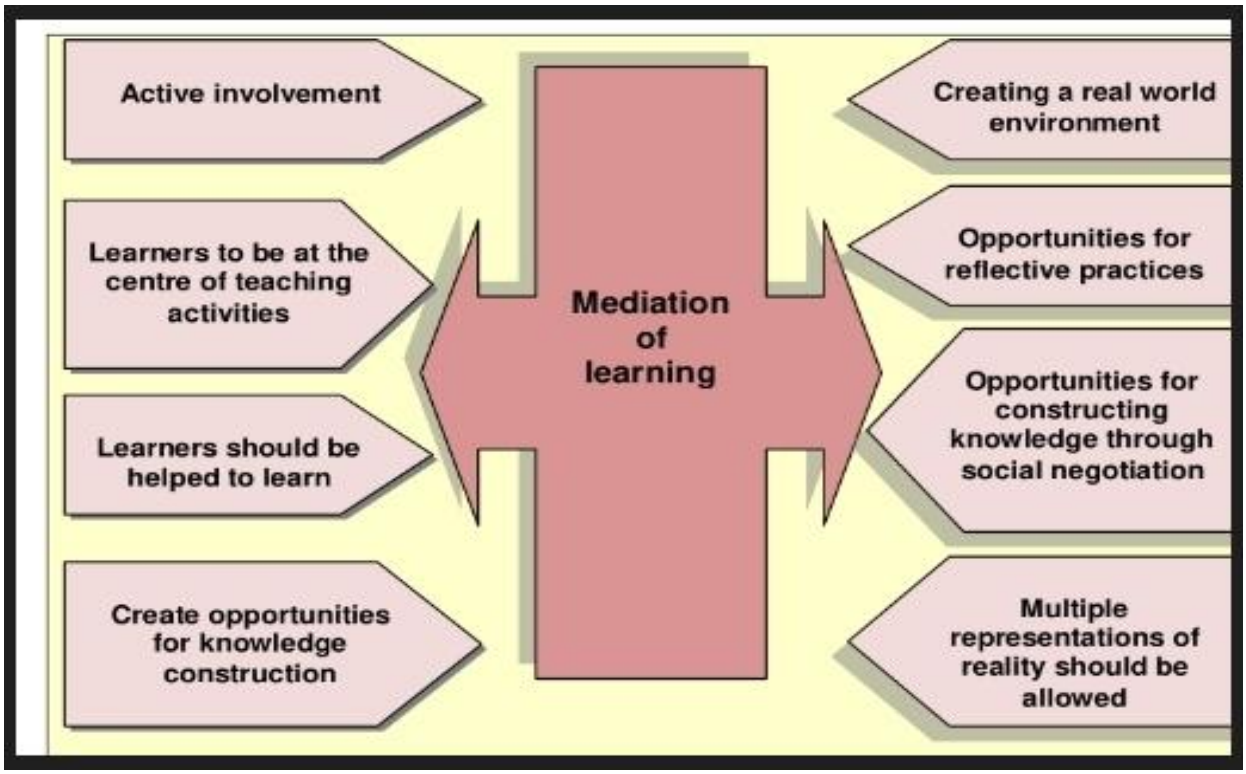

Figure 1.2: Implications of mediation for learning

As portrayed by Figure 1.2, learners must be actively involved in the learning process if they are to create new knowledge; this calls for the learner to be the focal point of everything that transpires in the teaching and learning process. The teacher should create a conducive environment and learning activities that will assist learners in constructing knowledge instead of being passive receivers of knowledge (Killen, 2002). Also, important to mention is that for effective learning to occur, learners should be assisted to learn through guidance so that learning is not complex. Mediation is pre-disposed with the construction of knowledge as juxtaposed to regurgitating information during tests or examinations. Quality interactions should enable learners to acquire problem-solving skills to solve real problems confronting the world (Isman & Tzuriel, 2008). In developing learners' critical thinking skills, mediators should create opportunities for learners to reflect on their learning strategies and critically evaluate whether those strategies assisted them in gaining a more profound comprehension of stimuli.

What becomes clear is that mediation allows learning that would not have been possible without mediation agents or using (materials) tools (Mori, 2002). It is also clear that MLE parameters are concerned with the quality of the teacher's instruction, the level at which the learners benefit from the teachers' mediational efforts, and the ability of learners to apply the learned knowledge and skills in different situations.

Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theory was deemed relevant to this study because it believes that mediational learning is realised when content is identified, ordered, and invested with specific meaning by teachers (mediating agents). This study will consider the four parameters as intertwined and not independent. Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) focuses on how teachers, as mediation agents, provide learners with appropriate opportunities and resources to acquire the intended knowledge and skills (Tzuriel, 2011). As a practice theory, MLE provided the lens by which the study analysed how teachers implement the Economics curriculum in the selected schools.

1.4.3 Assumptions of the theory

As a theory aligned with social constructivism, MLE epistemologically believes that knowledge is relative and subjective. The view is that knowledge is socially and culturally constructed (Jha & Devi, 2014). Therefore, in this study, Economics teachers constructed their knowledge based on context. They shared their personal experiences regarding Economics curriculum implementation in the Northern Cape schools while concurrently providing solutions to their problems.

Axiologically, MLE assumes that the researcher is part of what is being studied. Therefore, the researcher cannot be separated from the research and will be subjective. However, the researcher should present a balanced report of his findings. This researcher cannot rule out subjectivity, although all efforts were taken to minimise subjectivity throughout the period of data collection and analysis.

From an ontological point, the MLE denies the existence of objective reality and focuses on discovering multiple perspectives of all the participants in a setting (Henning, 2004). It believes that knowledge is unknowable and that reality cannot be discovered. In this study, Economics teachers in selected schools constructed their truth and knowledge based on their social interaction (Ryan 2018). Multiple voices from teachers of different schools were vital in how they perceived how Economics curriculum implementation could be enhanced in the selected schools.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following the introductory background, the study's primary and sub-research questions are as follows.

1.5.1 Main Question

How can Economics curriculum implementation be enhanced in selected schools in the Northern Cape?

1.5.2 Sub-questions

- How is Economics curriculum implementation done in selected schools?
- How are some aspects of the Economics curriculum used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation?
- What challenges are experienced during Economics curriculum implementation?
- What strategies can be used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation?

- What leadership support is provided to teachers to ensure proper Economics curriculum implementation?

1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The study main aim was to explore how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in selected schools in the Northern Cape. To achieve the aim, the following objectives were derived:

- To determine how Economics curriculum implementation is done in selected schools.
- To describe how some aspects of the Economics curriculum are used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation.
- To discuss challenges that are experienced during Economics curriculum implementation.
- To postulate on the strategies that can be used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation.
- To describe the leadership support provided to teachers to ensure proper Economics curriculum implementation.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In as much as philosophical assumptions remain dominantly hidden in research, they still have a huge impact on how the researcher carries research, and such, the researchers' philosophical assumptions need to be identified (Slife & Williams,1995). It is important to mention that the principles of research dictates that the researcher discloses their philosophical assumption as it will have a bearing on the research approach, research design and data collection methods the researcher employs. Philosophical worldviews or assumptions or paradigms are "a basic set of beliefs that

guide action" (Cuba, 1990: 17).A paradigm is "a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, generalisations, and experiments performed to support them are formulated" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023). The research paradigm forms a philosophical basis of the studies as it helps to ascertain what knowledge will be sought, how to discover it, and informs how the data will be collected, analysed, and interpreted. In this study, the interpretive paradigm was used to shape the path used to conduct these studies. It helped to understand how the researcher's beliefs and assumptions could affect these studies, and informed how data was collected, analysed, and interpreted (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Saunders et al., 2012).

There are basically four worldviews in research which are: Post positivism, Constructivism, Transformative, and Pragmatism.

Post Positivist Worldview

This worldview is sometimes known as the scientific method research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It subscribes to the deterministic philosophy of cause-and-effect outcomes. This worldview believes that knowledge is based on carefully observed and measured objective reality that exists in the world. There are laws and theories that govern this world and these theories have to be tested, refined or modified so that people can understand the world (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). Numeric measures of observations, and studying of individuals is of great importance to postpositivist worldview. To postpositivist, absolute truth can never be found, and research is a process of making claims and theory verification (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The Transformative Worldview

This philosophical view holds that research inquiry should be related to politics and political change agenda to deconstruct social oppression at all levels it manifests itself

(Mertens, 2010). Issues that speak to empowerment, inequality, domination, oppression, alienation, and suppression finds voice in this paradigm. Usually, researcher begin with one of the above issues as a departure point to their inquiry. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It seeks to give voice for those participants who are marginalised. Transformative paradigm assumes that the inquirer will collaborate so as not to further marginalise the participants as a result of the inquiry.

The Pragmatic Worldview

This paradigm draws from the work of Pierce, James, Mead, and Dewey (Cherryholmes,1992). Pragmatism is not hinged on any one system of philosophy and reality. Its more aligned to mixed methods research as the inquirer can freely draw from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they undertake research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pragmatists researchers are concerned with the "what and how to research based on intended consequences" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To them, truth is what works at the time and is not based on duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. The researchers need to establish a purpose for their mixing rationale for the reasons why quantitative and qualitative data need to be in the first place.

The Constructivist Worldview

The constructivist or social constructivism (often combined with interpretivism is seen as an approach to qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The ideas came from Mannheim and from the works such as Berger and Luckmann's (1967). In this study, the constructivist paradigm will be viewed to be synonymous with the interpretivist paradigm. The Interpretivist paradigm assumes that knowledge is of a softer and transcendental kind and is based on experience and insight of a personal nature, just like its epistemological assumptions (Hair et al., 2016). Interpretive paradigm is viewed as being underpinned by a belief in the value of relativism, namely, that reality and truth are socially constructed and that neither is entirely devoid of bias

in the meanings assigned by individuals to phenomena and aims to uncover and interpret the subjects' "situated experience in the world" (Wright-St Clair, 2015:54).

This study will adopt the interpretivist paradigm. In line with the interpretive paradigm, the researcher does not believe that knowledge is to be discovered but instead that knowledge is socially constructed (Saunders et al., 2012). The study tried to co-creating meaning as to understand the teachers' lived experiences. Interpretivist acknowledges multiple realities and truths, providing the researcher with a platform to explore how Economics curriculum implementation could be enhanced in the selected schools. Through the Interpretive paradigm, the researcher gathered rich insights into the live experiences of the Economics teachers (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Saunders et al., 2012).

1.7.1 Research Approach

There are basically three types of research approaches namely: Quantitative Research Approach, Qualitative Research Approach and Mixed Method Research Approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative research approach is used when one is concerned with testing existing theories by examining the relationship among variables. The variables should be measurable and the data is numbered and analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The same sentiments are shared by Williams, Wiggins & Vogt (2021:2) who postulate that “Quantitative research is about quantities, it is about measurement”. These scholars go further to state that quantitative research is concerned with inference which can lead to casual explanation and prediction. It uses experimental methods and can be done in a laboratory and can involve huge numbers.

Qualitative research approach is concerned with exploring and understanding the meaning which individuals or a group of people ascribe to a social phenomenon

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Similarly, Rahman (2017) argues that qualitative research is interested in analysing subjective meaning by collecting non standardised data and analysing texts and images rather than numbers and statistics. These definitions suggest that qualitative research is concerned about meanings to confirm which individuals or a group attach to their daily lived experiences. It cannot be quantified in numbers nor can numerical numbers be used to confirm the findings and back-up recommendations.

Mixed methods research is a research approach that involves collecting two sets of data; quantitative and qualitative. It enables the researcher “to integrate the two forms of data that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:4). The reason behind this approach is that the integration of qualitative and quantitative data results in additional insights than if one set of data was used alone.

Research Design

A multiple case study research methodology was adopted for this study. Brinkmann and Kvale (2018: xii) define qualitative research as research that intends to explain social phenomena "from the inside" in various ways. A qualitative research approach and case studies can be used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in its natural settings using multiple sources for validation (Schoch, 2020). To Hancock, Algozzine and Lim (2021), a case study can be used to study different phenomena such as a school, event, group or individual. It is, therefore, clear that case studies are an appropriate approach to employ in a school or organization where a teacher or employee wants to know ***why*** and ***how*** kind questions.

This study utilised a multiple case study to get the differences and similarities between cases (Vannoni, 2014) on the ***why*** and ***how*** questions from different teachers from different schools. It allowed the researcher to create a platform where Economics teachers unpack how they construct the world around them, what they do in their

classrooms, and what happens to them. Although the case study is widely used in research, it faces criticism that it is less rigorous (Tomaszewski, Zarestky & Gonzalez, 2020).

1.7.2 Data Collection

The study adopted semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to gather data since these data collection techniques are compatible with qualitative research (Lahiri, 2023; Creswell & Guetterman, 2021). Data gathering is the gathering of organised information, usually the result of observation, experience, and experimentation (Yin, 2011). The logic behind using multi-data sets was to enhance the credibility of the findings and mitigate biases in the study (Noble & Heale, 2019). After participants consented to participate in these studies, the data collection process started with document analysis. The three selected Economics teachers were asked to produce their teacher files. Effort was made to identify how teachers plan for their lessons, the form, and quality of assessments they administer, and the resources, and strategies they use in their lessons. This was followed by pre-observation interviews where the study sought to understand how the teachers implemented the Economics curriculum. Afterwards, arrangement was made to carry out classroom observations followed by post-classroom observation interviews. In the case of departmental heads, only two interviews were conducted, focusing on *objective five*. I adopted this triangulation strategy because I wanted it to serve as a cross-validation method to enhance the credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

1.7.3 Semi-structured Individual Interviews

Semi structured individual interviews were used to gather data. Semi-structured interviews refer to a set of questions with a predetermined thematic framework, which

are asked of a participant, and allow the researcher to probe the participant further to get more clarity (Lahiri, 2023). The pre-planned questions that the researcher poses are designed to leave room for any clarity-seeking questions that may arise based on the responses (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021).

In adherence with ethical considerations, the researcher first sought and was granted permission by the participants (Appendix 6) to conduct recorded interviews with them (Lahiri, 2023). Afterwards, arrangement was also made with the Economics teachers' departmental heads on the days and times would be available for the individual semi-structured interviews. Participants were informed that their responses would be kept anonymous, and that they had the right not to answer questions they felt were sensitive, and uncomfortable with (Allmark, Boote, Chambers, Clarke, McDonnell, Thompson & Tod, 2009). The interviews were conducted twice for 50 minutes each session with each participant on different days as was agreed, and all interviews were audiotaped, and transcribed word-by-word (Creswell, 2014). The benefit of conducting individual interviews is that they allow the researcher to go deeper, and discuss individual views, and perceptions without undue influence from other participants (DiCcco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Through semi-structured interviews, the researcher could access the participants' self-reported actions, thoughts, beliefs, and interpretations of classroom practices. The questions asked were in line with the objectives of the study. The first interview session gathered information to respond to objectives *one, two* and *three*. The second session was to respond to objectives *four* and *five*.

Semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to ask teachers open-ended questions about how they were implementing the Economics curriculum (Baillie, 2019) This approach allowed for proper understanding of the Economics teachers' curriculum implementation practices, challenges, and possible solutions, and the

support they received from various stakeholders, including the Subject Advisor (Creswell, 2013).

1.7.4 Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted to triangulate data obtained from semi-structured interviews and document analysis (Creswell, 2013). Methodological triangulation was meant to enrich the study's findings (Murdock, 2019). Classroom observation "is the conscious noticing and detailed examination of participants' behaviour in a naturalistic setting" (Cowie, 2009: 166). It involves watching a teacher whilst in action in their classrooms (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021).

To obtain first-hand information on how Economics curriculum implementation is done, the researcher deemed it fit to be a non-participant observer. Having received consent from the teachers to observe their classes, they were made to understand that before the observation, that the observation data was solely for study and that their identities would be anonymous (Allmark et al., 2009). Thus, the importance of building a positive relationship with the observed was established (Casabianca, Lockwood & McCaffrey, 2007). To this end, there was regular social WhatsApp calls and messages with the participants for weeks leading to the observations. Oblivious of the limited time to observe the classes, the researcher had to think and rethink what ~~to~~ look for during the fifty-five-minute observations. It was also acknowledged that the researcher might not have sound observing skills (Creswell, 2014). The researcher knew that observations have limitations, such as the researcher being seen as disturbing or intrusive. To minimise the effects of being viewed as an intruder, on the day of the observation, the researcher explained to the participants that they should not perceive the observation as a threat as it was only an academic activity. The researcher did this because the researcher did not want the participants to behave differently than they otherwise would.

During the observations, the researcher wore a complete observer hat, which meant that during the observation, the researcher did not form part of the participants (Creswell, 2014). The researcher observed three Economics teachers' classes to uncover, and demystify what transpires in the selected Economics classrooms regarding daily practices, use of meaningful assessment, challenges, and integration of ICT. The researcher took 'thick field notes' detailing what transpired in the participants' classroom, and 'making the familiar strange' (Holiday, 2007). The researcher took notice of the selected Economics teachers' spoken, and unspoken actions and did not take anything for granted. As a common practice in qualitative research, classroom observations were used with interviews, and document analysis to provide more information. It, therefore, followed that after each observation, an interview was conducted where teachers were asked to explain the reasons for their actions in the classroom. In one incident, conducting a post-lesson observation interview with Participant B was impossible as he had pressing personal matters to attend to immediately after the lesson.

Document analysis

Creswell (2014) conceptualises document analysis as a systematic document review process. Documents may be in texts, pictures or electronic form that would have been recorded without the researcher's influence (Creswell, 2014). Document analysis enables the researcher to interpret documents, make meaning, and better understand the phenomenon under observation. Like classroom observations, document analysis is usually used in qualitative research with other data collection techniques to combine evidence that leads to the credibility of the findings (Denzin, 2017).

This study wanted to explore how the Economics curriculum can be enhanced in the selected schools. To achieve this, the study needed to analyse documents such as lesson plans prepared by Economics teachers to achieve this aim. Lesson plans are an integral part of teaching and learning as they not only serve as evidence of

preparation by the teacher but also serve as a guide to the teacher on what aspects of the lesson are essential (Angaiz, Jabeen & Karim, 2021). Through document analysis, the researcher got information on the quality of assessments learners were exposed to and the nature and quality of written feedback the teachers provided. It also provided the researcher with information on the job descriptions of departmental heads. Document analysis enabled the researcher to pick congruency and inconsistencies between what participants said in the interviews, their actions during lesson observations and what policy dictates teachers and departmental heads should do.

1.7.5 Selection of Participants

The study employed purposive sampling to decide on the participants of the study. Purpose sampling is an intentional choice of participants due to their qualities (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). This sampling technique is non-probable, non-random, is not prescriptive on the number of participants, and does not need any underlying theories. The sampling of participants is based on what the researcher seeks to investigate, and establishes who can and is willing to share the solicited information based on knowledge or experience (Cresswell & Guetterman, 2021).

The study sought to explore how Economics curriculum implementation could be enhanced in the selected schools. The research participants comprised three Economics teachers, and three departmental heads from three different schools. The teachers, and departmental heads were purposefully selected based on the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results of the schools they were currently stationed. The results of these schools were analysed for the past five years; thus, one high-performing school was above 80% pass rate; another had just above 50% pass rate; and the last school was below 50% (underperforming according to DBE standards). Based on these results, the researcher wanted to establish why the status quo existed, and to get an insight; the Economics teachers, and departmental heads

of these schools in the province were deemed to have rich, and thick information on how the Economics curriculum was being implemented, and how it could be enhanced (Obilor, 2023). It is also documented in the literature that teachers are pivotal to whether a curriculum is delivered consistently, effectively, and with efficacy to enable learners to progress meaningfully or not (Zhu & Kaiser, 2022). Departmental heads are immediate supervisors who should monitor curriculum implementation to ensure that teachers are implementing the curriculum correctly, and offer support where necessary. For this reason, they were deemed to have the knowledge, which could be used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. In these studies, curriculum tracking refers to following or monitoring and, reporting how educators are implementing the curriculum.

1.7.6 Data Analysis

It is the position of Neuman (2014) that during qualitative data analysis, the researcher should interrogate data, inspecting similarities, patterns, and differences. As Creswell (2014) suggested that data collection, data analysis, and writing-up of findings happen simultaneously, this study adopted this stance. The data gathering, and data analysis procedures the researcher followed were informed by what is termed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as zig-zagging throughout the interviews.

The researcher's next step was to start preparing data by reviewing all audio-recorded data, and transcribing it into text by typing it (Creswell, 2014). After this, the researcher tried to make sense of the texts that the researcher had typed, and organised them into themes, and subthemes based on all data sources (coding). Theron (2015:4) defines coding as a process of labelling and organising data to identify themes and relationships between them. In this study, data coding began just after the first observation, document analysis, and interviews at the first school had been done. To save time, and accelerate data coding, the typed texts were fed into a computer

program (Atlas.ti), which assisted me in identifying recurring words and phrases. The researcher entered the data into the computer, which was password protected, and the researcher was the only one who had access to the data since the computer required a password. The reason why the researcher did this was that computers are efficient in storing, and locating qualitative data. After coding data, the researcher presented and analysed the qualitative data into broad themes and subthemes to exhibit how participants implemented the Economics curriculum (Cohen et al., 2011).

Since the study made use of interviews, document analysis and classroom observations to gather data, the interpretation of the findings involved formulating themes through triangulation (Creswell, 2014). The final stage involved me analysing data inductively and deductively until the researcher fully understood the data (Creswell, 2014).

VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study explored how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in the selected schools in the Northern Cape. By thoroughly describing the related Economics teaching and learning, the study seeks to add to the existing literature. This knowledge might benefit teachers and departmental heads, as they will be able to implement the Economics curriculum effectively. Learners will also benefit as effective curriculum implementation is closely related to better academic achievement. More so, departmental officials such as Subject Advisors for Economics will also benefit, as they will add to their knowledge on how to support teachers to implement the curriculum to the learners effectively.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before commencing the research, the researcher sought and secured ethical approval from the University of the Free State ethics committee (UFS-HSD2021/1088/21). The Northern Cape Department of Education also granted permission; the research site

principals, and the participants consented to participate in this study voluntarily. The participants were assured of confidentiality, and named Teachers A, B, and C to ensure anonymity. Participants were also informed that the information gathered would only be used for this study and that they could withdraw anytime they felt uncomfortable with the study.

1.8.1 Trustworthiness

Available literature shows that when using qualitative research, there are four principles (credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability) to ensure the research process's trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). To comply with the above principles, was rigorous in data collection and used multiple triangulation; did not rely on a single source to gather data from participants (Stahl & King, 2020). Data generated were carefully recorded, transcribed, and interpreted based on the meanings. Participants participated voluntarily and were informed they could withdraw from participating anytime they felt uncomfortable.

1.8.2 Credibility

Credibility is concerned with ascertaining whether the study findings are valid. In this study, do not doubt that the information obtained from research participants and the representation is valid and real. To elaborate on this further, triangulated data since qualitative research allows for the use of multiple methods to gather relevant data (Straus, 2017).

1.8.3 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research means the degree to which a finding of a particular study could be applied in another situation (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen & Elo, 2020).

The study was conducted in Northern Cape schools; the scope was limited to certain school environments in one province district. It, therefore, means that the findings and conclusion of this study cannot be generalised in all the schools in other districts and the province at large. However, it should also be noted that it might be possible that the findings can be transferred to another context.

1.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability meant the extent to which participants using the methodology employed and the various data collection tools could confirm the study findings. This process ensures alignment between data and how it is interpreted (Kyngäs et al., 2020).

1.8.5 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research relates to how well a research protocol was documented and how reliable and consistent the research findings are (Kyngäs et al., 2020). To ensure that the data was dependable, made sure that participants were asked similar questions. To incorporate trustworthiness and ensure that information was captured correctly, repeated the recorded interviews with the participants for any corrections.

1.9 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

This section will provide a brief description of the concepts used in this study to give the reader a better understanding of what the concepts mean and how they will be used in this study.

1.9.1 Economics Education

Economics is a social science-based discipline, which aims to explain how businesses, individuals, and governments seek to solve the problem of scarcity using limited resources (Idika, 2020). It is a unique subject that encourages the development of specialised economic knowledge, and skills, which can be employed to solve the numerous economic challenges faced by 21st-century economies. The subject exposes learners to mathematical skills, and graphing concepts to explain the dynamics of economies (Manzi, Mosia & Moreeng, 2021). Many learners sometimes find this knowledge, and skills abstract and complex (Khoo, 2017). Research studies indicate that learners struggle with Economics concepts, which involve graphing, and mathematical concepts (Angra & Gardner, 2017; Ejimonye et al., 2017). More so, the subject's intake has been dwindling in many countries.

For this reason, teachers have to find better ways of presenting these abstract concepts if the subject is to continue existing. With technology taking over every aspect of life, Economics teachers have not been left behind. Since the subject requires teachers who are competent, and abreast with a variety of teaching approaches, and strategies (Kaku & Arthur, 2020; Ayers, 2019), Economics teachers have been expected to be deliberate and intentional in the ways they deliver the content, and assess the learners if the envisaged outcomes of the Economics curriculum are to be realized (Prasetyono et al., 2021).

The teachers' role in implementing the Economics curriculum can never be over-emphasized. The teachers must translate the subject aims into assessment objectives of skills to be examined, for instance, understanding, application, analysis, interpretation and organization (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020). These complex knowledge, skills and values embedded in the subject will enable learners to reason based on their analysis as juxtaposed to passively describing economic phenomena. Effective acquisition of economics knowledge, analytical, critical, and creative thinking, and

problem-solving skills heavily relies on the teachers' ability to effectively and intentionally plan, deliver, and assess the Economics content (Santika, Indriayu & Sangka, 2022; Arthur & Kaku, 2020). Teachers have to be thoughtful, informed, and reflective in their daily practices if meaningful learning is to take place. The economics curriculum demands teachers to meet high pedagogical standards to help learners acquire the high-level knowledge, and skills embedded in the subject (Ogbonnaya, 2022; Kimanzi, 2021).

1.9.2 Curriculum implementation

Curriculum implementation is a broad concept that can be defined in various ways. Nevenglosky et al., (2019) view it as how teachers plan, and deliver instruction using specified resources provided. Sharing the same view on curriculum conceptualisation is Pak, Adegboye, Adekunle, Rahman, McBryde, and Eisen (2020) who opine that curriculum implementation refers to how teachers bring content to life in their classrooms. To Olebhiele and Oko (2018), curriculum implementation is when the officially prescribed syllabi are put into practice, the real exposure of learners to the planned learning opportunities. Key to these definitions is that curriculum implementation is an intentional, and deliberate action teachers undertake to facilitate learning. Curriculum implementation places considerable responsibility on the teachers' shoulders, including the ability to choose appropriate teaching methods, and resources (Boyd, 2018). It is prudent to state that effective Economics curriculum implementation relies heavily on the teachers' knowledge, and skills to plan, present, and assess the Economics content (Idika, 2020; Koskei & Chepchumba, 2020; Cobbold, 2017). Sometimes teachers struggle with these fundamental aspects for effective Economics curriculum implementation, as shown by (Abdulkadir & Harbau, 2019) in the study on the effective implementation of the Economics curriculum. Their study revealed that effective Economics curriculum implementation is not a smooth

process but can be affected by different internal, and external factors such as planning, Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Learning, and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) amongst other factors (Cabautana & Dacles, 2021; Olebhiele & Oko, 2018). Successful Economics curriculum implementation depends on these factors, which might differ according to context, as illustrated by Olebhiele and Oko (2018). For this study, Economics curriculum implementation is conceptualised as how teachers interpret, plan, and deliver instruction and assessment using resources.

1.9.3 Teacher practices

Teachers' practices are conceptualised as all educational activities that involve learning, teaching, and assessment that a teacher undertakes to achieve educational outcomes (Centre for Teaching Innovation, 2022; Tshelane, 2020). This study views teachers' practices as the activities, and actions teachers embark on to achieve specific goals. It is worth mentioning that teachers' practices include teacher-centered practices, learner-centred practices, selection of resources reflective, assessment, and feedback and instructional practices, among others (Jakhanwal, 2021; Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guàrdia & Koole, 2020). Teachers' practices should create conducive learning environments where learners are motivated to acquire knowledge individually, and collaboratively as group members (Kozibroda et al., 2020). The teachers' practices should help learners develop an engaged relationship with the content (Tshelane, 2020). Available literature documents that teachers' practices are influenced by factors such as teachers' qualifications, and experience, technological competence, availability of instructional resources and teachers' beliefs, amongst other factors (Ramsarghey, 2020). In this study, teacher practices are viewed as all the activities, and actions that teachers embark on to achieve certain educational goals.

1.9.4 Meaningful assessment

It is an assessment undertaken in the teaching, and learning process, and not at the end of the learning process (Christ et al., 2021). Meaningful assessment is tightly interrelated to curriculum instruction. It informs teaching, and learning as it helps the teachers, and learners to identify where the learners are in terms of learning, and what can be done to improve learning outcomes.

Given the importance of assessment on learning outcomes, there is a need for effective teachers who can administer meaningful assessments. Teachers play an unequivocal role as both designers and implementers of meaningful assessments. Curriculum implementation places a significant responsibility on the teachers' shoulders, including the ability to choose appropriate assessment strategies (Yan & Boud, 2022; Durga & Kumar, 2020; Brown, 2019). The quality of assessments learners are exposed to heavily depends on the teachers' ability to plan and administer assessments in their daily practice (Idika, 2020; Koskei & Chepchumba, 2020). Teachers have the power to make choices and decisions on how effectively they can use assessment to influence learning (Vahasantanen, 2015). Meaningful assessment demands teachers to design relevant tasks, gather valid information about learners' needs, and respond appropriately based on their needs (Durga & Kumar, 2020; Brown, 2019). It begs teachers to be cognisant of what learners are doing and thinking and to be capable of guiding them. Scholars like Brown (2019) argue that assessment is good teaching and not assessment. For this study, meaningful assessment refers to an assessment undertaken before instruction, during instruction and after instruction to diagnose learners' challenges, modify teachers' practices and enhance learners' understanding.

1.9.5 Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

Pedagogical Content Knowledge is defined as a combination of content knowledge (subject matter) and the expertise of delivering the content through different strategies of pedagogical knowledge (Molise, 2020). It refers to the knowledge and skills teachers need to effectively deliver a lesson (Ruifeng & Ping, 2021). When applied in this study, it implies the teachers' knowledge of Economics content and the ability to present it meaningfully to the learners.

1.9.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are devices, and all resources used to transmit, store, exchange or share information, and improve communication (Santika et al., 2022). ICT is an umbrella term that includes any device or application that might consist of cell phones, television, radio, computers, and other applications that can be used in distance learning (Singhavi & Basargekar, 2019).

1.9.7 Information and Communication Technology integration

Habbi et al. (2020) submit that ICT integration refers to the purposeful, and well-thought use of ICT in teaching, and learning. In agreement, Ghaviferkr and Rosdy (2014) state that ICT integration is the intentional use of computer-related communication in the teachers' practices. Information communication, and technology allow teachers to build higher-order thinking skills espoused by Bloom's taxonomy while keeping learning interesting (Kumar, Chowdhry, & Kazi, 2018). Using ICT, teachers can scaffold learning material from easy to difficult. For this study, ICT integration means using technology to enhance learners' understanding of teaching and learning.

1.10 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

This study was made up of seven chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 Introduction and orientation to the study where topics such as methodology, theoretical frameworks, the significance of the study, acronyms, and definition of terms are discussed.

Chapter 2

Article 1: "Exploring High School Economics Teachers' Curriculum Implementation practices: A case of Northern Cape Province."

Chapter 3

Article 2: "Mediating Economics curriculum implementation through meaningful assessment: A case study of the South African Educational system"

Chapter 4

Article 3: "Challenges Facing Implementation of Economics Curriculum: The Experiences of Frances Baard District Teachers."

Chapter 5

Article 4: "Economics Teachers' Integration of ICT for Enhanced Economics Curriculum Implementation."

Chapter 6

Article 5: Curriculum Leadership and Support for Enhanced Economics Curriculum Implementation in the Northern Cape

Chapter 7

This chapter presents a summary of the study, a presentation of the findings, recommendations, discussion, and implications.

1.11 CONCLUSION

This first chapter started with an introduction to the entire study, which stated the importance of enhancing Economics curriculum implementation. Then the researcher explained the problem statement, theoretical framework, research aim, objectives, and questions. The researcher also articulated the research design, data collection techniques, selection of participants, and data analysis. Furthermore, the researcher detailed the value of the study, and ethical considerations that were taken into account [*cf.* 1.7-1.8.5]. The chapter closes by explaining the layout of the chapters, and the definition of terms. Finally, the researcher provided the titles of the five articles in the order they will be presented from Chapters 2-6 [*cf.* 1.9.8].

As the researcher reflected, the researcher realised the degree of complexity of the task that was ahead, i.e., reporting on multiple layered article option thesis

CHAPTER 2

ARTICLE ONE

This article has been formatted as per the requirements of the Journal of Economics Education and Entrepreneurship where it was submitted.

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Exploring High School Economics Teachers' Curriculum Implementation Practices: A Case of South Africa

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A B S T R A C T

This empirical study explored high school Economics teachers' curriculum implementation practices. The study was grounded within Mediated Learning Experience theory (MLE) as a theoretical lens. Mediated Learning Experience advocates for teachers to deliberate in their instructional planning practices, selection and design of curriculum resources, choice of teaching approaches and strategies, assessment and feedback practices and reflective practices. Mediated Learning Experience demands that learners be actively involved in their learning if meaningful learning, which will allow learners to apply their knowledge and skills in different life situations, is to occur. The study was qualitative, with three participants purposefully selected from three schools in the Northern Cape province. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis were used to generate data from the high school Economics curriculum implementation. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The overarching research question in this study is: What are the Economics teachers' current curriculum implementation practices? The study findings show that although there are pockets of effective curriculum implementation, teachers still need to continue in-service training to enhance their curriculum implementation practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION (12pt)

Research on teachers' practices has been central to educational research since it has enlightened our understanding of how teachers' actions and decisions influence learners' learning (Zhu & Kaiser, 2022). Decades of research have continuously shown that the quality of instruction a learner receives significantly impacts their learning more than any other factor (Hattie, 2018). There is a consensus that teachers' practices in the classroom directly impact the extent to which learners acquire the requisite knowledge, skills and values in any subject (Anthony, 2019; Finkelstein et al., 2021). The success of any curriculum implementation depends on the most critical factor: the teacher (Ramsarghey, 2020). It is undoubtedly true that teachers hold the key to the successful implementation of any curriculum (Handoko & Antaridha, 2019).

In Economics, effective teachers' practices are essential as the subject is critical to a country's political, economic, and social development (Akin, Ogunode & Ibidiran, 2021). Exposing learners to Economics concepts offers many opportunities to develop mathematical, graphing, critical thinking, analytical, problem solving, and decision-making skills (Ojo & Adeyemi, 2020). These high skills empower learners to efficiently use resources, and interpret production, consumption, and exchange data (Yemi et al., 2021). Moreover, the subject enables learners to understand human rights issues, and engage in poverty alleviation (Yemi et al., 2021). The knowledge, and skills alluded to above demand exceptional teacher practices if learners are to benefit from the teaching, and learning process (Sekwena, 2023). Consequently, Economics teachers are in a

prime position for enhanced acquisition of the knowledge, skills and values embedded in the subject.

Notwithstanding the preceding, the Economics curriculum poses severe challenges to learners due to ineffective curriculum implementation practices by the teachers (Ojo & Adeyemi, 2020). Researchers such as Ancho and Serbo (2019), Asarta et al. (2021), and Ismael et al. (2020) point out that teachers still heavily rely on teacher-centred practices. Asarta et al. (2021) mention about 76%-80% of Economics teachers still rely on the traditional chalk-and-talk approach, which relegates learners to passive recipients of knowledge. For this reason, class meetings are often associated with boredom and routine (Buchs et al., 2017). Given that Economics is a subject that demands analytical, technical, critical, and problem-solving skills, it is understandable why the subject is posing challenges to learners because teachers' practices are not creating opportunities for meaningful learning to take place so that learners can develop these high demanding skills (Nepal & Rogerson, 2023).

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Economics teachers' practices have been investigated internationally among countries such as Finland, Malaysia, and Nigeria. For instance, in Malaysia, Aprianti and Sahid (2020) conducted a study to identify the relationship between the teachers' competency and the effect of teachers' competencies in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) learning. The study findings statistically proved that the competencies of Economics teachers have a huge positive impact on 4IR learning. In a related qualitative study in Finland, Platz (2022) investigated Game-Based Learning (GBL) as a teaching strategy. The study findings revealed that this strategy was a more effective learner-centred Economics teaching strategy and sighted several advantages of using GBL over other strategies. In support of the effect of teaching strategies on Economics teaching and learning, a Nigerian study conducted by Idika (2018) revealed that the teaching methods and strategies teachers choose play a significant role in the effective implementation of the Economics curriculum. In the South African context, previous studies have shown that integration of ICT enriches and enhances Economics curriculum implementation (Kimanzi, 2021). Sekwena (2023) brings a more comprehensive approach to teacher practices as his study elaborates on how active learning pedagogy enables learners to acquire high-order thinking skills.

Although some studies have been conducted in Economics curriculum implementation, most have been conducted in other countries, for

instance (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020; Idika, 2020). Those that have been conducted in South Africa were primarily focused on ICT integration, such as (Kimanzi, 2021) and recently Sekwena's (2023) study, which focused on how active learning pedagogy enriches high-order thinking skills in Economics learners. No study has been conducted in the Northern Cape Province regarding how Economics teachers implement the Economics curriculum. This study, therefore, seeks to explore Northern Cape Economics teachers' practices in the implementation of the Economics curriculum in an attempt to contribute to the body of knowledge on how Economics teachers' practices can be improved to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. The study sought to answer the following primary question:

What are the Economics teachers' current curriculum implementation practices?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is couched in Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theory. The theory's origins can be traced back to Reuven Feuerstein's work which began in the late 1940, and later developed into a theory in the period 1950-1963. Mediated Learning Experience has its roots in social constructivism theory which is Piaget's brainchild. Tzuriel (2012, p.1) views MLE interactions as "interactional processes in which parents or substitute adults interpose themselves between a set of stimuli, and the human organism to modify the stimuli for the developing child." Feuerstein and Feuerstein (1991) postulate that MLE theory has 12 parameters, but the first four (intentionality, reciprocity, mediation for meaning, and transcendence) are deemed critical for mediated learning to occur. This theory advocates that the mediator should deliberately create opportunities for learners to learn by designing activities, and using resources, and teaching strategies which allow learners to make meaning of their learning. The mediator's role is that of a facilitator of learning, and not a transmitter of knowledge (Tzuriel & Shamir, 2002).

Mediated Learning Experience is relevant to this study as the interactions between the learner, and teacher should be intentional. The teacher should be deliberate in choosing teaching strategies, curriculum resources, and assessments. Their choices should result in learners reciprocating to the stimuli (Economics Curriculum). Tzuriel (2012) argues that there is a need for openness and trust between the teacher (mediator) and the learner (reciprocity). Once this rapport has been established, it may catalyse learners to acquire the planned or intended knowledge, skills and attitudes, as learners can freely engage with the

teacher and the Economics curriculum. Using appropriate strategies, resources and assessments, the teacher becomes a facilitator of learning whose duty is to adjust the difficulty of (mediation of meaning) activities and concepts to match learners' needs and interests (Feuerstein & Feuerstein, 1991). Once learners understand Economics concepts, they can transfer what they learn in different situations (Transcendence).

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section will focus on the teaching practices explored in the literature on implementing the Economics curriculum. The following sub-headings were identified from literature based on the nature of the subject and the skills and values which learners are expected to acquire.

4.1 Economics Curriculum Implementation

The abstract knowledge and skills embedded in the Economics curriculum demand teacher practices to create opportunities for learners to acquire these knowledge and skills. Teachers should possess exceptional knowledge and skills to be able to choose appropriate instructional approaches and strategies (Ojo & Adeyemi, 2020), exhibit a deeper understanding of learning materials (Wulandari et al., 2020) and the ability to design and administer meaningful assessments (Asamoah et al., 2022). Given that the Economics curriculum is embedded with complex skills such as graphing, mathematical, critical thinking, analysis and decision-making (Ojo & Adeyemi, 2020), teachers should be alert to how their practices might enhance or deter meaningful learning. Aprianti and Sahid (2020) and Sasson et al. (2020) and jointly agree that successful and effective curriculum implementation heavily relies on the effectiveness of teachers. These scholars posit that the degree to which Economics teachers conform to the precepts, the integrity of Economics curriculum principles and how meaningful opportunities are provided guarantee the correspondence between Economics curriculum and implementation.

4.2 Teacher Practices

Teachers' practices are conceptualised as all educational activities that involve learning, teaching and assessment that a teacher undertakes to

achieve educational outcomes (Centre for Teaching Innovation, 2022; Tshelane, 2020). This study views teachers' practices as the activities and actions teachers embark on to achieve specific goals. Worth mentioning is that teachers' practices include teacher-centeredness, learner-centeredness, selection of resources, reflective practices, assessment and feedback and instructional practices, amongst others (Rapanta et al., 2020). Teachers' practices should create conducive learning environments where learners are motivated to acquire knowledge individually and collaboratively as group members (Kozibroda et al., 2020). The teachers' practices should help learners develop an engaged relationship with the content (Tshelane, 2020). Available literature documents that teachers' practices are influenced by factors such as teachers' qualifications and experience, technological competence, availability of instructional resources and teachers' beliefs, amongst other factors (Ramsarghey, 2020).

4.3 Instructional Planning Practices

Instructional planning is the first stage of curriculum implementation, where the teacher identifies specific outcomes for each lesson (LEAP, 2017). The teacher also decides on the teaching approach and strategies, resources and assessment forms to be used (Angaiz et al., 2021). The teacher visualises the lesson in motion and prepares for anticipated challenges and how they will be overcome (Li & Zou, 2017). This phase is crucial as it determines whether a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning is set. The teacher captures what, how and when learners will learn and the methods and materials they will learn from (Angaiz et al., 2021). For teachers to plan effectively, they should know how to formulate objectives and understand the cognitive abilities of their learners and the contextual factors (Xaydarova, 2022). Using a universal lesson plan does not result in effective Economics curriculum implementation as learner abilities and contextual factors differ from place to place and class to class (Li & Zou, 2017).

4.4 Selection of Curriculum Resources

To effectively and efficiently achieve the set goals in the Economics curriculum, teachers should develop learning material using attractive and pleasant resources (Thamrin et al., 2022). To Pepin and Gueudet (2020), curriculum resources are all materials developed and used by teachers in teaching and learning. Pepin and Gueudet (2020, p.2) went further to mention that resources could be "text (textbooks, policy guidelines, worksheets etc.), other material, (calculators and

manipulative), and digital ICT resources (interactive e-textbooks)". Teachers must deliberate on the choice, and use of resources if meaningful learning is to take place (Wulundari et al, 2020). The teacher should be able to adapt, and redesign the materials available to suit the intended goals, and learner abilities and interests. However, it is documented in the available literature that Economics teachers do not use activities catering to inclusion, diversity, and gender issues (Asarta et al., 2021). The interactive nature of digital resources is more useful in formative assessment practices as they help to drive the next instructional steps (Majid, 2020). The resources Economics teachers use must encourage learner participation (Resilient Educator, 2022).

4.5 Learner Centred Practices

Teachers have the choice to choose between teacher-centred practices and learner-centred practices. Teacher-centred practices involve all learning activities around the teacher (Fischer & Hänze, 2020). There is no room for innovation, creativity or critical thinking as the teacher dominates class proceedings (Resilient Educator, 2022). On the contrary, learner-centred practices put the learner at the centre of learning; the learner actively participates in the learning process (Resilient Educator, 2022). Collaboration is encouraged, the classroom is motivated by open logical participation, and critical thinking is promoted.

Available literature associate learner-centred teaching practices with effective curriculum implementation (Rahman et al., 2022). Effective, and competent Economics teachers use active learning strategies to promote more profound, and meaningful learning (Anco & Serbo, 2019). The teacher should intentionally create an environment, and opportunities for learners to acquire the requisite knowledge, and skills as envisaged in the curriculum. The key to learner-centred teaching strategies is that learners can decide on the material, and how they want to learn (Sudderth, 2022). Teaching strategies such as simulations, games, class discussions, questioning, jigsaws, field trips, cooperative learning resource persons, and digital-based learning enhance Economics learners' understanding, and academic achievement (Ismail et al., 2020; Malanog & Aliazaz, 2021). The higher-order thinking skills embedded in the Economics curriculum can only be achieved if learning is interactive (Chumak et al., 2022); this calls for the teacher to intentionally plan and deliver lessons in a manner that will solicit reciprocity from the learners.Using the active learning pedagogic approach can transform Economics learning from passive to participative learning, promoting deeper learning (Sekwena, 2023). These ideas are

also shared by Ancho and Serbo (2019), who posits that teaching Economics should not be reduced to a mere transmission of Economics knowledge, and facts but rather as a process of inferring from the concepts, connecting them to other concepts, and utilising them to find solutions (Malanog & Aliazaz, 2021).

4.6 Assessment and Feedback Practices

Available literature provides overwhelming evidence of the educational value of formative assessment, and feedback in teaching-learning (Yan & Bold, 2022). Teachers heavily rely on the information they obtain from classroom assessments to improve their instructional methods (Asamoah et al., 2022). As such, it becomes prudent that teachers are deliberate, and competent in collecting, analysing, and using assessment information (Brown, 2019). Formative assessments inform teaching, improve learning, and assist students in achieving the highest possible standards (Asamoah et al., 2022; Durga & Kumar, 2020). This form of assessment is preoccupied with improving the learners' understanding by providing feedback to both the teacher, and the learner on where the learners are experiencing difficulties (Yan & Bold, 2022)—formative assessment arms teachers with information which they can use to modify or enhance their teaching strategies.

4.7 Reflective Teaching Practices

Reflective practice is a process where teachers interrogate the classroom events, and experiences before, during, and after their occurrence to critically evaluate, and make informed judgements (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). Teachers have to reflect on the implications of their practices to enhance teaching, and learning of the Economics curriculum (Sekwena, 2023). They have to interrogate their choice of instructional approaches, resources, and assessment practices. Teachers should be lifelong learners who seek to improve their professional practice, and identity (Albreiki et al., 2022; Widodo & Ferdiansyah, 2018). Economics teachers should reflect on various factors as lesson plans (Manzi & Moreeng, 2023). They should be able to anticipate possible challenges before the lesson and find possible solutions (Léon-Henri, 2022). Reflection should continue during the lesson when the lesson is ongoing. Teachers should be able to modify their teaching strategies, resources, and assessment forms as they conduct their lessons if and when needed (Léon-Henri, 2022). Teachers always ask themselves questions like *What went wrong? How can I improve?* After the instruction is completed. All these forms of reflection

aim to enhance the teachers' practices so that their instruction is effective and results in meaningful learning.

5. METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research methods employed to carry out this study. These are discussed under research paradigm, approach, design, participant selection techniques, data analysis, and ethical consideration.

5.1 Research Paradigm

This study is lensed through the interpretivism paradigm to understand how Economics teachers implement the curriculum (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This type of qualitative research paradigm believes that there are multiple realities.

5.2 Research Approach

Pratt, Sonenshein & Feldman (2022) state that qualitative research is often used to explore and understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, or behaviours. The current study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate how teachers implemented the Economics curriculum. Teachers had to narrate their lived experiences, as they were the implementers of the Economics curriculum (Van den Berg & Struwig, 2017).

5.3 Research Design

This study adopted a case study as the research design since it is appropriate for exceptional phenomenon cases. It is relevant for this study as it enables us to deal with how teachers of identified schools were implementing the Economics curriculum. Several studies have found case studies to effectively gather in-depth, detailed data vital for understanding complex issues (Gentles et al., 2015). More so, as Harrison et al. (2017) suggest, case studies allow for the construction of a rich, contextualised understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This study will understand how the Economics teachers in the selected schools implement the Economics curriculum.

5.4 Research Participant and Selection Techniques

All Economics teachers from the district formed the population of this study. However, three teachers one teacher from each school were purposefully selected as research participants. The reason for the

selection of these three teachers from three different schools was based on the matric Economics results in the NSC examinations of these schools for the past five years. The schools chosen are classified under different quintiles .One school is a quintile one school, which means it is a poorly resourced school; the second school is a quintile two school, although poorly resourced, is better resourced than the quintile one school. Lastly, the quintile four school is a well-resourced school with the majority of the learners coming from affluent families. Purposeful sampling technique was used to choose the participants for the study. To Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, (2016), purposive sampling is a sampling technique that is intentional in the selection of participants. The participants are chosen on the premise that they have the experience and knowledge needed to answer the research questions. The participants sampled were deemed to have rich thick information about the phenomenon under study.

5.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through semi-structured pre-classroom observations and post-observation interviews. A total of six 50 minutes (two lessons per teacher) were observed and audio recorded. Post-observation interviews were conducted during intervals. This study adopted a thematic analysis to interpret and make meanings from the data generated. The thematic analysis focuses on identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns in qualitative data collection (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

5.6 Ethical Consideration

The researcher obtained permission to conduct this study from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2021/1088/21). Thereafter, permission was sought and granted by the Northern Cape Department of Education to conduct this study. The study participants were informed about the study and had to decide whether to participate or opt-out (Benton et al., 2017). Consent was obtained from the participants to participate and have the interviews recorded.The interview sessions were transcribed from the recordings. Anonymity was ensured through pseudonyms, and letters A, B, and C were used for the participants' data extracts.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher attempted to read the teachers' practices regarding Economics curriculum implementation through data gathered

from interviews and observations using the lens of MLE theory. The study sought to answer the question: *What are the Economics teachers' current curriculum implementation practices?* The researcher relied on related literature on effective teacher curriculum implementation practices and MLE theory parameters to make sense of the data generated and clarify the results. The following themes emerged; Instructional planning practices, Selection of curriculum resources, Learner-centred practices, Feedback practices, and Reflective practices.

6.1 Instructional Planning Practices

Planning helps teachers identify the lesson's objectives (Xaydarova, 2022). Lesson objectives are critical if effective instruction is to be realised. The chosen objectives should clearly define what knowledge; skills and values learners are expected to acquire (Angaiz et al., 2021). In addition, teachers should decide on the instructional strategies they will employ and the materials and resources they will use to support teaching and learning (Li & Zou, 2017). Resources and materials are critical as they help learners comprehend the abstract concepts embedded in the Economics curriculum (Xaydarova, 2022).

Participant A

Before delivering my lessons, I plan on the topic of the lesson, and derive the objectives from the topic so that I am clear on what I expect my learners to be able to do after the lesson.

Although Participant A had asserted this in his interview, when the researchers asked for a copy of the lesson plan, they discovered it was a pre-planned lesson downloaded on a particular website. The pre-planned lesson did not cater to the contextual factors in which the teacher was teaching.

In agreement with Participant A on the importance of lesson planning was participant B who added,

Planning is pivotal in my lesson delivery as it helps me to visualise how the lesson will unfold, anticipate possible challenges and how I will overcome them.

He went further to say:

Planning also helps me to decide on the forms of assessment I will implement in the class.

Planning also aids teachers in terms of resources to be used in the lesson, as Participant C posited:

Planning assists me in deciding when to do what at each stage of the lesson and choosing the resources to use.

The practices of the participants are in concurrence with literature such as (Xaydarova, 2022), which states that it is vital for teachers to be clear on what they expect learners to be able to do after the instruction. Determining objectives, the resources to be used, and the forms of assessment to be implemented is also in line with the MLE theory parameter of intentionality. The teacher deliberately determines what they want their learners to be able to do after instruction. However, as much as Participant A had lesson plans, the relevancy issue arose as the resources stated in his pre-planned lesson plan were not at his disposal.

6.2 Selection of Curriculum Resources

Concerning how participants practice concerning resources, the following data was generated:

Participant A

I use YouTube, Tik Tok, and Khan Academy video presentations as resources in my teaching.

When the researchers probed on how this practice was helpful, Participant A retorted:

Nowadays, learners are inclined to technology, so if one does not embrace it [technology], one will never get the best out of these learners.

Participant A's assertions show his awareness of the Gen Z bias toward technology. He uses social media platforms that appeal to learners to explain and deliver Economics content; this shows intentionality on the part of the teacher to solicit reciprocity from learners. The teacher knows that the subject has to be taught interestingly and not as dry and monotonous as the literature has reported (Asarta et al., 2021; Buchs et al., 2017).

In concurrence with Participant A, Participant B said:

Besides using the textbook and newspapers, I have also adopted the use of ICT; I use projectors, online quizzes, WhatsApp, Tik Tok, and other social media platforms in my teaching practices.

Extending the importance of carefully selecting resources was Participant C, who echoed:

In addition to ICTs such as laptops and projectors, I make use of copies of activities and newspaper articles to augment some of the available textbooks as some concepts in the textbooks, like the Balance of Payments, have changed their format.

From the participants' assertions, it can be argued that teachers deliberately select instructional resources that motivate and keep learners' attention; this was also witnessed in the observed lessons; for instance, participant A played a video from Khan Academy on the causes of market failures. The moment the video started playing; one would

notice that all learners were glued to the video as it had captured their attention. The selection of resources that capture the learner's attention is in unison with what is documented in the literature (Thamrin et al., 2022; Wooten, 2020). The deliberate use of pleasant and attractive resources that appeal to the learners makes the content (stimuli) interesting (Isman & Tzuriel, 2008).

6.3 Learner Centred Practices

The following were the participants' responses on the theme of learner-centred practices.

Participant A responded,

As teachers, we need to employ approaches and strategies that create opportunities for our learners to participate in class.

Adding to this is Participant B, who offers a much more detailed response by postulating that:

We need to create an enabling environment where learners can independently learn and discover new knowledge. This will make learning interesting as they [learners] will feel proud that they are in control of their learning.

The train of thought of associating learner-centred practices with effective teaching is corroborated by literature such as Zhou et al. (2019). The participants acknowledge the power of making learners active participants in their learning by intentionally creating opportunities for learners to discover knowledge on their own.

Contrary to Participants A and B, Participant C seem to have a different view as she asserts:

It is difficult to use learner-centred approaches and strategies in this subject. The chalk-and-talk method works for me as it enables me to explain the abstract concepts and cover the syllabus in the stipulated time.

Considering the above responses, it is evident that some teachers are utilising learner-centred approaches and strategies where learners actively interact with the content, their peers and teachers, as is espoused in literature such as Zhou et al. (2019). Participants A, B's assertions, and the effect of their actions in the lessons observed by the researcher suggest that learner-centred approaches are more effective than traditional approaches. Learners could be seen collaborating and learning from each other. This approach enables learners to be meaningfully engaged in their learning and see the relevance of what they are learning (mediation of meaning), which is one of the parameters of MLE (Isman & Tzuriel, 2008). However, participant C's response sharply contrasts the views of Participants A and B. Her response suggests that some teachers are still clamouring to teacher-centred practices. Her belief is unsurprising as available literature, such as Asarta et al. (2021), captures

that some teachers still dominate classroom proceedings and relegate learners to mere spectators.

6.4 Feedback Practices

Victoria State Government (2020) postulates that feedback practices should be regular, positive and practical. The purpose of feedback should be to narrow the gap in the learner's general mindset that Economics concepts are complex (Simbolon et al., 2020). The effectiveness of teaching can only be determined by assessing the learners' learning progress. Feedback enhances teaching and learning effectiveness during and after instruction (Yan & Bold, 2022). Teachers play a crucial role in determining learners' learning progress and in providing feedback to the learners. It is imperative to understand how Economics teachers carry out assessment practices in their classrooms (Larbi & Mavis, 2016).

The participants had this to say about their feedback practices.

Participant A

My feedback practices differ, but mostly I engage on face to face individualised and group feedback in class.

He continued

Once my learners write an activity or informal test, I give them feedback immediately whilst the questions are still vivid in their minds; this helps to correct misconceptions.

Participant B added,

I use a hybrid of approaches; sometimes, I provide impromptu verbal feedback when I have given classwork. I also load online responses if I have administered online quizzes so that my learners get immediate feedback. I, however, also make use of written feedback, especially on essay writing.

The practice by Participant B of using online assessment is in line with current curriculum practices where teaching and learning are not only confined to the classroom (Mursidi et al., 2022). Given that the current generation is biased toward technology, using quizzes through laptops and other electronic gadgets allows learners to use the familiar devices and learn whilst playing (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020).

Just as Participants A and B had echoed, Participant C stated,

My feedback practices vary. Sometimes I give group feedback, and at times I give individualised scheduled feedback, especially to those learners that I would have identified to be at risk.

When the researchers probed him on why he was doing this, he had this to say

Sometimes a learner at risk might have improved, although they might still have obtained a low mark that needs to be praised so that they keep on working hard.

Participant C's practice shows the teacher's intention to motivate her learners to perform better. This practice often results in learners working hard to improve their academic performance. Providing immediate and individualised feedback impacts learners' academic achievement and motivation in a positive manner (Khechane et al., 2020).

6.5 Reflective Practices

Reflective teaching practices analyse how something was taught and how the teacher might improve or change their practice for better learning outcomes (Mathew et al., 2017). It means teachers reflect on their actions and decisions during instruction to improve their practice (Léon-Henri, 2022). When teachers engage in the process of reflection, they create a pathway for improving their classroom practice, consequently improving academic achievement.

Participant A

I reflect as the lesson unfolds so that if my initial plan is not working, I can quickly modify and adapt to my learner's needs.

As is documented in literature such as Albreiki et al. (2022) that teachers should continuously interrogate their actions, Teacher A's assertion indicates concurrence with the literature as he asserts that he is always alert of how his learners respond to the stimuli as the lesson progresses. He is not rigid and does not wait until the end of the lesson to modify his teaching practices to suit his learners' needs. His actions are also in line with the parameters of intentionality and reciprocity as he keeps on checking whether what he intended to achieve in the lesson is still on course to be completed and whether learners are responding to the stimuli.

Participant B

At my school, we are encouraged to invite our peers to observe our lessons and then offer each other feedback. This feedback helps one to reflect on their practice.

Participant C

After every lesson, I sit and think back about what transpired in my class and evaluate whether the teaching strategies and assessment techniques I chose enabled me to achieve the lesson objectives.

The practices of the participants are in line with what literature such as (Mathew et al., 2017) postulate that given the complexity of teaching, there is a need for teachers to question their practices for them to develop professionally. The participants intentionally used different forms of reflection at various stages of their lesson to improve their practice and enhance their practices' effectiveness. These practices are

incongruent with what researchers such as Léon-Henri (2022) advocate for, as it results in teachers improving their teaching practices.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored high school Economics teachers' curriculum implementation practices. Findings revealed that although there are pockets of good teaching practices in Economics curriculum implementation in the selected schools, more still needs to be done to improve the Economics teachers' practices. For some teachers, practices on instructional planning, selection of resources, feedback and reflective practices promoted effective teaching, which aligns with MLE theory parameters of intentionality, reciprocity, mediation of meaning and transcendence. However, the study findings also reveal that some teachers are still clinging to the traditional teacher-centred approach in their daily classroom practice. They have challenges in instructional planning, accessing and utilising ICT resources and lack pedagogical content knowledge. We, therefore, recommend that there should be continuous in-service training of teachers on how to plan lessons to cater for diverse learners, how to use learner-centred teaching approaches and strategies and how to use the available ICT resources to benefit the learners.

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CHAPTER 3

ARTICLE TWO

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Mediating Economics Curriculum Implementation through Meaningful Assessment

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ABSTRACT

This empirical study explores how Economics teachers mediate Economics curriculum implementation through the use of meaningful assessment. Assessment plays a significant role in learner academic achievement, and it is therefore, imperative that teachers' practices produce learners who are creative, problem solvers and reflective. Despite increasing realization of the importance of assessment, teachers are either not using assessment or failing to use it meaningfully to mediate economics curriculum implementation. Assessment is a process of collecting data to have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of learners' learning. If assessment is used meaningfully, it has the power to inform how teaching and learning can be modified to enhance learners' understanding of concepts as opposed to being used just for certification and eligibility for further education studies. Effective Economics curriculum implementation is dependent on the teachers' understanding of the role and use of meaningful assessment. This interpretivist study is couched in Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theory, and makes use of qualitative multiple case study. Three teachers from three different schools were purposefully selected to

generate data through semi structured interviews and classroom observations. Data were analyzed using a constructivist approach of thematic analysis. The findings of this study show that, although there are pockets of good assessment practices within the research sites, there is still lack of understanding of the role and use of meaningful assessment in mediating Economics curriculum implementation. In light of the findings, the study suggests the need for training of Economics teachers on how to use assessment meaningfully.

Keywords: Curriculum implementation, Mediated Learning Experience, Meaningful assessment, Teaching and Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is the catalyst through which a country enables its citizens to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that empower them to contribute to the growth and development of a nation.[1] The effectiveness of any curriculum is dependent on how well it is implemented. Literature documents multiple studies in relation to curriculum implementation.[2] Curriculum implementation is when the officially prescribed syllabi is put into practice, or the real exposure of learners to the planned learning opportunities.[3] Effective curriculum implementation is reliant on the availability of resources, quality of instruction, and nature of assessment.[4] Assessment plays a crucial role in curriculum implementation as it; establishes what learners already know and what they have achieved, furnishes teachers with important feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching, and gives direction to teachers on how to

[1] David N. Kabita and Lili Ji, *The why, what and how of competency-based curriculum reforms: The Kenyan experience* (Paris: UNESCO/IBE, 2017).

[2] Haque, Aaisha, and Solomon Arulraj David. "Effective curriculum implementation for optimal teaching and learning experience: A study from a private school in Dubai: Effective curriculum implementation." *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 15, no. 1 (2022): 1-20.

[3] Katie Pak, Morgan S. Polikoff, Laura M. Desimone, and Erica Saldívar García. "The adaptive challenges of curriculum implementation: Insights for educational leaders driving standards-based reform." *AERA Open* 6, no. 2 (2020): 2332858420932828.

[3] Zi Yan and David Boud, *Conceptualising Assessment-as-Learning* (New York: Routledge, 2021), doi.org/10.4324/9781003052081-2

[4] Yan and Boud, Conceptualising Assessment-as-Learning

plan materials and activities for future learning.[5] Meaningful assessment is undertaken in the process of teaching and learning, and not at the end of the learning process. Assessment is tightly interrelated with curriculum instruction and therefore, should inform teaching and learning.[6]

Given the importance of assessment on learning outcomes, there is need for effective teachers who are able to administer meaningful assessment. Teachers play an unequivocal role both as designers and implementers of meaningful assessments. Curriculum implementation places a huge responsibility on the teachers' shoulders and these responsibilities include the ability to choose appropriate assessment strategies.[7] Moreso, the quality of assessments learners are exposed to is heavily dependent on the teachers' ability to plan and administer assessment in their daily practice.[8] Teachers have the power to make choices and decisions on how effective they can use assessment to influence learning.[9] Meaningful assessment demands teachers to design relevant tasks, gather valid information about learners' needs and respond to it appropriately, based on the individual learner needs.[10] It begs for teachers to be cognisant to what learners are doing and thinking, and to be capable of guiding them. In fact, scholars like Brown[11] argue that assessment is actually good teaching and not assessment. One can reasonably argue that good teachers establish what learners already know, and use the prior knowledge as a building block to develop new knowledge and skills. Teachers who constantly check their learners are

[5] Yan and Boud, Conceptualising Assessment-as-Learning

[6] Nicole Barnes, Helenrose Fives, and Charity M. Dacey. "US teachers' conceptions of the purposes of assessment." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 65 (2017): 107-116.

[7] Yan and Boud, Conceptualising Assessment-as-Learning

[8] Koskei, Benjamin K., and Everlyne Chepchumba. "Teachers' competency as a cornerstone on the implementation of competency-based curriculum in Kenya. A case of lower primary schools in Nakuru county." *International Journal of Education and Research* 8, no. 2 (2020): 1-10.

[9] Vähäsantanen, Katja. "Professional agency in the stream of change: Understanding educational change and teachers' professional identities." *Teaching and teacher education* 47 (2015): 1-12.

[10] Durga, M. V., and Mr Ch Balaji Kumar. "Formative and Summative Assessment for Learning: A Review." *J. Res. Sch. Prof. Engl. Lang. Teach* 20, no4 (2020).

[11] Brown, Gavin T. L. "Is Assessment for Learning Really Assessment?" *Frontiers in Education* 4 (2020): 64 https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00064

able to revise and refine their practice to meet the diverging needs of learners.[12] The success or failure of assessment depends on the teachers' ability to plan, administer, and interpret assessments in their daily practice.[13]

Few studies have been conducted in the area of assessment in Economics Education. One of the few studies conducted in this area is that of Rajaram and Bordia[14] on teaching econometrics using formative assessment. The study results revealed that incorporating project-based learning in the econometrics course raised learners' level of academic achievement

In their case study, Ojo and Jeannin[15] bemoaned the nature of Economics assessment university students were exposed to. They argued that Economics assessments were more concerned about students mastering models rather than basing assessments on the capacity of students to critically analyze the economic problems economies were facing using appropriate data and aggregates. To them, this was more appropriate as it fed into the ultimate goal of Economics teaching, which is premised on equipping learners to be independent thinkers who can come up with solutions to the economic problems bedevilling society and the world at large

Yidana and Anti Partey[16] conducted research on high school Economics teachers' conceptions of the purposes for undertaking classroom assessment. The results of their study revealed that most teachers indicated that classroom assessment leads to improvement in the teaching and learning process. The study recommended that teachers make use of assessment in their daily practice.

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[12] Durga and Kumar, Formative and Summative Assessment for Learning: A Review

[13] Durga and Kumar, Formative and Summative Assessment for Learning: A Review

[14] Rajaram, Kumaran, and Sarbari Bordia. "Culture clash: Teaching Western-based management education to mainland Chinese students in Singapore." *Journal of International Education in Business* 4, no. 1 (2011): 63-83.

[15] Ojo, Emmanuel, and Loïse Jeannin. "The way economics is taught needs an overhaul: A South African case study." Unpublished master's dissertation, Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand. WIREDSPACE. https://businesstech. co. za/news/finance/145109/the-way-economics-is-taught-needs-an-overhaul-a-south-african-case-study (2016).

[16] Yidana, Mumuni Baba, and Anti Partey P. "Economics Teachers' Conceptions of Classroom Assessment." *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research* 6, no. 10 (2018): 153–74. https://doi.org/10.31686/ijier.vol6.iss10.1176.

A study conducted by Marire,[17] to determine whether graph-intensive Economics curriculum and assessment promoted better comprehension of economic theory, found that graph intensive assessment hindered students' access to economic theory. The study revealed that graphs did not facilitate learning, and recommended that instructors avoid overburdening their assessments with graphs, and only use graphs when it is absolutely necessary

In a study conducted by Asarta et al.[18] on teaching and assessment methods in undergraduate Introductory Economics courses in the USA, results revealed that activities and references that addressed diversity were almost never used. This meant that the type of assessments used ignored learners' contextual factors, abilities and preferences.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the importance of assessment in the teaching and learning process, research consistently shows that there is unsatisfactory use of meaningful assessment in Economics Education.[19] Teachers are not equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to design and implement appropriate assessment tasks, obtain good information, and respond immediately to the performance on these assessments.[20] This could probably explain why learner academic performance in Economics in the Northern Cape province has been mediocre. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) reports that, over the past five years, more than 40% of the learners who sit for National Senior Certificate (NSC) Economics examination fail to achieve at 30%.[21] [22] [23] From his experience, the

[17] Marire, J. "Does a Graph-Intensive Economics Curriculum Promote Epistemological Access to Economic Theory?" *South African Journal of Higher Education* 32, no. 1 (2017). https://doi.org/10.20853/32-1-1651.

[18] Asarta, Carlos J., Rebecca G. Chambers, and Cynthia Harter. "Teaching Methods in Undergraduate Introductory Economics Courses: Results from a Sixth National Quinquennial Survey." *The American Economist* 66, no. 1 (2020): 18–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0569434520974658.

[19] Asarta, Chambers, and Harter, Teaching Methods in Undergraduate Introductory Economics Courses: Results from a Sixth National Quinquennial Survey

[20] DeLuca, Christopher, Allison Chapman-Chin, and Don A. Klinger. "Toward a teacher professional learning continuum in assessment for learning." *Educational Assessment* 24, no. 4 (2019): 267-285.

[21] Department of Basic Education. (2020). National senior certificate Examination Report. Pretoria: Government Printers.

[22] Department of Basic Education. (2019). National senior certificate Examination Report. Pretoria: Government Printers.

[23] Department of Basic Education. (2021). National senior certificate Examination Report. Pretoria: Government Printers.

researcher shares the view that teachers are either not using assessment or not using it meaningfully to mediate Economics curriculum implementation. Very little research has been conducted on assessment in Economics, especially at secondary school level. Most research on assessment in Economics curriculum implementation has been conducted at tertiary level. This study sought to contribute to the body of knowledge by exploring how Economics teachers are mediating Economics curriculum implementation through meaningful assessment.

The study pursued this aim by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do Economics teachers understand the role of meaningful assessment in mediating Economics curriculum implementation?
2. What meaningful assessment practices are Economics teachers using to mediate Economics curriculum implementation?

The paper is organized as Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Literature review, Findings, Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theoretical framework informs the paper. This theory has its roots in the social constructivism theory developed by Piaget.[24] Mediated Learning Experience theory owes its origins to Reuven Feuerstein, who developed the theory over the period 1950-1963. Mediated Learning Experience theory is concerned with the way in which stimuli is experienced in the environment, with the help of the mediator who can be a parent, teacher or agent.[25] The MLE theory is relevant to this study as it is premised on the principle that a correlation exists among learning, thinking, understanding and the learning environment in which these take place.[26] The learning environment refers to how teachers, as mediation agents and through appropriate guidance and support, provide learners with appropriate opportunities and resources to acquire the intended knowledge and

[24] Tzuriel, David, and Adina Shamir. "The effects of mediation in computer assisted dynamic assessment." *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* 18, no. 1 (2002): 21-32.

[25] Tzuriel and Shamir, The effects of mediation in computer assisted dynamic assessment

[26] Greenberg, Katherine H. *The cognitive enrichment advantage teacher handbook* (New York: CD Harris & Associates Press, 2000).

skills.[27] When applied to this study, it means that the meditational efforts by Economics teachers play a pivotal role in Economics curriculum implementation, and the quality of academic achievement

Feuerstein and Feuerstein note that MLE is based on 12 criteria, but only the first four are viewed to be necessary and sufficient for MLE to occur.[28] These are intentionality, reciprocity, meaning, and transcendence. For the purpose of this study, these parameters were viewed as intertwined not standalone. These parameters demand consideration of both the teachers' and learners' roles in the learning process in which the teacher should be a facilitator of learning, and the learner an active participant. To establish how teachers were mediating the Economics curriculum implementation through meaningful assessment, it was imperative to scrutinize the context in which learning occurs with respect to Economics curriculum. Mediated Learning Experience is a practice theory, and as such, provided the researcher with the lens to zoom into teacher assessment practices. The researcher believed that the context of teachers' practice could be understood through data obtained from classroom observations and semi structured interviews

In formulating the observation checklist, document analysis checklist, and interview protocols; the researcher drew from MLE to come up with the intentionality, reciprocity, meaning, and transcendence parameters. As the researcher analyzed data, the researcher was cognisant that mediational effect plays a crucial role in the achievement of learning activities

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, curriculum implementation and meaningful assessment and the teaching and learning of Economics will be discussed

Curriculum Implementation

[27] Tzuriel and Shamir, The effects of mediation in computer assisted dynamic assessment

[28] Feuerstein, Reuven., & Feuerstein, Raphael, S. (1991). Mediated learning experience: A theoretical review. In *Mediated learning experience (MLE), eds. Reuven Feuerstein, Pnina S. Klein and Abraham J. Tannenbaum* (London: Freund, 1991) 3-52).

Curriculum is the agency through which a nation equips its citizens with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable them to function well both for personal and national development. Curriculum is found in three phases; the intended, implemented, and attained.[29] The focus of this study was on curriculum implementation. Curriculum implementation is how teachers bring content to life in the classroom.[30] Concurring with the above assertion is Oleabhiele and Oko[31] who postulate that curriculum implementation is concerned with how teachers put the officially prescribed syllabi into practice. Key to these definitions is that curriculum implementation is the actual exposure of learners to the intended learning opportunities where the teacher delivers instruction and assessment. In the curriculum implementation phase, teaching, learning and assessment are integrated and cannot exist independent of each other.[32] The effectiveness of curriculum implementation heavily relies on the teachers, who are the interpreters and implementers of the policy, assessment guidelines, and other official documents.[33]

Meaningful assessment and the teaching and learning of Economics

Meaningful assessment helps teachers to interpret the learning abilities of the learners, so that teachers can make decisions on learners' future academic achievement.[34] Meaningful assessment demands teachers to intentionally design relevant tasks that enable them to gather valid information about learners' needs and appropriately respond to those

[29] Nevenglosky, Erica A. "Barriers to effective curriculum implementation." PhD diss., Walden University, 2018.

[30] Pak, Morgan, Polikoff, Desimone and García, The adaptive challenges of curriculum implementation: Insights for educational leaders driving standards-based reform

[31] Oleabhiele, Eric Oziegbe, and Nnaemeka O. Oko. "Economics curriculum implementation at the senior secondary education level." *Journal of Economics and Environmental Education* 3, no. 1 (2018): 10-20.

[32] Granberg, Carina, Torulf Palm, and Björn Palmberg. "A Case Study of a Formative Assessment Practice and the Effects on Students' Self-Regulated Learning." *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 68 (2021): 100955. https://doi.org/10.1016/
j.stueduc.2020.100955

[33] Idika, Ezinne Orie. "Students' and Teachers' Factors Hindering Effective Teaching and Learning of Economics in Secondary Schools in the Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State." *Journal of Culture and Values in Education* (2020). https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2020.4.

[34] Khechane, Nkoja C., Mamocheta C. Makara, and Awelani M. Rambuda. "Primary mathematics teachers' assessment practices in the context of the integrated primary curriculum in Lesotho." *African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education* 24, no. 1 (2020): 41-52.

individual learner needs.[35] It is intentional teaching, as teachers should use the data gathered from assessment to continuously modify their teaching approaches and strategies to meet the varying needs of their learners.[36] When learners are actively involved in the assessment of their learning, they tend to be motivated and aim higher.[37]

Given the complex global changes taking place in the world economies, Economics learners are expected to acquire creative, critical and problem-solving skills, which will enable them to function meaningfully in the global economy.[38] These skills demand greater input from teachers. Every Economics teacher should be equipped with different assessment techniques to cater for the different cognitive demands in the subject. To achieve this, there is need for competent, well trained, thoughtful, and adaptive teachers, who are able to use meaningful assessment strategies in the mediation of Economics curriculum.[39]

METHODOLOGY

This study was located within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, and used a qualitative multiple case study methodology to answer questions on Economics teachers' understanding of the role of meaningful assessment, and their meaningful assessment practices in mediating Economics curriculum implementation.[40] A multiple case study design allowed the researcher to analyze data; both within and across situations, that is, each teacher's understanding of the role of

[35] Durga and Kumar, Formative and Summative Assessment for Learning: A Review

[36] Yan and Boud, Conceptualising Assessment-as-Learning

[37] Christ, Ayşenur Alp, Vanda Capon-Sieber, Urs Grob, and Anna-Katharina Praetorius. "Learning processes and their mediating role between teaching quality and student achievement: A systematic review." *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 75 (2022): 101209.

[38] van Wyk, Micheal M. "Narrating Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments' Experiences of Assessment Practices in Curriculum Delivery." In *Investigating the Roles of School Management Teams in Curriculum Delivery, ed. Bongi P. Mqina* New York: IGI Global, 2021), 78-94.

[39] Acquah, Bernard Yaw Sekyi, and Walter Lumadi Mutendwahothe. "Assessment of trainee–economics teachers' effectiveness: Senior high school economics students' perspective." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 20, no. 14 (2014): 2853-2863.

[40] Rahi, Samar. "Research Design and Methods: A Systematic Review of Research Paradigms, Sampling Issues and Instruments Development." *International Journal of Economics & Management Sciences* 6, no. 2 (2017): 1-5. https://doi.org/10.4172/2162-6359.1000403

meaningful assessment and their practices with regards to assessment, in their individual contexts in the selected schools.[41] The three Economics teachers selected for the study were profiled as follows: Teacher A was a novice male teacher at a quintile one school. Teacher B had 20 years of teaching experience and taught at a quintile 5 school. Teacher C s a female teacher with 15 years of teaching experience. She taught at a quintile two school.

In compliance with the ethical considerations, permission was obtained from the Northern Cape Department of Education and the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2021/1088/21). Consent was granted by the participants through signing the consent forms. Participants were assured that their identities would not be disclosed, and that participation was voluntary, and as such, they could withdraw anytime they felt uncomfortable.[42]

Semi structured individual interviews and observations were used to generate data.The researcher used observations to test what the teachers had said in the interviews.The researcher took the stance of "observer as participant" (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).This enabled the researcher to record and document how the teachers were using assessment for learning in their daily pratices Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data using Wolcott's three-part model of description, analysis and interpretation.[43] The data from semi structured interviews and observations were transcribed, coded and arranged into themes that responded to the questions.[44]

FINDINGS

The aim of the study was to explore how Economics teachers were mediating Economics curriculum implementation through meaningful

[41] Creswell, John W., and J. David Creswell. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications, 2014)

[42] Suri, Harsh. "Ethical Considerations of Conducting Systematic Reviews in Educational Research." In *Systematic Reviews in Educational Research, eds. Olaf Zawacki-Richter, Michael Kerres, Svenja Bedenlier, Melissa Bond, Katja Buntins* (Amsterdam: Springer Open, 2019) 41–54. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-27602-7_3.

[43] Wolcott, Harry F. *Writing up qualitative research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008).

[44] Adu, Philip. *A step-by-step guide to qualitative data coding* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

assessment. The findings of the study revealed five categories of responses. These were then subsumed into two main themes, namely; teachers' understanding of the role of meaningful assessment, and meaningful assessment practices used by teachers in mediating Economics curriculum implementation.

Theme 1: Teachers' understanding of the role of meaningful assessment in mediating Economics curriculum

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is of paramount importance that teachers are knowledgeable on the role that meaningful assessment plays in their daily teaching.[45] Meaningful assessment helps teachers to ascertain where learners are in terms of their learning, direct how teaching should take place, and give feedback on whether meaningful learning took place.[46] Without proper understanding of the role of assessment, teachers are not able to mediate Economics curriculum through the use of assessment.

In responding to the first question the following sub- themes emerged:

It informs and differentiate teaching

Assessment provides valuable information for teachers, based on what learners can or cannot do. Equipped with this information, teachers are better positioned to modify their teaching strategies and provide extra support, where it is needed.[47] Teachers can use pre -tests or oral questions to diagnose knowledge gaps and misunderstanding of their learners. When no meaningful assessment is implemented, the teacher is not able to decide on the course of action to take since the teacher will not be aware of the learners' abilities.

Through interviews, the participants were in agreement that meaningful assessment is used to ascertain what learners know and what learners can do, so that teachers know how to go about building on learners' prior

[45] Yan and Boud, Conceptualising Assessment-as-Learning

[46] de Vries, Jitske A., Andria Dimosthenous, Kim Schildkamp, and Adrie J. Visscher. "The impact of an assessment for learning teacher professional development program on students' metacognition." *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 34, no. 1 (2023): 109-129.

[47] Yan and Boud, Conceptualising Assessment-as-Learning

knowledge. For instance, teacher A stated: "*Meaningful assessment helps me to establish what prior knowledge my learners have so that I can build new knowledge on their prior knowledge"*

Teacher C supported the above assertion and went further to postulate that: "For me, meaningful assessment forms the basis of my teaching, it will determine how I approach the lesson based on what I would have obtained from pre- assessment"

Corroborating the other two participants, teacher B added that: "*I do not only use assessment to establish what my learners already know but to also decide on different strategies to employ in my lesson so that I can reach all my learners"*

The participants' assertions were supported by what the researcher observed during classroom observations. It was common practice in all the classes observed that the participants started by establishing the learners' prior knowledge before they could introduce a new topic. This assisted teachers with how to pitch their lessons.

What came out clear is that teachers used assessment to establish learners' prior knowledge, and decide the course of action to take, based on what they would have established, which included using differentiated teaching strategies to suit the diversity in their classrooms.

It is used to engineer meaningful class discussion

Meaningful assessment is, not only limited to pen and paper activities and tests, but also makes use of oral questioning pitched at different cognitive levels.[48] Oral questioning ignites discussions that allow the teacher and learners to engage in meaningful class discussions. Through these discussions, not only are teachers able to guide the learners towards acquiring new knowledge, but also to provide an opportunity for learners to help each other and learn from each other.

From the data gathered through interviews and observations, it was noted that teachers used meaningful assessment to engage their learners in class. In one of the interviews, Teacher A postulated that: *"I use assessment to ignite class discussions, assessment helps to minimize my dominance in the classroom."*

[48] Christ, Ayşenur Alp, Vanda Capon-Sieber, Urs Grob, and Anna-Katharina Praetorius, Learning processes and their mediating role between teaching quality and student achievement: A systematic review

In support of the above assertion, Teacher B indicated that: "*It helps me to engage my learners so that they get to understand better".*

Of the same line of thought was teacher C who said: "*Mmm, teaching and learning is a two-way process, and for me to be able to achieve the learning intentions, I have to involve my learners through activities, oral questions etc."*

It was evident from the classroom observations that teachers were deliberate on how they used assessment to stimulate class discussions. The oral questioning was used to probe learners' responses and initiate discussions and debate. It should however, be stated that the researcher also observed that some of the question's teachers asked did not promote deep and critical thinking.

The three participants understood how assessment could be used to ignite meaningful class discussions. Most of the questions asked in the lesson observed paved way for an interactive classroom environment.

It provides learners and teachers with feedback

When used properly and meaningfully, assessment provides quality feedback to learners about their progress, which Economics learners can use to close the gap between the actual level of the learners and where they are expected to be.[49] Feedback is more effective if it is provided immediately, and is related to learning goals. Moreover, feedback can be obtained through written, oral, demonstrations, self and group (peer) assessments.[50] The purpose of feedback can be summed up as that of trying to mediate between the subject material and the learner.

The participants believed that assessment can be used to provide information to both the teacher and the learner on the learning progress. Teacher B had this to say: "*The class activities, homework and informal tests I give to my learners give me an idea of where my learners are in terms of their learning."*

Similarly, Teacher A concurred with teacher B, but went further to indicate that assessment provided feedback to all the education

[49] Khechane, Nkoja C., Mamocheta C. Makara, and Awelani M. Rambuda, Primary mathematics teachers' assessment practices in the context of the integrated primary curriculum in Lesotho

[50] de Vries, Jitske A., Andria Dimosthenous, Kim Schildkamp, and Adrie J. Visscher, The impact of an assessment for learning teacher professional development program on students' metacognition

stakeholders. He said: "*Meaningful assessment provides the department of education, teachers, parents, and learners with information on how well or bad learners are doing in their school work."*

For Teacher C, feedback was important to teachers and learners more than any other stakeholder. Teacher C said: *"Feedback is important to learners as they get to know where they are in terms of their learning, and also to the teacher since I will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of my teaching"*

The data obtained from the interviews was backed up by what the researcher obtained through classroom observations. Teachers used the feedback they obtained during the lesson to either emphasize on a concept which learners were finding abstract or to adjust their teaching strategies.

From the data gathered, it is clear that teachers were aware of the role of feedback in their daily teaching. They appreciated that feedback was part of meaningful assessment, and played a great role in mediating Economics curriculum implementation

Theme 2: Meaningful assessment practices used by teachers in mediating Economics curriculum implementation

Learner assessment is an integral part of teaching. Teachers play a pivotal role in this process. For this reason, their knowledge and competences in assessment are crucial.[51] Teachers are the pivots for meaningful learning. Based on this, it is vital to understand teachers' practices, especially on how they use assessment to mediate Economics curriculum implementation.

In the next section, the focus is on teachers' practices with respect to meaningful assessment. The practices are divided into teacher focused and learner focused meaningful assessment practices.

Teacher focused meaningful assessment practices

The focus of this theme is meaningful assessment practices that teachers used the most in the teaching and learning of Economics

[51] Durga and Kumar, Formative and Summative Assessment for Learning: A Review

Pre- assessment and sharing learning intentions and success criteria

Assessment can occur before learning (diagnostic) so that teachers can ascertain what learners already know.[52] This helps teachers to decide on the strategies to employ based on the findings of their pre-assessment. Besides establishing learners' prior knowledge, it is also important to share the learning intentions and success criteria with the learners. Learners need to know what is expected of them and how they would be assessed.[53] This motivates them as they see the link of their learning and how they will be assessed. Without sharing clear learning intentions and success criteria with learners, learning might be ineffective as learners will not have a clearer picture of what they are expected to know and how they will be assessed

The data drawn from interviews and observation of lessons revealed that teachers first established learners' prior knowledge on a given topic before introducing new knowledge. The participants mentioned that it was critical to first establish what learners could do and then build on their prior knowledge and skills. True to their assertion on the pre-interviews, the researcher witnessed, in the lesson observations, teachers starting their lessons by establishing learners' prior knowledge. For instance, Teacher A's lesson started in the following manner: *"Today we want to look at Business cycles. Let us remind each other on Business cycles which you did in Grade 10. What are Business cycles?"*

In a similar fashion, Teacher B started his lesson by saying:

> "*You did the circular flow diagram in grade 10, can someone come and draw the circular flow diagram of an open economy on the chalkboard"*

The teacher's practices confirm the principles of assessment, where it is vital to first establish where learners are, so that the teacher is informed on how to help learners to achieve the intended outcomes.

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[52] Walker, Rebecca, Rhonda Oliver, and Ross Mackenzie. "Group differences in secondary school students' perceptions of feedback." *Issues in Educational Research* 31, no. 1 (2021): 309-326.

[53] de Vries, Jitske A., Andria Dimosthenous, Kim Schildkamp, and Adrie J. Visscher, The impact of an assessment for learning teacher professional development program on students' metacognition

As the researchers was doing classroom observations, they discovered that learning intentions were conveyed to the learners at the beginning of the lesson by Teachers A and B. Teacher A actually wrote the learning intentions on the chalkboard (Figure1).

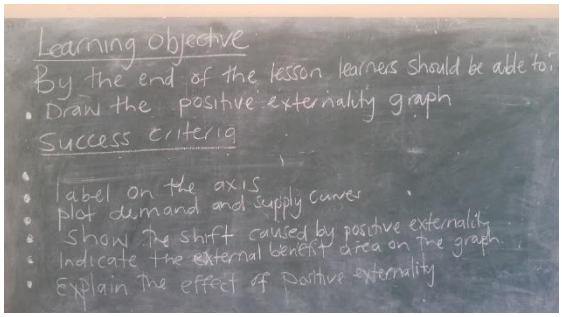

Figure 1: Learning Intention in Teacher A's Class

This made it clear to the learners what they were expected to learn, and the practice conforms to what the participants had said in the pre-interview as indicated by teacher B: "*Before I start a lesson, I make it a point that I share with my learners what they are going to learn"*

Similarly, Teacher A added that: *"It is important to share the learning intentions with the learners so that they are aware of what they are the expected to be able to do after at the end of the lesson"*

However, that was not the case with Teacher C, where learning intentions were not communicated to the learners. After establishing the learners' prior knowledge, the teacher then went ahead to introduce the new topic.

Engineering meaningful discussions, tasks and activities to ascertain learners learning

Questioning can be used as a strategy to initiate effective classroom discussions, and to involve learners in activities that elicit evidence of learners understanding.[54] If used properly, questioning allows teachers to

[54] Wiliam, Dylan. *Assessment for learning: why, what and how?* (London: Institute of Education, 2009).

ascertain learners' current knowledge and build on new knowledge.[55] Thus, questioning gives teachers an opportunity to diagnose learners' understanding and to direct them towards developing the intended knowledge and skills. Well-structured and scaffolded questions should prompt responses that range from simple recall of information to more abstract processes, such as application and synthesis

During the interviews, teachers also posited that they used questioning during instruction to ascertain how learners were grasping new knowledge and to engage learners in class discussions. The participants had this to say: *"I make use of question and answer to ascertain whether my learners are grasping the intended knowledge and skills"* (Teacher B)

> *"I ask questions, give short activities and ask my learners to do calculations or draw graphs as I teach to make sure they are following the lesson"* (Teacher C)

Teacher A further added that: "*Asking questions allows learners to be involved in the lesson and assists them in understanding the lesson better".*

In agreement with Teacher A, Teacher B further added that:

> "*Through questioning, I am able to create an opportunity for my learners to develop critical thinking skills as I vary the level of difficulty of my questions"*

What came out strongly from the interviews and observations is that teachers purposefully asked questions to engage learners. For Teacher A, questions helped to get an understanding of how learners were grasping the new concepts. Teacher C went further to administer activities besides the oral questions in an effort to engage learners in her lesson. Teacher B perceived questioning during the lesson as a strategy to ensure that learners were actively involved in the learning process, and a tool to be

[55] Hrastinski, Stefan, Stefan Stenbom, Simon Benjaminsson, and Malin Jansson. "Identifying and Exploring the Effects of Different Types of Tutor Questions in Individual Online Synchronous Tutoring in Mathematics." *Interactive Learning Environments* 29, no. 3 (2019): 510–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2019.1583674

used to develop complex skills like critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Feedback

Effective feedback possesses the power to influence learner involvement, learning and academic achievement.[56] Feedback informs teachers and learners about the knowledge obtained and the knowledge gaps that may exist.[57] Feedback can be oral, written, computer generated, amongst other mechanisms,[58] and can come from the teacher, peers or self.[59] It gives an indication on whether the set goals have been achieved or not. Effective feedback tends to be associated with improved motivation and learner academic performance, as it does, not only inform learners where they are currently, but also suggests the next steps learners should take in their learning.[60] Conversely, if feedback is insufficient, poorly explained, and badly distributed; it might actually negatively affect teaching and learning.[61] The timing and environment in which feedback is provided also determines how learners will receive and use the feedback to enhance their learning.[62]

Oral and Written Feedback

Teachers indicated that they provided immediate feedback on the learners' work, whether it was oral questions or written work. It was clear

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[56] Walker, Rebecca, Rhonda Oliver, and Ross Mackenzie, Group differences in secondary school students' perceptions of feedback.

[57] Khechane, Nkoja C., Mamocheta C. Makara, and Awelani M. Rambuda, Primary mathematics teachers' assessment practices in the context of the integrated primary curriculum in Lesotho

[58] Haughney, Kathryn, Shawnee Wakeman, and Laura Hart. "Quality of feedback in higher education: A review of literature." *Education Science*s 10, no. 3 (2020): 60. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10030060

[59] Patchan, Melissa M., and Christian D. Schunn. "Understanding the Benefits of Providing Peer Feedback: How Students Respond to Peers' Texts of Varying Quality." *Instructional Science* 43, no. 5 (2015): 591–614. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11251-015-9353-x

[60] Granberg, Carina, Torulf Palm, and Björn Palmberg, A case study of a formative assessment practice and the effects on students' self-regulated learning.

[61] Carless, David. "From Teacher Transmission of Information to Student Feedback Literacy: Activating the Learner Role in Feedback Processes." *Active Learning in Higher Education* 23, no. 2 (2020): 143–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787420945845

[62] Walker, Rebecca, Rhonda Oliver, and Ross Mackenzie. "Group differences in secondary school students' perceptions of feedback.

from lesson observations that teachers gave immediate feedback to the learners on oral questions and written class work. Teacher B had this to say: "I walk around checking as my learners are busy with a task. This gives me an opportunity to clarify grey areas whilst learners are busy with the activity"

His assertion was corroborated by Teacher C: "*I don't wait to give feedback at the end when we are marking even if it is written work, I provide them with feedback as they are in the process of writing the task"*

Lesson observations confirmed the teachers' assertions as the researcher observed teachers moving around checking learners work and engaging the learners experiencing challenges.

The participants' practice of providing immediate feedback was effective as learners were able to modify their thinking based on the guidance they got from their teachers. This feedback also came while the grey areas were still fresh in the learners' minds

Feedback on learners' incorrect responses

It was interesting to notice how teachers were using feedback to support learners and correct their misconceptions. Both Teachers A and B posited that learners' responses were very important as they indicated the learners' knowledge and knowledge gaps.

"*Incorrect responses help me in determining the learners' misconceptions"* (Teacher A)

"*When learners give me wrong answers on content we have done, it means there are challenges on that topic and I have to teach it again"* (Teacher B)

Wrong answers provided teachers with information on the learners' misunderstanding. It also helped teachers to have a better insight into the learners' level of understanding, and how they could adapt their teaching based on the learners' misconceptions and level of understanding. This was evident from Teacher C's assertion: *"I usually think of different*

strategies of explaining that section in order to assist my learners to comprehend the concepts"

During the classroom observations, the researcher realized that teachers used learners' errors to ascertain the learner's level of understanding, as well as to evaluate their teaching practices. They also used it for remediation as the teachers focused more on the learners who got the responses wrong. The researcher also noticed that teachers encouraged learners to respond to questions even if they were not sure about their responses, and the teachers insisted on learners giving reasons for their responses

When the researcher probed participants in the post interview on why they were encouraging learners to respond even if the learners seemed unsure of their responses as well as asking learners to explain their reasoning, Teacher A noted that: "*As learners give reasons for their answers, those who got wrong answers get to see their mistakes."*

This was corroborated by Teacher C who went further to state that:

> *"Asking learners to explain their responses give room for discussion as learners try to explain their reasoning"*

It was interesting to discover that teachers viewed assessment and learners' incorrect responses as an opportunity to learn. Teacher B posited that: *"As a teacher, I also learn something from learners' wrong answers and get to think how best I can deliver the content to avoid such misconceptions."*

The teachers' practices were in line with the dictates of meaningful assessment, where assessment is used as part of the instruction and not as an isolated activity that takes place at the end of the term. Teachers also acknowledged gaining useful information through assessment practices.

Learner focused meaningful assessment practices

In the absence of the knowledge on how to assess and regulate their own learning, learners cannot be their own agents, with the capacity of making

decisions about how they can improve their learning.[63] On the contrary, when teachers partner with their learners to use evidence of learning to make continual adjustments to improve learning, the adjustments are most likely to be effective.

The significance of peer and self-assessment was raised by teachers during the post interview. Teacher A, for instance, stated that: *"It is good to see that learners were using success criteria steps to evaluate their peers' work"*

The importance of peer assessment was shared by Teacher C when she said:

> "*With peer assessment, the responsibility of assessment does not rely only on the teacher, learners are able to assess each other and help to clarify grey areas."*

Classroom observation revealed that learners were involved in their learning and were motivated as the owners of their learning. They also acted as resources for one another. The most interesting observation was that learners worked in groups, correcting each other where they had failed to get the correct responses (see Figure 2)

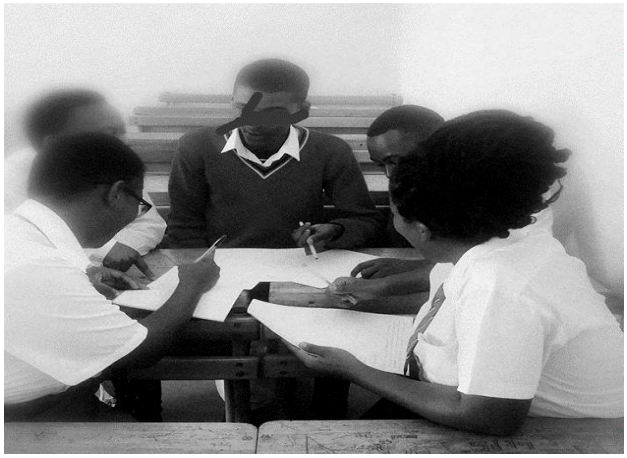

Figure 2: Peer assessment

It was striking to note that learners were able to self-assess using the success criteria as a benchmark. In the observation of Teacher A's class, learners were given an activity to calculate the multiplier from a given

[63] Brown, Gavin T. L., Is Assessment for Learning Really Assessment?

example. As she was busy, she checked on the handouts with the success criteria they had been given and said, *"Heee eee maan"* and erased her calculations and started afresh. Through the success criteria provided, the learner realized that she had skipped one stage in the calculation of the multiplier

When I probed the teacher on whether she had noticed that learners could correct their mistakes based on the success criteria, he stated*: "It is good to notice that most of my learners are able to self-assess based on the success criteria".*

In agreement with Teacher A was teacher B who said: "*Learners can compare their answers with the criteria and sometimes do not need me as a teacher to tell them whether their work is correct or incorrect"*

The data gathered showed that teachers were using both peer assessment and self-assessment effectively in their classrooms. Teachers' practices with these forms of assessment showed that they were aware of the pivotal role that self and peer assessment played in mediating Economics curriculum implementation.

DISCUSSION

The teachers in this study exhibited a fair understanding of the role of meaningful assessment in the mediation of Economics curriculum implementation. Their practices were also in line with what is documented in literature as good practices with regards to meaningful assessment.

Literature shows that meaningful assessment guides and informs teachers on their practice.[64] The findings of this study concur with what is documented in literature, that assessment provides valuable information for teachers to adopt and adjust their practices to meet the varying needs of their learners. The participants noted that they used assessment as an instrument to determine what course of action to take with regards to their teaching practice. Assessment acted as a mediating agent that

[64] Durga and Kumar, Formative and Summative Assessment for Learning: A Review

enabled learners to comprehend concepts that seemed abstract to them. Just as Yan and Boud observe, the study revealed that the teachers' understanding of assessment was that of it, not being an end in itself, but rather a process embedded in their daily teaching practice.[65] Meaningful assessment was seen as a guide on what direction teachers should take so that Economics concepts can be comprehensible to the learners

Christ et al. reports that engineering class discussions were pivotal in mediating between concepts and learners.[66] The scholars posit that when learners are meaningfully engaged in question and answer sessions in class, they are able to think deeply and help each other to comprehend concepts. This study confirms the findings of the above scholars, as teachers in this study revealed that assessment helped them to engage their learners. It was also evident during interviews that teachers were alive to the fact that class discussions had to be intentionally initiated to aid learners' learning. Just as Ying states, questioning ignites class discussions, which can enhance deeper understanding.[67] Teachers in the study intentionally used questioning to facilitate rich class discussions. Some of the types of questions that teachers asked were not of high cognitive demand and did not help much to ignite meaningfully class discussions

Teachers had a clear understanding of what feedback was, and clearly acknowledged how critical it was in helping learners to comprehend Economics concepts. The findings reflected the thinking of Khechane that feedback provided valuable information on where learners were with regards to their learning.[68] Teachers would then use it to decide on what steps to take to fulfil their intention of helping learners to master the content matter and skills in the Economics curriculum. The information obtained from the feedback allowed teachers to adjust their teaching in

[65] Yan and Boud, Conceptualising Assessment-as-Learning

[66] Christ, Ayşenur Alp, Vanda Capon-Sieber, Urs Grob, and Anna-Katharina Praetorius, Learning processes and their mediating role between teaching quality and student achievement: A systematic review

[67] Ying, Jonathan. "The Importance of the discussion method in the undergraduate business classroom." *Humanistic Management Journal* 5, no. 2 (2020): 251-278.

[68] Khechane, Nkoja C., Mamocheta C. Makara, and Awelani M. Rambuda, Primary mathematics teachers' assessment practices in the context of the integrated primary curriculum in Lesotho

order to match the learners' needs. Teachers used learners' incorrect responses to guide them to get a better understanding of the subject matter. This practice was in agreement with what is postulated by Granberg et al. when they note that feedback is used to guide learners from where they are to where they are supposed to go in terms of their learning.[69]

The study also revealed evidence to suggest that teachers attempted to incorporate elements of formative assessment through meaningful assessment practices with regards to learner involvement, in line with what is documented in literature. Teachers allowed learners to be assessed by their peers as well as to assess themselves. This practice resonates with Walker et al.'s observation that learners appreciate a learning environment where they are actively involved and are supported by the teacher and their peers.[70] The teachers understood and showed appreciation for meaningful assessment in their daily classroom practices. Some learners self-corrected based on the success criteria without the help of the teacher. The provision of success criteria played a significant role in assisting learners to reflect. A good example is when a learner said *"Heee eee maan*" upon reading the success criteria and erased their wrong answer and corrected it. This shows that learners could use the success criteria given before to evaluate their work.

SUMMARY

Meaningful assessment enables learners to understand the abstract concepts embedded in the Economics curriculum. When properly used, assessment has the power to provide feedback to both the teacher and the learner. Teachers are able to evaluate and modify their teaching practices based on the assessment feedback. Learners will too know how they are doing and which areas they need to focus more on. The findings of this study reveal that Economics teachers in the selected schools, to a certain

[69] Granberg, Carina, Torulf Palm, and Björn Palmberg, A Case Study of a Formative Assessment Practice and the Effects on Students' Self-Regulated Learning

[70] Walker, Rebecca, Rhonda Oliver, and Ross Mackenzie. "Group differences in secondary school students' perceptions of feedback.

extent, are using assessment meaningfully to enhance Economics curriculum implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and discussion of this study, it is recommended that assessment should be used effectively since it will enhance learners' understanding of abstract concepts. In addition, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) should conduct workshops, where teachers are constantly empowered to effectively use meaningful assessment in their daily practices especially through ICT as it will lessen the burden of teachers of designing and marking these formative assessments.

CONCLUSION

The study explored how Northern Cape teachers were mediating Economics curriculum implementation through meaningful assessment. The findings revealed that Economics teachers understood the role of meaningful assessment in mediating Economics curriculum implementation. This understanding was reflected in some of the teachers' practices with regard to assessment. The focus of the study was limited to teachers' understandings of the role of meaningful assessment, and the teachers' meaningful assessment practices in mediating Economics curriculum implementation in a semi-rural context. The study focused on large classes and curriculum-related factors with respect to teachers' understandings and practices in respect of meaningful assessment. Other contextual factors could not be adequately probed in this study. Future research should pay more attention to some elements that were not explored in the current study, such as the influence of: the lack of resources, language, and home environment of learners, amongst other factors.

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CHAPTER 4

ARTICLE THREE

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Challenges Facing Implementation of Economics Curriculum: The Experiences of Francis Baard District Teachers

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Abstract High school economics academic achievement has been poor or at best, mediocre in the Frances Baard District and in South Africa at large. This empirical study explores lesson planning, resources and pedagogical content knowledge as the challenges experienced by Frances Baard Economics teachers in their endeavour to implement the Economics curriculum. Curriculum implementation can be defined as how teachers plan and deliver instructions through the use of specified resources provided. Curriculum implementation is reliant on the teacher's ability to plan, choose and use available resources. This study makes use of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) parameters of intentionality, reciprocity and mediation as a theoretical framework. These parameters act as a guide for how Economics curriculum should be implemented. Anchored in the qualitative phenomenological multiple case study, the study is operationalised by three purposefully selected Economics teachers, with varying levels of qualifications and experiences, from different schools which belong to different quintiles. Document analysis, observations and semi structured interviews were used to gather data after which the data were thematically analysed while member checking was used for validation. Although an effort was that some Economics teachers encounter challenges with lesson planning, content knowledge, availability and use of resources. In mitigation to these challenges, the study recommends that the Department of Education should periodically organise workshops where teachers are empowered in terms of the Economics curriculum content, and use of various teaching strategies. It is also recommended that the Department of Education provide current and relevant resources and collaborate with different economics stakeholders.

Keywords Economics Education, Curriculum Implementation, Mediated Learning Experience

made to get a representative sample of schools in the Frances Baard District, the results of this study should be generalised with caution since only three schools formed part of this study. The findings of this exploration reveal

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the teaching and learning of Economics has been gaining attention from various stakeholders across the globe, South Africa included. This attention is premised on the fact that the subject is critical to the realisation of the much-needed economic growth and development of nations [1]. It is therefore imperative that the implementation of the Economics curriculum should enable citizens to contribute meaningfully to the economy.

Cabauatana & Dacles [2] postulate that Economics

focuses on how individuals and governments are involved in formulating wealth and eventually using that wealth to improve their standards of living. In agreement with this assertion is [3] who states that Economics is concerned with how individuals, businesses and government use scarce resources in a more efficient and equitable manner in order to satisfy their endless needs and wants. The functioning of world economies demands citizens who are able to properly utilise the continuously depleting scarce resources and are conversant with critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making skills. It is imperative to mention that informed decisions can only be made by someone who is abreast with the operations of the economy and has been equipped with economics knowledge and skills. These knowledge and skills, as [4] opine, resonate with the aim of the Economics curriculum which is to produce citizens who are positive contributors to the growth and development of an economy. Every nation is in need of these qualities to move their economies further and solve the ever-present economic challenges. Now more than ever, economics knowledge and skills are needed to lift the global economies from the affliction of the Covid-19 pandemic which ravaged global economies due to forced lockdowns.

Given the importance of economics knowledge and skills to global economies, there has been a growing interest in Economics curriculum implementation in many countries [1,3,5,6]. This is premised on the pedestal that in order to produce citizens with problem solving, critical thinking and decision-making skills, there is a need for proper and effective Economics curriculum implementation. It is the contention of [7] that effective curriculum implementation can only be realised if teachers are deliberate in their planning, they are experts in their subject area, and there are adequate resources availed. Economics curriculum implementation means putting the prescribed economics syllabus into actual practice [4].

Seemingly, effective Economics curriculum implementation is yet to be realised in South Africa and many other countries. For instance, in a study conducted in the Philippines by [8] the scholars investigated whether there is a relationship between problem-based learning approach and the development of critical thinking skills. This study concluded that there is a positive relationship because problem-based learning approach resulted in the development of critical thinking skills.

In Malaysia, [9] conducted a study on the effect of Google classroom assisted learning. Their study focused on how online learning platforms can enhance Economics curriculum learning through collaboration. The findings of this study highlighted that the teacher's teaching environment and approaches can motivate and ignite learners' interests in economics learning. It confirms that the use of technology has a positive influence on learners' academic achievement.

In another study conducted in Nigeria by [4] on Economics curriculum implementation, the study found that there is dearth of qualified Economics teachers, increase in school enrolment, mathematical phobia and curriculum overload. The study suggested that government should improve the working conditions of teachers, build more schools or extend the existing schools and improve the teacher learner ratio. Another related study was conducted a year later in Nigeria as well by [10] on effective implementation of senior secondary school Economics. The results of this study revealed that resources teaching and learning materials were inadequate for proper Economics curriculum implementation. As a result, teachers went to classes not adequately equipped to meet the demands of the Economics curriculum.

Moreover, [11] conducted a study in South Africa on the challenges experienced by learners in dynamics of market structures and found that teachers lacked the pedagogical content knowledge to teach market structures. This finding corresponds with what [12] discovered in their study on opportunities to learn imperfect market structures. The latter discovered that some teachers lacked mathematical and graphing skills to properly implement the graphing and mathematical skills embedded in imperfect market structures.

Problem Statement

Despite the importance of economics in today's society, its proper curriculum implementation is yet to be realised as plainly demonstrated by the learners mediocre to poor academic achievement [6]. For instance, persistent poor Economics academic achievement by learners in Nigeria has been reported by the Chief Examiners' annual reports of the West African Senior Certificate Examinations [3]. Similarly, the same is obtained in South Africa as revealed by the Diagnostic Report for the matric exam analysis which shows that academic achievement in the subject has been below average. The Diagnostic Report revealed that only 39.9% of the 107 940 learners who sat for the Economics National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination in 2020 achieved at 40% level and above, and that such has been the trend for the past five years. [13]. In the Frances Baard District, a similar trend like the national results was obtained as indicated by the district results which showed that most learners failed to achieve at 40% or higher in (NSC) examinations over the past five years. Challenges such as teachers not being deliberate in their planning, lack of sufficient content knowledge, lack of instructional materials, lack of competence in the use of available resource amongst other found expressions in literature [1,2,3,5,6]. The researchers experience as an Economics teacher for the past ten years relates with what is documented in literature that teachers face a myriad of challenges in Economics curriculum implementation.

Recognizing that learner academic performance acts as

an indicator on how effectively or ineffectively curriculum is being implemented, the poor academic performance points to obstacles in Economics curriculum implementation. Notwithstanding the numerous factors already enumerated in literature, there is still a need to understand the challenges faced by Economics teachers in Frances Baard District in their endeavour to implement the Economics curriculum. Pursuant of this, the study sought to explore the challenges facing Economics curriculum implementation in the Frances Baard District. In pursuit of the objective above, the following main question will be pursued;

1. What are the challenges facing Economics curriculum implementation in the Frances Baard District?

Theoretical Framework Theoretical Background

The paper is couched in Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theoretical framework. This theory found its roots from the social constructivism theory developed by Piaget [14]. Mediated Learning Experience theory owes its origins to Reuven Feuerstein who developed the theory over the period 1950-1963. Feuerstein, a Piaget student, was an Israelite psychologist and worked with large numbers of orphans and traumatized youths who were returning home to Israel after the Holocaust (Feuerstein, et al., 1980). Whilst many scholars of his time were concerned with what children could not do, he was more concerned with the learning potential in the learners and how this potential could be tapped to benefit the learners.

Mediated Learning Experience (MLE)

Mediated Learning Experience theory is concerned with the way in which stimuli is experienced in the environment with the help of the mediator who can be a parent, teacher or agent [14-16]. MLE theory is relevant to the study as it is premised on the principle that a correlation exists among learning, thinking, understanding and the learning environment in which these take place [17]. The learning environment refers to how teachers or mediation agents, through appropriate guidance and support, provide learners with appropriate opportunities and resources to acquire the intended knowledge and skills [14]. When applied to this study, it means that the meditational efforts by Economics teachers play a pivotal role in Economics curriculum implementation and the quality of academic achievement.

Feuerstein & Feuerstein [18] claim that the central theme of MLE is based on 12 criteria but only the first four are viewed to be necessary and sufficient for MLE to occur; intentionality, reciprocity, meaning and transcendence. For the purposes of this study, these parameters will be viewed as intertwined not as standalone parameters. These parameters demand consideration of both the teachers' and learners' roles in the learning process in which the teacher should be a facilitator of learning and the learner an active participant. Therefore, to fathom how teachers were mediating the Economics curriculum, it was imperative to scrutinize the context in which learning occurs with respect to Economics curriculum. Mediated Learning Experience is a practice theory and as such, it gave the researcher the lens to zoom into teacher practices. The researcher believed that the context of teachers' practices could be understood through data obtained from document analysis, observation and semi structured interviews.

In formulating the observation checklist, document analysis checklist and interview protocols, the researcher drew from MLE to come up with the following constructs; Planning, Economics Pedagogical Content Knowledge (EPCK), availability and use of Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM).

Literature Review

In this section, curriculum implementation and Economics education will be discussed

Curriculum Implementation and Economics Education

Curriculum implementation is a broad concept which can be defined in various ways, such as how teachers plan and deliver instruction through the use of specified resources provided [19]. Sharing the same view on curriculum conceptualization is [20] who opine that curriculum implementation refers to how teachers bring content to life in their classrooms. For [4] curriculum implementation is when the officially prescribed syllabi is put into practice, the real exposure of learners to the planned learning opportunities. The key to these definitions is that curriculum implementation is an intentional and deliberate action undertaken by teachers to facilitate learning. Curriculum implementation places a huge responsibility on the teachers' shoulders and these responsibilities include the ability to choose appropriate teaching methods and resources [21]. It is prudent to state that effective Economics curriculum implementation relies heavily on the teachers' knowledge and skills to plan, present and assess the Economics content [3, 22, and 23]. Sometimes teachers struggle with these fundamental aspects for effective Economics curriculum implementation as shown by [10] in the study on the effective implementation of the Economics curriculum. Their study revealed that effective Economics curriculum implementation is not a smooth process but can be affected by different internal and external factors such as planning, teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) amongst other factors [2,4]. Successful Economics curriculum implementation is dependent on these factors which might differ according to context as illustrated by [4]. It is therefore important to understand the challenges facing Economics curriculum implementation in the Frances Baard District schools. Although the writer acknowledges that curriculum implementation involves a

wide range of facets, this study only focused on lesson planning, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and resources as challenges of Economics curriculum implementation. The next section considers these factors in detail.

Challenges Facing Implementation of The Economics Curriculum

Planning for Economics Lessons

A lesson plan is a record of a teacher's thought processes on what will transpire in the lesson as it involves decisions about pedagogical dimensions the lesson will take [24]. Similarly, [25] claimed that a lesson plan is a written document capturing what, how and when learners will learn as well as the methods and materials they will learn from. Key to these definitions is that a lesson plan is an intentionally pre-planned document which creates ideas on how to deliver a lesson, considering the content, learners' needs, interests and problems. Scholars such as [26] argue that an effective lesson plan contains clearly written objectives to be achieved at the end of the learning process. A lesson which lacks properly formulated objectives is aimless and learners' behavioural changes cannot be ascertained. Moreover, [25] argue that a lesson plan gives confidence and direction to the teacher as it acts as a guide on what needs to be done at what stage of the lesson. However, despite the importance of lesson planning, some teachers face challenges in this practice. There is evidence in literature [27,28] that some teachers partly adhere to this practice. In trying to explain the above assertion, [25] submit that teachers view lesson planning as an extra burden on their already overwhelming workloads as it requires a lot of a teacher's professional time.

Without adequate planning, Economics curriculum implementation is negatively affected as teachers might waste time trying to figure out what content to teach and which activities to give to the learners [29]. In contention is [24] that without lesson planning, the teacher will not be able to cater for different learner needs in terms of material and teaching strategies and this results in the intended knowledge and skills not being achieved as learners would have been excluded from the learning process. In support of the above scholars is [18] who posits that lack of teacher preparedness is a huge stumbling block to successful curriculum implementation. Given the arguments forwarded above, poor planning means that the intended objectives and learning experiences will remain a far-fetched dream if teachers cannot adequately plan for their lessons.

Economics Pedagogical Content Knowledge (EPCK)

PCK is defined by [31] as a combination of content knowledge (subject matter) and the know-how of delivering the content through different strategies (pedagogical knowledge). This view is also shared by [32] who opine that PCK refers to the specific knowledge and skills that teachers need in order to effectively deliver a lesson. Teachers should possess content knowledge (CK) and the pedagogical knowledge (PK) for effective curriculum implementation [10,33] When applied to Economics, it implies that teachers should have the Economics Pedagogical Content Knowledge (EPCK) in order to effectively implement the Economics curriculum [10]. The key aspects important in EPCK are competency levels of the teachers in terms of Economics Content Knowledge (ECK). It also involves the teaching methods /strategies employed by the teacher (PK) and the ability of the teacher to adapt the content and assessments to the level of the learners [3,34]. This is important because it will enable the Economics teacher to choose appropriate strategies, deliver the content as espoused in the Economics curriculum and properly mediate where learners have challenges in comprehending the Economics content as identified and reflected upon by [2,4]. Furthermore, [10] submit that teachers should be subject specialists who can effectively make use of instructional materials. EPCK pertains to teachers' mastery of the Economics content and understanding of what makes the content abstract or easy to learn. It is undoubtedly clear that instructional competences on the part of the teacher are the pedestal for effective instruction and improved learner academic achievement [35].

Literature seems to suggest that some teachers grapple with the content matter they are supposed to teach [27,36,37]. It is the submission of [4] that in Nigeria, the lack of Economics content matter is as a result of dearth of qualified teachers. The lack of content knowledge seems to be evident even in developed countries like the United Kingdom as evidenced by [38] who submit that inadequate subject content knowledge is a challenge amongst teachers in the United Kingdom. Likewise, in Philippines public schools, Economics teachers confessed that they were unfamiliar with microeconomics subject content matter [2]. On PCK there is evidence in literature that teachers rely on chalk and talk method [39]. The over reliance of this traditional way of teaching compromises the learning environment, thereby negatively impacting Economics curriculum implementation [1].

Teachers with inadequate pedagogical content knowledge are incapable of mediating Economics subject matter incisively [1]. More so, teachers with inadequate pedagogical content knowledge are incapable of choosing appropriate strategies and this will negatively impact learner academic achievement. Literature reveals that limited PCK on the part of teachers usually results in poor quality education and learner achievement.

Availability and Use of Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM)

Learning and Teaching Support Material refers to all resources that are employed by teachers and learners in the teaching and learning process [7]. To Frimpong [41] LTSM refers to teaching aids that facilitate teaching and learning. These may take different forms such as textbooks, workbooks, worksheets, charts, videos, audio

material, computer or cell phone-based materials and materials on the internet and resource persons [42]. It is also worth noting that some materials not designed for instructional use such as TV, magazines, and newspapers can still have a powerful influence on Economics curriculum implementation.

Instructional materials play a key role in determining how well the Economics teachers make their lesson explicit to the learners [5, 7,10]. Supporting this view is [3,4] who postulate that although there is a shortage of LTSM in Nigerian secondary schools, the use of LTSM has been associated with improved academic performance. Learning and Teaching Support material allow learners to have an opportunity to have hands on experiences with the content [41]. The inference is that the effectiveness of teaching and learning could be affected by the resources availed to support it and the manner in which these resources are utilised. The LTSM employed by Economics teachers should support motivation, competence and self-directed learning [38]. The chosen instructional materials should be meaningful and relate to the learner's lived experiences and create interest of the subject.

When there is an inadequate or inappropriate use of LTSM, teaching and learning are compromised as learners are not exposed to real opportunities to learn Economics concepts [3]. This would mean that the lesson objectives are not met as learners' opportunities to learn are diminished. Inadequate Economics LTSM could compromise the quality of lesson delivery even if the teacher has adequate PCK simply because of the constrained resources provided to the teacher. Lack of LTSM results in a lack of variety in learner activities and this demotivates learners and may result in learners perceiving Economics content as abstract [43]

2. Materials and Methods

Methodology

The aim of this study is to explore lesson planning, resources and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as the challenges facing Economics curriculum implementation in the Frances Baard District. This needs the participants to share their own interpretation and subjective lived experiences [44] hence the study used the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. This paradigm acknowledges that there are multiple realities and truths based on people's beliefs, values, experiences and contexts [45]. The researcher used a qualitative multiple case study methodology in order to explore multiple bounded systems (cases). A multiple case design is a research methodology where several instrumental and bounded cases are explored using more than one data collection method [46]. This method allowed the researcher to analyse data; both within and across situations, that is, each teacher's way of curriculum implementation in their individual contexts in the selected schools [48]. Thus, the rationale for adopting a case study approach was based on the researcher's awareness that participants do not share the same reality on the phenomenon of Economics curriculum implementation.

Ethical Consideration

Before commencing the research, the researcher sought clearance from the ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2021/1088/21). The researcher also sought and was granted permission by the Northern Cape Department of Education and principals of schools where the research was to be conducted. It is an ethical practice to ask permission from authorities before conducting the study [47]. The participants also gave their consent to participate in this study and were assured of their anonymity and were given pseudo names. It was also made clear that participation is voluntary and purely academic, and not for financial gain and that they could withdraw from the research anytime without repercussions.

Selection of Participants

The population of the study were all Frances Baard District Economics teachers. However, three schools were purposefully selected as sites where the study was conducted as the sites had participants who could furnish rich information and knowledge about Economics curriculum implementation. The selection of the schools was based on the fact that two of the three schools, where teachers A and C were teaching, were deemed as underperforming schools and teacher B's schools was a performing school, obtaining a pass percentage of 85% and above every year. In South Africa, a school is deemed to be underperforming if it fails to obtain a pass percentage of 75% and above. The schools were also within the proximity of the researcher given the limitation of resources [47]. The chosen schools were also diverse and from different locations and at different school classifications. Within the SA context, schools are classified into what are referred to as quintiles; quintiles one and two are the "poorest" schools where learners do not pay school fees and are less resourced. Quintile three schools are better resourced than the first two quintiles, followed by quartile four and lastly quintile five, which are the 'rich' schools and parents pay huge amounts of school fees [4]. The participants selected for this study included three Economics teachers from quintiles one two and five within the Frances Baard District. The three participants were profiled as follows:

Teacher A is a novice male teacher at a quintile one school. He holds a Bed in EMS and Economics and has two years of teaching experience. He teaches EMS grades 8-9, Economics grades 10-12 and Life Orientation grade 8.

Teacher B has 20 years of teaching experience and teaches at a quintile 5 school (commonly known as former model C schools). This teacher holds a Bed in Economics and EMS and an Advanced Diploma in Education Management. He is also a deputy principal and teaches Economics grades 10-12. Teacher C is a female teacher with 15 years of teaching experience. She teaches at a quintile two schools and holds a certificate in Education specialising in Business Studies and an Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in Inclusive Education. She teaches EMS grades 8 and 9, Business Studies grade 10 and Economics grades 10-12.

Data Generation

Compatible with a qualitative study, data were generated through multiple sources. The researcher first asked the participants for their teacher files which he went through to get an understanding on how they were planning /0 their lessons. Thereafter, the researcher observed the teachers' lessons to ascertain how the teachers were implementing the Economics curriculum. Lastly, semi structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather data from the three Economics teachers' detailed narrations of their lived experiences. The researcher digitally recorded the talk during the interviews where the teachers were constructing their stories from their experiences. Where the researcher was not satisfied or needed clarity on the participants' responses, follow up questions were posed based on the themes of planning, EPCK and LTSM. Credibility was attained by triangulating different sources of data [50]. Through inductively working from the particular to generalised perspectives, data was coded, categorised and overarching themes were identified. In order to authentify and validate the generated data, member checking was employed before thick rich descriptive narratives were reported on [50]. Whilst generating data, the researcher enclosed his natural predispose and biases to enable the phenomenon to be experienced without any bias [51]. Emanating from these descriptions, Economics teachers' experiences in curriculum implementation were narrated.

3. Findings

In responding to the question on what challenges are facing Economics curriculum implementation, the researcher identified the following sub themes after transcribing the data from document analysis, observations and semi structured individual interviews respectively. This was done in conformity to [52] assertion that qualitative research uncovers themes and sub themes through a thematic process. In this study, the following sub themes were identified: lesson planning, EPCK, availability and use of LTSM

In the next section, focus turns to the challenges experienced by teachers in lesson planning.

Lesson Planning as a Challenge on Economics Curriculum Implementation

Through lesson planning, a teacher can ensure that lesson time is utilised productively to the benefit of the learners [25]. In the process of planning, the teacher reflects on what objectives the lesson seeks to achieve, the strategies to be used, learners' abilities and interests and the content to be taught [29]. This ensures effective Economics curriculum implementation as the teacher goes in the class fully prepared. In order to diligently plan, teachers should possess knowledge on how to formulate objectives, knowledge on how to plan and have a structured format of planning and know the cognitive abilities of their learners [26]

Teachers were asked the following question: *What challenges do you face in Economics lesson planning?* Two sub themes emerged on lesson planning.

Lack of Knowledge on How to Plan

There were varying levels of competences on planning amongst the three teachers. The researcher discovered through document analysis that in Teacher A's file for instance, there were lesson plans that showed the previous year's dates which was an indication that the teacher used pre planned lesson plans which might not suit the context of the learners. Moreso, when the researcher observed the lesson of Teacher A, the researcher had a sense that he was not properly prepared as the researcher struggled to ascertain the theme/ objectives of his lesson. The researcher then followed it up with him on what were the objectives he had sought to achieve in his lesson and without any iota of hesitation, he confessed that he was not sure on how to design a lesson plan with proper SMART objectives. He had this to say:

> *I am still new and trying to find my feet, I don't know how to design my own lesson plans with proper SMART objectives.*

Without proper objectives set, it is difficult for the teacher to evaluate whether meaningful learning took place and this makes the lesson plan redundant.

Similarly, a perusal of teacher C's file revealed that she did not use her own lesson plans but rather relied on using lesson plans from other areas that are not contextually relevant to the school environment that she was teaching. Through observation of her lesson, the researcher discovered that she never used the activities and YouTube video links which were documented in her lesson plans. The researcher followed it up with her in the post lesson interview on why she was using pre- planned lesson plans which did not suit her context and why there was no use of videos as stipulated in her lesson plans. This was her response:

> *…it's difficult for me to do lesson planning for*

Economics, I was never trained to prepare Economics lesson plans. I am a Business Studies and Life Orientation teacher

Contrary to teachers A and C, the researcher discovered that teacher B was diligently planning for his lessons. The document analysis showed different activities which had differentiated activities for different learners based on their abilities. As the researcher observed teacher B's lesson, the researcher witnessed learners being given activities as per the lesson plan. The teacher constantly took a glance at his lesson plan as the lesson progressed. He exuberated confidence on how to formulate objectives in his lessons. He reiterated that:

I am confident in formulating objectives which are achievable in a lesson.

With proper planning, the teacher has a guide on what to cover in a lesson and this enhances Economics curriculum implementation as the teacher focuses on the important aspects as documented in the official documents. The teacher is also able to set and measure whether the intended objectives were met or not.

Lesson Plan Content

One of the issues that came out strongly was the confusion on what content to include on the lesson plans. All the three teachers A, B and C had problems with what information needed to be reflected when planning Economics lessons. They bemoaned the fact that there was no universal template for an Economics lesson plan to guide teachers on the contents of a lesson plan. Teacher A attested that:

The problem is that there is no format or structure which we should follow when planning.

His assertion explains why document analysis had shown that he did not design lesson plans of his own. This was corroborated by teacher C who even went further to say that:

Without guidance from Economics departmental officials, lesson planning will continue to be a nightmare.

This is probably the reason why the teacher was not designing her own lesson plans as shown in her teacher files through document analysis. As if that was not enough, Teacher B went on further to say that:

We are confused. Head of Departments in our schools require this and when subject coordinators come, they have their own way they want us to design lesson plans

When I asked teachers A and C on how they were trying to overcome the challenges of lesson planning, Teacher A had this to say:

I use lesson plans which were designed by the previous teacher, I only change the dates

Teacher C, said:

I download lesson plans from other provinces

By analysing the novice teacher and experienced teachers' responses, and the lesson plans contained in their files, it is clear that although teachers are trying to improvise on lesson planning, it is undoubtedly clear that they are finding it difficult to adequately plan for their lessons. This is attributed to lack of knowledge on how to formulate appropriate and measurable objectives for their lessons, lack of knowledge on how to plan for different learner abilities and the uncertainty on the format of the lesson plan. This negatively affects curriculum implementation as teachers are then unable to deliberately and intentionally plan for their lessons.

In the following section, focus will be on Economics Pedagogical Content Knowledge.

Economics Pedagogical Content Knowledge and its Impact on Curriculum Implementation

The success and effectiveness of Economics curriculum implementation depend to a greater extent on the EPCK of the teachers [53,54]. Teachers should possess both the knowledge on the content matter and the skills to choose strategies which will capture the learner's attention and simultaneously ensure that there is quality learning [2]. Without proper ECPK, teachers cannot teach certain concepts, cannot choose proper teaching strategies and cannot properly assess learners [10]. Consequently, learners will be deprived the opportunity to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills as teachers cannot mediate what they don't understand themselves.

In responding to challenges on EPCK, two key issues emerged which were around lack of Economics Content Knowledge and teaching strategies and methodologies. The following section focuses on these two sub themes

The following question was asked on ECK: *Which sections of the Economics curriculum poses challenges for you?*

Lack of Economics Content Knowledge (ECK)

Literature on Economics Content Knowledge points that Economics teachers seem to have a challenge on content knowledge especially in micro economics [27, 2, 13, 37]. If teachers don't have ECK, they cannot mediate Economics concepts in order for learners to comprehend the concepts. Consequently, effective Economics curriculum implementation cannot be achieved as some concepts are left untaught or they are just brushed on the surface. It also means that learners will not be able to perform well in the Economics examinations.

On ECK, the results reveal that some Frances Baard Economics teachers possess inadequate ECK. Economics content is divided into two major modules, Macroeconomics and Microeconomics. Microeconomics constitutes 50% of the examinable content in the NSC

Economics papers. When asked about which section of Economics curriculum poses challenges to them, teachers A and C confessed that they had challenges in some Microeconomics content which included graphs and calculations. Teacher C had this to say

"Eish …, these graphs *[sighs] mona these calculations le di graphs make my life miserable*

I never liked mathematics and graphs even at school until university, ke nightmare

Her phobia for graphs and calculations was confirmed by how the teacher conducted one of the lessons which the researcher observed. The teacher avoided drawing the graph of the monopoly opting to give learners copies of the graph and never explained the calculation of the profit which was depicted on the graph.

On the day the researcher went for lesson observation in teacher A's class as agreed with the participant prior, the teacher did not teach the concept Oligopoly as reflected in the lesson plan but rather apologised to the learners that the teacher he had asked to come and help with the topic had excused himself at the last minute.He then gave learners an activity to do on the previous topic they had covered. After the lesson, we had a discussion where the researcher wanted to understand why he had to ask someone to teach the topic. He had this to say

These topics on microeconomics with the graphs and calculations are abstract for me, I am not comfortable to teach them

This assertion explains what the researcher observed in teacher A's class that he could not teach what was contained in his lesson plan. This puts more pressure on both the learners and the teachers to make up for the loss of time as a result of the teachers lack of ECK. It also compromises Economics curriculum implementation as sometimes the content might be given little attention or not taught at all due lack of content knowledge as was the case with teacher A.

The ECK competence of the teachers in this study evokes some questions on the quality of their teaching. This is based on the notion that if a teacher is not adequately equipped with the content matter of the subject, they cannot adequately implement the Economics curriculum as espoused by the curriculum designers. Possessing ECK alone is not enough for effective Economics curriculum implementation, the teacher should be able to choose appropriate teaching strategies. The next section therefore focuses on the findings on teaching strategies.

Teaching Strategies and Methodology

The way the content is delivered to the learners can hinder or enhance the learner's ability to comprehend what is being taught [3]. The subject requires that teachers take into consideration the level and intellectual development of the learners in their choice and use of teaching strategies [43]. Furthermore, Economics demands that interactive teaching strategies are employed in order to create a platform for learners to develop the requisite analysis, decision-making and problem-solving skills [56,57]. The choice and appropriate use of methodology and teaching strategies largely determine the failure or success of a lesson [57]. Given the importance of teaching strategies to Economics curriculum implementation, the researcher was curious to know what teaching strategies the participants were using in their daily practice.

The following question was posed to the participants. *How do you teach the subject?*

There were varying teaching strategies which Frances Baard teachers were implementing in their practice. For instance, Teacher B said:

I mix the teaching strategies like case study, group work, lecture amongst others because that's what the ATP document requires.

Teacher A had this to say:

I don't know which one is the best strategy to employ, however mostly I use chalk and talk and make copies of notes from the textbook

Teacher C was not different in her approach to the other two participants as she had this to say:

I explain concepts, use pair work and write notes on the chalkboard.

Although the participants were using various teaching strategies, it came out strongly that they were struggling in choosing the appropriate strategies to use. For instance, when the researcher probed them further on what informed their choice of teaching strategies, there were mixed reactions. Teacher C for instance posited that:

I have difficulties in choosing which teaching strategies would be suitable for the subject and the mixed abilities of learners in my class

This attestation confirmed what the researcher had initially observed in her class. The lesson was more teacher centred as she did most of the talking besides one or two instances where she would ask learners rhetoric questions like "*Do you understand?"* or "*Are we together?"*. For the later part of the lesson, Teacher C was busy writing notes on the chalkboard which were not written by most learners. It came out clearly that the teacher was not contextualizing her lessons to suit her learners' needs. Some resources were not used as had been reflected in the pre-planned lesson plan.

During the interview, Teacher B had this to say when the researcher asked him about his reflection on the effectiveness of the group work strategy, he had employed.

I find it difficult to control group work in large groups, the problem was the rowdiness of these kids and the

size of my groups.

Corroborating with the other two teachers was Teacher A who said:

My problem is on establishing how to use a textbook as a teaching strategy, I end up just reading from the textbook.

From the perusal of documents such as lesson plans, Teacher C's strategies were not in line with the interactive teaching strategies which the subject demands. More so, through document analysis, it emerged that those participants that chose appropriate strategies still experienced challenges on how to effectively employ the chosen strategies as was the case with Teacher B. His lesson plans showed that he made use of a variety of teaching strategies, however, the observations and interviews showed that although he used a variety of strategies, he could not use them appropriately as exemplified by the way he employed group work. The groups were large that the teacher could not direct and control what was happening in the lesson. Similarly, Teacher A's documents showed chalk and talk, textbooks amongst other strategies, however the textbook was not used effectively as the teacher confessed to just reading from the textbooks.

On the next section focus turns to the impact of LTSM on Economics curriculum implementation

Impact of LTSM on Economics Curriculum Implementation

Resources can be materials that can be seen or felt, could be places or persons that create conditions that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills [57]. These materials should help enhance learning by optimising the learning experiences of the learners. It is the position of [41] that not only should LTSM be made available, but that they should be meaningfully and effectively be used in the teaching and learning process. The availability, accessibility, relevance, adaptability and accuracy of LTSM afford learners an opportunity to develop the intended knowledge and skills in the economics curriculum [57,58]. The absence, minimal or poorly designed and unstructured use of LTSM negatively affects Economics curriculum implementation as in many cases teachers will then resort to the over use of talk and chalk [57] This strategy might result in learners losing interest in the subject and therefore resulting in failure to achieve Economics objectives.

Availability and Use of LTSM

On the question: *What resources are available for you to use in Economics curriculum implementation?*

Teacher A said:

Mostly I make use of textbooks prescribed by the department of education

A similar response from teacher B was obtained as he had this to say:

The main resource I use is the textbook

Teacher C

Textbooks are my source of information; however, they are limited in number due to increased learner enrolment.

All the three teachers indicated that they make use of textbooks as their main resource. The teachers went further to state that there were challenges on the use of the textbooks such as limited numbers and outdated textbook content as indicated in the following response by teacher A for instance who said

The textbooks we are using are outdated, they no longer cater for all the changes implemented in the subject.

This assertion was corroborated by teacher B who had this to say

Some of the content in the textbooks in now obsolete even the type of questions and activities in the textbooks that do not match the questions learners are asked in the final examinations.

During observation, Teachers A and C's schools were sharing textbooks in pairs and in some cases three learners were sharing one textbook. The Balance of payments (BOP) in the learners' textbooks, for example, is outdated. It was however interesting to note that teachers had solutions to this challenge as indicated by teacher C when she said

To supplement the textbooks, we make use of notes prepared by department of education from our province and other provinces as well

The teachers' solutions to augment outdated and insufficient textbooks were defeated by lack of resources. This was attested by teacher A who had this to say

We receive one copy of notes on all the topics to be covered which the teacher has to duplicate for the learners. It is frustrating that most of the time the copier machine is not working

In collaboration with teacher A was teacher C who posited that

The problem is photocopying paper here at this school, the school rarely has copying paper available.

When checking whether the teachers were using the internet to supplement what is in the textbooks and notes, the following were some of the responses teachers gave. For instance, Teacher A said

I would love to download other resources but the problem is that we don't have access to the internet at this school, it is only the principal who has a router which has limited data

Teacher C concurred with teacher A as she said:

The computers here have software problems, they have been locked in the storeroom, we only rely on the secretary's computer to print and download materials

When the researcher probed her further on how this was impacting Economics curriculum implementation, she attested:

Badly, I mean I need to give these kids notes and activities, how do I do that? I can't write on the chalkboard that will waste teaching and learning time.

The researcher then asked further if they are using any materials outside the classroom and probed them if they had links with professional institutions whether government based, business based or colleagues in other schools. The following were the teacher's responses:

Teacher A

I don't know whether it is allowed to bring people like SARB or Stats SA for instance, I am still new in the profession, However I asked the principal for permission to invite a senior Economics teacher in a neighbouring school to help with micro economics

Teacher B

I don't know who to contact at institutions such as SARB and Stats SA, these people could be helpful as they have first-hand information on many Economics concepts in the curriculum.

Teacher C was no different to the other two participants as she said

I am not sure whether it is allowed to bring them [government and business-based institutions] and if yes, I don't know how to get them

From the discussion above, it is clear that teachers are not fully utilising the potential that certain institutions related to economics that could provide valuable support in Economics curriculum implementation.

The results indicate that Frances Baard teachers are facing challenges on the availability and use of LTSM. This is negatively affecting effective Economics curriculum implementation. Without proper and adequate resources, effective economics curriculum implementation cannot be achieved as LTSM plays an integral part in the teaching and learning process.

4. Discussion

This study intended to explore what challenges are facing economics curriculum implementation in Frances Baard District schools. The study found that both novice and experienced Economics teachers are confronted with numerous challenges which include inadequate planning, inadequate pedagogical content knowledge, and lack of resources.

Firstly, the study discovered that both novice and experienced teachers professed a proper understanding of the value of planning. However, despite their understanding on the value of planning, some teachers were not being deliberate in this process as they are not acquainted on how to plan an Economics lesson and do not know what should be included in the lesson plan. Instead, some teachers have resorted to pre- planned lesson plans which did not consider the contextual factors of their learners. This is despite of the importance placed on context on the planning of Economics lessons by literature such as [25]. The use of pre- planned lesson negates MLE principles of reciprocity and mediation as content is not modified and adapted to the learners' needs, abilities, interest and contexts. The use of these generic lesson plans negatively affects effective economics curriculum implementation because the lesson plans are prepared without considering the calibre of the learners and context in which the learners find themselves. More so; the study revealed that some teachers are not competent in formulating SMART objectives. This finding confirms what is documented in literature that some teachers partly adhere to the practice of planning [27,28]. Without properly set objectives, literature such as [25] documents that the attainment of the intended competences remains a mystery. It is undisputed that without a clear intention of what is to be achieved in a lesson, mediation will be a futile exercise. Consequently, proper and effective Economics curriculum implementation will not be attained.

Secondly, the study revealed some teachers lacked content knowledge in some sections of the Economics curriculum for example microeconomics. This discovery is in unison with what literature suggests as some teachers either have phobia for mathematical and graphing skills or they were not trained to be Economics teachers yet they find themselves teaching the subject [2,38]. If teachers themselves struggle with certain concepts, it becomes difficult for them to mediate the content and make it comprehendible to the learners. Effective curriculum implementation will not be achieved as the success of curriculum implementation heavily relies on teachers being masters of the subject [22,23]. It also came clear from the study that some Economics teachers struggle with the choice and use of teaching strategies. Some teachers were not able to select appropriate strategies and those that chose the correct strategies were not able to use them properly. Instructional strategies play a pivotal role in helping to develop the skills as espoused in the Economics curriculum. This failure to select and /or use appropriate strategies which relate to the learner's context means the strategies will not help the teachers in mediating the content so that learners can comprehend abstract concepts.

Thirdly, both print material and electronic resources were discovered to be in short supply in most schools. Just like many countries especially in developing countries, teaching aids and learning materials are cited to

be negatively affecting curriculum implementation. This finding is not out of line with previous studies and challenges where lack of resources is cited as deterring effective economics curriculum implementation [4,10] Learning and Teaching Support Materials are supposed to be made available to enable the teacher to effectively implement the Economics curriculum and for learner to have an enhanced understanding of economic content. Participants in the study also raised concern on their inabilities to properly use resources such as textbooks and ICT. This inability to use critical resources only points to ineffective curriculum implementation as these resources are of paramount importance in trying to mediate Economics curriculum for easy comprehension. The study also reveals that there is a shortage of resources in some schools as some learners were sharing textbooks and lack of ICT was also common. This shortage of resources has a negative impact on Economics curriculum implementation as resources play a significant role in the mediation of learning.

Lastly, there is no proper stakeholder involvement between schools and institutions such as Stats SA and SARB amongst others. This lack of stakeholder involvement that goes against what literature was like [41] suggests on the significance of collaboration of schools and other stakeholders in the teaching and learning of learners. This lack of stakeholder involvement only serves to negate the efforts by teachers to mediate the Economics concepts for easy comprehension and for learners to achieve higher academic achievement. It should however be hastened to mention that some teachers were making an effort to collaborate with teachers from other schools to help in achieving effective economics curriculum implementation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the participants' voices, there is a need for periodic empowerment workshops where teachers are trained on how to plan context-based lesson plans. Another recommendation emanating from the findings of the study is that teachers need to be constantly workshopped on certain curriculum content and how to use different teaching strategies in their daily practice. The use of obsolete textbooks was another serious concern raised by Economics teachers. The Department of Education should prioritise the issuing of new textbooks which match the revised Economics curriculum and way of questioning that matches the Examinations which learners sit for. Stakeholder involvement is also recommended as this can enhance learners' understanding of the subject through resource for people from government and business-based institutions. The Department of Education is advised to up its efforts in trying to equalise the distribution of resources in schools as huge inequalities exist amongst schools of different quintiles. It is also recommended that the Department of Education should hire properly qualified teachers to teach the subject.

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CHAPTER 5

ARTICLE FOUR

This article was formatted according to the requirements of the Journal of Social Studies Education Research where it was submitted

Economics Teachers' Integration of ICT for Enhanced Economics Curriculum Implementation

Wellington Manzi[1] & Boitumelo Moreeng[2]

***Abstract*—Information and Communication Technology has gained tremendous attention as a tool for instructional delivery and assessment. However, high school Economics teachers have yet to fully utilize this educational tool to implement the Economics curriculum effectively. Information Communication Technology enables teachers to communicate with learners outside the physical classroom, encourages learner engagement, facilitates differentiated teaching, simplifies abstract concepts, and helps teachers design, distribute and provide immediate assessment feedback. Nevertheless, there is sparse research on Economics teachers' integration of ICT to enhance Economics curriculum implementation in South Africa. This empirical study explores Economics teachers' ICT integration to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) was the theoretical framework which guided this study. A qualitative approach was used in this study. Three teachers from three different research sites were purposefully selected for the study. Using a case study design, data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The study findings reveal that the teachers in this study were utilizing ICT to enhance their teaching. However, there is still room for improvement in teachers' ICT integration. The study recommends continuous teacher development on ICT integration to enhance economics curriculum implementation.**

***Index Terms*—Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Curriculum Implementation, ICT integration, Economics Education, Mediated Learning Experience (MLE)**

I. INTRODUCTION

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) has ushered opportunities and challenges for different sectors of human activities: professional fields, industries and services. In the education sector, many countries across the globe have embraced ICT in teaching and learning to enhance curriculum implementation (Bicalho et al., 2022; de Castro & García-Peñalvo, 2021). There has been the realization that effective ICT integration improves human resources quality (Bicalho et al., 2022). For some Economics teachers, ICT has brought a tool to enhance their practices; for some, it has brought unsurmountable challenges (Andyani et al., 2020). However, what is certain is that there has been increased acknowledgement of the critical role ICT plays in education.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration implements various applications and devices to support educational aims (Kimav & Aydin, 2020). Advocates of ICT integration deposit that when utilized optimally, it can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Economics teaching and learning process and eventually improve learner academic achievement (Mursidi, Buyung & Murdani, 2022). An increasing number of experts have revealed numerous benefits of ICT integration in the teaching and learning process (Alkan & Sarikaya, 2018). ICT integration has been found to offer numerous advantages, including but not limited to facilitating broader access to learning materials, making information more affordable and accessible, providing tools for assessment, and saving time (Andayani et al., 2020). It is well documented that properly using ICT in the education sector can shift teaching and learning from teacher-centred to learner-centred (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020; Ogbonnaya et al., 2020). In addition, Mursidi, Buyung and Murdani (2022) further posit that ICT integration enables self-regulated learning, creates a creative learning environment, promotes cooperative learning and provides more opportunities for developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

To achieve the high knowledge and skills envisaged in the Economics curriculum, global trends reveal that education systems have increasingly looked towards the advances in Information Communication and Technology (ICT) to assist in scaffolding learners' cognitive abilities (Ogbonnaya, 2022; Maity & Haque, 2018). This shift to ICT integration is based on research (Szymkowiak et al., 2021), which revealed that technology provides powerful tools to improve learner motivation and academic performance. Furthermore, given that 21st-century learners (digital natives) heavily rely on technology (Shafie et al., 2019), Economics teachers cannot afford to depend solely on the chalk-and-talk method anymore. More so, considering the

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high-level skills such as deductive and inductive reasoning embedded in the subject (Manzi et al., 2021), teachers must create an enabling environment where learners can achieve these skills. One way of developing complex skills such as analysis, critical thinking, decision making and problem-solving is through ICT integration in the teacher's daily practices (Santika et al., 2022; Arthur & Kaku, 2020).

Research on the significance of ICT integration in Economics education is not new (Nji & Idika, 2018; Arthur & Kaku, 2020; Kimanzi, 2021). The importance of ICT integration in Economics teaching has led to programs such as developing the ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT) (UNESCO, 2019), which assisted teachers in developing ICT competencies, even though controversial findings of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2012) regarding technology use and learning, the above scholars and many others concur that ICTs are powerful tools which can be used to enhance curriculum implementation. Although the studies on ICT integration mentioned above were conducted in different countries, their findings point to similar challenges, such as low utilization of ICT in the teaching and learning process, lack of resources, lack of ICT infrastructure and slow pace in adopting to the use of ICT (Andyani et al., 2020; Kimanzi, 2021). Furthering research on ICT integration in the teaching of Economics were Santika et al. (2022) and Ogbonnaya (2022), who went further to try and explain why there was low utilization of ICT in the teaching and learning of Economics. Their studies place the lack of ICT integration in teaching Economics on the teachers' lack of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). These studies recommended further training economics teachers on ICT use through workshops and seminars. In addition, the studies suggested that more funds should be availed to acquire more ICT resources.

Notwithstanding that several studies have investigated the factors that affect ICT acceptance and lack of ICT infrastructure (Gao & Zhang, 2020), little research has explored how Economics teachers are using ICT to enhance Economics curriculum implementation, especially in developing countries such as South Africa. The few studies conducted in South Africa give voice to the teachers' lived experiences concerning ICT integration in teaching Economics (Van Wyk, 2017; Kimanzi, 2021; Ogbonnaya, 2022). Thus, the lack of understanding of teachers' lived experiences regarding ICT integration in the teaching of Economics has opened an opportunity for this study to investigate the Economics teachers' integration of ICT to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. In this light, the study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge by understanding how Economics teachers integrate ICT into their Economics classes. In pursuit of this aim, the following research question will be pursued;

How do Economics teachers integrate ICT to enhance Economics curriculum implementation?

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Comprehending what drives Economics teachers' integration of ICT is a complex issue. However, what is evident is that teachers lack proper training to integrate technology into their teaching (Olutola & Olatoye, 2015). Teachers are unable to integrate ICT to simplify abstract concepts in Economics (Shafie et al., 2019). Although integrating ICTs is meant to alleviate problems of passive learning and teacher-centred pedagogies (Persaud, 2018), literature such as Buda (2020) reports that some teachers are ineffective in using them and continue to exhibit traditional practices. Teachers cannot effectively use ICT to develop complex skills such as graphing, critical thinking and problem-solving in their lesson delivery. Moreso, the literature documents that teachers cannot use ICT to design effective lessons and assess learners meaningfully (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020). It is visible in the literature that unless ICT competency is given maximum attention, it will remain a barrier to learners' learning (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020). As a result of the lack of effective ICT integration, Economics lessons have been dominated by teacher-centred pedagogy, which is not the preference of the 21st-century learner, resulting in learners failing to comprehend economics concepts (Ayers, 2019). The researchers' experience has also revealed that most Economics teachers do not know how to use ICT in their lesson delivery and assessment.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theoretical framework. This theory has its roots in the social constructivism theory developed by Piaget (Tzuriel, 2011). Reuven Feuerstein developed the theory over the period 1950-1963. Mediated Learning Experience theory focuses on how stimuli are experienced in the environment with the help of the mediator, who can be a parent, teacher or agent (Feuerstein et al., 1980; Tzuriel & Shamir, 2002; Tzuriel, 2011). This theory was deemed relevant to this study as it is anchored on the principle that a correlation exists between the learning environment and the development of the intended knowledge, skills and values in Economics; critical thinking, decision making

and problem-solving skills (Lidz, 2002). The theory focuses on how teachers, as mediation agents, provide learners with appropriate opportunities and resources to acquire the intended knowledge and skills (Tzuriel, 2011). Its application in this study is that the meditational efforts by Economics teachers through ICT integration play a pivotal role in Economics curriculum implementation and the quality of academic achievement.

It is the postulation of Feuerstein and Feuerstein (1991) that the overarching theme of MLE is based on 12 criteria. Still, only the first four are considered necessary and adequate for MLE. These parameters include intentionality, reciprocity, mediation of meaning and transcendence. *Intentionality and Reciprocity*- are concerned with the mediator's deliberate efforts to change the learners' perception, processing and response. Tzuriel (1999) further argues that intentionality has to be coupled with reciprocity. Reciprocity is achieved when a learner response verbal, non-verbally or vocally to the meditator's efforts. *Mediation of meaning* – the mediator should facilitate learners' reflection on how they found the solution to the problem and generalizations that can be made. *Transcendence* – the lessons learnt and experience should be transferred to new situations. Learners should be able to use the knowledge gained in different situations. Although transcendence relies on intentionality, reciprocity and mediation for meaning, combining the three provides a powerful tool for the "development of cognitive modifiability" (Isman & Tzuriel, 2008, p.548). What becomes clear is that MLE parameters are concerned with the quality of the teacher's instruction, the level at which the learners benefit from the teachers' mediational efforts and the ability of learners to apply the learnt knowledge and skills in different situations.

This study will consider the four parameters intertwined and not independent. The above parameters beg for consideration of learners' and teachers' roles in the learning process wherein the teacher assumes the role of facilitator of learning and the learner is an active participant. To understand how teachers integrated ICT in mediating Economics curriculum implementation, it was deemed necessary to interrogate how teachers used ICT in their daily practices. As a practice theory, MLE provided the researcher with the lens to analyze how teachers used ICT to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. It was the researcher's conviction that the context of teachers' practices concerning ICT integration could be understood through interrogation obtained from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

An observation checklist and interview protocols were drawn by tapping from MLE parameters of; intentionality, reciprocity, meaning and transcendence. In analyzing data, the researcher was cognisant that the mediational effect is critical in effective curriculum implementation.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Curriculum Implementation*

Curriculum implementation refers to daily teacher and learner classroom activities (Ogar & Opoh, 2015). According to Marques and Xavier (2020), it is when the teacher transforms the written curriculum into classroom activities, fulfilling officially prepared content. According to Nevenglosky (2018), it refers to how teachers teach and assesses learners. In Mabale's (2013) view, it is an application of thoughts and innovative ways to impart knowledge, skills, concepts and interpretations. It becomes apparent that curriculum implementation concerns teacher practices to create opportunities for learners to acquire knowledge and skills. These practices require the teacher to deliberate in planning, lesson delivery and assessment. The teacher must carefully select resources and materials to meet the learners' needs. Teachers are critical in implementing the curriculum (Lochner et al., 2015). As of late, the teacher's role has shifted from the transmitter of knowledge to the manager of the learning process. The new teachers provide activity-based teaching where learners collaborate, share and communicate their reasoning (Karakus, 2021). Recently, teachers have turned to Information and Communication Technology to assist them in implementing the curriculum. It has been at the backdrop of continuous realization of the significant role ICT can play in mediating the expected knowledge and skills (Bicalho et al., 2022).

B. *Conceptualisation of ICT*

Information Communication Technologies (ICT) are devices and all resources used to transmit, store, exchange or share information and improve communication (Santika et al., 2022). According to Singhavi and Basargekar (2019), ICT is an umbrella term which includes any device or application, which might consist of cell phones, television, radio computers and different applications which can be used in distance learning. Information and communication and technologies (ICT) used in the teaching and learning process include educational videos, music, PowerPoint presentations, World Wide Web(www), WhatsApp, Google Classroom, media apps, MOOC, zoom cloud meetings, YouTube, Team Link, and Telegram amongst other platforms (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Gao &

Zhang, 2020). ICT is commonly concerned with communicating through devices and software in these descriptions.

Habibi et al. (2020) submit that ICT integration refers to the purposeful and well-thought use of ICT in teaching and learning. In agreement are Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015), who posit that integrating Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in the teaching and learning process refers to the intentional use of computer-related communication in the teachers' practices. According to Mulwa (2018), ICT integration uses information resources on the web, learning objects, multimedia programs in CD-ROMs and other tools to enhance learners' learning. In Guemide's (2019) view, ICT integration is the use of technology seamlessly in delivering curricular content and when assessing learners. The researchers view ICT integration as the deliberate infusion of electronic devices and software in teaching, learning and assessment. When the teacher imagines the potential of the technology available for learning in the context, it will be taught. Information, communication and technology (ICT) integration is more than just knowing how to use a program but a reflection on how the ICT tool will help learners achieve the learning outcomes set by the teacher; this means that ICT integration should be intentional and done thoughtfully.

Backfisch et al. (2021) argue that effective ICT integration is a complex process which has resulted in different models, structures and theories being developed to guide the education fraternity in integrating sophisticated technologies in pedagogical practices. Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) integration has to be purposeful (Seufert et al., 2021). It should not just be an insertion or mere access to technology (Buda, 2020) but somewhat intentional, deliberate, and aimed at soliciting learners to reciprocate the teacher's intentional efforts. When ICT is infused into the teachers' practices, it should be aimed at enhancing curriculum implementation (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020). Whatever ICTs are employed, they should help mediate the complexity and abstractness of the concepts embedded in the Economics curriculum (Ejimonye et al., 2020). The infusion of ICT is more meaningful during lesson preparation and delivery and when learners' formative assessments occur so that learners' misconceptions can be identified and clarified immediately (Ejimonye et al., 2020). It should enable learners to apply the learnt knowledge and skills to different situations (transcendence).

C. Economics Education

Economics is a social science-based discipline which aims to explain how businesses, individuals and governments seek to solve the problem of scarcity using limited resources (Idika, 2020). It is a unique subject that encourages the development of specialized economic knowledge and skills which can be employed to solve the numerous economic challenges faced by 21st-century economies. The subject exposes learners to mathematical skills and graphing concepts to explain the dynamics of economies (Manzi et al., 2021). Many learners sometimes find this knowledge and skills abstract and complex (Khoo, 2017). Research studies indicate that learners struggle with Economics concepts which involve graphing and mathematical concepts (Angra & Gardner, 2018; Ejimonye et al., 2020). More so, the subject's intake has been dwindling in many countries.

For this reason, teachers have to find better ways of presenting these abstract concepts if the subject is to continue existing. With technology taking over every aspect of life, Economics teachers have not been left behind. Since the subject requires teachers who are competent and abreast with various teaching approaches and strategies (Kaku & Arthur, 2020; Ayers, 2019). Economics teachers have been expected to be deliberate and intentional in delivering the content and assessing the learners if the envisaged outcomes of the Economics curriculum are to be realized (Prasetyono et al., 2021).

The teachers' role in implementing the Economics curriculum can never be over-emphasized. The teachers must translate the subject aims into assessment objectives of skills to be examined, for instance, understanding, application, analysis, interpretation and organization (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020). These complex knowledge, skills and values embedded in the subject will enable learners to reason based on their analysis as juxtaposed to passively describing economic phenomena. Effective acquisition of Economics knowledge, analytical, critical and creative thinking and problem-solving skills heavily relies on the teachers' ability to effectively and intentionally plan, deliver and assess the Economics content (Santika et al., 2022; Arthur & Kaku, 2020). Teachers have to be thoughtful, informed and reflective in their daily practices if meaningful learning is to take place. The economics curriculum demands teachers to meet high pedagogical standards to help learners acquire the high-level knowledge and skills embedded in the subject (Kimanzi, 2021; Ogbonnaya, 2022).

D. Integration of ICT in the Teaching of Economics

Advocates of ICT integration in Economics teaching posit that ICT enhances collaborative learning and establishes a rich network between learners (Rafei, 2015). Through ICT integration, learners can share information amongst themselves and with the teacher inside and outside the classroom. Learners can share their work and ideas, which they would have obtained due to broader access to materials provided by ICT (Bicalho, 2022). ICT integration makes information accessible and affordable while saving time (Andayani et al., 2020). In addition, Mursidi et al. (2022) further posit that ICT integration enables self-regulated learning, creates a creative learning environment, promotes cooperative learning and provides more opportunities for developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills, meaning that ICT allows learners to apply the learnt knowledge and skills in different situations (transcendence).

Further to the above studies, a study conducted by Ejimonye et al. (2020) revealed that ICT integration enables one to use a variety of videos and power point presentations to make teaching more visual to minimize the abstractness of certain Economics concepts. Concepts such as the law of marginal returns and multipliers are challenging to teach by lecture or discussion (Lim, 2003). Through ICT platforms such as Tubidy, YouTube and Khan Academy, learners are provided with visuals on how these concepts work. In agreement with Ejimonye were Candra and Retnawati (2020) and Rafsanjani (2021), who asserted that when images accompany thought processes, learners tend to comprehend concepts better and help to improve memory retention among learners. In addition, advocates of ICT-mediated teaching posit that game-based learning can be used to develop problem-solving skills and engage learners more successfully (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). Technology also makes teaching and learning fun and interesting. When learners are taught through quizzes and games, their interest in schoolwork is boosted as they learn whilst playing (Aprianti & Sahid, 2020). Such games increase motivation among learners (Candra & Retnawati, 2020).

Most Economics concepts are usually interrelated (Gultepe, 2016), and learners find it challenging to establish the relationship between concepts, for instance, in the case of the multiplier, marginal propensity to consume (MPC) and marginal propensity to save (MPS). Learners struggle to understand how marginal propensity to consume impacts the size of the multiplier (Lim, 2003). However, through animations and videos, one can show the learners how an increase in MPC or a decrease in MPS influences the multiplier's size (Lim, 2003). Through the use of videos, software packages and drawing graphs
using different colour codes, teachers can mediate the abstractness of economics concepts (Ejimonye et al., 2020). Through social media platforms such as TikTok, WhatsApp, YouTube, and PowerPoint presentations with voice, teachers can mediate abstract Economics concepts (Mursidi et al., 2022).

Further to the above, Setiadi and Ghofur (2020) submit that through ICT, teachers can construct, deliver and offer timely and continuous feedback on assessments. Various scholars such as Wang et al. (2019) and Jo et al. (2018) concur that ICT-mediated assessment can take the shape of self-assessment, peer assessment, mobile assessment, and gamification, amongst others. Literature documents that most ICT packages are usually accompanied by assessments in the form of quizzes, matching exercises, flashcards, crossword puzzles, quizzes and tests and the responses to thereof (Link et al., 2020). Immediate feedback provided by ICT deals precisely with varying misconceptions that learners might have and, at the same time, assist in self-correction. Pratama and Sakti (2020) believe that when feedback is provided promptly after the act that initiated it, it acts as a powerful reinforcer and may allow learners to master economic terms and change their behaviour immediately.

What becomes apparent is that the integration of ICT in teaching and learning is a deliberate instructional choice by the teacher. ICT enhances curriculum implementation as it helps teachers introduce, reinforce, enrich, extend, assess and remedy the learner's comprehension of curricula.

V. METHODOLOGY

In this section, the researchers explain the research methods used, indicating ethical considerations, research approach, design, participants, instrumentation and data analysis procedures.

This study employed an interpretative paradigm where qualitative data were generated and analyzed to determine how Economics teachers integrated ICT into their teaching. Research paradigms represent the researcher's world views and interpretation of phenomena (Kamal, 2019). In this study, the researchers' choice of data collection and analysis was based on their opinions towards the subject under investigation. The primary purpose of interpretivism was to understand the lived experiences of Economics teachers regarding ICT integration in their daily practices.

The researchers utilized a case study design to understand better how Economics teachers integrated

ICT into their daily practices. More so, the case study design provided an opportunity to probe further by including follow-up questions to get more clarity from the participants' responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The study sample consisted of three purposefully selected schools, where three Economics teachers were chosen to participate in this study in the Northern Cape Province, South Africa. The researchers deemed these sites to possess thick and rich information about the phenomenon under study and were accessible to the researchers (Creswell, 2014). Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were used to generate data to answer the research question: *How do Economics teachers integrate ICT to enhance Economics curriculum implementation?* The researcher conducted forty-minute pre-interviews with the three teachers separately before observing their lessons. After the interviews, the researcher observed the lessons to understand better how Economics teachers integrated ICT into their teaching. Interviews were conducted with the teachers immediately after the observations to seek clarity on the teachers' practices during classroom observations and follow-up.

This study employed thematic analysis to make sense of the data from the semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The researchers used thematic analysis as this method is used to classify, analyze and record themes that have been identified from the data. Thematic analysis facilitated the process of interpreting, analyzing and presenting a comprehensive report of the study findings.

VI. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State, approved this study (UFS-HSD2021/1088/21). The Northern Cape Department of Education also granted permission to conduct this study. The participants who took part in this study provided informed consent. It was made clear to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that there were no financial gains from participating in this study (Suri, 2020).

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The interview and observation data were analyzed to identify themes relevant to answer the question: *How do Economics teachers integrate ICT to enhance Economics curriculum implementation?* The following themes emerged: used to enhance interaction and increase learner engagement, used to enable teachers to differentiate their teaching to accommodate different learning styles, used to allow teachers to determine their teaching to accommodate different learning styles, used to improve assessment opportunities and provided immediate feedback.

A. Used to enhance interaction and increase learner engagement

Indeed, when ICT is effectively integrated in the classroom, it can increase learner engagement and encourage interaction (Siwi et al., 2018). Teachers can present long-established ideas more innovatively and engagingly. It helps to make learning fun, motivating learners to be actively engaged in their learning (Hayati et al., 2019). Information communication and technology allow teachers to build higher-order thinking skills espoused by Bloom's taxonomy while keeping learning interesting (Chowdhry, 2018). Given that the current generation is biased towards smart technology, ICT can allow learners to create team projects, collaborate and learn from one another. Through interviews, teachers revealed that ICT enhances learner interaction and engagement confessed the following:

"As I prepare for my lessons, I use Google Classroom to get interactive material in different formats such as podcasts" (Teacher A).

Teacher A's assertion is congruent with the dictates of intentionality and reciprocity, as Isman and Tzuriel (2008) stated. The teacher (mediator) was deliberate in using ICT in his planning(intentionality) so that learners could respond either vocally, verbally or non-verbally(reciprocity) to the lesson content.

"I can play an audio clip and ask learners to give their opinion either as individuals or as groups" (Teacher B).

When I probed the teacher on why the use of audio clips, this was his response:

"It is a creative way of breaking up monotony and for learners to collaborate and learn from each other and develop their confidence in discussing their views

When I use platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, Khan Academy and others, my learners become enthusiastic and get engaged in the lesson because these are familiar platforms to them" (Teacher C).

The use of videos, audio clips and social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube etc., to improve learner engagement has also been found to be useful and is confirmed in studies by Siwi et al. (2018) and Hayati et al. (2019) who state that videos and audios motivate and encourages learners to be actively involved in their

learning. Through ICT integration, Economics lessons are transformed from the traditional practices where learners were reduced from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants in their learning (Shiyyab, 2020).

The researcher observed how the teachers used ICT to initiate robust class discussions. For instance, Teacher A played a video on the causes of Business cycles whilst Teacher B played audio on the clip on the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) statement by the Reserve Bank Governor, and Teacher C asked learners to go on TikTok with a given link to view a video on the concept Laffer Curve. It was interesting that Teachers A and B constantly paused the video or audio to ask learners questions based on the clips. This allowed discussions where ideas on the causes of Business cycles and repo rate increases justifications were deliberated. In the case of Teacher C, learners had to present to the class what the curve represents and how it helps governments to decide on the tax rate. This moves the subject away from being confined to the pages of the textbook to a practical subject. These practices meet the requirements of MLE parameter mediation of meaning and transcendence, where the teacher allows learners to reflect on how they got to the answer and how they can apply the learnt knowledge to different situations.

B. Used to enable teachers to differentiate their teaching to accommodate different learning styles

Information, communication and technology allow teachers to differentiate their teaching to suit individual learning levels and styles. Learners have varying learning styles and abilities, and technology enables teachers to cater for these varying needs (Levonius, 2015). For instance, some learners prefer watching videos and tutorials before doing a task or applying information (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). When effectively utilized, ICT has the potential to cater for all the varying needs of diverse learners (Granitz et al., 2021). ICT integration also means that learning is no longer restricted to time and space (Shuraimi et al., 2022). With ICT, teachers can carefully select and differentiate resource banks for learners based on their cognitive abilities and learning preferences. Teachers highlighted that ICT allowed them to determine their teaching.

"I make use of videos and audio tapes so that learners with visual and auditory learning preferences are catered for" (Teacher A).

The teacher exhibits intentionality because he purposefully chooses video and audio clips to cater to different learner preferences.
He intends learners to respond to the stimuli (Economics content). It is also documented in literature such as Granitz et al. (2021) that using ICTs such as videos has the potential to meet the varying needs of diverse learners.

"Sometimes I record my lessons and send learners to play the videos at their convenient time to recap what was taught" (Teacher B).

"Through Zoom and Google Meet, I am able to conduct intervention classes after school with my learners in the comfort of their homes" (Teacher C).

When the researcher probed further how the teacher would do this, Teacher C said

"I have three groups in this class, and we meet online to clarify grey areas at different times; it enables me to cater for learners with different abilities in my class."

The assertions by three teachers are in agreement with the literature by Shuraimi et al. (2022), who postulate that with ICT, learning can now take place anywhere without being limited to the physical classroom.

When the researcher observed the classes, he understood that teachers knew how to use ICT to cater to learners with different learning preferences and abilities. For instance, in Teacher A's class, as the teacher moved from one group to the other, checking on what learners were discussing, the researcher noticed that there was one group where the teacher spent more time even replaying the video. When the researcher asked him why that was the case, he stated that the group had learners who took longer to grasp concepts; hence he took more time to guide them. In Teacher B's class, the teacher had sent learners a TikTok video explaining the Laffer Curve. In class, it was more of a discussion. The ones who had grasped the concept had to answer projected questions. These practices concur with the sentiments of (Levonius, 2015). ICT allows teachers to pace their lessons differently to suit different learner needs.

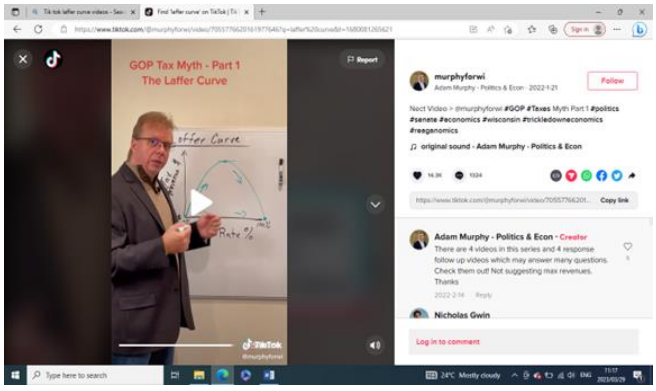

Fig. 1: TikTok video played in Teacher B's class

https://www.tiktok.com/@murphyforwi/video/7055776620161977646?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc&web_id=7215893906961483270

C. Used to Reduce Abstractness of Economics Concepts And Enhance Understanding

Using videos, PowerPoint, projectors, and other forms of multimedia makes concepts more visual and transparent (Zhang et al., 2019). Learners' learning opportunities are enhanced by presenting the same concept differently. Idika (2020) contends that instructional materials such as ICT assist teachers in teaching more conveniently and allows learners to learn abstract Economics concepts easily. Sharing the same sentiments with the above scholar is Granitz et al. (2021), who state that ICT gadgets enable easy comprehension of abstract concepts and lead to more positive attitudes and greater satisfaction towards academic work.

"With the advent of ICT, I am able to make use of diagrams, graphs, charts and animations to present the concepts and summaries of the topic" (Teacher A).

When the researcher probed him further on how this was different from making copies of the notes and how this was helping to enhance Economics curriculum implementation, he had this to say

"Through the use of videos, concepts become clearer as learners can visualize some of the concepts being presented in real life situations, for instance, the multiplier effect and marginal utility" (Teacher A).

The teacher purposefully chose videos (intentionality), so abstract concepts like graphs can make sense to the learners (mediation of meaning) and enable learners to transfer the graphing skills in other situations.

"Through Smart Notebook 11 Application, I am able to draw graphs step by step using different colours to highlight different axis and curves on the graph" (Teacher B).

When I asked the teacher how this simplified the concept, Teacher C answered,

"Look, learners don't get to see graphs as a picture but rather as a representation of different variables and therefore, it makes it easy for them to interpret graphs.

I use videos from YouTube, Tiktok and Khan Academy because videos enables learners to see and hear at the same time."

She went further to say:

"When I play videos and use Powerpoint presentations, learners are able to make discoveries of their own from visualization or observations which promote creative and analytical skills as envisaged in the subject aims."

The three participants' efforts are intentional and aim to solicit reciprocity amongst the learners. Furthermore, through ICT integration, teachers are mediating meaning and transcendence; they seek to enable learners to get a better understanding and to be able to apply their knowledge in different situations (Isman & Tzuriel, 2008). Teacher C's assertion that *"learners are able to make discoveries of their own from visualization or observations which promote creative and analytical skills"* agrees with what Shuraimi et al. (2022) found in their studies that the use of ICT enables learners to be creative thinkers.

The researcher observed that the teacher used a video from YouTube where the concept multiplier and the graphical representation were presented. The teacher played the following video in class.

The following is the link to the video.

https://youtu.be/mKroyMAZwUU

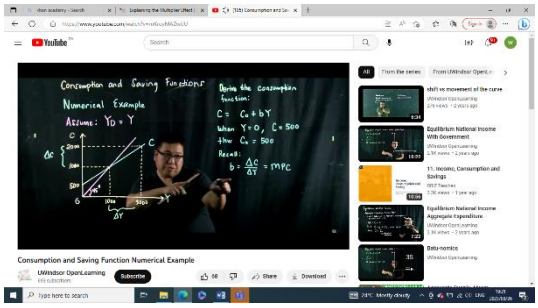

Fig. 2: YouTube video played by Teacher B

As the video was playing, the teacher constantly paused and asked learners questions based on the presentation of the multiplier concept. It also enabled the teacher to clarify grey areas as some learners were also posing questions to the teacher based on what was being presented. This practice of using videos is in unison with previous studies such as Shuraimi et al. (2022), who found that videos effectively present abstract concepts such as graphs. Through ICT, such as videos, previous concerns Angra and Gardner (2018) raised that interpreting graphs is a complex and complicated task are addressed.

D. Used to Improve Assessment Opportunities and to Provide Immediate Feedback

Assessment is always considered a critical component in teaching and learning. The constructivist method of teaching and learning permits teachers to assess learners using modern technologies. Information communication and technology devices such as desktops, laptops, smartphones, iPads etc., play a central role in making the assessment process easy for teachers (Majid, 2020). Information communication and technology-mediated assessment can reinforce the comprehension of Economics concepts and terms through matching exercises, quizzes, flashcards and crossword puzzles (Nikou & Economides, 2017; Karay, Reiss & Schauber, 2020). Through digital technology, tasks can be constructed and delivered, and feedback and grades can be given to the learners timeously (Marina, 2015; Majid, 2020). The timeous feedback facilitated by ICT can help to enhance learning Economics outcomes. However, it should be noted that not all kinds of tasks can be evaluated by a computer (Majid, 2020)

"I usually send activities or homework on our subject WhatsApp group, and learners respond, and I mark and give them feedback" (Teacher A).

*"I use online discursive activities through Quizlet" (*Teacher B).

"I use computerized based assessment with an item bank where learners can write informal tests on their computer, laptop, tablet or cell phones" (Teacher C).

When I probed her how this was helping in enhancing Economics curriculum implementation, she had this to say

"I can present learners with different questions based on their abilities, and my learners can sit for these tests as frequently as they find useful, and feedback is provided immediately."

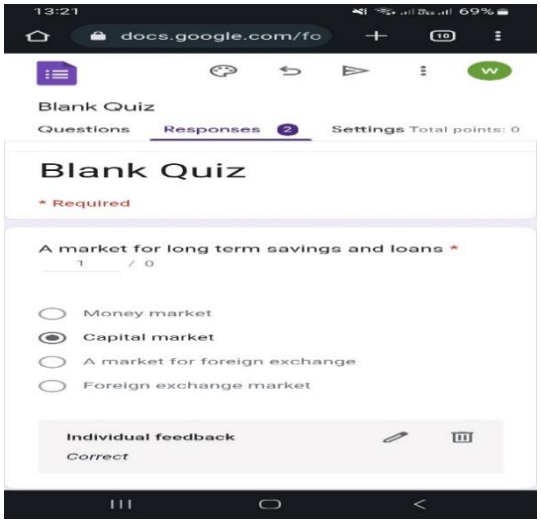

Fig. 3: One of the quiz questions given by Teacher C

The day the researcher went to observe Teacher A's lesson, the researcher noticed that the teacher sent an activity on the subject WhatsApp group. This indicates that ICT-mediated assessment does not limit teachers' time and place to assess their learners. This practice aligns with Bicalho's (2022) findings, which postulate that ICT integration breaks assessment boundaries only on paper and in the physical classroom. Although Teacher B mentioned item bank and computer-based assessment, the teacher did not use this. However, in the case of Teacher C, the researcher noticed an in-class assessment where learners used their cell phones to log in and respond to a quiz posted on Google classroom. Teacher C's use of Google forms as an assessment tool which was also programmed to mark the learners' responses, is in unison with study findings such as Marina (2015) and Majid (2020), who posit that ICT-mediated assessment provides immediate feedback to the learners. One of the ingredients of effective curriculum implementation is the provision of immediate feedback, as this allows learners to identify and correct their mistakes whilst the concept is still vivid in the learners' minds (Pratama & Sakti, 2020).

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study intended to explore Economics teachers' ICT integration to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. The verdicts and practices of Economics teachers in this study provide compelling evidence to conclude that teachers are alive of the importance of ICT integration in their practices. This study contends that the parameters of MLE are powerful tools that, combined with ICT integration, can help teachers provide learners with opportunities to develop negotiated meaning, critical thinking, decision making,

problem solving and analytical skills as embedded in the aims of Economics Education.

IX. VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study may help Economics teachers enhance their ICT integration to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. It might also inform departmental officials how to empower teachers and provide resources for more meaningful ICT integration in the high school Economics curriculum implementation.

X. LIMITATIONS

The study cannot be generalized as it was conducted in a few schools in the Frances Baard District. The schools chosen had access to ICT technologies which is not a typical reality, especially for most township schools.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Continuous teacher development on integrating ICT is as if teachers are facilitators of meaningful learning, which will enhance learners' academic performance. The Department of Education should also provide ICT facilities and gadgets to teachers and learners to be at par with 21st-century teaching and learning.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Manzi, Wellington created the interview schedule and did literature review and data analysis. Contribution:65% Moreeng B helped in data analysis and discussion and helped with other sections 40%. Both authors approved the final version.

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CHAPTER 6

ARTICLE FIVE

This article has been formatted according to the journal of African Perspectives of Research In Teaching and Learning where it was submitted.

Curriculum Leadership and support for enhanced Economics curriculum implementation

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Abstract

This study aims to report on the nature of curriculum leadership and support provided to Economics teachers by departmental heads in order to enhance Economics curriculum implementation within Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theoretical framework. Underpinned by an interpretive paradigm, the study adopted a qualitative case study approach. The study employed purposive sampling to select participants n=6, three departmental heads, and three Economics teachers based on their experience, knowledge, and understanding of the phenomenon under research. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews and were analysed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that departmental heads were providing curriculum leadership and support through moderation of assessment tasks, monitoring the assessment feedback provided to learners, observing teachers' lessons and providing feedback to teachers on how to better their lesson delivery, interpreting policy documents, and providing resources. However, the study also revealed that some departmental heads were not providing leadership and support in subject content matter and setting of assessments as they were not competent themselves. The study recommends continuous departmental heads-initiated training so that they are able to provide teachers with meaningful curriculum leadership and support to enhance Economics curriculum implementation.

Keywords: Curriculum implementation, Curriculum leadership and support, Departmental Heads, Economics Education, Mediated Learning Experience**.**

INTRODUCTION

Education is key to the development of any nation. The quality of human resources a nation possesses is dependent on the quality of education learners are exposed to (Indrawan, Muntholib & Armida 2021). Teachers are the cornerstone of the quality of education and the quality of human resources a nation possesses (Asyiah, Muntholib, & Hakim, 2023). Teachers are expected to possess the knowledge, skills, and expertise to produce the much-needed high-quality human resource to solve the ever-increasing 21st-century global economic challenges. Teachers should possess adequate pedagogical content knowledge to effectively deliver the Economics curriculum if the knowledge, skills, and values embedded in the subject are to be realized. However, considerable literature points to ineffective Economics curriculum implementation across the globe, including in developed countries such as the United Kingdom (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron & Osher, 2018), the Philippines (Cabautana

& Dacles, 2021), and in developing countries such as Nigeria and South Africa (Manzi & Moreeng, 2023; Olebhiele & Oko, 2018). Some of the reasons advanced relate the inability of teachers to effectively deliver the Economics content to lack of content knowledge, lack of knowledge on how to use instructional resources meaningfully, and inadequate knowledge on how to assess learners and provide meaningful feedback amongst other reasons (Cabautana & Dacles, 2021; Olebhiele & Oko, 2018).

In an attempt to address some of the challenges faced by teachers in curriculum implementation, there is a growing body of literature that seeks to understand the impact of curriculum leadership and support provided to teachers by departmental heads (Edwards-Groves, Grootenboer, Hardy, & Onnerman, 2019). Bryant, Ko & Walker (2019) and the Department of Basic Education (PAM) (2016) jointly posit that departmental heads are teachers who have been formally appointed to positions of authority at the school level to be responsible for a department or phase. These teachers are appointed on the basis that they are subject specialists and experienced (PAM, 2016). Departmental heads are the immediate supervisors of teachers and have the responsibility of leading, supporting, and monitoring curriculum implementation in their respective departments (Magnaye, Serrano & Serrano,2023). Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) make us aware that in other countries like England, departmental heads are known as middle managers and curriculum coordinators. Without the guidance and support of departmental heads, teachers find it difficult to navigate through the ever-mounting curriculum demands and challenges (Lipscombe, Tindall-Ford, & Grootenboer, 2019) and consequently, learner academic achievement is adversely affected (Edwards-Groves, Grootenboer, Hardy, & Onnerman, 2019). This understanding that curriculum leadership and support immensely contribute to the improvement of curriculum implementation, management, and outcomes, has resulted in an increased interest in educational research on the practices of departmental heads in providing curriculum leadership and support to in-service teachers (Grootenboer, 2018).

Given the consensus in the literature that departmental heads' instructional leadership and support practices are more critical in improving curriculum implementation (Dania & Andriani,

2021; Hallinger & Hosseingholizadeh, 2019), it is important to explore the departmental heads' leadership and support practices. Whilst there is adequate research on instructional and leadership research for instance (Cahapay, 2022; Lipscombe, Tindall-Ford, & Grootenboer, 2019; Magnaye, Serrano & Serrano, 2023; Ogunode & Ajape, 2021; Tapala,Van Niekerk, & Mentz, 2021). van Wyk, 2017) amongst others, to the researcher's knowledge, only a few studies in South Africa (Hlatshwayo, 2021; Morowane, 2019) have focused on the curriculum leadership and support provided to Economics teachers by their departmental heads. Thus, this study sought to describe the curriculum leadership and support provided to Economics teachers to enhance Economics curriculum implementation in the selected schools in Northern Cape. In order to achieve this objective, the following research question was formulated: What leadership support is provided to Economics teachers to ensure proper Economics curriculum implementation?

Research on curriculum leadership and support is not new in the literature. In Malaysia, Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014) conducted a study on the effect of the instructional supervisory role of departmental heads. The study findings revealed that departmental heads influenced teachers' curriculum implementation effectiveness. This influence was through developing and providing support to the teachers so that they can enhance their professional performance. The study emphasized the need for departmental heads to be practicing teachers so that they are able to provide valuable information on how curriculum implementation can be enhanced. In the same study, data revealed that those departmental heads who provided meaningful instructional resources and facilitated professional development had a huge impact on the effectiveness of teacher practices and effective curriculum implementation. Related to the above study on the effect of curriculum leadership and support provided by departmental heads, Morowane (2019) examined the role of contextual intelligence in leading the instructional program for Grade 12 Economics in South Africa. The study findings revealed that departmental heads neglect their duties of supporting teachers and monitoring how the Economics curriculum was implemented. The study suggested that departmental heads should provide leadership and support on what, how, and when to teach and assess. In addition,

Ogunode and Richard (2021) conducted a study on the supervision of secondary school education in Nigeria. Their study revealed that there was a shortage of Economics supervisors in schools and as a result, people who are not competent to supervise the subject were appointed. This practice, they concluded, hindered quality control and support of Economics curriculum implementation and consequently resulted in poor learner academic achievement. The study recommended that more resources should be invested in equipping departmental heads with the necessary skills so that they are able to provide adequate curriculum support to the teachers.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although research on instructional leadership dominates the literature (Hallinger, Heck & Murphy, 2014; Leithwood, 2016), there is still poor implementation and supervision of the Economics curriculum in many countries ((Ohiare, Ogunode & Rauf, 2021); Ogunode & Richard, 2021). This poor Economics curriculum implementation and supervision might be accountable for the poor learner academic achievement. In South Africa, and in the Northern Cape Province in particular, learner academic achievement in Economics has been poor. The DBE National Senior Certificate (NSC) results for the past five years show that on average, only 28% of the learners who sat for the NSC Economics Examination managed to pass at 40% and above (DBE, 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022). The researcher has been a teacher for the past 10 years and has observed that departmental heads barely perform most of their duties for various reasons and is of the opinion that the lack of meaningful curriculum leadership and support by Economics departmental heads might be contributing to these shortcomings and predicaments in Economics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is framed by the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) theory. This theory owes its origins to social constructivism theory as espoused by Piaget and Vygotsky (Tzuriel, 2011). Feuerstein developed MLE after spending many years working with marginalised children

(Feuerstein & Lewin-Benham, 2012). Feuerstein extended the work of Piaget and Vygotsky who believed that learners construct knowledge through social interaction or with the environment. He, however, went further and discovered that the mediator played a more crucial role on how learners learn (Greenberg, 2010). In his view, there should be deliberate mediation by peers, parents or educators for learning to take place.

Feuerstein's theory has 12 parameters, however the first four are crucial for mediation to take place (Feuerstein, Todd, Moskowitz, Bruns, Stoler, et al., 2010).These parameters include intentionality, reciprocity, mediation of meaning and transcendence. Intentionality has to do with the intent of mediator on when and what to mediate (Greenberg, 2010). It focuses on changing awareness, attention and reaction. Reciprocity is the verbal or non-verbal response by the learner to the mediator's efforts (Tzuriel, 2011). Mediation of meaning is when mediators facilitate learners' reflection on how they found the solution to the problem and the generalisations that can be made. Transcendence refers to how the learner is able to connect what they are learning to other situations (Tzuriel, 2011).

Feuerstein posit that an intentional, reciprocal mediator manipulates the learner, the task and his own mediational activities (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin & Stangor, 2002). Equally, for Economics teachers to enhance their implementation of the Economics curriculum, In this study, the departmental heads had to manipulate the teachers, the task and their own mediational activities. The mediator thus is an activist interventionist and therefore departmental heads were deemed as activist interventionists to mediate between the support and leadership needed in Economics curriculum implementation and the teachers (Bond & Dissinger,1991).Mediated Learning Experience advocates for cooperative learning since learning is a social activity (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin & Stangor,2002). Equally, for Economics teachers to enhance their implementation of the Economics curriculum there is need for them to share knowledge and learn from their departmental heads and peers. The mediation done by departmental heads should be goal seeking, goal setting and goal achieving. It should provide guidance for teachers to be able to effectively implement the Economics curriculum (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin & Stangor, 2002). It is also important to note that for the

purposes of this study, these parameters will be viewed as intertwined and not as stand-alone parameters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the next section, attention turns to the conceptualization of Curriculum implementation and Economics Education.

Curriculum Implementation

To Chacha and Onyango (2022), curriculum implementation is an activity performed by teachers to acquire a country's education objectives. For Ohibime, Mohammed, & Adebisi, 2023), curriculum implementation is putting a planned program that is meant to be learned in educational institutions into action. Curriculum implementation can also be conceptualized as the translation of the planned content, knowledge, and skills into operation (Ohiare, Ogunode & Rauf, 2021). To Nevenglosky (2018), it is putting the planned curriculum into action. In the view of Ramli, Sudadi & Afendi, 2023) curriculum implementation refers to the realization of curriculum plans, values, and the learning process, which are aimed at changing the learners' behaviour. Key to these definitions is that curriculum implementation involves putting into action a planned program. For the purposes of this study curriculum implementation is conceptualized as the act of executing a learning program. It refers to the actualization of the intended knowledge skills and values into practice. It is when learners in a learning environment experience learning programs.

Economics Education

Economics is a discipline that is concerned with how people use available resources by making choices based on the alternatives available to make a living (Ogunode & Tanimola, 2023). It is a social science because it deals with human behaviour. Economics concerns itself with

business, government, and household activities such as production, consumption, and exchange (Ogunode & Ibidiran, 2021). The study of Economics equips learners with analysis, critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills (Idika, 2021). These skills are necessary for the 21st century as we now leave in the global world. Learners should be responsible global citizens who are able to survive and solve the challenges of the global world. Through the study of Economics, learners are able to function as citizens of society, country, and global world. They will have an appreciation that resources are scarce and as such, people have to sacrifice some of their needs and wants. The subject also alerts learners of the consequences of their actions on the environment and develops an appreciation of conserving resources so that future generations can also benefit.

The roles and responsibilities of departmental heads as instructional leaders and supporters of curriculum implementation include planning and provision of resources, curriculum management, assessment and monitoring (Bush, 2014). In the following section, the aforementioned roles and responsibilities of departmental heads are discussed.

Planning and Provision of Resources

As instructional leaders, departmental heads should collaboratively plan with the teachers in their departments on how and when they will implement the curriculum and assessment tasks according to policy direction (Mampane, 2017). Planning is on two levels. The first is at a departmental level, which involves formulating curricular vision and goals and convincing teachers to work towards the intended vision (Thorpe & Bennet-Powell, 2014). Through engaging with teachers on curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies, a sense of collegiality is cultivated, and the shared vision and goals may act as an incentive to motivate teachers to give their best in Economics curriculum implementation (Irvine & Brundrett, 2017; Sayed & Macdonald, 2017). The second level of planning is at the classroom level where decisions are made on the content to be taught, the teaching strategies to be implemented, and the instructional resources to be used (Aydin, Ozfidan, & Carothers, 2017).; Ulusoy & Incikabi,

2021), and the forms of assessment to be administered to achieve the intended objectives (Tataroglu-Tasdan, Tekin Dede, & Yiğit Koyunkaya, 2022). Although the second level of planning primarily rests on the teachers' shoulders, departmental heads are expected to offer support to teachers to ensure effective curriculum implementation (PAM, 2016).

Instructional resources are pivotal in enhancing curriculum implementation as they enable learners to comprehend concepts with ease, therefore, they should be purposefully and carefully selected (Cevikbas ,Konig & Rothland, 2023). It is documented in the literature that departmental heads should organize instructional resources that support teaching and learning (PAM, 2016).

Curriculum Implementation and Management

Departmental heads should focus on activities that are related to ensuring that meaningful teaching and learning take place rather than focusing on management activities (Bryant, 2019). The focus should be on activities that support better and more effective curriculum implementation through sharing experiences and working collaboratively with teachers on curriculum articulation (Bryant, Ko & Walker 2019). Capacity building has the effect of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in Economics (Marishane, Marishane & Mahlo, 2015). This is a result of teachers having been empowered to have good knowledge of the subject as well as cognitive and pedagogic competencies. The plausible argument here is that effective teaching and learning are achievable when departmental heads are instructionally located closer to the classroom (Morwane, 2019).It is the understanding of DBE that a departmental head should be an expert in the subject and someone who is able to conduct staff development workshops for his/her colleagues (Mthiyane, Naidoo, & Bertram, 2019). The implication here is that once departmental heads identify a gap in teachers' practices, they should be able to intervene and support the teacher.

Assessment Setting and Monitoring of Marking

Assessment is a key contributor to the discourse on improved teaching and learning (Van der Merwe, 2016). It cannot be separated from teaching and learning as it forms part of instruction and gives feedback to parents. For an assessment to be meaningful, it should be properly designed and evaluated (Yan & Boud, 2022). Sometimes teachers struggle with setting and assessing assessment tasks and require support (Brown, 2019). It is the duty of departmental heads to provide this support at the school level (PAM, 2016). Departmental heads are expected to provide and contribute to the professional development of the teachers at the school level and with other professional bodies outside the school (Dinham, 2007). This includes on–school support such as workshops, and professional networking to ensure that teachers are competent in setting quality assessments and that marking is done fairly and just (Shirrell, Hopkins & Spillane, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design underpinned by the interpretive paradigm to answer the research question: What curriculum leadership and support is provided to Economics teachers for enhanced Economics curriculum implementation? The interpretive paradigm believes that reality is socially constructed and that there are multiple realities that people can construct. (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The researcher intended to explore the curriculum leadership and support provided to Economics teachers, therefore different departmental heads gave their own interpretations of what kind of support they provided to Economics teachers. A case study research methodology was employed as it allowed the researcher to capture the lived experiences and realities of the departmental heads on the nature of support, they provided to Economics teachers for enhanced Economics curriculum implementation (Allan, 2020).

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this study. In purposive sampling, participants are selected based on the researchers' personal judgment that the selected

participants have the knowledge, experience, information and qualities needed to answer the research questions (Rahi, 2017).In selecting the participants for this study, the researcher deemed departmental heads to have in-depth knowledge about how leadership and support are being provided to Economics teachers in the selected schools since these participants are the ones who offer such support. The three Economics teachers from three different schools were deemed to have first-hand experience on how each of their departmental heads was providing curriculum leadership and support.The study aimed to have in depth knowledge on how different de[partmental heads were providing c8urriculum

Semi-structured interviews were used to generate data. Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to ask open-ended questions and probe the participants' responses for further clarity (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). The researcher asked further questions on curriculum leadership and support provided to Economics teachers based on information that emanated from the discussions with the participants. To minimize mental tiredness as warned by Adams & Lawrence (2018), interviews only were conducted once for fifty minutes with each of the participants. The interview discussions were audio recorded so that every detail of the interview was not missed. In order to make sense of the shared meanings and experiences of the participants as indicated by the data, the researcher made use of thematic analysis. Emerging themes and sub-themes were identified based on the data from interviews (Braun & Clarke ,2013. The final stage involved the researcher analysing data inductively and deductively (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

It is ethical practice to seek permission before conducting research (Creswell, 2014). Ethical considerations were conformed to as the researcher first sought and was granted ethical clearance from the University of the Free State ethics committee (UFS-HSD2021/1088/21). The researcher also obtained permission from the Northern Cape Department of Education, the principals of the research sites, and the departmental heads. To address the credibility of the study findings, the researcher used peer debriefing and member checking (Maree, 2007) and colleagues were asked to do critical peer checks on the interpretation of data (Rule & John, 2011). More so, the research participants were requested to verify whether the analysis and

interpretation of data was a true reflection of what they had said in the interviews (Rule & John, 2011).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section reports on the codes of meaning; Lesson planning, Setting of assessment tasks, Feedback and Comments on Learners' work, Monitoring classroom instruction and curriculum support, Interpretation of Policy documents, and provision of resources that emerged from data analysis of the semi-structured interviews in conjunction with available literature and the theoretical framework to examine the curriculum leadership and support provided to Economics teachers for enhanced Economics curriculum implementation.

Lesson Planning

Cevikbas, Konig & Rothland (2023) postulate that lesson planning is critical to effective curriculum implementation. It is the initial phase of a lesson where the teacher decides on the objectives to be achieved, the strategies and the material to be used. The objectives to be achieved should be measurable and cater to all cognitive levels from low, middle to high-order skills (Aydin, Ozfidan, B & Carothers, 2017). Well-formulated objectives help to give feedback to the teacher on whether learners learned or not (Ulusoy & Incikabi,2021).

Notwithstanding the above, the findings of this study revealed that there was no consensus from the teachers on the support that was provided to them by their departmental heads. Teachers A and C were struggling with lesson planning and needed support in this regard, yet it was not forthcoming, however, Teacher B applauded his departmental head for the support he was providing on lesson planning. Teacher A confessed his challenges with lesson planning:

I am still new and trying to find my feet, I don't know how to design my own lesson plans with proper SMART objectives.

The challenge of lesson planning was not only peculiar to Teacher A, Teacher C also experienced challenges with lesson planning. She confessed:

As someone who majored in Business Studies, designing solid lesson plans with proper objectives, strategies, and adequate content for the fifty-minute period is a nightmare for me.

When the researcher asked how departmental heads were supporting their teachers with lesson planning, DH1 had this to say:

I assist my teachers by downloading lesson plans on the internet from other provinces and areas so that they don't have to spend time designing their own lesson plan.

Whilst DH1 thought he was assisting his teachers and reducing their responsibilities, this kind of assistance is against what the literature advocates for in terms of lesson planning (Manzi & Moreeng, 2023; Tataroglu-Tasdan, Tekin Dede, & Yiğit Koyunkaya, 2022). Pre-planned lessons from other areas might not be relevant to the learners' context. Such practices defeat the principle of reciprocity as learners will not respond to stimuli that are not relevant to their context (Feuerstein, Todd, Moskowitz, Bruns, Stoler, et al., 2010). Lesson plans should be designed based on the abilities of the learners and the resources at the disposal of the teacher. When lesson plans do not relate to the learners' interest, context and abilities, curriculum implementation is affected negatively as learners lose interest in the lesson.

In contrast, teacher B was happy with the support he was receiving from his departmental head. He mentioned that he got assistance from his departmental head even though he was competent in lesson planning.

We always share good practices with my departmental head and discuss how to better lesson planning by making the lesson more learner centred and interesting. He is very supportive, sometimes we do lesson planning together.

The data set shows that there is heterogeneous support provided to Economics teachers by their departmental heads in terms of lesson planning.

The setting of assessment tasks

Effective Economics curriculum implementation cannot be complete without meaningful assessment (Brown, 2019). The quality of assessment tasks set by teachers and the quality of marking is critical to the realization of effective curriculum implementation. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning as it serves to; inform teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching, inform learners about their progress, and help teachers to modify their teaching practices where necessary amongst other purposes (Yan & Boud, 2021). To ensure these purposes are recognized, there is a need for leadership and support on the quality of assessments set by teachers. Departmental heads seem to be appreciative of this as DH1 had this to say:

I moderate the assessment tasks set by teachers to ensure that they comply with the Blooms' taxonomy before they can be administered to the learners.

His assertions were supported by DH3 who opined that:

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning as it provides feedback primarily to the teacher, learner, and parents. I, therefore, make sure that assessments administered to the learners are of an acceptable standard.

From the data set, it emerged that departmental heads were alive to the fact that the quality of assessment tasks is critical to enhanced Economics curriculum implementation (Yidan & Partey, 2018). They also understood that assessment provides valuable information to different stakeholders (Khechane, Makara, & Rambuda, 2020). Departmental heads acknowledged that it was their duty as leaders and supporters of Economics curriculum implementation to ensure that high-quality and meaningful assessments were administered to the learners. Thus, the mediational efforts they undertook to ensure that assessments were of high standards.

Whilst Teacher A acknowledged the efforts made by departmental heads to ensure that assessments of good quality were administered to the learners, he had this comment to make:

I get annoyed when I submit my tasks for moderation to my departmental head and they come back literally torn apart, green pen on every question. I feel belittled and as a result I have resorted to cutting and pasting questions from past question papers.

Similar sentiments were shared by Teacher C who postulated.

Honestly my departmental head is not supportive when it comes to setting assessments. He sticks to the moderation tool provided by the department but does not workshop me on how to set assessments as prescribed by policy.

Whilst DBE clearly stipulates that departmental heads should take the responsibility of facilitating professional development for teachers (Nicholson, Capitelli, Richert, Bauer,& Bonetti, 2016), it was abundantly clear that teachers are not receiving adequate support in the setting of assessments. Departmental heads were more focused on the monitoring part of the quality of the assessments set by teachers and seemed to be neglecting the support part; where they either conduct workshops themselves or facilitate workshops where lead teachers or subject coordinators train teachers on this aspect. The failure to support teachers on setting assessment tasks results in ineffective curriculum implementation (Yan & Baud, 2021) as teachers might design assessments which do not provide them with meaningful feedback on how learners are progressing and how they can modify their teaching to enhance learners' understanding.

Feedback and Comments on Learners Work

Teachers have to provide constructive and timeous feedback to learners if the assessment is to be effective (Kruger, 2019). The PAM document issued by the Department of Basic Education (PAM, 2016) clearly states that departmental heads should ensure that the moderation and monitoring of all assessment tasks take place. Departmental heads, through moderation, ensure that marking is fair, accurate, just, and of acceptable standards. More so, of paramount importance to note is the importance of feedback to learners. It is vitally important that learners are provided with meaningful feedback and not just ticks so that they know where to improve

(Khechane, Makara, & Rambuda, 2020; Walker, Oliver & Mackenzie, 2021). DH1 had this to say on the moderation of scripts:

I help my teachers in terms of quality marking of learners' scripts by discussing the differences in marks (if any) between the mark I get and the teachers mark.

I discovered that teachers appreciated the efforts of departmental heads in assisting them to be quality markers. Teacher B appreciated this by saying:

I was not comfortable with these discussions about marking. However, I realised that my departmental head does it for professional development purposes and I now welcome such initiatives.

He continued.

Sometimes when we discuss the mark differences, he also sees mistakes on how he would have moderated my scripts.

From the discussions, it was clear that departmental heads were intentionally supporting teachers in ensuring that the quality of marking was of acceptable standards. It was also clear that just as it is spelled out by the Department of Basic Education in the PAM document (PAM, 2016), Economics departmental heads were executing their monitoring and moderating assessments. The parameter of reciprocity is scored when Teacher B asserted that he welcomed the initiative of the departmental heads to engage the teachers after the moderation of scripts. With quality marking, assessment serves its purpose of guiding teachers on how to modify their teaching strategies as well establishing where learners are in terms of learning. This information is critical as it enhances Economics curriculum implementation.

DH3 had this to say on feedback:

I sometimes call individual teachers so that we discuss the feedback given to learners. Just putting ticks and marks on the learners' scripts is not enough.

From the data set, it emerged that departmental heads were also assisting teachers to give meaningful feedback to the learners. Departmental heads' assertion that providing learners with

a mark alone is meaningless is in line with what is contained in the literature such as (Walker, Oliver & Mackenzie, 2021). Learners should be provided with comments on how they can improve their work and when they have achieved, they should be commented on what they did well. This deliberate (intentionality) effort by departmental heads is meant to improve teachers' practices so that Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced. The discussions between the teachers and departmental heads align with the pillar of MLE theory of social construction of knowledge

Monitoring Classroom Instruction and Curriculum Support

Effective teaching and learning are dependent on regular monitoring of teachers' work (Ndungu,Allan, Bornett, & Emily, 2015). Monitoring acts as a yardstick to measure the degree to which teaching and learning are taking place. Mbiti and Kiruja (2015) conceptualizes monitoring as an ongoing process that aims to provide a report on the work underway. Departmental heads are not only tasked with providing feedback on the successes and failures of the teaching and learning process but also provide suggestions and support on how teaching and learning can be enhanced.

The data presented by the participants showed that departmental heads supported teachers in their classroom instruction practices as opposed to finding fault in teachers. However, some teachers needed more curriculum support on the content itself than on teaching strategies to use. Sadly, not all departmental heads could provide this support. On classroom monitoring, DH1 stated:

I visit teachers in their classes whilst they are teaching. My visits are meant to check on whether teachers are using appropriate strategies which engage learners in the learning process.

The same practice was taking place at the second research site where the departmental head (DH2) conducted class visits for support, he mentioned that:

My class visits are not a witch-hunt, they are meant to support the teacher to the best of my ability.

Whilst it is the duty of the departmental head to monitor curriculum instruction, it is also their responsibility to offer support (Pont, 2014). Teacher A under the supervision of DH1 confirmed what his departmental head had said:

I acknowledge the efforts of my departmental head in supporting me on the teaching strategies to use that appeal to the learners. However, the support I need is on some Economics concepts. I have challenges with Dynamics of markets graphs and my departmental head cannot assist.

When the researcher further probed him on why the departmental head could not assist, he had this to say:

He told me that he did not major in Economics, and he too does not know what is happening with those Dynamics of markets graphs.

It was interesting to note that Teacher C had a similar challenge with the graphing and calculations in the Dynamics of markets. However, what was different with teacher C is that she had taken initiative to get help from her peers.

My departmental head majored in Economics but rarely supports me in terms of my developmental needs because he is more focused on other managerial responsibilities, so I took it upon myself to look for assistance from my peers in neighbouring schools.

Teacher C's departmental head confirmed what Teacher C had said about his inability to assist the teacher with some Economics concepts. He attested:

As much as I want to assist my teachers, time is limited due to other managerial responsibilities.

Although departmental heads have the responsibility of providing leadership and support (Pont, 2014), it emerged from the data that not all departmental heads could do so as was the case with research sites where Teachers A and C were working. Important however to note was the initiative taken by Teacher C to ask for assistance from her peers. She intentionally sought assistance so that she is able to teach the content she was struggling with. This shows that

mediational efforts are not only between the teacher and the learner but also between the teacher and the content to be taught. Seeking assistance from peers in encouraged by the MLE theory since the theory is anchored on social constructivism where knowledge is socially constructed.

Interpretation of Policy Documents Provision of Resources

The CAPS document and the National Protocol Assessment Practices provide direction on the content to be taught and the forms of assessment that learners should be exposed to (van Wyk, 2021). Principals, departmental heads, Subject Advisors, and teachers have to understand and interpret these documents accurately. As instructional leaders, it is the responsibility of departmental heads to assist teachers in interpreting and implementing the contents of these policy documents (PAM, 2016). It is also the duty of departmental heads to ensure that teachers have the necessary resources for them to effectively implement the Economics curriculum.

It was clear from the interviews that departmental heads were supporting Economics teachers to interpret and implement curriculum policies. There was evidence that they had face to face sessions with teachers to unpack the Economics curriculum documents.

DH1 said:

I ensure that every Economics teacher in my department has the CAPS document. I also make sure that I support teachers to comply with the CAPS document and the National Protocol of Assessment Practices.

In unison, DH2 added that as a departmental head, he was a policy interpreter and implementer as he stated:

I call for meetings with my departmental members where we interpret the departmental policies on the work to be covered, volume and nature of assessments to be given to learners in terms of formal tests, assignments, projects, informal activities, tests and homework.

All three teachers confirmed the assertions of the head of departments that they were provided support on the interpretation of policy documents (van Wyk, 2021). They also alluded to the fact that it was critical that they had the same understanding as their departmental heads on what was expected of them. More appreciative of this group's interpretation of the policy was Teacher A who posited:

I am a novice teacher, and it is very helpful for me when we sit and discuss these policy documents. It increases my confidence when I get in my class and start implementing what the policy says.

On the provision of resources, it emerged that departmental heads were supporting teachers to ensure that teachers had the resources needed to implement the Economics curriculum. Confirmation of this support is witnessed when DH3 said:

I try my best to ensure that my teachers have the needed resources. I liaise with the principal and sometimes subject advisor to source resources which my teachers might be in need of.

The three teachers acknowledged that their departmental heads were supporting them in terms of resources. For instance, Teacher C appreciated the efforts of her departmental head when it came to the provision of resources. She acknowledged:

My DH (departmental head) is very resourceful and supportive, when I need internet connection for my lesson planning, he sometimes provides me with his router if the school internet is down.

She went further to say,

If there is an additional resource, I need like a textbook which the school does not have, he pushes the LTSM (Learning and Teaching Support Material) committee to place an order immediately. He doesn't rest until I have what I requested.

Literature provides that one of the duties of departmental heads is to provide resources to their teachers (PAM, 2016). The departmental heads in this study were conforming to what literature dictates as teachers applauded them for being resourceful. Providing resources is in line with

MLE as the theory believes that mediation is not only done by the teacher, but resources too can be used to mediate between the learner and stimuli (Feuerstein, Todd, Moskowitz, Bruns, Stoler, et al., 2010).When teachers are provided with the necessary assistance, they are able to effectively implement the Economics curriculum and consequently result in enhanced Economics curriculum implementation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to address the knowledge gap on how Economics departmental heads were providing curriculum leadership and support for enhanced Economics curriculum implementation in selected schools in the Northern Cape. With the ever-increasing economic challenges facing global economies and curriculum designers continuously adapting the Economics curriculum to address these challenges, it is prudent that Economics teachers are supported in terms of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, assessment practices, and resources. Departmental heads as immediate instructional leaders, need to exhibit unquestionable competence and appetite to support Economics teachers in effectively implementing the Economics curriculum for enhanced Economics curriculum implementation. The study findings have shown that to a larger extent, departmental heads are providing Economics teachers with curriculum leadership and support on many fronts.

The findings of the study revealed that departmental heads provided teachers with support in terms of moderation and providing feedback to the learners' written work, interpreting policy documents, assisting with teaching strategies, and providing resources for Economics teachers. It should however also be noted that departmental heads fell short in supporting teachers in certain aspects. In this study, some departmental heads could not meaningfully assist teachers with lesson planning as some departmental heads resorted to downloading pre-planned lesson plans from other provinces and areas for their teachers without taking the contextual differences into account. Strikingly was the failure of departmental heads to assist regarding content knowledge where some Economics teachers had challenges with certain concepts. Interesting

to note was how some teachers had taken the initiative to look for assistance from their peers on the content which they had difficulty in teaching.

The study recommends that relevant support should be provided to departmental heads in terms of lesson planning, assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of teachers' daily classroom practices so that they are able to support their teachers. District officials, specifically subject coordinators should provide subject–related support to ensure that departmental heads have the requisite subject knowledge to support Economics teachers in their department. There is a need for further research to investigate the challenges faced by departmental heads in supporting Economics curriculum implementation in the selected schools and what support they need to overcome those challenges. Since the study was conducted in three schools, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to represent the curriculum leadership and support of all departmental heads in the Northern Cape. A larger study with a bigger population sample should be conducted in the future to get a broader perspective of the curriculum and leadership support provided by departmental heads.

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CHAPTER 7
BRIDGING THE ARTICLES, RECCOMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents a brief background and context, the summary, concluding reflections and recommendations, and the study's implications. I also discuss the interrelatedness of the five articles to the research objectives and how each research question was answered.

This qualitative study aimed to explore how Economics curriculum implementation could be enhanced in the selected schools in the Northern Cape. The study adopted Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) as the theoretical framework and was structured on five article publications. In order to generate meaningful data to address the research objectives, I used three data collection methods: semi-structured interviews scheduled for the three selected teachers, Departmental Heads, classroom observations for the three selected teachers and document analysis. Participatory methodologies were adopted to allow concerned people to be actively involved.

7.2 ARTICLE SUMMARY

7.2.1 Article One

Article one responded to the research objective of determining how the Economics curriculum is implemented in selected Economics classrooms. The article is titled: "Exploring High School Economics Teachers' Curriculum Implementation Practices: A Case of Northern Cape. The findings revealed that although there are pockets of good teacher practices in Economics curriculum implementation in the selected schools, more still needs to be done to enhance Economics curriculum implementation.

7.2.2 Article Two

The second article is linked to the research objective of describing how some aspects of Economics curriculum implementation are used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. One aspect of Economics curriculum implementation I chose was assessment hence article two's title: "Mediating Economics Curriculum Implementation through Meaningful Assessment: A Case of the South African Educational System." The study findings show that there is still a lack of understanding of the role and use of meaningful assessment in mediating Economics curriculum implementation. In light of the findings, the study suggests the need for training Economics teachers on using assessment meaningfully.

7.2.3 Article Three

Article three's research objective was to discuss the challenges experienced during curriculum implementation. The article is titled: "Challenges Facing Implementation of Economics Curriculum: The Experiences of Frances Baard District Teachers." The findings revealed that novice and experienced Economics teachers face numerous challenges, including inadequate planning, inadequate pedagogical content and lack of resources.

7.2.4 Article Four

Article four's research objective was to postulate the strategies that can be used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. I decided to explore how ICT integration was used as one of the strategies to enhance Economics curriculum implementation hence this article's title, "Economics Teachers' Integration of ICT for Enhanced Economics Curriculum Implementation." The study's findings provide compelling evidence to conclude that teachers are alive to the importance of ICT integration in their practices. However, teachers still face challenges in integrating ICT into their daily practices.

7.2.5 Article Five

Article five responded to the research objective of describing the leadership support provided to teachers to ensure proper Economics curriculum implementation. The article titled "Curriculum Leadership and Support for Enhanced Economics Curriculum Implementation in the Northern Cape" sought in-depth information about the support provided to teachers to implement the Economics curriculum effectively. The findings of this study reveal that although there is some support from different stakeholders, some of the support does not address the teachers' challenges and expectations.

In the following section, the researcher explains how the research objectives/ questions were addressed based on the five articles.

7.3 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

7.3.1 Research Objective 1: To determine the current Economics teachers' curriculum implementation practices

This objective was addressed in article one through the research question: *How is Economics curriculum implementation done in selected Economics classrooms?* The study identified teacher practices such as planning, selection of resources, learner-centred, feedback and reflection as dominant in Economics curriculum implementation. Teacher practices are deemed pivotal in any effective curriculum implementation (Finkelstein & Sharma, 2021; Anthony, 2019) as they determine whether the curriculum is implemented effectively or not. This data was important in the study as it would form the basis of how the teachers' practices could be improved to enhance Economics curriculum implementation.

7.3.2 Research Objective 2: To describe how some aspects of the Economics curriculum are used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation

Objective number two was responded to an article two through the research question**:** *How are some of the aspects of the Economics curriculum used to enhance Economics*

curriculum implementation? The article focused on how assessment as one of the aspects of Economics curriculum implementation could be used meaningfully to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. The study finding revealed that teachers had a fair understanding of the role of meaningful assessment, and their practices were also in line with what is documented in literature as good practices concerning meaningful assessment. Teachers used assessment to guide and inform them about their practices; this concurred with what literature documents that assessment provides valuable information to teachers to adopt and adjust their practices to meet the varying needs of their learners (Careless, 2022). The basis for focusing on assessment is that teaching and learning is incomplete without assessment. In fact, assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning (Carless, 2022; Brown, 2019).

7.3.3 Research Objective 3: To discuss challenges that are experienced during Economics curriculum implementation

This objective was addressed in article three through the research question: *What challenges are facing Economics Curriculum implementation?* Article three zoomed into challenges faced by Economics teachers in curriculum implementation. From the Economics teachers' perspective, the findings indicate there were challenges with lesson planning, a lack of Economics Pedagogical Content Knowledge (EPCK) and a failure to use available resources meaningfully. Support from the literature confirmed that these factors were hindering effective Economics curriculum implementation (Cabautana & Dacles, 2021; Abdulkadir & Harbau, 2019; Li & Zou, 2017). The teachers revealed that they lacked knowledge of meaningfully planning lessons that suit different learner needs and abilities. As a result, they resorted to pre-planned lesson plans from other areas that did not fit the contexts they were operating in. The lack of proper planning is bemoaned by literature as it means that lessons are not delivered in the context of the learners (Nasri & Heideri, 2014).

7.3.4 Research Objective 4: To postulate on the strategies that can be used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation

This objective was addressed in article four through the research question: How do Economics teachers integrate ICT to enhance Economics curriculum implementation? This article question was derived from the main research question, 'What strategies can be used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation?' The researcher chose ICT integration as one of the strategies that could be used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. Teachers integrated ICT in their planning, lesson delivery, assessment and when providing feedback to the learners. It was revealed that using ICT in teaching, learning, and assessment, according to the participants' opinion, created a conducive learning environment for the learners. This assertion aligns with literature such as Mursidi, Buyung and Murdani (2022), which argues that ICT integration enhances the learning environment for effective learning. It also meant that learning was fun, pleasurable and memorable as it was linked to the learners' lived experiences (Kimav & Aydin, 2020). In the same breath, failing to tap in on the learners' interest in ICT resulted in learning being dry, monotonous and consequently hindering effective Economics curriculum implementation.

7.3.5 Research Objective 5: To describe the leadership support provided to teachers to ensure proper Economics curriculum implementation

Objective five was addressed in article five through the research question: *What leadership support is provided to teachers to ensure proper Economics curriculum implementation?* This article sought to describe the leadership support which Economics teachers were being provided. The study findings revealed that Economics teachers got support from departmental heads and their peers. Although teachers interacted with their peers, some teachers did not deem this as support as their definition of support seemed to be the top-down support from their departmental heads. Teachers were provided support in terms of creative ways of presenting lessons, formal and informal assessments, some aspects of the Economics curriculum where they had difficulties and ensuring that their standard of marking was of a better quality.

7.4 REALISING THE AIMS OF THE STUDY/ADDRESSING THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to explore how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in selected schools in the Northern Cape. To realise this aim, the main research question was formulated: *How can Economics curriculum implementation be enhanced in selected schools in the Northern Cape?* Five objectives were pursued, with an article dedicated to each of the five objectives.

Article one (see Chapter 2) helped to understand the current teacher practices. The article revealed teachers' practices such as lesson planning, selection of resources, assessment and feedback, learner-centred, and reflective practices. Teachers were cognisant that their practices affected the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. It was evident from the findings that teachers appreciated the importance of lesson planning and thrived in planning their lessons. Interesting to note that some participants were aware of the importance of using learner centred approach in their daily practice, although there was room for improvement on how these approaches were utilised in class. The participants appreciated the importance of selecting proper and relevant instructional resources.

Assessment and feedback were used to enhance teaching and learning, with some teachers even using ICT platforms to administer assessments and provide feedback. Reflective practices were also evident in the participants' daily practices, which is one of the critical practices in effective curriculum implementation as it helps teachers critique and improve on their practices. Although the teachers' practices were in unison with what is documented in the literature, there is still room for improvement in how teachers plan their lessons, utilise available resources and administer assessments and provide feedback to the learners. Article one helped me to understand the current teachers' practices and provided me with the pedestal to make the suggestions above on how Economics curriculum implementation could be enhanced through improving Economics teachers' curriculum implementation practices.

Article two (see Chapter 3) focused on assessment as one of the core aspects of Economics curriculum implementation. The study findings revealed how teachers were using assessment and feedback. Teachers used assessments to establish where

learners were in their learning and used the results of these assessments to plan and design the course of action. Most participants understood the importance of feedback and provided timely feedback to the learners in different forms; this helped learners to work on areas they had difficulties, and, in some instances, feedback motivated the learners when they had achieved it. However, the findings also revealed some teachers had challenges designing or adapting assessments to meet the learners' needs and context; this calls for teachers to continuously undergo training on how to design meaningful assessments. It could also help if teachers could collaborate and assist each other in designing assessments. It is not overstating to mention that enhanced Economics curriculum implementation cannot be realised without properly designed assessments and provision of quality, timeous and meaningful feedback.

Article three (see Chapter 4) focused on teachers' challenges in Economics curriculum implementation. Some of the challenges identified were lesson planning, PCK, lack of resources and how to use available resources meaningfully. Some participants echoed that they had difficulties designing measurable lesson objectives and resources to use in their lessons. More so, it emerged that some teachers lack content knowledge on some aspects of the Economics curriculum. It was, however, interesting to note that some teachers had solutions to some of these challenges. One good example is when teachers invited their peers from neighbouring schools to assist them in teaching the concepts they were uncomfortable teaching. To overcome these challenges and enhance Economics curriculum implementation, the study suggests that there should be ongoing teacher-initiated empowerment workshops where teachers are trained. Collaboration amongst teachers is also recommended, where teachers assist each other at a peer level.

Article four (see Chapter 5) concerned how ICT integration, as a teaching strategy, could enhance Economics curriculum implementation. The findings show that some teachers are meaningfully integrating ICT in their classrooms. Some used it to prepare lessons, design teaching and learning materials, administer assessments, and provide feedback. Interesting to note is how some teachers were using platforms such as TikTok and YouTube, amongst others, in teaching and learning Economics. To enhance Economics curriculum implementation, such practices are encouraged, and it is suggested that

teachers should be trained on how to use different ICT platforms to design lessons, administer assessments and provide timeous meaningful feedback.

In article five (see Chapter 6), attention was given to how departmental heads provided curriculum leadership and support to Economics teachers. It came to light that departmental heads assisted teachers in providing them with educational resources and moderated the assessments and the scripts marked by teachers. Some departmental heads also assisted teachers with content matters that teachers were not comfortable with or at least solicited support for the teachers. However, it should be mentioned that some departmental heads were absent on duty as they left teachers to "sink" alone. Although departmental heads felt they were providing adequate support, the three teachers in this study did not share the same sentiments. They felt there is a need for more meaningful support from departmental heads if Economics curriculum implementation is to be enhanced.

To enhance Economics curriculum implementation, it is clear from the preceding section that there is a need for teachers to continuously undergo teacher-initiated empowerment workshops where lesson planning, abstract Economics concepts, learner-centred teaching strategies, integration of ICT in the teaching and learning of Economics, assessment and feedback practices are dealt with thoroughly. More so, departmental heads should be trained on an ongoing basis on how to support teachers. There is also a need for teacher collaboration to be encouraged, as teachers can assist each other as peers through platforms like Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study put forward the following recommendations to enhance Economics curriculum implementation in the selected schools in the Northern Cape:

- Economics teachers should adopt teaching methods and strategies that accommodate different learning styles, as the study showed that teaching methods and strategies that do not accommodate learner preferences and strengths result in learners switching off during teaching and learning.

- The study recommends learner-centred strategies such as pair work, small groups, peer assessment and micro-teaching as the teaching approaches in Economics classrooms.
- Assessment should be used to diagnose where learners are so that teachers are informed on how to modify their teaching strategies and assist learners towards achieving the intended goals.
- Economics teachers should embrace information and Communication Technology as 21st-century learners are biased towards technology.
- Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) should be available to teachers and learners to enhance effective teaching and learning.
- Economics teachers are encouraged to collaborate with their peers in other schools through Professional Learning Communities (PLC).
- The study calls for the support of relevant stakeholders such as the corporate world, institutions such as SARB, SARS, Subject Advisors, and Departmental Heads, amongst others, to assist Economics teachers where necessary to empower them with their expert knowledge and provide LTSM.
- The study suggests that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) should regularly conduct workshops for teachers on ICT, learner-centred strategies, and the Economics content itself, as some teachers struggle with certain concepts.

7.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Article one asked: "What are the current Economics teachers' curriculum implementation practices?" The teachers elucidated their current practices, and the article came up with ways which could be used to enhance Economics curriculum implementation. In article two, two questions were posed: "How do Economics teachers understand the role of meaningful assessment in mediating Economics curriculum implementation?" and "What meaningful assessment practices are Economics teachers using to mediate Economics curriculum implementation?" The study came up with recommendations on how assessment could be used effectively. Article three addresses the question, "What challenges are faced by Economics teachers in Economics curriculum implementation?"

Teachers identified the challenges faced by Economics curriculum implementation and came up with suggestions and solutions to the challenges they faced in their daily practice. Also, article four with the research question: "How can Information and Communication Technology be used to enhance Economic curriculum implementation?" This study came up with suggestions on how ICT could enhance Economics curriculum implementation.

It is interesting to note that teachers have solutions to most of the daily challenges. It becomes clear that viewing teachers from the perspective that they are deficient in solutions is misguided. Therefore, this study argues for a professional development model that emphasises the need to understand the teachers own experiences and context rather than the deficit model. The teacher's experiences and practices should be considered for scrutiny, comprehension, sharing and critique; this situated and contextualised form of professional development will likely sustain the change as it is hinged on realities and context. In short, professional development programmes should be done within the teachers' context as this guarantees the application of new knowledge in class. Regarding teachers as passive receivers of knowledge from experts and specialists provides little or no pedestal for effective curriculum implementation practices as teachers might not feel part of the professional development process.

This study suggests the abandonment of the dominating discourse of many professional development programs which adopt the 'outside-in' or "push strategy" to strategies that are 'from within' or "push to pull". This demands the designing of professional development programmes which give attention to the needs of the teachers. Such an approach allows the programme to be directed by the teachers, as they know the challenges they experience and how best they can be addressed. This pull approach puts the power to improve squarely in the teacher's hands.

When professional development is provided using this top-down approach, chances are high that such pre-determined programmes might not address the teachers' needs and contextual factors. Once teachers feel that the programmes are devoid of solutions to their daily challenges, the most common reaction is to discard such programmes as they are irrelevant. Designing programmes and materials that teachers are expected to use

without understanding the contexts in which teachers operate might be futile and a waste of resources.

7.7 LIMITATIONS

Since the study used a small sample of participants (three teachers, three Departmental heads and one subject Advisor), the findings could not be generalised but instead limited within the context of the three schools in the Northern Cape Province. It, therefore, implies that the findings may not represent all Economics teachers in the province and country but can be a guideline to all interested stakeholders. Again, the weakness in social science is that it is challenging to study human behaviour, and, in this study, teachers might have prepared their "best lessons" on the days they knew that there were going to be observed.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since the study was conducted in schools in only one of the five districts in the Northern Cape, I recommend that a similar study be conducted in more schools in the District and other districts in the province to determine whether the way curriculum implementation is being done in the studied district applies to other schools and districts or whether it is limited to certain schools and district in the province.

7.9 REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Firstly, I discovered that the literature is vocal on teaching practices, assessment, teaching strategies and curriculum support. A forest of literature explains and advocates for learner-centred practices anchored on the abovementioned aspects. Although it is a reality that some teachers are rigid and do not want to embrace change, change is inevitable, especially with the ever-evolving technology and the demands of 21st-century technologically inclined learners. Traditional teaching methods are becoming absolute,

and Economics teachers should be flexible to learn from their mistakes, the learners they teach, their peers and any other source.

Secondly, as opposed to my previous professional development experience, this study has opened my eyes to the fact that teachers are a critical factor in implementing the curriculum. Even though they face challenges in their daily practices, they have solutions to those problems, and therefore they should not be viewed from a deficit perspective in trying to find solutions to the challenges they face. For any teacher development workshop or efforts to be fruitful, the teachers' views and perceptions should be considered because their attitudes, views and feelings could shape the success or failure of such efforts (McCracken, 2017).

Thirdly, I realised that most of the recommendations in this study are also directed and personal to me. Most of the ideas that emerged from the findings of this study could immediately be applied in my practice to enhance my teaching practice. Again, I learned that collaboration and collective learning is vital. The daunting task of completing this thesis journey was made possible through the assistance and insights of my supervisor, the cohort group meetings, external academics who presented workshops on different aspects of writing and the participants in this study.

Fourthly, it dawned on me that it is not easy for teachers to open their doors to be observed or interviewed. It is human nature to feel insecure and feel that someone is intruding on their space. The question that continued to linger on my mind was: *Is what the teachers said in the interviews their true perceptions?* And *Is what I observed during classroom observations a true reflection of their daily practices? Did they not act up because they knew that they were being observed?* It was difficult to arrange interviews with two of the three Departmental Heads as they postponed the interview dates. Perhaps again, it was a feeling of insecurity and intrusion into their space.

Lastly, in this journey, I travelled with the participants, peers, different editors from different journals and my supervisor; I grew holistically as a person and an upcoming academic; I became transformed. I acquired scholarly knowledge, skills, values and attitudes on personal, professional and social levels. The various journal editors I interacted with in submitting the five articles provided valuable feedback, which enhanced

and sharpened my academic acumen. It also dawned on me that although academic writing has certain pillars or expectations, academics do not always view issues with the same understanding. Critical to note is that academic writing is not an event but an ongoing process where one learns daily from one's mistakes, everyday lived experiences, peers and other academics. One never stops learning in the academic fraternity!

7.10 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in selected schools in the Northern Cape. The study had five objectives, and from these objectives, five main research questions were formulated and answered accordingly in the five articles. The study concludes that teachers' practices, quality of assessment and feedback, teaching strategies and leadership and support play a critical role in enhancing Economics curriculum implementation. The teachers' Economics Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (ETPCK) determines the effectiveness of Economics teachers' curriculum implementation.

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{There seems to be obvious inconsistencies in your style of referencing, especially in the Reference pages. If it is the APA Ref. style, or any other style you chose to adopt, let us know. Otherwise, you should adhere strictly to the university acceptable format and be consistent with it}

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TITLE REGISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS UV

Postgraduate Office
Faculty of Education

Room 16
Winkie Direko Building
Faculty of Education
University of the Free State
P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
South Africa

T: +27(0)51 401 3651

www.ufs.ac.za
Duvenhagecs@ufs.ac.za

11 June 2021

APPLICATION FOR TITLE REGISTRATION

Applicant: Manzi, WI
Student Number: 2017148541
Discipline: Curriculum Studies
Study Code: Doctoral (EDCA9100)

Dear Mr Manzi

Your registered title is: ***"ENHANCING ECONOMICS CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN SELECTED SCHOOLS THROUGH THE STRENGTHENED OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN APPROACH".***

All of the best with your studies.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Patrick Mafora
Chair: CTR committee

Ms CS Duvenhage
Secretary: CTR committee

APPENDIX 2: UFS ETHICAL APPORVAL

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS UV

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

02-Nov-2021

Dear Mr Wellington Manzi

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
Enhancing Economics curriculum implementation through strengthened opportunities to learn

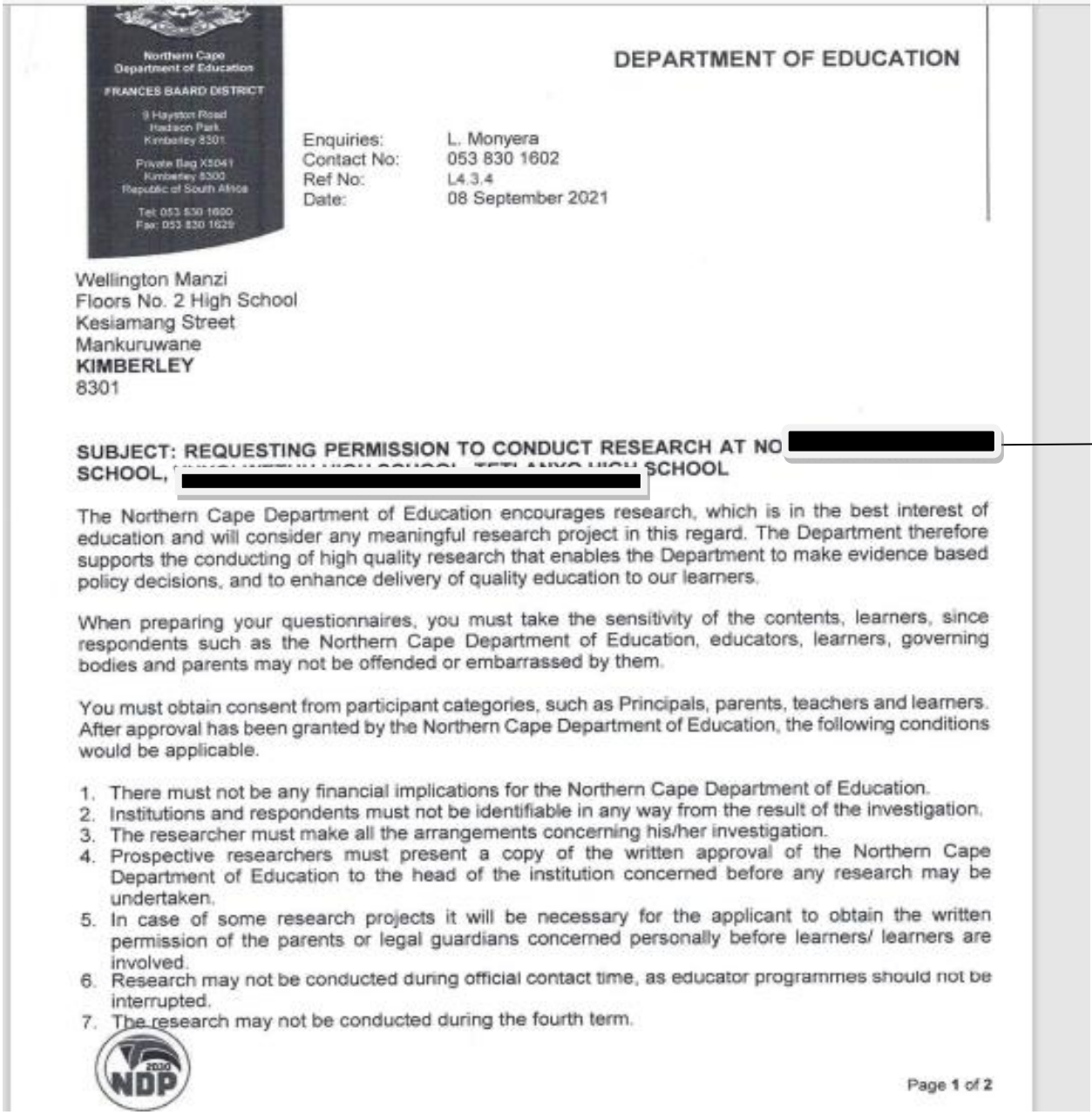
Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2021/1088/21

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE NORTHERN CAPE



Northern Cape
Department of Education
FRANCES BAARD DISTRICT
9 Hayston Road
Radison Park
Kimberley 8301
Private Bag X5041
Kimberley 8300
Republic of South Africa
Tel: 053 830 1600
Fax: 053 830 1629

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: L. Monyera
Contact No: 053 830 1602
Ref No: L4.3.4
Date: 08 September 2021

Wellington Manzi
Floors No. 2 High School
Kesiamang Street
Mankuruwane
KIMBERLEY
8301

SUBJECT: REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT NO [redacted] SCHOOL, [redacted] SCHOOL

The Northern Cape Department of Education encourages research, which is in the best interest of education and will consider any meaningful research project in this regard. The Department therefore supports the conducting of high quality research that enables the Department to make evidence based policy decisions, and to enhance delivery of quality education to our learners.

When preparing your questionnaires, you must take the sensitivity of the contents, learners, since respondents such as the Northern Cape Department of Education, educators, learners, governing bodies and parents may not be offended or embarrassed by them.

You must obtain consent from participant categories, such as Principals, parents, teachers and learners. After approval has been granted by the Northern Cape Department of Education, the following conditions would be applicable.

1. There must not be any financial implications for the Northern Cape Department of Education.
2. Institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the result of the investigation.
3. The researcher must make all the arrangements concerning his/her investigation.
4. Prospective researchers must present a copy of the written approval of the Northern Cape Department of Education to the head of the institution concerned before any research may be undertaken.
5. In case of some research projects it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the written permission of the parents or legal guardians concerned personally before learners/ learners are involved.
6. Research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educator programmes should not be interrupted.
7. The research may not be conducted during the fourth term.

NDP 2030

Page 1 of 2

8. The research will be limited to those schools or institutions for which approval has been granted.
9. A copy of the completed report, dissertation or thesis, accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2-3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis, must be provided to the Frances Baard District Director.

This letter herewith provides you with permission for the research project to be conducted at Northern Cape High Scho[redacted] Baard District in the Northern Cape Province on condition the above are adhered to.

Regards

2021/09/09

L. MONYERA
DISTRICT DIRECTOR: FRANCES BAARD DISTRICT

APPENDIX 4: ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear prospective research participant,

You are invited to volunteer as a participant for a research study titled: **Enhancing Economics curriculum implementation in selected schools in the Northern Cape.** The reason of this information brochure is to provide you an information about what the study entails so that you have a clear understanding of what the study entails before you decide whether to participate or not. Should you require any further clarity have or uncertainties about participating in this study, you are welcome to contact me on ***0726608647.*** You are at liberty to withdraw at any time, in case you feel uncomfortable being a participant.

The purpose of the study.

The purpose of the study is: **To explore how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in the selected schools in Northern Cape.**

What is expected from me as a researcher?

If you decide to participate in the study, you will be one of the teachers/Head of Departments /Subject Advisor who would play an important role in assisting the researcher a foundation upon which to provide suggestions on how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in the selected schools in the Northern Cape. Your views and identity will remain anonymous throughout the study as well as upon completion.

How long will this study take?

The study duration is a minimum of two years on a full-time basis. Your participation will be limited to semi structured interviews, classroom observations for teachers and document analysis and only semi structured interviews for Departmental Heads and Subject Advisors

What are my rights as a participant in this study?

Participation in this study is voluntary, and the findings might benefit you, the schools, and departmental officials. You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

Will the study procedure hurt me?

The researcher does not envisage any unforeseeable harm or physical discomfort in the study and the process; however, if you decide to participate, you have the right not to respond to any question you might deem uncomfortable with.

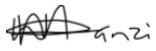
What are the risks involved in this study?

No unforeseeable risks to the participant could be determined in this study

Confidentiality

Your views and opinions which you may provide during your participation in this study will not be disclosed to anyone and your identity will remain anonymous

Your voluntary participation will be highly appreciated as your views and experiences will be of great assistance in exploring how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced.



28/2/2022

Researcher signature Date

APPENDIX 5: CONSENT FORM

Interviews scheduled for Teachers

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Enhancing Economics Curriculum Implementation in the selected schools in the Northern Cape

Introduction

You are hereby invited to be a voluntary participant for a research study titled: **Enhancing Economics Curriculum Implementation in the selected schools in the Northern Cape.** The purpose of this information brochure is to inform you and give you a brief insight into what this study involves to ensure that you have clarity before making your decision if you would wish to be a participant. Should you need any further clarity you have uncertainties about being part of this study, you are welcome to contact me on ***072 6608647***. Please note that as if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any point during the study in case you feel uncomfortable being a participant.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is: **To explore how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in the selected schools in the Northern Cape.**

What is expected from me as a researcher?

If you decide to participate in the study, you will be one of the teachers/Head of Departments/Subject Advisor who would have contributed immensely in providing the researcher with a foundation on which to make recommendations on how Economics curriculum implementation can be enhanced in schools. Your identity will not be revealed or attached to any information you would have provided.

How long will this study take?

The study duration is a minimum of one year on a full-time basis.

APPENDIX 6: INFORMED CONSENT

The researcher has thoroughly explained to me about the study and the importance of being a participant. I have also been made aware that this study will add value to me as a teacher/Departmental Head/Subject Advisor and Northern Cape Department of Education. I have received, read, and understood the written information regarding this study, and risks, discomforts, and benefits have been outlined.

I, with this, declare myself ready and prepared to take part in this study. I fully understand my rights to withdraw from the study unconditionally without stating reasons and have been given the assurance to ask clarity seeking questions as and when a need arises.

Participant's Surname & Initials: ……..

Participant's signature: ……..

Manzi, W.I

Researcher's signature Researcher's name

APPENDIX 7: CONFIRMATION LETTER FROM JCSR: PROOF OF SUBMISSION OF ARTICLE

From: wellington manzi
To: Carmen Nel
Subject: Fwd: [JCSR] Submission Acknowledgement, missin information
Date: Thursday, July 27, 2023 4:24:01 PM

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Bulent Tarman** <btarman@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 29, 2023 at 12:27 PM
Subject: [JCSR] Submission Acknowledgement, missin information
To: <manziwellington95@gmail.com>

Dear Wellington Itai Manzi,
Thank you for your interest in the JCSR. According to the title page you have a co-author named "Boitumelo Moreeng". However, the name is not entered into the online portal of the journal although it is required. Please add the name under the metadata section as a coauthor. We also need the second author's email address, affiliation and ORCID IDs in the title page. **Please update the title page and email it back to me today.**

Please also note that there are two types of review process available: The first one is a regular review process, which may take around 6-12 months and cost 400 USD. The second option is the fast-track review process that can be completed in 4-6 weeks and costs double the regular fee after acceptance. **Please inform me today which process do you prefer?**
Regards,

Prof. Dr. Bulent TARMAN, Ph.D
CEO, OpenED Network, Ankara, Turkey: https://www.openednetwork.com/
Turan University, Almaty, Kazakhstan (Remote Position)
Editor-in-Chief, Research in Social Sciences and Technology
(http://ressat.org/index.php/ressat)
Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Social Studies Education Research (jsser.org)
Emails: b.tarman@turan-edu.kz ; btarman@gmail.com

APPENDIX 8: CONFIRMATION LETTER FROM JEE: PROOF OF SUBMISSION OF ARTICLE

From: wellington manzi
To: Carmen Nel
Subject: Fwd: [JEE] Submission Acknowledgement
Date: Thursday, July 27, 2023 4:19:43 PM

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Ananda Setiawan** <mail.ppjp.ulm@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jul 7, 2023 at 10:06 PM
Subject: [JEE] Submission Acknowledgement
To: Mr WELLINGTON ITAI MANZI <manziwellington95@gmail.com>

Mr WELLINGTON ITAI MANZI:

Thank you for submitting the manuscript, "Exploring High School Economics Teachers' Curriculum Implementation Practices: A Case of South Africa" to Journal of Economics Education and Entrepreneurship. With the online journal management system that we are using, you will be able to track its progress through the editorial process by logging in to the journal web site:

Manuscript URL:
https://ppjp.ulm.ac.id/journals/index.php/jee/author/submission/9440
Username: manzi_3

If you have any questions, please contact me. Thank you for considering this journal as a venue for your work.

Ananda Setiawan
Journal of Economics Education and Entrepreneurship

Journal of Economics Education and Entrepreneurship (JEE)
https://ppjp.ulm.ac.id/journals/index.php/jee

APPENDIX 8: CONFIRMATION LETTER FROM Journal of African: PROOF OF SUBMISSION OF ARTICLE

Jurnal, Aportal (sent by kabelo.kaapu@ul.ac.za)

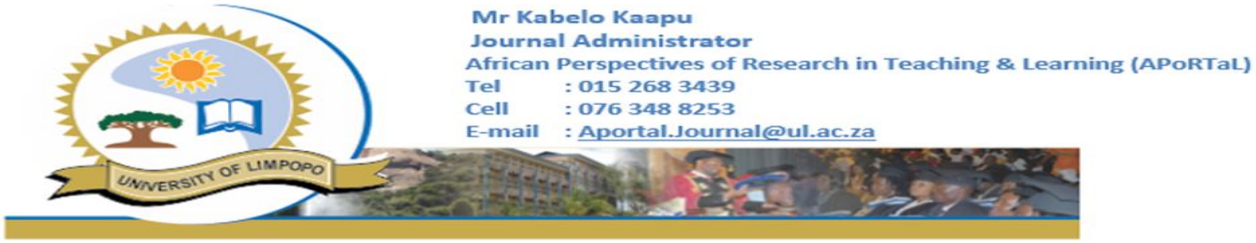
to me

Dear Authors

Thank you for choosing APoRTaL. Please note that due to the high volume of submissions, our next issue is already full, and your manuscript will be considered for review for the March 2024 issue.

Please let us know if your manuscript should be queued for review or if you are submitting it to another journal.

Kind regards



APPENDIX 9: PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Carmen Nel
BA INFSCIENCE

EDITING SERVICES
072 377 5585
carmen@ufs.ac.za

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

This certifies that I have edited the work detailed below for language and styling.

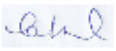
Title:

"Enhancing Economics Curriculum implementation in selected schools in the Northern Cape"

Author:

Wellington Manzi

Regards



Carmen Nel

26 July 2023

Professional editing of articles, thesis, dissertations and books

APPENDIX 10: TURNITIN REPORT

Manzi_TurnItIn

ORIGINALITY REPORT

8%	7%	5%	1%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	noyam.org Internet Source	4
2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	1
3	Wellington Manzi, Boitumelo Moreeng. "Mediating Economics Curriculum Implementation Through Meaningful Assessment- A Case Study of the South African Educational System", E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, 2023 Publication	1
4	mro.massey.ac.nz Internet Source	<1
5	www.researchgate.net Internet Source	<1
6	eprints.soton.ac.uk Internet Source	<1
7	www.coursehero.com Internet Source	<1
8	link.springer.com Internet Source	<1
9	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	<1
10	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1
11	Submitted to Jacksonville University Student Paper	<1