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**EXPLORING THE USE OF LOCAL HISTORY PROJECTS TO DEVELOP
LEARNERS' HISTORICAL SKILLS IN A SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASSROOM**

By

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**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY WITH SPECIALISATION IN CURRICULUM STUDIES**

At the

Department of Social Science and Curriculum Education

Faculty of Education

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DECLARATION

I, Zwelinjane Meshack Mbatha (Student Number: 2006123430), hereby declare that this thesis entitled "***Exploring the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science Classroom***" (three 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 also further declare that this work has not been submitted previously in parts or entirely for examination for a degree at any institution.

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



Signature

14 November 2023

Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to
God Almighty, my immediate and extended family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude and appreciation goes to:

- The Almighty, for giving me the strength to complete this hard work.
- My family, for their support and understanding through this project.
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- My late father, mother, and my late brothers and sisters, this one is dedicated to you.

ABSTRACT

History teaching in schools has evolved beyond the focus of content in the form of dates and names of people to a more comprehensive approach that addresses content, critical thinking and historical skills. One of the ways that learners have to develop this critical thinking is through teaching local history projects. Local history is the study that helps the community to understand its past. Therefore, teachers must constantly tell the past because telling these stories and continuing with these traditions helps strengthen the communities. This study sought to explore the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science Classroom.

Critical Pedagogy drove the study as a critical framework to suggest which essential thinking skills teachers must enhance to develop learners' historical skills. Critical pedagogy was employed to coach the study; this was done to respond to both the literature and the empirical study findings, which suggest that approach. The study was approached from an interpretive paradigm, which influenced the research practice in the study.

The research design has to do with making critical choices on the part of the research. The sample, which was chosen through purposive sampling, included five primary schools in Motheo District. One teacher was selected for detailed study at each of the five schools. The empirical study consists of collecting data using interviews and document analysis. Data was analysed using qualitative analysis; this was done to ensure a thorough description of qualitative study findings. Interviews and document analysis were used to report the findings of the study. Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data.

The findings show that there were opportunities for learners to showcase their skills and myriad challenges in teaching local history projects to develop their historical skills. The study recommended more meaningful use of current relevant sources, and the teachers should attend continuous workshops to enhance their understanding of teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

Keywords: Social Science, Local History Projects, Learner Historical Skills

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CP	Critical Pedagogy
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
FS DBE	Free State Department of Basic Education

IMPORTANT NOTE

To whom it may concern,

Kindly take note of the following before reading further.

The following articles have been submitted to accredited journals and are currently under review for publishing.

1. Article 1: "Exploring History Teachers' Understanding of Using Local History Projects to Develop Learner's Historical Skills" submitted to *Studies in Learning and Teaching (SiLET)*.
2. Article 2: "Exploring teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills" submitted to *Journal of Social Studies Education Research (JSSER)*.
3. Article 3: "Exploring teachers' challenges of using local history project to develop learners' historical skills" submitted to *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)*.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom. According to Bhar (2018), local history projects can be defined as the inquiry that pupils engage with their immediate relevance to their own lives, families, streets, and communities as it informs people's own identity. For Goksu and Somen (2019), local history projects can also include descriptions of traditions, country cuisine and folklore, which aims to connect to the community's present and future. Bhar (2018) adds that local history projects study regions that tend to be geographically small cities, towns, or villages to embrace the spatial leanness of the learners' environment by serving as an ancillary to the teaching of general history.

Teaching local history projects has the potential to develop different historical skills. Kitts (2022) asserts that teaching local history projects is rooted in a process that forces one to compare perspectives, reflect and re-conceptualise past people and events, locate their own places in the content of time, and solidify their identity in the present. Black (2011) adds that teaching local history should enable learners to ask questions, clarify beliefs, think critically, respond, and investigate. Furthermore, Skjæveland (2017) identify historical interpretation, historical investigation, chronological understanding, knowledge and understanding of events, people and change in the past, and organising and communicating as critical skills that must be addressed while teaching local history. In addition, Davis, Chen, Hauff and Houben, (2018) assert that learners must be able to present information in an organised, coherent and logical manner in written, spoken and/or diagrammatic manner. The skills mentioned in the preceding sentences are also encapsulated in the Social Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (DBE, 2011) and must be addressed in the teaching and learning process.

Research has shown that local history projects should be taught in the history curriculum because they enable learners to investigate and learn history, form connections between past and present, and gain essential life skills (Goksu & Somen,

2019). As part of the curriculum, local history allows learners to make sure of their world and explore and understand the people around them (Ivey, 2012), inferring that local history helps communities build a common bond and that they have a shared interest in their society because learners appreciate the aspirations and achievements of others (Ivey, 2012). Conversely, Aktekin (2010) points out that through the knowledge of local history projects, a society can know itself. Thus, studying local history projects serves a dual function because it enables the learners to understand the past and appreciate the present and lets them live comfortably in a strong and resilient society. Hence, Mink (2022) believes that without our history, we would not be able to know who we are, who our relatives are, where we come from, and how we came to be what we are today. Without local history projects being taught to learners, they would lack an understanding of their own society and lack direction. Research has shown that studying local history projects helps learners understand each other and their society. It allows learners to identify change, link it to the past and deal with it in the present (Pickett, 2014).

Even though teaching local history projects has many benefits, most History teachers in the Intermediate Phase experience challenges when dealing with it. According to Iyer (2018), some social science teachers do not specialise in history and have limited knowledge and understanding of history, making it challenging to address the anticipated historical skills. Naicker (2020) identified the ability of teachers to properly plan, implement and assess the local history project as negatively affecting the addressing of the local history project. In addition, understanding the local history project itself seemed to be a challenge to some of the teachers, which resulted in them confusing the task with a typical history assignment (Naicker, 2020), thereby missing an opportunity to focus on the potential multiple Historical skills that can be addressed through the local history project. Heeralal (2014) maintains that a thriving local history project relies on a good relationship between the school and the community within which it is located. In the absence of this strong relationship, many projects collapse or are not able to address the intended outcomes.

The study of local history projects and context value History as a learning living source; it facilitates the understanding of historical concepts and helps us understand the locality in which we live, contributing to the multiple understanding of History and the building of the three pillars: History, Memory and Identity (Liu, Zeineddine, Choi,

Zhang, Vilar & Páez, 2021). Furthermore, cultural assets and heritage are important as they are significant in the consolidation and implementation of learning, making teaching less bookish and more alive, giving meaning to learning (Liu et al., 2021). This project aims to foster interest in historical and cultural heritage by teaching learners how to reflect, investigate, disseminate and share information, to acquire some skills through motivating and meaningful learning in the local context, to encourage teamwork in multidisciplinary groups, and to share information as a way to promote the local environment in conjunction with the school and the local authority.

Research and studies say that for today's children, who grew up with television, video, and the internet, visual modes of learning are fundamental, so technology can be used to change how we live and learn (Fails, Guha & Druin, 2013). Therefore, they must be seen as the teachers' allies in any area of the curriculum and in teaching local history projects because it enables the development of core competencies in transforming information into knowledge (Ali, Ahmad & Seman, 2017). Therefore, teachers must take advantage of a strongly positive view of technology for the learners as a strategy to enhance learners' understanding of local history projects (Fails et al., 2013).

Research has shown that the study of local history projects enriches the life and times of the community of a particular place by providing information related to historical sites and societies (Joyner, 2022). Furthermore, the local history collection and projects can help learners, researchers, historians, local administrators, social workers and writers by giving them the history of that specific locality (Crocco & Marino, 2012). An old Persian proverb states that history is the past and mirror of the present. When the word 'local' is prefixed to the word history, the meaning and connection change. Local is a word which conveys a relational concept. Conventionally, local history has been taught by writing about a town, region, or state explained to a local audience. During the twentieth century, some academics appropriated the term local history to refer to community study, highly academic monographs that explore questions about a particular community (Pasternak, Evans, Allen, Turner, Knapp, Harris, Wu, Bartlett, Habeck, Worm & Taylor, 2020). Several factors must be considered in the United States regarding developing and teaching a local history project. Although local history tends to be treated as supplementary to elementary and secondary state curricular and content standards, local history provides a fertile ground for improving students' ability to contextualise their historical thinking (Perrotta, 2017). They further say that

the most critical historical thinking includes engagement in local sources analysis, deliberation issues, and connecting to prior knowledge and life experiences. In the South African context, the history of places and people, later known as local history, was formalised by the mid-1970s as regional history, with an open agenda and no particular defined framework (Van Eeden, 2012). At this time, different schools of thought researched ordinary people in urban and rural areas. These events coincided with the decade in which South African legal apartheid between races led to political turmoil, and this process implicitly or explicitly impacted the historiographical landscape of recording regional or local history in South Africa. However, the context of time may have influenced the way intellectuals have documented local or regional history in South Africa (Van Eeden, 2012).

1.2 THE NON-TRADITIONAL FORMAT AND ORGANISATION OF THE ARTICLE APPROACH STUDY

The presentation of this doctoral thesis differs from the traditional format as the thesis embraced the article option instead of the conventional approach. Three interconnected articles are presented in Chapters 2 to 4. It is imperative to note that although the three articles were free-standing for publication purposes, all of them contributed to the thesis and are interrelated and jointly seek to achieve the aim of the study, which is to enhance the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a concern about learner acquisition and development of historical skills. Learners struggle to display the required historical skills (McCall, Janssen & Riederer, 2018); they struggle to conceptualise their historical thinking and reflect (Ford, Patt & Scannell, 2016). Teachers, on the other hand, also seem to have challenges in understanding the teaching of local history projects, and this can lead to how to plan, implement and assess the local history project in a manner that addresses curriculum expectations and a variety of historical skills (Nevenglosky, 2018; McCall et al., 2008). The assertion is made worse because not all Social Science teachers specialise in History and, therefore, do not possess a deeper understanding of core concepts and

skills involved in the subject the teacher is teaching (Bertram, 2016; Spaul, 2013). Teachers' ability to assess and give proper feedback was another factor Nyirongo (2023) identified that influenced the quality of the local history project.

The problem in the literature does not focus on the teachers' ability to solve historical problems, mainly using local history projects, which are critical in moving from the known to the unknown style of teaching, which helps to empower learners with critical skills easily. As such, there is a historiographical fissure whereby, during the apartheid era, local histories of the previously colonised were silenced because of legal apartheid between races, and the policy impacted the recording, curriculum and teaching of regional or local history in South Africa. Such teaching was also done from a rote learning manner instead of empowering learners with critical skills in History, which has also penetrated the new South Africa's curriculum delivery in the History classroom as I have observed or witnessed as the Departmental Head of Social Science in the Intermediate and Senior Phase, I can attest to my observation at school that teachers cannot equip learners with the skills to solve historical problems, mainly using local history projects. On this basis, I embarked on this study to investigate how Social Science teachers used local history to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom.

1.4 CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Pedagogy (CP) as a critical framework will guide this study. A critical framework is defined as a roadmap for the study, helping to visualise and implement the research project. The critical framework defines the relevant variables for the study and maps out how they might relate to each other. So, the critical framework comprises my thoughts on the identification of the research topic, the problem to be investigated, the questions to be asked, the literature to be reviewed, the theories to be applied, the methodology I used, methods, procedures, and instruments, the data analysis, and the interpretation of the findings, recommendations and conclusion I made (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). A critical framework is a contract that helps justify the research (Namasasu, 2012).

Critical Pedagogy as a critical framework that is coaching the study found its roots in the Brazilian educator and activist Paulo Freire, using the principle of critical theory as

its primary source and is deeply rooted in Hengel and Kants' critical philosophy (Berude & Gendren, 2022). The primary purpose of critical pedagogy by Lynch (2019) is that teachers use their own enlightenment to encourage learners to question and challenge inequalities in families, schools, and societies. In this regard, the classroom is critical because that is where teaching and learning occur. CP is about teaching students to think critically and question their given information. CP is more than a theory; it is an inclusive teaching practice in which educators consider how students' distinct identities will influence their classroom experience (Morgan, 2023). Instead of working against students with different perspectives, critical educators enhance diversity and even change the direction of lessons and assessments to fit students' needs (Lee, 2022). Conversely, CP places students' experience at the center of the curriculum (Piotti et al., 2022), which makes CP a critical framework relevant to this study. The following section will deal with the principles of CP.

The following principles of critical pedagogy are arranged by Morgan and Parker (2023), and these principles stem from and nestle with each other.

Freire argues that education liberation enables people to overcome the culture of silence, address human needs, and improve society (Bosio, 2022). This study examines the role of local history projects in developing society and cultivating historical skills among learners. Freire argues that education liberation enables people to overcome the culture of silence, address human needs, and improve society (Bosio, 2022). This study examines the role of local history projects in developing society and cultivating historical skills among learners. Thus, this study aims to shed light on the essential principles in CP, including education, teacher and students' roles, curriculum and authentic materials, praxis, and language and dialogue.

1.4.1 Critical Pedagogy and the Education Process

As Vandrick (2023) claims, the primary goal of CP is to emancipate and educate all people regardless of gender, class, and race. Pikhart et al. (2022) also note that critical pedagogy, which seeks to change the structure of an oppressive society, is of significant interest to Freire. In Morgan and Parker's (2023) terms, CP rests on the belief that every citizen deserves an education, which involves understanding the schooling structure by the teacher. Mazzarotto and Serpa (2022) distinguish between

banking education and problem-posing education. In the traditional view of education, teachers are pillars of knowledge; they know everything, and the students know nothing. Teachers deposit knowledge in students and never ask them to question that knowledge. The teacher chooses the content, and students comply with it. Freire refers to the traditional view of education as a banking model of education because it is like depositing money in the bank.

Pal (2022) proposed a problem-posing education as an alternative to the banking model, which can lead to critical thinking consciousness. Subsequently, Lynn (2022) writes that good teaching pedagogy leads to the development of knowledge by the students themselves. According to Morgan (2023), problem-posing education involves uncovering reality, striving for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality. It shows learners that they have to ask questions. As Morrison (2023) suggests, education should make the students think critically and become citizens who can take their place in a democratic life.

1.4.2 Curriculum and Authentic Materials

The curriculum in CP is based on the idea that no single methodology applies to an entire population (Crookes, 2022). As Morrison (2023) also maintains, there is no set curriculum because all decisions related to curriculum and materials to be studied are based on the needs and interests of students. Pikhart et al. (2022) also point out that the curriculum is formed through student experiences and realities of their lives. This curriculum is transformative; it forces students to acquire the necessary strategies and skills that help them in life (McLaren & Bosio, 2022). CP lesson plans should be based on authentic materials and resources such as museums, commercials, and televisions, which are the representatives of the culture to be examined by the students and serve as a basis for discussion and critical reflection of the culture (Crookes, 2022).

Nelson and Chen (2022) point out that texts and their themes should be provided by teachers and students who bring experience to the study. In their assignments, students can pick up themes most meaningful and relevant to their lives and the center where they work (Marouli, 2022). The knowledge materials help students develop skills in reflection and action. The principle resonates well with the study's objectives

in using authentic materials when dealing with local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

1.4.3 Critical Pedagogy and the Role of a Teacher and Students

Teachers in this approach are viewed as problem posers. Pioneers of this approach, Alam and Monhanty (2023), believe that learners, through problem-solving and practical application, lead students to take a more active role in determining their experiences and position within a society. Marouli (2022) maintains that teachers must empower their students by raising their awareness of reproducing the inequitable status quo in schooling and offering societal institutions. So, in Giroux's terms, teachers are Trans Formative Intellectuals with the knowledge and skills to critique and transform existing societal inequalities (Walmsley and Wraae, 2022). The role of a transformative intellectual is to learn from students, appreciate their viewpoints and participate in dialogue. Darder and Hernandez (2023) assert that by creating appropriate conditions, teachers enable students to become cultural producers who can rewrite their experiences and perceptions. They also help students learn from each other, theorize, and understand how to question the authoritarian power of the classroom. Crookes (2022) writes that classroom experience, with the help of the teacher, should become a situation in which students are encouraged to act as active agents in their education and to develop a critical consciousness that helps them to evaluate the validity, fairness, and authority within their education and living situation.

As Marouli (2022) puts it, students are active participants in that, together with the teacher, they correct the curricula, share their ideas, and learn to challenge assumptions. Piotti et al. (2022) stated that students contribute to curriculum decisions and determine areas of study and the associated reading materials. As Morgan and Parker (2023) maintain, critical scholars are students who can accept, reject, or suspend judgment about a claim. They can also offer good reasons for their ideas and can correct their own and others' procedures (Webber & Melhuish, 2022). They should engage in social criticism to create a public sphere where citizens can exercise power over their learning (Morrison, 2023). Therefore, learners are not the recipients of knowledge. Instead, they become creators in dealing with local history projects.

1.4.4 Critical Pedagogy and Praxis

The purpose of education and the educated, the leader and the followers in a dialogue between equal partners is called praxis (Mazzarotto, 2022). In education, praxis aims to bridge the gap between theory and transformation action (Allen & Gillon, 2022). Praxis connects education (the liberator) with social transformation (Nomdo, 2023). Freire alluded to praxis as reflection, action, interpretation, and change. Lynn (2022) asserts that learners equipped with praxis are well prepared to participate in collective action, meaning they can do things independently. Praxis is a critical reflection and action to implement various educational practices and processes to create a better world (Saeed, 2023). Admitting the importance and the effect of praxis, Sadeghi and Bahari (2022) maintain that only through the dialogue process is the practice of praxis likely to happen in schools.

1.4.5 Critical Pedagogy and Dialogism

Nomdo (2023) maintains that in observing one's human rights and dignity, the first step is respecting their linguistic human rights. Furthermore, Halabi (2022) adds that with the help of critical, oppositional, and theoretical language, teachers can be more towards a discourse by which they seek educational criticism. Bosio (2023) also confirms that even when the same language is spoken in the class, teachers should be sensitive and not favour one kind of interaction over another. Subsequently, Skinnari and Nikulu (2017) assert that language is important in two ways; first, language needs curriculum should be grounded in students' vocabulary to involve students in learning actively, and second, to read the world and transform it, students need a form of discourse.

According to Floyd (2022), dialogism is the base of critical education because it actively involves students in their education. Through dialogue, teachers talk and encourage learners' voices (Goodall, 2022). Matusov (2023) states that only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, can generate critical thinking. Without dialogue, there is no actual communication. The use of dialogue, as Mazzarotto and Serpa (2022) claim, implies the use of language similar to the one the individual is familiar with. Establishing a dialogue with a community is important because it is the same community the learners will work with during their local history projects. In order words,

in dialogue, as supported by CP, there is equal, open, and critical inter-subjectivity between students and their world and between teachers and students. Through communication, there is also a mutual acceptance and trust between the teacher and students that the meaning of human life is transferred (Park et al., 2023).

A local history project requires a flexible, learner-centred, contextualised, community-based, and multi-skilled approach with multiple perspectives to appreciate local subjective knowledge (Jumardi et al., 2023). Through local history projects, teachers have the potential to relate their work with major social issues in society to create hope for the learners to transform society for the better (Naicker, 2020). All these are supported and encouraged by using Critical pedagogy as a critical framework.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions

How do social science teachers use local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?

Subsidiary Questions

- How do Social Science teachers understand local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?
- What are the current practices Social Science teachers use in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?
- What are the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers when teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?

1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.6.1 Aim

To explore how Social Science teachers use local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

1.6.2 Objectives

- To determine Social Science teachers' understanding of local history projects.
- To establish Social Science teachers' current practices in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.
- To explore the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers when teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is grounded in the interpretive paradigm as this paradigm resonates with the characteristics of phenomenology. For Lingam and Lingam (2023) and Rossman and Rallis (2017), the paradigm is used to capture the idea that the definition of science is the product of a shared understanding of reality that is a complete and complex way of seeing and sets assumptions about the world and action within it. In addition, it contends that paradigm consists of ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. Interpretive studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meaning people assign them (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). In this study, teachers can assist learners in integrating different components of what they are learning in class coherently and logically. Walters, Hyde, Berg-Lyons, Ackermann, Humphrey, Parada, Gilbert, Jansson, Caporaso, Fuhrman, and Apprill (2016) points out that methodology is a frame of reference for the researcher that is influenced by the paradigm in which the researcher's theoretical perspective is placed and developed. Because the study is interpretive, a qualitative research approach was employed. The choice of the research design is based on the researcher's assumption, research skills, and research practices, and it influences the way the researcher collects data (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). The design was chosen in keeping with the view of Braun and Clarke (2021), who assert that qualitative research aims to collect qualitative data, which is a record of the qualities concerning people's judgement, feelings, emotions, ideas, and attitudes. In the study, a constant relationship exists between the researcher and the participants, and the participants bring a broad variety of experience and diverse knowledge. The study followed a qualitative approach based on carefully considering the critical framework's principles and the study's aims and

objectives, which seems to promote a study that collects qualitative data in a natural setting, using methods that encourage dialogue and validation of the participants.

1.7.1 Research Design

Research design is a plan for data generating techniques, selecting participants, and analysing data that combines relevance with the research procedure and purpose (Leavy, 2022). Furthermore, it is the blueprint for empirical research to answer specific research questions (Haydam & Steenkamp, 2020). The choice of the research design is based on the researchers' assumptions and influences how data will be collected (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). There is a wide range of research designs from which the researcher may select one that is congruent with the philosophical assumptions and most appropriate for generating the kind of data required to answer the research questions posed (Flick, 2022).

The methods used for conducting research were designed to suit the study's research objectives and questions to avoid generating unwanted data. For the sake of the study, the researcher used interviews and document analysis to determine the differences and similarities between different situations (Karras et al., 2022). This is because data was collected from different teachers and different schools.

1.7.2 Data Collection

Lobe et al. (2020) state that data refers to information that research uses as raw material to conclude some issue. Whitehead and Whitehead (2020) say data collection is a systematic approach to gathering information from various sources to get an accurate picture of an area of interest. Qualitative data collection collects information on the participants' ideas, opinions, beliefs, and perceptions about the phenomenon under study (Groenland & Dana, 2020). In addition, Rallis and Rossman (2017) support the narrative when they assert that qualitative data collection is the collection of how the participants understand the phenomenon being investigated. The technique's relevance is a collection of information on how participants in a study understand the phenomenon being investigated. However, the researcher's initial decision is always negotiated with participants and mediated by the research context.

The methods of collecting data relevant to this study are interviews and document analysis (Sharma & Shen, 2018).

The study uses interview and document analysis to achieve data convergence using different data sources and methods. This was done to provide evidence that breeds the credibility of the qualitative findings.

1.7.3 Semi-structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was used because it formed a dialogue in which the researcher sought to elicit information from the participants about how they think (Sharma & Shen, 2018). This dialogue translation of the interview makes Magaldi and Berler (2020) call an interview a more personalised form of data collection method because the researcher can record the actual words said by the respondent, even the respondent's attitude in answering the questions, implying that the interview method is suitable for questions, which allows the researcher to probe the responses by the respondent to obtain adequate information based on the actual words spoken and the behaviour and attitude displayed by the respondent. Participants can present their ideas in their frame of reference on their terms, giving the researcher a glimpse of reality (Van Bavel & Dessart, 2018). Therefore, the semi-structured interview is chosen for this study because it allows flexibility in the interaction between the researcher and participants. Brinkman and Kvale (2018) say an interview guide or schedule is a list of general topics or questions the interviewer wants to explore during the interview. The general topics that were put forward for investigation to answer research questions were teacher training, development and support, managing curriculum change, availability of resources, assessment and classroom environment. Gravlee, Maxwell, Jacobsohn, and Bernard (2018) contend that the interview schedule ensures good use of limited interview time, and the researcher adheres to this by coming up with an interview with open-ended questions. The participants were visited at their schools for a face-to-face interview in the proper teaching and learning context; this is guided by a critical framework conducting the study, critical pedagogy, and demand that data collected be done in the natural setting of the phenomenon being studied.

1.7.4 Document Analysis

Document analysis is qualitative research in which the analyst assesses the appraisal theme in printed and electronic review documents (Armstrong, 2020). The author further states that document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to an assessment topic. Analysing documents helps researchers understand and categorise primary sources or original accounts from people with personal experiences with the topic. The advantages of document analysis are that it is not time-consuming, documents are always available without the author's permission, they are cost-effective, they can be repeatedly reviewed, and they are an exact reflection (van der Vyver, 2020). This study seeks to review and evaluate printed and written documents used by History teachers, such as projects given to learners for investigation and assessment. Documents can assist the researcher in uncovering meaning, developing understanding and discovering insight relevant to the study. For the document analysis schedule, the following documents were consulted: Lesson plan, local history projects task done, and memorandum or marking guidelines for the tasks.

1.7.5 Selection of Participants

Sampling is selecting a subset of a population of interest for making inferences about that population (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2020). Conversely, the sampling frame is the list from where the sample can be drawn or the selected category of interest to the study (Johnson et al., 2020). There are different forms of sampling, such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling (Swain, 2016). For this study, I used purposive sampling. I selected this form of sampling since, according to Kumar (2014), it is suitable for qualitative research because it seeks not to be representative in a statistical sense but to select a unit of the study, such as the individual that is theoretically meaningfully related back to the original research questions. For this study, I chose the sites that are likely to generate rich information on the type of phenomenon under study. The case yielded voluntary participants who willingly chose to participate in the study.

Five different types of schools were identified. These were all primary schools in other areas of the Motheo Education District. Care was taken to ensure each of the five

schools represents each quintile. One Intermediate Phase teacher from each selected school was requested to participate. All participants were qualified teachers, having taught Social Science for the past three to five years.

1.7.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming and modelling data to discover useful information, inform conclusions, and support decision-making (Akinyode & Khan, 2018). For this study, the approach to data analysis the researcher used is an interpretive analysis of qualitative data. The use of interpretive data analysis means that the observation must be interpreted through the eyes of the participants embedded in the social context and what the participant's statements mean (Madondo, 2021). The interpretive analysis aims to inspire and provoke people to broaden their horizons (Nassaji, 2020). Furthermore, the analysis procedure for the data analysis collected through interviews and document analysis was presented. This method of data analysis was designed to discover the patterns emerging from different data collected for each school, which were then compared and constructed to formulate a bigger picture of themes that constitute the study's findings.

Analysis of data from interviews: the researcher used question-by-question analysis to show how all the teachers who participated in the discussion responded to questions, which was done in view of the suggestion by Oluwafemi et al. (2021) that there is a need to highlight the exact words from the text that speak to capture critical thoughts or concepts from which codes can be derived. Key phrases in the text data were used as a coding frame in agreement with Creswell and Clark (2017), who say coding frames can be sentences, paragraphs, or phrases. Text data was understood, allowing the four questions of the research and four objectives which the empirical study seeks to answer and explain.

Analysis of data from document analysis involves skimming, reading and interpretation (Goldsmith, 2021). This interactive process combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis. The following document analysis to give data is based on critical pedagogy curriculum change in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom. The documents are a lesson plan, vital

to see what the teacher is teaching, a local history project or task needed, and a memorandum or a marking guide for the teacher.

1.8 VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study's value is that it fills in the gap in the new South African historiography on curriculum teaching and learning by revealing how students are taught local history, which lacks empowering them with critical skills, and how that can be eradicated. Also, it is to assist curriculum policymakers, researchers, and educationists with opportunities to explore History teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills (see abstract of Article 1). As such, no research from the candidate's investigation has ever been undertaken on using History projects articulated in the curriculum to develop learners' historical skills.

History teachers will benefit from the study, which seeks to further critical teaching approaches. The learners will benefit from the research in local history projects throughout the classroom, and their voices will be heard. The community will also benefit from their participation in teaching and learning local history projects, as they will be allowed to be involved as mentors to their children outside the classroom. Researchers will benefit from the knowledge the study seeks to entrench in the existing body knowledge.

The Free State Department of Basic Education (FS DBE), especially Motheo District, where the research is conducted, will benefit from using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom. The primary beneficiaries will be the schools because the reach is classroom-based. The community, as part of the local structure, will also benefit. Provinces across the country will also be beneficial in addressing similar challenges of teaching local history in their respective schools.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Before commencing the research, the researcher sought clearance from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2022/1748/22). The researcher sought permission and was granted by the Free State Department of

Education and the principals of the schools where the research was conducted. It is ethical to ask permission from the authorities before conducting the study. The participants also consented to the study, were assured of their anonymity, and were given pseudonyms. It was also made clear that participation is voluntary and purely academic, and not for financial gain, and they could withdraw from the study without any repercussions.

1.9.1 Trustworthiness

Adler (2022) believes that the fundamental criterion for qualitative research findings is trustworthiness, which deals with how research can be certain that the results of an inquiry are worth paying attention to and taking into account. The emphasis is made by Lauckner et al. (2012) when they confirm that trustworthiness is the soundness of the study. Literature has shown that when using qualitative research, there are four principles of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Hayre, 2021). Data collected were carefully recorded, transcribed, and interpreted based on the meaning. The participants were informed that they could withdraw their participation because they participated voluntarily.

1.9.2 Credibility

Creswell and Poth (2016) describe credibility as the faithfulness of the phenomenon in question, and it addresses uniformity amongst the participant's views and the researcher's description of them. Specific techniques are necessary to ensure credibility (Leko et al., 2021). These include adopting research methods that are well established in qualitative investigation in general: interviews and document analysis, and the engagement between the researcher and the participant. Conversely, credibility is concerned with ascertaining whether the study findings are valid.

1.9.3 Transferability

Singh et al. (2021) assert that transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to another context or setting. For the study, I addressed transferability through a thick description of data regarding

interviews and document analysis to let the reader judge the transferability of the study's findings. The study was conducted in the Free State province in Motheo District; thus, the scope of the study was restricted to certain schools. It, therefore, means that the findings and conclusion of this study cannot be generalised in all the schools in order districts and the provinces at large, but it is crucial to note that the findings can be transferred to another context.

1.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the participants can confirm the study findings using the methodology employed and the various data collection tools (Singh et al., 2021). Furthermore, Kumar (2014) adds that confirmability is also similar to reliability in qualitative study; it is only possible if the researcher follows the process in an identical manner for the results to be composed. This process ensures alignment between data and how it is interpreted (Kelly et al., 2021).

1.9.5 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research relates to how well a research protocol was documented and how reliable and consistent the research findings are (Stradford & Bradshaw, 2021). The researcher ensured that information was captured correctly and repeated the recorded interviews with the participants for further corrections to ensure that data was dependable.

1.10 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

The section below provides a brief description of the concepts utilised in the study to give the reader a better understanding of what the concepts mean and how they will be applied in the study.

1.10.1 Social Science

Social Science is a broad concept defined as any branch of academic study or science that deals with human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects, the study of society

and how people behave and influence the world around us (Grossman et al., 2019). Anthropology, Archaeology, Economics, Geography, History, Law, Linguistics, Politics, Psychology, and Sociology are the most common subjects in Social Science. Dogan (2019) writes that in other countries, it is referred to as Social Studies, and the main difference between social studies and social science exists in their purpose; in social science, the focus is on society and the social life of human groups whereas in Social Studies you study both Social and Humanities to promote effective citizenry (Meyer, 1999).

In the South African context, Social Science is the product of the post-apartheid system but also has deep roots in the historical past (Leevina Iyer, 2018). Moreover, in 1996, the (DoE) in South Africa introduced a compulsory curriculum for Grades R to 9, which was known as Curriculum 2005 (C2005) (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). This new curriculum was based on a newly adopted concept termed outcome-based education (OBE). The South African government implemented OBE after closely monitoring the education system of developed countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and the United States (Sayed & Jansen, 2001).

Fitting the challenges of OBE and C2005, the Ministerial Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 was set up in February 2000 (Chisholm, 2003). The committee advanced and was granted the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in Grades R to 9 and for Grades 10 to 12, in which Social Science replaced the Human and Social Science learning area. As an illustration, DoE (2000) History and Geography in the Intermediate and Senior Phases would be linked but not systematically merged into one learning area. In the quintessential nature, they would still be integrated but as collaborating, related disciplines with their content and conceptual bases (DoE, 2002).

The primary objective of Social Science was to develop knowledge, understanding and values, as well as allow for the application of acquired skills and techniques, which should ideally be used in different contexts (Mohajan, 2020). Conversely, through Social Science, learners would explore issues concerning human rights and environmental awareness in South Africa and worldwide. The DoE planned to advance this collaboration between History and Geography by firstly providing structures for different components of assessing learners, by supplying schools with a common framework for administering the assessment of learners, such as portfolios, and by

providing teachers with examples of different types of assessment, teaching methods and resources which they could use when assessing Social Science (DoE. 2002), suggesting that presently, integration in the 21st century Social Science curriculum not only refer to the thematic collaboration of History and Geography but also refer to the pedagogical, political, socio-economic and environmental relationship between the two subjects in an integrated manner (Hollstein & Smith, 2020).

1.10.2 Curriculum Implementation

As a concept, curriculum implementation has been defined in various ways. Bediako (2019) refers to it as how the teacher translates the planned or officially designed source of study into a syllabus, scheme of work, and lesson to be delivered to students. Furthermore, Mutelo (2023) add that curriculum implementation refers to working out the plan and suggestions that curriculum specialists and subject experts have made in a classroom or school setting. Teachers are the primary curriculum implementers, while students, parents, and school administrators can be directly or indirectly involved in the implementation process (Evans, 2023).

Curriculum is the heart of education; hence, this is a plan or a blueprint of everything that is supposed to happen inside the school (Gandasari, 2022). That is why curriculum implementation places considerable responsibilities on the teachers' shoulders, including the ability to choose appropriate teaching strategies and resources (Okeke, 2023). Effective teaching of Social Science and local history curriculum relies on the teachers' knowledge and acquired skills to plan and assess local history content (Selvan et al., 2021). On the other hand, Komen (2023) states that the effectiveness and efficiency of curriculum implementation of the learning process depends on numerous support services, and these services should be designed based on the requirements of the learning process. The institutions of learning should ensure the availability of all necessary physical resources. It should have a strong collaborative relationship with the community to allow learners to learn in real life (Quarshie & Leuschner, 2020). For this study, local history curriculum implementation is conceptualised as how teachers plan, interpret, and deliver instructions that develop learners' historical skills and assess those using available resources.

1.10.3 Local History

Local history has two essentials: people and places; together, they have interacted to produce changing but particular historical experiences, which are the staff of local history (Gunawan & Rachmah, 2018). Dymond (2021) has put it that local historians are concerned with people and places, and as he asserts, local history tells us much more than that every place was different from every other place. Rediscovering and interpreting local experiences is a fundamental part of more comprehensive historians. On the one hand, local history illuminates general history, while on the other, it is influenced by outside factors (Pederiva et al., 2022). Paradoxically, despite its small canvas, local history can offer one of the broadest perspectives available (Hansen et al., 2022). Local history combines materials and documentary evidence, spanning the archaeological and landscape of prehistory and earliest written records to the present (Levstik & Burton, 2022). It generates a shared agenda of questions relevant to the place being studied and to different periods, fostering a comparative approach. Separately, these questions offer specific directions for historical investigations, and together, they can contribute to a holistic understanding of historical experiences and processes (Mutiani et al., 2023).

Today, local history is consumed through schools, the popular media, visits and tourism, private collecting, museums and galleries, family history, community heritage, public history projects and the activities of voluntary societies (Fitrisia & Ningsih, 2023). Local history activities investigate, record, analyse, and share evidence and findings, working through libraries, record offices, specialist societies, lifelong and higher education courses and degrees, and group research projects, linking to volunteers, heritage and academic professionals (Saldivar, 2023). Local history attempts to reconstruct a specific place's past to understand how people's lives connect to the community's present future (Buckingham, 2013). Local history reflects the reality that a particular place shapes our lives, and our physical place is a significant determinant of our lives (Shani, 2021).

1.10.4 Local History Project

The study of local history projects and context values History as a learning living source; it facilitates the understanding of history concepts and helps us understand

the locality in which we live, contributing to the multiple understanding of history and the building of the three pillars: History, Memory and Identity (Mendes, 2019). Furthermore, cultural importance and heritage are therefore vital as they are significant in the consolidation and implementation of learning, making teaching less bookish and more alive, giving meaning to learning (Levstik & Barton, 2022). Gomes, Silva, and Marcelino (2015) mention the following strategies that can be used to ensure that local history projects are meaningful to learners: to foster interest in historical and cultural heritage, leading learners to reflect, investigate, disseminate, and share; most importantly, to acquire skills through motivating and meaningful learning in the local context.

Research has shown that local history projects should be taught in the history curriculum because they enable learners to investigate and learn the history of their communities from past to present and gain important life skills (Fitrisia & Mulyani, 2023). Local history projects as part of the curriculum allow learners to make sense of the world and explore and understand people around them (Hunt, 2019), inferring that local history projects help learners build a common bond and that they have a shared interest in their society because learners appreciate the aspirations and achievements of others (Sillitoe, 2019). In addition, Levstik and Barton (2022) point out that it is only through knowledge of local history projects that a society can know itself. Thus, studying local history projects (Kahn et al., 2022) serves a dual function. It enables learners to understand the past, appreciate the present, and live comfortably in a strong, resilient society. Research has shown that studying local history projects helps learners understand each other and the community in which they live; it helps learners identify change, link it to the past and deal with it in the present (Pickett, 2014).

Therefore, the increasing use of local history in Social Science as a school subject has necessitated local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Kitts (2022) put it that the teachers' understanding of teaching local history projects will create an opportunity for learners to develop such skills.

1.10.5 Historical Skills

In all societies, curriculum and development are based on a particular philosophy, considering the socio-cultural infrastructure and skills individuals will need in the future

(Bhat, 2019). History is one of the primary fields at every level in these curricula (Chen et al., 2023). History learning is a field that includes many different acquisitions, such as vocabulary learning, reference, memorisation, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, reasoning, evaluation, and communication skills (Mohamada et al., 2020). Historical thinking is one of the most fundamental skills acquired through historical teaching and curriculum shaping (Seixas et al., 2015). Although historical thinking is defined as using historical information, including context, perspectives, and perceived facts, to understand the past (Meira, 2020), it is a complex phenomenon to express in a single definition. Therefore, 'historical thinking' is defined in terms of elements or the skills expected to be acquired rather than a specific definition (Seixas & Peak, 2009).

Although historical thinking seems to be an achievement specific to history lessons at advanced grade levels, in different countries, it is seen that this skill is expressed as a skill that should be acquired starting from the 4th grade (Levstik & Barton, 2022). Curricula of different countries and related academic studies were examined in forming the framework of historical thinking skills (Nunez, 2021). Historical thinking skills are associated with historical inquiry, using primary sources, collecting evidence, using evidence, and historical empathy in some studies (Drake & Brown, 2003). Skare (2023) asserts that history is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past that helps explain how people, events, and forces from the past have shaped our world. To acquire knowledge and understanding of history, skills associated with identifying, comprehending, and interpreting sources, the use of chronology, research, and communication must be developed (Ampartzaki, 2023). Historical skills are developed through a process of historical inquiry. These skills enable learners to engage with history, explore, discover, inquire, and, most importantly, experience history (Lee, 2023). Skills in history are taught using the content described in the syllabus for each stage of learning (Sebbowa & Ngambi, 2020). On the other hand, Aktin (2017) grouped the historical thinking skills as follows: chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis, historical research skills, and historical issues analysis and decision-making.

Giving learners a local history project aims to develop their historical skills. Therefore, the teacher should travel with the learners to understand these skills chronologically and analyse, research, decide, and understand the meaning of history in today's and future life (Maria, Ahmad & Awang, 2019). Furthermore, historical thinking skills, which

encompasses these skills, have been appropriate in history learning, especially for learners to learn the history subject authentically and dynamically, not only memorising historical facts and events (Abbas et al., 2023).

1.11 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

This study is made up of five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: An orientation and introduction are provided, discussing the background, research problem, critical framework, research methodology, and definition of operational concepts to give context to the reader.

Chapter 2: *Article 1* - "Exploring History teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills."

Chapter 3: *Article 2* - "Explore teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills."

Chapter 4: *Article 3* - "Explore teachers' challenges of using local history project to develop learners' historical skills"

Chapter 5: This chapter summarises the study, presenting the findings, recommendations, discussion and implications.

1.12 CONCLUSION

The first chapter started with an introduction of the entire study, which stated the importance of enhancing the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Then, explain the problem statement, the critical framework, the research aim, the objective and the questions. I also articulated the research design, data collection technique, selection of participants, and data analysis. Furthermore, I detailed the study's value and the ethical considerations that were considered—the chapter closely by explaining the layout of the chapter and the definition of operational concepts. Lastly, I provided the titles of the three articles, which will be presented from Chapters 2 to 4, in order.

CHAPTER 2
ARTICLE 1

**EXPLORING HISTORY TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF USING LOCAL
HISTORY PROJECTS TO DEVELOP LEARNER'S HISTORICAL SKILLS**

*This article has been formatted according to the journal style guidelines for Studies in
Learning & Teaching (SiLET)*



Exploring History Teachers' Understanding of Using Local History Projects to Develop Learner's Historical Skills

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ABSTRACT (10 pt)

In this empirical study, we explore the understanding of Social Science teachers on using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Teaching local history projects can potentially develop learners' different historical skills as it forces one to compare perspectives, reflect, and re-conceptualize past people and events and locate their places in the present. To achieve the study's aims and objectives, the study employs critical pedagogy as a critical framework guiding the study along with an interpretive paradigm that will guide the qualitative approach. The study purposefully sampled five participants from five different schools. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used as data collection strategies. The researcher's findings show that no opportunities were created to explore history teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The paper suggests that the lesson study approach is a valuable intervention that can better the teachers' understanding of establishing learners' historical skills. To achieve this, the teachers need workshops on local history projects to develop students' historical skills in schools.



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INTRODUCTION

The study explores history teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The increasing use of local history in Social Science as a school subject has necessitated local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Therefore, the teachers' understanding of teaching local history projects will allow learners to develop such skills.

The belief that local history had to be done rather than learnt made local history popular for educationists who understand active learning, in which the learners rather than the teachers do the work (Lomas, 2022). Active learning leads to teachers understanding and using source materials and, thus, helps learners feel for the topic they are studying (Moseikina & Toktamysov, 2022). Welsh (2022) argued that by studying local history projects, "history need no longer be dry chalk and talk". He added that analyzing local documents, map reading, map making, manor houses, elderly inhabitants, or field visits make history a practical, lively and active subject, and those activities free history from the classroom chairs and the endless note-taking.

The teacher's understanding of local history can be a valuable vehicle for building partnerships with the local community in which the school resides and can help break down the barriers between school and the world outside (Bowen et al., 2023). During field visits and project work on local history, learners will contact experts such as museum, archivists, archaeologist, and historical society members (Barret, 2022), emphasizing that local history has a broader significance outside the classroom. The learning process extends beyond History textbooks (Stephens, 1977). The teacher's understanding of the teaching of local history projects encourages learners to make their links with the outside world and take control of their learning. Subsequently, Chan and Erduran (2023) assert that studying history outside the classroom enables learners to develop cross-curricular skills and interests. Environmental studies, geography, and arts all have a historical element, and often, the teacher's understanding of local history plays an integral part in teaching (Zhang et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Hopmann (2023) writes that the general objective of local history should include understanding the nation and local history of a particular period or theme, their interrelationship, and the skills and interests they intend to develop. Local history projects encourage learners to research, analyze, and report the observations. As a result, they acquire more relevant skills than merely verbal knowledge, often developing logical thoughts (Lash, 2023). Field trips are a good way of developing those skills. Learners need to be involved in history to see it, not as a film they simply watch but as a continuing play in which they are actors (Harvey, 2023). Local history projects interest learners when teachers understand how to teach it, and it gives opportunities for developing the following skills of inquiry methods such as observation, classification of evidence, deduction from evidence and presentation of conclusion.

Over and above, there are many challenges, as Kgari-Masondo (2019) alluded to the fact that learners choose multidisciplinary teaching of History and Geography as a challenge. Newly appointed teachers face growing emphasis on standards and accountability, an increasingly diverse learners' population, and a lack of support and mentoring (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012).

The study seeks to add to the growing body of knowledge by exploring History teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom.

In teaching local history projects, there is a concern about learners' acquisition and development of historical skills. Learners struggle to display the required historical skills and self-reflection (McCall et al., 2008). On the other hand, teachers also seem to have challenges in planning, implementing and assessing the local history projects in a manner that addresses curriculum expectations and various historical skills (Nevenglosky, 2018). There is also a concern that teachers do not possess a deeper understanding of core historical concepts and skills involved in the teaching of history (Bertram-Troost & Visser, 2020), which affects teachers' understanding and ability to assess and give proper feedback is the most critical aspect of teaching local history projects in schools (Flores, 2018). As the Departmental Head of Social Science in the Intermediate Phase, I can attest to the observation in the school that I am teaching as well as in the literature as teachers struggle to equip the learners with the skills to solve historical problems, particularly the use of local history projects (Perrota, 2017). Hence, the study explores the teacher's understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

Local History

For this study, we must understand both local history and local history projects. Local history studies history in a geographically local context, often concentrating on a relatively local community (Hampton & Wheeler, 2012). Local history incorporates cultural and social aspects of history. It is not merely about the national history of a community but a study of past events in a given geographical area based on a wide variety of documentary evidence and placed in a corporative context that is both regional and national (Bhar, 2018). Local history allows in-depth research to connect the past with the present, which is done more simply and with more meaning than studying the faceless national masses. Thus, local history is community-based as it incorporates community resources and includes underrepresented historical figures and events in the historical narrative to engage students in historical thinking (Perotta, 2017).

Local history matters because a city is not a community without understanding its past (Aktekin, 2010). The traditions, stories and communication transform our city into a community. Telling those stories and continuing these local history traditions help strengthen our community connections. On the other hand, local history projects are a concept that can be defined with various meanings by different historical scholars. White *et al.* (2011) describe local history projects as teacher-directed collaborative projects in which learners research their community's history and share their findings with their global peers. Rieckmann (2018) further adds that local history projects enable the learners, teachers and community to collaborate locally using face-to-face interaction and technology to enhance learning about their community. Through local history projects, learners study their neighborhood and particular buildings, conduct interviews with local people, take historical photographs and the analysis of various local documents (Frenz & Sanchez, 2023).

Conversely, Goksu and Somen (2019) assert that local history projects are an effort that involves a series of activities, sources, and resources aimed to achieve specific outputs that will relate to historical content skills. It further allows learners to contextualize their historical thinking, such as source analysis, deliberation of issues and connecting to prior knowledge and in-life experience (Popa, 2020). Local history projects enable learners to research the history of their locality and make presentations. One of the goals of teaching learners local history projects is to teach them to care about the places they live, appreciate historical and cultural environments, care for and respect older generations, and understand and appreciate the historical heritage of the past and the present (Nilson & Thorell, 2018).

Local History Projects in South African Context

In South Africa, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) Document is the guiding document in the teaching of Social Science; it directs teachers that learners must complete one project in each Grade. They, therefore, do a project in either History or Geography in a given year (DBE, 2011). The local history project is done only in the Grade 4 first term. The South African History Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) emphasizes the significance of history as a subject empowering learners with historical skills and knowledge. Still, there are critical gaps, especially in the teacher's understanding of how to teach local history projects that the study seeks to posit that affect quality teaching and learning and the need for ways of bridging the divide between theory and practice (Kgari-Masondo, 2019).

Research has shown that local history projects should be taught in the History curriculum because they enable learners to investigate and learn history, form a connection between the past and the present, and gain essential life skills (Goksu & Somen, 2019). Furthermore, local history as part of the curriculum allows learners to ensure their world and explore and understand the

people around them (Naicker, 2020). Conversely, McCoy and Sabzalian (2021) and Aktekin (2010) point out that society can know itself and its family history by engaging in local history projects. Moreover, family history projects make students understand and think about the kind of ancestors they want to be for future generations (Ender *et al.*, 2021). Teachers can use books, written sources, maps, geological and geographical items, names, buildings, archives, pictures, other images, industrial institutions and television and radio programs as sources to engage with for local history projects (Oguzhan, 2015). However, understanding and taking local history into the class with various materials will provide more time and visuals for the students (Aktekin, 2010). In Uganda, the value and understanding of local history education is increasing cultural awareness among the younger generation cannot be overstated (Pedroso, 2020). Thus, understanding and having the component of local history in the curriculum encourages learners to expand their knowledge (Bhar, 2018). Ysulun (2021) asserted that teaching local history astonishes learners by providing them with the local community's history, thus serving as an information service. The biggest challenge is the classification of learners concerning the type of schools and monthly family income; they have considerably varied levels of knowledge of local history (Drajea & O'Sullivan, 2014).

Local history projects serve dual functions because they enable the learners to understand the past and appreciate the present, allowing them to live comfortably in a solid and resilient society and to develop particular skills (Aktekin, 2010). Therefore, some skills need to be understood by exploring teachers understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The following skills are interrelated with local history knowledge and understanding and should be taught in an integrated manner (Sinaga & Widodo, 2022). Chronology, terms and concepts: this skill involves sequencing, connecting, understanding, and applying concepts and terminologies. Analysis and using sources: the skill relates to working with primary and secondary sources. Explanation and communication are about explaining and presenting findings from a historical inquiry in written, digital or oral forms. Historical questions and research: the skill requires identifying questions to shape an inquiry and locality of suitable resources for research. Lastly, the understanding and interpretation of skills involve analyzing various historical perspectives and acknowledging differing interpretations of history (Bunari, 2022).

Teachers understanding of both local history and the local history project is crucial because it ensures that it is appropriately taught to serve its purpose and to address the required skills. Hence, this study explores teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop historical skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

Critical Pedagogy guides this paper as a critical framework. Freire defined critical pedagogy as a critical approach to education, highlighting the importance of having learners engaged actively in their learning process and being able to find and develop their own opinions and position (Kaya & Kaya, 2017). Critical pedagogy effectively enhances students' critical thinking capability and generates positive behavior change in students' lives (Muhammad & Uddin, 2019). This strategy enhances students' consciousness, understanding and judgement. It gives students a voice to speak in a classroom (Villacañas de Castro *et al.*, 2022).

Critical pedagogy provides a critical framework to observe in the classroom and to examine any challenges that can undermine learning and alienate students. Thus, the present study aims to shed more light on the major principles that can be envisaged in critical pedagogy, including education, teachers and student roles, praxis, language and dialogue. On critical pedagogy and

the part of teachers and students, Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) maintain that teachers must empower their students by raising their awareness in the classroom. In education, CP on praxis aims at bridging the gap between theory and transformation action. The principle of language and dialogue emphasizes the same language spoken in the class; teachers should be sensitive not to favor one kind of interaction over the other because teachers decide whose voice will be heard and whose will be submerged in the classroom (Muhammad & Uddin, 2019).

These principles will be considered relevant to the study because they are integral to the classroom. CP and its principles have a progressive approach to teaching whose objectives are to promote the development of critical thinking in the learners and generate capable individuals (Namasasu, 2012). Lado and De Valle (2022) emphasized that CP is an inclusive teaching practice in which teachers consider how learners' distinct identities will influence their classroom. The primary purpose of CP by Lynch (2019) is that teachers use their enlightenment to encourage learners to question and challenge inequalities in their families, schools and societies. Therefore, the classroom must be critical because that is where teaching and learning occur. CP give the researcher the lens to zoom into how teachers present their work and assess the learners in a classroom. The researcher believes that what the teacher does in the classroom could be understood through data obtained through interviews and document analysis.

To achieve the aim of this study, we grounded the study in the interpretive paradigm as this paradigm resonates with the characteristics of phenomenology. The interpretive study generally attempts to understand phenomena through the meaning people assign them (Chen *et al.*, 2021). Because the study is interpretive, a qualitative research design was employed. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2019), qualitative research is concerned with answering questions about the relationship among measured variables to explain phenomena. The researcher found this approach relevant to describe the teacher's understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

All the participants in this study were chosen from the five different schools in Motheo District in the Free State, the five schools from which five teachers (one teacher per school) were purposefully selected. The chosen schools were diverse and from different locations and different classifications. The participants selected for this study are five Social Science teachers from Motheo District in the Free State Province.

In line with a qualitative study, data were generated through interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather data from five Social Science teachers who narrated their understanding and experience in the study. When the participants could not understand, probing and clarity were given to them. The interview will take place in a convenient school for the participants after school and on Saturdays. As a researcher, we met once with each participant for only two hours. The researcher digitally recorded the interviews where the participants gave their views and experiences, and the themes were formed from the two sources of information (Paseka & Schwab, 2020).

After the interview, the researcher asked for the formal assessment documents the teacher uses to assess learners in first-term Grade 4, specifically the local history project. The researcher is explicitly looking at the instruction of the project and, the time frame given to the learners by the teacher, the form of how the teachers assessed the learners.

Data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis and generated through two sources: interviews and documents. The researcher had a semi-structured face-to-face interview to gather data from five Social Science teachers, and they gave me detailed experience on the subject matter. The researcher digitally recorded the talk during the interview, where teachers narrated their stories and experiences. Where the researcher was unsatisfied with the answer, probing and

follow-up questions were made. Data were coded and categorized, and themes were identified in conjunction with (Mezmir, 2020). Lastly, I asked for their formal assessment of the local history project to understand how it unfolded from the beginning until the end.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The study explored the teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. In responding to the question '*How do social science teachers understand local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?*', the researcher identified the following themes after proportionately deciphering data from the interviews and document analysis: understating of local history projects, the purpose of local history projects, the value of giving learners local history projects, and the skills learners will acquire when taught local history projects.

Understanding of local history project

To have understanding is to be able to put the pieces together and use such to do things, that is, to solve problems and to create new ideas. Knowledge and understanding come in three varieties: proportional, integrative, and knowledge (Baumberger, 2014). It is only when the teachers understand how to do local history projects diligently to develop learners' historical skills. It was, therefore, necessary to establish how the participants experience how their understanding of local history projects is being executed in their respective schools. It was fascinating to see how teachers from different schools understand local history projects similarly. The teachers were asked: What do you understand about the local history project? The teacher in School A responded:

"According to my understanding, local history projects helps learners to learn more about the history of their community. Although they live in that area, I know they do not know much about that community."

The same sentiments were echoed by the response of the teacher in School B, who responded:

"I believe that local history project enables the learner to learn about their community's history."

The teacher in School C responded by saying:

"My understanding of local history project is that the project is educational and gives learners a chance to learn about their local community."

The three responses seem to emphasize knowledge generated through participating in the local history project. For the participants, learners do the project to learn more about their immediate environment. Even though this might be viewed as limiting, it is still in line with most of the definitions of local history provided by literature (Kammen, 2014), as she defines local history as the study of the local community and that of Nilson and Thorell (2018) who described local history as concerned with many subjects within a particular area, factual events, cultural heritage and folklore.

These definitions also seemed to foreground the need for knowledge and less on how this is solicited by not emphasizing the processes and skills used.

Slightly different responses that eluded to the development of skills are seen in the following teachers in School D when responding by saying:

"Local history project is a process where learners find out about different landmarks in their community."

The same response from a teacher in School E who said:

"My understanding about local history project is that learners find out about the history of their local community through different ways of obtaining the same information."

Using words like "find out" might imply that these two teachers are aware of the actions that learners will be expected to undergo in generating new knowledge about their community. For learners to find out, they will have to ask questions, enquire, make sense of the responses they receive, come to certain conclusions based on the facts in front of them, and lastly, develop a way of communicating these findings; this is in line with Hampton and Wheeler (2017) in saying the understanding of local history is the study of history in a geographically, local context, often concentrating on a relatively local community.

From the document analysis, teachers' tasks showed that teachers do not understand the rationale behind giving learners this type of project to develop their historical skills.

MEMORANDUM OF PASSAGE

Subject: Social Sciences **History:** Project
Time: Time according to ATP **Compiled by:** _____
Total: ___ / 25 **Moderator:** _____
Name and surname: _____ Gr. 4D

Assignment:
 Complete a poster about your school and use the passage about the history of your school to answer the questions.

Poster
 The teacher will help (teach) you how to make a poster.

Assessment:

Writing (Are the lettering large and clear?)	- 5
Neatness (Are your writing and pictures neat?)	
Information (Is all the necessary information on your poster?)	- 5
Colorful (Is your poster colourful?)	- 5
Total	- 15

Reading passage
 Use the reading passage about your school, in your history book to answer the following questions.

- In which year did [name of school] opened its doors for the first time? _____
- Who was the first principal of the school? _____
- How many teachers were there when the school started? _____
- How many learners were there when the school started? _____
- Who was the second principal of the school? _____
- Who was the third principal of the school? _____
- Who is the current principal of the school? _____
- How many teachers are there now at the school? _____
- What is the motto of the school? _____
- Name the official colours of the school. _____

Total: 10

Figure 1. Four aspect of student ability (example figure with short)

The purpose of giving learners local history projects

The purpose is an abiding intention to achieve a long-term, personally meaningful goal and make a positive mark. For the teacher to achieve the intended objective of a lesson, there must be a cumulative effect of meaningful and purposeful goals and the impact the teacher wants to have (Xhaferi, 2017). Without a proper clear purpose, the teacher cannot achieve the intended objectives of the lesson, in this regard, the local history project. Subsequently, learners will be deprived of acquiring the intended historical skills. The purpose of giving learners local history should be to develop their historical skills by using local history projects. In response to purpose, the following question was asked to the participants: What do you think is the purpose of giving learners this type of project?

A response from the teacher in School A was:

"The purpose is to make learners aware that every town or locality has a history and that it is good to know the history of your local area."

This is the response from a teacher in School D:

"The purpose is to collect information about the past of our community."

Both teachers have a similar view on giving learners this type of project, which is only to collect information in the community.

Teachers in schools C and B provided a slightly different view when they responded to the same question.

"The purpose is to show how the places where we live have changed over time. It also allows to develop the following skills: brainstorming, presenting, displaying, interviewing, creating a timeline and individual writing skills."

The response by the teacher supported this statement in School B when he said:

"The main purpose is that these types of projects they develop the questioning skill about the past. Also, teachers and learners care about the places they reside to appreciate the historical and cultural environment by interviewing the elders. Most importantly, the group discussion skill of learners is developed."

Literature has shown that the purpose of teaching local history projects is to enable learners to learn the skill of investigation, form a connection between the past and the present, and gain essential skills (Goksu & Somen, 2019). Furthermore, the curriculum aims to allow learners to sharpen their exploration skills to understand the people around them (Naicker, 2020).

The document analysis found that the type of activities given to learners required them to gather information and ask questions, as depicted in the following project instructions.

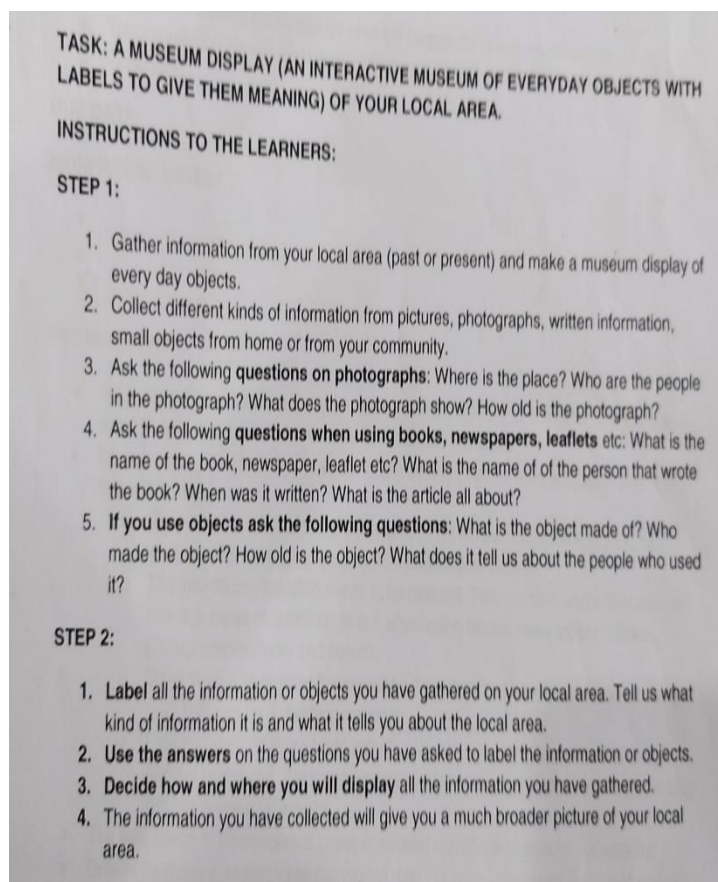


Figure 1. Four aspect of student ability (example figure with short)

These observations indicate that teachers understand that the purpose of giving learners local history projects is only to gather information about their local area.

The value of teaching local history projects

The value of teaching learners local history projects helps them better understand their community and, eventually, their immediate world (Goksu & Somen, 2019). However, it is not just in case of bombarding them with local facts. Good local history develops learners' inquiry skills that allow learners to investigate, drawing on their previous historical knowledge and understanding.

Participants were further asked to reflect on the values of teaching local history projects to learners in schools. This response by the teacher in School B seems to summarize the views of most of the participants when declaring that:

"The value of teaching local history projects is to create a background of the learners' own history and enhance awareness of the importance of local history to learners' present life. You teach learners to develop research skills and use different methods, such as interviewing, reading history books, letters and blogs on history. To add is to develop the learners academic skills, thinking, reasoning and the skill to work with other learners".

True to the response assertion, the researcher, through the document analysis, found that some skills are being given to learners without making any emphasis on which is evident from the figure below:

25

Assessment: Project
Social Sciences: History

Name of learner _____ Grade 4 E _____
Date _____ Time: 2 Weeks

Project:
Local History - Finding out about the past of "My Local Area"

In this project we are going to find out about the History (the past) of _____ Primary School.

There are different kinds of information we can use to find out about the history (past) of a local are. We can use:

- Pictures/ photographs
- Writing
- Stories and interviews with people
- Objects

Figure 1. Four aspect of student ability)

Although it is evident that learners are given some skills, it cannot be assumed that the learners grasp these skills without the teachers' guidance. However, the teacher must emphasize the skills in a classroom, especially giving the challenge on the value of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The above response was supported by the teacher in School C, who also made mention of particular skills learners will grow if given such a project.

"The value of giving learners local history projects it will help learners to develop their thinking skills about the past and the present in a disciplined way. Comparative skills will be developed in order for the learners to compare the past and the present. The most important is the writing skill that will be developed."

The response by the teacher in School A was not convincing:

"To teach a project to a child, especially a Grade 4 learner, is to equip them with the right way to start a project. A project cannot be completed in one day".

Also, the response from the teacher in School D was not convincing:

"The value of teaching local history projects is to preserve our history in the community, to acknowledge our past, and to know the community's identity."

The teacher from School E responded:

"Learners will gain a sense of belonging by being informed about where they come from. They will acquire new knowledge about their local community."

In both B and C of the above responses, there is a synergy in developing skills, as the literature has said. Goksu and Somen (2019) assert that local history matters because local teaches learners about essential skills. It allows individuals to view the world from different perspectives. It teaches critical thinking skills when researching, like understanding biases and juggling multiple perspectives. Furthermore, local history develops the skill that reflects a particular place, shapes our lives and that our physical place in the world is a significant determinant to knowing our lives and where we live (Ohio Local History, 2023).

Local history can provide values for learners to be curious, give opportunities to study something in-depth, help learners to see pictures by looking at the local first and vice-versa, help

learners to challenge generalization and value it as a key element in the 2014 National Curriculum and perhaps even more pertinent to many of us.

Skills learners will gather when they are taught local history projects.

The primary objective of giving learners a local history project is to develop historical skills. These interrelated skills can be taught integrated (Sinaga, 2022). Chronology, terms and concepts, analysis and the use of sources, explanation and communication skills, historical question and research skills, and perspective and interpretation skills are the skills that learners must gather when they are taught local history projects. The participants' views in the study show that skills need to be addressed. On the question, which skills do learners gather when they are taught local history projects? A teacher from School A responded:

"I think that there are a couple of skills that learners will gather, for example, investigation and interpretive skills, chronological happening of events, and organising skills. Learners must know how to organise a project."

According to the response by the teacher and the project provided, the instructions were clear. The project requires learners to interview and design a poster.

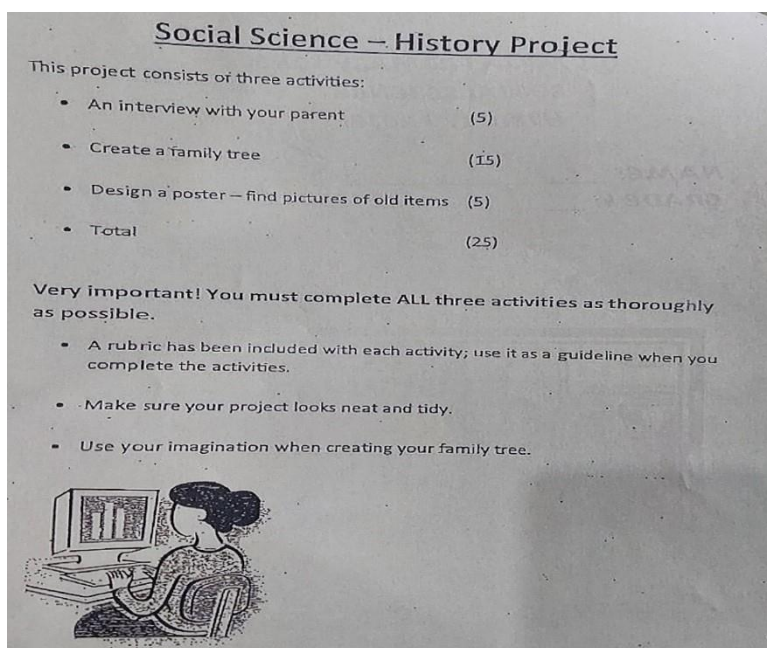


Figure 1. Four aspect of student ability

It is reasonable to attribute this challenge to the teacher's lack of understanding; when the teacher gives learners a project, they must understand which skills they will gather given the local history project. A teacher in School B supported the response above:

"These are some of the skills learners gather when they are taught local history project, critical thinking skill, interpretive skill, and reasoning skill."

Also, the teacher in School C responded by saying:

"Learners will acquire the writing skill, interviewing skill and question and identification skill."

The same answer emanated from the teacher in School D, who said:

"Learners will gather research skills, investigative skills, and the learners will know the timelines of events in a chronological order."

The teacher in School E came up with the same answer, stating:

"Learners will gather writing skills, social skills and research skills".

From the discussion above and looking at the figures, there seems to be some understanding of skills that need to be addressed by the teachers when teaching local history projects to the learners. In Figure 2, the instructions were clear, and which skills were to be addressed in the project, learners were supposed to do the following things: interview their parents, create a family tree and design a poster. In this regard, the project shows that a particular skill has to be achieved, as it is mentioned by the teacher in School C when responding to the questions. In Figure 2, a chronological happening of events was envisaged as a teacher from School A responded. A teacher in School E responded that the learners would gather writing, social, and research skills when doing this kind of project. Effective local history projects cannot be achieved without preparations and a clear understanding of which skill must be addressed. These skills are integral to the teaching and learning process in developing learners' historical skills.

Discussion

The main research question for this article is to explore teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Based on the analysis of teachers' responses, the study discovered that teachers lack a proper understanding of giving learners local history projects. Stefaniak *et al.* (2017) contend that learners who study the local history of their surroundings will develop particular values and skills and enhance historical interest, passion, national awareness, and social trust. However, this was not the case from the data collected; hence, the CAPS document emphasized the significance of history as a subject in empowering learners with historical skills and knowledge. However, there are critical gaps, especially in the teachers' understanding of local history projects. Consequently, proper and effective local history project implementation will not be achieved.

From the study, the quality of formal activities that the teachers give to learners, are they addressing and empowering learners to develop historical skills. Effective curriculum implementation without a clear purpose is the recipe for disaster because curriculum implementation with a purpose relies on teachers being masters of their subjects (Nevenglosky, 2019). The teachers fail to have a purpose in teaching strategies that will not serve any purpose for effective teaching and learning of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

The qualities of the activities of local history projects given to the learners will assist them in gaining the requisites of historical skills. This finding further supports the assertion by Goksu and Somen (2019), who stated that local history projects should be taught in the history curriculum because it enables learners to investigate and learn history, form connections between the past and the present and gain essential skills, which is the value of teaching local history projects. The participants agree that teaching local history projects is crucial in developing particular skills as critical value, but how they do that is challenging.

Skills are the most critical aspects of which the study seeks to achieve. The scholars (Goksu & Somen, 2019) stated that local history projects are an effort that involves a series of activities, sources, and resources aimed to achieve specific output that will relate to historical content and skills. Therefore, at the end of a project, teachers must ensure that the learners have acquired a particular skill. Pedagogical knowledge is imperative for teachers to impart the most critical skills the learners need.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that Social Science teachers who participated in this study do not create adequate opportunities to understand the use of local history projects to develop

learners' historical skills. This is based on the premise that historical skills were not emphasized in teaching local history projects. The quality of understanding the purpose and the value of local history projects limited the dominating view of the study. It was also evident that teachers presented skills that only require low cognitive demand, yet the concept requires learners to be critical thinkers and researchers. Teachers need to create opportunities and understanding for engagement through a deeper classroom discussion around learners' locality if the objective of critical thinkers and researchers is to be realized.

This study was limited to five schools with different socio-economic backgrounds. While this study's results may be extended to other teachers in a similar context, it is imperative to generalize cautiously.

This article recommends a follow-up study with a larger group sample from different schools in the other locality to get a more representative picture of pedagogical strategies and knowledge for teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a more diverse educational context.

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CHAPTER 3

ARTICLE 2

**EXPLORING TEACHERS' CURRENT PRACTICES OF USING LOCAL HISTORY
PROJECTS TO DEVELOP LEARNER'S HISTORICAL SKILLS**

This article has been formatted according to the journal style guidelines for The Journal of Social Studies Education Research (JSSER).

**EXPLORING TEACHERS' CURRENT PRACTICES OF USING LOCAL HISTORY
PROJECTS TO DEVELOP LEARNER'S HISTORICAL SKILL**

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Abstract

The study aimed to explore teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The teaching of local history projects has the potential to develop learners' historical skills, as it forces one to compare perspectives, reflect and re-conceptualise the past people and events and locate their places in the present. The study uses critical pedagogy as a critical framework, coaching the study with an interpretive paradigm to guide the qualitative approach. The study purposefully sampled five participants from five different schools. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were employed to collect data. Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data. The findings show that Social Science teachers who participated in this study create adequate opportunities while teaching local history to develop learners' historical skills even though they limit learners to their school and family histories. There is a need for teachers to be more explicit on the skills that need to be displayed by the learners. Furthermore, alternative ways of finding information, such as ICT, should also be explored.

Keywords: History teaching, local history, local history project, historical skills

Introduction

History teaching in schools has evolved beyond the focus of content in the form of dates and names of people to a more comprehensive approach that addresses content, critical thinking, and historical skills (Boadu, 2020). This move also influenced the adoption and use of other forms of assessment and learning activities that could be used in schools (Cohn, 2020). Initially, the focus was on writing tests, assignments, home works and examinations that were reliant on what was covered in the classroom and mainly in textbooks as dictated by the different curriculum policies to include out-of-classroom activities such as research, oral history projects, creating documentaries, and the local history projects amongst others (Gulluhan, 2022) These are usually used as part of continuous assessment and go a long way in developing other critical thinking and historical skills. This paper will focus on local history as one of such essential projects used in teaching history to develop historical skills (Avianto, 2023).

The teaching of the local history approach has been adopted and used in many countries, such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Turkey (Goksu & Somen, 2019). The main focus of this approach is to ensure that history teaching involves the development of historical

and critical thinking skills (Bertram, 2020). In pursuance of this objective, curriculum content, aims, objectives, and assessment were adjusted to reflect these changes.

During the local history project, learners learn more about the content under investigation and develop skills such as project planning, investigation, interviewing, report writing, communication and presentation, to name but a few (Eesman et al., 2021). To achieve the intended outcome, history teachers must be able to teach and assess the local history project. Learners must be thoroughly prepared to enable them to learn and develop their skills. Failure to do it properly often results in poorly formulated research projects that miss the local history project's real aim and focus (Thomas, 2022).

Bhar (2021) focused on using and teaching local history projects as a powerful pedagogical tool that can be used in the classroom to develop historical understanding and learning. In the study by Cronin (2022), he asserts that local history projects bring history alive to learners by capturing personal stories and connecting them to individual and historical events. Learning local history projects can help learners realise the grand scheme of historical change of countless individuals, like learners and those around them, who contributed to their community's ongoing story (Cameron, 2021). Teaching local history projects can be an excellent way to foster learners' sense of identity and connectedness to their community; such activities can help learners develop historical skills (Bartholomew, 2022). The study aims to explore history teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

While the above study by different authors has positively contributed to the study of local history, there is no evidence of the teachers' current practice of using local history projects to develop learner's historical skills in the classroom. The caption (Dere, 2018) clearly states that the effectiveness of curriculum implementation can only be realised if teachers, in their preparations, presentation and assessment, are expected to present local history effectively in their subject area. Conversely, Kabapinar (2018) writes that the effectiveness of teaching local history depends on the teachers' ability to present teaching materials that learners can access. The study addresses that what teachers do in the classroom does not mitigate the development of learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom.

Problem Statement

The use of local history as a project has been in the CAPS document for a few years. However, there is still a concern about learners' ability to display specific historical and cognitive skills (Rosyad et al., 2022). History learners seem to struggle when dealing with local history projects to demonstrate the required historical skills such as research, narrative, interview and ability to arrange facts chronologically (Dutt-Doner et al., 2019) which is supported by Goksu (2019) who maintains that learners are not able to develop the skills to analyse and comparing similar events. This can be attributed to teacher inability to teach and formulate meaningful local history projects by administering local history projects, different assessment forms, and the multidisciplinary teaching of history and geography as identified by various scholars (Rasulov, 2022). On the other hand, teachers also have the challenge of planning, implementing, and assessing local history projects in a manner that addresses curriculum expectations and the acquisition of a variety of historical skills (Nevenglosky, 2018). Bertram (2020) writes there is a concern that teachers do not possess a deeper understanding of core historical skills and concepts that preclude learners from acquiring relevant historical skills. Nevertheless, it has been noted that the teachers continue to focus on only academic textbook objectives without addressing the required skills of the projects (Graham, 2019). This poorly formulated results in teachers missing the opportunity to use the local history project meaningfully to address curriculum aims and skills.

In this paper, we attempt to understand the current teachers' practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in the classroom.

Critical framework

The critical framework underpinning this study is Critical Pedagogy. Critical pedagogy found its roots in a Brazilian educator and activist, Paulo Freire, using the principles of critical theory as its primary sources and is deeply rooted in Hengel's Kant's critical philosophy (Gendron, 2022; Mackernan, 2013). Freire defined crucial pedagogy as a vital approach to education, highlighting the importance of having learners engaged actively in their learning process and being able to find and develop their own opinions and positions (Kaya & Kaya, 2017). Critical pedagogy effectively enhances students' critical thinking capability and generates positive behaviour change in students' lives (Gibson, 2020). This strategy enhances students' consciousness, current practices and judgement. It gives students a voice to speak in a classroom (Serrano et al., 2022).

For the purpose of the study, CP and its principles will be viewed as relevant to the study because they play an integral part in the classroom. The two most essential principles are Curriculum and Authentic Materials and the Role of the Teacher and Students. Curriculum and authentic material (Giroux, 2020) are found through students' experiences and the realities of their lives. It further states that students had to bring their experiences for their study and place that knowledge in the context in which it occurs. Teachers in this approach are viewed as problem posers; they must empower their students by raising their awareness to offer societal institutions (Lynn,2022). Students in this regard are active participants in that they correct curricula with the teacher, share their ideas and learn to challenge assumptions (McLarren & Bosio, 2022). CP gives the researcher the lens to zoom in on how teachers present their work and assess the learners in a classroom. The researcher believes that what the teacher does in class could be understood in data obtained through interviews and document analysis.

Literature Review

Local History and Local History Project

The following section will address local history and local history project concepts. The two concepts can be viewed and understood similarly but differ in context. Local history is the study of history in a geographically bounded area such as a region, a state, a country, a town, a village or a neighbourhood (Stapleton, 2022). Furthermore, Morris (2022) defines local history as the history of our place, including the history of our families, description of traditions, country cuisine and folklore. On the other hand, Buckingham (2023) adds that local history reflects the unique places that shape our lives and that our physical place is a significant determinant of our lives. Local history matters because it is not a community without understanding its past. The traditions, stories, and civic commemorations transform our city into a community. Telling these stories and continuing these traditions help strengthen our community (Healey, 2012).

On the other hand, local history projects are defined by Yasin (2022) as teacher-directed collaboration projects in which learners research the history of their community and share their findings with their global peers. On the other hand, Rickmann (2018) further add that through local history projects, learners study their neighbourhood and particular buildings, conduct interviews with local people, take historical photographs and analyse various local documents (Metcalf & Downey, 2021). Eisman et al. (2021) summarise the previous assertions well when saying that

local history projects are an effort that involves a series of activities, sources, and resources aimed to achieve specific outputs that will relate to historical content skills. Local history project further allows learners to contextualise their historical thinking, such as source analysis, deliberation of issues and connecting to prior knowledge and in-life experience (Clarke & Lee, 2020).

Charamba (2020) emphasises that local history projects' value helps learners better understand their community and their immediate world. One of the values of teaching learners local history projects is to care about their places, appreciate historical and cultural environments, care for and respect older generations, and understand and appreciate past and present historical heritage (Duff, 2019). Rittidet (2011) writes that the local history projects research results show that our society needs excellent and responsible citizens who value and love their community and its members. Furthermore, research has shown that local history projects should be taught in the history curriculum because it enables learners to develop skills such as investigating and learning history to form a connection between the past and present, and learners gain essential life skills (Goksu & Somen, 2019). Over and above, Aktekin (2020) and McCoy and Sabzalian (2021) point out that society can know itself and their family history by engaging in local history projects.

Learners must demonstrate knowledge of local history, develop and understand research skills, and analyse, interpret, interview, and conduct research with primary sources (Aktin & Tekir, 2018).

Teaching the Local History Project

A local history project is a very complex activity that requires sound, meticulous planning and implementation. The teacher plays an important role in designing and planning the activity (Goksu, 2019). Different steps can be used to ensure meaningful use of the local history project to develop historical skills. Aktin and Tekir (2018) and Crocco and Marino (2017) suggest that teaching local projects can be divided into three steps: planning, implementation, and conclusion. This view is further supported by Judson-Whitehouse (2023), who asserts that the teacher should deliberately take the learners through these steps; they are not presented as a single presentation. They happen through the project to emphasise certain aspects and clarify what is to be covered in the project. These steps will be elucidated in the following part of the study.

Planning Local History Projects

In this section of the study, the focus will be on the four most crucial parts of planning, which are the aim of the project, the introduction; the sources needed for the project, and the form of assessment. The planning stage of the project can be referred to when the teacher is planning the entire project, thinking about the focus of the activity, where and how it will be conducted, and what it will entail and be assessed (Fewing & Christian, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative that when the teacher and the learners are discussing the planning of the project, the following stages must be considered.

The Aim of the Project

The project's aim, as Ataro (2020) outlined, should be simple, brief, and a factual statement regarding what learners should achieve at the end. In this regard, the aim of giving learners a local history project is to develop their historical skills in the classroom. The project must have a specific aim and focus; the aim and focus is to develop learners' historical skills. Literature has shown that learners struggle to display the required historical skills and self-reflection, as explained by McCall et al. (2018). CAPS (2013) emphasised the significance of history as a subject on empowering learners with critical historical skills and knowledge.

The Introduction of the Project

To prepare learners for this type of project work, the teacher needs to know how and where to get learners started. The teacher should be able to explain what the project is all about. It should include key details about the project, giving the reader enough information to understand its purpose and scope (Naicker, 2020). The teacher needs to generate a comprehensive list of suggested topics that learners could carry out at home, at school, or in the community, eliminating some of the frustrations that learners feel when first confronted with such a project. The critical aspect that learners should make is the choice of the relevant topic for the project (Smith, 2019). Different studies have shown that learners are not given the luxury of choosing a topic for their project (Dorn & Hancock, 2020). The best way for a learner to select a suitable topic is to identify a researchable topic (Hoyt & Morris, 2022).

The Sources Relevant to the Project

A source is anything that might inform a person about something or provide knowledge to somebody (Flynn, 2020), and it may be observation, people's speeches, documents, pictures and organisations. To properly research a project, a learner must use primary or secondary sources (Bickford et al., 2020). The teacher needs to know what sources are available in school and the community. Once the topic has been decided, learners have to match the topic with available sources of information (Waring & Hartshome, 2020) and thus have to identify the community resources and places such as libraries, museums, schools, and local history societies.

The Form of Assessment

Assessment helps the teachers, learners, parents and other relevant stakeholders to understand the depth and breadth of learning undertaken so that progress can be discussed and planned (Mafuga, 2021). Teachers are challenged to assess local history projects in a manner that addresses curriculum expectations and various historical skills (Nevenglosky, 2018). Bertram (2020) writes that teachers do not possess a deeper understanding of core historical concepts and skills to assess learners to develop their historical skills. For the teacher to assess the project, the teacher needs to develop a rubric or a marking guide alone or with the learners so that learners know what is expected from them (Ruberto, 2023). Depending on the project learners will be doing, the assessment will be guided by the assessment tool or the marking guide (McConlogue, 2020). The following aspects will be expected from the learners: analysis and presentation of information from photographs, drawings, illustrations, newspapers, interviews, visiting the library, and how learners interact with different sources. The marking guide or the rubric will guide the marking of the project, and the following steps can be followed: layout, creativity, neatness, interviews and design.

Implementation

There are factors teachers need to take into consideration concerning the implementation of local history projects. Local history provides especially fertile ground for improving learners' ability to contextualise their historical thinking skills (Clarke & Lee, 2021). During the project's implementation stage, the following topics will be explained: choosing the topic, time frame, interview schedule, and the primary sources needed. The use of local history projects in teaching

history allows learners to briefly experience the work of the researcher scholar (Jackson, 2020). Marino (2020) states that allowing the learners to follow these steps shapes their understanding to achieve the intended historical skills.

Choosing the Topic for the Project

The study of local history enriches the life and times of the community of a particular place by providing information related to the historical sites and societies (Bhar, 2018). Choosing a topic for the project must connect to learners' lives; hence, there are opportunities for more hands-on, real-world learning experiences outside the classroom (Crocco & Marino, 2017). The first critical choice that the learners should make is to decide on a topic, and the best way is to select a researchable topic (Adhikari, 2020). Teachers tend to ignore the ability of learners' ability to decide on the topic choice for their project, which limits their understanding (Hoyt & Morris, 2022). It does not matter what learners choose as long as it is relevant to their community and people are likely to know something about it (Sharro, 2022). Learners should select the topic they will focus on and genuinely spark their interest (Claunch, 2020). Subsequently, the teacher must ensure that learners will remain relevant and interested in the topic (Megyesi, 2020). What types of sources are relevant to the topic, such as books, historians, people to interview, and documents learners should choose from?

Time Frame for the Project

A local history project time frame allows the learners to schedule tasks to see what needs to be done and when and keep an eye on the project's overall performance and time frame (York, 2023). Ultimately, a project time frame is about time management, which may be essential for every project a learner can be involved with (Ceylan et al., 2020). According to Hancock et al. (2021), time frames help learners understand the chronology of historical events and help learners situate newly encountered events and figures concerning those already studied. They allow learners to recognise how historical events, areas, and topics overlap. A historical project must have a time frame; all those proposals are essential. Collectively, they help learners develop a long-range understanding of historical chronology as a skill. Every day, a history teacher begins a history lesson with a review of the time frame and learners give an account of what they have done (Crocco

& Marino, 2017). Learners do not need to account for every element of the project; they should just tell a story about a particular event or theme (Cebula, 2020).

Interview Schedule

Preparing in advance will offer an opportunity to become familiar with the project's content, get to know and build trust with the person to be interviewed, and test your recording equipment, if there is any (Sommer & Quillan, 2017). Teachers need to guide learners on how to interview, the most essential skill in studying history (Thomas, 2021); learners cannot interview without being adequately guided on how to do it. (Bratt, 2021) emphasised that the following techniques can be expected during the interview: how long the interview will take and who will be attending the interview besides the learner. Consent forms are a vital part of the interview when conducting project fieldwork (Leavy, 2022). The interviewer and the narrator must understand the intended purpose of the project. Learners have to write a report of the whole interview. A good interview schedule should have the following parts: the opening, the body, and the closing (Smith, 2022). The opening should always make the respondent feel welcomed and relaxed. Interviews require learners to listen, write, focus, communicate and react appropriately to what the respondent is saying; by so doing, learners will develop the much-needed skills.

Basic Sources Needed for the Project

When investigating our local past, we need to look at various sources and resources that can assist us in understanding who we are (SAHO, 2019), and those sources can play a prominent role in the completion of the project. For the learners to complete a project, they need different sources such as books, pictures, people, objects and writings (SAHO, 2019). Pictures are a great source to learn about local history (Barret, 2020). Learners will be developing visual literacy skills through the analysis of images (Mujiyati et al., 2019). One of the easiest ways to learn about local history is by looking at what has been written about it. Learners can go to a library and read about local history that has been documented, and by so doing, learners will be developing their reading skills, which the study seeks to achieve. In history, we do not rely only on written records and pictures to help find information about the past; objects left behind play a prominent role in information and are called artefacts (Findlen, 2021). People look for these artefacts and can tell much about those who left them behind. In this regard, learners develop the skill to be archaeologists.

This part of the study attempted to demonstrate how Social Science teachers, when following the correct steps of, planning stage, implementation stage, and the conclusion in teaching local history projects, can assist in developing learners' historical skills. As an enrichment lesson with the topic of a local history project, the purpose was to grow learners' interest in local history to improve their knowledge and develop their historical skills; on the other hand, teachers must make sure that the project is attractive and interesting (Sago, 2023). The study thus focuses on exploring teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom.

Research Methodology

To achieve the aim of this study, we grounded the study in the interpretive paradigm as this paradigm resonates with the characteristics of phenomenology. Interpretive study generally attempts to understand phenomena through the meaning people assign them (Chen et al., 2021). Because the study is interpretive, a qualitative research design was employed. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2019), qualitative research is concerned with answering questions about the relationship among variables being measured to explain phenomena. The researcher found this approach relevant to describe the teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

Participants in this study were five Social Sciences teachers from five different schools in Motheo District, Free State. The chosen schools were diverse and from other locations and different classifications. Data were generated through interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather data from five Social Science teachers who narrated their understanding and experience in the study. When the participants could not understand, probing and clarity were given to the participants. The interview took place after school and on Saturdays. As a researcher, we met once with all participants for only two hours. The researcher digitally recorded the interviews where the participants were giving their views and experiences, and the themes were formed from the two sources of information. When the researcher was unsatisfied with the answer, probing and follow-up questions were made (Paseka & Schwab, 2020).

After the interview, the researcher asked for the formal assessment documents the teacher uses to assess learners in first-term Grade 4, specifically the local history project. The researcher is

explicitly looking at the instruction of the project and the time frame given to the learners by the teacher; the form of assessing is fundamental. Data were analysed utilising qualitative content analysis (Puppis, 2022). The researcher had a semi-structured face-to-face interview to gather data from five Social Science teachers, and they gave me detailed experience on the subject matter. The researcher digitally recorded the talk during the interview, where teachers narrated their stories and experiences. Data were coded and categorised, and themes were identified in conjunction with (Mezmir, 2020). Lastly, I asked for their formal assessment of local history projects to understand the teacher's current practices of teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

Ethical Consideration

Before commencing the research, the researcher sought clearance from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2022/1748/22). The researcher also sought and was granted permission by the Free State Department of Education and the principals of the schools where the research was conducted. It is ethical to ask permission from authorities before conducting the study. The participants also consented to the study, were assured of their anonymity, and were given pseudonyms. It was also made clear that participation is voluntary and purely academic, and not for financial gain, and they could withdraw from the research without any repercussions.

Findings

The study explored the current teachers' practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. In response to the question: *What do Social Science use in their current practices in teaching local history project to develop learners' historical skills?* Three themes emerged: choosing and deciding on the topic, pre-administering, and fieldwork. An interpretation of each of these themes is provided below.

Choosing and deciding on the topic

In choosing the topic, one has to make sure that the topic is relevant to the subject matter, is within reach of the learners, and develops the learners' interest (Megyesi et al., 2020). In choosing the topic, both the teacher and the learners must reflect on what objectives the lesson seeks to achieve, and what strategies the teacher will employ to develop the most suitable topic for the learners that

will develop learners' historical skills. Literature has shown us that choosing an appropriate topic for learners must connect to what is happening inside and outside the classroom (Crocco & Marino, 2017). In selecting a suitable topic for the learners, the teacher first comprehends a list of topics for the learners to discuss, notwithstanding the age group of the learners (Adhikari, 2020). Hence, the teacher knows which resources are available in school and the community, and from literature, the teacher decides the topic (Bhar, 2018).

The teachers were asked: *How do you choose a suitable topic for your learners?* The teacher in school A responded by saying:

"It is the first time the learners in Grade 4 are doing a project; after we have a discussion of different topics, then I make a decision for a suitable topic for my learners and taking into consideration of available resources."

Similar response from the teacher in school B:

"I will ask learners about the origin of the name of their local area. Different answers come from the learners. Then I will give them a project to find out about the origin of the name of their locality."

The teacher in School C responded as follows:

"Firstly, I will divide the class into groups; while learners are brainstorming on different topics, learners give feedback about their discussion, then I make a final decision about the topics."

From the responses above, it is clear that the teachers are the ones who decide for the learners on the project topics. A totally different response was captured from the responses of the teachers from schools D and E, who responded by saying:

"I give learners total control of the project, with the help of their parents. Learners use their parents' cell phones to capture information about the project."

The teacher in School D responded as follows:

"I give learners an opportunity to decide on the topic and give learners the time to gather information about their local area. Learners share with the class about their findings."

By analysing the responses from the teachers, it is evident that both teachers and learners play a prominent role in choosing a suitable topic for the project. Literature has shown that teachers play a critical role in guiding learners' choice of an appropriate topic for a project; even though learners can come up with their own choices of topics, the final arbiter in this regard is the teacher (Bhar,

2018) which is in line with the principles of CP, which state that the principles have a progressive approach in teaching whose objective is to promote the development of critical thinking in the learners, to generate capable individuals (Namasasu, 2018). The teacher ensures that learners will remain relevant to the topic, what sources are available for the project and the topic that will spark their interest (Magyesi et al., 2020). The following section will be on pre-administration of the project.

Pre-Administering

In this project phase, general ideas germinate (Ashfag, 2023), and the intent and concepts of the work and the relationship form. It structures the outline and the coming together of ideas about the project (Evgen'ev, 2021). Hence, the intentions and the relations begin to take shape. This part of the project will ensure effective management of a local history project to develop learners' historical skills.

Teachers were asked the following question: *During the pre-administering process of the project, what was the discussion with the learners?* Three sub-themes emerged from the discussion.

Dealing with Project Instructions

Before learners embark on the fieldwork, the teacher must emphasise what the learners must do, that is, the instructions (Lynch, 2019). The same author emphasises that when a teacher gives instructions on a project, the teacher must be relevant to what they want to achieve with the learners. During this project stage, it is necessary to establish how the teachers instruct the learners. It was fascinating to see how teachers from different schools had a similar view in giving learners instructions. The teacher from school C has this to say:

"I make sure that learners understand the topic of the project, where to find information about the topic and the importance of the project."

The teachers in schools D and E echoed the same sentiments:

"When we discuss the instructions with my learners at his stage, we talk about the topic and discuss what is been expected of them."

"We make a thorough revision about the topic of the project and make sure that learners understand their expectations."

There seems to be a striking issue emanating from these responses, that is, the discussion of the topic; by that, it means the teachers are emphasising for the learners to master the skill of comprehending the topic before they embark on a project (Marino, 2020). Subsequently, CP, as a critical framework of the study, gives learners a voice to speak in a classroom (Serrano et al., 2020)

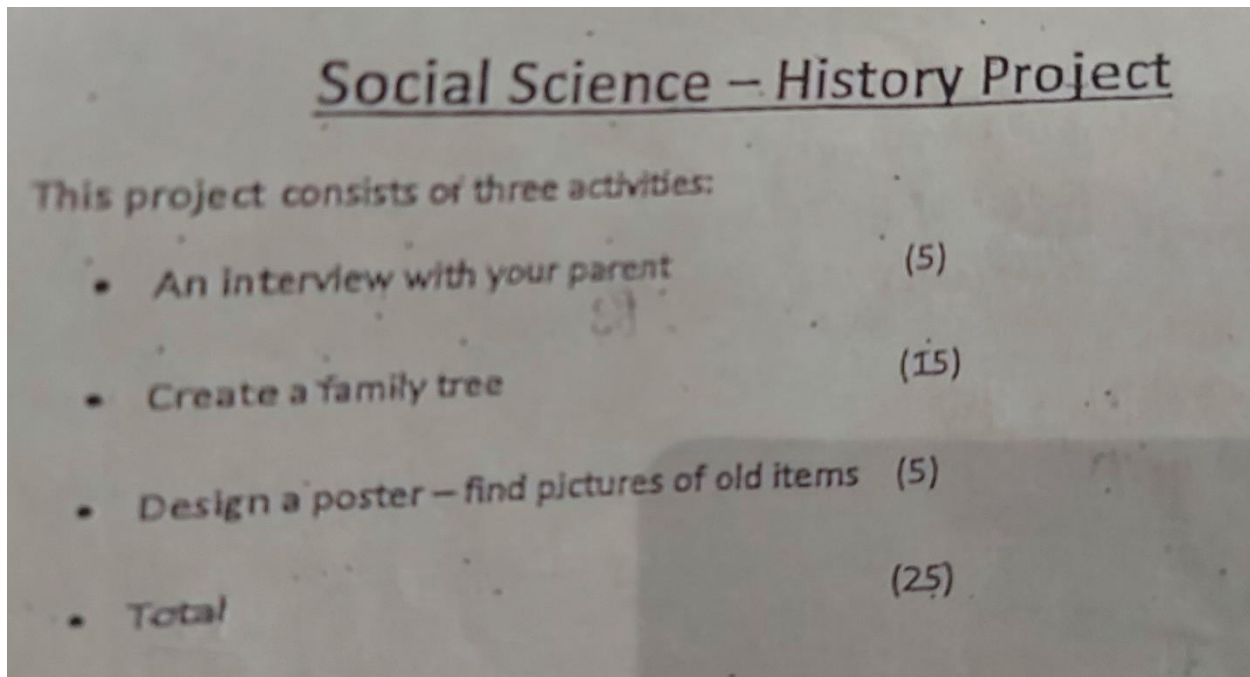
The Skills to be Addressed During Assessment

The local history project aims to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom. Therefore, the teacher should travel with the learners to understand these skills, engaging with multiple sources, interviews, chronology, exploring evidence, interpreting the facts based on evidence, and using imagination to have empathy and rationalise its meaning to understand the importance of history in today and future life (Maria, Ahmad & Awang, 2019). The teachers' view in the study shows that specific skills needed to be addressed even before they could start with the project. The response from the teacher in School B was:

"Before the learners can start the project, I encourage them to brainstorm the topic; by so doing, they learn to acquire knowledge from each other."

The following is the response from the teacher in school C, who shares a similar idea, and a picture from document analysis supported it:

"I encourage learners to go home and ask their parents some questions about their grandparents; by so doing, they develop interview skills."



Picture 1

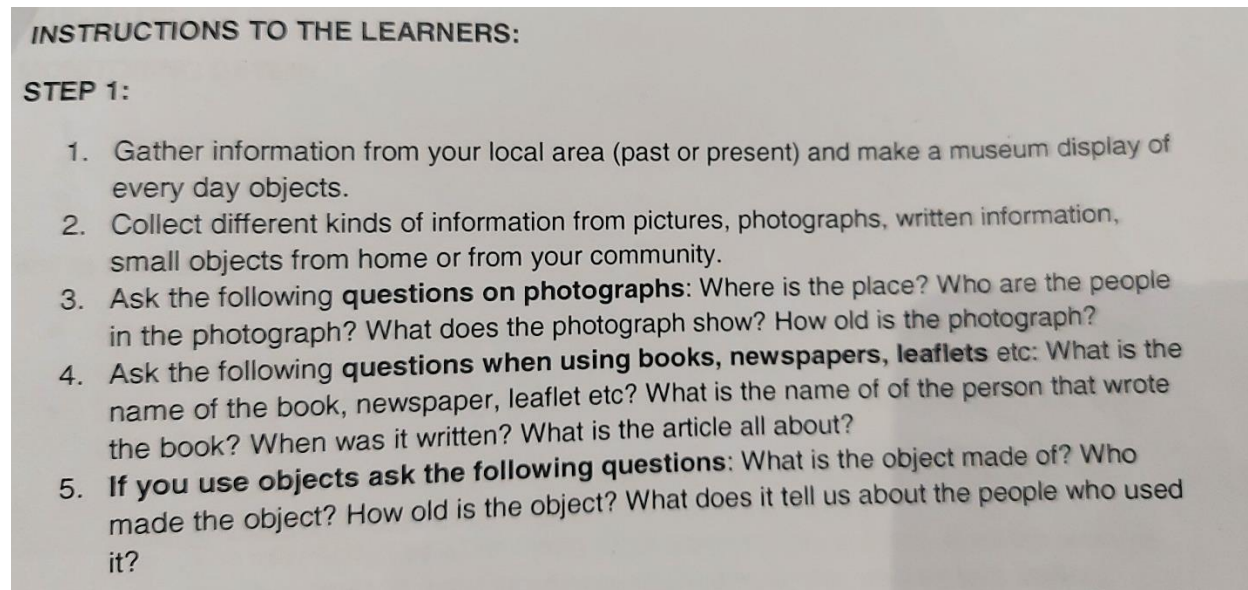
Analysing other teachers' responses shows that they are trying to develop. Still, it does not clearly show which skills can be attributed to the lack of understanding in giving learners local history projects, which will ultimately affect the desired intended objectives of the project to develop learners' historical skills.

Multiple Sources

Constructing meaning from multiple sources of information denotes a new form of literacy, which involves location, evaluating, and using diverse sources of information, digital and printed, to construct an integrated, meaningful mental representation of a particular issue, topic or situation (Swarts, 2022). Literature has shown that multiple sources are the primary way to interact with and understand more about what to learn (Noun & McComas, 2021). Learning from various sources is very important as it helps us understand and work out how we got there (Nokes, 2022). From the teacher's responses in school D, it is evident that the teacher addresses skills that will be assessed. When asked the question, the teacher has this to say:

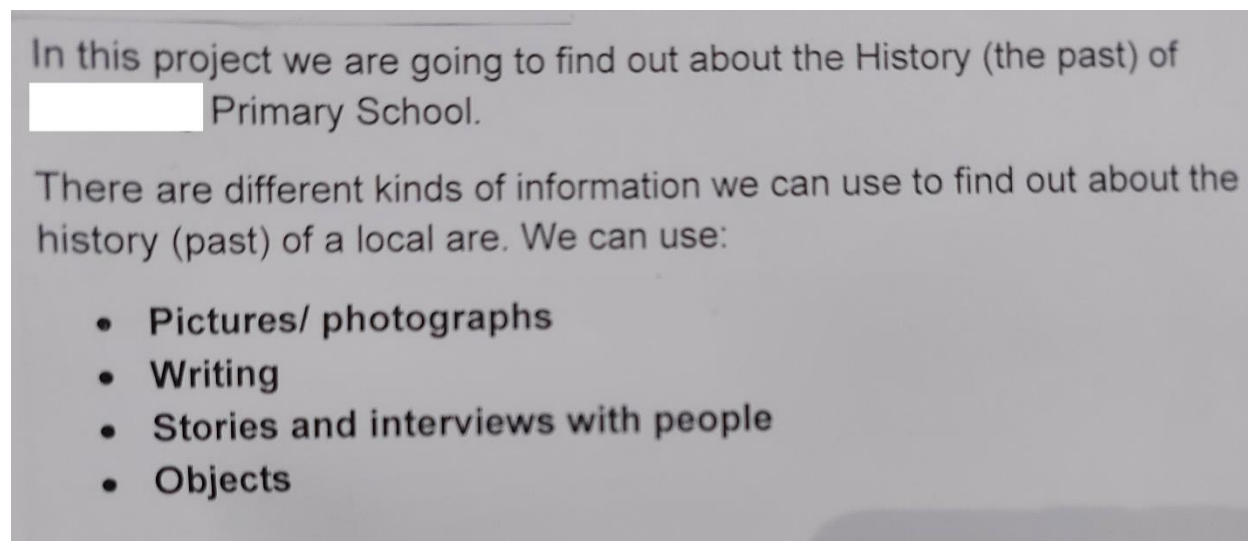
"I usually make sure that my learners use multiple sources to get information for the project."

The following picture from document analysis even supported this response from teacher D. It shows learners using multiple sources to find information.



Picture 2

Similarly, from the teacher in school B, during the perusal of the documents, I realised that learners use multiple sources to get information for the project, and this was the response when asked the question:



Picture 3

"I encourage learners to look for pictures, photographs, writings, and objects that can assist them to do the project."

The responses and perusal of teachers' documents from schools D and B clearly show that they use a strategy of multiple sources that can enhance and develop learners' historical skills, which is the study's aim. Literature has also demonstrated that using various sources allows learners to explore events and information to shape their society and discover what society was back then through interaction with multiple sources (Atari & Henrich, 2023). In the next section, the focus turns to field work's impact.

Field Work

The fieldwork approach helps learners think about how different historical sites represent the past, how they work to convey particular past, and other kinds of reading (Afandi & Baildon, 2021). It also focuses on how history is represented and how it has been used to communicate meaning about the identity of the past, present and future (Nordgren, 2016). Historical fieldwork can help learners become careful and critical readers of artefacts, sites, monuments, historical markers, and museum displays as sources of information to develop learners' historical skills (Levstik & Barton, 2015).

Teachers were asked: *What instructions are given when going on fieldwork?* Two sub-themes emerged in fieldwork.

Administering of the Project

In this part of the project, learners are given the instructions to start doing the project because now they have the structure. Learners are given the space to perform their tasks effectively as instructed. The teacher is there to support the learners (Shild, 2019). Teachers regard themselves as facilitators of the project. The teacher from school B responded to the question asked:

"The learners have to start searching for relevant information that will assist them; as a teacher, I will just facilitate the process."

Similar response from the teacher in school D:

"I will instruct the learners that they must doing the project; they must go and look for information. As the teacher, I will check and assist here as necessary."

A response from the teacher in school E:

"I instruct learners to go out in the field and collect as much information as possible, and I will assist them to organise it."

Through the responses from the teachers, it is evident that the teachers are giving learners instructions to go out to the field to search for information and come back to class to report to the teacher. Literature has shown that a local history project is a teacher-directed collaboration project in which learners do research and share the findings with their peers (Yasin, 2022). To develop learners' historical skills this is in line with our critical framework; according to Freire, he highlights the importance of having learners engaged actively in their learning process and being able to develop their own opinions (Kaya & Kaya, 2017).

Monitoring of the Project

Monitoring aids decision-making and improves the history project impact by maximising learning abilities (Arora et al., 2023). Furthermore, to generate the type of evidence at a particular time, try to use the most appropriate time to assess the effectiveness and quality of intervention (Gelmanova, 2023). Subsequently, Wittrich (2021) writes that monitoring is an ongoing process that is done to see if activities are going on track or not, and it has to start from the initial stage of the project; it provides information about the current status and has to help to make immediate remedial actions. The following question was posed to the teachers: *What steps do teachers take to monitor the project's progress?* The teachers employed various strategies to monitor progress. For instance, the teacher from school B gave the version of her response by saying:

"I keep my learners motivated by ensuring that I look at how far the learners are with their project once a week."

The teacher's response shows that the teacher had no tangible plan for monitoring the project. Once a week for two weeks, the project is monitored twice before submission.

A different version of the response from the following teachers. A response from the teacher in school A:

"I use a rubric or a marking guide to monitor the progress of learners; during the first ten minutes of the period, I do a spontaneous check."

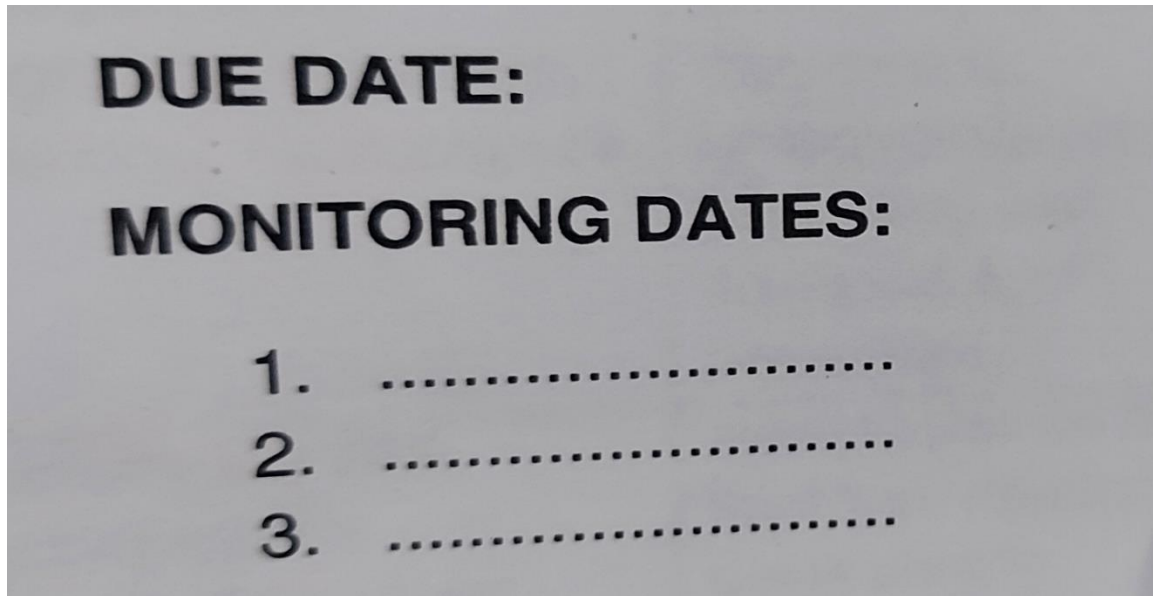
Similar response from the teacher in school C:

"The clear marking guide must be explained to the learners. The learners will be guided through all the steps by the rubric."

The teacher echoed the same sentiments in school E:

"The project is monitored by the marking tool, and the same marking tool will assist me to check progress of the learners."

The teacher from school D had the same views, but additional information from document analysis showed the monitoring dates.



Picture 4

"I have designed a monitoring tool, with the assistance of the marking guide; every day during the Social Science period, I monitor the progress of the learners using my monitoring tool."

A closer look at the teachers' responses implies that there is an understanding to monitor learners' progress. At the same time, they are busy with the project in conjunction with literature (Wittrich, 2021) who alluded to the fact that monitoring is an ongoing process. Moreover, teachers are using different forms of monitoring. Therefore, the understanding of monitoring that serves as a vehicle to monitor learners' progress to develop learners' historical skills has to be emphasised.

The discussion above shows that teachers know the aims and objectives of giving learners a local history project to develop their historical skills. Because they have different views and approaches, there is a need to explore the teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a structured way.

Discussion

The main research question for this article was 'to explore teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills'. Based on the participants' responses and document analysis, the researcher concluded that there are few opportunities for the learners to be exposed in local history projects to develop their historical skills in a Social Science classroom.

In the first instance, teachers understand that they should expose learners to different topics before starting the project. Crocco and Marino (2017) write that learners should be exposed to various topics. Still, when choosing a suitable topic for the learners, it must connect to what is happening inside and outside the classroom. However, despite the teachers' understanding of exposing learners to different topics, there are some challenges to some of the teachers who lack knowledge on how to give learners a project. Teachers do not expose learners to various topics so that they can make a choice. Consequently, this limits the learners' understanding in the development of learners' historical skills.

In the second instance, learners were exposed to a local history project on what to do during pre-administering the project. Literature has shown that when a teacher deals with the instructions of pre-administering a project, the teacher must be relevant to what they want to achieve together with the learners (Lynch, 2019). The study has revealed that some teachers lacked content knowledge on how to give learners instructions from the beginning of the project until the end of the project. The researcher discovered three steps as the participants responded to the questions: pre-administering, administering, and post-administering. Instructional strategy plays a prominent role in developing the learners' skills. Therefore, the failure of the teacher to give learners appropriate instructions in this stage can lead to the failure of the intended objective of the project. Fieldwork is the most critical phase of the project because it is when the learners go out and do the actual work; the project's success and failure are based on this phase. The researcher observed no proper structure or tool to monitor the project because they relied only on the marking guide. This lack of adequate monitoring structure goes against the idea of Ataro (2023), who asserts that monitoring aid decision and lead to improvement in local history project can impact through maximising the learning available.

Lastly, during the post-administering of the project, it must align with the study's objectives to realise the development of learners' historical skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This article aims to elicit by exploring teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. When data obtained from the output of participants were examined, the findings of this study suggest that Social Science teachers who participated in this study did not create adequate opportunities during the teaching of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The participants' views on local history studies were analysed, and it was observed that skills that are required when conducting research and choosing a topic were not adequately emphasised. The quality of understanding of the instructions during the pre-administering the project, skills to be addressed, the expectations during the fieldwork, and the post-administering of the project are effective tools to encourage teachers to provide a deeper understanding of how to deal with local history project to develop learners' historical skills.

The study was limited to five schools based on the socio-economic background. Similar studies can be conducted at other schools, considering that local history can be utilised at all levels of primary schools.

It will be appropriate for the department to organise in-service training for the teachers to grasp the importance of local history. Various research methods can be used to develop teachers' awareness of local history and perception of change and continuity as a recommendation.

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CHAPTER 4
ARTICLE 3

**EXPLORING TEACHERS' CHALLENGES OF USING LOCAL HISTORY
CURRICULUM PROJECT TO DEVELOP LEARNERS' HISTORICAL SKILLS**

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Exploring teachers' challenges of using local history curriculum project to develop learners' historical skills

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Abstract: This study seeks to explore the teachers' challenges in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skill. Believing that, the study will provide opportunities for learners to acquire local history knowledge, which will enable them to make informed historical decisions about their locality. In spite of the importance of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills and knowledge, learners' academic achievement in Social Science as a subject will improve. To achieve the aim and objective of the study, the study uses critical pedagogy as a critical framework, along with interpretive paradigm to guide the qualitative approach. The study purposefully sampled five participants from five different schools. Semi-structured interviews were used as data collection strategy. Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data. The researchers' findings shows that Social Science teachers who participated in the study have a myriad of challenges in teaching local history projects to develop learners historical skills. In mitigating these challenges, the Department of Education should come with strategies to organize work-shops to empower teachers specifically on the teaching of local history projects using available resources. The paper also suggests that a collaborative effort of relevant stakeholders to come together in assisting the schools.

Keywords: Local history project;, historical skills; teaching history.

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INTRODUCTION

The study explores teachers' challenges' in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The subject of history represents transferring and investigating the previous events that have been occurring since creation until the present, which are related to human beings and their life aspects (Stearns, 2020). Through history, the present is being formed, and the future is being drawn (Jacobs, 2022). Rapid change and development in this field also significantly manifest in Social Science as a school subject (Byrne & Callaghan, 2022). The study of history develops several mental, social, and motor skills, such as critical thinking skills (Suddaby et al., 2023).

Furthermore, these skills are considered necessary in light of the information and knowledge explosion era that the world is currently witnessing (Abbas et al., 2023). Subsequently, these skills impose the necessity of learning new thinking skills such as innovative thinking, critical thinking, and historical thinking skills to face the considerable challenge of the era (Tirado et al., 2023); hence, the new way of teaching and learning history requires that the subject must focus on developing learners' historical skills.

When looking at local history, learners are presented with concepts of history thinking, which offers spatial awareness, a sense of chronology, and the capacity to put their lives in a historical context (Aktin & Tekir, 2018). Local history has been positioned as research and a project activity under out-of-school learning and other approaches (Dere et al., 2019). Therefore, local history project is considered to help learners think historically by providing evidence that can be interpreted and deduced (Marino & Crocco, 2012). Literature has shown that the study of local history project methods can be applied at all levels of education systems, from primary schools to higher education. Still, it is appropriate for primary school learners needing concrete learning (Oner, 2015). Furthermore, scholars such as Dutt-Doner et al. (2016) emphasized that oral strategies in presenting local history

are a powerful pedagogical tool that can be used in the classroom to develop learners' historical skills. Local history brings history alive to learners by capturing and connecting personal stories and historical events to them (Levstik & Barton, 2022).

Over and above, Whalen (2019) identified some challenges experienced by teachers when teaching local history, which includes confronting learners' choices and multidisciplinary teaching of History and Geography. Beginning history teachers face challenges when entering the schooling system: content knowledge, growing emphasis on the standard of accountability, an increasingly diverse learner population and the lack of support and mentoring (Cochran-Smith, 2012).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the importance of teaching learners local history projects in schools to develop their historical skills, proper curriculum implementation is yet to be realized, as demonstrated by the challenges teachers face (Walters & Kopcha, 2020). Bertram (2019) asserts that a plethora of evidence and a growing body of research show a problem with teaching local history projects that do not seem to develop learners' historical skills.

Kabombwe and Mulenga (2019) add that teachers teach local history projects that are teacher-centred and focus mainly on content and not on developing historical skills such as historical thinking skills. Furthermore, through the local history projects, learners can question, apply, and consolidate new knowledge (Robison & Adjai, 2022). National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2005) and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) endorsed this educational approach in South Africa (Sexton & Cole, 2023). Despite all these successive interventions, teaching and learning remain challenging in schools (Modisaotsile, 2012). Some teachers still follow the traditional ways of teaching, which restrict learners' understanding and absorption of the facts and concepts described in the history curriculum

and that hinders learners' development of historical skills (Moseikina et al., 2022).

In this regard, there must be an emphasis that the teaching way is significant and essential in achieving the educational curriculum objectives based on local history curriculum objectives aiming to develop learners' historical skills, especially historical research skills (Herrera, 2022). The researcher found that the underlying reasons for that avoidance were their challenge of low experience and knowledge levels of the local history research skills, what made local history teaching reality and its teaching methods, a real challenge that needs to be investigated.

CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Pedagogy will guide the study as a critical framework. Bradshaw (2017) asserts that Critical Pedagogy is more than a theory; it is an inclusive teaching practice in which teachers consider how learners' distinct identities will influence their classroom experience. CP is an effective strategy to enhance critical understanding to give learners a voice to speak in a classroom (Gibson, 2020). Freire emphasized that CP is a vital approach to education, highlighting the importance of having a learner engaged actively in the learning process and developing their own opinion and position in a classroom (Giroux, 2020).

There must be a dialogue between the teacher and the student, and this dialogue-based approach engages students in questioning and exchanging ideas to inquire and learn (Giroux & Bosio, 2021). Dialogue requires critical thinking and can also generate critical thinking, one of the skills that can be developed by using local history projects (Paige & Hardy, 2019). The other principle of CP that makes it relevant to the study is the principle of connecting learning with real life; it comes from the concept of education that shows how learning is far from real-life situations (Mc Laren & Bosio, 2022). Students only memorize what the teacher transfers, as alluded to (Macrine, 2020). This memorization does not bring tangible learning

into the students' lives; there is no connection between child learning and real-life situations. Using local history can connect learning to real-life situations, as it is supported by Magill and Solinas (2019), who write that by bringing objects, statements, text, and pictures to explain, compare and evaluate, the students can argue in a real-life situation. Lastly, the principle of hands-on study activity by Yannier et al. (2020) connects students to the community. It has shown that even low-scoring students improved their performance, and at the end of the year, all students got a sound report card.

Kincheloe (2011) made CP more relevant to the study because of the role of teachers and parents and their focus on children's education so that it is not away from the child's point of view and their construction of reality. Critical pedagogy is not a new strategy in teaching and learning; it helps learners create knowledge with keen understanding (Joseph & Gandolfi, 2022). Education aims to enhance learners' critical awareness, and teachers and parents are the most influential characters to guide learners. They can make them enthusiastic about learning for life and its pursuit of the study's objective, which seems to explore teachers' challenges of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) emphasizes the significance of History as a subject, empowering learners with historical skills (Kgari-Masondo, 2019). This challenge poses a critical gap that this study seeks to posit, and the challenge is how teachers can teach local history projects to develop learners' historical skills, which affects the quality of teaching and learning. To position the study to make meaning, we need to define both concepts, local history and local history project, and firstly, I will give a perspective on local history.

Local History

Local history is a concept taught as a narrative or a topic that refers to a particular place

(Howe, 2020). Research regarding local history collects all kinds of past documents, even academic documents that studied some areas; those writings collections construct local history narratives (Pasternak, 2009). Magro et al. (2014) add that local history is the study of history in a geographically local context and often concentrates on the local community. It incorporates cultural and social aspects of history. Colla (2023) gives similar ideas when defining local history by referencing the study documentation of a specific geographical area, generally focusing on vents, people, and cultural aspects within a particular community, town, city, or region. Conversely, Fardi (2022) adds that local history involves researching and recording various aspects of the past, such as significant events, notable figures, community development, local traditions, industries, architecture, and landmarks. Local history provides insight into an area's unique characteristics and heritage, emphasizing its importance in understanding the broader historical context and preserving a community's cultural identity (Joyner, 2022).

Local History Project

The study of local history projects has a strong argument; hence, it must provide data and information from the sources and show evidence (Fitrisia et al., 2023). The concept is supported by Mallik and Bhar (2018) when defining local history projects as giving information about the study in the past and the region under study; generally, it tends to be geographically cities, towns, or villages. Zurndorfer (2022) extended the definition of local history project as the study of the history of our home places, including the history of our families, description of tradition, country cuisine and folklore. Furthermore, Khalifa (2020) emphasized that the study of local history projects is the inquiry that pupils engage with their immediate relevance to their own lives, families, streets, and communities, and it informs peoples' identity. Moreover, Kincheloe (2001) presents the teaching of local history projects as rooted in historiography, commonly referred to as the

study of history, while comparing perspectives taken by different historians.

The Value of Teaching Local History

Abbas et al. (2022) assert that the prominent value of teaching learners local history helps them better understand their community and the inequalities in education, poverty, health outcomes and other issues they see around them every day. Charamba (2020) further writes that local history's value helps children make sense of their immediate world. However, it is not just a case of bombarding them with local facts. Good local history involves inquiry that allows children to investigate, drawing on their previous historical knowledge and understanding to develop their skills.

Furthermore, Ford (2016) alluded that bringing local history into the classroom helps learners better understand their values and themselves. Most importantly, local history is the primary learning media and source for learners because learners can understand the material they are working with for them to develop various skills and value of local wisdom, apply to them (Khalifa, 2020) In the next section of the study, I will deal with the challenges teachers face in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

The Challenges of Teaching Local History Projects

Recent research in the teaching and learning of local history advocates instructional approaches that engage learners in history, including building historical knowledge through primary sources, conducting historical inquiry, and engaging learners to develop historical skills (Dobson & Ziemann, 2020). To teach learners to do local history project, teachers must understand how to teach them; in other words, teachers must have a deeper understanding of what local history project is and how local history inquiry is conducted (Vander Ark et al., 2020). Thus, teachers face many challenges in teaching local history, especially local history projects, as are elucidated below.

Understanding of Local History

De Regt and Baumberger (2019) state that to have understanding is to be able to put the pieces together and use such to do things, that is, to solve problems and to create new ideas. Knowledge and understanding come in three varieties: proportional, integrative, and objective knowledge. It is when the teachers understand how to perform their duties diligently using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Boty et al. (2023) assert that, from the teachers' perspective, it is hard to find real, local history in textbooks, and it takes courage to teach this hidden history, which poses a severe challenge. Furthermore, teachers must understand that local history contains a wealth of details and stories that help reveal how social changes impacted the lives of ordinary people (Fitrisia, Ningsih & Mulyoni, 2023).

Subsequently, teachers need to understand by engaging learners in critical thinking exercises and historical research about topics related to their immediate community; learners can better understand the complexities of time, place and change within history (Khoir, 2023). Over and above, local history allows teachers to know how to utilize interesting primary sources readily accessible within the region or community that may not be considered when teaching more available content (Pollard et al., 2023). Engaging learners in exploring the unique stories tied to their local regions can elicit curiosity, creativity, and personal connection to the materials (Sari & Sunardi, 2023).

Teachers must understand the importance and meaning of local history and incorporate it into the classroom curriculum, and that can be a great way to make fun and engaging (Rock, 2022). Whatever methods teachers employ by engaging with local history, learners can learn about their heritage and feel a part of something more significant in the process (Usman, 2023).

Focus on Historical Skills

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grade R-12 expresses the knowledge, skills and values worth learning in South African schools. (DBE, 2019) alluded to the fact that this curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes understanding in a local context while being sensitive to global imperatives (DBE, 2011). History is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past to explain how people, events and forces from the past have shaped our world (Lee, 2023).

According to Byrom (2014), to acquire knowledge and understanding of history, skills associated with identifying, comprehending, and interpreting sources, use of chronology and research, and communication need to be developed. These historical skills are developed through a process of inquiry and enable learners to engage with history, explore, discover, inquire, and, most importantly, experience history (Santiago & Dozono, 2022). Most importantly, historical thinking skills help learners in other aspects to make meaningful conclusions about past event and their effects on the present (Park & Cho, 2022). Consequently, Abbas et al. (2023) write that the following types of historical thinking skills can help learners make inferences about the past: chronological reasoning, historical research, historical analysis, interpretation and synthesis, argumentation, and problem-solving.

As a challenge, teachers' shortage of knowledge of local history projects influences teachers' readiness to develop these skills (Tenreiro-Vieira, 2018). Literature has found that teachers' excessive use of textbooks left no room to refer to other reference books, which hinders the development of learners' skills in teaching local history projects (Thorp & Persson, 2020). Furthermore, depending on the single text would not enable learners to use the skills of interpreting, imagining and rationalizing the facts (Aktin, 2020).

The absence of sensitivity to events happening around us ended up with the teacher merely based on facts, which has

limited the teacher's ability to stimulate learners to interpret facts as a skill (Yang, 2015). Kessner and Harris (2022) assert that by focusing on these skills, teachers can be able to determine key areas to improve to enhance teaching and learning to develop historical skills in a classroom, and these skills in history are to be taught using the content described in the syllabus for each stage of learning.

Teacher Content Knowledge, Teaching and Assessment

According to Tirri and Kuusisto (2022), it is common knowledge that teachers need content knowledge to teach, and most everyone subscribes to the axiom that 'teachers cannot teach what they do not know and understand'. Hence, teachers must have deep knowledge of their teaching subject to inspire high-quality learners (Spaul, 2013). Furthermore, Saputra (2022) notes that teachers greatly influence the teaching and learning of the subject matter they are teaching. Content knowledge for teachers is not just a collection of facts about the subject but a deeper understanding of the core concepts involved in the subject the teacher is teaching (Bertram et al., 2023).

Teachers with a deep understanding of the subject they are teaching are more likely to be able to integrate learners' interests with the activities they are teaching (Allender, 2020). Gardiner (2019) writes that teachers who teach subjects with no content knowledge will most likely not have adequate skills to teach the subject, compromising teaching and learning. The whole notion is supported by Senali et al. (2022) when they emphasized that teachers cannot teach subjects that they do not know of.

Atubi and Dania (2022) made mention of the intricacies of planning both History and Geography by the teacher to teach learners. The challenge is that some teachers are more conversant in History or Geography (Simfukwe, 2023). The content of the two subjects is essential because it is what the teachers teach during teaching and learning

(Seekane, 2022). Admiral et al. (2017) add that most teachers teaching History and Geography are not comfortable with one of the subjects. Akhmedov (2023) maintains that teaching is determined by the teachers' subject knowledge and understanding. Hence, the teachers need to have knowledge of both subject matters.

On the other hand, assessment is regarded as the most critical aspect of teaching and learning that determines if learning has taken place, and this implies that assessment is the cornerstone of learning because it gauges the depth of learning and understanding (Barber, 2014). Webb, Matome and Troy (2021) unearthed challenges teachers and the education system face in moving from curriculum development to effective implementation of competency-based teaching and assessment practices that seek to understand clear skills. The assessment must identify best practices, given that skills are visible to teachers' observation and teacher professional development in teaching and assessing skills (Joynes & Rossignoli, 2019). Eadie (2021) adds that the challenge teachers face is that the current teaching and assessment system used for measuring academic scores cannot adapt to the current demand of developing learners' innovative skills. Subsequently, currently, there is little substantial evidence on the effective teaching strategies and assessment tools approaches to develop learners' skills (Evans, Thompson & Brandt, 2020).

Lack of Resources

Literature has found that learning and teaching resources are essential to any education system (Ndebele & Mbodila, 2022). Conversely, du Plessis and Letshwene (2020) assert that lack of resources in schools affect performance in both primary and secondary schools in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Lack of resource materials, like charts, posters, flashcards, maps, and teachers' resource centres, play a significant role in the learning process of learners (Mgadi & Proches, 2020).

Hence, the literature asserts that if recourse materials are available and used wisely, they significantly enhance lesson impact in developing learners' skills (Lockett & Shay, 2020). Bartelds and Savenije (2020), supported by Kassymova et al. (2020), alluded that a wide variety of instructional resources can stimulate interest and actively engage learners in the learning process.

Historical resources like diaries, letters, drawings, and memories created by those who participated in or witnessed the events of the past, if available, can tell us something that even the best-written article or book cannot convey in the teaching and learning of local history projects (Moore, 2020). Furthermore, the availability and the use of primary sources expose learners to critical historical concepts (Levstik & Barton, 2022). Therefore, learners become aware that all written history reflects an author's interpretation of past events. Thorp and Persson (2020) note that when learners use primary sources, they develop critical analytical skills, which the study seeks to achieve. By properly using primary sources, learners directly touch the lives of people in the past.

Teachers must turn their classrooms into an active local history laboratory with available resources. Local history resources and teacher imagination are enough when learners and teachers participate together in the exciting and evolving process of historical inquiry in terms of knowledge, developing skills, and interest that can be great and lasting (Blevins & Magill, 2020).

Lack of Parental Support

Parents are their children's first educators; therefore, their support affects children's development, learning and educational outcomes (Gabriela et al., 2022), including direct support to learning before and during formal education, as well as indirect facilitating of factors such as nutrition, health, and hygiene (Boyette et al., 2023). Support tasks range from school and home communication to assistance in home learning activities (Pollard et al., 2023).

According to Nurhayati et al. (2023), parents do not understand how to assist their children at home in dealing with local history projects because of the lack of knowledge and understanding. The parent's non-availability to support the children when dealing with local history projects demoralizes the learners' confidence (Sebu, 2023). Parents play a prominent role in educating their children in school and out-of-school contexts as community leaders and managers of resource centres in the community where the school is based. They should understand how to assist and support their children (Lombardi et al., 2023). The lack of proper communication channels between teachers and parents to assist the learner in dealing with local history projects poses a serious challenge (Lawal, 2021).

RESERARCH METHODOLOGY

The study aims to explore teachers' challenges of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills and achieve this study's aim; the study is grounded in the interpretive paradigm as this paradigm resonates with the characteristics of phenomenology (Samuels, Reddy & Brown, 2022), requiring the participants to share their interpretation and experience hence the study used interpretive approach (Leavy, 2022). Because the study is interpretive, a qualitative research design was employed. According to Khoa et al. (2023), qualitative research is concerned with answering questions about the relationship among variables being measured to explain phenomena. The researcher found this approach relevant to describe the teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

Participants in this study were five Social Sciences teachers from five different schools in Motheo District, Free State. The chosen schools were diverse and from other locations and different classifications. Data were generated through interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured face-to-

face interviews were conducted to gather data from five Social Science teachers who narrated their understanding and experience in the study. When the participants could not understand, probing and clarity were given to the participants. The interview took place after school and on Saturdays. As a researcher, we met once with all participants for only two hours. The researcher digitally recorded the interviews where the participants gave their views and experiences, and the themes were formed from the two sources of information. When the researcher was unsatisfied with the answer, probing and follow-up questions were made (Knott et al., 2022).

After the interview, the researcher asked for the formal assessment documents the teacher uses to assess learners in first-term Grade 4, specifically the local history project. The researcher is explicitly looking at the instruction of the project and the time frame given to the learners by the teacher; the form of assessing is fundamental. Data were analyzed utilizing qualitative content analysis (Nasiri et al., 2023). The researcher had a semi-structured face-to-face interview to gather data from five Social Science teachers, and they gave me detailed experience on the subject matter. The researcher digitally recorded the talk during the interview, where teachers narrated their stories and experiences. Data were coded and categorized, and themes were identified in conjunction with (Ningi, 2022). Lastly, I asked for their formal assessment of local history projects to understand the teacher's current practices of teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before commencing the research, the researcher sought clearance from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2022/1748/22). The researcher also sought and was granted permission by the Free State Department of Education and the principals of the schools where the research was conducted. It is ethical to ask permission from authorities before conducting the study.

The participants also consented to the study, were assured of their anonymity, and were given pseudonyms. It was also made clear that participation is voluntary and purely academic, and not for financial gain, and they could withdraw from the research without any repercussions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study explores the teachers' challenges in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. In responding to the question '*What are the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers when teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?*', the researcher identified the following themes after deciphering data from the interviews: the understanding of local history projects, teachers content knowledge, lack of resources, and the lack of parental support when dealing with local history projects. The following section will present data based on the identified themes, and the presentation will include interviews.

Understanding of local history projects

To have an understanding is to have the power to comprehend and grasp nature and its significance (Mogea, 2023). As in education, understanding can be viewed as a process by which the students create personal meaning or representation of what is being experienced (Henderson & Cunningham, 2023). Furthermore, Tolman and Kremling (2023) assert that the student's understanding may be the same as teachers. It is when the teachers understand how to perform their duties to develop learners' historical skills. It was imperative to establish how the participants experienced their understanding of how local history projects are being done in their respective schools. Listening to the teachers' responses about their challenges in understanding local history projects was intriguing.

The teacher in School A responded by saying:

"According to my understanding of local history projects, it helps learners to learn about their community."

The same response was echoed by the teacher in School B, who responded:

"I believe that in a local history project, learners will be able to learn about their community history."

The teacher in School C responded by saying:

"My understanding of teaching learners' local history projects is to give learners a chance to learn about their local community."

By looking at the responses of the three teachers, their understanding focuses only on the community. Although it may be viewed as limiting in the understanding of teaching local history projects, it is coherent with the definition of local history projects provided in literature by (Brown & Woodcorck, 2019), who emphasizes local history as the learners' communities. The study of local history projects is viewed by others as concerned with many subjects within a particular area, factual events, cultural heritage and folklore (Nilson & Thorell, 2018).

A different response from the teachers in schools D and E:

"In local history projects is where we teach learners to find out about the history of different landmarks in their community."

A similar response from the teacher in School E:

"When teaching local history projects, learners have to find out about the history of their local community through different ways and artefacts."

The response from both teachers in schools D and E shows that they are aware of the actions that learners will be expected to undertake in generating new knowledge about their community as they teach, which is in line with Hampton and Wheeler (2017), who contends that the teaching and the understanding of local history projects is the study of history in a geographically, local content, often concentrating on a relatively local community. The assertion is in line with our critical framework, where Freire emphasizes that critical pedagogy highlights the importance of having a learner engaged actively in the

learning process and being able to develop their own opinion and position in a classroom (Giroux, 2020).

Teachers content knowledge

Content knowledge refers to the body of knowledge, facts, theories, principles, ideas, and vocabulary, which a teacher must master to be effective (Jacobs et al., 2020). Teachers should have a deeper understanding of their subject matter and the corresponding curriculum subject content knowledge (Reardon & Derner, 2023). Hence, teachers need to have deep knowledge of the subjects they are teaching to inspire high-quality learners (Spaul, 2013). The content knowledge the teachers have must seek to develop learners' historical skills when dealing with local history projects. In trying to get a deeper understanding of teachers' content knowledge, these were the responses from participants:

A response from the teacher in School A was:

"I am a new teacher in the school, with two years' experience, and I am still learning."

The teacher echoed the same sentiments in School B:

"The challenge in our school is that the management has the tendency to temper with subject allocation during the end of each year, which by itself brings about instability in our school; hence, I am new in teaching the subject."

The response from teachers A and B shows that the challenge is about the lack of experience in teaching the subject. Teaching experience is critical because it combines developed skills, exposure, and training that helps a teacher to do current work more effectively (Hopkins, 2023), especially working with students to facilitate their learning; over and above, it increases one's confidence. It is imperative that teachers must have experience in the subject they are teaching.

The teacher in School D responded by saying:

"What I have realized in our school is that teachers lack pedagogical content knowledge, meaning not knowing how to teach History, even before the teacher can proceed with the content knowledge of local history."

A response from the teacher in School E was: *"Social Science as a subject has two disciplines, that is History and Geography; therefore, you find a teacher being more comfortable in Geography than History and poses a serious challenge."*

Concerning the response from teachers D and E, it clearly shows that teachers don't possess the knowledge to teach the subject. Still, literature has shown us that it is common knowledge that teachers need content knowledge to teach the subject effectively (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2022). Spaul (2013) further states that teachers must deeply understand their teaching subject to inspire highly quality learners. Teachers must acquire adequate knowledge to teach the subject in schools.

A completely opposing view from the teacher in School C, who mentioned that teachers seem to have lost their passion for teaching Social Science.

Passion is infectious. Love of the subject inspires a person to learn more, dig deep, and think harder about it, so passion inspires and deepens knowledge (Mohler, 2023). Teachers need to be motivated to be inspired.

Lack of resources

Resources in teaching and learning help the teacher structure a lesson and incorporate many different ways of learning into a single session (Manegre & Sabiri, 2022). Conversely, Ndebele and Mbodila (2022) assert that teaching time becomes difficult or monotonous when relying on other things without relevant resources. Furthermore, literature has found that teaching and learning resources are essential to any education system (Akram et al., 2022); therefore, teacher needs to incorporate as many resources in their teaching methods to inspire teaching and learning in schools. Participant responses were as follows:

A response from the participant in School A:

"Learners cannot go to the library because they lack financial resources, learners have to travel, learners do not have magazines, I have to provide."

A response from the participant in School B with the same sentiments:

"Learners are staying far away from the library; they cannot have access to the resources in the library."

The participant in School C said,

"Learners lack resources, like the internet, to assist them with their project; the cellphones are there, but they struggle with data."

A response from the participant in School D:

"The learners don't have enough materials or resources to display and demonstrate the project expectations."

Similar response from the participant in School E:

"Incomplete project as a result of not having access to resources, like computers."

Looking at all the responses from the participants shows that there is a challenge of access to resources. Research has shown that if resources and materials are available and used wisely, they significantly enhance lesson impact in developing learners' skills (Luckett & Shay, 2020). Critical pedagogy is the frame that guides the study; it makes it clear that by bringing objects, statements, text, and pictures to explain, compare and evaluate, the student can argue in real-life situations (Magill & Solinas, 2019).

Lack of parental support

Learners whose parents stay involved in school have better attendance and behavior, get better grades, demonstrate better social skills and adapt better in schools (Epstein, 2022). Furthermore, parental involvement and support also set these learners up to develop a lifelong love of learning, which researchers say is the key to long-term success (Goodall, 2022). Parents must feel free to tell their children stories about similar projects and what knowledge and skills they used as a child (Bhahami et al., 2020). Black (2022) further contends that frequent conversations with the child about the project will assist the

child in developing communication and interactive skills.

Participants responded by answering the question, and this is what they said:

A response from the participant in School A:

"Parents have no transport to take their children to the library. Also, parents complain that they have no money for magazines."

The same response from the participant in School B:

"Learners complain that parents at home are not interested in helping them."

The participant in School C:

"The teachers realize that learners bring to school the incomplete project, and when they ask, the learner said they did not assist at home."

The participant in School D responded by saying:

"The lack of parental involvement in our school is a serious challenge; hence, learners bring the incomplete project. As a school, we have called a meeting to engage parents and show them the importance of assisting their children with school work in general."

The exact assertion from the participant in School E:

"Lack of support from home is a serious crisis here at our school that needs to be addressed."

From the discussion above, based on the responses from participants, it is evident that there are challenges concerning the understanding of local history projects because teachers have to develop specific skills. Content knowledge is very critical; hence, it is the one that drives the motive of the teacher. The most critical challenge is the issue of resources and parental support regarding the participants' responses.

Discussion

The main research question for this study is to explore the teachers' challenges of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Concerning the analysis of teachers' responses, the study discovered that teachers lack a thorough understanding of teaching learners' local history projects to develop their

skills. As Fitriasia et al. (2023) write, teachers must understand that local history contains a wealth of details and stories that help reveal how social changes impacted the lives of ordinary people. This statement was not emulated from the data collected. Thus, whatever method teachers are using in the classroom when engaging with local history, teachers must make sure that learners have the opportunity to learn about their heritage and feel part of something more significant in the process (Usman, 2023); at the end, it develops learners historical skills. There seem to be critical gaps, especially in the teacher's understanding of the teaching of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

The study findings also reveal that teachers' content knowledge is impacted negatively towards teaching local history projects because of the lack of experienced teachers teaching the subject. Some teachers are novice teachers who just entered the field, and teaching History and Geography as a stand-alone subject poses a severe challenge. Literature has shown that teachers should have a deeper understanding of the subject matter they teach and the corresponding curriculum subject content knowledge (Reardon & Dermer, 2023). History and Geography should not be treated as stand-alone subjects but must be taught in collaboration.

From the data generated, it was also evident that teachers responded out of frustration when one of the teachers remarked that learners submit incomplete projects as a result of not having access to resources. Du Plessis and Letshwene (2020) alluded that the lack of resources in schools affects performance in both primary and secondary schools in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills, which is further supported by Ndebele and Mbodila (2023), who said that in learning and teaching resources are an essential part of any education system. The availability of relevant resources makes teaching and learning easy, and positive results are attainable.

The quality of local history projects depends on the positive support of parents.

Parents can help their children by participating in school activities, advocating for the school, and improving their children's work (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Moreover, research shows that learners' academic achievement and the presence of home-based activities are more linked with school-based activities (Jeynes, 2022). For some parents, being supportive and involved means dropping off and picking up their child from school or asking whether their homework is complete, which is a challenge (Alharthi, 2023). Conversely, this is not to say those things are negative or unhelpful. The research is clear: parents and family support create better outcomes for learners, and learners are more likely to achieve better grades and score higher on tests.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study explores teachers' challenges of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Based on the participants' views and voices, there is a need, for instance, to empower workshops on the understanding of local history, particularly local history projects, to emphasize developing learners' historical skills. Another recommendation from the study's findings is that teachers must constantly equip themselves with curriculum content knowledge and how to use different teaching strategies in their daily teaching—using available teaching and learning resources specifically for teaching local history to arouse learners' interest.

The Free State Department of Basic Education should prioritize issuing relevant resources that teachers and learners can utilize. Parental support and community involvement are also recommended to enhance learners' understanding of how to do local history projects. It is also recommended that, when the Department of Education hires ring teachers, they should look at teachers with relevant qualifications, especially in the teaching of Social Sciences.

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CHAPTER 5

BRIDGING THE ARTICLES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the articles' summary, recommendations, findings' implications, contributions to the body knowledge and concluding reflections. The section also discusses the three articles' interrelatedness to the research objectives and how each research question was answered.

This qualitative research study aimed to explore the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom. As the study was structured on three articles, it was guided by Critical Pedagogy as a critical framework, drawing on the participants' experiences. To generate meaningful data to address the research objectives, I used two collection methods: semi-structured interviews scheduled for five selected teachers in five different selected schools and document analysis. Participatory methodologies allowed concerned people to be actively involved in creating a transformed Social Science environment.

5.2 ARTICLE SUMMARY

5.2.1 Article One

The first article responded to the research objective of determining the Social Science teachers' understanding of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The article titled: *“Exploring History Teachers' Understanding Of Using Local History Projects To Develop Learner's Historical Skills”*. The study's findings suggest that Social Science teachers who participated in this study do not create adequate opportunities to use local history projects to develop learners' historical skills, based on the premise that historical skills were not emphasised in teaching local history projects. Teachers must create opportunities for engagement through a deeper classroom discussion around learners' locality if the objective of the concept of critical thinkers and researchers is to be realised.

5.2.2 Article Two

The second article responded to the research objective that seeks to establish the Social Science teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. My interest in this regard was to look at what teachers are doing in the classroom, hence the title: *“Exploring Teachers' Current Practices of Using Local History Projects to Develop Learner's Historical Skills”*. The findings of this study suggest that social science teachers who participated in the study did not create adequate opportunities to develop learners' historical skills while teaching local history projects. Specific skills that required conducting research and choosing a topic were not emphasised. Teachers must provide a deeper understanding of how to deal with local history projects.

5.2.3 Article Three

The third article responded to the research objective that explored the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers when teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The article title: *“Exploring Teachers' Current Practices of Using Local History Projects To Develop Learner's Historical Skills”*. The study findings revealed that teachers' content knowledge negatively impacts teaching local history projects because of the lack of experienced teachers teaching the subject. Novice teachers teach History and Geography as stand-alone subjects, which must be taught together.

The following section discusses how the research objectives/ questions were addressed based on the three articles.

5.3 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE/QUESTIONS

5.3.1 Research Objective 1: To determine Social Science teachers understanding of teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills

Article one addressed this objective by asking How Social Science teachers understand local history projects *to develop learners' historical skills*. The teachers' understanding of teaching local history projects and their skills are the most critical aspects the study seeks

to achieve. The scholars Eisman and Quanbeck (2021) stated that local history projects are an effort that involves a series of activities, sources, and resources aimed to achieve specific output that will relate to historical content and skills. Pedagogical knowledge is imperative for teachers to impart the most critical skills the learners need.

5.3.2 Research Objective 2: To establish the current practices used by Social Science teachers in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skill

Objective number two was responded to in article two through the research question: *What are the current practices used by Social Science teachers in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?* The article mainly focused on how teachers teach local history projects in class to enhance and develop learners' historical skills. Bhar (2018) asserts that teaching local history projects is a powerful pedagogical tool that can be used in the classroom to develop historical understanding and learning. There is concern about the inability of learners to display the much-needed historical skills in teaching local history projects (Rosyad, 2022).

5.3.3 Research Objective 3: To explore the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers when teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills

The objectives were answered in this article using the following question: *What are the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?* The article examined the challenges teachers face in the classroom when dealing with local history projects. Despite the importance of teaching learners local history projects in schools to develop their historical skills, proper curriculum implementation is yet to be realised, as demonstrated by the challenges teachers face (Rusznyak, 2020). Some teachers still follow the traditional way of teaching, which restricts learners' understanding in absorbing the facts and concepts described in the History curriculum, hindering learners' development of historical skills (Moseikina, 2022).

5.4 REALISING THE AIM OF THE STUDY/ ADDRESSING THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study aims to explore the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science classroom. The main research question was formulated to realise this aim: *How do Social Science teachers use local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?* Three objectives were pursued, with an article dedicated to answering each of the three objectives.

Article one (see Chapter 2) assisted in determining the History teachers' understanding of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. In this article, based on the analysis, the study discovered that teachers lack a proper understanding of giving learners local history projects to develop their historical skills. The CAPS document emphasised that the significance of History as a subject is to empower learners with historical skills and knowledge. However, there is a critical gap, especially in the teachers' understanding of teaching local history projects. Consequently, proper and effective History project implementation has not been achieved, and the quality of formal activities that the teachers give to learners to address and empower them to develop historical skills is insufficient. This article helped me understand that teachers do not have purposeful teaching strategies that effectively teach and learn local History projects to develop learners' historical skills.

Article two (see Chapter 3) explored teachers' current practices of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Based on the teachers' responses and document analysis, I realised that there are few opportunities for the learners to be exposed to how to do local history projects. The following are the steps as per literature that a teacher must follow in conducting a local history project: the planning phase, the aim of the project, the introduction of the project, the sources relevant to the project, the forms of assessment, then the implementation stage, choosing the topic for the project, the time frame of the project, the interview schedule and the conclusion of the project. Following these steps will assist the learners in doing the project.

The fieldwork is the most critical phase of the project because it is when the learners have a real taste of the project itself. Hence, the project's success and failure lie in this phase. Assessment and the form of assessment are critical because they help the learners, parents, and relevant stakeholders understand the depth of learning.

Article three (see Chapter 4) focuses on the challenges teachers face when using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Some of the challenges identified were the teachers' understanding of local history, forms of historical skills, teachers' content knowledge, forms of assessment, lack of resources and parental support. It has emerged that some teachers do not understand local history due to the lack of content knowledge of local history. Some teachers made mention of the lack of resources they can relate to when dealing with local history. Lack of parental support results from the inability to complete a project at home.

To mitigate those challenges, the teachers must constantly equip themselves with curriculum content knowledge on using different teaching strategies and effectively using available teaching and learning resources to arouse the learners' interest. Parental support and community involvement are critical in enhancing teaching and learning, motivating parents during parent meetings and making them aware of their importance in teaching and learning.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The research study indicated the following recommendations to enhance the teaching of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

Social Science teachers must create adequate opportunities to understand the use of teaching local history projects by adopting teaching methods and strategies that accommodate different learning styles. As the show shows, teachers must create opportunities and understanding for engagement through deeper classroom discussion around learners' locality if the objectives of critical thinkers and researchers are to be realised.

To address the issue of sources and resources, Social Science teachers should enhance Communication and Technology as 21st-century learners are biased towards technology.

The study further recommends that the form of assessment must be used to diagnose progress for learners so that teachers are informed on how to modify their projects to assist learners in achieving their intended goal of developing their historical skills.

Encourage teachers to establish Professional Learning Communities to strengthen knowledge and strategies for applying meaningful teaching of local history.

Teachers must create a fertile ground to collaborate with stakeholders such as parents, guardians, and the community to close the learning gap identified in teaching and learning.

The study suggests that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) should regularly conduct workshops for teachers, especially in Social Science History, on various research methods that can be used to develop teachers' awareness of local history.

5.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Article one asked, *"How do Social Science teachers understand local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?"* In this research article, Social Science teachers shared their understanding of the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in the classroom, and it was discovered that teachers do not have adequate knowledge of teaching learners local history projects to develop their historical skills. The article discusses ways teachers can use to enhance the understanding of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. In article two, the question was posed: *"What are the current practices used by Social Science teachers in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?"* The teachers elucidated their current practices, and the article came up with ways and strategies that teachers can use to enhance the teaching of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Article three addressed the question: *"What are the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?"* Teachers

identified the challenges faced by Social Science teachers when dealing with local history projects, and through literature, I came up with solutions to the challenges they face daily. This research was grounded in the interpretive paradigm, which generally attempts to understand phenomena through the meaning of people assigned to them. Social Science teachers' experiences and practices were considered significant and placed centrally to address the problems experienced within their unique teaching and learning environment. Therefore, the study urges a professional development model that emphasises understanding the teachers' experiences and context rather than a deficit model. Accordingly, this study highlights the need for a professional development model that provides support and growth for Social Science teachers through adequate training and workshops to offer better opportunities for teachers to improve learning significantly. The DBE must support Social Science teachers consistently to enhance curriculum practice in the teaching and learning environment.

5.7 LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to five schools in the Motheo District in the Free State, wherein a small sample of participants that consisted of five teachers was utilised. Hence, the findings could not be generalised but instead limited within the context of five schools in the Free State Province. It implies that the findings may not represent all Social Science in the district, province, and country but can be guidelines for all interested stakeholders. There might be several challenges and solutions discussed in this study. However, the Social Science teachers who contributed to the research study deemed the identified challenges and strategies significant. Regardless of limitations, the research study generated and analysed data to the best of its ability.

5.8 IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since the study was conducted in schools in one of the five districts in the Free State Province, I recommend that a similar study be conducted in more schools in other districts in the province to determine whether the way local history projects are being done in the

studied district applies to other schools and district or whether it is limited to certain schools in the district under study.

5.9 REFLECTIONS AND LESSON LEARNED

Undertaking this study has been a long journey that was characterised by its own change of circumstances. Unwavering academic and moral supervision overcame these. The most challenging part I encountered was learning to move from the traditional writing of a thesis to the article writing approach, wherein I had to ground adequate academic writing skills and in-depth reading of relevant literature. Through rigorous training and coaching from my supervisor, I learned the art of writing an article and submitting my articles to different journals to be published.

It was with great satisfaction that the participants were taken into their experience field, allowing them to share their joys and disappointments. Most of the limitations of this study came from the data generation process. In the beginning, the principals and the participants, all Social Science teachers, felt uncomfortable with my presence in the school. During our semi-structured interviews, the participants thought I was there to question and judge their way of teaching the subject. The rationale of the study and the purpose were clearly stated to deal with the situation and alleviate their fears, and the information to obtain as data was for the study. As the researcher, I should have emphasised to the participants that I was not here to question and judge their teaching and assessment strategies but to get an insight into how they have been experiencing the teaching and learning of Social Science as a school subject. They admitted frankly that there is a deep gulf between the curriculum intentions on critical skills and the reality regarding developing essential thinking skills in teaching local history.

The role of the critical framework of critical pedagogy and interpretivism in the study was achieved through constant reflection. Critical pedagogy as a critical framework was relevant because it is an objective approach that develops critical thinking in learners. This gave the researcher satisfaction in undertaking the study, which aimed to explore how Social Science teachers use local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Such a study, the first of its kind in our District education system, is believed to

have broken the ground for research into teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in schools.

I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

5.10 CONCLUSION

This study explored how Social Science teachers use local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The study used three objectives, and from these objectives, primary and secondary questions were formulated and answered accordingly in the three articles. The study concludes that the teachers' understanding of their current practices determines the effectiveness of teaching local history projects in schools to develop learners' historical skills.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

11-Jan-2023

Dear Mr Zwelinjane Mbatha

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

EXPLORING THE USE OF LOCAL HISTORY PROJECTS TO DEVELOP LEARNERS HISTORICAL SKILLS IN A SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASSROOM.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/1748/22

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

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APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION FROM FS DoE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango
Ref: Research Permission: Z. Mbatha
Tel. 051 404 8808
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za



3 Draakenstein Street
Erichpark
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear Mr. Z. Mbatha

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: MOTHEO DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education within the Mthetho Education District. The details in relation to your research project with the University of the Free State are as follows:

Topic: Exploring the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science Classroom.

1. List of schools involved: Emang Primary School, Mabela Primary School, Mangaung Primary School, Olympia Primary School and Sentraal Primary School.
2. Target Population: Five educators teaching Social Sciences in Intermediate Phase at the selected schools.
3. Period of research: From the second week of February 2023 until 30 September 2023. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
 - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1st Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein or can be emailed to the above-mentioned email address.
 - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - 4.4 The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. MZAMISO W. JACOBS
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 06/12/2022

RESEARCH APPLICATION BY Z. MBATHA. PERMISSION LETTER 06 DECEMBER 2022. MOTHETHO DISTRICT
QM&E, M&E and Strategic Planning Directorate Private Bag 28500, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Thuto House, Room 101, 1st Floor, St Andrew Street, Bloemfontein

www.fsdoe.gov.za

APPENDIX 3: NOTIFICATION FROM FS DoE - PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango
Ref: Notification of research: Z. Mbatha
Tel: 051 404 8808
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za



District Director
Motho District

Dear Mr. Moli

NOTIFICATION OF RESEARCH: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN MOTHO DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that Mr. Z. Mbatha has been granted permission to conduct research in the Motheo District under the auspices of the University of the Free State. The details in relation to the research project are as follows:

Topic: Exploring the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science Classroom.

1. List of schools involved: Emang Primary School, Mabela Primary School, Mangaung Primary School, Olympia Primary School and Sentral Primary School.
2. Target Population: Five educators teaching Social Sciences in Intermediate Phase at the selected schools.
3. Period of research: From the second week of February 2023 until 30 September 2023. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
4. Research benefits: Teachers will benefit from this study as they will seek to further their critical approach in teaching. Learners will benefit from this study in local history projects and in the classroom and their voices will be heard. The FSDoE will benefit from the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Sciences classroom.
5. The Sub-directorates of Research and policy will make the necessary arrangements for the researchers to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in the Department.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. MZAMO M. JACOBS
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE, RISE AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 06/12/2022

RESEARCH NOTIFICATION Z. MBATHA, 06 DECEMBER 2022, MOTHO DISTRICT
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APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TITLE: EXPLORE THE USE OF LOCAL HISTORY PROJECTS TO DEVELOP LEARNERS' HISTORICAL SKILLS

1. **How do Social Science teachers understand local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?**
 - 1.1 What is your understanding of the local history projects?
 - 1.2 What do you think is the purpose of giving learners this type of a project?
 - 1.3 What are the values of teaching local history projects?
 - 1.4 What do you think learners will gain in doing local history projects?
 - 1.5 Which skills learners will gather when they are taught local history projects?

2. **What are the current practices used by Social Science teachers in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?**
 - 2.1 Briefly explain the steps you take in administering the local history project.
 - 2.2 In what way are you addressing a specific historical skill through the use of local history projects?
 - 2.3 During the pre-administration process of the project, what is the discussion with the learners?
 - 2.4 During the administration discussion of the project, what are the expectations to the learners?
 - 2.5 During the post-administration process, what are the teachers' expectations to the learners?
 - 2.6 What steps are followed by the teacher in assessing local history projects?
 - 2.7 Explain the extent to which your assessment focuses on the development of historical skills?

3. **What are the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers when teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?**

APPENDIX 5: PROOF OF ARTICLES SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION

SiLET

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Prof. Nadi Suprpto, Ph.D** <nadisuprpto@scie-journal.com>

Date: Fri, 03 Nov 2023, 15:07

Subject: [SiLeT] Submission Acknowledgement

To: Zwelinjane <zwelinjane.mbatha@gmail.com>

Hello,

Boitumelo Moreeng has submitted the manuscript, "Exploring History Teachers' Understanding of Using Local History Projects to Develop Learner's Historical Skills" to Studies in Learning and Teaching.

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

Prof. Nadi Suprpto, Ph.D

[Studies in Learning and Teaching](#)

JSSER

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Boitumelo Moreeng** <MoreengBB@ufs.ac.za>

Date: Mon, 02 Oct 2023, 19:32

Subject: FW: [JSSER] EXPLORING TEACHERS' CURRENT PRACTICES OF USING LOCAL HISTORY PROJECTS TO DEVELOP LEARNER'S HISTORICAL SKILL

To: Zwelinjane Mbatha <zwelinjane.mbatha@gmail.com>

Hi Doc

This came earlier today, and I am in contact with the editor I will keep you updated.

Kind regards

SHE

-----Original Message-----

From: Dr. Sigit Ricahyono, S.S., M.Pd. <bot_smtpojs@unipma.ac.id>
Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 2:09 PM
To: Boitumelo Moreeng <MoreengBB@ufs.ac.za>
Subject: [SHE] Submission Acknowledgement

The following message is being delivered on behalf of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal.

Dr Boitumelo Benjamin Moreeng:

Thank you for submitting the manuscript, "Exploring teachers' challenges of using local history project to develop learners' historical skills" to Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal). 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://urldefense.com/v3/__http://e-journal.unipma.ac.id/index.php/SHE/author/submission/18159__;!!LRJdiIM!CPpQNjyQ6b98ugGdo2bb-0PUX_B1mtXbzs7WXIYdfNX1VuqdGT_qpWtXjvnl-vpMmrNPDkZc1Lav04hPyO2WYFzsfMY\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http://e-journal.unipma.ac.id/index.php/SHE/author/submission/18159__;!!LRJdiIM!CPpQNjyQ6b98ugGdo2bb-0PUX_B1mtXbzs7WXIYdfNX1VuqdGT_qpWtXjvnl-vpMmrNPDkZc1Lav04hPyO2WYFzsfMY$)

Username: moreengbb

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1/10/23, 12:34 PM

Gmail - Fwd: FW: [SHE] Submission Acknowledgement

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

Dr. Sigit Ricahyono, S.S., M.Pd.
Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal) _____

Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal [https://urldefense.com/v3/__http://e-journal.unipma.ac.id/index.php/SHEJournal__;!!LRJdiIM!CPpQNjyQ6b98ugGdo2bb-0PUX_B1mtXbzs7WXIYdfNX1VuqdGT_qpWtXjvnl-vpMmrNPDkZc1Lav04hPyO2WeThAia2\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http://e-journal.unipma.ac.id/index.php/SHEJournal__;!!LRJdiIM!CPpQNjyQ6b98ugGdo2bb-0PUX_B1mtXbzs7WXIYdfNX1VuqdGT_qpWtXjvnl-vpMmrNPDkZc1Lav04hPyO2WeThAia2$)

APPENDIX 6: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

Michelle Woolley

WRITER EDITOR PROOFREADER TRANSLATOR

Bachelor of Library and Information Science: B.Bibl.

Reference & Research Librarian

Bachelor of Arts Honours in Translation Studies and Editing

Associate Member of Professional EDITORS' Guild (PEG)

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

This letter certifies that I have edited the Dissertation detailed below.

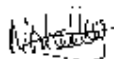
Title:

Exploring the use of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills in a Social Science Classroom

Author:

Zwelinjane Meshack Mbatha
2006123430

Regards
Michelle Woolley



Date: 20/02/2024

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Professional
EDITORS
Guild